ISSN 1322-0330

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
(PROOF)

Hansard Home Page: http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-assembly/hansard
Email: hansard@parliament.qld.gov.au
Phone (07) 3553 6344 Fax (07) 3553 6369

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 10 May 2017

Subject Page

PW WELLINGTON
SPEAKER

NJ LAURIE
CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENT

LJ OSMOND
CHIEF HANSARD REPORTER

WEDNESDAY, 10 MAY 2017

The Legislative Assembly met at 2.00 pm.

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

PRIVILEGE

Members' Register of Interests

Mr WILLIAMS (Pumicestone—ALP) (2.01 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege. As I advised the parliament yesterday, the documents tabled referred to an investigation by the Department of Transport and Main Roads into a company named Accident & Breakdown Towing Pty Ltd in 2015. I want to make it clear that my wife and I sold this business in 2013. To be absolutely clear, the business transferred out of our hands on that date.

In the transition to the new owners, I was temporarily a director and then a minor 10 per cent shareholder until the transaction was complete. Let me be clear: I played no further role in this business. I table documents to that effect.

Tabled paper: Australian Securities and Investments Commission Change to Company details, Form 484, dated 31 July 2013, regarding Accident and Breakdown Towing Pty Ltd [673].

I may have to correct my register of interests due to this deficiency of timing in these matters.

SPEAKER'S RULINGS

Questions, Authentication of Facts

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, in a ruling on 25 May 2016, I reminded members that they should be able to authenticate facts in their questions. It is in order to ask a minister whether an allegation or charge is correct. It is also in order to ask a minister what action they will take to inquire into an allegation and, if some allegation is correct, what action they will take.

However, questions should not be phrased so as to state as fact that which is not fact but assumption, supposition or knowingly incorrect. It is deliberately misleading to state a fact in a question that is knowingly incorrect. The duty is on the member asking the question to authenticate the fact. If they cannot authenticate the fact they should qualify the matter.

On 17 August last year, I held that, where a member heavily qualified a statement to make it clear that it was only rumour or hearsay as opposed to fact, the member was not deliberately misleading the House. Yesterday, the member for Aspley asked a question that contained a statement of fact about the member for Pumicestone. Facts in that statement were disputed by the other member.

When a statement of fact about a member is disputed by that member, they have two procedural options. Firstly, they may later write to me and seek that the matter be referred to the Ethics Committee as a deliberately misleading statement; or, secondly, they can rise and dispute the fact about the member. It is then for the Speaker to decide what action they should take. The Speaker can simply dismiss the member's point of order. In the great majority of cases members will simply rise and say that the other member is misleading the House and attempt to argue the point the first member was making. In most instances, the member taking the point of order is simply disagreeing with what the other member is saying. In these majority of instances, the Speaker will dismiss the point of order. The Speaker may advise the aggrieved member to write to them later if they wish to allege the member has deliberately misled the House.

The Speaker may also in rarer circumstances ask a member to authenticate the fact, rephrase the question or give some undertaking about the content of the question. Yesterday, I eventually asked the member for Aspley to rephrase the question. Either the member for Aspley or the member for Pumicestone can write to me making complaint about the statements made by the other.

I wish to make it very clear that questions without and on notice are a very important accountability and scrutiny mechanism. I do not wish to in any way hinder members asking questions, but members should be very careful in the asking of their questions to ensure that the facts included are correct and not incorrect or misleading.

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by the Premier and Ministers

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, on 7 March 2017 the member for Redlands wrote to me alleging that the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services and the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games deliberately misled the House in relation to their statements made on 28 February 2017 and 1 March 2017 respectively. On 22 March 2017, the member for Redlands also wrote to me alleging that the Premier and Minister for the Arts deliberately misled the House in relation to her statements made on that same day.

I consider the matters raised in all three matters technical and do not warrant the further attention of the House. I therefore will not be referring the matters to the Ethics Committee. I table the correspondence in relation to this matter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 7 March 2017, from the member for Redlands, Mr Matt McEachan MP, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding an alleged deliberate misleading of the House [674].

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 22 March 2017, from the member for Redlands, Mr Matt McEachan MP, to the Speaker, Hon. Peter Wellington, regarding an alleged deliberate misleading of the House [675].

I seek leave to incorporate the rulings circulated in my name.

Leave granted.

SPEAKER'S RULING—ALLEGED DELIBERATELY MISLEADING THE HOUSE

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members,

On 7 March 2017, the Member for Redlands wrote to me alleging that the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services and the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games deliberately misled the House in relation to their statements made on 28 February 2017 and 1 March 2017 respectively.

The Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services stated:

> All of this is at threat because of the dalliance and the commitment that we now see developing between the LNP and One Nation. The only difference between the LNP and the One Nation party is one letter, O—LNP, ONP. What have we heard in other late breaking news? The member for Dawson has just resigned as the National Party whip in the federal parliament. We know that the next resignation that will be coming will be from the Liberal National Party. It has already lost Cory Bernardi. They are going to lose George Christensen. All of this, everything we are doing in health care—reducing the number of people on the waiting list, delivering a budget surplus across the health system, making sure that our hospitals are safe—will be put at jeopardy by this dalliance, by this coalition between the Liberal Party and One Nation.
>
> They will not repudiate it. Why? Because we know that the deal is being done. We know that the preferences are being exchanged.

The Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games stated:

> We know that the deal is done between One Nation and the LNP? We want to know what end of the pineapple the LNP opposition took? What did they take when they did the dirty deal with One Nation behind the scenes?
>
> …
>
> I withdraw, but the cat is out of the bag. We know that there is a deal between One Nation and the LNP.
>
> …
>
> We know that they are not running a candidate in Buderim because the deal is done. One Nation and the LNP are as one.

In his letter to me, the Member for Redlands claimed that these statements were deliberately misleading as the Leader of the Opposition had previously issued a media statement and made public comments that the LNP would not enter into a coalition with Pauline Hanson's One Nation party, and that preferences would only be issued on a seat-by-seat basis and not subject to a broad-scale deal.

Standing Order 269(4) requires:

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

On the information before me, I considered that the preface of the phrase "we know" used by both ministers was intended to convey a context of supposition or speculation rather than a statement of fact. Accordingly, I consider the matters are technical and do not warrant the further attention of the House.

I therefore will not be referring the matters to the Ethics Committee.

I table the correspondence in relation to this matter.

SPEAKER'S RULING—ALLEGED DELIBERATELY MISLEADING THE HOUSE

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members,

On 22 March 2017, the Member for Redlands wrote to me alleging that the Premier and Minister for the Arts deliberately misled the House in relation to her statements made on that same day, when she said:

> What I will say is that there is one side of politics that wants to put all that at risk and that is those opposite and the Leader of the Opposition for doing a deal with One Nation.
>
> …
>
> Coming back from my trade mission—this is very important—the issue of the deal of the LNP with One Nation was raised with me.
>
> …
>
> Trading relationships are being put at risk by the deal by this man, the member for Clayfield, with One Nation. Whilst I travelled on my most recent trade mission investors asked me specifically about the One Nation deal.

In his letter to me, the Member for Redlands claimed that these statements were deliberately misleading as the Leader of the Opposition had previously issued a media statement and made public comments that the LNP would not enter into a coalition with Pauline Hanson's One Nation party, and that preferences would only be issued on a seat-by-seat basis and not subject to a broad-scale deal. The Member for Redlands argued that the Premier would have been aware of the Leader of the Opposition's media statement and public comments.

Standing Order 269(4) requires:

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

On the information before me, I considered that the Premier's use of the term 'the issue of the deal' was intended to convey a context of supposition or speculation rather than a statement of fact. Accordingly, I consider the matter is technical and does not warrant the further attention of the House.

I therefore will not be referring the matter to the Ethics Committee.

I table the correspondence in relation to this matter.

PETITIONS

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

Moggill Road, Cycling Infrastructure

Dr Rowan, from 443 petitioners, requesting the House to provide safe, separated cycling infrastructure on Moggill Road in line with its designation as a Principal Route in the South East Queensland Principal Cycle Network Plan [687, 688].

The Clerk presented the following paper and e-petition, sponsored and lodged by the Clerk)—

Dayboro, Water Supply

From 253 petitioners, requesting the House to reconsider Seqwater's decision to not connect Dayboro to the water grid and to give priority to securing Dayboro's water supply via a pipeline from North Pine Dam [689, 690].

Petitions received.

ORDER FOR PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

The CLERK: In accordance with standing order 29, I advise of the following outstanding order: order of the House dated 1 March 2017 requiring the Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning to produce to the House a report from Queensland Rail on the outcome of the chair's 'stress test' of the Citytrain timetable.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Federal Budget

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.08 pm): The Turnbull government has failed the people of Queensland yet again. I am a proud Queenslander and last night was a slap in the face. The federal budget failed to deliver a fair share for Queenslanders. I know the Prime Minister and his Treasurer are focused on Sydney, but where were the Queensland Liberal National Party MPs and senators? What did these Queenslanders ask for in the federal budget for Queensland?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I do not want this to turn into a rabble where Hansard and I are not able to hear the speaker.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They need to tell Queenslanders why they missed out. In stark contrast to the LNP members in Canberra and Queensland, my government made clear our expectations of the federal budget. In response, the Turnbull government has adopted the Brisbane line for this budget. The Turnbull government's rhetoric about developing Northern Australia is just that—rhetoric. There were no specific commitments on energy and water projects in the north. The Prime Minister's concern for east coast gas supplies two weeks ago was ignored in this budget. Instead of funding gas pipelines for the east coast, the federal budget committed $90 million over four years to promote gas supply. There was no reference to Queensland where we are actually developing our gas reserves.

The Turnbull government's rhetoric about nation-building infrastructure is just that—rhetoric. They have had the business case for Cross River Rail since June last year.

An opposition member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I know they do not want to hear it, but they can listen today. A joint statement between the Deputy Premier and the federal Minister for Urban Infrastructure on 2 December last year states—

Planning and procurement for the revised Cross River Rail project began in early 2015 and the business case is currently being assessed by Infrastructure Australia.

They are the facts. My government delivered the business case last year. We have committed $850 million for the project. What do we get from Canberra? Nothing! Zero! There was no excuse for the Turnbull government to not fund Cross River Rail in the budget last night. None of the other projects mentioned as potential candidates for the 10-year National Rail Fund are as advanced as Cross River Rail. The National Rail Fund only allocates $600 million over 2019-20 and 2020-21 for projects across Australia. It is a disgrace.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: And what are you doing about it? Nothing!

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. Members!

Ms PALASZCZUK: I call on Queensland senators to join me and stand up for a better deal for Queenslanders. I call on Queensland senators to demand a better deal from this Sydney-centric Turnbull government.

Spinal Cord Research

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.12 pm): At Griffith University this morning, the Treasurer and I met with the world-leading researchers and medical clinicians who are continuing their ground-breaking work into healing spinal cord injuries. As we all know, spinal injury can happen to anyone at any time and the impacts are absolutely devastating for the person involved and for their family and their friends. The commitment and dedication of the researchers and clinicians at Griffith University to discover a cure for permanent paralysis is nothing but inspirational. Developing a cure would be a life-changing discovery for people the world over who struggle to cope as best they can with spinal cord injury. It would be the magnificent breakthrough these sufferers the world over have always dared to hope for. The research team at Griffith University could be on the verge of developing a cure for spinal injury.

Work has progressed now to producing a three-dimensional bio-degradable nerve cell bridge that can be transplanted to repair injured spinal cords. The unique know-how and clinical experience amassed at Griffith University advances the work of our current Australian of the Year Emeritus Professor Alan Mackay-Sim. Emeritus Professor Mackay-Sim's earlier scientific work in proving stem cells could be taken from the nose and safely transplanted into the human spinal cord was a significant achievement in medical research. The cure for spinal cord injury project is a collaborative effort led by Dr James St John involving two leading research institutes, the Griffith Institute for Drug Discovery and the Menzies Health Institute Queensland.

The project has enjoyed the long-term support of the Perry Cross Spinal Research Foundation and the Clem Jones Foundation. To further boost this vital research effort, my government will provide $5 million in funding over the next three years. This will support the pre-clinical development of the new stem cell spinal cord therapy and leading up to a final clinical trial. I congratulate everyone involved in this groundbreaking research at Griffith University.

Federal Budget

Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.14 pm): In relation to the visit of the Premier to Griffith University to announce a funding boost for spinal cord research, on a personal note as a former disability services minister, it was an extra-special moment to see $5 million going into such a worthwhile cause, giving hope and optimism to so many people. It was an important event and I again thank Emeritus Professor Alan Mackay-Sim for his attendance today.

Last night's federal budget was a blatant attempt to move on from the era of Tony Abbott and Joe Hockey's budget emergency phase. The 2017-18 federal budget is an improvement on the last three, but that would not take much. As a self-confessed sci-fi geek, I like the quote from PwC Chief Economist Jeremy Thorpe who summed up last night's budget by saying—

This is the Star Wars Rogue One budget; the government has the plans but it hasn't yet tackled the Debt Star.

This federal budget is long on promises and short on actual new funds for job-creating projects in Queensland. Promises appear in Scott Morrison's budget speech but not in the actual budget papers with actual funding figures for actual financial years. We see funds to set up new bodies like the Infrastructure and Projects Financing Agency to look at how to fund projects without actually funding them now. In other words, we have been told about big-ticket items with zero or almost no funds attached to them in this budget. It is a plan for a plan. It is smoke and mirrors. Economic commentator Michael Pascoe has said that Scott Morrison has taken the approach of 'think of a big number and keep adding years until you reach it.' He has also pointed out that the federal Treasurer's headline $75 billion infrastructure and financing promise is spread over 10 years. Scott Morrison has been busy writing cheques, but not inserting dates or dollar amounts.

As the Premier has said, and the Deputy Premier will get to shortly, our No. 1 infrastructure priority is Cross River Rail. There is a promise to establish a $10 billion National Rail Program to deliver rail projects subject to business cases, yet only about $600 million is allocated in the forward estimates and we are meant to take a leap of faith that $9.4 billion will be coming in the out years. Yet again nothing for Queensland's No. 1 project.

On energy, despite a lot of pre-budget talk—including from those opposite—a new North Queensland coal-fired power station did not appear anywhere in the budget. It did not rate a mention. While the Turnbull government is looking in the past, our government's proposal for hydro-electricity on the Burdekin Dam has an eye to a renewable future.

There was a promise of $90 million over four years to promote gas supply that specifically includes funding for studies on two potential gas pipelines to South Australia. There is nothing for Queensland, even though we are ideally positioned to be the powerhouse of Australia and we stand ready to help fix the problems in the national energy market.

The theme of the budget was fairness, opportunity and security, but there is no security in the future of national partnership agreements as they stand. National partnership agreements fund a range of essential health, education and other services, but states often receive little notice of any ongoing funding, if any, as the agreements expire. As we have heard over the last couple days, these agreements are worth $1.7 billion and support and provide important services for Queenslanders. Some examples include skills reform. There is no renewal of the national partnership that provides for a new Skilling Australians Fund. Queensland Treasury estimates we will receive $40 million less than this year when it comes to skills funding. In relation to early childhood education we have no funding certainty beyond 2018. There is no funding certainty for remote Indigenous housing beyond 2017-18. For 21 national partnership agreements we are left in a position of continuing uncertainty. States and territories simply cannot plan for the future under these arrangements.

There are, of course, many more elements to the federal budget that we will touch on. We will be examining it more closely over the coming days. In particular, we need to see how it impacts on the state budget for 2016-17. We already face the economic and financial impacts from Tropical Cyclone Debbie. What we do not need are extra impacts from a tricky federal budget that short-changes Queensland. The state budget I will hand down on 13 June will be the third for the Palaszczuk government. It will continue to deliver more for Queensland, in particular to those living in regional Queensland forgotten by the Turnbull government. Our budget will again focus on job creation, real infrastructure investment, fostering innovation, stimulating economic growth and delivering better services. It will continue our economic and fiscal discipline and we will continue to deliver for Queenslanders even if the Turnbull government will not.

Federal Budget, Cross River Rail

Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (2.19 pm): Cross River Rail remains this government's highest priority infrastructure project, presenting a unique opportunity to transform South-East Queensland. On Monday, the board of the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority formally met for the first time. The board members have the right mix of skills, experience and industry acumen to bring the project to life.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Deputy Premier. Member for Chatsworth, you are warned under standing order 253A. I find your comments are designed to disrupt the speaker. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action.

Ms TRAD: The board includes the directors-general of the four key agencies of Transport and Main Roads; Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning; the Premier and Cabinet; and Queensland's Under Treasurer. Four independent experts and a senior federal government representative round out the board with the skills and determination to deliver Cross River Rail for Queensland.

This project is essential for the future of South-East Queensland and will create thousands of jobs and reduce congestion on some of our busiest roads. The comprehensive business case presented to the federal government on 26 June last year shows that Cross River Rail is a vital piece of nation-building infrastructure that will benefit our state's fastest growing region and, in fact, our whole economy. It is a good investment with a strong and positive benefit-cost ratio. That is why the Palaszczuk government has already committed $850 million to kickstart the project, which is more than any other government before.

However, last night's federal budget, which was an opportunity for Mr Turnbull and Mr Morrison to give real support to this once-in-a-generation city-shaping project, monumentally failed to deliver. Despite all of the hype about a $10 billion rail package, the reality is that under the Turnbull government there will be no contribution for Cross River Rail for at least another two years and even then there is no guarantee. Instead, the federal government announced an equity injection of $8.4 billion to the Australian Rail Track Corporation to commence construction on the inland rail project from Melbourne to Brisbane. Also announced was the intention for the ARTC to enter into a public-private partnership for the Gowrie to Kagaru section, the most complex element of the project.

Whilst the Queensland government has been supportive of the development of inland rail, it is important to place this announcement in context for Queenslanders. Our No. 1 priority remains Cross River Rail. It is ready to be built now. In contrast, the construction of the inland rail in Queensland is a long way from commencing. Queensland is likely to be the last jurisdiction to benefit from the inland rail because the Queensland section of the project is the most complex and difficult due to the amount of greenfield construction and complex engineering associated with the route over the Great Dividing Range.

In a letter to me yesterday, the federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Darren Chester, made it clear that a large number of issues still needed to be settled and agreed before the inland rail could progress, including the final alignment, consent to construct new railways, land tenure and leases for ARTC operated rail and land acquisition. The inland rail business case refers to a 10-year program schedule, covering project development and construction. On this basis and in light of the large number of outstanding issues still to be resolved, it is reasonably expected that planning, design and construction of the project will take many years, if not a decade. Queensland should not have to wait that long for the federal government to invest in vital infrastructure for our state.

Federal Budget, Health

Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.22 pm): If there is one issue that signifies the difference between Labor and LNP governments, it is the way we value, fund and deliver health care. This morning Queenslanders woke with a sense of disappointment as they reflected on a federal budget that puts at risk all the progress we have made to restore front-line services and drive down waiting lists. In 2013, the then Labor government signed the National Health Reform Agreement, which was signed by all the states, Labor and coalition, in recognition that here at last was an opportunity to end the bickering and the blame game and finally build long-term sustainability into the provision of health services. That outbreak of harmony and good sense lasted as long as the change of government and the election of Tony Abbott as prime minister.

Last night's budget is in the tradition of coalition budgets: it is a weak response to the challenges of our health system presented by our ageing population and increasing demand. Over the life of the agreement, for Queensland the shortfall is projected to be $10 billion. When it comes to national partnership agreements, between 2009 and 2014 the annual average funding provided to Queensland was $334 million. According to information in last night's budget, that will fall to just $53.5 million and by 2019-20 it will be less than $40 million. In the 2014-15 budget, the dental funding allocated to Queensland for 2017-18 was $78.3 million. Under Scott Morrison's budget, Queensland's share is estimated to fall to just $21.6 million, which is a cut of 72 per cent.

Regrettably, in last night's budget there was no decision to reverse the $216.6 million cut to aged care which will directly affect the quality of the services able to be delivered to some of our most vulnerable Queenslanders and act as a disincentive to further investment in the sector at a time when demand is increasing. Last night it was also regrettable that there was no federal funding for hospital car parks in Rockhampton and Caboolture, promised by the LNP during the federal election, and no mention of the 15 Commonwealth supported medical places that the community has called for at the new Sunshine Coast University Hospital.

The much heralded unfreezing of the Medicare rebate turned out to be little more than a slow thaw, with Queenslanders being told that they will have to wait for the restoration of affordable GP and specialist services. Scott Morrison's performance last night has come up well short of what is required to guarantee decent health services for Queenslanders. This will have an impact on the delivery of health care in this state for many years to come, including our government's ability to provide timely health care to Queenslanders and to drive down waiting lists.

Federal Budget, Community Legal Centres

Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (2.25 pm): The federal government announced that it would not go ahead with its funding cuts for community legal centres. The federal Attorney-General said that the budget would include $55.7 million over three years for legal assistance services across Australia. We welcome this announcement. It is pleasing that Canberra has finally listened to community concerns about community legal centres.

I would like to recognise and thank community legal centre staff and volunteers and the state body, Community Legal Centres Queensland, for their continuous advocacy against the previous expected federal government cuts. It is because of their determination, hard work and perseverance, working with our Queensland members of parliament, that the federal government has reinstated the funding. Their support for local communities has not gone unnoticed and I look forward to working with community legal centres into the future.

However, unfortunately we have been left in the dark about the details of this funding by the federal government. We still do not know how much Queensland will receive and the details of what funding is tied to. Because of this, we have not been able to tell our community legal centres how much extra funding they will get to run their service come 1 July. That means that some community legal centres still do not know what to tell staff. They do not know what services they will be providing in two months. They do not know how many clients they will be able to help. They do not know if they can sign contracts and leases. Some staff still do not know if they will have a job come 1 July. We know that this is hurting CLCs right now. Right now in our centres, staff do not have certainty and are leaving to find other employment.

Until the Commonwealth government makes it clear how much funding will be provided to Queensland and how it is to be applied, CLCs are left in limbo, not knowing whether they can continue services. Staff are left to wonder whether they will have a job after 30 June. As members can imagine, many people are simply looking for alternative employment. This uncertainty will also have a significant effect on service delivery for our most vulnerable Queenslanders in need of legal assistance when those CLCs are forced to recruit to replace staff who have left or, worse, staff whom they have had to let go because the Commonwealth government could not decide how the funding would be allocated between the states and territories. This is not good enough.

I am pleased to announce that the Queensland government is taking an unprecedented step to support the Queensland CLCs that will be impacted by Commonwealth funding delays from 1 July. A further $565,000 of Queensland funding will be allocated as an interim measure for 22 impacted community organisations. This is in addition to the $33.3 million of Queensland funding already allocated to community organisations over 2017 to 2020. The additional funding will provide vital funding

certainty, enabling the community organisations to maintain current staff and services for a further three months from 1 July, until the mess caused by the Commonwealth government can be sorted out. This did not need to occur. We have been asking for this funding for 18 months. To announce it a week out from the budget, with no detail and now saying that there will be a discussion paper about how to allocate funding that should never have been cut in the first place, is leading to significant delays and is causing harm to our CLCs.

This step reaffirms the Palaszczuk government's commitment to community legal centres and the vulnerable people who access their services every day while we work through the details of the Commonwealth's plan once it is made available. Making an announcement is simply not good enough. It is not enough that the funding needs of CLCs are not being provided right now. They need this money come 1 July. They need the details of how much funding we are getting for Queensland and what, if any, criteria is attached to that funding. We need that right now. I ask every member who has stood with our CLCs and campaigned to keep up that campaigning because a press release is not enough. We need the funding and we need it now.

Federal Budget, Roads

Hon. MC BAILEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (2.30 pm): The Palaszczuk government is a proud partner in the $8.5 billion 10-year Bruce Highway upgrade program. In last night's federal budget we saw the announcement of more than $800 million for the Bruce, including $530 million between Pine Rivers and Caloundra. We understand the importance of this project and the need to continue to improve the Bruce Highway.

For the benefit of the House, I can clarify that this funding is not new funding—it is the reinvestment of savings that we have realised from other projects in the Bruce Highway upgrade program. The Palaszczuk government is already fast-tracking a joint planning study for the Bruce Highway Pine Rivers to Caloundra upgrade; however, it is yet to be finalised.

At this stage it is not clear whether this funding package will be enough to complete the works. It is also not clear how they reached the $530 million given that no final design nor business case has been completed.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you one and all. We will wait.

Mr McEachan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Redlands!

Mr BAILEY: Contrast that fact with the Turnbull government's excuse that they would not fund Cross River Rail because they did not have a business case which Queensland gave them 12 months ago. The Turnbull government has committed funding to the Bruce Highway upgrade, despite the planning and detailed design work being incomplete. Canberra also committed $130 million for Rookwood Weir—wait for it—without a business case.

Cross River Rail is ready to go—the planning is done, the business case was sent to the federal government 12 months ago—and still the Turnbull government holds off on committing funding. All Queensland gets from Malcolm Turnbull is excuses, excuses and excuses. All Queensland gets is a no, no, no from 'Slowmo ScoMo'.

Regional Queensland is also disappointed about not getting our Northern Australia Roads Programme funding back for regional roads in North Queensland. Six months ago the Turnbull government ripped out of Queensland $150 million in promised road funding under the Northern Australia Roads Programme in the 2016 federal budget. The federal government originally allocated $375 million in NARP funding for Queensland, but they went back on their word giving us just $223.8 million—a difference of $150 million given to other states, mainly the Northern Territory.

This means projects like installing overtaking lanes or improving heavy vehicle safety on the Flinders Highway between Townsville and Charters Towers and stage 1 of the Cairns Airport access upgrade missed out. 'ScoMo' said no dough for Queensland there either! There is also a list of Queensland projects on Infrastructure Australia's priority list that did not receive funding, including the remaining sections of the Ipswich Motorway Rocklea to Darra upgrade, the Cunningham Highway Yamanto to Ebenezer/Amberley upgrade and other Brisbane to Gold Coast transport corridor upgrades. All we were after for Queensland from Canberra was a fair go from 'ScoMo', but he said no go.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock! Member for Hinchinbrook, you are warned under standing order 253A. I find your interjections designed to try to disrupt the speaker. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action.

Mr BAILEY: All we wanted was a fair go from 'ScoMo', but he said no go. He would rather visit Germany than visit the Sunshine State.

Federal Budget, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing

Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Sport) (2.34 pm): We acknowledge the historical injustices that led to the dispossession of land and the injustices that have led directly to social disadvantage and to disadvantages in health and education outcomes. We also acknowledge the disadvantages that still hold Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people back when it comes to jobs and economic development. I know that each of my cabinet and caucus colleagues have been working hard to end this disadvantage, to further extend reconciliation in Queensland.

Last month I attended an LGAQ led council of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mayors meeting where we committed to a plan to improve housing outcomes for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. At that meeting I reported on Queensland's leading outcomes in delivery of state owned and managed Indigenous housing in the recent national *Report on government services*. I reported to the meeting of mayors that we are now committed to targets that will see delivery time frames for the construction of housing in remote communities improved by 16 weeks, from an average of 44 weeks to construct a home to 28. Our plan will also see local Indigenous employment increased across those remote communities. Under the current agreements we have already constructed over 863 new homes.

Safe, secure, affordable housing provides a vital foundation to social and economic progress. We have made much progress in that space to close the gap. I am determined to work with mayors and councils to close the gap on community infrastructure and to make a real difference in reducing overcrowding in particular, which currently runs at 24.7 per cent or around 734 households as at 30 April 2017. This work requires continued improvement in the way my department does business. We continue to make those changes.

In last night's budget the Turnbull government left Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing out in the cold. Scott Morrison, the federal Treasurer, had the opportunity to give the work that we are doing to improve housing outcomes long-term certainty. He squibbed it. What he has done is ensure a funding cliff with the National Partnership Agreement for Remote Indigenous Housing, which is worth $111 million to Queensland this year, unfunded beyond June next year. This means that when the wet comes this year work will stop in those remote communities and may never start again. That is real jobs gone.

Remote communities should have been given investment and certainty. Last night's budget delivered neither. The Minister for Indigenous Affairs has been revealed to have had no influence on the federal budget. Torres Strait Island mayor, Fred Gela, said when we met in Cairns—

> There is no cost savings in increasing overcrowding. Without NPRH investment continuing you can expect continuing and increasing challenges with health, educational attainment, employment outcomes, social emotional well-being and family safety. You can't build up remote economies without a strong pipeline of construction work.

Queensland punches above its weight when it comes to housing, despite the challenges of being a vast and decentralised state. Communities need certainty, mayors need certainty and, most of all, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders need certainty. We need to be able to plan the rollout of our ambitious remote housing agenda beyond this coming wet season. Denying social outcomes is one thing. Walking away from economic advancement completely is another thing all together. The Turnbull government is putting local jobs in remote communities at risk. They are putting local apprenticeships at risk.

Next Friday I will be meeting with state and territory housing ministers in Adelaide and I will be making sure that this issue of the abandonment of remote communities is front and centre on the agenda. Malcolm Turnbull needs to dispatch a minister to that meeting in Adelaide and he should ask that minister to pack both an explanation as to why remote communities have been abandoned and pack a chequebook to make it right.

Federal Budget

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) (2.39 pm): Last night's budget claimed to make the right choices for better days ahead. Better days ahead does not apparently extend to foster and kinship carers or our young people. Last year the Victorian Minister for Families and Children, Jenny Mikakos, and I called upon the Turnbull government to show some leadership and to consider a national approach to child and family support. Outdated rules on tax and Centrelink benefits are standing in the way of professionalised foster care, and changes are desperately needed to Medicare to ensure children in out-of-home care—our most vulnerable children—have their health needs assessed and met.

Where is the Turnbull government on these vital reforms? Nowhere it seems. Again last night the Turnbull government ignored foster carers nationwide, with none of these vital changes warranting a mention. Further, family tax benefit part B still does not extend to our hardworking foster and kinship carers. Our hardworking foster carers should not have to jump through hoops in order to be supported in their vital service to our community and to our most vulnerable kids. This does not strike me as 'fair and responsible' at all.

We are proud of our record of supporting foster carers. Yet what last night's budget confirmed is that the Turnbull government is dragging its feet on putting the needs of families and children first. As the Minister for Youth, I am deeply concerned about the impact of the budget on Queensland's young people. Not only can young people expect it to get harder to afford a house, but the degree that they will need to pay for it is even further out of reach. It is little wonder that the Australian Council of Social Service has described the budget as 'a war on young people'.

With university fees going up, a $2.8 billion cut from the university sector, HECS repayments starting at a lower threshold and school funding cuts, the future the Turnbull government paints for young people is a lifetime of debt, all while delivering corporate tax breaks for the big end of town. Where is the help for the unemployed with proper policies to create employment—for example, reinvesting in TAFE and apprenticeships?

I would like to be able to update the House on what the budget held in store for Queensland women—but I cannot. We are again disappointed that the federal government has not reinstated a women's budget statement, a longstanding feature of the annual budget from 1983 until 2013, when it was axed by the coalition. Either they do not have anything to offer women in the budget or they simply do not care.

This was not a budget meant to give Australian battlers brighter days. This was a budget for Turnbull and his fellow millionaires. It fails the fairness test and it hurts Queensland families.

Federal Budget, Education

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games) (2.42 pm): Every Australian child, no matter where they live, deserves the best possible education our country can afford. We welcome the Turnbull government's decision to walk away from the deep cuts to education. Let me be very clear: what was delivered for Queensland state schools in last night's budget was a far cry from sustaining the funding growth Queensland schools have benefited from between 2014 and 2017. These changes have permanently locked in a reduced funding growth path for all Queensland schools—$300 million less for all Queensland state schools over 10 years because they cut the education index from 4.7—

Mr Nicholls: No-one believes you.

Ms JONES: I take the interjection. Go and listen to the Catholic schools in your community and go and listen to the independent schools in your community. They understand that there has been a change to the education index in Australia.

Mr Dick: Shame.

Ms JONES: Shame, shame—too smart by half, Timmy.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. We will wait.

Ms JONES: To clarify for all members, there has been a change to the education index, which is currently at around 4.7. It will go down to 3.5 and then down to 3.1. That affects all schools in Queensland—state, Catholic and independent schools. Next Thursday I will join other education

ministers for a meeting of the ministerial council. I expect to hear the details of what conditions the federal government wants to impose on this funding. I give this commitment: we will fight to ensure that there is no additional impost on our teachers in our schools that detract us from our core business of teaching and learning in the classroom.

In great news for Queensland—I see the honourable Premier wearing maroon—the NRL double-header is happening this Saturday at Suncorp Stadium. Today I had the great privilege of joining with Queensland Greats including Mal Meninga, Kevvie Walters, Darius Boyd and Justin Hodges in promoting what we think will be a 45,000-strong crowd with the two—

Mr Dick: To see the Broncos win.

Ms JONES: To see the Broncos win. I take that interjection. Indeed, the Broncos will be taking on the Manly Sea Eagles and the Melbourne Storm will be playing the mighty Titans. I thought that if I wore both of these colours I would be covering the Titans and the Broncos.

COMMITTEES

Estimates Hearings

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (2.44 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That—

1. in accordance with standing order 177(5), the dates for each portfolio committee's estimates hearing and the dates by which each committee is to report to the House as set out in the order circulated in my name be agreed to; and

2. standing order 189(4) be suspended for the consideration in detail of the 2017 appropriation bills.

2017 ESTIMATES COMMITTEES—ORDER SETTING DATES FOR HEARING AND REPORTING

The dates for each portfolio committee's hearings and report dates are as follows—

Portfolio Committee	**Speaker**	**Date of hearings**	**Date of Report**
Finance and Administration Committee	Speaker	Tuesday 18 July 2017	Friday 4 August 2017

Portfolio Committee	**Ministers**	**Date of hearings**	**Date of Report**
Finance and Administration Committee	Premier and Minister for the Arts Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	Tuesday 18 July 2017	Friday 4 August 2017
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee	Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships	Wednesday 19 July 2017	Friday 4 August 2017
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee	Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services	Thursday 20 July 2017	Friday 4 August 2017

Agriculture and Environment Committee	Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef. Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Economic Development	Friday 21 July 2017	Friday 4 August 2017
Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee	Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and Commonwealth Games Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business	Tuesday 25 July 2017	Friday 4 August 2017
Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee	Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland	Wednesday 26 July 2017	Friday 4 August 2017
Public Works and Utilities Committee	Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Sport	Thursday 27 July 2017	Friday 4 August 2017

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

Mr WALKER (Mansfield—LNP) (2.45 pm): I give notice that I will move—

That this House condemns the Palaszczuk Labor government for cover-ups of systemic failures under its watch.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Logan. You will join the other members on the list if you are not careful.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Federal Budget

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.46 pm): The federal Treasurer has delivered a fair and responsible—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I might invite the Leader of the Opposition to start again. Would you like to start again, Leader of the Opposition?

Mr NICHOLLS: Thank you very much. I might need some extra time, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: We will see what happens. We will start again.

Mr NICHOLLS: The federal Treasurer has delivered a fair, responsible and pragmatic budget that is being welcomed by Queenslanders while exposing the rank hypocrisy and underperformance of a do-nothing Labor Palaszczuk government—an approach by Labor that has seen 30,000 jobs lost in the last year alone, an approach by Labor that has seen unemployment rates for young people in Townsville above 21 per cent, above 20 per cent in Cairns and Wide Bay, and above 40 per cent in the outback. What has the federal coalition done? It has stepped in with $24 million over four years to establish the Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships program.

On infrastructure, game-changing inland rail is ready to go—a nation-building project that will put Queensland and regional Queensland at the forefront of interstate trade and commerce. Queensland also stands to benefit, if it were not for a do-nothing Palaszczuk government, from the $10 billion rail fund, with projects such as the Brisbane Metro and the Nambour to Beerburrum rail duplication. They are two congestion busters that we will not hear them talk about—not a word. They are strangely quiet on that but are set to benefit from it.

What we have seen from this do-nothing government is talk, talk, talk and whinge, whinge, whinge with no, no, no action. They whinge about Cross River Rail. I simply say that, if the business case is so good, why are they still hiding it? Why are Queenslanders still in the dark?

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. I am being reasonably tolerant but I would urge you not to—

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier.

Mr NICHOLLS: All the federal government says is, 'Give us a business case that we can rely on.' Why should they do that? Let us look at the history. Child safety in Queensland: fail. South-East Queensland rail transport: fail. Youth detention in Queensland?

Opposition members: Fail!

Mr NICHOLLS: Fail. Water infrastructure?

Opposition members: Fail!

Mr NICHOLLS: Fail. What about crime in North Queensland?

Opposition members: Fail!

Mr NICHOLLS: Fail. What about the Health payroll system?

Opposition members: Fail!

Mr NICHOLLS: Fail. What about the toxic foam spill at Pinkenba?

Opposition members: Fail!

Mr NICHOLLS: Jobs: fail. This is a government that has failed Queenslanders. Today's *Financial Review* puts the lie to the claims made by the Treasurer and the Premier—$13.6 billion, second only to New South Wales. Labor is failing Queenslanders. This do-nothing government is costing jobs and infrastructure. The cost of living continues to increase. Labor has no answers.

Federal Budget

Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.50 pm): The member for Clayfield is clearly a man going places, and the sooner he goes the better. It was very interesting to hear him talk about the federal budget being a fair budget, because the only benchmark he has is that of his own budgets. We all know he thinks they were really fair even though 14,000 people got sacked in his first budget. His benchmark for success is his own budget. His speech today was sent up by royal carrier pigeon from his political masters in Canberra. He has delivered the lines faithfully. Maybe he should have read it before he delivered it.

Scott Morrison's second budget is a budget which is big on promises and short on funds. Budgets are a bit like the State of Origin, although unlike the State of Origin where Queensland usually wins we did not win this time. We came second to New South Wales and to some other states, quite frankly, which are not even normally in the running. The Palaszczuk government's frontbench—the front rowers here—have taken the ball up hard, making sure they are playing very strongly for Team Queensland. What happened to the people who claimed to be on Team Queensland? What happened to federal wingers George Christensen, Michelle Landry, Ken O'Dowd? By the way, they are all playing on the right wing, not the left wing. Those front wingers have not been able to stand up for Team Queensland. They should get kicked off the team. Just like the others, they were put on the bench—just like Trevor Evans, Jane Prentice and Peter Dutton.

They have all been put on the bench while Sydney, Melbourne and Perth all scored money for their railway lines. What did we get for the Cross River Rail? We got nothing. The member for Clayfield talks about a business case for Cross River Rail. He has admitted that he had no business case for 1 William Street and that it was done on the back of an envelope. He has no right to come in here and

talk about business cases at any stage. In Rugby League when you score a try, that is the goal but you also need to convert. The federal government has a very poor track record when it comes to conversions. If we look at the NAIF, a $5 billion fund, how many money has gone out the door? Nothing. They cannot convert an idea into an actual proposition for funding which delivers actual jobs.

Last night's budget was a thinly veiled effort by the Turnbull government to try to bury the ghosts of Joe Hockey and Tony Abbott. To say that this budget was 'Labor-lite' I think is very incorrect, because there is nothing Labor about maintaining cuts to health. There is nothing Labor about putting $40 million less into skilling this year than last year. There is nothing Labor about not making tough decisions on things like tax reform. That is not the Labor way. This is certainly not a 'Labor-lite' budget; it is a political exercise. It is smoke and mirrors. Over the coming days we will continue to expose Scott Morrison for the budget that he has handed down.

Federal Budget, Infrastructure

Mrs FRECKLINGTON (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.53 pm): The federal government has to do the heavy lifting in infrastructure because this incompetent Labor government—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I take that interjection. Those opposite have done nothing for infrastructure—I outlined that very clearly yesterday in this House—because they have an incompetent infrastructure minister. Nothing sums up the do-nothing approach of this Palaszczuk Labor government better than its mishandling of Cross River Rail. The message from the federal Treasurer last night was clear: this is an unprecedented infrastructure budget, with $75 billion worth of infrastructure spending.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr Nicholls: Be a bit more furious. That will work for you!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Thank you, Leader of the Opposition. Thank you, Premier.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I take that interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. It takes more than being furious to get something done on infrastructure. What we saw from the federal Treasurer last night is an infrastructure budget: $75 billion with over $8.4 billion for inland rail. It is a nation-building project that will put Queensland front and centre for decades to come. There is $10 billion on the table for other rail projects, and yet all this state government needs to do is put together a business case that actually stacks up.

Instead of putting together a robust and defensible business case, the Premier and her incompetent infrastructure minister have put together a weak business case for Cross River Rail. Those are not my words. A 'weak business case' are the words of independent economist Gene Tunny. Today independent economist Gene Tunny went on to say 'the business case for Cross River Rail has never been compelling'. He further said 'Cross River Rail appears to be such a marginal project'. His plea to this do-nothing government is to release the secret business case.

I know the Treasurer himself likes to quote Gene Tunny. Gene Tunny then went on to say that keeping the business case secret is—

> ... against the best interests of the Government itself and the wider community. Public scrutiny of a draft business case would have helped strengthen the final business case.

If Labor want to get something done in this term of government, then release the business case for Cross River Rail. Queenslanders, the federal government and independent economists do not trust this government, which is completely addicted to secrecy and cover-ups.

Federal Budget, Cross River Rail

Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (2.56 pm): As we have heard this morning, the federal government had an opportunity last night to demonstrate their commitment to this state and they failed all round, particularly when it came to funding the No. 1 infrastructure priority for this state, Cross River Rail. We have been working in good faith with the federal government for a long time now to demonstrate our commitment to this project and to demonstrate the value of this project.

On 26 June last year we gave them the business case. Let me detail to you the elements of that business case. There are over 2,000 pages of detailed planning and an independent review of the work by companies like Jacobs, KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers. That rigorous business case detailed

the benefits that this project will deliver to the people of South-East Queensland and to our economy right across the state. It will double rail capacity across the Brisbane River and through the CBD from the south, supporting growth in the region; support an additional 65,000 jobs to be located within new Cross River Rail station precincts; reduce the number of people travelling to the CBD by 18,000 vehicles per day by 2036; and reduce travel time significantly for people wanting to get home to their families.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms TRAD: The Turnbull government has had this business case for more than a year. Let us be clear: the calls from those opposite around the benefits of the business case are not to be believed. The carping from the member for Nanango is just hypocritical in the extreme. There was not one business case or feasibility study for 1 William Street—nothing. $2.4 billion over its life has been lost from Queensland taxpayers. Where was the business case for the Bus and Train Tunnel? There was nothing. They spent time in office and they did nothing to duplicate the heavy rail line across the Brisbane River that our region desperately needs.

Let us be clear. This is not about the business case, because last night we saw the Turnbull government fund in Western Australia the Perth Metronet rail to the tune of $800 million with no business case. What is this all about? I will tell the House what this is about. Yes, the federal government is doing heavy lifting. Turnbull and Scott Morrison are doing heavy lifting, but it is because the Leader of the Opposition is so hopeless that they need a hand from their Canberra mates and they do not want to be seen to delivering to Queensland.

Federal Budget

Mr EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (3.00 pm): Better days are ahead of us thanks to the coalition budget.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members.

Mr EMERSON: As I said, better days are ahead of us thanks to the coalition budget, and even state Labor agrees. A senior Labor figure said today of the budget, and I quote, 'We see opportunities for Queensland.' That is how he described the federal budget. Who is that senior Labor figure who recognised the budget for having opportunities for Queensland? It is the state Treasurer, Curtis Pitt. Curtis Pitt recognised it, and this is what he told the PwC budget breakfast this morning when talking about the budget. When describing the budget, he said, and I quote, 'We see opportunities for Queensland.' That is what he told the PwC breakfast. The Treasurer has now endorsed the budget. He has endorsed it, because even the Queensland Labor Treasurer acknowledges that there are opportunities for Queensland in this budget. That is what he told the PwC.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the House, I do not need your assistance.

Mr EMERSON: Obviously, even the Treasurer acknowledges that there are better days ahead because of the federal budget. He has acknowledged it today, but I am concerned. I have fears because we think this do-nothing Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, and her Labor government will squander those opportunities because they have done that every time before. It is great that Treasurer Curtis Pitt acknowledges the opportunities in this federal budget, but what do those people out there think about Labor? Do those kids who cannot find a job or those parents and families who are struggling and cannot find work believe that this government will do the right thing by Queensland? Labor will waste the opportunities identified by the state Treasurer. They will fail Queensland again and again and again.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr EMERSON: We hear the state Treasurer bleating away but we know what he told the PwC breakfast this morning—'There are opportunities in the federal budget.' Labor has now acknowledged it. Do members remember last year's state budget? The Treasurer had his own ALP fundraiser, but what did his host say? The Treasurer was told, 'This is a backward step.' His own host told him that his own state budget was a backward step, and now we have seen 'Captain Risky' come out and acknowledge that the federal budget is one of opportunity for Queensland.

(Time expired)

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will finish at 4.03 pm.

Federal Budget, Cross River Rail

Mr NICHOLLS (3.03 pm): My first question is to the Premier. I refer to independent economist Gene Tunny's comments about Cross River Rail. He said, 'Great maps and brochures, but weak business case.' If the Cross River Rail business case stacks up, why will the Premier not release it?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question because I am more than happy to speak about Cross River Rail in this House any day. Let me get a few things on the record. The first thing is that the federal government have the business case and they have had it since June last year. I was surprised, like many other people, to hear Malcolm Turnbull, the Prime Minister, say just before the budget was handed down, 'We don't have the full complete business case.' After hearing that, I said to my director-general, 'Please ring your counterpart and check that they have everything they need.' Yes, it came back to us from the department that they have everything they need to assess Cross River Rail. Their own Prime Minister did not know that the full business case had been submitted for this infrastructure project.

While I am on my feet talking about the federal budget, let me make it very clear that we needed to see some dollars attached to the Cross River Rail in last night's budget, but what did we see? Nothing. Zero. Absolutely zero. This shows very clearly that those opposite do not even want to acknowledge that Cross River Rail is the No. 1 infrastructure project for this state and the No. 1 infrastructure project for Australia. Over 3,000 jobs could be generated as a start and there would also be flow-on jobs from it. This is going to transform the city in which we live here in the south-east. It will mean faster commuting times. It will also mean development opportunities around those stations which will bring with it added investment and added jobs.

To say that I am disappointed is an understatement. On this side of the House, we stand up for Queensland because we are Queenslanders. I do not know what they do on that side of the fence. They are asleep. We do not hear a word from them. It is about time they grew a backbone and started standing up for this state because we see nothing from them. On this side, we work for Queensland. On that side, they just whinge and whine.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They are a bunch of whingers.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I think you are debating the question and that is not on. I think you have answered the question.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, let me make it very clear: the federal government have everything they need. As the Deputy Premier said, they are funding money in Perth without a business case. This is the contradiction of it. We will continue to fight for this state, unlike those opposite, and we will stand up for Queensland and get our fair share.

Mr SPEAKER: Can I just indicate that for questions in relation to the federal budget I will allow a reasonable degree of latitude. I heard the member for Burleigh say that the answer was not relevant. I will not be requiring a very narrow interpretation, but I do not want members to be arguing or debating the point.

Federal Budget, Cross River Rail

Mr NICHOLLS: My second question without notice is to the Premier. I refer again to independent economist Gene Tunny's statement that the Cross River Rail business case is 'weak'. Given that $10 billion is waiting, and given the Premier's government refuses to release the Cross River Rail business case, what more than the six secret taxes is it hiding?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question, and let me continue. Yes, we heard the federal government announce $10 billion last night. It is $10 billion over 10 years for about six or seven projects across Australia, which is barely anything. From memory, Treasurer, $600 million would be made available—

Mr Pitt: Yes, in two years in the forward estimates.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—in two years in the forward estimates for all of those projects across the nation to fight for. That is simply and utterly unfair. My question to those opposite today is this: why won't they back this project? Why won't they back Queensland's No. 1 infrastructure project?

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I do not want you debating it. Please do not debate it.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I said very clearly that the business case has been forwarded to Canberra—unlike those opposite. Do members remember the BaT tunnel? When those opposite were in government, was there a business case for the BaT tunnel? No. When they had the idea of building 1 William Street for themselves, was there a business case? There was no business case.

Ms Trad: Was there consultation with Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take that interjection. There was no consultation at all. It is very disappointing. On this side of the House we will stand up for Queensland. We will fight for Queensland. We will work for Queensland. It has gone to Canberra.

North Queensland, Infrastructure

Mr HARPER: My question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier outline our government's plans for developing infrastructure in North Queensland and the assistance being provided by the federal government to deliver those projects?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Thuringowa for that question.

Ms Jones interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take the Minister for Education's interjection as well. We know that, once again, the federal government has turned its back on Queensland—not just the south-east—when it comes to Cross River Rail. I am very glad I have been asked two questions on that today; thank you for those dixers. When it comes to the north of our state, once again the federal government has turned its back. While I am on my feet can I say that I am very pleased to see that MMG has decided to invest and make their FIFO headquarters in Townsville, creating 400 jobs in Townsville. I also welcome Townsville Enterprise tonight in parliament. I know that a lot of members will be meeting with members of the Townsville business community. Whilst I am on my feet I might also say that our next Premier's Business Advisory Council meeting is going to be held in Townsville as well because my government listens to the regions. We understand how important it is for this state.

It is my government that is working for the people of Queensland. We got underway projects like the $55 million upgrade of berth 4 of Townsville port and the $4.25 million Abbot Point material offloading facility upgrade, creating jobs around Townsville. We are also developing a business case to build a hydro-electric power station at the Burdekin Falls Dam. Powering the north—that is what I want to do. I want to make sure that we have a renewable future for this state and a renewable future for Townsville. We are also putting in money for that great Townsville stadium. It is good to see that over 80 per cent of local contractors are going to be up there building that Townsville stadium—local jobs first.

It actually shocked me when the Prime Minister wanted to have a meeting about Northern Australia. I wrote back and said, 'I would love to have that meeting in Queensland.' I have had some correspondence back about where that meeting might be held. I have a map of Australia here for those opposite. I thought they might have that meeting in Cairns perhaps.

Mr SPEAKER: You do not need a prop, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Northern Australia? No. Townsville perhaps? No. Perhaps Darwin? Maybe Rockhampton—I suggested Rockhampton. Where are we having the meeting? Where do honourable members think we are having the meeting with the Prime Minister on Northern Australia? Hobart! We are having the meeting in Hobart.

Mr SPEAKER: Do you want to table it?

Ms PALASZCZUK: We can turn it upside down.

Mr SPEAKER: Would you like to table that?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will table it. In all honesty, how embarrassing is it to have a meeting on Northern Australia in Tasmania?

(Time expired)

Cross River Rail

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to independent economist Gene Tunny's statement that Labor's refusal to release—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Thank you, members. We have an understanding that the member must be able to ask their question in silence. Will you repeat the question, please?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will. My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to independent economist Gene Tunny's statement that Labor's refusal to release the Cross River Rail business case is actually against the best interests of the government itself and the wider community. I ask the Premier: the access to federal funding for Cross River Rail is dependent on the business case that stacks up, so why has it not been released for public scrutiny?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said—and this question is very repetitive—I am quite happy to keep talking about Cross River Rail. I am more than happy to talk about it because we were robbed last night; Queensland was robbed. We failed to get our fair share from the federal government. What did those opposite do? What did the LNP do? Nothing, fail! We have forwarded the business case to the federal government. We have contacted them. They have everything they need to assess it, but unfortunately—

Mr Nicholls: Why won't you release it? If it is so good, release it.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Oh my goodness. Pick up the phone and whinge to Malcolm Turnbull; do not whinge to me. Pick up the phone and whinge to Malcolm Turnbull. Oh my goodness!

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Honestly! No wonder Lawrence looked very happy when he was here before.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. I think the Premier has answered the question. We will move on.

Federal Budget, Queensland Film Industry

Mr POWER: My question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier advise the impact of last night's federal budget on our government's plan to secure more international blockbusters to film in Queensland using Queensland crew?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Logan for that very important question for Queensland. Once again, did we see anything in relation to attracting more international films to our great state? No. We know that it was very important for the federal government to have a tax incentive raised from 16.5 per cent, which would actually benefit a permanent film industry located here on the Gold Coast. Unfortunately, once again, we did not see anything from the federal government in relation to their budget.

We know that Scott Morrison likes the odd movie or two because he was very happy to take credit for *Aquaman* when my government, working with Screen Queensland, worked so hard to get the film here. Instead the film studios and producers will have to continue to make the trek to federal Treasury every time they want to have a movie filmed here in Queensland or Australia. I am glad that they agreed to increase the offset for *Aquaman* and *Thor,* but Canberra needs to make this permanent. If we are going to have permanent jobs in this state it must be made permanent.

My government's commitment to establishing Queensland as a screen hub is fast being realised. Just last week *Aquaman*, the latest international blockbuster to come to Queensland, began filming at the Gold Coast Village Roadshow studios. This Warner Bros. production is creating more than 600 local jobs and injecting more than $100 million into the Queensland economy, and that is good news for Queensland. It is the latest in our back-to-back pipeline of international and domestic productions to come to Queensland including *Thor, Pacific Rim 2, The Shallows, Jungle*, *Kong: Skull Island* and the soon-to-be-released *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales*.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Members opposite are acting like renegade pirates at the moment. I want to clarify that my government has invested, through Screen Queensland, an extra $30 million over four years to attract those blockbusters. Coming up at the end of this month we will have the opening of the fantastic Marvel exhibition at GOMA helping to celebrate 10 years. I know that is going to be a great blockbuster for Queensland. I hope that everybody in the south-east gets behind that. In fact, ticket sales are going incredibly well. Once again, we will create a permanent industry and continue to attract those blockbuster movies to our great state.

Cross River Rail

Mr EMERSON: My question is to the Premier. How can the Premier claim that Cross River Rail is shovel-ready when the state government's own Coordinator-General has not provided final approval for the project?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have answered this question before. Let me make it very clear: we put our commitment on the table. We allocated $850 million in our last budget and we do not have any matching funds from the federal government. That is a disgrace. It is shameful to think that the federal government is turning its back on the No. 1 infrastructure project in this state. We will continue to fight for this because it means jobs for Queenslanders. There is nothing to—

Mr EMERSON: I rise to a point of order. The question was clearly about the Coordinator-General's approval or lack thereof. It has not been approved; that is what the question was about. The Premier is not addressing that question.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the Premier. Do you have anything further you would like to add?

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is still shovel-ready. It is ready to go. It is ready for the jobs they will create. They are turning their back on jobs.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Whilst the members may not like the answer the Premier is providing, I am not going to have an argument. I call the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is very clear that they are against job-creating projects in this state.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier. I do not want a debate with the opposition.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: What is their alternative to Cross River Rail? They had absolutely nothing. In fact, the member opposite is the transport minister who stood there with his former premier and announced a BaT tunnel—

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier; I think you have answered the question. I call the member for Capalaba.

Federal Budget

Mr BROWN: My question is of the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier inform the House of Queensland's share of infrastructure funding in last night's federal budget and whether the Palaszczuk government will continue to fight for a better deal?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Capalaba for the question. I note that the member for Capalaba believes in public transport. I have caught public transport with the member for Capalaba before, but by the time we see a federal Tory government invest infrastructure money in Queensland his newborn son might be a grandfather. Let us be clear: last night's budget was extremely disappointing—

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Coomera, I find that you are trying to debate the issue with the Deputy Premier to distract the Deputy Premier. You are warned under standing order 253A. I call the Deputy Premier.

Ms TRAD: To say that Queensland was dudded last night in terms of new infrastructure dollars for our state would be a gross understatement. This is a dud budget from a Sydney-centric government that simply does not get Queensland. In fact, they think they should talk about Queensland when they are in Hobart. That is where they should convene Northern Australia meetings which deal with infrastructure for Northern Queensland.

Despite the Liberal National Party in Queensland holding 21 out of the 30 federal seats in this state, how many projects did Queensland get up in the federal budget? Not many, because in New South Wales there is $5.3 billion for a new airport; $2.9 billion for a Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan; billions for WestConnex and Sydney Metro; millions more for NorthConnex, Parramatta Light Rail, the New England Highway, the Princess Highway and more. In Victoria there are billions as well for projects like Geelong rail, North East rail, Tullamarine Freeway widening, the Great Ocean Road and the Monash Freeway. In Western Australia, as I said, there is $800 million for MetroNet without a business case plus millions for NorthLink, the Kwinana Freeway, the Great Northern Highway and more.

Queensland has got crumbs from Malcolm Turnbull and Scott Morrison; let's be clear about that. As the Minister for Main Roads has detailed, even the money for the Bruce Highway is savings within the current program. It is not new money at all. It is no wonder that Infrastructure Partnerships Australia said—

This budget cuts Federal infrastructure funding by $7.4 billion over the forward estimates and sees infrastructure funding at its lowest level in more than 10 years.

Logan Mayor Luke Smith said—

Part of our people-movement strategy across south-east Queensland demanded that Cross River Rail be funded. That's a big disappointment.

What did failed LNP candidate Nick Behrens say? He said that Queensland has been 'short-changed in recent years' when it comes to federal infrastructure funding. They did not quote him this morning, did they, Mr Speaker? They like quoting Gene Tunny, who believes that we should be putting road pricing on all of our roads. I wonder if they will come into this parliament and talk about road pricing by Gene Tunny.

(Time expired)

European Train Control System 2

Mr POWELL: My question without notice is to the Premier. Rail advocate Robert Dow said last night, 'The state government's position is that all other rail projects are on hold until Cross River Rail, its No. 1 priority, is funded by the federal government. Tonight we call on the state government to abandon this position as it is not correct or logical,' and he called on the government to immediately implement the European Train Control System 2 or better. Can the Premier guarantee to the House that the European Train Control System 2 will be delivered on time and on budget, given Labor's history of rail fails?

Ms PALASZCZUK: My understanding is that the European Train Control System is on track.

An opposition member: On track?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes. It is currently meeting the time frames that it needs to meet. You raised a number of issues and you raised Cross River Rail again. Let me make it clear that Cross River Rail is not just Queensland's No. 1 infrastructure project; it is Australia's No. 1 infrastructure project. In fact, Infrastructure Australia released the Australian Infrastructure Plan and the updated Infrastructure Priority List on 17 February 2016, and the Cross River Rail project was listed as a high priority initiative. There you have it; the facts are clear. Our No. 1 is Infrastructure Australia's No. 1.

Whilst I am on my feet, we have heard those opposite talk about Gene Tunny. Gene Tunny also had something to say about the BaT tunnel, and I think the member for Indooroopilly might be interested in this. He said—

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Bus and Train (BaT) Tunnel from Dutton Park to Spring Hill is out for comment, and I'm rather unimpressed by the benefit-cost ratio, estimated by Deloitte at 1.16. That is, benefits are estimated to be only 16% higher than costs over the life of the project. That's pretty concerning for a $5 billion project that is likely to be subject to the same risks of cost blowouts and demand shortfalls as other mega-projects.

There was no business case and he said that he was 'rather unimpressed'.

Ms Trad: What about 1 William Street!

Ms PALASZCZUK: We all know who thought of that one, don't we? I take the Deputy Premier's interjection. It was the Leader of the Opposition who had the grand plan to sell off government buildings in the CBD. There was a secret plan and a fire sale that lost us hundreds of millions in taxpayers' money. They forgot about that and built their 1 William Street. Was there a business case? There was no business case.

Mr SPEAKER: I think the Premier has answered the question.

Ms Trad: And your half-price trains from India!

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take the Deputy Premier's interjection. Then we had the NGR contract, and how is that going? That was signed off by those opposite—

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I think you have answered the question.

Federal Budget

Mrs LAUGA: My question is of the Treasurer. I refer to last night's federal budget and ask: will the Treasurer please advise if the budget met Queensland's urgent federal funding needs?

Mr PITT: I thank the member for Keppel for her question. I want to take this opportunity in the House to congratulate her as an expecting mum. I think it is very exciting and we all look forward with great interest to seeing your progress.

As we know, last night's federal budget has not met our expectations, particularly when you start looking at the time frames concerned. The time frames concerned are the most concerning thing here. There was a lot of talk about what money might be in the budget—what we might be able to apply for,

thrown in amongst everyone else—when we have ready-made business cases for projects like Cross River Rail. The government does not allocate it, and we know it has form in not spending it. We would not want to die waiting for these funds. This is a case of the federal government saying one thing and doing another.

Queenslanders can spot from a mile away someone who is all talk. They picked up the member for Indooroopilly pretty early during the last term of government. That was very easy. Then they started picking off the former cabinet, realising that they were all talk and no action—putting all their eggs in the one basket of privatisation.

Michael Pascoe, a very respected economist, has come out and talked about the big infrastructure con job that has been perpetrated on the people of Australia. Nowhere is that con job in effect more than in Queensland. We have seen some great examples. Cross River Rail is the most prevalent. There is a $10 billion allocation under a fund. There is $600 million over two years—2019-20 and 2020-21. We are then expected to believe that $9.4 billion will magically appear in the out years. This is a serious point. You cannot just say something in the budget speech and expect that people will believe it is actually in the budget. We have seen this from those opposite, under former treasurer Tim Nicholls. In one particular budget he completely—deliberately—forgot to fund pensioners in terms of electricity concessions and then pretended it was just an oversight. We know that they have form in saying one thing and doing another. We know that they have form in making deliberate decisions.

When you look at the last four federal budgets you realise that every year they have said, 'We are going to get back into surplus in the fourth year.' How many times in the last four budgets have they been in surplus? None. We on this side of the House are very responsible economic and fiscal managers. We delivered a surplus in the first budget, we delivered a surplus in the second budget and we have forecast to deliver surpluses across the forward estimates. When we say we will deliver it, we deliver it. We cannot say the same for the Tories at the federal level or the state level. Quite frankly, you cannot believe a word they say. That goes to their line of questioning today. They have their riding instructions from Canberra and they have failed miserably.

(Time expired)

Emergency and Corrective Services, Payroll System

Mrs SMITH: My question is to the Premier. I table part of a leaked PwC report into the new payroll system for Queensland fireys, ambos and corrective services.

Tabled paper: Report by PricewaterhouseCoopers for the Department of Science Information Technology and Innovation, HRIS Program, Program Health Check, March 2017 [676].

PwC said this project is burning 700,000 taxpayer dollars every month while waiting for the Palaszczuk government to make a decision. Is this not more proof the Palaszczuk government is burning taxpayers' dollars with its senseless waste?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am more than happy to have a look at the document that has been tabled. This issue was canvassed in the parliament last time. My understanding from the minister is that this was a draft document. I have been assured—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, the Premier's answer is relevant.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have been assured that the project is on schedule and that it will be gradually rolled out. Once again, this is about quality assurance. This is what we do in government. We make sure that if we are rolling out a new system we take our time to get it right. We started off with a very small component. I understand there is another section to go this month.

My understanding is that those on the other side commissioned this project initially and spent $18.5 million. Those opposite are part of this project. They started this project.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, no. You put money into this project, just as we have put money into the project. That is why we do the quality assurance. We check it and we make sure that everything is being rolled out correctly. To come in here and start blowing up an issue is unfair. It is wrong. It is not based on evidence. It is misleading. I am advised that everything is running on track in relation to this project.

Federal Budget, Health Services

Ms BOYD: My question is of the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister please advise the House how the Queensland Health system fared in last night's federal budget?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Pine Rivers for her work in supporting our government's attempt to make sure Queensland gets its fair share when it comes to proper funding for our health system in Queensland. The verdict on the federal government is in: Labor-lite and Queensland invisible. New South Wales may not be able to win a State of Origin series, but Scott Morrison's home state was the absolute tearaway winner in last night's disappointing budget. What did New South Wales get? It got $5.8 billion for a second airport in Sydney, $8.2 billion for an inland rail that will exhaust 80 per cent of its track plodding between rural towns in New South Wales; and $12.5 million for a medical school—that is right—on the central coast of New South Wales. After everything the community of the Sunshine Coast has done to secure the additional 15 places to make that medical school a reality, there was not one zack for the Sunshine Coast medical school.

This smacks of a national Treasurer who has no interest in our state. As we heard from the Deputy Premier yesterday, this year he has not come to Queensland once but he has gone to Germany twice. Here is a phrase he might like to practise when he is next flying out of Berlin: 'Ich bin ein Queenslander'. Perhaps it is unsurprising that he has ignored Queensland, because he does not know we exist. What did we get for Cross River Rail? Nothing. What did we get for health infrastructure? Nothing. What did we get to restore cuts to dental health funding? Nothing. What did we get to restore the funding hacked out of aged care? Nothing. There was nothing to revive the National Health Reform Agreement and the $10 billion that has gone from Queensland. There was nothing for Mareeba Hospital. They have deliberately taken $2.1 million away from that community.

Where is the Leader of the Opposition? There is more to being a champion for rural and regional Queensland than putting on the stubbies and thongs and going on a pub crawl. This is his chance to stand up for Queensland, yet he dazzles the parliament with his extraordinary capacity to disappoint. Queensland gets nothing and he says nothing. Queensland misses out and the Leader of the Opposition goes missing.

From a health perspective, this is a miserable and anaemic budget that does nothing to address the growth in demand. Apparently Scott Morrison feels that Queensland should be satisfied with a few crumbs from the Commonwealth's table. It is like someone robbing your house and giving you back your toaster.

Emergency and Corrective Services, Payroll System

Mr WALKER: My question is to the Premier. Given the scathing commentary in the PwC report tabled earlier—a report signed by partner Sean Rooney—and given Labor's appalling record on delivering IT payroll projects, why should Queenslanders believe the Premier that this project will not fester into another colossal failure like Labor's Health payroll, which saw over a billion dollars needlessly wasted?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said, this was a project started under the former Newman-Nicholls government, when Tim Nicholls was the treasurer. Some $18.5 million was put into it.

Mr Dick: Already gone.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right: it is already gone. They started it. As I said, we are doing the quality assurance that is needed in relation to rolling out these issues. This HR issue involves people in QFES, QCS and the Ambulance Service. When the Leader of the Opposition was the former treasurer, what did those opposite do?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition has sat through the entirety of the Premier answering a question from a member on his side reading out from a document quite loudly. That is so rude, Mr Speaker, and I ask that you give direction to the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition, as you know, gets very great latitude because of his position, but I think that is particularly disorderly conduct.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the House. I would urge all members to allow the person to answer the question.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I might just finish by saying that—

Mr Seeney: Before you were rudely interrupted!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: No. Thank you, member for Callide. I do not need your assistance.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That just says it all, doesn't it?

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock one moment. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Leader of the Opposition and member for Callide, I would urge you not to persist or your names will go on the list of warnings.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Not long to go now, Jeff. Not long to go now. How many months?

Mr Seeney interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Not long to go. Bye-bye, Jeff.

Mr SPEAKER: Members!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Bye-bye, Lawrence.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: All right; we will wait.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Where are the tissues?

Mr SPEAKER: We will wait. Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Bye-bye, Verity in Broadwater.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Your preselections, not mine. Your preselections.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, do you have anything further to add?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I do, Mr Speaker. When those opposite commissioned this they wanted to outsource it. They wanted to wash their hands of it and outsource it, but what this minister did was brought it back into government to ensure that it was properly managed inside, and that is what we are doing. Consistent with the findings of the PwC report, the department has appointed an experienced program director with a proven track record for delivery to restructure the program. The program governance structures have also been revised and new terms of reference drafted. It is expected that a full implementation component over the four agencies will be completed by the end of 2018. One agency, the Inspector-General Emergency Management, was completed in November.

Mr Ryan: No problem.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No problem; I take that interjection. There were no problems at all. The next one is due, as I said, by the end of this month and the remaining implementations are scheduled for completion by the end of 2018. Those opposite are once again trying to raise alarm bells when there are none to be raised. They are talking down the work of public servants who are doing the right thing to ensure that it is properly managed and that it rolls out on budget and on time. We know what those opposite think about the Public Service, and now they want a flexible Public Service and the Public Service knows what that means. It clearly shows that the people of Queensland cannot trust the man who is sitting over there as Leader of the Opposition. There is no trust at all when it comes to listening to them given the way they treat the Public Service in this state.

Federal Budget, Tourism

Mr CRAWFORD: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Tourism. Will the minister outline to the House how the Turnbull government's budget will impact tourism growth?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for his question. I have had the privilege of being in the member for Barron River's electorate a number of times since I have been the Minister for Tourism and he understands how important tourism jobs are to regions such as Cairns. Very disappointingly, in the budget we saw a $35 million cut to the Tourism Australia budget. At a time when we know that tourism is growing and that it is creating jobs across Queensland, we have seen our federal government—a department overseen by a federal Liberal member from Queensland—cut the Tourism Australia budget by $35 million. Well, that shut them up! Now we have finally got some quiet from over there because not even those opposite can defend this bad boy. They are right to sit there silently,

because even the LNP in Queensland knows that this is a backward move for our state. Under the LNP government in Queensland we saw Tourism and Events Queensland having to go back cap in hand to the member for Clayfield every year begging for its money, saying, 'Please fund us next year, Mr Treasurer.' When we came into government those opposite had ripped more than $180 million out of the forward estimates to fund Tourism and Events Queensland. They ripped that money out and there was no money there. The first thing our Treasurer, Curtis Pitt, did—given he comes from Cairns and recognises how important the tourism industry is—was he came to the table and delivered that funding security for regional tourism organisations and for Tourism and Events Queensland each and every year of our government.

The member for Mansfield talked about scathing criticism. Here is some scathing criticism from the Tourism & Transport Forum Australia—

The Turnbull Government has jeopardised the growth of Australia's visitor economy and put at risk the ability of the tourism sector to become one of the nation's largest employment sectors by treating the sector as a cash cow.

That is what industry is saying. Everyone knows QTIC and Daniel Gschwind. I will be talking with the shadow minister over the next week and I call on the shadow minister to actually say something positive about the tourism industry. He continues talking it down up and down Queensland. Stand up for Queensland, mate! Now is your time to shine, member for Beaudesert. Now is the time to shine, buddy! Now is your time to shine. You stand up for the Queensland tourism industry and call on your federal government not to cut $35 million.

Mr SPEAKER: I would urge the minister to make her comments through the chair please.

Ms JONES: I call on the member for Beaudesert to finally stand up for the tourism industry in Queensland. Stop going around talking down our industry. Stop going across Queensland and talking down our industry. It is about time he stood up to his federal colleagues and called on them to walk away from this. Stand with industry for once!

Southport Spit, Proposed Development

Mr DICKSON: My question without notice is directed to the Premier. Given that polling this week has revealed that 70 per cent of people on the Gold Coast reject the Chinese based ASF proposal for five high-rise towers and a casino on the Southport Spit, will the Premier immediately put a stop to this development and adopt the One Nation policy of supporting only development on this public land that complies with the city plan?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Buderim very much for the question. The issue of the development on The Spit at the Gold Coast has been out for community consultation. That community consultation period has now closed and the Minister for State Development will be looking very closely at the responses to that proposal. As I have said publicly, there are also large tracts of land there that I believe should be preserved forevermore as parkland for not just the people of the Gold Coast but also for visitors who love going down to the end of The Spit area. I have been down there myself and used to go down there as a young child with my family as well. In relation to your question, we are going through the due process. There is a proposal. The council will have its views as well, and we will listen to what it has to say. Fundamentally, I have made it very clear I will listen to what the community has to say in relation to this project. I look forward to having discussions with the Minister for State Development and my cabinet colleagues when that proposal is submitted to us for due consideration.

National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform

Ms DONALDSON: My question without notice is directed to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills. Will the minister please update the House about any progress on a new national partnership on skills reform and what this means for training in Queensland?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Bundaberg for her question. I know that she understands the importance of properly funding training in this state, as does every other member on this side of the House.

For almost two years now, state and territory ministers have been asking the Commonwealth, 'What is going to happen post 30 June 2017 with the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform? Will there be a new agreement?' When we got to the point that it was too late to renegotiate we wanted a commitment for at least an extension of that agreement. Last night, we discovered that there was no replacement of the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform. However, we discovered that the announcement made recently by Malcolm Turnbull on section 457 visas in relation to a Skilling Australia

Fund is our new national partnership agreement. When it comes to training we welcome any funding, but this is not adequate funding. The overall funding for training in Australia is going down, not up. This funding is not replacing all of the funding and programs that have been slashed over the past four years by that government.

But here is the kicker. Interestingly, the new levy is for businesses when they bring in an overseas worker. I have no objection to that and I have no objection to making sure that Australian workers are getting Australian jobs. That is what we want, but the way this works is that our new national partnership agreement on skilling Australian workers is wholly contingent on how many foreign workers we can get into this country. The revenue will be drawn from a levy, which will be paid by businesses employing foreign workers on certain skilled visas. It is wholly contingent on how many foreign workers we can get. For Australian workers to get the jobs over overseas workers, we have to have the skills. To get the skills we need the training dollars, but we need to get as many foreign workers here as we can to fund that. How ridiculous!

Will we hear anything different from the Leader of the Opposition? I doubt it, because in the 2012-13 budget, as treasurer, the Leader of the Opposition said that they 'will ensure our visa allocation is not wasted but used to increase the skilled workforce available for Queensland business'. That was in the budget of those opposite—to increase the skilled workforce by not wasting their visa allocation for foreign workers coming in. We need adequate funding for training in this state and the Commonwealth has to come to the party. It is not good enough to drop a national partnership agreement four weeks before it is due to expire.

Emergency and Corrective Services, Payroll System

Mr HART: My question without notice is to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. I refer to the leaked report into Labor's latest failed IT payroll upgrade and ask: when was the minister told that the payroll IT upgrade was well behind schedule and over budget on his watch? Why did the minister not do anything except flick it to the minister for IT?

Mr RYAN: I appreciate the opportunity to provide some information to the House on this matter. I was never told that this matter was behind schedule or over budget, because it is not. The advice that I have received from the Queensland Corrective Services commissioner is that the new payroll system for Queensland Corrective Services is on time and on budget. The Queensland Corrective Services commissioner also told me about a report that they received from PwC only a month ago which gave the project three green ticks, saying that it is on track, on progress and on budget.

The members opposite have to be very careful about raising this issue, because their grubby fingers are over this project.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Those words are unparliamentary. Please withdraw. Whilst I am speaking, perhaps the member for Mount Ommaney might like to withdraw also if she wants to continue with her conversations from her chair.

Mr RYAN: Mr Speaker, I withdraw. The PwC report from December 2016 that the member referred to is a historical report that covers the project since its inception. It started under the term of the members opposite in 2012. They were so incompetent in their management of this project that, right up until the 2015 election, they spent millions and millions of dollars and could not even get a contract signed in respect of it. What did they want to do with the project? They wanted to outsource it. They wanted to give it to the private sector. The PwC report is a historical report of their incompetence and their waste of money. When we came to government, we brought it back. What did we get from PwC when it looked at the QCS payroll transition? Seven green ticks.

Mrs Smith interjected.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Mount Ommaney, I find that you are trying to speak over the top of the minister while he is answering the question. I find his answer relevant. You are warned under standing order 253A. Member for Mudgeeraba, if you persist, you will also be warned.

Mr RYAN: The members opposite have to be very careful when they open this Pandora's box, because their fingerprints are on it. They wasted millions and millions and millions of dollars and could not even get a contract signed to outsource it to the private sector. We brought it back in and, with the wonderful people in Minister Enoch's department, not only are we getting the project on track but also we are delivering it. We have delivered it to IGEM. The Inspector-General Emergency Management

has the new payroll system and it is working fine. It is being rolled out to the QCS. The advice that I have received from the Queensland Corrective Services commissioner is that the transition is going well.

The interesting thing to note also is that the payroll system that is being implemented has been used in the government for many years. In fact, the Queensland Police Service has had the Aurion payroll system for 10 years. This is not a new system; it is a system that is proven, it works and it is being rolled out. As I have said, the advice that I have from the Queensland Corrective Services commissioner is that the project is on track, on budget and it is working.

Federal Budget, Energy Projects

Mr PEARCE: My question is to the Minister for Energy. Will the minister outline what announcements were in the federal budget last night for key energy projects in Queensland?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the member for Mirani for his question. I would especially like to note his exemplary hard work on behalf of his community during the recent Cyclone Debbie. It is always a pleasure to work with the member for Mirani on all issues, but particularly in relation to Cyclone Debbie.

As the Minister for Energy for this state, I was very curious to see what would be in the federal budget for Queensland. We have seen much advocacy from Matt Canavan, the federal minister for Northern Australia—allegedly—Tim Nicholls and others for a new coal-fired power station for North Queensland. In fact, Matt Canavan was even promising it for Gladstone. The last time I saw Gladstone, it was not part of North Queensland. Matt Canavan does not seem to be able to say no. He goes around the countryside like Oprah Winfrey saying, 'You can get a coal-fired power station. You can get a coal-fired power station.' He cannot say no to anybody.

There I was waiting for the big announcement, waiting for the federal government to deliver for Queensland an old solution for a contemporary problem. Where was it? It was absolutely nowhere. There was no funding for their new coal-fired power station in the north, not one single shekel for an old solution to a current problem.

In this regard I want to say a few things. This state is not short of baseload power. We have eight huge generators, four of them young technology—super critical technology in four of our eight generators. Yet we have the federal government and also the opposition leader, the member for Clayfield, advocating old technology for a current problem. At a time when we need to drop our carbon emissions if we want to act on climate change to protect our reef—not cook our reef but to protect our reef—they are looking to the past for solutions. The LNP position is like backing biplane technology during the jet era. It is like backing stagecoach technology after the invention of the model T. It is like backing a video library during the streaming era. That is the kind of backward looking approach that we have from the Leader of the Opposition.

Of course, we all know how much the Leader of the Opposition disdains solar users, calling them latte sippers and champagne drinkers. However, the other day on Twitter there was a picture of him with a latte in front of him. I thought, 'Hello, Tim must be getting solar on his roof.'

We did not see in the budget support for Queensland for hydro, support for Queensland's clean energy boom that is happening in North Queensland—$2 billion worth of investment, 16 projects. What did we get from Canberra? Nothing.

Cleveland Rail Line

Dr ROBINSON: My question is to the Premier. Labor's rail fail has seen the Cleveland line as one of the worst affected in the city. One commuter who works in the city recently said, 'I have recently experienced four train breakdowns and multiple waits. They have not fixed the train line.' When will this government fix the broken Cleveland line and restore faith among my commuters in public transport?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for his question. I am sorry that his constituent has had that experience. Can I update the House that we now have a new CEO in place, we have a new chair, Philip Strachan, and the Deputy Premier has been tasked with fixing the trains. That is exactly what she is doing. She is working incredibly hard with the board. In fact, she has just advised me that she travelled that line herself last week. She is out there meeting with the public, listening to their views and, of course, delivering. There is no stronger advocate, other than me, for Cross River Rail in this state. This Deputy Premier is fighting tooth and nail to get the funding we need from Canberra for Cross River Rail.

Once again I am extremely disappointed—and this is incredibly relevant—that all those opposite can do is come in and attack Queensland's No. 1 infrastructure project. What they are attacking is jobs for Queensland. Honestly, if this is a question time strategy they had better go back to the drawing board because it is just absolutely hopeless.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I think you have answered the question.

Federal Budget, Great Barrier Reef

Mr RUSSO: My question is of the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef. I refer to the federal budget announcement, and I ask: will the minister inform the House how the federal budget will impact the Great Barrier Reef?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Sunnybank for his question and for his ongoing advocacy for our Great Barrier Reef. The reef is an international icon. It supports nearly 70,000 jobs in tourism and contributes nearly $6 billion to the Queensland and Australian economies, but you would not know it from the federal budget last night. There was no mention of funding for any environmental initiatives, let alone the Great Barrier Reef. Despite the fact that Tropical Cyclone Debbie devastated coral reefs at some of our tourism hotspots, despite the fact that the reef has just suffered through a second coral bleaching event in as many years and despite the fact that there is international concern for the reef's health with the World Heritage Committee keeping a close eye on our water quality progress, despite all of this our Great Barrier Reef did not warrant even a mention or any new funding in last night's budget.

In keeping with its approach from last year, the Turnbull government has delivered no new money for the reef—none! The federal government has let the reef down again and they have let down all those Australians who cherish the reef and want to fight for its survival. The Palaszczuk government is investing record amounts in efforts to support the reef's resilience in the face of increased pressures from climate change. On average we are dedicating $55 million per year to efforts to improve water quality. Historically the Commonwealth government has funded reef programs two to one, but now the Turnbull government has slashed that contribution to just fifty-fifty. The Great Barrier Reef and the 60,000 jobs that rely on it need a genuine commitment from the Turnbull government. They need to reverse these cuts.

Mr SPEAKER: That is the end of question time.

GASFIELDS COMMISSION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.04 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Biodiscovery Act 2004, the Gasfields Commission Act 2013, the Right to Information Act 2009, the Sustainable Ports Development Act 2015 and the Public Service Regulation 2008 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 [677].

Tabled paper: Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, explanatory notes [678].

I am pleased to introduce the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. On 18 December 2015, the Premier and Minister for the Arts committed to an independent review of the GasFields Commission, an independent statutory body established to manage and improve sustainable coexistence between rural landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas industry. The review was commissioned to determine whether the current GasFields Commission model works effectively to manage disputes between resource companies and landholders and to provide recommendations to the Queensland government on opportunities to improve regulatory and administrative settings.

The review commenced on 23 March 2016 under Professor Scott, a former member of the Land Court of Queensland. Professor Scott delivered his final report on 29 July 2016 and the bill responds to recommendations from the independent review. I would like to once again take the time to thank Professor Scott personally for his time and dedication in completing his report. On 1 December 2016, the government released the independent report and the government's response to the report.

The report made 18 recommendations and the government has supported, or supported in principle, the majority of the recommendations. The review made recommendations on a range of matters, including the appointment status of the chairperson—full time or part time—management of disputes; the functions and operation of the commission; and the potential role for the commission in managing or facilitating responses to public health concerns.

The bill introduces a new function in relation to providing information and coordination on health and wellbeing matters. This new function will be performed in conjunction with health specialists and service providers. The bill also makes amendments to clarify that the commission should not be involved in individual disputes. Reforms to the dispute resolution process and the establishment of a separate Land Access Ombudsman are being managed through my Department of Natural Resources and Mines. These amendments will be brought forward separately for consideration later this year.

The bill provides a clearer distinction between the strategic and operational functions of the commission, which was a key recommendation of the review. The commissioners will operate as a board and set the strategic direction for the commission. Commission staff will implement this strategic direction by, for example, stakeholder engagement and the enhanced extension and communication role recommended by the reviewer. This change in role for the commissioners means that the role of chairperson no longer needs to be full time. However, the bill is drafted to provide the responsible minister with flexibility to recommend either a part-time or full-time chairperson to the Governor in Council. The position of general manager of the commission will be redesignated to become the chief executive officer. There are a range of consequential amendments that arise from these changes—for example, delegations, declarations of interest, quorums for board meetings, special leave arrangements and temporary appointments during extended periods of leave. These amendments are reflected throughout the bill.

The bill also amends the Biodiscovery Act 2004 to provide an alternative option to the administration of benefit sharing agreements. The Biodiscovery Act allows entities to collect and use native biological material from state land and waters for the purpose of biodiscovery. An example of biodiscovery is the collection of a native plant from state land to extract a compound to form the basis for development and commercialisation of a pharmaceutical product. The Biodiscovery Act is currently structured so that every entity that uses native biological material along a commercial chain is required to have a benefit sharing agreement with the state. This was originally intended to ensure that any potential benefits of biodiscovery are shared in a fair and equitable way between the state and the biodiscovery entities. However, this structure does not reflect commercial reality. There can be many entities involved in a commercial chain and requiring each one to have a contract with the state may be a disincentive to creating commercial opportunities.

The amendments to the Biodiscovery Act will provide an alternative option to the administration of benefit sharing agreements by giving a head biodiscovery entity that has a benefit sharing agreement with the state the option to enter into its own arrangements with subsequent users of native biological material. This will ensure that all entities along a commercial chain can operate in an efficient commercial arrangement, with reduced regulatory burden under the Biodiscovery Act. This will help encourage job creation and innovation in scientific discovery.

The bill will also make a minor amendment to the Sustainable Ports Development Act 2015 to ensure that a port overlay consistently applies to development in a master planned area. This amendment will clarify that a port overlay cannot regulate development that is regulated under a development scheme for a priority development area or for a state development area. This government is responsible for the implementation of master planning processes for the four priority ports under the Sustainable Ports Development Act to deliver on the key port related actions from the Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan. The amendment to section 19(4) of the Sustainable Ports Development Act ensures a master plan can be implemented through the port overlay and contributes to achieving commitments under Reef 2050. It will also ensure that local governments and port authorities can apply the port overlay when assessing development that is located within a priority development area or for a state development area but excluded from the development scheme, as originally intended.

This bill delivers on the commitments made by the government and recommendations from the independent report. The commitments demonstrate this government's will to support Queensland's onshore gas industry and the landholders and communities in which it operates. The bill will also streamline the biodiscovery framework to assist this exciting sector to develop innovative products and to grow and prosper. The bill also clarifies the application of a port overlay and contributes to achieving commitments under Reef 2050. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.11 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.11 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee report to the House on the Gasfields Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 14 July 2017.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL (TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 1 December 2016 (see p. 4863).

Second Reading

Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (4.12 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

From the outset I thank the committee and the secretariat for their consideration of the bill. My thanks go to those stakeholders who made submissions as part of the committee's examination of the bill and spent time and effort in communicating their concerns, suggestions and support of the bill.

Firstly, I will speak to the bill's package of reform amendments in relation to local government elections. When I introduced this bill late last year, I informed the House that the Palaszczuk government would implement real-time online disclosure of electoral donations to allow for greater transparency during state and local government elections. It gives me great pleasure to remind the House that on 23 February 2017 the Premier and the Attorney-General announced that Australia's first real-time electronic donation disclosure system had gone live in Queensland. The Premier announced that, instead of waiting more than six months to see who is donating to which political party, from 1 March 2017 voters would have access to that information within seven business days. This government is also demonstrating its commitment to transparency for local government electoral donations. Not only will Queenslanders be better informed about electoral donations before the state election; this bill means that Queenslanders will also be informed about electoral donations before a local government election.

As the Premier has said, Queensland now has some of the most progressive, open and transparent political donation laws in the country. Queensland is leading the way in disclosing details about how and when political donations are made. With the passage of this bill, the Palaszczuk government will once again deliver on its commitment to transparency with the application of these requirements to local government elections. As I informed the House when I introduced the bill, this significant reform package will pave the way for the real-time online disclosure of donations so that Queenslanders will be better informed about donations before they cast their vote for their local government candidate.

The bill, in conjunction with other legislative measures, implements the government's response to the recommendations of the Crime and Corruption Commission's December 2015 report titled *Transparency and accountability in local government*. The government is implementing important reforms that were identified by the CCC. In relation to the CCC's concerns about the use of titles such as 'mayor' in the name of an association, amendments were recently made to the Associations Incorporation Regulation 1999. The amendments declare a name containing the words 'councillor', 'lady mayoress', 'lord mayor', 'mayor' or 'mayoress' as an unsuitable name for an incorporated association that is not a controlled entity and therefore subject to auditing by the Queensland Audit Office.

To address the CCC's concerns about candidates and councillors using a separate legal entity to hold election campaign donations, the bill amends the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 to clarify that incorporated associations cannot have a main purpose of receiving or holding electoral campaign funds that are intended to be applied for the benefit of a member of the association or a person nominated by a member. Further, the bill amends the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 to do a number of things, including: to set the candidate and third-party election disclosure threshold at $500 to align with a councillor's register of interest gift disclosure threshold; to facilitate real-time online electoral donation disclosure for local government elections, consistent with state election requirements; to require unspent campaign donations to be either held for future campaign expenditure, returned to the relevant political party or transferred to a registered charity; to provide that a candidate's and a group's dedicated account can only be used during the disclosure period for the election for amounts received and paid for the conduct of the election campaign; and, lastly, to clarify that the Electoral Commission Queensland may continue to recover from local governments the indirect costs associated with the conduct of local government elections.

I will now address the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee's report on the bill, which was tabled on 7 March this year. After careful consideration of the submissions and the committee's report, I am pleased to table the government's response.

Tabled paper: Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee: Report No. 43, 55th Parliament—Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, government response [679].

In addition to the committee's first recommendation for the bill to be passed, the committee made five further recommendations. Recommendation 2 is that clauses 16 and 17 of the bill be amended to make it clear that candidates are required to lodge a return within the required period, irrespective of whether any gifts are received during the disclosure period. The bill continues the existing requirements for a summary return to be given to the Electoral Commission Queensland within 15 weeks after polling day. The government notes the committee's view that the drafting of the amendments to sections 117 and 118 of the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 may create uncertainty regarding disclosure requirements where a candidate receives no gifts or the total value of gifts is less than the disclosure threshold. The government, therefore, supports recommendation 2 and I will move an amendment to clauses 16 and 17 during consideration in detail to clarify that candidates in these circumstances are required to provide a return stating either that no gifts were received or a summary of the total value of all gifts and the number of entities that gave gifts.

The committee's third recommendation is that clauses 16 and 17 of the bill be amended to specify that the Electoral Commission Queensland is required to provide the chief executive officer of the relevant local government a copy of all returns for candidates who are successful in an election in that local government area. The government notes the committee's view that the requirement to provide a copy of the return should apply irrespective of whether the return applies to gifts with a value over the disclosure threshold, less than the disclosure threshold or states that no gifts were received. However, after careful consideration the government does not support recommendation 3. The government considers that requiring the Electoral Commission Queensland to provide the chief executive officer of the relevant local government a copy of the summary return, in addition to a copy of the returns disclosing gifts with a value equal to or more than the $500 threshold, may create an unnecessary administrative burden and duplication for the Electoral Commission Queensland and local government CEOs. Furthermore, as the Electoral Commission Queensland will be required, under section 129 of the Local Government Electoral Act 2011, to publish all returns on its website, the summary return will be available for inspection by CEOs, if necessary.

The committee's fourth recommendation is that the bill be amended to allow entirely self-funded candidates to recover any unspent money from their dedicated campaign account at the end of the disclosure period. The CCC's report highlighted that the inability to trace expenditure of leftover funds after an election undermines transparency. The bill introduces new requirements that unspent funds in

the account at the end of the disclosure period may only be kept in the account for the purpose of the candidate conducting a later campaign or if the candidate was a member of a political party paid to that political party or paid to a registered charity.

The committee acknowledged the range of views expressed by submitters in relation to this proposed amendment. The government further notes the committee's support of the intention of the amendment to increase transparency in how campaign donations are used. However, the committee questioned the effect of the bill in preventing a self-funded candidate from recovering unspent money in the account at the end of the campaign.

While noting the committee's concern, the government does not support committee recommendation 4 for the following reasons. Firstly, as cited in the committee's report, the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning advised the committee that a fully self-funded candidate has the flexibility to manage the dedicated account by depositing only those amounts necessary to enable amounts to be paid out of the dedicated account. Therefore, a fully self-funded candidate may have a nil balance in the dedicated account at the end of the candidate's disclosure period. Secondly, the government's response to the CCC's report was informed by a review panel established to consider the recommendations. The review panel comprised representatives of the Local Government Association of Queensland, the Electoral Commission of Queensland and state agencies. The review panel did not recommend that unspent amounts be returned to an individual candidate.

The government also notes the committee requested two clarifications during the second reading speech. The first point of clarification is regarding the anticipated time frame within which candidates and third parties would be required to disclose gifts or expenditure with a value over the disclosure threshold. I am pleased to note that the committee supports the intention of the bill to increase transparency by facilitating more contemporaneous disclosure of donations. The committee seeks, however, to be reassured that the time frame to be prescribed by regulation within which candidates and third parties would be required to disclose gifts or expenditure with a value over the disclosure threshold will facilitate practicable real-time disclosure.

The government also notes the committee's reference to the CCC's suggestion that seven days from the date of receipt of a gift or expenditure for political purposes would be a reasonable period for disclosure. May I draw to the attention of the House the amendments to the Electoral Regulation 2013 which commenced on 1 March 2017. The amendments prescribe the real-time reporting time frames for state elections and approve the procedures made by the Electoral Commission of Queensland under the Electoral Act 1992 for the electronic lodgement of returns. The amendments require returns to be given by the seventh business day after the relevant event—that is, the day the gift or loan is made or the day the gift is used where a gift is received by a third party that incurs expenditure for political purposes.

Subject to the passage of the bill, the provisions in part 4 that relate to real-time online disclosure will be proposed to commence by proclamation. Amendments to the Local Government Electoral Regulation 2012 will also be proposed, consistent where appropriate with the recent amendments for state elections to prescribe real-time online disclosure time frames for local government elections and approval for the Electoral Commission Queensland's procedure for electronic lodgement of returns.

The second clarification requested by the committee is regarding the rationale for aligning the disclosure threshold at $500 rather than $200. To address concerns about the inconsistencies in the election disclosure threshold, the bill increases the disclosure donation threshold for candidates from $200 to $500 and decreases the threshold for third parties from $1,000 to $500 to align with the councillor register of interest gift threshold.

The CCC in its report recommended that the government consider amendments to disclosure requirements in the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 and the Local Government Act 2009 to align the threshold obligations for reporting, but did not recommend the amount at which the threshold should be aligned. On this issue, the government accepted the recommendation of the review panel. The panel agreed with the CCC that it would be optimal to align the threshold obligations for reporting. The panel considered that a new threshold of $500, bringing candidate and third party disclosures in line with councillors' gift disclosure requirements, would be appropriate.

In making its recommendation, the review panel considered that Queensland's disclosure threshold for local government candidates is one of the lowest in comparison with other jurisdictions. For example, the threshold in New South Wales is $1,000, in Victoria $500, in South Australia $500 and in Western Australia $200. Furthermore, Queensland's disclosure threshold of $200 was prescribed in 1996 and has not been indexed since.

The committee drew to the department's attention minor drafting errors in clauses 25(1) and 26(1) of the bill. The committee commented that clauses 25(1) and 26(1) contained incorrect instructions. I thank the committee for that. I will move an amendment during consideration in detail to correct the action commands in clauses 25(1) and 26(1).

The Palaszczuk government was elected on a platform of restoring integrity and accountability. It was a promise made to the people of Queensland and Queenslanders expect transparency and accountability from their local representatives, and the bill delivers on this commitment. May I echo the words of the Premier that integrity and accountability are cornerstones for our democratic processes in this state. Now when voters go to the ballot box they will be better informed about who is donating, how much they are donating and who is receiving the donations. As the Attorney-General has reminded the House, it is a Labor government—the Palaszczuk Labor government—that has brought in a nation first of real-time disclosure.

I now turn to the building and planning aspects of the bill, which seeks a number of amendments to related pieces of legislation. As I informed the House late last year when introducing the bill, its objectives for planning and building legislation are to: firstly, amend the Sustainable Planning Act to give early effect to some of the planning reforms contained in the Planning Act 2016 and the Planning and Environment Court Act 2016; secondly, amend both current and uncommenced building and planning legislation to address issues arising from several court decisions about development approval for building work; and, thirdly, make several amendments of a technical nature to clarify aspects of the Planning Act 2016 and Planning and Environment Court Act 2016 before their commencement later this year.

Recommendation 5 of the committee was that the Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 be amended to provide an example in section 83(1)(b) of the Building Act 1975 to clarify the intended operation of the provision. The government supports the recommendation and I will be moving amendments during consideration in detail of the bill to include an example in section 83(1)(b) of the Building Act 1975 as recommended by the committee.

Recommendation 6 of the committee was that the Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 be amended to create a clearer link between the provision stating that a development permit given by a private certifier does not authorise work unless a relevant preliminary approval is in place and the provision prohibiting assessable development without a permit. The government supports this recommendation. I will be moving amendments during consideration in detail of the bill to clarify that if a private certifier gives a development permit to an applicant and the permit does not authorise development because a prior preliminary approval was required but had not been obtained, any development under the permit is an offence under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009. I thank the committee for these recommendations and agree that they will improve the implementation of the bill.

I note the committee has also identified an inconsistency between the bill and the draft planning regulation in relation to whether parties to a breakup agreement are required to publish their agreement on their respective websites. I thank the committee for this observation. I am advised that it is proposed to alter the draft planning regulation 2017 to eliminate this inconsistency.

The committee also noted a matter raised in a submission by the Brisbane City Council about the clarity of clause 56 of the bill, which establishes transitional arrangements for conversion applications for trunk infrastructure. I thank the committee for this observation. I will be moving an amendment during consideration in detail of the bill to clarify the application of clause 56.

I also note that concerns were raised late in the committee process by the Housing Industry Association about aspects of the amendments to planning and building legislation dealing with the legislation between planning and building approvals. The committee was unable to seek the information required to respond in the time frame it had available to it. I would like to take the opportunity to address those concerns now.

The first concern is in regard to the modification to the definition of a building development application and how this might have unintended consequences in relation to checking compliance with self-assessable codes. I can advise that the requirements to ensure consistency with self-assessable codes is a separate obligation from carrying out building assessment work for a development application so will be unaffected by the change to the definition.

The second concern raised by the HIA is that the amendments have the potential to force all applications down a preliminary approval path with consequential increased costs and significant time delays. I can advise that there is nothing in the amendments that would result in the range of matters subject to referral being greater or less than is currently the case. The number of matters subject to referral will be determined by the Planning Regulation and the content of planning schemes. I have been advised that officers of the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning have since met directly with officers of the HIA to clarify the operation of these provisions.

I also intend to move several amendments during consideration in detail that either further address matters raised in submissions to the committee or seek to clarify or correct provisions in the planning legislation to address issues that have come to light since the bill was introduced. I propose to move an amendment concerning the administrative arrangements for private certifiers to advise local governments and applicants of the approvals they give and which addresses views raised in the Brisbane City Council's submission to the committee—that the amendments in the bill still do not afford adequate protection against unlawful demolition of character houses.

The amendment I propose to move would require a private certifier to wait five days after informing a local government of an approval the certifier has given before giving the approval to the applicant. However, the proposed amendment would only apply if the application before the private certifier involves demolition of a residential dwelling and the demolition is assessable development under the local government's planning scheme. This ensures that adequate protection is afforded against pre-emptive demolition of character housing while ensuring that assessment time frames for the overwhelming majority of applications processed by private certifiers are unaffected. The proposed amendments will be accompanied by a transitional arrangement ensuring applications under consideration by private certifiers at the commencement are unaffected.

The remaining amendments I propose to move during consideration in detail clarify or correct several matters concerning the planning legislation that have come to light since the bill was introduced. These are: firstly, amendments clarifying that a planning scheme amendment to introduce a 'party house restriction area' is not an 'adverse planning change' so does not trigger rights to compensation—the amendment merely confirms the existing position; secondly, a minor amendment adding a reference to development schemes under the Economic Development Act 2012 as a matter a designator must have regard to in making a designation; and, thirdly, amendments including a 'remove doubt' provision and example confirming that nothing stops a regulation under the Planning Act 2016 prescribing different assessment managers in relation to different parts or aspects of development in a development application. This supports and clarifies the arrangements under the bill requiring private certifiers to await development permits for other aspects of building work in particular circumstances.

There are amendments confirming alternative assessment managers cannot assess 'variation requests', which should rightly be assessed only by local governments as they may affect the way the local government's planning scheme applies to land, and providing for more flexibility in consultation about amendments to standard conditions for 'deemed approvals'. The standard conditions are currently contained within the proposed development assessment rules under the Planning Act 2016 but are significantly larger than the rules themselves and are likely to require ongoing refinement and amendment. The amendment proposes separating the standard conditions from the rules and subjecting them to a more flexible amendment process.

There are amendments re-establishing the minister as the 'responsible entity' for assessing change applications in relation to development approvals given by the minister under a call-in. There are changes to appeal provisions for several building and plumbing and drainage matters for consistency with existing rights under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and changes to appeal provisions for several matters to clarify their scope, including to confirm the longstanding arrangement under planning legislation that appeal rights are unavailable against decisions about applications called in under chapter 3, part 6.

There is a minor correction to the heritage provisions in section 277 of the Planning Act 2016 to change the term 'prudent or feasible' to 'prudent and feasible' and an amendment including a transitional arrangement for determining a maximum adopted charge for the financial year in which the Planning Act 2016 commences. There are amendments clarifying transitional arrangements for compliance certificates for reconfiguration and a minor amendment moving the definition of 'storey' from schedule 2 of the Planning Act 2016 to schedule 1, in order to allow the Planning Regulation 2017 to include a slightly different definition of 'storey'. There are minor modifications to amendments of the

Building Act 1975 contained in the Planning (Consequential) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2016 to remove a duplicated provision in section 48 of the Building Act 1975 and to include a note more clearly linking that section with the definition of 'building assessment work' in section 7 of that act.

The bill will reintroduce 'costs provisions' to the Sustainable Planning Act where each party bears their own costs in the Planning and Environment Court. This delivers on the Palaszczuk government's election commitment to ensure that the community are able to have their say without being at risk of massive legal bills for appealing development decisions.

In summary, this bill enacts key reforms to ensure transparency and accountability in local government elections in Queensland and ensures that our planning system gives communities a voice and has in place appropriate mechanisms for the protection of character housing. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (4.35 pm): I rise to speak to the Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The bill, as the Deputy Premier outlined, looks at changes to the Local Government Electoral Bill including donation and declaration thresholds, incorporated associations in campaigns and funding the ECQ, the Electoral Commission of Queensland, in relation to local government elections. The bill also looks at amendments to the Planning Act.

A series of recent court decisions, known as the Gerhardt decisions, have raised concerns about the relationship between the role of councils and private building certifiers. There have been particular concerns that planning provisions relating to character housing have been undermined by uncertainty in this area. The LNP is not convinced that what the government is proposing will sufficiently clarify these issues, but my colleague the shadow minister for planning, the member for Mansfield, will talk to these in more detail and outline the LNP's position on the planning and building changes in this bill.

The changes to the local government electoral law in this bill originated in a 2015 report by the Crime and Corruption Commission entitled *Transparency and accountability in local government*. A number of recommendations were made by the CCC and are addressed in this bill. At this stage I also want to put on the record my thanks to the members and staff of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee for their consideration of the bill. I particularly want to acknowledge the new deputy chair, Ann Leahy, the member for Warrego, and our erstwhile deputy whip, the member for Gympie, Tony Perrett.

Like the LNP, the committee has identified a number of concerns and has recommended amendments be made by the Deputy Premier. I was listening carefully as the Deputy Premier provided her second reading speech. I note the comprehensive response she has provided to the committee's concerns. I would also like to spend some time detailing those concerns as they pertain to the local government aspect of the bill. I would like to start with incorporated associations.

As mentioned, the genesis of the investigation by the CCC was complaints made about the use of incorporated associations as a campaign or donation vehicle. The bill seeks to clarify that incorporated associations are prohibited from holding or receiving campaign funds for a local government election candidate. The bill also prohibits associations from using a name which would imply that it is an official entity of a council, such as using the title of 'mayor' in its name, unless of course it is owned by the council in question. These changes are supported by the LNP.

We do, however, have concerns that the government has not clarified how the prohibition on incorporated associations will affect entities incorporated in other jurisdictions—that is, interstate or indeed overseas. There is no guarantee that these laws would stop interstate organisations and unions from breaking the spirit of the laws. As the member for Warrego wrote in her statement of reservation in the committee's report—

> The Minister should address what steps will be taken to ensure that incorporated associations outside Queensland are required to comply with the spirit of these amendments.

I would seek some response by the Deputy Premier to that concern.

I move to real-time disclosure. This bill also allows for the government to introduce real-time donation declarations for local government candidates, similar to the system introduced for state candidates. Just like the concerns raised by the member for Mansfield at the time with the state system, contemporaneous disclosure for local government candidates will presumably suffer from the same loophole—that is, with donations made in the last seven days of a campaign not being updated in real-time. Perhaps the Deputy Premier would like to give some consideration to that in her summing-up.

With regard to the donation reporting requirements contained in the bill, the bill seeks to align the donation reporting requirement for local government candidates with sitting councillors. The candidate and third-party election disclosure donation threshold is now set at $500—from $200 previously for candidates and $1,000 for third parties—to align with the threshold for a councillor's register of interest gift disclosures under the existing act. This consistency in requirements between candidates, councillors and third parties is welcomed as it reduces confusion and decreases the chance of unintentionally incorrectly completing a return as a result of complex and confusing arrangements. I do note, however, the committee's recommendations 2 and 3. Recommendation 2 is that clauses 16 and 17 of the bill be amended to make it clear that candidates are required to lodge a return within the required period, irrespective of whether any gifts are received during the disclosure period. Recommendation 3 is that the same clauses, 16 and 17, be amended to specify that the Electoral Commission Queensland is required to provide the chief executive officer of the relevant government a copy of all returns for candidates who are successful in election in that local government area.

I listened carefully to the Deputy Premier's contribution and note that she will be moving an amendment to address recommendation 2. The LNP is certainly supportive of that. In response to recommendation 3, an amendment will not be moved due to a perceived or real administrative burden but also because a summary report is ultimately published on the ECQ website and therefore it is duplication. The LNP is willing to accept that as a response to that recommendation. We would have been supportive of an amendment to those clauses for that purpose, but in this instance we will accept the justification given by the Deputy Premier.

I move to self-funded candidates. During the committee's investigation, the LNP members of the committee raised significant concerns about the effect new provisions concerning unspent donations would have on self-funded candidates. The bill provides that donations received by local government candidates should do the following after the election they were raised for: be held in a special account for a future campaign; be returned to a political party if the candidate is a member of a party; or be donated to charity.

The LNP has serious concerns that self-funded local government candidates who are members of a political party but are not endorsed candidates would have to provide any unspent funds to a political party. During the committee hearing process LNP members confirmed with the CCC that this was not the effect of its recommendations, and in any case they are only supportive of this provision where it concerns endorsed party candidates. The CCC suggested that this provision may be an unintended consequence. I refer to the statement of reservation by the deputy chair, the member for Warrego, and, in particular, a quote by Ms Dianne McFarlane, the Executive Director, Corruption, Crime and Corruption Commission, who advised the committee of the following—

... the CCC is not aware of the genesis of the provision to allow candidates to provide unspent funds to a political party. It may be that the proposal may have unintended consequences which have not yet been considered. The CCC, however, considers that such a proposal may be appropriate where a candidate has been endorsed by a political party to contest the election.

During the committee's departmental briefing the member for Warrego questioned this part of the bill using a hypothetical scenario containing candidates who are members of a political party. The member for Warrego asked—

Does their membership of a political party impact at all on whether it—

being the campaign funds—

should go to a charity or whether it should go to a political party given that they are just a member and not endorsed?

The department's representative replied—

The provision in the bill says 'a member of a political party' ...

To clarify, the member for Warrego asked—

Even if they are not endorsed and they are just a member?

The response was—

That is what the bill says, yes.

It is now incumbent on the Deputy Premier to again clarify what the effect of this provision is and amend it if necessary. It would fundamentally change the nature of local government elections in this state if candidates who are just ordinary members of political parties are treated as if they are endorsed candidates. I do note the Deputy Premier said that a self-funding candidate has the potential to manage

that campaign fund and end with a net zero, but I have concerns that a number of self-funded candidates may not be fully aware of the consequences of that and end up with funds in a self-funding campaign fund that they would then have to direct to a political party.

The CCC confirmed, as I have said before, that they did not intend for these changes to go this far. Related to this matter, I will also be awaiting the CCC's report into Operation Belcarra, which considered the nature of candidates running in local government elections as Independents while they may also be ordinary members of a political party. I am sure the commissioner will have a number of recommendations regarding this practice.

In the meantime, and returning to the legislation as written, it seems to overreach in its scope by referring to ordinary members of political parties instead of candidates endorsed and funded by political parties. A by-product of the LNP committee members' questioning is that the committee had also recommended in recommendation 4 that this bill be amended to allow entirely self-funded candidates to recover any unspent money from their dedicated campaign account at the end of the disclosure period. Those candidates who do self-fund—a practice very common, particularly in smaller councils—should be able to take their own money back at the end of the campaign if it is not used. I would at this stage again commend that recommendation to the Deputy Premier and ask her to give consideration, while this second reading debate is going on, to amending that clause to ensure that it applies only to endorsed candidates of a political party, not ordinary members of a political party.

I turn to the Electoral Commission of Queensland funding. The bill also provides for the Electoral Commission to be able to recover indirect costs from councils relating to the running of elections. The committee was advised that this is current practice and the bill is just seeking to clarify this. However, ambiguity remains over what the indirect costs will entail, whether there will be an effect of cross-subsidising other functions of the ECQ and how transparent the costs that councils will incur are. Stakeholders raised concerns that the ECQ should provide a fixed cost estimate rather than what recently occurred where local governments had to make a guesstimate on the costs of the election. I refer to page 10 of the committee's report which states—

> Conversely, other submitters raised concerns about potential costs. For example Brisbane City Council raised concerns that the changes would 'expose local governments to unknown and unverifiable additional costs associated with conducting local government elections'. Similarly Sunshine Coast Council raised concerns that 'councils may be burdened with ECQ costs associated with elections outside specific council areas, including those for elections relating to other levels of government'.
>
> Southern Downs Regional Council submitted that if the ECQ is given power to recover costs relating to conducting elections, the ECQ should be required to provide local governments with a 'full disclosure of all costs', and 'a fixed cost estimate' on the cost of the election.

Certainly such would help with council budgeting, especially for smaller regional and rural councils. The ECQ should be transparent in the costs it incurs for local government elections and confirm that local governments are not unfairly burdened by cross-subsidising other activities undertaken by the ECQ.

The Deputy Premier and Attorney-General should ensure this will be the case and councils will not be unfairly burdened. It will certainly be something that the LNP will be monitoring closely, particularly at the next local government election due in 2020. I await clarification of the LNP's issues with this bill from the Deputy Premier, particularly as they pertain to smaller councils and self-funded candidates. As I mentioned earlier, the member for Mansfield will have more to say on the planning and building changes in this bill. In conclusion, the LNP will not be opposing the changes being made in relation to the local government electoral law.

Hon. M FURNER (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (4.50 pm): I rise to support the Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. The Palaszczuk government was elected on a platform of restoring integrity and accountability. Queenslanders expect transparency and accountability from their local representatives, and this bill delivers on that commitment.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor as local government minister, Deputy Premier Jackie Trad. In the first two years of the Palaszczuk government, the Deputy Premier was instrumental in helping local councils build strong, accountable and sustainable communities across the state of Queensland. Along with the Premier and Attorney-General, she has championed a range of reforms as part of the government's commitment to integrity and accountability. A great example of this is real-time electronic donation disclosure—a signature Palaszczuk Labor government reform. On 23 February 2017, the Premier and the Attorney-General announced that Australia's first real-time electronic donation disclosure system for state government elections had gone live in Queensland. This

means that, instead of waiting months to see who is donating to a political party, since 1 March voters have been able to see, within seven business days, who is donating, how much the donations are and who has received the donations.

The bill before the House will ensure that voters also have access to real-time information about donations being made to local government candidates before an election takes place. The Deputy Premier has also outlined how the bill further delivers on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to innovative and fair planning and building legislation through the early commencement of key planning reforms. This will address issues in the relationship between building and planning approvals and further clarify elements of the new planning laws due to commence later this year.

As Minister for Local Government, I will focus my remarks on those amendments related to local government elections. It is important that local government elections are open and transparent. Open and accurate electoral donation disclosure returns a key part of that transparency. The public has a right to know who is donating to candidates so they can make informed decisions. Through these amendments, the government is putting in place legislative changes to electoral donations to local government candidates well in advance of the next local government election scheduled for 2020.

The bill directly addresses recommendations in the Crime and Corruption Commission's report *Transparency and accountability in local government* released in December 2015. Along with other legislative measures, it constitutes the government's response to these recommendations. The report largely concluded that the governance around local government electoral donations was confusing and did not clearly outline how campaign funds and donations should be treated. The amendments in the bill are robust and evidence based, drawing on expert and stakeholder views from an advisory panel set up to review the CCC report. It included representatives from the Electoral Commission of Queensland, the Local Government Association of Queensland and key state government agencies.

Accordingly, the bill includes amendments to the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 and the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 to provide for the implementation of a real-time online disclosure system for local government electoral donations consistent with the state system; clarify that incorporated associations cannot have a main purpose of receiving or holding electoral campaign funds which are intended to be applied for the benefit of a member of the association or a person nominated by a member, either directly or indirectly; ensure that a candidate's and a group's dedicated account can only be used during the disclosure period for amounts received and paid for the conduct of the election campaign, making it easier to trace campaign expenditure; require unspent campaign donations to be held for campaign purposes at a later point, transferred to a registered charity or, if the candidate was a member of a political party during the disclosure period, paid to the political party; set the candidate and third party election disclosure donation threshold at $500 to align with a councillor's register of interest gift disclosures threshold; and clarify that the ECQ may continue to recover direct and indirect costs associated with the conduct of local government elections.

In relation to the CCC's concerns about the use of titles such as 'mayor' in the name of an association, amendments were recently made to the Associations Incorporation Regulation 1999. These will ensure that associations receiving or holding campaign funds will not be permitted to use official titles in the fund's name unless the association is a controlled entity subject to auditing by the Queensland Audit Office. Collectively, these changes will ensure that Queenslanders can have confidence in the accountability, transparency and integrity of the donation disclosure requirements for council elections.

Mr Deputy Speaker Stewart, as you know, on 1 December 2016 the Deputy Premier introduced the bill which was referred to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee for consideration. On 7 March 2017, the committee tabled its report on the bill and made six recommendations, including that the bill be passed. The Deputy Premier has already tabled and outlined the government's response to the committee's report and the submissions in some detail. In short, we have accepted four of the committee's six recommendations, taking into account the views of the committee and stakeholders. We have explained our reasoning to the House in relation to the two recommendations the government is not supporting, and we will be providing further clarification about the two additional matters as requested by the committee.

I join with the Deputy Premier in thanking the committee and secretariat for their consideration of the bill. In particular, I mention the member for Mirani, Jim Pearce. I also thank all stakeholders for their valuable contribution and feedback on the bill. Like many people, I followed the recent CCC Operation Belcarra hearings with great interest. This has helped to clarify some of the practices associated with local council elections and their financial campaign activity. The bill currently before the

House will address many of the concerns raised during the CCC's hearings. However, it may be that some new issues have arisen as a result of donations to candidates in these most recent local government elections, so we welcome any additional findings and recommendations that may come from the CCC and the ECQ. If further change is required in response to future recommendations, the government may consider this.

Queenslanders expect and deserve transparency, accountability and integrity from their candidates at every level of government. It has always been Labor that has been the party of electoral reforms in Queensland, going back to the pioneering Goss government. In 2017 it is the Palaszczuk government that has delivered Australia's first real-time electronic donation disclosure system. Through these significant reforms, we are taking another step in ensuring that Queensland has some of the most progressive, open and transparent political donation laws in the country. Again, I commend the Deputy Premier for her carriage of these important Labor reforms. As Minister for Local Government, I look forward to implementing them and moving forward. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WALKER (Mansfield—LNP) (4.58 pm): As the member for Glass House indicated, as shadow minister for planning, my comments on this measure will be related to the planning and building legislation changes in the bill. As is stated in the explanatory notes, the Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill seeks to—

> … make amendments to planning and building legislation to give early effect to planning reforms contained in the *Planning Act 2016* and *Planning and Environment Court Act 2016*, make various technical and clarifying amendments, and address issues arising from several court decisions concerning development approval for building work.

With respect to those matters that go to the early effect of measures already passed by this House, while some of those measures were in contention when the bill was debated in this House, the opposition sees no point in opposing those measures, given that the act will come into effect on 1 July in any case so any early effect is of a minor nature only.

This bill seeks to amend and improve some technical issues raised by stakeholders since the enactment of the planning reform amendments in 2016, which passed through the parliament in what in most part was a bipartisan manner. These matters need some clarification and have arisen from consultation undertaken by the department during implementation of the 2016 reforms. Those measures include: allowing standard conditions for deemed approvals to be made separately from the development; assessment rules, by authorising the minister to make an instrument for standard conditions; facilitating negotiated decision notices being sought for an approval of a change application other than a change application for a minor change; providing that submissions for development applications are taken to be submissions for any change applications made within one year of the development approval; allowing a person to give notice of a legal proceeding to seek a declaration or notice of appeal to the department by email; providing when a decision notice about a change application, other than a minor change, must be given to submitters, correcting an omission in the Planning Act; reinstating an omitted provision enabling the minister in determining the appropriate assessment manager for a development application to split the application into two or more applications; establishing transitional arrangements for applications that exist at the commencement of the legislation to convert infrastructure to trunk infrastructure in relation to development approvals; extending the definition of 'tidal area' to more broadly refer to areas in or next to a local government area; and allowing the Planning and Environment Court to establish fees for applications and appeals.

These all seem reasonable amendments and ones which have come from the experience since the bill was passed. We are supportive of those changes. We note that, by large part, the submissions to the committee were in favour of those changes.

I do note that just this afternoon the Deputy Premier has introduced amendments which add 12 new amendments to that planning legislation. I must say it is very difficult for members of this House to assess those on the run. They are quite technical amendments which are quite difficult ones. I have had a look at them and I do have some experience, which helps me in making sense of them. The opposition will not be opposing those, but I do ask that this not become the norm. They are pretty significant amendments. I do ask the Deputy Premier whether in her response she could give some assurance that consultation with industry and councils was taken with respect to those amendments to give the House some comfort that they are broadly acceptable within the development and local government community.

The situation is a little different with respect to the building legislation changes. Firstly, it is important to understand the difficulty and the technical nature of the issues that we are trying to deal with in relation to these matters which arise from what are generally known as the Gerhardt cases—a

number of cases that went through the planning and higher court system in recent years. They do deal with a matter that is very important. Firstly, in principle, that matter is the way in which building approvals and planning approvals interact, in particular in circumstances such as character housing where there may be both a building and a town planning element to the one development. It is not an easy matter and I do not want to pretend in any way that it is.

It also deals with a very practical and emotional issue and that is the possibility that character or heritage houses may be removed or adapted without proper approval. I want to make it clear that the opposition is very aware that that is an important issue to deal with and in no way demeans that issue or the desire of both councils and building certifiers to get the procedure right so that the prospect of unauthorised work happening, either by accident or design, does not occur.

Mr David Nicholls, who is a prominent planning lawyer, has written about the Gerhardt cases. I table an article in which Mr Nicholls deals with these matters.

Tabled paper: Article by Mr David Nicholls, Partner, Hopgoodganim Lawyers, titled 'Understanding the Gerhardt Cases and their Implications' [680].

I will quote his conclusion. He said—

The Gerhardt series of cases highlights the difficulties inherent in trying to regulate 'building work' through planning schemes. This has come to the fore in recent times in several contexts but more particularly in relation to character housing and local heritage.

Obviously there needs to be a clear pathway for development that does not involve material change of use to be assessed against the relevant aspects of the planning schemes, but care needs to be exercised to avoid over complicating the development assessment system.

Mr Nicholls's quote concludes there. He rightly points out both the difficulty of the issues involved and the need to be careful that, in fact, by amending provisions we do not make matters worse rather than better.

The Deputy Premier has referred to a letter from the Housing Industry Association to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee. Unfortunately, it is a letter which came after the committee considered the legislation. That is not to be endorsed in any way, but it does remain that the HIA had considerable concerns about the matters that were involved. The Deputy Premier has gone through those. She says that she is satisfied that the HIA's concerns have been met. I and the opposition are not.

Ms Trad: I didn't say that.

Mr WALKER: I beg your pardon. I am sorry. The Deputy Premier did refer to a number of the concerns that the HIA had raised and responded to them. Perhaps that is a fairer way to put it. The opposition is not satisfied that the concerns have been met. We have since met with the HIA to discuss their concerns. That took us back to look again at the submissions that were made to the committee. It is clear when we look at those again in the light of those concerns that had been raised by the HIA that the concerns are broader in relation to these matters. They are perhaps best summed up in two of the councils' submissions. Logan City Council says this in their submission to the committee on 20 January—

Unfortunately, the amendments are not clear as to the exact mechanism(s) a planning scheme may employ in order to ensure certain building works matters are triggered for assessment by a local government.

I also refer to the Sunshine Coast council's submission to the committee in which it said—

Neither this Bill, nor the proposed Planning Regulations, effectively achieve this stated objective.

That was the objective about removing the difficulty between planning approvals and building approvals.

The Brisbane City Council submitted three or four pages of amendments that it required to these particular provisions. I do note, as the Deputy Premier said, that some of the amendments that she has now foreshadowed she will move to the bill deal with some of the issues raised by the Brisbane City Council but not all. Similarly, the Ipswich City Council submitted amendments that were requested to make the bill clearer, as did the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Moreton Bay Regional Council. Those submissions rang alarm bells with us. Taking into account that the HIA has said that although the government's intention in trying to clarify this matter is worthy, we do not believe that the particular measures there have sufficient acceptance amongst either the local government community or the development community to be an acceptable solution to what is a difficult problem.

In consideration in detail the opposition will be opposing those measures that, broadly, we will call the Gerhardt measures that deal with the attempt to solve that problem. We do hope that there is an ability to revisit the matter because it does need to be attended to. However, in our view it is simply not the case that the provisions as put forward in this bill are sufficient to do justice to a very difficult issue. Other than that exception, the opposition will not be opposing the other planning and building matters. As to the balance of the bill, the member for Glass House has dealt with the opposition's approach to that.

Mr PEARCE (Mirani—ALP) (5.08 pm): As chair of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, I am pleased to be able to stand in this place tonight and make a contribution to the debate on the Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The Deputy Premier referred the bill to the committee on 1 December 2016. After examination of the bill the committee recommended the bill be passed and the committee supports the intention of the bill. On behalf of the committee I would like to thank a number of people for the work that has been put into the report that was tabled in this place. Much effort is put in by the members themselves in having to attend meetings, go on trips and be involved in the whole process, but we would not be able to do what we do without the support of the secretariat.

I wish to thank Mary Westcott, the acting research director, Trudy Struber, Margaret Telford and Yasmin Ashburner for the work that they did. They worked really hard, and I appreciate that and I know the members of the committee do as well. The members of this particular committee changed over time. Dr Mark Robinson, the member for Cleveland, was the deputy chair for a while; Ms Ann Leahy, the member for Warrego, became the deputy chair on 15 February; Mr Craig Crawford, the member for Barron River; Mr Shane Knuth, the member for Dalrymple; Mrs Brittany Lauga, the member for Keppel—the loyal, smart-thinking, experienced town-planner who was always available to guide me—and Mr Tony Perrett, the member for Gympie. The explanatory notes state—

The objectives of the Bill are to:

1. Improve transparency and accountability in local government electoral disclosure requirements and to remove any confusion
2. Clarify that the Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ) may continue to recover direct and indirect costs associated with local government elections
3. Make amendments to planning and building legislation to give early effect to planning reforms contained in the *Planning Act 2016* and *Planning and Environment Court Act 2016*, make various technical and clarifying amendments, and address issues arising from several court decisions concerning development approval for building work.

I have listened to the Deputy Premier's response to the recommendations contained in the report. I am more than satisfied with the response and I believe that her acceptance of four of the recommendations shows that we did a pretty good job in getting it right. As I said earlier, the committee supports the intent of the bill to increase transparency by facilitating the more contemporaneous disclosure of donations; however, the committee notes that the disclosure requirements would in practice depend on the definition of 'disclosure date' prescribed by regulation. The committee also notes the CCC's suggestion that seven days from the date of receipt of a gift or expenditure for political purposes would be a reasonable period for disclosure. I know what local members like ourselves are required to do, and I do not see any problem with those who stand for local government having to accept some of the same responsibilities.

After the committee's work, the key to the bill is that it puts forward a progressive, open and transparent process which will ensure that Queensland leads the way in local government candidate transparency, and I think we should hold our heads high for that. I think that the people I represent and the people I talk to are like a fox who pricks its ears up if it can hear a rooster in the distance, because when you mention the words 'transparency' and 'accountability' in local government people take an interest. They want to know what you are talking about, because that is always an issue for them when they have any issues with the council in their area. I think that anything the government can do to improve transparency and accountability will always get the support of the local community.

Local governments in Queensland are governed primarily by the Local Government Act 2009 and the Local Government Electoral Act 2011. This legislative framework contains various provisions designed to promote transparency and accountability by elected officials and candidates for public office in order to maintain public confidence in the system of government. That is the key to whatever we do with regard to accountability and transparency in government. The key is that ratepayers—the people whom local government represents—want to have confidence in their local government body.

If they do not have that confidence it is not in the best interests of elected members, because people are out there finding every opportunity to knock the council itself rather than listening to what council has to say and then, because of the credibility of the council, they are prepared to go along with it.

The provisions aim to ensure that gifts, benefits or donations are appropriately recorded and managed so it is clear to the public who is funding an election campaign and who is giving elected officials gifts and benefits during their term of office. I think that has probably been brought about because over the past few years I have been around Central Queensland I have heard a lot of comment about developers contributing to the financial part of an election campaign and being left in a position where they feel as though they owe the contributor favours while in council. I think that every elected member has to be very careful about what they do here, because it does not take much for people to get the wrong opinion about an elected member. I remember some years ago when I was approached by a person involved in the racing industry who wanted me to get the racing minister to come to the community. I was promised a good night out that would not cost me anything, we would have a lot of fun, and it would give the person who approached me an opportunity to talk to the minister. I said, 'Mate, I'm not interested in anything you want to propose along those lines. I'll get the minister here, but there'll be no dinners and there'll be no free lunch because I don't want to owe you anything.'

Mr Stevens: There's no fun with you, Jim.

Mr PEARCE: No, he really did not appreciate my stand, but that is the way it is.

Mr Russo: No free lunches with Jim.

Mr PEARCE: No free lunches at all, because that is the way it is. If you leave yourself open like that, you never get over it. Even though allegations may be way off the mark, it is like that saying: 'If you throw mud, a little bit sticks.'

An honourable member interjected.

Mr PEARCE: I did not say 'stink'. I said 'sticks'.

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr PEARCE: It depends where you are standing when they throw the mud whether you stink or not.

The Crime and Corruption Commission tabled a report titled *Transparency and accountability in local government* on 11 December 2015. The report concluded that the legislative framework 'does not clearly prescribe how an elected official or local council must treat campaign funds or donations in a range of circumstances'. The CCC made six recommendations for legislative reform with the objectives of increasing transparency in the local government sector, reducing perceptions of corruption and promoting public confidence in the probity of elected officials. I am certainly not going to go through the six recommendations, but they are available for people to look at if they want to go to the net and find the bill.

The government's response to the CCC report was tabled on 20 July 2016, accepting recommendations 1 to 4 and part of recommendation 5 relating to unspent donations. Recommendation 5 relating to the disclosure of the expenditure of donations and recommendation 6 were not supported. The bill gives effect to recommendations 2 to 4 and the part of recommendation 5 supported by government. The explanatory notes state that recommendation 1 will be progressed separately as an amendment to the Associations Incorporation Regulation 1999.

Other members of the committee will speak during this debate. I could mumble away and send people to sleep, but I do not want that to happen. It is getting too close to the most exciting part of the day: the six o'clock debate. I certainly do not want to bore everybody.

I say to the Deputy Premier that I think this is good legislation. It is what the people of Queensland want. I like to be part of a government that is determined that not only local government members but also elected members of the state parliament are transparent and accountable to the people they represent.

Ms LEAHY (Warrego—LNP) (5.19 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate of the Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I thank the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee staff for their assistance with the inquiry and the professionalism with which they have produced report No. 43, especially given the workload the staff had at that time. I also thank the other members of the committee, from both sides of the House, for their participation in the committee process and for their consideration of this bill.

Much of this legislation has been generated from the Crime and Corruption Commission report titled *Transparency and accountability in local government*, tabled on 11 December 2015. The report concluded that the legislative framework does not clearly prescribe how an elected official or local council must treat campaign funds or donations in a range of circumstances. The CCC made six recommendations for legislative reform with the objective of increasing transparency in the local government sector.

The state government's response to the CCC report was tabled on 20 July 2016. It accepted recommendations 1 to 4 and part of recommendation 5 relating to unspent donations. Recommendation 5 relating to the disclosure of expenditure of donations and recommendation 6 were not supported by the state government. These recommendations are included in the committee's report No. 43, for those who are seeking that further detail.

The objectives of the bill are: to improve transparency and accountability in local government electoral disclosure requirements and to remove any confusion; to clarify that the Electoral Commission may continue to recover direct and indirect costs associated with local government elections—that has been a contentious issue on some occasions; and to make amendments to planning and building legislation to give early effect to the planning reforms contained in the Planning Act 2016 and the Planning and Environment Court Act 2016, make various technical and clarifying amendments and address issues arising from several court decisions concerning development approval for building work. That is a particularly complex area of planning information.

The committee made a number of recommendations in relation to the bill. I note that the minister has tabled a response to the committee's recommendations. I think we have fared fairly well with our recommendations. Not all of them were accepted by the government, but I suppose that is the way it is going to be. We cannot agree on everything. The committee also sought some clarification from the minister on certain points. That is contained in the response. I will continue to review that response.

The bill seeks to amend the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 to clarify that incorporated associations are prohibited from holding or receiving campaign funds which are intended to be applied for a member's benefit, either directly or indirectly. This, however, only applies to associations incorporated in Queensland. It does not prohibit interstate incorporated organisations from holding or receiving campaign funds for these purposes. There are concerns that interstate organisations can seek to influence the outcome of local government elections; however, as they are not incorporated under Queensland legislation they will not be subjected to similar requirements as, say, the local ratepayer association because it is an association incorporated in Queensland.

It is important to point out that the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 regulates these issues to an extent by placing obligations on both the donor and the candidate during the disclosure period for the relevant election. Any donations made by a donor and received by a candidate in an election, above the reportable threshold, are required to be disclosed in accordance with the Local Government Act. In circumstances where the donor is not present in Queensland, there is still an obligation on the candidate to record the gift or donation and keep relevant particulars and a prohibition on accepting anonymous donations.

I would be interested, though, in what steps the government might take to ensure incorporated associations—unions or other incorporated groups—outside of Queensland comply with the spirit of the amendments that clarify what incorporated associations in Queensland are prohibited from doing. We live in a global society. There are things like Facebook run funding campaigns. What will happen to ensure those outside of Queensland comply with the spirit of what is being put forward in this legislation?

The LNP members of the committee raised concerns on behalf of the self-funded local government candidates and asked why a self-funded candidate who is a member of a political party and who may—and some do—have borrowed funds to fund their campaign would have to provide any unspent funds back to a political party. Many local governments in my area do not receive gifts or donations; they simply self-fund. That is how they fund their election campaigns. At the hearing, Di McFarlane, Executive Director of Corruption at the Crime and Corruption Commission, advised the committee—

> The CCC is not aware of the genesis of the provision to allow candidates to provide unspent funds to a political party. It may be that the proposal may have unintended consequences which have not yet been considered. The CCC, however, considers that such a proposal may be appropriate where a candidate has been endorsed by a political party to contest the election.

It does seem reasonable that if a political party has formally endorsed a candidate and therefore enabled that candidate to use the party's brand or franchise, or whatever you want to refer to it as, in a local government campaign then the political party does have some buy-in to those unutilised or

unspent funds, especially if it is the brand that may have helped to raise some of those funds. However, this legislation seems to make a massive overreach by referring to members of political parties instead of candidates endorsed by political parties.

At the public hearing the committee sought clarification from the departmental staff on this matter. It was made very clear that the legislation extends to political party members. They could be on all sides of the House—not just conservative or Labor but also members of minor or interstate political parties that are not registered in Queensland. The department were very clear in their explanation to the committee. They said—

The provision in the bill says 'a member of a political party' and it says 'the remaining amounts or part of the remaining amounts'.

It is quite specific that the bill refers to members of political parties. It is certainly an overreach to single out those candidates who are members of political parties. What about those candidates who might be union members and those unions are affiliated with political parties? What about members of activist groups interstate? Why treat members of political parties—on both sides of the House—differently? Surely if it is good enough for political parties it should be good enough for union members and activist groups as well. There is a very interesting distinction being made between members of political parties and those who are endorsed candidates. It is a very unusual distinction to draw in legislation.

Currently the Electoral Commission of Queensland may charge a local government for indirect costs associated with the conduct of local government elections. That has been a somewhat contentious issue for some years. Local governments tend to raise with me issues about what they see money being expended on on some occasions. The committee was advised that the amendment is merely to clarify the continuing arrangement. Submissions to the committee did, however, raise concerns that the ECQ should provide a fixed cost estimate—rather than what has recently occurred, where local governments had to make a guesstimate on the cost of the election which included a potential refund or subsidy for the inclusion of the question relating to four-year terms. That will not happen all the time because we will not have referendums all the time, but there needs to be a better process for local governments so they can budget appropriately.

The government should ensure that ECQ is transparent in the costs it incurs for local government elections and that local governments are not unfairly burdened by cross-subsidisation of the other activities that ECQ may take. There has also been a series of court cases and court decisions in which there have been a number of concerns raised about the relationship between town planning, building rules and the respective roles of councils and private certifiers. There have been particular concerns that the planning provisions relating to character housing may have been undermined by uncertainty in this area. There has been a series of court decisions and the cases seek generally to have a sound approach in identifying the relative responsibilities of certifiers and councils in assessing building work in a way that allows each to effectively address their respective interests.

I note that there has been a number of amendments to this legislation in this regard and I look forward to hearing those amendments in detail. However, I think it is disappointing, as a committee, that those amendments were not brought forward much earlier. This is extremely complex and there is a lot of process involved in this area. I do not think we are doing justice to the amendments and I do not think we are doing justice to the amendments that were tabled in the House today if we do not allow industry organisations the opportunity to scrutinise in full and to question in full the information that is put forward before them. It is a particularly serious matter because the Housing Industry Association raised a number of concerns at a very late stage. At that time the Housing Industry Association said that the concerns that it had could potentially affect tens of thousands of building development applications every year. When we have a situation where the implications are that serious, we really do need to have some strong rigour and the opportunity for industry organisations to go through those amendments and be very careful and very sure about the direction that things are heading in.

It is a complex area, and I think the member for Mansfield alluded to that as well. We should not deal with this matter in an ad hoc manner. It is by far too serious and too complex. I think the industry organisations should have that opportunity for scrutiny. Perhaps the minister may add some further comments in her summing-up around that issue. If she could make it simple for the House, I look forward to—

Ms Trad: You just said they were complex; now you want me to simplify them. Make up your mind!

Ms LEAHY: You are the minister. They are complex. You have to make them simple so people can understand them or, otherwise, put them out for scrutiny.

Ms Trad: I did: my second reading speech!

Ms LEAHY: Put them out for scrutiny much earlier so that the industry organisations can actually work their way through them. The opposition, as indicated, will support the majority of the legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CRAWFORD (Barron River—ALP) (5.32 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill delivers on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to Queenslanders to improve transparency and accountability in political donations at the local government level. As the Premier has stated, Queensland now has some of the most progressive, open and transparent political donation laws in the country. Since March 2017 voters have been able to access information about state government election donations within seven business days of the donation being made. This means that Queenslanders will be informed about who has made election donations, to which candidates and how much they have donated before the next state election. This bill will ensure that voters will have access to real-time information about donations being made to local government candidates before local government polling day.

The Crime and Corruption Commission report *Transparency and accountability in local government* recommended changes be made to Queensland's local government electoral donation legislation to improve transparency and accountability and to remove confusion about disclosure requirements. One of the recommendations of the report was to amend disclosure time frames to make the disclosure of donations more contemporaneous with the receipt of the donation. The CCC found that not having this information available before the election hampers voters' ability to make an informed decision about a candidate on polling day.

Like the Electoral Act 1992, which governs state elections, the bill will provide a head of power for a regulation to prescribe the time frames within which donations must be disclosed. Amendments have recently been made to the Electoral Regulation 2013 requiring returns to be made within seven business days after the donation is made. The Deputy Premier stated in her second reading speech that, subject to the passage of this bill, it is proposed to make amendments to the Local Government Electoral Regulation 2012 to prescribe disclosure time frames that are consistent, where appropriate, with the state election time frames. The bill will address concerns raised by the CCC by ensuring that information about who has made donations to local government candidates and how much they have donated is available to voters before elections. This means that Queensland voters will be able to make informed decisions about the suitability of candidates for election as mayors or councillors before they go to the polls. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PERRETT (Gympie—LNP) (5.35 pm): I rise to speak on the Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. This bill addresses a number of issues about funding and disclosure in local government elections, arrangements with the Electoral Commission of Queensland in recovering costs in local government elections, planning reforms and issues regarding development approvals for building work. As a former local government councillor and deputy mayor for 12 years, I have a working knowledge of these issues and am concerned that there are still a number of issues which the government needs to clarify.

There is potential for overreach in the legislation regarding the requirement to return unspent campaign funds to political parties. This means that some candidates may unreasonably have to return money to political parties which have had no part in the local election. Many candidates in rural and regional Queensland may be members of a party but do not stand for election under the banner of the party or as a party candidate. They fund themselves, and not unusually often borrowing to run their campaigns. In Gympie there are members of political parties who have been elected to council but none of them stood as a party candidate. This practice is not isolated to Gympie. It appears that the Labor government does not appreciate the backgrounds or types of candidates who run for election in local, regional and rural councils.

As conscientious and involved local community representatives, many candidates are members of local community organisations. It is natural that many are also members of other local political parties. They are members of the Greens, the Labor Party, the LNP, the Katter party and One Nation. Unlike the fiercely partisan nature of city politics, many receive support across the political divide. This is why I have concerns with the proposals to credit a political party with any unspent campaign funds from their borrowings all because they happen to be a member of a political party. In effect, this means that they have been forced to donate borrowed funds to a political party.

This legislation originates from the 2015 report of the Crime and Corruption Commission titled *Transparency and accountability in local government* and seeks to implement recommendations 2 to 4 of the report and part of recommendation 5. The CCC report advised on how to improve accountability

in relation to how donations were spent. It sought to align the expenditure to the purpose of the donation—that is, to support a candidate's election campaign. It has recommended a provision to allow unspent money to be donated to a charity. It did not advise donating it to a political party. The executive director of the Crime and Corruption Commission advised the committee—

... clauses 25 and 26 of the bill go beyond the recommendations contained in the CCC's public report ... the CCC's submission supports the proposed changes to the legislation which require candidates to account for unspent funds by either retaining them for future election campaigns and/or donating them to charity. Implicit in this submission is its omission of support for the proposal that the candidates who are members of a political party during the disclosure period may pay the unspent money to a political party.

She told the committee—

The CCC is not aware of the genesis of the provision to allow candidates to provide unspent funds to a political party. It may be that the proposal may have unintended consequences which have not yet been considered. The CCC, however, considers that such a proposal may be appropriate where a candidate has been endorsed by a political party to contest the election.

When we sought clarification from the department of infrastructure at the public hearing, it was made clear that the legislation extends to political party members and not just endorsed candidates. It is clearly an overreach of the intention of the original recommendation. Unfortunately, when it comes to redirecting other people's money into party coffers, the Labor Party has form. Let this legislation not be used as another way to be cavalier about siphoning money into the party's treasury.

The bill will also seek to amend the Associations Incorporation Act 1981. The aim is to clarify that incorporated associations are prohibited from holding or receiving campaign funds that are intended to be applied for a member's benefit, either directly or indirectly. The bill also seeks to clarify the use of official titles in the name of the incorporated or unincorporated associations. Titles such as 'mayor' cannot be used in a name unless it is a controlled entity of a council and, therefore, subject to auditing by the Queensland Audit Office.

The problem is that, in this case, no-one has thought about what happens with organisations that are not incorporated under Queensland legislation. I ask the minister: how does the government intend to ensure that those unions and incorporated associations from outside Queensland comply with the spirit of these amendments? Or maybe I should ask the minister: does the government intend to make them comply?

Another concern I have is about the imposition of costs on the already stretched resources of local governments. Currently, the Electoral Commission of Queensland may charge a local government for indirect costs associated with the conduct of local government elections. Stakeholders raised concerns that the ECQ should provide a fixed cost estimate and be transparent in the cost that it incurs for local government elections. The experience of the last local government election was the inclusion of a state government referendum question. Local governments had to make a guess estimate on the cost of the election, which included a potential refund or subsidy for the inclusion of the costs of the referendum question on four-year terms. This bill is supposed to be about transparency and the ECQ should be transparent in the costs that it incurs for local government elections and not have local ratepayers pick up the tab, once again, for the state government.

A number of planning and building changes are foreshadowed in this legislation. This bill seeks to address issues from several court decisions concerning development approvals for building work, make various technical and clarifying amendments, and make amendments to give early effect to the planning reforms contained in the Planning Act 2016 and the Planning and Environment Court Act 2016. One court case related to council approval for a house in Brisbane where a private certifier was used. No approvals were sought from the Brisbane City Council. Another case related to the demolition of two houses, also in Brisbane, and the definition of 'preliminary approval'. These cases are known as the Gerhardt decisions. My concern is that, in addressing the issues raised, we do not place unreasonable and unfair additional charges on financially stressed workers and families.

The Gerhardt decisions relate to development approvals by private certifiers. By requesting owners to lodge a material change of use for modest changes such as building a carport or back veranda, it will cost the applicant a four or five figure sum. If there is dispute with the council, the home owner will be liable for costs of anywhere between $10,000 or possibly up to $100,000. It is unreasonable—in fact, ridiculous—to charge struggling homeowners for what should be a simple procedure.

Taken together, the cases seek to establish a generally sound approach to identifying the relative responsibilities of certifiers and councils in assessing building work in a way that allows each to effectively address their respective interests. The government believes that it would be desirable to reflect this approach clearly in the law and also establish that, if a development approval is required

from a council, it should be obtained before a certifier decides an application for the building work, as this would minimise the potential for missed council approvals. Council approvals also often provide a valuable context for the detailed design that is necessary to support a later application to a certifier.

It would also be desirable to minimise to the greatest extent possible any duplication between council assessments under development applications and referrals to councils from private certifiers. Although the opposition agrees that clarity is required in this area of the law, it is not convinced that the government's proposals will clarify the issue.

Councils and industry are also concerned about the proposed changes. The Local Government Association of Queensland believes that the attempt to improve legislative certainty around developer approvals arising from the Gerhardt decisions need further improvement and clarity. The Sunshine Coast Council believes that the government's amendments, which are designed to improve certainty, will, in fact, lead to greater uncertainty by attempting to clarify what is a necessary development permit rather than simply ensuring that all development permits were obtained prior to any building approval. The Property Council asserts that the proposed changes to remedy the Gerhardt decisions will add complexity to the approval process.

The other litigant in the Gerhardt cases, the Brisbane City Council, is seeking amendments that would allow it to take action against a developer who has not sought approval from the council as well as a private certifier. That would limit the ability of the new provisions being proposed to ensure that the building development applications sought are approved by the council prior to work commencing.

Without an amendment, these proposals satisfy neither the concerns of councils nor those of industry. They need to be revisited to ensure that they deal with the substantive issue without creating further confusion and uncertainty. That is why, although I support that the bill be passed, I urge the government and crossbench members to oppose the Gerhardt provisions.

Mrs LAUGA (Keppel—ALP) (5.45 pm): The Palaszczuk government's planning reforms will put Queensland on track to have the best planning and development assessment system in Australia. The Planning Bill and associated legislation were passed last year and will come into effect on 3 July 2017. This legislation will support responsible development and ensure genuine public participation in the planning process. The new planning system will enable communities, councils and industry to shape the future of their streets, suburbs and regions. The reforms will ensure that Queensland's planning system is fair, open, transparent and easy to understand.

The Palaszczuk government supports planning reform to deliver a more efficient system that supports investment in jobs, but does not believe that this should come at the expense of community participation or the important role of local government. Since the bills were passed, the government has been working with a range of stakeholders to ensure that the system will be ready to go from day one. In particular, the government has worked in partnership with local governments to make sure that the transition will be as seamless as possible.

In the meantime, the proposed amendments to the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 ensure that communities will have a strong voice in the planning and development decisions that affect the neighbourhoods and communities where they work, live and play. Local government will continue to play the lead role in deciding local development outcomes: what development is permitted and the form in which that development should occur.

In honouring the Palaszczuk government's election promise to Queenslanders that it would listen, the amendments in this bill reintroduce cost provisions to the SPA where each party bears their own costs so that the community is no longer at risk of massive legal bills for appealing development decisions. This amendment delivers on Labor's election commitment to restore rights that were stripped away by the former Newman government. It means that, if residents appeal a development decision, they will not have to wear substantial costs.

The bill also provides for increased penalties for development offences from 1,665 penalty units to 4,500 penalty units. The bill addresses legislative issues with the SPA, the Planning Act 2016 and the Building Act 1975 arising from recent decisions of the Planning and Environment Court and Court of Appeal concerning the assessment of building work by local governments and private certifiers. This process will be clarified so that there is more certainty for all of those involved in planning and development, particularly when it comes to protecting character housing.

The amendment to the Sustainable Planning Act will provide for perpetrators to be prosecuted if it is proven that they committed an offence by carrying out unlawful demolition or development. Currently, the maximum penalty for such an offence is more than $202,000 per property. The amendment in this bill significantly increases this penalty to more than $548,000 per property to provide an even greater deterrent to unlawful development activity.

Further, since the bills were passed in 2016, the government has had the opportunity to test them and refine them with key stakeholders, such as local governments. That is part of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to constant engagement and improvement, ensuring that the Queensland planning system gets better with every step. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.48 pm): I rise to speak to this bill, which covers the local government electoral system and the roles and applicable rules affecting the state government, local councils and building certifiers in the planning and building of our communities.

The local government electoral system, particularly in relation to donations received by local candidates, has recently been well covered and canvassed by Gold Coast news providers, with the Crime and Corruption Commission concluding its hearings into the Gold Coast City Council election in late April. This is the second inquiry into a Gold Coast City Council election that I have been a witness to. In fact, I had, let us call it, a minor supporting role in the witness stand in the previous inquiry that the Crime and Corruption Commission held into the Gold Coast City Council election. That was an absolute waste of time as well. More later.

These hearings follow on from the CCC's 2015 report into transparency and accountability which contains a number of recommendations that this bill seeks to implement surrounding when donations need to be declared, at what monetary amount donations need to be declared and creates consistency with the Councillors' Register of Interests gift disclosures which is $500 for candidates and third parties rather than having two different amounts of $200 or $1,000.

I cannot let this opportunity pass, in the much heralded steps towards transparency by the Labor Party government at this current time in terms of the inquiry that has just been held on the Gold Coast, without drawing to the attention of the House the disclosure return for a candidate or group of candidates in the 19 March 2016 election. I will table both of these documents shortly. This is third-party donations from the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, Construction and General Division, Queensland Northern Territory Divisional Branch: Penny Toland $3,700 gift in kind; Penny Toland $14,761; Penny Toland $172; Penny Toland $46; Penny Toland $8,872. The list goes on to an amount of almost $38,000 donated from this union to one Penny Toland, former Labor candidate on the Gold Coast and supposedly independent candidate for mayor. Guess what? Here is the disclosure by Penny Toland, former Labor candidate for Broadwater on the Gold Coast. Surprise! No disclosure of $38,000 from the unions.

When this Labor government comes in here and says this inquiry is all about transparency and accountability, that does not apply to the unions and Labor candidates. Councillors tell me that there is another candidate who was asked by the CCC to do an interview, refused point blank to do that interview and was not subpoenaed to appear at the inquiry. This inquiry does not have anything to do with what happened at the 2016 elections and who gave what and who did not give anything; this inquiry is all about laying the turf so that this government can bring some new legislation into the House that bans developer funding of the LNP in particular and of all council candidates. Mark my words, that will be in here before the next election comes forward.

What we have is a false inquiry. They called the LNP member mayor of the Gold Coast City Council, Tom Tate, but why was Penny Toland not called to the inquiry? Why was she not a witness when she did not disclose anything? Why? I cannot believe this witch-hunt into transparency on the Gold Coast is being used by this holier-than-thou Labor government trumpeting openness and accountability when their own ex-members do not get called as witnesses to inquire into what happened in the 2016 election. The unions will have complete exemption from any donations in any future legislation coming to this House. I table those two documents.

Tabled paper: Electoral Commission of Queensland Disclosure Return for a Candidate or a Group of Candidates—in the name of Penny Toland, dated 19 March 2016 [681].

Tabled paper: Electoral Commission of Queensland Disclosure Return for a Third Party/Donor—in the name of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, Construction and General Division, Queensland Northern Territory Divisional Branch, for the period 7 February 2016 to 19 March 2016 [682].

Another key recommendation from the CCC report resulted in the bill's creation of a head of power to allow for real-time declarations of local government political donations to match the state donation requirements that already exist. This will be a significant change as noted within the CCC report. Candidates are required to disclose campaign donations within 15 weeks from polling day. There is no requirement to disclose donations on or before polling day. This would seem to hamper voters' ability to make an informed decision about a candidate on polling day. What if we knew if Penny Toland was getting $38,000 from the CFMEU? How would that go down on the Gold Coast in relation to

openness and transparency by this Labor Party trumpeting its new laws in relation to local councils, which they love beating up on? There have been several councils involved in this inquiry. The only outcome, I can assure members, will be that new legislation that I mentioned previously.

Changing the 15 weeks after polling to a real-time electronic register will be a major change to the Local Government Electoral Regulation 2011, providing consistency for Queenslanders to understand when political candidates or representatives must declare items of significance and where our Queensland voters can find that information.

Further, I would like to bring to the attention of the House, as my LNP colleagues have done, my concerns in relation to self-funded local government candidates who are political party members but not political party endorsed candidates, which I believe is a very important distinction. Endorsed candidates are provided with support financially and through non-monetary ways by political parties, or in Labor's case unions they represent, and are only seen in Queensland within the Brisbane City Council jurisdiction. This contrasts sharply with the rest of Queensland that sees only individual candidates who stand on their individual values and platforms, who may or may not have a support team available to them.

The bill as currently drafted does not make such a distinction, with the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning advising that the legislation would apply to political party members and not just endorsed candidates. This poses a concern, as under the legislation self-funded local government candidates should, after the election, arrange for funds to either be held in a special account for future campaigns, be donated to charity or just quietly returned to a political party if the candidate is a member of that party—essentially funding a political party that the original donators may not support or even be aware that the candidate is a member of. I would call on the minister and the Palaszczuk Labor government to clarify what they intend by this change, as with the exemption of Brisbane City Council, no political party runs endorsed candidates for any other council.

Further amendments within the bill provide clarification to the prohibitions on incorporated associations holding or receiving campaign funds where those funds are intended to benefit, either directly or indirectly, the member. However, these prohibitions do not affect interstate organisations or unions, clearly protecting the Palaszczuk Labor government's future donators while they seek to influence local government election outcomes to suit their needs. This is a clear oversight by the minister who has failed the Queensland public and the CCC and should be viewed with apprehension in relation to the Gold Coast City Council and other regional councils that border New South Wales and the Northern Territory. It would be conceivable for an incorporated association to establish just over the border in New South Wales to primarily support a member. I am sure that that will be an outcome of this failed legislation. I hope the minister has plans to ensure that incorporated associations outside of Queensland are required to comply with the spirit of these amendments.

It was with disappointment, almost a feeling of suspenseful woe, that my LNP colleagues and I discussed the Electoral Commission of Queensland cost recovery amendment clarifications. I go back to my time in local government when the local council funded their elections appropriately and got the job done appropriately. Then it got taken over by ECQ. The price tripled and we did not get the results. Members saw at the last local government election the mess that came out of ECQ right across Queensland and the debacle that was the local government election. I see this bill as a precursor for more Labor Party trickery in relation to donations to political parties, making sure those on the other side of the House stay in their union backed seats.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

Mr WALKER (Mansfield—LNP) (6.00 pm): I move—

That this House condemns the Palaszczuk Labor government for cover-ups of systemic failures under its watch.

When Justice Richard Chesterman headed an inquiry into the Health payroll disaster, he made the point that it was the worst failure of public administration in the nation. I am sure that if somebody looked at the McMillan report into juvenile detention in this state they would regard it as the worst failure of a government review process in the nation. It is an absolute shocker. It is a disaster. It is an embarrassment. It has no redeeming features. The inquiry was set up to find out if there was systemic abuse in our detention centres following significant allegations made on television programs. They were worrying allegations of great consequence. An inquiry was set up, as was appropriate. That inquiry was

meant to find out whether there was systemic abuse. What did we get? We got a 600-page report, but six months after the event more than one-third of those pages were redacted, leading to headlines in the *Courier-Mail* such as this one which appeared on 28 April: 'Culture of secrecy'. I table that document.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 28 April 2017, titled 'Culture of secrecy', showing redactions [683].

That lead to yesterday's embarrassing backflip by the Attorney-General, who announced a review into the redactions of her own review, and this morning's *Courier-Mail* cover-page headline 'The great uncoverup', followed by an article headed 'D'Ath Evader'.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 10 May 2017, titled 'The great uncover-up' [684].

This is an embarrassment to our state. It is also an insult to the people of Queensland, those who are in detention centres and the officers who are serving in those detention centres. I refer not only to the heavy redactions in that document but also to the fact that the conclusions of the report simply did not go to what the report was meant to uncover. Why is that? In relation to the systemic failures in our juvenile detention centres, the commissioners could not reach a determination on whether or not there are systemic failures in our detention centres. It is an indictment on the government when it cannot tell us—and yesterday the Premier would not guarantee—that there is not systemic failure or systemic abuse in our youth detention centres.

On the vexed question of 17-year-olds moving into youth detention centres, the inquiry could not determine that the existing centres have the capacity to take 17-year-olds, which was a key question in the debate. Great chunks of the report dealt not with sensitive legal matters but with the important policy matter of whether 17-year-olds should or can conveniently, properly, safely and economically be transferred to youth detention, but that question could not be answered by the very inquiry set up to answer it. That important policy issue was redacted in the report.

In the report, a slab is redacted and then a sentence says, 'These are very sobering statistics'. Why should not the people of Queensland know what those sobering statistics are? Yesterday, the Attorney-General backflipped and said she would review the redactions. What about their other reports that have been redacted? This calls into question whether those reports have also been put out on proper advice.

It is clear that the redactions in the McMillan report were ludicrous. The number of hectares upon which the Moreton Correctional Centre stands was redacted. The number of available beds in one centre was published, but redacted with respect to one of the other centres. The people of Queensland can make no sense of the report. The opposition can make no sense of the report. The bits that were not redacted were inconclusive on the very issues they were meant to determine.

This is par for the course when it comes to the actions of this government. No-one trusts the Premier or the Attorney-General anymore. The Attorney-General has fast gained a reputation as a ditherer who specialises in review and crisis management, but does not seem to get much right along the way. Queenslanders have the right to feel let down and cynical about this government and this Attorney-General. We see secret reports, ministers subverting proper government channels to conduct business in an attempt to avoid scrutiny, jobs for Labor mates, cosying up to the CFMEU and senior officials who have clouds of criminality hanging over their heads and government protection rackets run on a daily basis. Political self-interest in general comes before governing for Queenslanders. Queensland is stagnating. The community is crying out for leadership. It does not deserve the cover-ups that are being dished out by this government.

Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (6.04 pm): What we just heard is a great example of why the member for Mansfield should never fill the position of Attorney-General, because he could not even address his own motion. He did not even identify the systemic failures that we are allegedly covering up.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. If I cannot hear the Attorney-General, I can assure you Hansard cannot either.

Mrs D'ATH: The opposition like to talk about secrecy and redactions. In the LNP's mind, they have redacted the whole of 2012 to 2015. They talk about what happened prior to 2012 and they talk about what happened from February 2015, but apparently nothing happened in between 2012 and 2015. They talk about statistics. Let us talk about statistics! They cannot talk about statistics between 2012 and 2015, because they stopped reporting them. You do not have to talk about the problems when you stop reporting the statistics altogether.

Let us talk about the code black that occurred at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre that took those opposite two years to get a report on. Then not only did they not want to release it; they challenged it in court, because they did not want the children's commissioner at the time releasing it. When it was released—do not worry about the content—they redacted recommendations.

Let us talk about the failed boot camp in Cairns. Only two youths went to that boot camp. They escaped. They committed crimes. One threatened a 59-year-old woman with a knife. The former attorney-general, the member for Kawana, said that he would conduct an investigation. One week later, they suddenly defunded the boot camp and shut it down, but where is the report about those two youths escaping and offending?

This government is willing to front up. We have released reports where we can. We have provided as much information as we can. God forbid a government and the first law officer should actually comply with the law and follow legal advice! We know that is a very novel concept for the LNP. When they were in government, did they follow advice? No, they deliberately ignored it! The Queensland Audit Office's unredacted report shows that they ignored advice and recommendations on procurements and boot camps.

I will stand by our record against theirs any day, because when it comes to secrecy it was the LNP that changed political donations so that you did not see who was giving them money. It was the LNP that sacked an entire parliamentary crime and corruption committee, because they did not like what they were saying.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. There are members trying to talk over the top of the Attorney-General. I do not mind a reasonable interjection, but when members continually talk with the sole intention of distracting the speaker, it is not on.

Mrs D'ATH: In government, the LNP was all about cover-ups. The safe night out expert panel wrote a report with recommendations about what to do with liquor trading hours. Was it ever released? No! Would that be because they actually recommended winding back liquor trading hours and the member for Kawana did the complete opposite by removing the moratorium disallowing extended hours applications beyond midnight? They had a flood of applications, which meant that pubs and clubs throughout our suburbs were able to trade till five o'clock in the morning. They ignored their own expert panel's report, which never saw the light of day. Those opposite have absolutely no credibility.

We conducted this inquiry. We called it on. We were willing to have these incidents and these serious allegations investigated. We took advice and we released the report. We are happy to take the criticism and have it properly examined again. But you know what? At least as an Attorney-General I am willing to do that. I will take that independent advice, but what I will not do is interfere. I will not do what those opposite did and never—

Mr Walker interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I apologise, Attorney. Member for Mansfield, you have had a pretty good go. I would prefer not to have your name on the list.

Mrs D'ATH: Those opposite want to talk about the cover-up of systemic failures in this report. Have a look at when most of the incidents occurred. If they want to talk about how youth detention centres were operating in 2012, 2013 and 2014 then they should talk about their record in terms of how youth were treated in 2012, 2013 and 2014 under their watch and the sort of staff they brought into those centres. They talk about systemic failures, but they do not want to talk about their record. They do not want to talk about what they did. They have no credibility on this issue. We are the ones who brought transparency and accountability back to government.

(Time expired)

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (6.10 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by my colleague the member for Mansfield. You cannot trust Annastacia Palaszczuk or any of her ministers, none more so than the Minister for Child Safety, who has made an art form of the cover-up. Watergate has nothing on the member for Waterford when it comes to hiding information and hiding the facts. Whether it is washing data, hiding reports or using thousands of dollars to block access to information, this embattled child safety minister takes the prize as the queen of the cover-up.

This is a minister who hides behind veiled secrecy and unseen legal advice to cover-up her own failings. All over our state children are being let down because of the cover-up and concealment. Right now, tonight, there are kids caught in child safety backlogs who need our help. Worse still, it was only

after secret internal data was leaked to the opposition that it came to light that in any given month there could be thousands of children caught on a secret waiting list awaiting assessment before their cases are even classified.

For 12 months I have called on this Labor minister to do something and to do it urgently. I have called on the minister to fix the backlogs. I have called on her to be up-front and accountable, but today Queensland children still have the same Labor minister letting them down. This is the same minister who is backed by a Premier who promised to release the expert panel report into child safety's handling of the death of a little boy—a report that has now been buried forever behind legal advice—a report into Child Safety's actions and inactions in its handling of his case. What happened to protecting children? Under Annastacia and Labor it is now about protecting incompetent ministers.

Mrs D'Ath interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock! Attorney-General, I have counselled your opponent, the shadow Attorney-General. I would urge you to also exercise some caution.

Ms BATES: Worse still, we have child safety officers drowning under case loads too big for them to handle. When the minister says statewide average case loads are at 18, do not believe a word she says. What she will not say is that all the cases from interstate that Child Safety have to manage are not even included on the books.

When I asked through a question on notice what the official breakdown by child safety service centres was—similar to a question asked back in 2005, which, by the way, received a response—instead of giving an answer like the previous minister did to the same question, this minister said it was reported on statewide only and quarterly. What changed between 2008 and 2017? The cover-up by Labor has just become worse. This is further evidence that the minister is happy to cover-up the facts or is so lazy she will not even ask the question and require the department to answer the question.

We have asked her in questions on notice what the case loads are for investigation and assessment teams around the state—something the minister should be monitoring if she were serious about tracking backlogs. Do members know what she said? We received nothing but a pathetic response claiming it is not part of the department's regular reporting. That is something of a standard response when it comes to answering questions on child safety matters.

What we have is a Labor government plainly refusing to be open and accountable. They are still having reports redacted or just not released at all. They still have at-risk kids not being seen on time. The December data is unfortunately more of the same under this Labor minister. Some 62 per cent of all abuse investigations were still not being actioned within required time frames. Worse still, we saw Labor's embattled child safety minister trying to raise the spectre of ice use among abusive parents as an explanation for her failed management. Whichever way we look at it, hundreds of at-risk children are still not being seen within the required 24-hour time frame.

Investigations requiring a 10-day response are stuck at a record low action rate of 26 per cent. More than 10,000 investigations dragged on longer than the required 60 days, leaving children and families in limbo and putting greater strain on investigative teams. Labor still has no answer to the record 9,262 children in foster care. The number of abuse investigations has jumped to 22,976, putting more pressure on an already stretched system. These are some of the worst figures since before the commission of inquiry into child safety. Alarmingly, more carers than ever before walked away from the system—some 1,392 carers exited.

It is no coincidence the minister dropped this data on the same day as an ice summit, and late in the day. Queenslanders do not need more washed data from this incompetent minister. They are sick to death of the minister putting it through a spin cycle. They want the truth and they want action. What is more, we do not need cover-up by cost. RTI means right to information, not refusal of information. This is a minister whose department blocked access to four excel spreadsheets of internal child safety data with a $4,000 cost. Queenslanders cannot trust Annastacia Palaszczuk and this Labor government when it comes to protecting abused kids.

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) (6.16 pm): I am very pleased to contribute to this debate tonight. Is it not interesting that we have just heard the member for Mudgeeraba talk about a cover-up when her own position is entirely unclear and contradictory. When asked recently by Steve Austin on ABC Radio about the release of the report into the death of Mason Jet Lee, the member said that she would take the advice of the DPP if she were in government. We know that that advice says that that report should not be released until after the trial—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock! We are not going to have a debate. Member for Mudgeeraba, if you find something offensive you know what the appropriate wording is.

Ms FENTIMAN: At first she said she would take the advice of the DPP. When asked again she said that the opposition would release the report. When Steve Austin attempted several times to confirm the member's position she said that she would not prejudice a fair trial. One cannot hold all these positions at the same time. I table the transcript of that interview. If members have time, it is a cracker of a read.

Tabled paper: Transcript from ABC Radio Brisbane—Mornings with Steve Austin, 11 April 2017, with member for Mudgeeraba, Ms Ros Bates MP [685].

I am happy to put this government's record on transparency and accountability against that of those opposite any day of the week. Let us take a minute to have a look at the record of the Newman-Nicholls government when it comes to transparency. Let us not forget that one of the first things they did when they came to government was gag community organisations. They literally covered the mouths of those hardworking front-line community organisations that advocate on behalf of some of the most vulnerable people. They literally covered their mouths.

The Queensland Law Society president at the time said 'community organisations who are at the coalface of service provision have the professional know-how and practical experience to intelligently inform government policy'. He went on to say that it 'encroaches on the right to freedom of opinion and expression and only makes for poorer legislative outcomes'.

They were not just a government focused on cover-ups; they also used their new-found power vindictively. Some $2 million was cut from the Queensland Association for Healthy Communities after they spoke out about the rights of gay and lesbian couples. St Vincent de Paul were told by media release that $350,000 was cut from their funding after they allegedly breached this contractual requirement. I am so proud that one of the first things this government did when we came to power was remove those undemocratic gag clauses. While they were busy covering the mouths of community organisations, they also went about cutting other organisations—$40,000 was cut from DVConnect and $150,000 was cut from the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre on the Gold Coast.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I apologise for interrupting, Minister. Member for Mudgeeraba, you have had an opportunity to speak. You are now trying to speak over the top of the minister. It is not on.

Ms FENTIMAN: They did all of this quietly and hoped that everyone was looking the other way. The ultimate cover-up here is the crocodile tears from those opposite about reviews into child deaths not being released. Since I have been the Minister for Child Safety, I have ensured that annual reports into the deaths of children known to my department—

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I apologise for interrupting, Minister. Member for Burleigh, you are warned under standing order 253A. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action.

Ms FENTIMAN: I have always released the annual reports into child deaths. Anyone can go to the department of communities' website and see those reports. There is one missing. There is one annual report into child deaths that has never seen the light of day—that is, the 2013-14 Child Death Case Review Committee report. Why? Because the Newman-Nicholls government removed the requirement to publish this report from legislation. That is right; they legislated their way out of transparency. In what they described as 'streamlining', they removed the section of the act that required publication of a child death report that would inform the community of any concerning trends developing in relation to these tragic cases.

During the debate of that legislation, the then child safety minister, the member for Aspley, said that a key 'track' of the bill was to 'refocus oversight on learning'. While the department may take learnings from those child death annual review reports, it means that the general public of course were kept in the dark about any of the learnings from those reports. Despite their legislation removing the requirement to publish these reports, this government continues to do so. I have made a commitment that I will continue to publish those reports.

The member for Mudgeeraba continues to say that the public are sick of politicians who are all talk and no action. Well, they are—sick of an opposition that is all talk but has no ideas to fix the system.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (6.21 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to this motion moved by the shadow Attorney-General. When Labor was first elected they promised a government of 'integrity and accountability'. We heard it again today from the Deputy Premier on the

electoral disclosure bill that we were debating this afternoon. Labor's term in government in the 55th Parliament has been defined by cover-ups and blame shifting. As we have heard, there has been a culture of failures and furphies festering not just in child protection, as mentioned by the member for Mudgeeraba, but also in our all-important health system, as well as in juvenile justice, as the shadow Attorney-General, the member for Mansfield, mentioned in his contribution.

It is obvious that on this side of the House we are 'health friends' and on that side of the House they are 'health frauds'. We only have to look at the health minister's track record. It is clear that there is no-one more seasoned than the health minister when it comes to cover-ups and blame shifting. In fact, just this afternoon the health minister published a media release which can only be described as crocodile tears. Once again, he claims that the federal budget has cut $10 billion—just like Austin Powers; $10 billion—from Queensland Health, but this was an unfunded promise by federal Labor, just as the education promises were when Bill Shorten was out there doing his 27 special deals and talking about money into the future that was unfunded. Maybe the health minister would like to take that up with Bill Shorten himself, the opposition leader, who went to the last election not necessarily agreeing to put all of that money into health and education because it was unfunded. Labor must take Queenslanders for fools.

We have a minister who is not even prepared to answer questions in this House. I table a number of answers to questions on notice about our health system which, according to the minister, do not deserve proper answer.

Tabled paper: Answers to questions on notice No. 60 of 2017 and No. 175 of 2017 [686].

I want to refer to them. I asked on 28 February 2017 about issues in 2016-17 to date. The answer I received was that 'information pertinent to the Member's question is contained in the annual reports of the Director of Mental Health'. That is not appropriate.

Mr Dick: They're on the public record.

Mr LANGBROEK: The annual report does not come out until October. I take that interjection. Another question I asked was: how many ambulance officers and paramedics were employed at each ambulance station around Queensland as at 1 February 2017? I was told that I will get that in the annual report and state budget papers. That just shows the lack of respect for this parliament and the people of Queensland that the health minister has. I have tabled those, as I mentioned. Accountability has well and truly gone out the window under the Labor government.

Not only does the minister think that Queenslanders do not deserve answers to questions on notice; he also thinks that Queenslanders do not deserve answers about significant issues facing our communities. We are still waiting for the report into the Moorooka bus incident, and we are yet to see the latest annual report to the Director of Mental Health for 2015-16, which is being kept secret by the health minister.

The minister has even been hiding the waiting list for the waiting list. Under Labor up to 2012, people were marked 'never to be seen'—never to be seen at all. At the Gold Coast and at the RBWH, they were marked 'never to be seen'. That was the record of Labor up to 2012. The Attorney-General asked what happened before 2012; we know that. People were marked 'never to be seen'. The minister always talks about long waits but he never discloses the waiting list for the waiting list.

For the first time in our state's history, a hospital and health service board was forced to resign because of the state government's lack of oversight. I asked about this issue at Cairns Hospital last year. It was not until months later when the HHS was $18 million in debt—unprecedented in our history—that the minister gave in and confirmed that there was an issue.

That is not all. Under Labor, our mental health system is quite literally operating behind closed doors. We have victims and families of victims who have been locked out of the Mental Health Review Tribunal's processes. We have victims and families of victims left without answers after rushed amendments were put through the House to validate 11,000 cases which were presided over by an unqualified member in the Mental Health Court without a review. We have reports of breaches and serious incidents that have all occurred behind the closed doors of mental health facilities. Yet the minister does not see anything wrong with the mental health system in its current form. The minister was eager to push through these bandaid fixes to cover up a fundamentally broken system. We have nurses crying out for help because they are experiencing systematic bullying within this broken system.

The minister is more than happy to front up for soft stories and selfies, but he disappears and hands it over to the HHSs when it comes to the real issues. We are 'health friends' on this side; they are 'health frauds' on the other side. The government should be condemned for the culture of cover-ups and blame shifting.

(Time expired)

Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (6.26 pm): Why don't I start with a report to the parliament on the waiting list for the waiting list? There were 104,000 people waiting longer than clinically recommended when we came to government—left behind by the LNP. What is it now? It is 52,000—cut by 50 per cent in two years. That is the first report I will give to the parliament.

What about the mental health system? I will tell you this much about the member for Surfers Paradise: he has more front than David Jones. They produced a bill in government that they introduced into the parliament which substantively became the Mental Health Bill that we moved through the parliament. They then introduced it as a private member's bill. We introduced it to the parliament. Hold the front page—each and every one of them, including the member for Surfers Paradise, voted for that legislation, reforming the law in Queensland. Each and every one of those members opposite voted for it. I will not accept this hypocrisy from the member for Surfers Paradise that the mental health system is broken when they supported the legislation that is the law in Queensland.

The member for Surfers Paradise might smirk about the Mental Health Review Tribunal. What about the member that he reappointed in 2014—the member that he reappointed who was not qualified and was involved in 2,200 decisions that were wrong and that were not lawful? We had to amend the law. They would not even support the amendment to change the law to rectify the problems in Queensland.

What about mental health reports? Let us talk about mental health reports. Let us talk about not a secret report but a report that was tabled in this parliament—the Expert Clinical Reference Group's report into the Barrett Adolescent Centre which recommended that the Barrett centre should not be closed without replacement. The then minister for health did not even read the report. That was what was concluded by the royal commission from the evidence. He did not read it when it was tabled in front of him in the parliament. He did not read it after he met the young patients of the Barrett centre who were distressed about its impending closure, who begged him to keep it open. That government ignored the report. They, including the man who purports to be the shadow health minister, ignored the report and they closed the centre without replacement, with catastrophic consequences.

What about LNP health service investigations? The LNP commissioned their own health service investigations into some issues. They commissioned eight reports. Five were never released. They never saw the light of day. Perhaps there were good reasons for that. Perhaps that was because of legal advice—legal advice that people like the Attorney-General, the Minister for Communities and I take seriously, because we are a government that believes in the rule of law and believes in acting on advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions as well as the Crown Solicitor. I will not—

Mr McEachan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Minister, I apologise for interrupting; you are on a roll. Member for Redlands, you are making numerous interjections. I find that they are designed to simply disrupt the minister. If you persist, you will join the list. I call the minister.

Mr DICK: I will not accept the hypocrisy from the member for Surfers Paradise about answers to questions on notice. He answered questions by referring members of the then opposition to annual reports. In fact, he did not even answer some questions. He said, 'Put in a right to information request.' That was his response to questions on notice.

The LNP complaining about transparency is like Vladimir Putin complaining about cybercrime. It is complete hypocrisy. This is from the team that redacted the entire Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee. They sacked them all in the middle of the night. They redacted the head of the Ethics Committee that they themselves appointed. That is their form. Now they bring a motion in here about cover-ups.

This Palaszczuk Labor government stands in the same tradition as all Labor governments. It was Labor governments that introduced freedom of information laws to this state. It was Labor governments that introduced right to information laws in this state. It is this Labor government that reduced the threshold for disclosures—which was $12,500 so they could protect their mates—to $1,000 and we did it against LNP opposition. We have introduced the additional reform of real-time disclosure.

This government understands and respects the separation of powers. We will always give due weight and proper regard to the advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Crown Solicitor. We will always do that, and any qualified lawyer, including the member for Clayfield and the member for Mansfield, should do exactly the same.

Our response is in deep contrast to the member for Mansfield. Remember that May interview last year, now known universally as the 'train wreck', where he spent 30 minutes trying to avoid the doctrine of the separation of powers? That is what would happen if he were the Attorney-General. This government being lectured to by the LNP is like being lectured on transparency by—

(Time expired)

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

AYES, 38:

LNP, 38—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Elmes, Emerson, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

NOES, 39:

ALP, 39—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Russo, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

Pairs: Power, Bleijie; Ryan, Simpson; Byrne, Frecklington.

Resolved in the negative.

Sitting suspended from 6.40 pm to 7.40 pm.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL (TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1070, on motion of Ms Trad—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (7.40 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Although there are many very important amendments contained within this bill, including those around transparency and accountability, which are some of the hallmarks of the Palaszczuk Labor government, I wish to speak specifically to the message the bill conveys about how the balance of how development is undertaken in our communities needs to be swung back in favour of community expectations.

By introducing provisions to help restore confidence in the system, the passage of the Planning Act last year was a major step forward in meeting this commitment. However, because the implementation of the Planning Act is necessarily deferred to allow local governments, the development industry and the state to be ready for its commencement, and time needs to be allowed for that, it is important to bring forward some of those provisions into the current legislation, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009. The provisions that I would like to speak to are those which relate to temporary local planning instruments, increased penalty costs and restoration of appeal rights so that bona fide objectors do not have to fear cost orders being awarded against them. The bill will give clarity about when development approvals are required from local governments for building work before a private certifier can approve the work.

I can tell members of the House right now that these are very, very important matters for an electorate like Bulimba. They are important to the residents of Power Street, Norman Park, who woke up one day late last year to find that two character houses in their street had been inappropriately demolished and that there was absolutely nothing they could do about it because of loopholes under the current planning and building legislation that lead to uncertainty about when approvals are required from both the local government and a private certifier for some building work.

This bill will affect not just the residents of Norman Park but also the residents right across my community, including those who come through my door on an all-too-regular basis having woken up one morning to find an inappropriate development was going up next door to them or in their street or in their neighbourhood. Even though this development was going to affect their personal quality of life or the amenity of their local area, they had literally no capacity to object to it, unless they were willing to take the risks of paying court costs for all concerned.

Appropriate development is a really key issue for an electorate like mine. We accept that development is a fact of life and that increased density is a reality for an inner-city area. However, if there is not an appropriate framework for development, such as will occur under this government's Planning Act, if we are not absolutely vigilant in our communities about ensuring it meets the parameters of our local neighbourhood plans, if local residents do not feel like they have any say about what goes on in their own community, if we cannot protect the heritage which defines areas like ours, then we are simply not meeting community expectations. That is why this government has made a commitment to make the planning system more open and transparent and to restore the community's trust in the system, trust that has been eroded over a number of years.

I have listened to the speeches of those opposite and I realise that no-one on the other side has any interest in protecting the tin and timber of our inner-city suburbs, the very heritage of our communities and the things that define our local communities. I say to the people of the Bulimba electorate that those opposite do not care. They have told us over and over again through their speeches—and it does not matter what legislation we are debating, whether it is the Nature Conservation Act or legislation protecting national parks—that they have no interest and no understanding of the inner city. I can tell the House that the protection of our heritage areas is very, very important.

The provisions under the Planning Act allow an urgent temporary local planning instrument to be given even more timely effect than currently exists and closes the door on unscrupulous developers attempting to rush an application before the rules are changed to fix the problem. If this had been in place, the Power Street, Norman Park residents would not be in the situation they are in now. Increased penalty units introduced under the Planning Act bring deterrents for development offences into line with community expectations. No longer will a developer be tempted to knock down part of our heritage or clear vegetation without approval, simply because the penalties are so weak that it makes economic sense to do so. Finally, the restoration of the principle of each party meeting its own costs in an appeal restores the ability for concerned members of the community to legitimately challenge planning decisions without the fear of being sent broke by having to pay the court costs of a cashed-up developer. These are all excellent provisions that will commence later this year under the Planning Act. However, to avoid current loopholes being exploited between now and then, they should be given immediate effect in the current planning legislation.

I would like to thank the Deputy Premier and the members of the committee who have supported these amendments going through now. It sends a message to the people in my community that we are listening to the concerns they have raised with me over and over and over again. They are interested in preserving the quality of life in our community and some of the things that we hold most dear, and we are listening. I will be telling them very clearly that the LNP members on the other side of this House are definitely not listening. These provisions will be hugely welcomed in my community, and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr SORENSEN (Hervey Bay—LNP) (7.47 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Local government is where I started my political career. These amendments seek to implement a number of recommendations made by the Crime and Corruption Commission report from 2015 entitled *Transparency and accountability in local government*. The bill allows a head of power, such as the CEO, to allow real-time declarations of local government political donations, as per state donation requirements. There is a change to the third-party election disclosure donations threshold set at $500 from $200 for candidates and $10,000 for third parties. It will now be the same as the threshold for a councillor's register of interests gift disclosure under the existing act.

The bill also says that donations received by self-funded local government candidates should be treated in the following manner after the election—be held in a special account for a future campaign, be returned to a political party if the candidate is a member of a party or be donated to a charity. There are some concerns about this because, as it reads, it would mean that any unspent funds from local government candidates who are members of a political party but who are not endorsed candidates would have to send the money back to the political party. The Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning advises that the legislation extends to political party members, not just the endorsed candidate. This draws a long bow in its scope, by referring to ordinary members of political parties instead of candidates endorsed and funded by political parties. Therefore, the minister must advise what the intent of this change is because no political party endorses candidates other than in the Brisbane City Council elections. There needs to be a clarification between members of political parties and endorsed candidates of political parties.

There is also a question about the amendments to the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 to clarify that incorporated associations are prohibited from holding or receiving campaign funds which are intended to be applied for a member's benefit whether directly or indirectly. We have concerns that elections can be influenced by interstate unions in our local government elections. The minister needs to advise what steps are being taken to ensure that the incorporated associations outside of Queensland are required to comply with the intent of these amendments.

In relation to ECQ cost recovery, the ECQ can charge a local government for indirect costs incurred by local government elections. The committee advises that this bill amends the act to clarify this arrangement. I believe that ECQ should provide a fixed cost estimate instead of the recent guesstimates of the cost of the election. This includes a potential refund or subsidy for the inclusion of the question of four-year terms. I was in council before the ECQ took over and I think the cost of running an election nearly trebled. The cost of running an election went from about one hundred and something thousand to about $400,000 to $500,000. That was just for the Hervey Bay City Council. It is incredible how it bumped up the cost of that election.

I turn to the planning and building changes, in particular the Gerhardt decision. In the submissions to the committee a number of comments were made and they were quite negative. To name just a few, the LGAQ were concerned about the consistency and the number of amendments; Sunshine Coast said that neither the bill nor the proposed planning regulations achieve the objectives; and Moreton Bay said that changes needed to be made. The HIA had concerns that the proposed amendments are intended to provide clarity around one issue but may have unintended consequences in other areas.

Today we talk a lot about housing affordability and things like that, but I think it is difficult to keep adding red tape to the town planning schemes. Sometimes it takes months or years for some planning decisions to be made. It is the cost of holding those properties and associated costs that keeps bumping up the price of developing some of this land for housing development. We just cannot keep pushing up the price of houses and land and adding more and more red tape into the equation, especially considering the time frame that some of this takes, which is unbelievable. That just pushes up the price of the land. We have to think about the future for our young people and what their housing needs will be. We have to make sure we do have land so at the end of the day we can give these young people the opportunity to own a home.

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—PHON) (7.53 pm): I rise to speak to the local government electoral and other legislation amendment bill. In response to the Crime and Corruption Commission report of 2015, the bill seeks to make a number of amendments to a number of acts including the Local Government Electoral Act 2011, on which I wish to focus my contribution to the debate. Of particular interest is this bill's intention to ensure the disclosure of donations is made with greater immediacy at the time of donation by the candidate and others required to make that disclosure. A real-time online system to disclose local government election donations will be implemented. The candidate and third-party election disclosure donation threshold is to be set at $500. Any unspent campaign donations will either be held for campaign purposes at a later date, returned to the relevant political party or transferred to a registered charity.

This debate is particularly timely given we know that the Crime and Corruption Commission recently recommended a public inquiry into two federal members of parliament and a number of mayors and councillors from three South-East Queensland councils over what the CCC have referred to as 'possible criminal offences' during last year's local government elections. The Crime and Corruption Commission is conducting preliminary investigations into claims of candidate misconduct during the Gold Coast, Ipswich and Moreton local government elections. It was interesting to hear on the first day of the hearing that the Queensland Electoral Commissioner, Walter van der Merwe, said there had been an upsurge in complaints about the conduct of candidates in the 2016 local government elections. It seems that the conduct of these candidates certainly includes the way in which the issue of donations is dealt with by parties, their donors and candidates in the lead-up to and during that election campaign.

Former Turnbull government minister Mr Stuart Robert has revealed some very creative candidate funding initiatives that he was involved with prior to the council elections. He has given evidence that he wanted funding made available to the council election campaigns of two former staffers to keep Labor out of his electorate. Oddly enough, though, the funding to be made available to those two candidates was from LNP funds even though they were putting themselves forward as Independents. These funds were to be channelled from the aptly named Fadden Forum—aptly named because Mr Roberts occupies the seat of Fadden—which is a local Liberal National Party fundraising entity.

During his evidence, Stuart Robert admitted that he lobbied the Fadden Forum to secure funds for employees Kristyn Boulton and Felicity Stevenson for their campaigns during that election. He apparently told those two candidates that he would seek funds from the Fadden Forum to help their election campaign and that he needed the approval of the LNP party heavyweights. Ultimately, each of those two LNP staffers masquerading as Independent candidates paid $30,000 each towards their election campaigns. There must have been a great deal of creative accounting taking place at the LNP Fadden Forum. As I have just given a summary of how our friends in the LNP distribute their funds in an attempt to influence election results, I now turn my attention to the Labor Party.

Recently I read a book which was published just after the US elections late last year. One of the contributors to the book was Mr Graeme Haycroft. During his industrial relations career, Graeme employed over 2,000 people across 150 businesses. Like a lot of people, Graeme wrote, 'It always pays to follow the money.' He continued—

The unions, by virtue of their legally privileged monopoly, collect money from members. This money is then used to support the Labor Party, who does whatever is necessary to maintain the union monopoly, and effective compulsory membership of members, so the funds keep flowing.

As reported in May last year, unions also bankrolled so-called Independent council candidates in the last Queensland government election. It was revealed that the hard left union provided funding and volunteers for Independents on the Gold Coast and neighbouring councils ahead of the 19 March election. The Electrical Trades Union spent at least $70,000 on the Gold Coast and in Logan and Toowoomba. Apparently the Gold Coast mayoral candidate Penny Toland, a former ALP candidate, received a $10,000 donation from the electoral division of the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union, yet she told voters she was backed by her family and friends. We now know that the CCC is also probing recent revelations of expenditure of over $37,000 undeclared by the CFMEU, the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union—expenditure provided to a Labor aligned candidate. We should never forget that the vast majority of funds used by political parties comes from donations and union dues. Those donors and the workers paying their dues deserve to be able to trust the parties in terms of where those donations are channelled.

Mr PYNE (Cairns—Ind) (7.59 pm): I rise to also support the government's bill. I note the member for Buderim's comments and share his concerns about the state of local government here in Queensland. In 2015 I called for an inquiry into local government in Queensland stating that bullying, nepotism and corruption were rife. This was something I did immediately after being elected. I also raised these matters with the minister, and we all know what happened. This resulted in me resigning from the Labor Party. I was standing for principles of openness and accountability, transparency in local government and honesty, and I maintain those principles. I honestly believe that I play an important role in exposing some aspects of the local government 'underbelly' here in Queensland.

I would like to make a brief reference to the ALP in Queensland. ALP rules require an MEC—a municipal executive committee—to be formed. In fact, section 31 says that an MEC should be established for each ward of the city of Brisbane and for such local authorities as may be approved by the administrative committee. The purpose of an MEC is to conduct election campaigns and discuss local government matters. The ALP has failed its members in Ipswich by not enforcing its own party rules, and they have done this deliberately so that the mayor, deputy mayor and all ALP councillors virtually do what they like. They do their own fundraising outside the ALP and they get away with it. I do not think anyone could deny that they are very slick operators indeed. It is disgraceful, and I refer to evidence given at CCC hearings. How many other cities, towns and shires across Queensland with ALP councillors also have no ALP MEC operating? I think the government should answer this. Will the government make sure that councillors who are ALP members strictly abide by the rules of the ALP and, indeed, the law of Queensland? What about councillors who raised funds—maybe tens of thousands of dollars—who have retired or lost? Have they simply pocketed this money? Has it been turned into private superannuation accounts? Have they bought cars or houses? A number of issues remain unaddressed.

I would like to again refer to Dr Timothy Prenzler's work concerning 'grey corruption'. Dr Prenzler has carried out an extensive project funded by Transparency International, the New South Wales Ombudsman and the Integrity Commissioner. The project is to strengthen Australia's national integrity systems, focusing on areas such as abuse of entitlements, pork-barrelling, political donations and undue influence, gifts and benefits, as well as excessive wasteful expenditure. I would commend Dr Prenzler's work to the government. I would also recommend Dr Cameron Murray's recent book *Game of Mates*, which also covers the use of favours by those seeking money and power.

Many of the concerns that I first raised in 2015 have been addressed by a number of aspects of government legislation which has come forward. More recently in this bill I support real-time disclosure in particular. I think that is a very positive step forward. All too often we see the 'team', if you like, that has won on council lodge its return after the election and we realise property developers and whatnot have funded the campaign, but of course it is too late and after another three and three-quarters years the public have well and truly forgotten what happened. I think real-time disclosure is important because we live in a very immediate world, and making people accountable now has to be a good thing. The work in regard to incorporated associations is very good, and I do not completely understand the concerns around self-funding. If you are self-funding your election presumably you are going to spend your money on your election, and I do not know why you would have large amounts that remain unspent.

Where to from here? I believe that banning donations from property developers would be a big step towards improving the system. We must also address the fact that the Crime and Corruption Commission in Queensland still investigates less than three per cent of the complaints they receive. I would also note Operation Belcarra, which has been launched and is carrying out investigations into a number of councils. Who knows what more dirty linen will be revealed there?

There are many other contributing factors that need to be acknowledged and addressed in local government, and I will continue to agitate in this space and call more broadly for an ICAC inquiry into public administration in the state of Queensland. There are some steps in this bill that are definitely moving forward.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr PYNE: I take that interjection about the CFMEU. This is new to me. Certainly as a former councillor in Far North Queensland and North Queensland I never witnessed any union money in local government campaigns, but if it is an issue—as appears to be the case—then that also needs to be addressed and I would not shy away from that either. I think we are on the pathway to greater transparency and accountability and we have to ensure that we keep going. I commend the bill to the House.

Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (8.06 pm), in reply: Can I at the outset thank all of the members who have contributed to the debate on the Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I particularly thank my ministerial colleague the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships for his contribution and partnership in this endeavour.

In my opening remarks I emphasised that Queensland now has some of the most progressive, open and transparent political donation laws in this country. This bill, together with the amendments we are putting forward, perfectly illustrates this Labor government's determination to establish and maintain very high levels of transparency, accountability and integrity for Queensland voters in local government elections. The bill, together with the amendments we are putting forward, also further delivers on the Labor government's commitment to innovative and fair planning and building legislation through the early commencement of key planning reforms, addressing issues in the relationship between building and planning approvals and further clarifying aspects of the legislation due to commence later this year.

This government heeds good advice and listens to the views of stakeholders. We have responded positively to three recommendations of the parliamentary committee taking into account the views of submitters, and the committee reflected on those recommendations. During this debate we have provided our reasoning to the House in response to the two recommendations the government does not support. We have also provided further clarification about two additional matters at the request of the committee.

I now want to address the planning amendments and the comments made during the second reading debate, particularly in relation to the LNP opposition to the so-called Gerhardt amendments. I consider that these amendments, the so-called Gerhardt amendments, are absolutely essential to protect valued character houses for our communities. I do note the concerns expressed by the member for Mansfield with respect to how to ensure the proper balance is struck between planning and building matters. While I propose to proceed with these amendments tonight, I have requested that my department establish a working group with local government and industry stakeholders to identify and agree if any further refinements to the relevant legislative provisions are warranted. I have given my department three months to provide me with a report that I can table in the House of the working group's conclusions. I believe that this will ensure that the protections for our character housing with the current amendments take immediate effect, with the assurance that further work will be undertaken with the stakeholders to identify any further refinements. I hope that this is an approach that the opposition finds

favourable and I hope to see their support for these amendments here tonight, because I think they are essential and critical for protecting our character housing. These amendments came at the express request of the Brisbane City Council.

I table for the benefit of the House the letter which originated the work in relation to these amendments around clarifying building and planning approvals within our approval system.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 10 June 2016, from Councillor Julian Simmonds to the Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment, Hon. Jackie Trad, seeking assistance on an inconsistency in the application of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and the Building Act 1975 [691].

I think these amendments are critical. I hope we will see them adopted here tonight. If there are further refinements to be made, we will work collaboratively to identify them. I do not want us leaving this House tonight with fewer protections or loopholes available for the type of unauthorised demolition work we have seen in Brisbane suburbs and all over the state to continue. I know that there are many people in the House who feel very passionately about it, as do I.

I would now like to go through in a little bit of detail the other concerns or issues raised by members opposite. I was a bit confused by some of the remarks of the members for Glass House and Warrego. There seemed to be some confusion as to whether our amendments did not go far enough or whether they were an overreach. They used both terms to describe the amendments we are proposing tonight. I will step through some of the issues they raised and the government's response in relation to them.

In relation to incorporated associations outside of Queensland participating in electoral fundraising and campaigning for political organisations, can I say that the unique thing about being part of a state legislature is that we have responsibility for legislation within the boundaries of our state. We cannot dictate what incorporated associations outside of Queensland do. That is a fact. I would like to be able to pass laws that will have some sort of power over incorporated associations in other jurisdictions, but, unfortunately, the Constitution of Queensland does not allow for that to occur. I hope that goes some way to explaining to those opposite that we cannot put up legislative barriers at this stage to stop incorporated associations in other jurisdictions in the same way we can in terms of incorporated associations within Queensland's jurisdiction.

In terms of real-time donation disclosure and the concerns raised in relation to the disclosure of donations within the last seven days of a campaign particularly, I think those opposite have expressed a reasonable concern. I will give them that. This is something that was considered when we looked at real-time donation disclosure for state elections as well. I think this concern needs to be weighed up against the significant reform we are pursuing here tonight. Any donations received in the last week of an election campaign will still have to be disclosed and be disclosed earlier than they currently are. They will have to be disclosed within seven days of receipt.

I do understand what opposition members are saying, but I question their consistency considering that those opposite are still yet to disclose the donors of some $100,000 worth of electoral campaign donations. They were not given in the last week of a campaign; those opposite have had literally years to disclose the donors and the amount each donor gave in terms of the last state election and they are yet to do so. I am a bit incredulous that they would come into this House and express concern around how we could real-time disclose, within the last seven days of a campaign, donations received.

Let us keep this in perspective. This is a significant reform and this is potentially the first step in what will be Australia's most transparent and most accountable electoral donations system. Those opposite should think twice about coming into this place and expressing concern—until they have lodged a complete list of all of the donors for the $100,000 worth of donations they are yet to disclose. That is not even real time; we are talking about historical documents. We are talking about receipts.

In relation to self-funded candidates, I sat in the chamber and listened to some of the concerns that were raised about members of political parties who stand for election—not as endorsed candidates—being compelled to give funds from their electoral campaign that they have self-funded, that they have contributed to themselves, back to a political party. I say for the benefit of those on the other side of the House—I know that government members understand this—that there is no compulsion.

There was very clearly a recommendation from the CCC in relation to this matter that any unspent funds needed to be accounted for. We set up a review panel and the review panel came up with some very clear options. The first option was that the funds sit in the account to be used for the next campaign—that is, they were to continue to be used for the purpose for which they were originally

donated to that candidate, so they would remain in the account. The second option was that if a candidate felt incredibly compelled to give to a charity of their choice they should be allowed to do so. Any unspent funds could go to a charity of their choice. The third option was that a candidate who was not an endorsed candidate but a member of a political party should be given the right to donate money they have put into their account to the political party they are affiliated with. That is not a compulsion; it is an option. There are three options there.

What they cannot do is take money out of their campaign account and put it in their pocket. All of us here were candidates and probably most of us will have contributed to our own elections, but many other people would have contributed to a candidate's election. Disaggregating that and substantiating what was donated, what was produced through fundraising and what was produced through other donations would be a very hard task. Effectively, a candidate could use their campaign account and the amount of money they put in on an individual basis to justify taking out more money that has been raised in good faith—people have donated in good faith for a campaign purpose—after a campaign, to be personally pocketed. I do not think that is an ethical thing to do.

Candidates who are making their own donations, investing their own money in their own campaign, whether it is borrowed money or money straight out of their pay packet, have the ability to regulate how much they put into their account and the ability to regulate how much is spent on a campaign. They are part of the campaign. It seems nonsensical to me that we would set up a provision whereby campaign accounts could be used to not only hold contributions from a candidate but also raise money from other donors and that at the end of a campaign that money could be pocketed by candidates. It seems nonsensical. It seems like it is not the best thing to do to remain consistent and ethical with the spirit of the recommendation from the CCC. I hope those members opposite understand why it is not a very good thing for us to be saying that campaign accounts should be used as fundraising vehicles that can redirect unspent campaign funds into the pockets of candidates at the conclusion of an election.

To reiterate, members of a political party who stand for election but not as endorsed candidates do not have to give unspent money that they have contributed to an election campaign to a political party. There is no compulsion. There are options and those options can be exercised and can be taken up at the will of the candidate involved.

I go to the issue of indirect costs in relation to the conduct of elections. I really have to say that this clause is simply clarifying a power that exists now. This is not about an additional power; this is about clarifying that power within legislation. It is not about an extension of power. I know that there may be concerns in relation to the cost of elections, but every member in this House would know that a review into local government elections was conducted or is in the process of finalisation from the 26 local government election campaigns. If there are recommendations in relation to costs and if there are recommendations in relation to the conduct of elections that the ECQ undertook in the last council elections, then the government will look at them and this parliament will consider them if changes need to be made. As it stands now, this clause only seeks to clarify what already exists in law. It is a simple clarification. It is not about an extension of power.

I hope that addresses some of the issues that were raised in relation to the concerns expressed by those opposite. I again thank the committee and thank the member for Mirani for leading the work on the committee. I thank every government member for their contribution and the member for Cairns for his contribution. I hope that the member for Mansfield takes account of my commitment here tonight in relation to the working group and looks favourably upon the so-called Gerhardt amendments and their inclusion and adoption here tonight so that we can walk out of this House knowing that we have done our best in this place to protect Queensland's character homes. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—

Mr POWELL (8.22 pm): Clause 4 relates to the incorporated associations component of this bill. I acknowledge the further contribution by the Deputy Premier on this matter, but I think she is completely misrepresenting what the LNP was asking for. We were not necessarily asking for—in fact, I do not

recall using the words myself—a legislative solution for this. We know that you cannot legislate for incorporated associations in other states. What we asked is what steps would be taken to ensure that incorporated associations outside Queensland are required to comply with the spirit of these amendments. For example, is there a capacity for—and in this case I will say—a legislative amendment that would ban campaign expenditure in Queensland from an interstate incorporated association or, if not, is the Deputy Premier willing to have a conversation with her federal and other state colleagues to address this matter? If it is good enough for this state, is it not something that the Deputy Premier would consider sharing federally or with other states to ensure that we cannot have that kind of activity occurring across borders? I put on the record that I think the Deputy Premier completely misunderstood where the LNP's concern lie in this matter. We know you cannot prevent interstate incorporated associations complying with Queensland legislation. We were asking what steps the Deputy Premier and the Palaszczuk Labor government are going to take to ensure that interstate incorporated associations comply with the spirit of this legislation.

Ms TRAD: The best way to address transparency and accountability within our electoral system is to ensure that we have rigorous laws, and there is nothing more rigorous than real-time donation disclosure that we are putting through the parliament here tonight in relation to local council elections, as we have done with state elections. There is no greater transparency than real-time donations and absolute disclosure and low-disclosure thresholds—unlike the $12,800 disclosure threshold that those opposite changed the disclosure threshold to when they were in power. We have brought it back down to $1,000. If the donation is made in Queensland, it needs to be declared in line with Queensland legislation, regardless of where it came from. That will happen more frequently and more regularly under this legislation, and that is the best way to ensure that our electoral system is as transparent and as accountable as possible.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—

Mr WALKER (8.25 pm): This is the first of the amendments that lead into a succession of amendments that relate to the Gerhardt amendments, as we have been calling them. I did hear what the Deputy Premier had to say by way of a commitment to look again at those provisions by way of a working group which would include industry and councils. As I stated in the debate, the LNP does have concerns that the particular solution is not the right solution. Having heard what the Deputy Premier has said about giving that commitment, we will not oppose the Gerhardt amendments, but we expect and hope that that working group brings a positive report to the parliament as to a more workable solution than that that is presently proposed, but time will tell. We will see what that working group comes to. I thank the Deputy Premier for the commitment to do that and, on that basis, we will not oppose the Gerhardt amendments this evening.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 6 and 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—

Ms TRAD (8.27 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 8 (Amendment of s 83 (General restrictions on granting building development approval))

Page 11, after line 3—

insert—

Example—

A building development application is made for a development permit for building work that must be assessed against the building assessment provisions and a code in the local government's planning scheme. The code is not a building assessment provision and is not, under the Planning Act, within the jurisdiction of a referral agency. A private certifier is engaged to assess and decide the application. The private certifier must not grant the development permit until a preliminary approval given by the local government is in effect for the part of the building work that must be assessed against the code.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments. Amendment No. 1 will insert an example into section 83(1)(b) of the Building Act 1975 consistent with recommendation 5 of the committee's report as I outlined in my second reading speech.

Tabled paper: Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, explanatory notes to Hon. Jackie Trad's amendments [694].

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Ms TRAD (8.28 pm): I move the following amendment—

2 After clause 8

Page 11, after line 29—

insert—

8A Amendment of s 88 (Giving approval documents to applicant)

(1) Section 88—

insert—

(2A) Subsection (2B) applies if the application is for building work that is—

(a) the demolition of a building used only or mainly for residential purposes; and

(b) assessable development under a local planning instrument.

(2B) The private certifier must not give the applicant any approval documents for the application before the end of 5 business days after the day the private certifier has complied with all requirements under section 86(1).

Maximum penalty—165 penalty units.

(2) Section 88(4) and note—

omit, insert—

(4) The private certifier must give the approval documents to the applicant—

(a) if the application is mentioned in subsection (2A) and the private certifier receives the acknowledgement before the end of the period mentioned in subsection (2B)—within 5 business days after the end of that period; or

(b) otherwise—within 5 business days after receiving the acknowledgement.

Note—

See also section 132.

8B Insertion of new ch 11, pt 18A

Chapter 11—

insert—

Part 18A Transitional provision for Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2016

344 Building development application approved before commencement

(1) This section applies to a building development application approved by a private certifier before the commencement.

(2) Former section 88 continues to apply in relation to the building development application as if the amending Act had not been enacted.

(3) In this section—

amending Act means the *Local Government Electoral (Transparency and Accountability in Local Government) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2016*.

former section 88 means section 88 as in force immediately before the commencement.

Amendment No. 2 goes to the issue of amending the Building Act 1975, particularly section 88, by inserting a provision requiring that private certifiers wait five business days before giving approval documents to applicants in limited circumstances. The amendment also includes transitional provision for these new arrangements to apply only for development applications for building work approved by private certifiers after the provision commences.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 24—

Ms TRAD (8.30 pm): I seek leave to move amendments en bloc.

Leave granted.

Ms TRAD: I move the following amendments—

3 Clause 16 (Amendment of s 117 (Gifts to candidates))

Page 15, line 21, 'This section'—

omit, insert—

Subsection (2)

4 Clause 17 (Amendment of s 118 (Gifts to groups of candidates))

Page 17, line 12, 'This section'—

omit, insert—

Subsection (2)

5 Clause 17 (Amendment of s 118 (Gifts to groups of candidates))

Page 18, lines 1 and 8, after 'group'—

insert—

, or a person acting on behalf of the group,

Agreements agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 24, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 25—

Ms TRAD (8.30 pm): I move the following amendment—

6 Clause 25 (Amendment of s 126 (Requirement for candidate to operate dedicated account))

Page 25, line 19, 'omit,'—

omit.

This amendment is merely a technical amendment to remove the action command 'omit' in clause 25 of the bill to correct a minor drafting error.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr POWELL: Clause 25 talks about requirements for candidates to operate their dedicated account. I want to touch briefly on the issue of self-funded candidates, because the Deputy Premier, when summing-up the second reading debate, got herself quite confused and contradicted statements that she had made in her second reading speech.

During her second reading speech, the Deputy Premier made the comment that a self-funded candidate has the capacity to self-manage that fund and at any minute withdraw that money. During her summing-up the Deputy Premier referred to the fact that the self-funded candidate may have had contributions from third parties put into that account and, therefore, could not withdraw any of the money whatsoever. By my reckoning, that defies the definition of a self-funded candidate and, therefore, it is quite contradictory.

I acknowledge what the Deputy Premier said in her second reading speech that, yes, a self-funded candidate should be monitoring what is in their account, given that it is their money and it is their responsibility, but I can just picture a situation, as we all have in this House, of in the hurly-burly of those final days of an election campaign neglecting to keep that last-minute eye on what is sitting in an account and an amount being left over. It may not be a large amount. Yes, there is no compulsion, but if that money is left in that account then there is a compulsion and that compulsion requires the individual to either hold it over for another election—and that is assuming that the candidate is going to do that—to give it a political party, or to donate it to a charity.

Although we can be quite glib that self-funded candidates should be able to manage their own budgets, I envisage situations where there will be money left in such accounts and we will have situations where self-funded candidates are unable to get that money out because of these provisions. I do not believe that the explanations given by the Deputy Premier take those issues seriously enough and I would ask her to again address them.

Ms TRAD: In relation to this issue, I direct the member for Glass House to the submission by Ms Dianne McFarlane from the Crime and Corruption Commission in relation to the bill and this matter particularly, because I think if there is a conflict or confusion that exists, it exists within the mind of the member for Glass House. I refer to what the CCC said in relation to those candidates who are completely self-funded, or if there was a mixture of funds in campaign accounts. Let me address this issue in relation to whether self-funded candidates should reclaim the unspent money from election campaign accounts. Ms McFarlane said—

The issue, I suppose, is if they were completely self-funded, that would be very clear. If there was a mixture of funds in there—as in some self-funding, some from other donations—it then becomes difficult to say which money was spent, I suppose. I guess my preliminary view would be that, yes, it would, again, give that level of transparency. It would also come with those other issues of how, when you have a mixture of funds, you then separate them for the purposes of returning either to a political party and\or to a donor or even if that donor is the self-funded.

There is a very real risk that there is a mixture of funds within a campaign account and even if—

Mr Powell: You can't be self-funded by the definition of the word.

Ms TRAD: This matter was ventilated by a group of people who looked at the CCC report and made recommendations to the government in relation to this issue. Their views were that, in the case of members of political parties, there should be the option there for them to be able to return it to political parties, or give the outstanding amount to political parties. This issue was considered by a very broad political mix of people on the review panel. I think they landed it correctly. There are members of political parties who do not run as endorsed candidates but who have been long-term members of political parties. If they want to donate their money to a political party, then they should be entitled to, as they should be entitled to hold it over for the next campaign or, in fact, donate it to a charity. I think that is a very fair way of dealing with unspent funds. Candidates who are standing for political office who want to put up their hand to manage public finances should be able to manage how much money they put in a political campaign account to fund a political campaign.

Clause 25, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 26—

Ms TRAD (8.37 pm): I move the following amendment—

7 Clause 26 (Amendment of s 127 (Requirement for group of candidates to operate dedicated account))

Page 26, line 16, 'omit,'—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 26, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 27 and 28, as read, agreed to.

Clause 29—

Mr POWELL (8.37 pm): Clause 29 relates to local governments responsible for expenditure for conducting local government elections. Although I accept the words of the Deputy Premier in that this amendment is tidying up what is already a practice, it does not negate the fact that a number of councils believe that the ECQ is charging them for costs that they had no prior knowledge they were going to be charged as the ECQ used a guesstimate. If I heard the Deputy Premier correctly in her summing-up, she is awaiting the finalisation of the review of the 2016 election and has given a commitment that, if that is a very real outcome of that review, the Deputy Premier—the government by default—would consider subsequent legislative amendments.

Again, we have a situation that has been largely dismissed and that is a sense—whether it is real or not—that councils are being overcharged for the cost of conducting local government elections or ancillary activities such as the referendum. I think it is only fair for those councils, particularly small councils, to be able to ask the Electoral Commission of Queensland to give them not a guesstimate but an itemised account that gives them an indication of what the cost will be at the conclusion of that election. My question to the Deputy Premier is did I hear her correctly when she said that pending the review of the 2016 elections, if such recommendations are made, further legislative amendments would be possible?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Glass House for his contribution and the question. What I did say in my summing-up is that the Attorney-General, as part of the review of the conduct of the elections into local councils in March of 2016, as well as the statewide referendum into four-year terms, asked that a review be undertaken and appointed a review panel. That review panel had worked to a very broad set of terms of reference that looked at a comprehensive range of issues raised during the council elections. I am sure that the committee has done an outstanding job. The government is awaiting the finalisation of that report and whatever is recommended for consideration by government in relation to the conduct of local council elections we will have a view on. The government will formalise a report. If there are changes that need to be made we will bring them into this House.

Clause 29, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 30 to 90—

Ms TRAD (8.41 pm): I seek leave to move the following amendments en bloc.

Leave granted.

Ms TRAD: I move the following amendments—

8 After clause 32

Page 30, after line 9—

insert—

32A Amendment of s 30 (When this division applies)

Section 30(4)—

insert—

(g) is made under section 276(1)(c) to identify all or part of a local government area as a party house restriction area.

32B Amendment of s 36 (Criteria for making or amending designations)

Section 36(7)—

insert—

(ca) if the premises are in a priority development area under the *Economic Development Act 2012*—any development scheme for the priority development area under that Act; and

9 Clause 33 (Amendment of s 48 (Who is the *assessment manager*))

Page 30, lines 10 to 19—

omit, insert—

33 Amendment of s 48 (Who is the *assessment manager*)

(1) Section 48—

insert—

(2A) Without limiting subsection (2), a regulation may prescribe that a person is the assessment manager for a development application that is for part of a particular type of development.

Example—

For building work that must be assessed against the building assessment provisions and is assessable development under a local government's planning scheme, a regulation may prescribe that—

(a) a private certifier is the assessment manager for a development application for the part of the building work that must be assessed against the building assessment provisions; and

(b) the local government is the assessment manager for a development application for the part of the building work that is assessable development under the planning scheme.

(2B) Subsection (3) applies to a development application that—

(a) is for development that requires code assessment only; and

(b) does not include a variation request.

(2) Section 48(3), 'However, if—'—

omit, insert—

If—

(3) Section 48(3)(a), from 'a development application'—

omit, insert—

the development application; and

(4) Section 48(3)(b), from 'a particular type'—

omit, insert—

the development the subject of the application; and

(5) Section 48(3)(e)—

omit, insert—

(e) a person on the entity's list enters into an agreement with another person to accept the development application;

(6) Section 48(6), from 'may'—

omit, insert—

may—

(a) decide who is the assessment manager; or

(b) require the application to be split into 2 or more applications.

(7) Section 48(9), after 'that is'—

insert—

prescribed

10 Clause 35 (Amendment of s 64 (Deemed approval of applications))

Page 31, lines 4 to 8—

omit, insert—

(2) Section 64—

insert—

(9) Before making or amending the instrument mentioned in subsection (8)(c), the Minister must consult with the persons the Minister considers appropriate.

(10) The Minister must notify the making or amendment of the instrument mentioned in subsection (8)(c) in the gazette.

11 After clause 40

Page 33, after line 23—

insert—

40A Amendment of s 78 (Making change application)

(1) Section 78(3)—

insert—

(ba) for a change application to change a condition imposed by the Minister under section 95—the Minister; or

(bb) for a change application to change a development approval given by the Minister under part 6, division 3—the Minister; or

(2) Section 78—

insert—

(5) If a change application is made to the Minister and the Minister is satisfied the change does not affect a State interest, the Minister may refer the change application to the assessment manager.

(6) If the Minister refers the change application to the assessment manager, the assessment manager is taken to be the responsible entity for the change application.

12 After clause 41

Page 33, after line 28—

insert—

41A Amendment of s 80 (Notifying affected entities of minor change application)

Section 80(2)(c), after 'the P&E Court'—

insert—

or the Minister

13 Clause 42 (Amendment of s 81 (Assessing and deciding application for minor changes))

Page 34, lines 1 to 8—

omit, insert—

42 Amendment of s 81 (Assessing and deciding application for minor changes)

(1) Section 81(2)(b)—

omit, insert—

(b) if the responsible entity is the assessment manager—any properly made submissions about the development application or another change application that was approved; and

(2) Section 81(2)(d)—

omit, insert—

(d) if the responsible entity is, under section 78(3)(ba) or (bb), the Minister—all matters the Minister would or may assess against or have regard to, if the change application were a development application called in by the Minister; and

(da) if paragraph (d) does not apply—all matters the responsible entity would or may assess against or have regard to, if the change application were a development application; and

(3) Section 81(3), 'subsection (2)(d)'—

omit, insert—

subsection (2)(d) and (da)

14 Clause 43 (Amendment of s 82 (Assessing and deciding application for other changes))

Page 34, line 11—

omit, insert—

(1) Section 82(3)—

insert—

(c) if the responsible entity is, under section 78(3)(ba) or (bb), the Minister—

(i) part 2, division 2 and part 3, other than sections 51, 63 and 64(8)(c), and the development assessment rules apply to the change application only if, and to the extent, those provisions would apply to a development application called in by the Minister; and

(ii) section 105(5) and (6) applies for assessing and deciding the change application.

(2) Section 82—

15 Clause 48 (Amendment of s 112 (Regulation prescribing charges))

Page 36, lines 6 to 13—

omit, insert—

48 Amendment of s 112 (Regulation prescribing charges)

Section 112(2)—

omit, insert—

(2) A ***maximum adopted charge***, for a financial year, for trunk infrastructure, is—

(a) for the 2017-2018 financial year—the prescribed amount for an adopted charge for the infrastructure; or

(b) otherwise—the sum of—

(i) the prescribed amount for an adopted charge for the infrastructure in force at the start of the financial year; and

(ii) an amount equal to the amount mentioned in subparagraph (i) multiplied by the sum of the percentage increases for each financial quarter since the amount was last prescribed or amended.

16 After clause 49

Page 36, after line 19—

insert—

49A Amendment of s 139 (Application to convert infrastructure to trunk infrastructure)

(1) Section 139(1), after 'may apply'—

insert—

(a ***conversion application***)

(2) Section 139(2)—

omit, insert—

(2) The application must be made—

(a) to the local government in writing; and

(b) within 1 year after the development approval starts to have effect.

17 After clause 52

Page 37, after line 11—

insert—

52A Amendment of s 277 (Assessment and decision rules for particular State heritage places)

Section 277(3) and (4), 'prudent or'—

omit, insert—

prudent and

18 Clause 56 (Insertion of new s 307A)

Page 38, lines 24 to 29—

omit, insert—

(1) This section applies in relation to a development approval that is in force when the old Act is repealed.

(2) Section 139(2)(b) does not apply to a conversion application made by the applicant for the development approval.

19 After clause 56

Page 38, after line 29—

insert—

56A Amendment of s 319 (Compliance assessment of documents or works)

Section 319(1)(b), 'works.'—

omit, insert—

works, other than a subdivision plan.

20 Clause 57 (Amendment of sch 1 (Appeals))

Page 39, lines 1 to 5—

omit, insert—

57 Amendment of sch 1 (Appeals)

(1) Schedule 1, section 1(2)(g) and (h)—

omit, insert—

(g) a matter under this Act, to the extent the matter relates to the Building Act, other than a matter under that Act that may or must be decided by the Queensland Building and Construction Commission; or

(h) a decision to give an enforcement notice—

(i) in relation to a matter under paragraphs (a) to (g); or

(ii) under the Plumbing and Drainage Act; or

(2) Schedule 1, section 1(2)(i), 'a decision to give'—

omit.

(3) Schedule 1, section 1(2)(k)—

omit.

(4) Schedule 1, section 1—

insert—

(8) In this section—

storey see the Building Code, part A1.1.

(5) Schedule 1, table 1, item 1, 'An appeal'—

omit, insert—

For a development application other than a development application called in by the Minister, an appeal

(6) Schedule 1, table 1, item 2, from 'An appeal' to 'change application.'—

omit, insert—

For a change application other than a change application made to the P&E Court or called in by the Minister, an appeal may be made against—

(a) the responsible entity's decision on the change application; or

(b) a deemed refusal of the change application.

(7) Schedule 1, table 1, item 3, from 'An appeal' to 'extension application.'—

omit, insert—

For an extension application other than an extension application called in by the Minister, an appeal may be made against—

(a) the assessment manager's decision on the extension application; or

(b) a deemed refusal of the extension application.

(8) Schedule 1, table 1, item 4, paragraph (d)—

omit, insert—

(d) for an appeal to the P&E Court—the amount of the charge is so unreasonable that no reasonable relevant local government could have imposed the amount.

(9) Schedule 1, table 2, item 2, from 'An appeal' to 'variation request.'—

omit, insert—

For a development application or change application other than an application decided by the P&E Court or called in by the Minister, an appeal may be made against the decision to approve the application, to the extent the decision relates to—

(a) any part of the development application or change application that required impact assessment; or

(b) a variation request.

(10) Schedule 1, table 2, item 3, from 'An appeal' to 'variation request.'—

omit, insert—

For a development application or change application other than an application decided by the P&E Court or called in by the Minister, an appeal may be made against a provision of the development approval, or a failure to include a provision in the development approval, to the extent the matter relates to—

(a) any part of the development application or change application that required impact assessment; or

(b) a variation request.

(11) Schedule 1, table 3, item 3—

omit, insert—

3. Certain decisions under the Building Act and the Plumbing and Drainage Act

An appeal may be made against—

(a) a decision under the Building Act, other than a decision made by the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, if an information notice about the decision was given or required to be given under that Act; or

(b) a decision under the Plumbing and Drainage Act, part 4 or 5, if an information notice about the decision was given or required to be given under that Act.

Column 1 Appellant	**Column 2 Respondent**	**Column 3 Co-respondent (if any)**	**Column 4 Co-respondent by election (if any)**
A person who received, or was entitled to receive, an information notice about the decision	The person who made the decision	—	—

21 Clause 58 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 39, lines 7 and 8—

omit, insert—

(1) Schedule 2, definitions *required fee*, *standard conditions* and *storey*—

22 Clause 58 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 39, after line 14—

insert—

Queensland Building and Construction Commission means the Queensland Building and Construction Commission established under the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991*, section 5.

23 Clause 58 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 40, after line 8—

insert—

(4) Schedule 2, definition *conversion application*, 'section 139(2)'—

omit, insert—

section 139(1)

24 After clause 64

Page 42, after line 34—

insert—

64A Amendment of s 64 (Amendment of s 48 (Functions of private certifier (class A)))

Section 64(1)—

omit, insert—

(1) Section 48(1)(b)—

omit, insert—

(b) decide the building development application, and give a decision notice for the application; and

25 Clause 65 (Replacement of s 75 (Amendment of s 83 (General restrictions on granting building development approval)))

Page 43, line 10—

omit, insert—

(2) Section 83(1)(b) and example—

26 Clause 65 (Replacement of s 75 (Amendment of s 83 (General restrictions on granting building development approval)))

Page 43, after line 25—

insert—

Example—

A building development application is made for a development permit for building work that must be assessed against the building assessment provisions and a code in the local government's planning scheme. The code is not a building assessment provision and none of the referral agencies for the application are required, under the Planning Act, to assess the application against, or having regard to, the code. A private certifier is engaged to assess and decide the building development application. The private certifier must not grant the development permit until either of the following is in effect for the part of the building work that must be assessed against the code—

a preliminary approval given by the local government under the repealed *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*; or

a development permit given by the local government.

27 Clause 78 (Amendment of s 578 (Carrying out assessable development without permit))

Page 51, lines 14 to 18—

omit, insert—

78 Amendment of s 578 (Carrying out assessable development without permit)

(1) Section 578(1), penalty, '1665 penalty units'—

omit, insert—

4500 penalty units

(2) Section 578—

insert—

(4) Subsection (5) applies to a development permit for assessable development that is building work if, under section 245A(3) or (5), the permit does not authorise the carrying out of a part of the building work.

(5) For subsection (1), the development permit is not an effective development permit for the part.

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 30 to 90, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (8.42 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. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (8.42 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.

STATE PENALTIES ENFORCEMENT AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 2 March (see p. 491).

Second Reading

Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (8.43 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I would like to thank the Finance and Administration Committee for its report No. 38 tabled on 28 April 2017 regarding the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017. I also thank those who made submissions to the committee and those who appeared as witnesses as part of the committee's inquiry. The committee made two recommendations: that the bill be passed and that the bill be amended to include a catch-all provision for eligibility for work and development orders.

The Queensland government is committed to ensuring that people with SPER liabilities but who are also experiencing genuine hardship have access to work and development orders. We believe this can be achieved within the scope of the categories for work and development orders provided in the bill with the support of comprehensive guidelines that detail the eligibility criteria for each category. On this basis, the government does not accept the second recommendation. I will address this matter further when I come to talk about work and development orders. I am pleased to table the government's response to the committee's report.

Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 38—State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017, government response [692].

The State Penalties Enforcement Registry, or SPER as it is more commonly known, is undergoing a significant transformation program. This program will result in a new SPER service delivery model designed to modernise the management of penalty debt in Queensland. The bill supports SPER's new service delivery model and will help address the key challenges facing SPER. When SPER was established in 2000, its business infrastructure and governing legislation were framed to manage individual monetary penalties rather than managing offenders and their offending behaviour. The system assumed debtors would have a single debt they had the capacity to pay and which they finalised promptly. As I said when I introduced this bill, there have been major changes to SPER's operating environment since then. These changes include increases in the number of offences for which infringements can be issued and the increased use of automatic detection technology for offences.

The changes have seen increases in the number of debtors, debt volumes and the value of the debt pool managed by SPER. These changes and emerging challenges mean that SPER requires a new service delivery model. This is best achieved by adopting a case management approach focused on the debtor rather than their debts. This involves using targeted, debtor-specific strategies to recover debt. SPER has already made business and process changes where it can to adopt this new model. SPER's actions have included starting to proactively call debtors to remind them of their obligations; establishing a successful wheel clamping program and seizing vehicles from wilfully noncompliant debtors; and leading an integrated whole-of-government approach to improve penalty debt management. These initiatives have already seen a significant improvement in SPER's debt finalisation rates and a significant reduction in the growth rate of the debt pool.

Further improvements will be enabled by the replacement of SPER's ageing ICT system with new software as a service solution that moves from a one-size-fits-all debt recovery model to a contemporary risk based approach. The bill before us makes amendments in a number of areas that will support this new approach. A significant proportion of SPER debtors are in financial hardship or are disadvantaged. The State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999 provides limited non-monetary debt finalisation options to debtors in hardship. In practice, the only option available to an individual who has no capacity to pay is to undertake unpaid community service. More options are required to support individuals who genuinely want to meet their obligations but do not have the financial means to do so. This is why the government is introducing a work and development order scheme to provide an expansive range of options for eligible debtors to satisfy their SPER debt.

The bill provides that approved organisations will be able to sponsor individuals experiencing financial hardship to undertake a range of activities to clear their SPER debt, except where that debt relates to court ordered compensation or restitution. Those eligible will include people experiencing domestic and family violence, are homeless, have a prescribed mental illness or substance use disorder or have a cognitive or intellectual disability. Activities that eligible debtors will be able to undertake will include medical or mental health treatment, drug and alcohol treatment, financial or other counselling, educational, vocational and life skills programs and unpaid work as decided by their sponsor. These activities are designed to reduce their likelihood of reoffending.

An important feature of the work and development order scheme is that it involves the development of genuine partnerships between SPER and the community services sector to support people experiencing all types of hardship. The government acknowledges that just because a person is experiencing hardship it does not absolve them from taking responsibility for their offending behaviour. However, fines can have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable people who have very little or no capacity to pay. The challenge is to balance justice and compassion. With work and development orders we think we have the balance right.

The committee recommended that new section 32H, clause 24, be amended to include a catch-all provision for eligibility for a work and development order to cater for circumstances outside those prescribed in the bill. The government agrees with the intent of this recommendation. I said at the outset the government is committed to ensuring that people experiencing genuine hardship have access to work and development orders. The bill provides six eligibility categories for work and development orders, the scope of which will be prescribed by regulation or detailed in comprehensive guidelines provided under proposed new section 150B(2A), clause 78. Guidelines will define the eligibility criteria for each category and include examples of what the criteria may include. The guidelines will be developed in consultation with key non-government service providers, advocacy groups and government agencies. This will ensure that the scheme is sufficiently inclusive to accommodate the broad spectrum of hardship circumstances. On this basis, the government considers that it is not necessary to amend the bill to include a catch-all provision for eligibility for the work and development orders in section 32H and, accordingly, does not accept this recommendation.

Currently, fees charged by SPER under the act to register and enforce debts are complicated. As fees help incentivise both debtor behaviour and early payment of debt, this government is simplifying and streamlining fee arrangements. The bill provides for fees to be applied when SPER takes enforcement action on the debtor's account, replacing the current arrangements where fees are applied to each debt. Fees will also be applied consistently across all SPER debts and enforcement activities. The bill will provide the SPER registrar with authority to waive or return fees where circumstances warrant. This will allow the registrar to take a debtor's personal situation into account in exceptional circumstances.

In terms of the vehicle immobilisation period, in this bill the government aims to strike the right balance between meeting debtors' circumstances, including hardship, and having more effective enforcement for those debtors who can pay but who simply refuse to do so. The bill includes amendments to enhance the effectiveness of SPER enforcement actions, such as vehicle immobilisation and garnishment of wages and financial institution accounts. As I mentioned earlier, SPER has recommenced vehicle immobilisation and seizure and sale, which have assisted to finalise outstanding debts of wilfully noncompliant debtors. Experience has shown that the current immobilisation period is too short. A 14-day period for vehicle immobilisation will provide more time for debtors to finalise their debts. It will give them more time to obtain finance or to substantiate late claims for hardship before the vehicle is seized or sold.

On dispute process improvements, the government is undertaking an integrated approach to penalty debt management. SPER, together with some of the large agencies that issue fines, the courts and Queensland Corrective Services have been working to analyse and improve the end-to-end penalty debt management process. These agencies are represented on a Penalty Debt Management Council established as part of SPER's modernisation program. Currently, debtors may be required to engage with both SPER and the administering authority that issued an infringement to resolve a dispute. Disputes can be about, for example, not receiving an infringement notice. Amendments in the bill will streamline the disputes process so that a debtor will deal with the one government agency best placed to fully resolve their issue.

The information sharing provisions in the bill provide authorisation for information sharing in the specific circumstances outlined in the bill. This is expected to assist with the early identification and contacting of debtors, broadening opportunities for early and effective recovery. Early identification benefits debtors as it may avoid the referral of their debt to SPER and the addition of fees to the original fine. SPER will prepare guidelines that will provide greater operational clarity on information sharing. The committee noted that, while there is a risk of unauthorised disclosure in any information-sharing regime, the guidelines will go some way to prevent this.

In relation to technical amendments to modernise the act, the bill provides for a number of technical changes to assist with the modernisation of the act. The most significant of these is the broadening of service provisions to include service by electronic means with the consent of the debtor and service to postal addresses, including PO boxes. These changes will enable SPER and administering authorities to send infringement notices and other documents to the address that is most likely to result in them being received and acted upon.

There are minor amendments to the bill resulting from the committee process. I propose to move a number of minor and technical amendments to the bill during consideration in detail by the Legislative Assembly. These proposed amendments primarily relate to issues raised by stakeholders during the committee process, as well as minor inconsistencies and drafting issues that have been identified during that process. In their submissions, the Local Government Association of Queensland, the Logan City Council and the City of Gold Coast raised concerns about the potentially restrictive wording of

clause 11 of the bill, relating to the recovery of vehicle registration search costs. The submissions sought an alteration of the wording of the clause to enable such costs to be recovered if incurred at any point in the collection process. The purpose of the amendment proposed in clause 11 of the bill is to clarify and replace the arrangements enabling the recovery of verification costs incurred by issuing agencies that are currently provided for in subsection 35(3) of the act. At present, the proposed amendment only enables costs to be recovered when incurred for the purpose of serving an infringement notice. It was not intended to exclude cost recovery for vehicle registration search fees when the search is undertaken after the notice has been served. Clause 11 of the bill has, therefore, been amended to rectify this and provides that vehicle registration search fees can be added to a fine and recovered if reasonably incurred by an issuing authority in relation to the infringement notice. This will cover costs incurred at any point in the process of serving or collecting the infringement notice.

In its submission to the committee, LawRight identified an inconsistency in the provisions providing protection to debtors subject to the garnishment of funds. The act currently preserves a protected earnings amount when a debtor's wages are garnisheed. In the bill, a similar protection will apply when a debtor's account with a financial institution is garnisheed on a single occasion. However, inconsistency arises because no protected amount is preserved for periodic garnishment of a debtor's account with a financial institution. Clause 46 of the bill has been amended to provide a similar protection for periodic garnishment of a debtor's account with a financial institution.

The committee considered that the bill was not sufficiently clear regarding the protection of a debtor's earnings. The committee suggested that this issue would be overcome if SPER publishes information regarding the minimum protected earnings amount on its website. This will be undertaken as part of a comprehensive review of the website, in line with the move to its new service delivery model. Clause 87 has been amended to outline that a regulation may be made about the courses, plans or programs that may be undertaken under a work and development order.

Non-government members of the committee raised a number of reservations regarding the efficacy of the proposed changes to the State Penalties Enforcement Act and how the implementation of the work and development order scheme will be resourced. The bill supports a SPER transformation agenda with new ways of doing things. This change agenda is fully funded. The 2016-17 budget included an investment in SPER of $65.4 million over five years to support changes to business processes, new systems and staff development. More than $17 million will be provided on an ongoing basis beyond the five-year horizon. In addition to the injection of new resources, existing SPER resources will be able to be reallocated as functions are automated and more people who are able to self-serve are enabled by the new system to do so. Resources can be redirected from administrative activities to focus on the debtors who require intervention to meet their obligations, and to recruit and support sponsors for the work and development order scheme.

Experience in other jurisdictions has shown that work and development order sponsors are already servicing the individuals who will benefit from and participate in the scheme. The absence of additional funding for sponsors has not proven a barrier to their participation. We expect a similar outcome for the work and development order scheme in Queensland.

Regarding accessibility of the scheme in regional areas, it is acknowledged that there will be more potential sponsors in metropolitan areas compared to regional Queensland. The same can be said of potential participants in the scheme. SPER will actively target regional sponsor engagement. SPER will leverage existing local and regional community services networks to tap into the services that are available and will look for innovative approaches to facilitate enhanced accessibility.

This bill is a significant piece of legislation necessary to support the implementation of SPER's new service delivery model. It introduces a work and development order scheme; facilitates case management of debtors rather than the management of their individual debts; provides for fairer, simpler and more consistent fee arrangements; enables efficiencies in dispute management; enables enhanced information sharing to assist with fine and debt recovery; and provides more effective enforcement functions for SPER. I ask all members to support this bill and I commend it to the House.

Mr EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (8.58 pm): I rise to speak to the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017. Queenslanders rightly expect that when someone does the wrong thing, whether it is failing to pay a parking ticket, getting a fine for speeding or being fined in the courts, that person fronts up and pays the amount owed. Of course, there is always going to be a small number of people who attract those fines and will struggle to pay what is owed by them because of their financial situation. That is a sad fact of life. However, there is a cohort of people who have the ability to pay but refuse to enter into arrangements to do just that. Fundamentally, the state has a responsibility to ensure the integrity of its fine collection system. It is an important part of the overall governance of the state.

Sadly, we are continuing to see SPER debt rise to record levels. The level of debt owed to SPER currently sits at around $1.18 billion. The level of debt on issue has continued to increase under the current Labor government, up from $948 million from the time of the 2015 election, which is an increase of more than $230 million in just over two years.

Since SPER was first established in 2000 we have seen an increasing use of technology for automatic infringement detection and the construction of new toll roads. There is no doubting the introduction of the new toll roads to the roads network in particular has had a significant impact on the growth of unpaid fines. Toll road debt is actually the largest component of the SPER debt pool, at almost $230 million, apart from the identified other section.

It should be noted that the tolling arrangements in relation to the vast majority of toll roads operating around Brisbane were set in place by the previous Labor government. The road franchise agreements for these roads came into effect on 1 April 2011 and identify the requirement for the state to undertake enforcement services for the Gateway and Logan motorways.

Let us make one thing very clear, contrary to the unfounded claims by the Treasurer in his introductory speech and other ministers, the LNP never made a decision to automatically refer all toll fines to SPER. All the LNP did was to take actions to ensure the integrity of the existing system.

I know a bit about this as a previous transport minister. As the minister it became clear that the department only had capacity to process around 30 per cent of the required demand notices. Because of this, the LNP placed extra staff in the Department of Transport and Main Roads to clear that backlog and increase the processing capacity to ensure we could keep up with the demand. Put simply, the former Bligh government failed to prepare for the obvious increase in compliance activities required as a result of the arrangements it put in place. The previous LNP government only undertook actions to improve the integrity and accountability of the existing system.

While in government, the LNP also took considerable steps to enhance debt collection at SPER. The LNP set in place a comprehensive SPER reform program. The reform program included a number of steps to address the significant aged legacy debt within the SPER debt pool. The reform program was fundamentally about enabling SPER to do what it is best placed to do—that is, deal with debt that requires escalated enforcement for debtors who can but will not pay and the management of debtors who cannot pay.

Our reform program included a crackdown on fine dodgers through the increasing use of stronger enforcement options, such as wheel clamping, seizure and sale. Sadly, the Treasurer and the Labor government jettisoned many of the SPER reforms set up by the LNP. In the meantime, we waited two years for this government to step up and outline its so-called strategy to stop SPER debt from ballooning out of control. On the Treasurer's watch we have seen the state's SPER debt balloon past $1 billion. Only now has he at last introduced a bill to try to arrest the continued increase in SPER debt.

Turning to the bill itself, the LNP's position is that, while we do not oppose the bill, there are sections we will not be supporting. I foreshadow that I will be moving amendments during the consideration in detail stage. As outlined in the explanatory notes, in terms of the work and development orders the bill essentially replaces what are currently known as fine option orders with what will be called work and development orders. This is largely achieved at clause 24, which inserts new part 3B into the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999. Essentially, this part of the bill will increase the number of options available to people to work off their existing SPER debts through non-monetary means. Currently, fine option orders are only available to people who are in financial hardship and are suitable to undertake unpaid community work.

What is being proposed in the Labor bill goes much further than this. The non-monetary options available to people in hardship will extend from community service to things such as financial counselling, an educational, vocational or life skill course, drug and alcohol treatment or mentoring programs. Under the model being proposed, approved sponsors will undertake an assessment of a person and can then apply to SPER on behalf of the individual to convert part or all of their fine to a work and development order.

Imagine it like this: a 24-year-old ice addict who has racked up fines for a number of offences from speeding to driving unlicensed and not properly registering their car over the years has accumulated a SPER debt in excess of $10,000. The state itself has spent a significant amount of money chasing this person up to pay what is owed. Under the option being proposed by Labor, this person could potentially make an application for a work and development order and instead of having to pay their fine, this person might simply just have to undertake counselling of some kind.

What is not made clear in this bill is just who is going to pay the cost of this person's counselling services. The explaining notes to the bill state the following—

> Any costs associated with these legislative amendments will be met from within existing funding allocations and agency resources.
>
> Government service providers that become approved sponsors under the work and development order scheme will be required to assess a person's eligibility for the scheme, decide activities to be performed under a work and development order, make the work and development order application on behalf of the individual, and report on progress. Whilst this may result in some minor costs being incurred by these entities, these costs will be met internally by service providers on the basis that these organisations are already funded (through state or federal government funding) to deliver the services to the individuals who will be eligible for the work and development order scheme, as well as the broader community.

It simply does not fly that these service providers would be expected to offer all these additional services to people without seeing any increase in funding to be able to assist them in providing these services.

That is what the committee report said on the issue. It said several submitters raised the issue of the administrative role for service providers and their capacity to meet increased demand for their services, which, without additional resources, may impact the services provided. It is also simply not believable that groups or individuals who are providing services to SPER debtors—whether it is providing an educational program or providing a person with a mentoring services—will do these services free of charge.

Patently, these services will come at a cost. If this scheme is going to function properly, the state is undoubtedly going to have to put extra funding into the WDO. This could potentially lead to a situation whereby the state is not only losing funds that are owed by way of unpaid debts but also investing extra funding to provide these services so that SPER debtors have the opportunity to work off their debts through other means.

The LNP opposition sees this as both unfair to the vast majority of people who do the right thing and to the people who get fined and take action to pay what is owed back. We are also concerned that it could undermine the integrity of the SPER system and encourage more and more debtors to ignore their mounting debt in the knowledge that other options are available to them. We need to avoid the situation where a person who has flouted the law and done the wrong thing is given an easy pass. As noted in the LNP members' comments in the committee report, the opposition is worried that the establishment of a work and development order scheme could also lead to a situation whereby people living in metropolitan areas have access to services to undertake WDOs but people living in regional centres will miss out.

The statistics of SPER show the state's debt is spread right across the state. For example, in the Mount Isa postcode there are 5,091 SPER debtors owing a total of $8.7 million. This is one of the worst regions in the state with regard to SPER debt. We note that the services provided in Mount Isa simply do not match the services provided in the state's south-east. While people in the state's south-east may have the opportunity to go through the process of applying through an approved sponsor to undertake a WDO, this opportunity could be much more difficult in Mount Isa.

It would be much more difficult to access these services in regions like Hervey Bay, where SPER debt for the 4655 postcode totals almost $10 million. The organisations providing these types of services in regional communities will be in even less of a position to absorb the administrative costs of undertaking WDOs internally. If people in regional communities of the state are to have access to the same services as people in metropolitan areas that is clearly going to require an investment from the government. This government has made it clear that these changes are expected to come at no cost to the state.

The LNP opposition believes that this will come at a cost, and it is imperative for this cost to be fully understood before committing to these changes. Let us make it very clear: the LNP itself is not against increasing the non-monetary options available to people with issues such as intellectual disabilities or people who are experiencing domestic or family violence. From opposition we have led from the front in relation to making women and children experiencing family and domestic violence safer. However, there is currently not enough detail around the establishment of the work and development order scheme for the LNP to support this aspect of the bill. As the committee report notes—

> Submitters also raised the need for the implementation of the program to be carefully considered in conjunction with the community and potential sponsors, including the need for a working group to support effective implementation of the scheme and the need to ensure the scheme remained flexible, transparent and accessible.

Treasury noted in its response to the submission that SPER will establish a work and development order implementation reference group comprising non-government community service providers, peak advocacy groups and government agencies. The reference group will provide input and guidance to the department on the implementation of work and development orders, including the development of detailed guidelines which underpin the operation of work and development orders.

It should also be noted that the LNP opposition is not against the creation of a work and development order implementation reference group. In fact, we believe the work of the reference group could inform potential positive future changes instead of the position that we have in front of the parliament at the moment which lacks detail and has not properly identified the costs of such a scheme. It needs to be noted that the WDO scheme has a much wider application than the current fine option order regime, and local councils rightly want to understand the impact of these changes on them.

The LNP opposition has also noted on the ICT Dashboard that the SPER program end date has been pushed back three months. Public information that is available makes it appear that these delays are attributable to the contents of this bill. This program is an important part of maintaining the integrity of the fines system and IT delays, as we have constantly seen under this government, should be minimised. This is a government that has bungled the implementation of ICT system after ICT system. It remains to be seen whether this system will also be bungled by a government that simply cannot manage contracts.

I turn briefly to other aspects of the bill. In terms of case management of individual debtors, there is nothing in these changes that the LNP would oppose. In terms of establishing fairer and simpler and more consistent fee arrangements, we expect Treasury and SPER to honour the commitment given to the LGAQ in respect of this amendment. When it comes to improving disputes management and information sharing, we see no issues with these clauses.

The bill achieves the policy objective of assisting SPER's enforcement functions by making a number of amendments. Again, these amendments highlight the work of the LNP when in government to strengthen enforcement measures. The LNP will always support measures to crack down on people who can pay their debts but who refuse to do so. SPER is such that many people in the community have had a difficult experience dealing with the agency. An agency that is set up to collect fines from people is always going to come in for its fair share of criticism. Having an efficient and effective fine collection agency is an important part of government. It is contingent on all members in this place to take steps to ensure that this agency has the powers to do what it needs to do and the resources to properly undertake its functions.

Mr RUSSO (Sunnybank—ALP) (9.13 pm): To fully understand what the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017 sets out to achieve, it assists to go back to 1999 and set out some of the aims of the bill which introduced to Queensland the State Penalties Enforcement Registry. In 1999, a bill was introduced in this House to establish the State Penalties Enforcement Registry. That body has come to be known as SPER. It was established to replace the previous methods of collection of fines owed to the state and restitution owed to victims of crime. The bill was to be the whole-of-government fine enforcement and collection system. SPER was to be responsible for the collection and civil enforcement of most penalty amounts due and owing to the state. The Treasurer should be congratulated for the innovative steps underpinning the bill introduced in the House. It is a step in the right direction and is intended to tackle an issue which had been left in the too-hard basket by the previous government.

In a previous life I worked as a public servant at the Southport Courthouse. I was the fines clerk and one of my responsibilities was for the collection of debts owed to the state from fines imposed by the magistrates of the day. It was a very challenging position because of many factors—the most challenging being time. The longer a debt remained outstanding the harder the debt was to collect. SPER was established first and foremost to ensure that more of the fines were able to be collected. The bill presented to the House in 1999 was designed to achieve three major efficiencies: (1) to reduce the cost of fine enforcement; (2) to increase the rate of payment prior to enforcement action; and (3) to minimise the number of fine defaulters being imprisoned. The bill, when passed, saw the expansion of fine options orders, which was an option that enhanced the objective of minimising the number of fine defaulters being imprisoned.

Previously I have outlined how SPER came into existence and some of its main functions. I will now turn my attention to the current bill before the House. The committee recommended that the State Penalties Enforcement Bill 2017 be passed. The current bill before the House is designed to expand the fine options orders regime which existed under the previous legislation to a regime which more greatly enhances sound social policy whilst still being fiscally responsible by the introduction of work

development orders. In my chair's foreword to the report on the bill, I outlined the following: Queensland's State Penalties Enforcement Registry exists to enforce debts owed to the state. SPER performs its duties in accordance with the SPER charter, which requires SPER to maximise collection of fines and moneys before enforcement action is taken. It also envisages a reduction in the use of imprisonment for defaulters by encouraging alternative enforcement measures. Another function of SPER under its charter is to promote public education on the obligations of the offenders and the consequences of not satisfying the debts owed.

The 2017 bill will amend the charter to ensure that SPER promotes a philosophy that community service work is for the needy in the community and not an alternative to payment of a fine for those who can afford to pay the fine. This brings to fruition a view that was expressed back at the time of the 1999 bill. The 2017 bill will introduce work and development orders offering non-monetary opportunities for people who are suffering hardship in order to assist them to satisfy their SPER debt.

The current bill inserts a new part 3B providing for work and development orders which provide a range of non-monetary options for debtors in hardship to discharge their debt. Work and development orders are designed to increase the avenues currently available for non-monetary discharge by 'substantially increasing the number of organisations involved in supervising non-monetary debt discharge, and by including a broader range of activities that can be performed, in addition to unpaid work and ensure that access to opportunities is not reliant on the capacity of one service provider'.

The bill also provides that qualified and experienced professionals from not-for-profit community organisations, government agencies and health services will be able to register with SPER as approved sponsors for work development orders. The outcome will be the establishment of genuine partnerships between SPER and the community service sector. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (9.19 pm): I rise to speak to the bill, which aspires to address the spiralling debt levels of the State Penalties Enforcement Registry, or SPER, through modernising and improving the management of penalty debts. To be honest, the real acronym for this bill should be the 'SPEAR Bill', the 'State Penalties Enforcement Act Registry Bill' because spearing is exactly what is happening as a result of a system that has failed, as the chair pointed out, since 1999. When we were in government we had to deal with the same matter. It started at $750 million, as I recall. As the shadow Treasurer has just pointed out, it rose to $950 million when we left government and is now $1.18 billion or close enough to $1.2 billion.

What we have is a system in government that is failing the people of Queensland. It is failing for a lot of reasons. Whilst we recognise that what is recommended by the Treasurer today is trying to address the enforcement of the bill and assist in the collection of fines and penalties, it is a botched system that should be taken back to the drawing board to start again. We could not fix it, and this is an absolute bandaid solution that we are debating here tonight.

As the committee is well aware, when we investigated the bill there were people who came forward with a nightmare of bad stories. They are bad stories for disadvantaged people. There are bad stories for people who are good, honest citizens of Queensland—Queensland taxpayers—who are getting belted through the 'SPEAR' system in terms of the doubling or quadrupling of the initial fine of a toll to end up with thousands of dollars worth of debt. The system is broken.

Whilst we are supporting the passage of this bill, I would like to see the Treasurer and the government address the problem that is creating heartache for a lot of Queenslanders. We heard a lot of stories. I have one, in particular, in Mermaid Beach of a father with an autistic son who has been severely fined through the system. The digital age means that a notification is sent out to an address, but he has not lived at that particular address for some time. It happens to be his mother's address, but there has been a family breakdown et cetera. I am not going to mention any names, but because there is a digital address he has copped a fine which has been escalating enormously until the son—an autistic kid—now owes thousands of dollars and the father has to stump up for the funding of it.

We had submissions from the good people of SPER saying that there were opportunities to have the debt waived on compassionate grounds, but they are not going to tell anyone because otherwise everyone will use it. That is the sort of mentality that is involved with this 'SPEAR' bill. As I said, the debt is currently approaching $1.2 billion, affecting Queenslanders across our widespread communities. It is affecting those who can afford it the least, with a significant number of debtors unable to pay their penalty debts because they are experiencing genuine hardship. We were advised that 17 per cent of the SPER debt, which is approximately $200 million, is owed by people who cannot pay. We had submissions from SPER representatives that there is a special category of customers in custody. It sounds like a reality TV show, but these people have no capacity whatsoever to pay, in some instances, $20,000 worth of debt. They are in custody.

For other people affected by SPER, the debt has accumulated so much that their licence has been taken away. With no ability to drive, their job is taken away so they have no capacity to pay their SPER debt. What I am saying here clearly is thank you, Treasurer, for trying to address the matter through your WDO scheme and trying to put something in place that we could not do as a government. However, this needs to be looked at in a fulsome manner to reattack the SPER issue—the enforcement and the collection of debt in Queensland. I know there are contractual problems with the private sector on the matter. I know there are issues that have to be dealt with, but those people who are dodging fines need to pay and there are some deliberate people. We have one particular company which owes $350,000. That is deliberate and it needs to be cracked down on hard. We are not going to cop that in terms of our system for all genuine taxpayers across Queensland paying their dues and paying their fair share of liability. When the system goes haywire so that a minor toll debt of a couple of dollars of someone who is severely disadvantaged turns into thousands of dollars of fees owed—as I pointed out previously in terms of the health issue of a person—then the system is broken. Whilst we support this bill going through, I would love to see the whole SPER issue addressed from a new blank page and start again.

Introducing these debtors to an extensive variety of non-monetary options with increased access to those opportunities through a work and development order scheme supported by a network of approved organisations is a good idea at heart but—and there is always a loud 'but'—there is a weak and illusory approach to the non-monetary debt finalisation options provided by this bill. I know through my experience in PCYC where the guys at Numinbah were doing a bit of work for us that it cost us more money at the PCYC to supervise and control them than it did to get value out of the work they were doing.

That was the question that I had. Non-government members put in a statement of reservation, which the House would be aware of, which alluded to the fact that it was not going to cost any money. That is like saying pigs might fly. The bottom line is that these schemes need managing. They need operation. As we have seen in New South Wales where it has been in place, they are now coming back to government for more money to fund some of these operational matters.

I recognise the objectives of this bill would be of benefit to all Queenslanders if—and only if—they were implemented with proper concern for the financial costs involved. Unfortunately, the Treasurer has already admitted that the likely impacts of things like Cyclone Debbie and the subsequent funding will be a $2 billion hit on the budget affecting Queensland for the next two years, as I recall from this morning.

Mr Pitt: $1.5 billion.

Mr STEVENS: Thank you very much, Treasurer, for the adjustment. This is in combination with the Queensland Council of Social Service's comments surrounding accessibility to the WDO program and the explanatory notes accompanying the bill stating that any financial costs would be met from within existing funding allocations and agency resources. I question how the costs associated with implementing the bill—the Treasurer alluded to it in his opening remarks—could be accommodated within the existing government budgets. As I said, if there are matters to be catered for in terms of expenditure, then the budgeted money that they already have is too much. It is too much fat in their existing budgeted areas. If it is not going to be that way, if they are going to put money towards one program, then they are going to take it from another program so some other program will have to be cut. To say that it will cost nothing to government is a nothing in itself.

This leads to questions as to whether current government budgets are excessive or what government budgeted programs would need to be sacrificed to support the cost burden associated with the passing of this bill from enacting the enclosed duties. Further objectives of this bill, such as the case management of debtors where the payment compliance and enforcement history with SPER and the total owed amount will be considered, as well as an improved dispute management process, would be in place to support the WDO program outcomes. I make note that many of the submissions we received during the consultation process on this bill came from Queensland residents who had experienced frustration with how the SPER process was currently being managed and approached.

Positively, the bill does create an opportunity to reduce the workload of dispute management with debtors and the debt collection process for those who have undergone case management through the modernisation of the act with the ability to electronically serve some documents. I have already outlined how there are problems in the electronic world when you have real people with real problems in different situations such as broken homes, broken families et cetera. They are the people, unfortunately, who are involved more than the normal operators—the more fortunate people in society in terms of copping most of the SPER debt. Subject to the registrar's approval, there are options to accept a payment plan through the online system portal.

However, without the proper financial analysis completed, and as I have previously stated in the second reading debate of the Farm Business Debt Mediation Bill, it is hard to reach a solution when we do not know exactly the extent of the problem. While the Farm Business Debt Mediation Bill passed with Finance and Administration committee suggested amendments earlier this year, included within its explanatory notes was an estimate of the expected costs to be incurred.

Additionally, in closing, as I have made note in the statement of reservations, I would like to draw to the attention of the House the divide we are seeing emerge between metropolitan and regional areas in accessing non-monetary solutions for debt resolutions. I quote from that statement—

It's a simple fact that SPER debtors living in areas like South-East Queensland will have more ability to successfully apply to work off their debt through the WDO scheme. The lack of services available in many regional areas will mean that access to this option will most likely be restricted. Organisations providing these services in regional locations will also find it more difficult to meet the costs of providing WDO services internally. The publicly available SPER debts highlight that the amount owed is spread right across Queensland, including in regional parts of the state.

I am sure in the good areas of Mulgrave there is a lot of SPER debt that the Treasurer should be very, very concerned about. The statement continued—

This is a gap in the system that will emerge and needs to be acknowledged.

Mr POWER (Logan—ALP) (9.32 pm): I rise to support the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017 and particularly the introduction of work and development orders. I note the committee received submissions and conducted public hearings. I would like to thank and commend the other members of the committee, especially the chair of the committee, Peter Russo, and our erstwhile deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach. The chair took up the task as hearings had to be cancelled because of the rain of Cyclone Debbie and when my participation was limited at those hearings by the flooding in my electorate of Logan. I also want to express my thanks to the other members of the committee.

We sometimes must levy a fee or a penalty on Queenslanders. Sometimes this is a tough penalty for wrongdoing, and we recognise that these must be paid. The amendment bill recognises that and is a significant reform undertaken by the Palaszczuk government. We know that people should pay their debts one way or another, and that includes non-monetary means. We also know that the collective level of debt to be collected by SPER has steadily increased, as was highlighted so well by the deputy chair. The bill introduces work and development orders, replacing the current fine option orders which are largely community service orders. SPER undertook consultation with key stakeholders during 2016 as part of the process of forming the policy on work and development orders.

I know that justice requires and the community expects—and even most who have done wrong recognise this—that those who have done the wrong thing must take responsibility for their offending behaviour. However, some people simply cannot afford to pay their fines due to hardship. I believe that work and development orders have the potential to make a real difference to the lives of these people but still do justice to the penalty that has been imposed upon them.

The reality is that the impact of a $250 fine will be so much greater on people dependent on Centrelink benefits or living on a low income than on a person who is very well off. The Finnish government had legislation recognising this, and they actually increased the fines based on income. I am not suggesting this should be done for Queensland, but we should recognise that what for a wealthy person would be just an annoyance can become a crushing and depressing burden for those on limited incomes or earning capacity.

Work and development orders will give very low-income earners ways of clearing their debt by undertaking activities that ultimately will be of benefit to their local community. Work and development orders will also provide a good help for those with drug and alcohol problems to stick with their treatment programs as part of the process of resolving their debts. Sticking the course through a drug and alcohol treatment program does not just benefit the person with an addiction problem; it helps their family, their workplace and their community.

I note that approved organisations can partner with SPER to implement work and development orders. I hope local organisations in Logan get involved in transforming lives to see justice done and to see positive projects completed for Logan. The Logan non-government community service providers are already on the ground helping the vulnerable. They are well placed to assist SPER customers in hardship.

We also know that some see their debt as being too difficult for them to pay so, instead of knuckling down to deal with it, they ignore it and hope that it will go away. SPER debts of course do not simply go away. Indeed, if not paid promptly, they can increase. The earlier the debt is paid, the less

cost there is to SPER. However, for those who ignore debts, they have to pay an extra fee which makes the large debt even harder to pay. This is a vicious cycle for those on low incomes and in the end is a profound penalty.

This bill makes this process simpler and fairer. Each time SPER is required to take further enforcement action, a single fee will be imposed rather than a fee for each debt previously incurred. This has the potential to reduce the fees payable and prevent the fee burden on debtors becoming far out of proportion to the original fine. I strive for a fair system of justice in Queensland that does not crush those who have little economic power. This bill is a step in the right direction of making this process fairer and providing more ways for debtors to pay back our society.

When I was campaigning the first time, I met a man who was a similar age to me. He told me that he had only had a licence for 10 years. He had gone through a process where he had driven unlicensed, he had been fined and prevented from having a licence and he had driven unlicensed again and again. He had built up a long series of fines which he had refused to pay and he continued to drive unlicensed. He said that he had to make a change, so he made the change and knuckled down. He did not drive during the period he was serving a restriction on the ability to have a licence. He then paid his fees steadily over quite a few years and was able to apply for a licence. He became regularised as a Queensland licensed driver and paid off his fees and changed his behaviour through that process. We want this to be a stepping stone for more and more Queenslanders to recognise the debt they owe and to begin to pay it back in a fair way that reflects the wrong they have done society. We commend those who pay their penalty and change their behaviour. We commend this bill because it gets people on a pathway to do that.

Mr MINNIKIN (Chatsworth—LNP) (9.38 pm): I take great pride in rising to contribute to the debate on the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017. From the outset, may I take the opportunity to congratulate the committee secretariat for their support and also the chair, the deputy chair and my fellow colleagues on that committee. By way of background, in early March this year, the Treasurer introduced the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017 into parliament. This bill was referred to the Finance and Administration Committee, which I am proud to be a member of, and the committee was due to report on about 28 April this year.

The State Penalties Enforcement Registry was established, as has been said by a previous speaker, in 2000 to collect unpaid penalty debts. The SPER system collects the debts on behalf of a range of agencies, including state government agencies, courts, councils, universities et cetera. As the member for Mermaid Beach said, and I think the Treasurer also said this in his contribution, staggeringly there is currently around $1.18 billion worth of SPER debt. This level of debt has obviously gone up considerably in recent years due to the newly constructed tollways, tunnels et cetera.

This bill was introduced as a way—and the intent was noble—of trying to address some of the debt management challenges facing the state, most notably the low recovery rates for some offence types. There have also been other major changes to SPER's operating environment since it was established all those years ago including increased fine volumes and technological advances.

Broadly, at its core, the bill had the following six objectives: to provide improved non-monetary debt finalisation options for people in hardship—and I will come back to that—secondly, facilitate case management of debtors rather than the management of their individual debts; establish fairer, simpler and more consistent fee arrangements; create efficiencies in the management of disputes; enhance information sharing, importantly, between SPER and other prescribed agencies for penalty debt management purposes and improve SPER's information collection and disclosure provisions; and, finally, to assist SPER's enforcement functions.

As pretty much all speakers contributing to this debate have said, Queenslanders rightly expect that when someone does the wrong thing, whether it is simply failing to pay a parking ticket, getting a fine for speeding or being fined in the courts et cetera, that person does the right thing: they actually front up and pay their due; they pay the amount that is owed. That is only fair and that is just. Of course we cannot speak in the public arena in absolutism. There will always be on the fringes a certain, albeit small, percentage of people who for whatever reason simply will not do the right thing. In fact, moreover, it is their intended purpose to absolutely not do the right thing. Sadly, this cohort of people have in some cases the ability to pay—in fact, I put it to honourable members that in most cases they have the ability to pay—but refuse. Fundamentally, the state has responsibility to ensure the integrity of its fine collection system. It is an important part of overall governance. Worryingly, as I alluded to earlier, we continue to see SPER debt rise to record levels. As I have already said, the figure at the moment is around $1.18 billion.

Let's make one thing very, very clear. Contrary to the unfounded claims by the Treasurer in his introductory speech, the LNP never made a decision to automatically refer all tolls to SPER. What the LNP did was to take actions to ensure the integrity of the existing system. Sadly, the Treasurer and the Labor government jettisoned many of the SPER reforms set up by the LNP. Our position, as has been outlined by the shadow Treasurer, who will be moving amendments in relation to work development orders, is that we will not oppose the bill. However, the work development order is something that I would like to make further comment on. This is largely achieved at clause 24, which inserts new section 3B into the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999.

Essentially, this part of the bill will increase the number of options available to people to work off their existing SPER debts through non-monetary means. Currently, fine option orders are only available to people who are in financial hardship and are suitable to undertake unpaid community work. What is being proposed—and it is noble in part—in the Labor bill is that it will go much further than this. The non-monetary options available to people in hardship will extend from community service out to things such as financial counselling or undertaking educational, vocational, life skills, drug and alcohol treatment or mentoring programs. In fact, other members have used examples of people whom they have come across in their past. I can distinctly recall one such individual, and this comes back to the fundamental principle that some people use the SPER system as a complete joke. There was one individual, who obviously cannot be named—and I will not name—from whom many years ago I borrowed a CD. I opened up the glove box and there was literally a cascade of unpaid Brisbane City Council parking fines and, most importantly, toll fines from the Gateway. It was absolutely staggering. I said to the guy, 'Do you have any intention at all of paying these?,' and he steadfastly looked at me and said, 'Why would I? Why would I?'

The key thing here is that under the option of the WDOs being proposed by the Labor Party a person such as the guy I have just mentioned could potentially make an application for a work and development order and instead of having to pay the fine, or even do community service if they cannot pay, this person can take counselling of some kind as a way of working off their debt. As the shadow Treasurer said earlier in his contribution, what is not made clear in this bill is just who is going to meet the cost of this person's counselling service. The explanatory notes to the bill state the following—

Any costs associated with these legislative amendments will be met from within existing funding allocations and agency resources.

This is the fundamental departure where I do not agree with what the government is proposing. There is no way in the world that a lot of these people will have these agency costs—extra costs—paid for from the generosity of their own heart. It simply will not occur. It simply does not fly that these service providers will be expected to offer all these additional services to people without seeing any increase in funding at all to be able to assist them in providing these services.

As noted from the LNP members' comments in the committee report, the opposition is worried the establishment of a work and development order scheme could also lead to a situation whereby people living in metropolitan areas do have access to services to undertake the WDOs but people living in regional centres will miss out. Those particular services may simply not be offered to them outside metropolitan areas.

In relation to just how much of a problem SPER is, I did some research within the confines of my own Chatsworth electorate. I went to the State Penalties Enforcement Registry. It concerned me that as at 31 March in the beautiful electorate of Chatsworth for the postcodes 4152, 4153, 4154, 4155 and 4173 there is just under $9.8 million outstanding—quite staggering. There is nearly $10 million owing just in my own electorate.

In conclusion, the LNP will always support measures to crack down on people who can pay their debts but refuse to do so. I acknowledge, as previous speakers have said, that there will always be a percentage of people who simply will not have the means. However, we are referring to those people who do have the means but have absolutely no intent in paying it off. The very nature of SPER is such that many people in the community have had different experiences dealing with the agency, and all members of the committee noted that point. Having an efficient and effective fine collection agency is an important part of overall governance and it is contingent on all members in this place to ensure we are taking steps to ensure this agency has the powers to do what it simply needs to do and, importantly, the resources to properly undertake its very functions. Simply put, when people do the wrong thing and can pay, they should have to pay. It is not a case of 'if I pay my SPER bill'; it should be 'when I pay my SPER bill'. Sadly, that is what many people do not understand.

As I have said, I applaud the government for where it was trying to land in this particular public policy space, but I stand by the statement of reservation that the LNP members of the committee have made. We urge the Treasurer to take on board the comments that the non-government members are contributing to in this debate because we can foresee major problems and unintended consequences with the WDO situation.

Mr MADDEN (Ipswich West—ALP) (9.48 pm): I rise to speak in support of the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017. After the first reading speech by the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment on 2 March 2017, the bill was referred to the Finance and Administration Committee for consideration. As outlined in the committee's report, the Queensland State Penalties Enforcement Registry—SPER—exists to enforce debts owed to the state. Unpaid fines and penalties may be registered with SPER for collection and enforcement. SPER debts may arise in various ways: an unpaid infringement notice, court fines, offender levy, offender debt recovery notice, a Department of Transport fine and toll debts. A key feature of the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017 is work and development orders—WDOs—offering Queenslanders experiencing genuine hardship alternative ways to reduce or pay off their debt.

The bill also simplifies fee arrangements and provides amendments that facilitate a case management approach to people with SPER debts. This case management approach focus is designed to enable more effective collections by SPER while balancing fairness with effectiveness by considering a person's entire debt history and circumstances rather than just focusing on individual debts. The improvements to SPER's fee structure will simplify and streamline the way SPER applies fees, making it easier for people to understand what they need to pay and when fees will be applied if SPER is required to take enforcement action.

The WDO program will be open to people unable to pay their debt who are experiencing domestic and family violence, homelessness or financial hardship, or those with mental illness, intellectual or cognitive disability or serious substance use disorder. Under the program, SPER will work with government and community based sponsors who would then manage the activities undertaken by the person. Registered sponsored organisations will be able to recommend and supervise the activities of the program participants including unpaid community work, undertaking financial or other counselling, or completing educational, vocational or life skill courses, amongst other options. Queenslanders in hardship who are eligible for a WDO will initially be able to access the program in the second half of 2017 with Queensland Corrective Services, and further options will be available in 2018.

With the work and development orders offering non-monetary opportunities for people who are suffering hardship to satisfy the debt, the committee made a recommendation that the eligibility for the work and development orders be extended to allow for a catch-all provision to cater for circumstances outside those prescribed by the bill. It is clear that a significant proportion of people who owe SPER debts are vulnerable members of our community. The proposed service model for the case management of debtors rather than individual debts, coupled with fairer and simpler fee arrangements, will achieve better results for Queenslanders. Overall the bill will improve the operation, effectiveness and efficiency of SPER.

As the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Development said in his introductory speech, the Palaszczuk government is committed to improving the management of penalty debt in Queensland. The State Penalties Enforcement Registry was established in 2000 to collect unpaid penalty debts. Since SPER's establishment there have been major changes to its operating environment and new approaches to penalty debt management. SPER currently administers debts totalling $1.17 billion. The debt level that was inherited by this government was made worse by the former treasurer's decision to automatically refer all road toll fines to SPER. This was part of an effort by the then treasurer to fatten up SPER for potential outsourcing or privatisation. It was a move that reeked of the former treasurer's disastrous Strong Choices asset sales plan.

The impacts of the changes made by the former treasurer, now opposition leader, were dramatic. Tolling debts registered with SPER in the first eight months of the 2014-15 financial year totalled $92.3 million, which was more than triple the 2013-14 level. Tolling debts now stand at a total of more than $232 million. Provisions in the bill will modernise the management of the penalty debt for unpaid fines and tolls with the aim of stopping large debts accumulating, introducing options to address large debts when they occur, and lessening the pressure on the SPER system and allowing it to do its job: collecting fines.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the Finance and Administration Committee, the committee secretariat and the submitters. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JANETZKI (Toowoomba South—LNP) (9.54 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill. The objectives of the bill are broadly: to provide enhanced non-monetary debt finalisation options for people in hardship; establish more consistent fee arrangements; better manage disputes; grow information sharing; create an environment of better case management of debtors rather than the management of their individual debts; and further support SPER's enforcement functions.

This proposed bill needs to be put into some context, particularly after the prior comments of the member for Ipswich West. I find it interesting that the Treasurer has suggested—and it has been repeated by the member for Ipswich West—that the cause for this out-of-control SPER debt nearing $1.2 billion is somehow the result of the LNP government's decision to refer all toll road fines to SPER. That is a bit of a dodgy claim and it is worth testing. The facts are that SPER was introduced by the Labor Party in 1999, so they sat around for a decade through to 2011 as that SPER debt grew ever larger. Then in 2011, as the debt grew ever worse, they made a very bad position even worse when the Bligh government changed the arrangements in relation to the tolling of Queensland roads just as they were privatising the motorways. When the LNP took power in 2012 it immediately started to address the problem.

In 2012-13 the then treasurer, now Leader of the Opposition, oversaw SPER's collection of nearly $250 million in unpaid fees. Significant aged debts of five years or greater with little prospect of ever being repaid were written off, and that cleared the decks for a dedicated focus on debt collection. The LNP set in place a comprehensive SPER reform program including such things as wheel clamping, seizure, and sale to recover unpaid debts. SPER's ICT system was upgraded and some debt recovery functions were handed to specialist debt recovery firms. Many of those were dropped by the Labor government when they took office. Although they may have signed up a $60 million IT contract to improve SPER's debt recovery potential, that may not even be delivered this year either. In the Toowoomba postcode 4350 we have nearly 10,000 debtors totting up over 60,000 individual debts with a total value beyond $18 million. That makes Toowoomba the fourth most indebted postcode in Queensland.

This is a serious problem and something must be done. The total SPER debt has ballooned since the Labor government took office in 2015 by a further $230 million. In addressing the total SPER debt, we also have to address the scenario where small fines for minor infractions are blowing out to enormous amounts due to people not knowing about them and which are unlikely ever to be repaid. Many stories of this nature were relayed to the committee during the hearings, and the member for Mermaid Beach reflected on a couple of those stories as well. I have heard plenty of anecdotes from around Queensland of people facing great challenges after dealing with SPER.

How is the bill proposing to solve these problems? Firstly, the bill is proposing work and development orders, and that is a major expansion on the fine option order regime that is described and outlined in sections 41 to 50 of the existing act. This regime allows SPER to convert a fine to community service activity, and a fine option order is only available where the debtor has a demonstrated incapacity to repay the debt and is otherwise suitable to undertake unpaid community work. This is an important regime and it has served its statutory purpose well, as evidenced by the successful case studies outlined by a variety of charities including Roma House at Spring Hill and 139 Club in the Valley, which explained how debtors successfully completed community service and moved towards employment.

LawRight was a submitter to the committee, and they went on to say that an internal study they conducted revealed that 65 per cent of homeless people seeking assistance from their homeless persons' clinic have an average SPER debt of more than $5,000. SPER has previously shown its adaptability in helping the homeless by adopting new practices which develop fine option orders as an appropriate option for homeless clients and generated an increase in their usage. They included the adjustment of financial eligibility thresholds for the homeless, parcelling of debt and the freezing of debt while part of the debt was being worked off. There is no doubt that these fine option orders grant appropriate protection to those most vulnerable in our community. This matters, as we know that homeless people are more likely to have interaction with law enforcement and are therefore more likely to incur fines for offences relating to public intoxication, public transport or offensive language.

As foreshadowed by the shadow Treasurer, the Labor proposals take this regime much further and put at risk the operation of the entire system. Amendments proposed by the shadow Treasurer to the work and development order provisions will seek to address these shortcomings. Specifically, the non-monetary options available to people in hardship under a work and development order are proposed to expand from simply community service under the current act to incorporate financial

counselling, undertaking an educational, vocational or life skills course, drug and alcohol treatment and mentoring programs. In their statement of reservation, opposition members raised a concern about the lack of such services available in regional centres which will result in challenges accessing the proposed work and development order scheme. Although we know that the majority of SPER debt is found in urban centres, there is significant SPER debt around rural and regional Queensland.

Under the proposed changes it is conceivable that a SPER debtor could seek a work and development order and, instead of paying the fine or completing community service, as per the fine option system under the current act, the debtor could simply attend a few counselling sessions to 'pay off' their debt. There are two key problems with this particular scenario. Firstly, there is a question of fairness that must be answered. The last thing we can afford is for the law-abiding citizens of Queensland to be subsidising the recidivist activities of others. There can be no safety net for recidivists who leave the Queensland taxpayer picking up the tab. You cannot just park anywhere, speed when you feel like it and dodge a toll when the mood takes you.

Secondly, there is the question of who is going to pay for these work and development orders. The explanatory notes to the bill opine that any costs associated with these legislative amendments will be met from existing funding allocations and agency resources. The opposition members' statement of reservation described the idea that the implementation of the proposals in this bill would come at no extra cost to the Queensland taxpayer as preposterous. The bill is based on many aspects of the New South Wales model, which pumped significant funds into its implementation. It is not just the LNP opposition saying this in the statement of reservations. Submitters to the committee are onto this as well. I reflect on Mr Matsuyama from the Office of the Public Advocate, who said their main concern with the bill was that there would not be the funding that New South Wales had received to implement the work and development program. Mr Potts, Immediate Past President of the Queensland Law Society, said that their major concern was that the program be properly funded. And on it went.

Frankly, it is implausible that approved sponsors under the work and development order scheme will not seek compensation for their work in assessing a person's eligibility for the scheme, deciding what activities might be performed, making the application and then reporting on the applicant's progress. Further, it is implausible that businesses supporting the work and development order scheme would not seek additional funding to conduct courses, counselling or mentoring. The logical conclusion to all of this is that Queenslanders will not just forgo through the failure to collect SPER related debt; they will also forgo through providing services to those same debtors to let them off the hook.

The Treasurer needs to explain, should these proposals pass, where this funding will come from. The Treasurer needs to give Queensland taxpayers some assurance that the government has control over the budget and how the scarce taxpayer dollar is spent. The LNP will always back initiatives to make sure that people who owe money to Queensland taxpayers pay it off or work it off, if they are able to do so—quickly, fully and honestly. The shadow Treasurer's proposed amendments to the bill will make sure of that.

Ms HOWARD (Ipswich—ALP) (10.03 pm): I rise tonight to speak in support of the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017. We as a government have a number of responsibilities to Queenslanders—things like health, education, jobs and services. Ensuring that all members in my community of Ipswich are treated equitably and fairly is what I fight for every day. This bill addresses one of the obstacles some people in Ipswich face when it comes to equality. There are a number of people—many of them unheard—who are experiencing hardship when it comes to debt management. The previous one-size-fits-all approach was forcing vulnerable people into increasingly deeper holes. The new model contains a contemporary risk based approach using targeted strategies that will prove more effective when it comes to debtor case management.

SPER is due for some major reforms. That is exactly what our government is doing here tonight. I commend the Palaszczuk government and our Treasurer, Curtis Pitt, for identifying this need and simplifying the process of debt management through SPER. To ensure we are putting Queenslanders first, there has to be time taken—time used to guarantee that what we change will be to their benefit and not the other way around.

One element of this bill in particular that accomplishes this is the new non-monetary debt finalisation options that have been provided for people in hardship. Struggling with debt is crippling and is a debilitating social stigma—one that for many becomes a hole that, try as they might, they struggle to get out of. That is why it is important that these new options are there for those in hardship. Rather than adding to their financial difficulties, we have provided people with an option that considers their hardships, not amplifies them, and puts their interests first.

One of the fundamental ways it does this is through the introduction of new conditions for application of non-monetary options to satisfy the fine—increasing the inclusivity of the criteria and giving every Queenslander a choice. This expanded definition of 'hardship' will now include those experiencing financial hardship, those who have a mental illness, cognitive or intellectual disability or substance disorder, those who are homeless or those who are experiencing domestic and family violence. The last criteria is of particular importance as there are few situations worse than suffering domestic and family violence. I am proud that we as a government are taking this opportunity to ease hardship.

Not only have we made the criteria more inclusive; we have also expanded the options available to our constituents. Some of these new options include unpaid work, medical or mental health treatment, educational, vocational or life skills courses, financial and other counselling, drug and other treatment, mentoring programs for those under the age of 25, and culturally appropriate programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote areas.

These are significant changes for Queenslanders. In the past, a disadvantaged young person who committed a minor crime would have had to pay a possible hefty fine, potentially jading them against the justice system and society entirely, benefiting no-one. Now they can seek mentorship or even vocational training opportunities. These are opportunities they may never have had or considered before, benefiting not just the young person but also society in general. Another point worth noting is that there will be case management of individual debtors rather than it being simply based on individual debts owed.

In brief, a debtor's payment, compliance and enforcement history with SPER and the total amount owing in penalty debt will be factors that are considered by SPER to determine an appropriate collection strategy. In addition, case management will be achieved by the introduction of payment plans at a case level and the settlement of debt at a case level in order to lift enforcement actions. What this will mean for Queenslanders is that they will be entitled to payment plans that are both flexible and fair, ensuring they are given a number of options for paying a debt that will hopefully ease the burden of debt on the debtor. What is more, if the debtor receives further debt, these can be added to the existing plan.

This is good news for Ipswich and good news for Queenslanders. Like many of my colleagues in this House, I have been approached by people in my electorate who are struggling with debt management. For some, they have done everything right yet somehow have still managed to find themselves in a difficult situation that did not need to be. I am grateful that there are now more options for them.

The amendments in this bill simplify SPER fee arrangements to provide greater consistency and flexibility, to enhance information sharing between agencies, to streamline the disputes process, to provide a better customer experience and to amend instalment plan arrangements to facilitate case management of a debtor. I want the people in my electorate who are struggling with debt to be treated as fairly as possible as they go about getting back on their feet. This bill does just that. I commend it to the House.

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (10.09 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to debate on the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017. Members of the House who have followed, like me, *Game of Thrones* will know that the Lannisters always pay their debts. For the vast majority of Queenslanders, that is also the case. Unfortunately, there are a number who owe, in some cases, a considerable amount of money to the state government. This bill, the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill or SPER bill, seeks to make a number of changes to the scheme tasked with recouping debts owed to the state.

As I said, most Queenslanders do pay their fees or fines as they occur, whether it is a parking ticket, a speeding fine, a toll or a charge which is court ordered. We do understand that, for some, there is a need for SPER to have flexibility to case manage, particularly those under extreme financial hardship or those with extraordinary circumstances, and there are already a number of non-financial means of settling that debt contained within the SPER act at the discretion of SPER to utilise. As the member for Indooroopilly outlined, we have serious concerns about the efficacy of the proposed work and development orders in terms of how they will be paid and what happens to the debt owed to the creditors like councils that is ultimately written off by SPER as a result. As such, the member for Indooroopilly will be moving amendments accordingly.

I want to quickly talk about the process of recovering unpaid tolls since this is an issue of considerable concern in the broader community that relates to the portfolio I hold as shadow minister for transport and main roads. Motorists have three days to pay a toll. If that does not happen, an invoice is issued—in this case, by Transurban. If that is not paid within 14 days, a demand notice is issued—

again by Transurban or go via—and if that is not paid the toll is referred to the Department of Transport and Main Roads to recover. At the point it is referred to Transport and Main Roads, the tolling company waives any right to receive the original toll. It then goes to SPER once the offender refuses to pay the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Let me make it clear to all members of this House and to members of the public, as a number of my colleagues have done: when the Treasurer and the Minister for Main Roads want to lay blame on anyone but themselves for the state of SPER, remember that this is a legacy scheme of successive Labor governments. SPER was established in 2000 by the Beattie Labor government and the arrangements for toll roads—that process I just outlined where at some point the tolling company can transfer the debt to the government through TMR and on to SPER—were signed off in a road franchise agreement settled in 2011 under the then Bligh Labor government just before it privatised Queensland Motorways. Who was the transport minister at the time? That would have been the Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk.

Any increase in referrals of unpaid fines during the time the LNP was in government was a genuine attempt to clear a backlog that was allowed to develop under the previous government, with fines recovered under the same powers that had been in place since 2011. Now amounts owed to SPER have been allowed to vastly exceed $1 billion under this Palaszczuk Labor government. Some measures in this bill will be helpful in tackling this mountain of debt, but in the interests of maintaining the integrity of the system we have serious concerns about the proposed work and development orders, and that is why I will be supporting the amendments moved by the shadow Treasurer.

Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (10.13 pm): It is my pleasure today to rise to support the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017, which represents significant reform undertaken by the Palaszczuk government. It deals with an issue that comes through my office and, I think, through the office of every local MP on a fairly regular basis. People in my electorate expect that people should pay their debts one way or another, and that includes non-monetary means, and this is what this bill provides for as well. It is pleasing to see that a focus is on managing the debtor holistically and not just on managing individual debts in the debt pool. Whether it is responding to hardship circumstances, agreeing on a payment plan or taking enforcement action, all of a person's circumstances and history with SPER will be taken into account before a critical decision is made.

The State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999 was initially drafted on the basis that the vast majority of people would only ever owe a single fine, but the average number of fines per debtor is now more than five. Dealing with people at the whole-of-case level means that interaction between SPER and debtors will be simplified. It has been a pleasure for me to be a bit of a regular visitor to the Finance and Administration Committee, and I was very pleased to be present for a public hearing with the people from SPER to hear them talk about this very point. Fees are minimised, correspondence is streamlined and the SPER debtor is supported under these new arrangements in fully discharging their penalty debt obligations. Debtors will be treated fairly. Those people who genuinely want to comply will do so more easily, and for the entirety of their debt. Those who are trying to avoid their obligations or continue to demonstrate wilful disregard will be identified swiftly and dealt with appropriately. I am very pleased to see this very complex issue being dealt with in this manner. The bill strikes the right balance. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—PHON) (10.15 pm): I rise to speak regarding the proposed amendments to the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999 with regard to the management of penalty debts by the State Penalties Enforcement Registry, SPER. Since SPER's establishment there have been major changes to SPER's operating environment including, amongst other things, customer service expectations and the development of new approaches for the management of penalty debt. Apparently the Queensland government has approved the implementation of a new service delivery model for SPER to improve the management of penalty debt and position SPER as a respected leader in penalty debt management, and it is that very last point I wish to focus on.

Improvement of SPER's management of penalty debt cannot come fast enough for the people of Queensland and in particular a lady who contacted my office in March. On 12 November last year my constituent was caught speeding on the Bruce Highway by a police officer. She fully admits and regrets the offence. The fine was $243 and she took the option to pay by instalment. She paid the first instalment on 6 December 2016 as it was due four days later. She subsequently forgot to make a payment for the second instalment and received a letter on 15 January 2017 stating that she was in arrears. She was quite distressed by receiving this letter as it cited a number of additional penalties ranging from suspension of her licence to her arrest. She then paid the $60 instalment on 13 February. She received an SMS on her phone stating that her payment had been unsuccessful due to the infringement being referred to the State Penalties Enforcement Registry, SPER. The SMS also stated

that her funds had been returned to the originating bank account and to please allow five to 10 business days for the funds to appear. This lady then paid the balance of the money for this fine and on 15 February she received another SMS with the same message about the funds being returned to her. One day later, on 16 February, she received another SMS stating—

Your first $60 payment was to initiate the VIP instalment plan for the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

In view of that SMS, the lady then repaid the full amount again and on 23 February she received another SMS advising her that the funds were again being returned to her originating bank account. As of 7 March 2017, the lady had not received any correspondence from SPER. On 9 March I wrote to the ministerial office of the Treasurer, the member for Mulgrave, asking that this matter be investigated. Subsequently, an officer from SPER contacted my electorate office by phone and advised my staff that SPER had no record of this matter. That contact with my office was at least one month after the lady had received the SMS on 13 February advising her that the infringement had been referred to the State Penalties Enforcement Registry. A couple of days later on 24 March 2017 my constituent received a registered debt notice from—you guessed it—SPER, but only this notice was in a different name and SPER had added an additional $65.20 to the notice for enforcement. In part the notice states—

Because the infringement was not finalised it has been registered with SPER for enforcement and the additional $65.20 has been added to the fine.

This is a complete and utter debacle. As I just said, my constituent received the registered debt notice from SPER on 24 March. I have a copy of that notice with me and it is dated 16 March 2017. I also have with me a copy of a letter signed by the Treasurer's chief of staff. That letter is dated 31 March 2017—17 days after my constituent received the registered debt notice from SPER. The letter states—

... the Registrar advises me that there is no record of an infringement notice fine registered with SPER in the name of—

my constituent. The letter from the Treasurer's office continues—

The Registrar also informs me that inquiries by SPER have identified that this infringement notice is currently with the Department of Transport and Main Roads awaiting further action.

No, the matter was actioned by SPER seven days beforehand—on 24 March—when it sent my constituent the registered debt notice. The problem for SPER and the Treasurer's office is that they sent out the notice in the wrong name. All of the other details on the registered debt notice are correct, including the offence, the time and date of the offence, the location of the offence, the registration number of my constituent's vehicle and, most importantly, the original infringement notice number. This may be a matter that the Treasurer's chief of staff may wish to follow up with the registrar because, clearly, someone is having a lend of someone.

How can it be that the registrar has informed the Treasurer's chief of staff that SPER had no record of the infringement notice, even though my constituent had already received the registered debt notice from SPER? This is the really critical point: the same registered debt notice sent to this lady by SPER quotes the identical infringement notice number as it appears on the original infringement notice. That is proof that SPER must have had the infringement notice prior to sending out the registered debt notice. Otherwise, how could they have quoted the identical infringement number notice? Either they have had the infringement notice or they have had one hell of a crystal ball down at SPER to be quoting the exact number of an infringement notice they say they have no record of.

It is diabolical that this lady attempted a number of times to finalise the fine by paying the full amount owing, but the money kept getting returned to her bank account. As she has made the point, the original infringement notice is in her correct name, the car registration as recorded on the original infringement is in her correct name, her licence as recorded on the original infringement notice is in her correct name. All of this information is held by government departments. Obviously, SPER, by the registered debt notice, sent it out with an incorrect name. They whacked on an additional $65.20 to pay for their incompetence. I have been recently informed that SPER have since removed the $65.20, which I suppose can be interpreted as an admission that they are incompetent.

I think it is important to reflect on SPER's performance in this matter by having a look at a few of this bill's policy objectives. Firstly, there is the objective to facilitate case management of debtors rather than the management of their individual debts. That is a fail on SPER's part. SPER cannot even correctly identify the lady in their registered debt notice.

The next objective of the bill is to establish fairer, simpler and more consistent fee arrangements. That is a fail with a capital 'F'. As I have just said, SPER send out registered debt notices to people with incorrect names on them and then whack on additional fees to pay for their incompetence. Another of the bill's policy objectives is to enhance information sharing between SPER and other prescribed agencies for penalty debt management purposes and improve SPER's information collection and disclosure provisions.

In relation to the intention of this bill to enhance information sharing between SPER and other prescribed agencies for penalty debt management purposes and improve SPER information collection, I would like to return to the circumstances of my constituent about whom I was speaking earlier. I have received updated information from my constituent. She advises me that she received a phone call from an officer at SPER in mid-April. She states that, during the discussion about her matter, the officer informed her that SPER does not check the information coming across from the departments as there is so much information made available. That is another fail with a capital 'F'. SPER can exchange all the information it wants, but if it cannot be bothered checking it and ensuring that it is basing its actions on accurate information, what is the point?

The bill's final objective is to assist SPER's enforcement functions. In that regard, SPER needs all the help it can get. It is hard to enforce anything if the department cannot correctly identify the person. I can certainly appreciate the intent of this bill but, going by the example of my constituent, which I have highlighted, the system needs all the streamlining and help it can get. I am also certain that the officer from SPER who contacted my office did so in good faith in a genuine attempt to assist. It is not the officer's fault that the current system let him down as well as, on this occasion, my constituent.

Dr ROWAN (Moggill—LNP) (10.25 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017. This bill was introduced as a way of amending the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999 to modernise the management of penalty debts by the State Penalties Enforcement Registry, SPER. Since the establishment of SPER, there have been major changes to what now exists within its current operating environment. These changes include an increase in fine volumes as well as customer service expectations, together with significant technological advancements and new approaches for the management of penalty debts.

One of the objectives of the bill is to provide improved non-monetary debt finalisation options for people experiencing hardship. It is important to note that, overall, SPER debt is nearing $1.18 billion. That goes to demonstrate that new strategies are needed to tackle this issue. The introduction of a work and development order scheme, which would replace the current fine option orders, could increase the number of options Queenslanders have available to them to work off their accumulated debt through non-monetary means. For that to become operational, the eligibility criteria would need to be expanded. That eligibility criteria could include those who have a mental illness, cognitive or intellectual disability or a substance use disorder, who are homeless, or who are experiencing domestic and family violence. A similar system was implemented in New South Wales in 2009. Under this system, a work and development order can be made only if an application is supported by an approved organisation or, in the case of medical or mental health treatment, via a health practitioner qualified to provide such treatment.

It would come as no surprise to both sides of the House that Queenslanders expect that infringement notices that are issued are, indeed, then paid. It is also no surprise that there are a small number of people who are in receipt of a fine that they are simply not able to pay and finalise. There is also the other side of the coin, where people who have the ability to pay refuse to enter into arrangements to do just that. There are those offenders who simply ignore the rules, and that is not acceptable.

Since the Palaszczuk Labor government was elected in January 2015, SPER debt has increased substantially. This is just over two years. At this time I would like to contradict what the Treasurer claimed in his introductory speech—that the LNP made a decision to automatically refer all toll fines to SPER. What the LNP did, and today has continued, is to propose a system whereby after three days of a person going through a toll without paying for it they receive an invoice. Then a second notification is sent after 14 days. Then a final demand notice is sent a further 30 days on. If after that period no action is taken, the matter is referred for the issuing of a penalty infringement notice. It is only after it not being paid 30 days after that notice that the matter is then referred to SPER.

When in government, the LNP took steps to enhance debt collection at SPER by setting in place a comprehensive SPER reform package. It was a dual plan that required enforcement for debtors who can pay but will not pay as well as the management of those who simply cannot pay. Like many of the reforms that were delivered by the previous LNP government but which were discarded by this Labor government, the LNP's SPER reforms were also discarded. Now, after two years of waiting for the Labor government to outline its strategy to fix this issue, SPER debt has ballooned past $1 billion. Only now has the member for Mulgrave introduced legislation to try to reduce this ever-growing SPER debt.

We on this side of the House do not oppose the bill. There are some clauses that we will not be supporting. The shadow Treasurer, my good friend the member for Indooroopilly, will be moving an amendment in relation to the work and development orders. The LNP members agree on the need for

an efficient and effective fine collection agency as an important part of due diligence and oversight responsibility by the Queensland government. With that in mind, it is incumbent on all of us to ensure that appropriate steps are taken so that SPER has the powers to do what is required and that it also has adequate resources available.

Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (10.30 pm), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to this debate on the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017. I will express our concerns with some matters that have been raised and address some issues, specifically in relation to the work and development order scheme, which will no doubt be a topic of discussion during consideration in detail.

The Queensland work and development order program is based on the highly successful work and development order program in New South Wales which does not fund sponsors to participate in the scheme. That should be made clear. Sponsors are already servicing clients who will benefit from the scheme. As I said earlier tonight, there has been no compelling case in the New South Wales experience. The absence of additional funding has not proven to be a barrier to participation, with some 2,000 organisations now registered in the New South Wales program, up from 200 in 2011. What the sponsors want are efficient, streamlined processes that are easy to administer. The Queensland scheme will deliver that.

For SPER the scheme is a new way of doing things. It will need to recruit and support sponsors who in turn will provide services to SPER debtors. The scheme is part of a broader transformation agenda that will see SPER reviewing and allocating its resources to be able to deliver on the entire agenda. Let me make it clear that SPER will not be going soft. Strict criteria apply to the WDOs. A person is eligible if they cannot pay because they are homeless, a victim of domestic or family violence, have a substance use disorder, have a mental illness or cognitive intellectual disability or are in financial hardship. Furthermore, the activities under the scheme make a direct contribution to changing behaviour. This is the just outcome that we should all be striving for. I think there is agreement on that in this chamber.

I would also like to thank the SPER team from within the Office of State Revenue for undertaking extensive consultation on the proposed work and development order scheme. SPER met with 30 peak non-government organisations and government agencies. Fifty submissions were received and all parties consulted were overwhelmingly in favour of the introduction of the work and development order scheme. That has informed the work that has gone into this bill which provides a comprehensive set of strategies to address the issues we acknowledge we face. Everyone in this place recognises that taking action is critically needed. It is necessary, as we have seen now the total debt balloon to almost $1.2 billion. We have worked hard and managed to reduce the number of tolling fines significantly by working with the Department of Transport and Main Roads and Transurban to improve up-front collection of tolls. This has significantly reduced the need to issue tolling fines, reflected in an 85 per cent reduction in tolling debts now coming into SPER.

This is not a controversial bill, nor should it be. This is a bill that will make things fairer for Queenslanders and have practical outcomes. It was time to take a fresh look at how SPER operates. The bill makes amendments in a number of areas that will support a contemporary risk based approach to debt recovery. This government acknowledges that there are some in the community who are in genuine hardship and cannot pay their debts. There are currently only limited non-monetary options for these people to finalise their debts. The bill establishes the work and development order scheme to provide Queenslanders who are experiencing genuine hardship a way to reduce or pay off their SPER debts.

At the end of the day, giving Queenslanders a fair go is what those on our side of the House are all about. The reforms in this amendment bill deliver that goal. To sum up, I again thank members of the Finance and Administration Committee and the staff of the committee for their work on the bill. I also wish to put on record my thanks to Treasury staff who have worked tirelessly to progress the bill and the reforms within it. I thank again, as I mentioned earlier, staff of the Office of State Revenue. The State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017 contains the necessary reforms to improve how SPER works and to provide those experiencing genuine hardship ways to work off and reduce their debt. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—

Mr EMERSON (10.34 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 2 (Commencement)

Page 10, line 8, after '66,'—

insert—

71,

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017, explanatory notes to Mr Scott Emerson's amendments [695].

Tabled paper: State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017, Mr Scott Emerson's amendments [696].

Amendment No. 1 amends clause 2. Amendment No. 15 makes changes to clause 71 of the government's bill such that part 7 of the current State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999 is no longer omitted. Part 7 of the SPE Act relates to general provisions about fine option orders. This first amendment is a result of a more substantive change detailed in amendment No. 15 circulated in my name. This is just the first amendment to give effect to our position in relation to work and development orders and maintaining the current arrangements due to the lack of clarity and detail surrounding the government's proposed work and development order scheme.

During my second reading contribution I outlined a number of issues we see emerging in relation to this scheme which is why I will be moving these amendments. I ask all members to be wary of what happens when Labor rushes into these types of changes without fully appreciating their full impact. It has happened before—for instance, in relation to transferring 17-year-olds out of adult prisons—and it is occurring again here tonight. The LNP fundamentally does not support any measures that undermine the strength of the system. We do not think it is fair that the people who do the right thing could have to foot the bill for people who do the wrong thing and look for whatever way they can to get out of paying.

Mr PITT: I will not reiterate the reasons why we are obviously very strongly focused on the work and development orders. These are a critical piece in the reforms we are undertaking in this bill. We believe that this is about a just outcome, a fair outcome, one that recognises that there are a number of reasons why people may be experiencing hardship. It is not only financial hardship but may relate to other areas, including being victims of domestic and family violence, people who may be suffering mental illness or may have an intellectual disability to name but a few.

We stand by these orders. We believe there has been great success in other jurisdictions, including New South Wales. From a cost perspective we believe there is no compelling case to suggest that those partnerships that have been established to deliver these programs require any additional funding at this stage. We will carefully monitor that, of course, but ultimately we believe the process of consultation that OSR has undertaken dealing with a number of non-government organisations in Queensland is a very comprehensive process and is obviously a great start in terms of the future relationships that will be required to successfully implement the work and development order program.

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

AYES, 40:

LNP, 39—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

PHON, 1—Dickson.

NOES, 40:

ALP, 39—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, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Russo, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Pyne.

Pairs: Ryan, Simpson; Power, Bleijie.

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

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Emerson) negatived.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 90—

Mr PITT (10.44 pm): I seek leave to move the following amendments en bloc.

Leave granted.

Mr PITT: I move the following amendments—

1 Clause 11 (Insertion of new s 14A)

Page 13, lines 2 to 6—

omit, insert—

(1) This section applies if, in relation to an infringement notice for an infringement notice offence involving a vehicle, an administering authority reasonably incurs a cost in establishing ownership of the vehicle (a ***verification cost***).

2 Clause 12 (Amendment of s 15 (Infringement notices))

Page 13, lines 10 to 13—

omit, insert—

(1) Section 15(2)(f) and (g)—

omit, insert—

(f) the ways the alleged offender may respond to the notice under section 22;

(g) that the notice may be withdrawn at any time before the fine is satisfied in full;

3 Clause 46 (Amendment of s 102 (Financial institution to make payments))

Page 60, lines 2 to 14—

omit, insert—

46 Replacement of s 102 (Financial institution to make payments)

Section 102—

omit, insert—

102 Financial institution to make payments

(1) For each regular deposit into the enforcement debtor's account while the fine collection notice for regular redirection is in force, the financial institution—

(a) within 2 days after the deposit, must deduct from the account the amount stated in the notice and pay it to SPER as stated in the notice; and

(b) may only charge the enforcement debtor an amount (an ***administration charge***), as an administrative cost of complying with the notice, of not more than the amount prescribed by regulation; and

(c) must give the enforcement debtor notice of the deduction and any administration charge.

(2) However, the financial institution must not deduct an amount from the account if—

(a) the deduction would cause the account to be overdrawn; or

(b) the deduction would cause the total balance of all the accounts the enforcement debtor holds with the financial institution to be less than the amount prescribed by regulation (the ***protected amount***).

(3) Also, in applying subsection (1)(a) to the last deduction, the financial institution must deduct the amount, not more than the amount stated in the notice for deduction for each regular deposit, that results in the total amount deducted by the financial institution being the total amount to be deducted under the notice.

(4) If the financial institution is prevented by subsection (2) from deducting from the account the full amount of the recoverable amount, it must deduct as much of the amount, if any, that it may deduct without contravening subsection (2).

Example—

If the recoverable amount is $950, the protected amount is $400 and the enforcement debtor's account has a balance of $725, the financial institution must deduct $325 from the account.

(5) A deduction paid or kept by a financial institution under this section is a valid discharge of the financial institution's liability to the enforcement debtor to the extent of the deduction.

4 Clause 73 (Insertion of new pt 8A)

Page 74, line 9, 'section 134J'—

omit, insert—

section 134M

5 Clause 87 (Amendment of s 165 (Regulation-making power))

Page 94, lines 11 and 12—

omit, insert—

(a) the activities that are unpaid work, and the restrictions, if any, on those activities being unpaid work, including, for example—

(i) the places where an activity may be undertaken; and

(ii) the licences, authorisations or qualifications a person must have to undertake an activity;

6 Clause 88 (Insertion of new pt 10, div 7)

Page 95, after line 21—

insert—

183A Department (corrective services) is approved sponsor

(1) From the commencement, the department (corrective services) is taken to be an approved sponsor for a work and development order to undertake unpaid work.

(2) The chief executive (corrective services) may appoint an appropriately qualified person to supervise a person undertaking unpaid work under a work and development order.

(3) The *Corrective Services Act 2006* applies to a person appointed under subsection (2) as if a reference in that Act to a community service supervisor were a reference to the person.

(4) A corrective services officer has, subject to the directions of the chief executive (corrective services), the powers necessary to facilitate the department (corrective services) carrying out the functions of an approved sponsor.

(5) In this section—

corrective services officer see the *Corrective Services Act 2006*, schedule 4.

department (corrective services) means the department in which the *Corrective Services Act 2006* is administered.

7 Clause 88 (Insertion of new pt 10, div 7)

Page 95, lines 22 to 30 and page 96, line 1—

omit, insert—

184 Other approved sponsors

(1) This section applies if, before the commencement, the registrar published, on the department's website, a list of entities that are to be approved sponsors under this Act.

(2) From the commencement, an entity included in the published list is taken to be an approved sponsor for the types of work and development orders stated for the entity in the list.

8 Clause 89 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 103, lines 12 to 15—

omit, insert—

(1) Schedule 2, definitions *address*, *administration charge* and *fine option order breach notice*—

omit.

(2) Schedule 2, definitions *authorised corrective services officer*, *civil enforcement fee*, *community service order*, *compliance period*, *corrective services office*, *default certificate*, *enforcement debtor*, *fine option*

9 Clause 89 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 104, after line 13—

insert—

fine option order breach notice means a notice, in the approved form, about a person's failure to comply with a fine option order and stating the following—

(a) the full name and address of the person;

(b) the offence to which the order relates;

(c) if relevant, the infringement notice number to which the order relates;

(d) how many hours of community service the person performed under the order;

(e) the total amount owing because the person did not comply with the fine option order.

10 Clause 89 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 106, after line 9—

insert—

unpaid work means—

(a) if a person's approved sponsor is the department in which the *Corrective Services Act 2006* is administered—the community service offered to the person by that department; or

(b) otherwise—an activity, prescribed by regulation, that is performed by a person without pay.

As I mentioned during my second reading speech, the amendments to be moved during consideration in detail support the fundamental policy underpinning the bill—that is, to amend the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999 to modernise the management of penalty debts by the State Penalties Enforcement Registry. I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Bill 2017, explanatory notes to Hon. Curtis Pitt's amendments [697].

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 90, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule 1, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (10.46 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. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (10.46 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.46 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Tully Coastguard

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (10.47 pm): In February this year, I tabled a petition in this House regarding the Tully Coastguard's radio installation, which is co-located with Ergon infrastructure on Mount Mackay, east of Tully. In December 2016 I wrote to the energy minister about Ergon trying to charge a community-based volunteer not-for-profit organisation more than $40,000 to keep its radio installation on that site for three years as part of an infrastructure upgrade. We have since received a response from the energy minister advising that the first $10,000 contribution demanded by Ergon will be covered by a Queensland government department to allow negotiations to continue. Therefore, we have no resolution on the matter, just a temporary reprieve. I would have thought that the energy minister would have sorted this out to protect the Tully Coastguard from this greedy cash grab proposed by Ergon.

The other issue that the Tully Coastguard and boaties across the Cassowary Coast region have faced since December last year is that channel 16, the emergency channel, and channel 80, the public channel, have not been operational. This has caused a huge problem for the Tully Coastguard and the boating public. Marine safety has been compromised during the nearly five months those services have not been available. Since channels 16 and 80 stopped working on 17 December 2016, the Tully Coastguard has been unable to secure a contractor to visit the site to determine why they were not operational. We know Ergon was working at the Mount Mackay site on 17 December 2016 and that other Queensland government agencies that have radio infrastructure at the site also had problems with their radio communications at that time. On Saturday 29 April 2017, a contractor was able to get to the Mount Mackay site to investigate why channels 16 and 80 were not operational. The advice to the Tully Coastguard was that the power supply—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Member for Hinchinbrook, I will ask the Clerk to pause the clock. Members will resume their seats. There are too many members standing around in the aisles talking and it is very difficult to hear the member.

Mr CRIPPS: The advice to the Tully Coastguard was that the power supply to its radio installation had been cut off by Ergon. This is an extraordinary and unacceptable action by Ergon that, as I mentioned earlier, has created marine safety issues for the general public across that region. The Tully Coastguard secured the agreement of Marine Safety Queensland, which has radio equipment at the Mount Mackay site, to access a temporary power supply from their installation. This provided enough power to re-establish channel 16, the emergency service used by the coastguard, but sadly it was not possible to restore channel 80, the channel used by the general public, so this problem remains live and serious.

The difference between life and death at sea can be access to effective and reliable communications to other vessels or to relevant emergency services. For that lifeline to have been cut off by Ergon is a dangerous act of gross negligence. The energy minister needs to smarten Ergon up and direct it to lay off the volunteers at the Tully Coastguard. It is absurd and insulting for Ergon to charge the Tully Coastguard fees to co-locate its radio infrastructure on top of Mount Mackay.

(Time expired)

Pine Rivers Electorate, Education

Ms BOYD (Pine Rivers—ALP) (10.51 pm): Recently I was able to announce a $3 million upgrade to extend the Bray Park State High School multipurpose hall. The school community has been calling for an extension to the hall for over a decade—

Ms Jones interjected.

Ms BOYD: I will take that interjection from the minister. After it was irresponsibly announced as an unfunded promise by my predecessor, I made it a priority to deliver it once I was elected.

Ms Jones interjected.

Ms BOYD: I will take that interjection too. Currently the school budgets many thousands of dollars to hire fit-for-purpose venues for event nights. This upgrade will provide essential learning and performance spaces for HPE and the arts, along with the provision of a much needed showcase space for all school community events, including awards evenings. I have been overwhelmed by the positive feedback from students, the faculty and the P&C. I particularly want to acknowledge the hard work and perseverance of principal Kirsten Ferdinands and P&C president Kent Funnell.

In addition, to this project I announced the fast-tracked investment of $63,000 to install shade structures, bus stops and a school hall fan at Pine Rivers State High School. I want to acknowledge the minister who is in the chamber for her work in achieving this in my local community.

Our government is determined to give every student in every school the best possible education. That means delivering the teachers, curriculum and school facilities we need to give students the best chance at success. These projects in my local state high schools will also create vital jobs for local tradies and more opportunities for apprentices and trainees. Aside from the recent announcement, in this financial year alone there has been over $1.4 million in increased infrastructure investment in local schools in my community, and an investment of nine teachers above growth.

Just down the road is the proposed Petrie uni project. I have been campaigning with my community for the better part of a year to secure funding and for it to finally be recognised in the federal budget. It will see a capital investment and concessional loan to the University of the Sunshine Coast to have the campus built, giving security to get this project up and running by 2020.

Sadly, what this budget also saw was $2.8 billion cut out for the university sector. Locally I have been campaigning for a local uni, which Labor believes should be accessible to all in our community and not just the wealthy. This view is at odds with the federal government and its budget, which will see a 7.5 per cent increase in student HECS fees.

I have also been campaigning for a fully funded uni with trade skills training, yet this federal government and their budget has walked away from the vocational skills sector. They have walked away from the national partnership agreement and investment in vocational skills in this space that we are in desperate need of, not just in our community but right across our nation.

Our community needs to be congratulated on our campaign to hold the federal government to account on this project. There will be more work to do in the future to maximise this asset in our community. We know that the future of my community depends on our education system, not just for our kids but also for the thousands who have been made redundant or shut out of our economy. Education is how we regain an advantage.

(Time expired)

Quilpie Shire Centenary

Ms LEAHY (Warrego—LNP) (10.54 pm): It gives me great pleasure to place on record a history of Quilpie presented by Lyn Barns and written by Sister Margaret Anderson at the Quilpie Shire Centenary welcome dinner on 27 April 2017. Let us take ourselves back, not to 29 April 1917, the day Quilpie was officially proclaimed a town, but to 18 March 1916 and that day's edition of the *Northern Miner*, the Charters Towers newspaper. In the business section, mention is made of the new settlement Quilpie where a land sale was held. To quote from the article—

Bidding created surprise to everyone.

62 allotments were sold with storekeeper George Espie paying 700 pounds for a corner block. In all, land sales that day totalled 5500 pounds.

The news item continues—

Prices show the extraordinary faith the tradesmen have in the new township.

In a June 1916 edition of the paper mention is made of 'Mr Delaney from Adavale who is building a butchers shop in the township of Quilpie along with storekeepers erecting stores.'

On 29 April 1917 Quilpie was proclaimed a town with rights and responsibilities. Those who heard the news were excited. What would it mean for the fledgling town—the townspeople; those who would call it home? Speculation was rife! Questions were pondered. Would a community gather around the new hub? Would the town and community support each other? The town of Quilpie and community have outlasted the speculations and musings of those far off days. For 100 years Quilpie has stayed on the map. It has not been a century of smooth sailing.

Over the years drought and flooding rains, low prices and world wars have caused trouble and heartache but the towns built at the end of the line are often forced by circumstances to get in and get things done. This attitude has been part of the community and its leadership down the years.

As we look around during the week of the centenary, the displays throughout town give us a glimpse of life in the early years. As the wonders of the modern era reached Quilpie—the railway, electricity, the party line, motor cars and trucks, the picture theatre, bitumen roads, television, schools, the hospital, air conditioning—life was made easier but not less challenging. With the electronic era in full swing, we have been drawn into the 21st century.

As we begin our second century we have questions similar to our pioneering citizens. Will we still be on the map? What will be the challenges of the coming years? Will there be a compassionate community for the young and the old? What part will each of us play? May we, like the tradesmen of 1916-17, continue to have extraordinary faith in our town of Quilpie. We remember, we celebrate and we give thanks.

Battle of the Coral Sea

Mr STEWART (Townsville—ALP) (10.56 pm): Just five months after Japan had entered World War II and two months after capturing Singapore, Australia was in the enemy's sights. Although the Imperial Japanese Navy, with six carriers in the fleet, steamed towards Australia, it was Port Moresby that was the target. By taking Moresby it would neutralise the allied forces allowing Japan to concentrate on taking Darwin and Townsville and take Australia effectively out of the war.

Due to US bombers bombing Tokyo from Midway Island, the Japanese fleet was split into two—one fleet heading to Midway and the other to steam to the Coral Sea and towards Port Moresby. Fortunately, by splitting the fleet the Japanese abandoned their planned 300 aircraft raid on Townsville. Australia was prepared to deter any attempted invasion by Japanese forces between Cairns and Brisbane by mobilising militia. The 42nd battalion was tasked with patrolling the rail line and coast south of Townsville. Steam trains were strategically placed on rail sidings ready to evacuate civilians south.

By intercepting Japanese intelligence, the size and nature of the Japanese fleet was determined. Two US carriers—the *Yorktown* and *Lexington*—combined with Australian navy cruisers the *Hobart* and *Australia* on 4 May to intercept the Japanese fleet approximately 800 kilometres from Townsville in what became known as the Battle of the Coral Sea. On 5 and 6 May, two fleets manoeuvred but did not make contact as the Japanese headed towards Moresby. For the first time in naval history, two fleets would engage without sighting each other nor firing on each other, except for their aircraft. It became such a crucial point that the 42nd Battalion had then mobilised to Alligator Creek, just 15 kilometres south of Townsville. They were given 20 rounds of ammunition, told to fix their bayonets and face seawards. That is how serious it was.

At the end of the battle, the USS *Lexington* aircraft carrier was sunk, along with the several other ships, and over 130 aircraft. Between 7 and 12 May, Townsville based aircraft flew almost continually against the Japanese fleet. Port Moresby was saved and Townsville was spared major damage. Those excerpts were taken from the *Townsville Bulletin*.

My grandmother told me many stories of those days and the continuous armada of aircraft flying in and out of Townsville at that time. Back then they were only stories to me when I was a boy. On Monday, 1 May at the 75th commemoration of the Battle of the Coral Sea, attended by the Premier and Prime Minister, those stories came flooding back to me. We owe those sailors, soldiers and airmen more than they will ever know. Lest we forget.

Prawn Industry

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (10.59 pm): From sugar industry woes over the last 12 months or so to the recent floods where we saw boat ramps with more than a metre of mud on them; a house with its dance studio downstairs and other small businesses being wiped out; cars and motorbikes and all manner of metal roofing, side panels and so forth being smashed up against trees, trying to get into the Albert River—we saw all sorts of things. In amongst all of that, we saw $25 million worth of prawns wiped out.

Having had the opportunity over the last five months to look back, I realise that the whole concept of what was done with those prawns and those prawn farmers has been mismanaged by Biosecurity Queensland. Those farmers lost everything through absolutely no fault of their own. They were looking for support and looking for help. I can say one thing is absolutely certain: the federal government and the state opposition have been there supporting them.

Senator Barry O'Sullivan came to see me. He implemented an inquiry for the prawn farmers to find out what had gone wrong—where the fault lay. That has happened. I also arranged for him to come and do a forum in the canelands to talk to the prawn farmers—it was not just the farmers on the river; it was also the wild catch farmers. We also had the cane industry issue for him to have a look at. We had two sessions. They both went exceptionally well. Everyone in the canelands area, where it seemed like everything was coming at them, were very, very appreciative.

Finally they have something to smile about, with the federal government now coming forward—after a lot of lobbying from me, Barry O'Sullivan, the opposition office and others—with a $20 million package. Sadly, the state government has chosen not to engage in that package. There is going to be a lot more money needed. Another $10 million from the state government would have been well received and needed by those farmers but, sadly, that is yet to be seen. In fact, they have been told, 'No. It is not going to happen.' At least that $20 million was something for them to smile about.

Something else for all of us to smile about is that the prawn day is going ahead this Friday at 148 Marks Road, Woongoolba. Please, if you want to support that local area, make sure you buy your tickets and come on down to the prawn day on Friday.

Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committee Conference

Mr RUSSO (Sunnybank—ALP) (11.02 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, between 19 and 21 April 2017, as you are aware, the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committee held its 14th biennial ACPAC conference. Firstly, thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for your participation. I would like to thank the Speaker for welcoming the delegates to the conference and Neil Laurie, the Clerk of the Parliament, for his participation. I would also like to thank Ray Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach and deputy chair of the Finance and Administration Committee; Steve Minnikin, the member for Chatsworth; and Linus Power, the member for Logan, for their participation.

ACPAC was formed in 1989 and provides a unique forum for the exchange of information and opinions relating to public accounts committees, providing committees with the opportunity to share experiences, best practice and matters of mutual interest. Its aim is to improve the quality and performance of public accounts committees, particularly in Australasia.

I thank Amanda Honeyman, Nicola Ryan, Deb Jeffrey, Katie Shalders, Yasmin Asburner, Joanne Walther, Christine Knight, Janette van den Berg, Zac Dadic for taking the group photo and Louise Whitlock for helping to design the program. I thank the catering team for putting on such lovely meals and accommodating several last-minute changes to meal requests. I thank the finance team for assisting with fees and refunds when required. I thank the attendants and security teams for assisting with getting in and out of the building. The tours of our parliament and this great building where we

come to make Queensland a better place were enjoyed by all—and I must say that I learn something new about parliament every time I have the opportunity to join in on a tour, so I say a big thankyou to them.

Finally, I say a big thankyou to my fellow Finance and Administration Committee members for their participation. I must give a shout out to the member for Lytton, Joan Pease, and the member for Kallangur, Shane King, for helping to entertain the conference delegates at the welcoming barbecue—so thank you to my parliamentary colleagues.

The program ran over two days and included discussions on, to name a few: 'Strategic reviews of auditors-general offices'; 'Parliamentary public accounts oversight—holding PACs to account'; 'Following up on audit reports—how can parliamentary oversight add value?'; 'Beyond the audit inter-agency cooperation to maintain integrity'; and 'Parliamentarians v politicians'.

Whilst many of the delegates come from Australia, there were members from New Zealand, Fiji, South Africa and India. The greatest thing about the conference was the depth of experience that was in the room and the willingness for the presenters to impart their knowledge. I personally learnt a lot over the two days and left the conference with renewed confidence and equipped with ideas of how I can strive to be a better chair.

(Time expired)

Noosa North Shore

Mr ELMES (Noosa—LNP) (11.06 pm): I rise tonight to call upon the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection, Steven Miles, to urgently act to protect the Noosa North Shore from environmental degradation. In 2010, the Bligh Labor government introduced a permit scheme to raise revenue from daytrippers and campers to fund the necessary facilities to cope with rising visitor numbers. I am advised that visitor permits have doubled since the inception and that $6,628,000 in revenue has been raised.

I table for the House tonight photographs taken at a community organised clean-up last weekend where nearly 300 volunteers joined the Surfrider Foundation in their biannual working bee.

Tabled paper: Bundle of photographs depicting beach clean up [693].

Astonishingly, more than three tonnes of rubbish and three skip bags full of contaminated and non-recyclable products were removed from a 60-kilometre stretch of beach in just one weekend. Clearly the work that the Surfrider Foundation do is outstanding. I would like to pay tribute to them here tonight. What they really need is for this government to deliver on its promise to provide the necessary funds to help QPWS implement better all-round management of the Noosa North Shore.

It is obvious that, regardless of the money being collected from the government's permit system and the almost $2.3 million the department is reportedly spending on capital works, the government is failing in its duty to protect the Noosa North Shore. As the population of South-East Queensland continues to grow, more and more visitors will want to share in this paradise. In fact, over the recent holiday break some 2,500 campers spent their holidays on the Noosa North Shore, north of Teewah, and the only toilet facility for use is located inland at the Freshwater campground.

There are many faults across the spectrum. There is not enough money and resources being invested in maintenance and rubbish removal; there are far, far, far too many yahoos wilfully trashing the beach and using it as a dumping ground; and the sheer number of people and vehicles on the beach cannot be managed. The government needs a strategy now that includes all or some of the following: immediately fund necessary waste management facilities; invest more financial and human resources to ensure that the Noosa North Shore is looked after and cleaned up; reduce the number of vehicle permits issued; and place life bans on those proven to have polluted the beach.

It is not good enough that cash-strapped community organisations such as the Surfrider Foundation and local volunteers are left to clean up after others due to insufficient and inadequate waste management facilities when the Labor government put a plan in place to prevent this very problem. Minister Miles is responsible and needs to come good with a plan to urgently protect the Noosa North Shore.

Federal Budget, Education

Mr MADDEN (Ipswich West—ALP) (11.09 pm): The Minister for Education has advised the House that Queensland state schools will be $300 million worse off under the Turnbull government's new education funding arrangements pursuant to the 2017 federal budget. Federal funding for state

schools in Queensland will go backwards over the life of the agreement. Malcolm Turnbull is trying to trick Queensland parents. This is a better deal than the funding cuts they delivered in last year's budget, but it still goes nowhere near the rate we are funded now. Queensland schools would not see any major funding increases for years.

Mr Turnbull has pushed education funding to the never-never with significant funding increases not flowing to Queensland schools until 2027. Queensland parents expect to see more funding for our schools now, not in 10 years time. It is not just our state school students who will be disadvantaged by these new federal funding arrangements. Queensland Catholic school students will also be disadvantaged. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, through the Bishops Commission for Catholic Education, has expressed its grave concerns over the impact of the Turnbull government's school funding announcement for the 770,000 students who attend Catholic schools across Australia. As the Executive Director of Queensland Catholic Education Commission, Dr Lee-Anne Perry AM, stated in a media release she issued yesterday, unreliable figures confuse the federal funding debate.

In the last 48 hours all Catholic school principals have received from the federal government a letter purporting to provide details of proposed changes to the funding arrangements for their Catholic school beyond 2017. Unfortunately, the figures provided by the federal government do not accurately describe the funding allocation that schools receive under the Queensland Catholic schools funding distribution systems, nor do they accurately detail what schools will receive beyond 2017.

Queensland Catholic schools do not receive funding directly from the Commonwealth. Instead, as with systems—government and non-government—across the country, total funding for all schools in the system is received and distributed by the system authority—in the case of Queensland, the Queensland Catholic Education Commission. The commission and the Catholic school authorities work together to distribute funds in a way that enables them to most accurately respond to individual school needs and circumstances. Despite repeated requests, the federal government will not provide Catholic school authorities with access to its funding projection tools so that the underlying assumptions used to come up with the projections can be properly tested.

The federal government's Quality Schools website has nominally allocated to each school based on averages and without regard to the approved distribution processes. It is important that Catholic school communities understand that the information available through the Quality Schools website is unreliable. The Palaszczuk government just wants a fair go for our school students, but this is just another example of how the Turnbull government has failed Queensland.

(Time expired)

Gympie Electorate, Volunteers

Mr PERRETT (Gympie—LNP) (11.12 pm): Many decades—in fact, hundreds of years—of volunteering services were celebrated in Gympie last week. I hosted more than 250 people who represented almost 50 organisations which have helped make Gympie such a caring and supportive community, and they have raised many thousands of dollars in their fundraising efforts. These grassroots workers, fundraisers, volunteers and enthusiasts help to keep our community ticking. In fact, Gympie residents punch above their weight when it comes to volunteering.

In the 2011 census, 22.2 per cent of Gympie locals undertook some form of voluntary work. That is more than the Queensland average of 18.7 per cent. In other words 8,075 locals have given up their time for their community. Community involvement takes many forms. These volunteers help those in crisis, lend an ear or roll up their sleeves and lend a hand to those in need. They man stalls and fundraise for causes which keep the community ticking. They champion social and community issues or brighten the lives of those in need.

I would like to thank once again the supporters and volunteers from the Anglican Church; Australian Native Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Association Inc; Bluecare Gympie; Bravo Disability Support Network Inc.; Centacare Community Services; Chatsworth Hall Committee Inc.; Cooinda Aged Care; Cooloola Coast Medical Transport; Cooloola Coast Youth Activity Project; Cooloola Cove Residents & Friends Inc.; Dream Fly Believe; Early Childhood Teachers Association—Little Kids Day Out; Football Gympie Inc.; Friends of the Gallery; Friends of the Library; Girl Guides Queensland—Gympie District; Goomeri SES; Gympie and District Riding for the Disabled; Gympie Community Bus; Gympie Lions Club; Gympie Meals on Wheels Inc.; Gympie Men's Shed; Gympie Pensioners League; Gympie Quota Club; Gympie Residential Care; Gympie Volunteer First Aid Services Inc.; Heart of Gold International Short Film Festival; Hope Reins; Jake Garrett Foundation; Justice of The Peace—Gympie; Kandanga Tennis Club; Kia Ora Memorial Hall; Little Haven Palliative Care; Meals on Wheels; Older

Women's Network; Queensland Rural Fire Service; Rattler Volunteers; Red Cross; RSPCA Queensland; St Vincent De Paul; Tin Can Bay Coast Guard; Tin Can Bay Fishing Club; and U3A Gympie.

Often government policies underestimate the contributions made by volunteers outside paid work. It is the unpaid contribution which keeps many of these organisations functioning. It has been estimated that the average Queensland volunteer donates 214 hours of their time, and when they retire they do even more. In fact, a retired Queensland volunteer donates 289 hours or 35 per cent more than average. Research has shown that those who volunteer or get involved are happier as a result. Based on the inspiring and humbling turnout last week, Gympie must be a very happy place to live and retire.

Indigenous Australians, 1967 Referendum

Hon. LM ENOCH (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (11.15 pm): Later this month Australia will mark the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum that altered the Australian Constitution. The outcome saw Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, our country's first nation's people, counted for the first time in the census and regarded as Australian citizens. The yes campaign represented a turning point in our collective history. It was a time when Aboriginal rights were being hard fought for and when the stories of historic and contemporary trauma—stolen generations, institutional abuse, violence and brutality—were being articulated to educate and ensure a better Australia.

The 1967 referendum was always more than just about the right to be counted; it was about the right to be treated with dignity in your own country. Aboriginal women like Faith Bandler and my own aunt Oodgeroo Nunukul, a strong Quandamooka woman, were at the coalface of this campaign, and they fought hard, as they had all their lives, against oppression, racism and sexism to help make this a better place for themselves, me, our children and those children to come.

Today when I meet young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women I see a look of determination to uphold the gains made during those times of hard-fought-for rights. When I get the chance to catch up with Aboriginal and Torres Strait women who are my friends, colleagues, mums, educators, professionals, elders and community workers, I see a sense of pride—a strength that is borne from understanding where we have come from, places admittedly often filled with pain, racism and sexism, and I see a commitment to making sure that the future our daughters and nieces inherit will have fewer of those kinds of places.

It is these same women who stand up and call out any signs of a society that is slipping back to the times of pre 1967 to a time when it was the norm to exoticise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women; a time when Indigenous people were regarded as inferior. When Aboriginal men today are having bananas thrown at them on the football field or being called apes and gorillas among other racial slurs, it is these women who do not dismiss these acts as trivial or humorous. They stand shoulder to shoulder to defend and rally in support of Indigenous rights. They do that because they understand that you cannot leave the door open for the rest of society to believe that any of that is okay.

We have seen football codes do the same when they rally to say no to racism, and, as we focus on the prevention of domestic and family violence, no to negative and harmful perceptions of women. I stand with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and men and non-Indigenous men and women who never leave the door open for anyone to think that racism and sexism is ever okay.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.18 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Bailey, Barton, Bates, Bennett, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Crawford, Cripps, D'Ath, Davis, de Brenni, Dick, Dickson, Donaldson, Elmes, Emerson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Gordon, Grace, Harper, Hart, Hinchliffe, Howard, Janetzki, 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, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Walker, Watts, Weir, Wellington, Whiting, Williams