

WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY 2017

ESTIMATES—INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE—TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING

Estimate Committee Members

Mr J Pearce (Chair)
Mr CD Crawford
Mr S Knuth
Mrs BL Lauga
Ms AM Leahy
Mr AJ Perrett

Members in Attendance

Mr AP Cripps
Mr SL Dickson
Ms DE Farmer
Mrs DK Frecklington
Mrs JR Miller
Mr AC Powell
Mr LP Power
Mr IB Walker

In Attendance

Hon. JA Trad, Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning

Mr M Collins, Chief of Staff

Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning

Mr F Carroll, Director-General

Ms K Parton, Deputy Director-General—Strategy, Governance and Engagement

Building Queensland

Mr D Gould, Chief Executive Officer

Department of Transport and Main Roads

Mr N Scales, Director-General

Queensland Rail Limited

Mr N Easy, Chief Executive Officer

Committee met at 9.00 am



CHAIR: Good morning everyone. I declare open this estimates hearing for the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee. I would like to introduce the members of the committee. I am Jim Pearce, the member for Mirani and chair of committee. We have Ms Ann Leahy, the member for Warrego, who is the deputy chair. The other committee members are Mr Craig Crawford, the member for Barron River; Mr Shane Knuth, the member for Dalrymple; Mrs Brittany Lauga, the member

for Keppel; and Mr Tony Perrett, the member for Gympie. The committee has granted leave for non-committee members to ask questions at its hearing today, so other members may be present over the course of the proceedings.

Today, the committee will consider the Appropriation Bill 2017 and the estimates for the committee's area of responsibility. I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from proceedings at my discretion as chair, or by order of the committee. The committee has authorised its hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for the broadcast of proceedings are available from the secretariat. I ask that mobile phones and other electronic devices be turned off or switched to silent mode. I also remind you that food and drink are not permitted in the chamber.

The committee will examine the portfolio areas in the following order: Infrastructure and Planning from 9 am to 11 am; Transport from 11.30 am to 1.30 pm; State Development from 2.30 pm to 4 pm; Natural Resources and Mines from 4.30 pm to 6.30 pm; and Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships from 7.15 pm to 9.30 pm. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2017 for the portfolio areas of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. The committee will examine the Deputy Premier's portfolio until 1.30 pm. During this time we will suspend proceedings for a break from 11 am to 11.30 am.

Visiting members present today are the member for Nanango, the member for Mansfield, the member for Bundamba and the member for Bulimba. I remind those present today that the committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and are subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament also apply in the hearing. In this regard I refer to standing orders 112 and 115. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings today so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members of the committee.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the Deputy Premier, the director-general, departmental officers and members of the public to the hearing. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental officers to identify themselves in the first instance they answer a question referred to them by the Deputy Premier, or the director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of Infrastructure and Planning open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Deputy Premier, do you wish to make an opening statement of no more than five minutes?

Ms TRAD: Thank you very much, Mr Chair, I would. Good morning, Mr Chair and to all of the permanent and visiting members of the committee. I also acknowledge the secretariat here. I know that you do a huge job pulling this all together. Queensland is a growing place and, in my role as Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, I know that my portfolio has a critical role to play in shaping our state for the future. The Palaszczuk Labor government is investing in the critical infrastructure that our state needs, growing jobs and ensuring a diverse and sustainable economy. Our \$42 billion infrastructure program, guided by the updated State Infrastructure Plan that I am releasing today, is delivering the right projects in the right place at the right time.

This budget commits to fully funding our No. 1 infrastructure priority, Cross River Rail, with early works to commence later this year. This project is critical to unlocking the bottlenecks across the Merivale Bridge and increasing capacity right across the whole South-East Queensland rail network. It will deliver 7,700 direct jobs over the life of the project, tackle congestion by taking more than 18,000 cars off our roads, and improve transport for people living right across the South-East Queensland region. Queenslanders should be clear: it is only the Palaszczuk government that will deliver and build Cross River Rail.

The member for Clayfield has already cut this project once in 2013 when it was funded by the federal Labor government. Now, he says that he will cut it a second time unless it is funded by the federal government, but he has done nothing to help convince his LNP colleagues at a federal level to back it. That is because it is all a smokescreen for his real plan. He has cut this project once and he plans to cut it again. The Leader of the Opposition has only two settings: he is a cutter and he is a seller.

We are also delivering essential infrastructure in our regions with projects like the Townsville stadium; the Smithfield bypass in Cairns; new hospitals in Kingaroy, Roma, Aramac and Alpha; the redevelopment of the Yeppoon foreshore; and the \$75 million Capricorn Highway duplication. We know that local councils are at the heart of regional communities, which is why we are supporting them through our incredibly successful Works for Queensland program, which is pumping \$400 million into regional economies. We have been successful in establishing the nation's first City Deal for Townsville and we are working towards a City Deal for South-East Queensland.

In planning, we are continuing to drive reform, with the commencement of the state's new planning system on 3 July heralding a new era for planning in Queensland. We will continue to work with local governments to support them in their implementation of the new planning system. Over the course of the year, we have consulted widely and finished the South East Queensland Regional Plan, also known as ShapingSEQ, which is expected to be released later this year. Work has also commenced on the first ever North Queensland regional plan, which will guide the region for the next 25 years. The draft plan will be released for consultation shortly.

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority is also focused on assisting with the recovery and rebuilding of Queensland communities affected by disasters, including severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie during the 2016-17 financial year. Unfortunately, recently we have seen the callous and mean-spirited refusal of the Turnbull government to match our category D funding commitment of \$110 million to rebuild these communities. The communities of Whitsunday, Mackay and Rockhampton now know that it is only the Palaszczuk Labor government that will continue to fight for what is fair and reasonable for their future.

When given a choice to back these disaster impacted communities or his Liberal mates in Canberra, the Leader of the Opposition joined Malcolm Turnbull and left these regional communities hung out to dry. It is my commitment to those disaster affected communities that our government will continue to fight for them.

CHAIR: Thank you, Deputy Premier. I call the member for Nanango.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Thank you. Thank you, very much, Mr Chair, and to your committee for allowing me to be here today. Good morning, Deputy Premier, and to all of your departmental colleagues who are with you.

Ms TRAD: Good morning.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My first question is to the CEO of Building Queensland, Mr Gould. If I could please have him come forward? Thank you. Mr Gould, good morning. I refer to the SDS and Building Queensland's function to develop rigorous business cases for projects. My question is: why did Building Queensland model a tripling of demand for rail patronage when rail patronage has fallen by 16 per cent since 2008 to 2016? I seek leave to table two documents, being page 18 of the secret business case and question on notice, No. 14, which the committee should have. Thank you.

CHAIR: We will wait until I get them.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: You are welcome to start.

Ms TRAD: I think we should wait until he views the document.

CHAIR: Yes, certainly. This is a public document?

Ms TRAD: One is and one is not.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: One is from the secret business case and the other is an answer to a question on notice.

CHAIR: All of those in favour? Carried. You may answer.

Mr Gould: I thank the honourable member for the question. The June 2016 detailed business case for the Cross River Rail project undertook detailed modelling of projected increases in demand for public transport and, in particular, rail transport. The increases in demand associated with both public transport as well as rail in the network were based on a number of factors, including projected population growth that was provided by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office that indicated that, from the assessment period of the project—from 2015 to 2036—there would be population growth and that a large proportion of the population growth would be outside the Brisbane local government area. That is population growth around South-East Queensland.

The other relevant information that informed the transport modelling that was included within the detailed business case for the Cross River Rail project included employment growth over the projected period for the project—from 2015 to 2036—and that the proportion of employment growth in the

Brisbane local government area would be higher than the growth rate within the local government area. That would, therefore, drive increased demand generally for transport services, including public transport and rail services, in the region.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Gould, my question was in relation to the tripling of demand that Building Queensland took into consideration. It has fallen by 10 million passengers over that period—from 2008 to 2016. That tripling of demand is what you have taken into consideration in developing the business case. Do you agree that that was one of the aspects whilst developing the business case?

Mr Gould: I again thank the honourable member. The detailed business case for Cross River Rail was informed by a process of detailed transport modelling.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Therefore, if rail patronage does not triple in demand, as it has been modelled by Building Queensland, will this reduce the cost-ratio benefit of Cross River Rail?

Mr Gould: The business case for the Cross River Rail project was based on assumptions in relation to the growth in demand for rail services over the project period.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: But we have proven in the past that there has not been growth.

Mr Gould: I again thank the honourable member. The projections that were included within the transport modelling were informed by population and employment growth projections for the region during the project period from 2015 to 2036. That was the subject of detailed transport modelling undertaken as part of the business case, which was subject to independent peer review.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Right. During the development of that Cross River Rail business case, was Building Queensland aware of the DTMR data that showed the estimated passenger load has declined on Merivale Bridge in the morning peak from 5,989 people in 2011 to 5,426 people in 2016? Over five years we have had a decrease for that morning peak?

Mr Gould: The detailed transport modelling that was undertaken to inform the development of the business case for Cross River Rail modelled the demand for rail services during the study assessment period. That was based on, again, projections around population growth and growth in employment in the region.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I want to be really clear. Building Queensland made the decision not to make any decisions based on what has gone on in the past for this very important project that I think the Deputy Premier calls the No. 1 infrastructure project, the most important project, for Queensland. Obviously, this project is too costly to get wrong. It is a \$16 billion project. I want to be really clear. Building Queensland has not taken into consideration patronage figures from the past, from 2008 to 2016, and has not taken into consideration the fact that the passenger load has declined; is that correct? You are basing this on future figures?

Mr Gould: The demand projections in the business case are informed by, as indicated in the previous answer, detailed transport modelling that was informed by a number of factors, including population and employment growth projections for South-East Queensland.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I want to finish on this very quickly: was Building Queensland made aware of DTMR's data that, in 2015-16, the estimated passenger load on the Merivale Bridge is only 65 per cent of seated capacity and 41 per cent of design capacity? Is it true to say, Mr Gould, that there is plenty of spare capacity and that the trains that do go over the bridge are not even half full?

Mr Gould: Again, the projections set out in the June 2016 business case for Cross River Rail were based on estimated demand projections for the period from 2015 to 2036.

Mr WALKER: Mr Chair, I raise a point of order. Mr Gould is not answering the key question that the member for Nanango is asking, which is historical figure against prediction.

Ms TRAD: I think he actually is.

Mr WALKER: I ask you to bring him to the point of the question.

CHAIR: There is no point of order. I have been listening and I think he is doing a good job.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will ask another question of Mr Gould. I refer to the SDS, which refers to the function of Building Queensland to develop rigorous business cases for the projects. Why did Building Queensland include the demand for the Flagstone rail line in the Cross River Rail business case but not the billions of dollars that it would cost to construct that new passenger rail line?

Mr Gould: Again, the transport modelling that informed the development of the Cross River Rail June 2016 business case was based on population demand projections, which informed the demand for—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Gould, I am now talking about the Flagstone line—

CHAIR: Order! Member for Nanango, I will give you respect and let you ask the questions. However, one thing that I cannot handle and I know others cannot handle is if you keep coming in over the top and do not allow people the opportunity to answer.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: With the greatest respect—

CHAIR: Hang on a minute. If you listened to the first part of his answer, I think he answered it quite well.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Thank you, Mr Chair, but with the greatest respect it seems to be the same answer for every question I have asked since I have been sitting here.

CHAIR: You are asking the same question in a different way.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I think the good people of Queensland are wondering why we are spending \$16 billion on a project that is not using patronage numbers that are correct—

Ms TRAD: Point of order: it is a \$5.4 billion project.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am happy to talk about that.

Ms TRAD: Please feel free to ask me a question.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will, Jackie. I will move on and again ask a question of the CEO of Building Queensland. Mr Gould, going to the cost that the Deputy Premier has just alluded to, I wish to talk about the cost to allow the Flagstone line to carry passengers. You need that for the business case to stack up. We have established that.

Ms TRAD: Point of order: that is hypothetical. That work has not been done yet, so the member is asking a hypothetical question.

CHAIR: That is a fair point.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will move on to ask the CEO of Building Queensland this: when you are developing the business case for Cross River Rail, how can you include the demand from that new Flagstone line in the benefits of the Cross River Rail project but not the costs? I want to be really clear for the Deputy Premier. How can you include in the benefits the demand for a rail line that cannot even carry passengers whilst you are establishing the business case for Cross River Rail?

Mr Gould: In terms of the development of the cost estimates that are incorporated in the June 2016 Cross River Rail business case, they were based on the design, construction and commissioning of the Cross River Rail project reference design. That reference design informed the development of the cost estimate, which, again, is separate to the process of forecasting demand for transport services.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Would it be true that you have had to cook the books to make this project stack up?

CHAIR: Order! Your time has expired.

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, that is actually quite an offensive comment and it is unparliamentary. I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I withdraw. Mr Chair, I have had only 11 minutes of my 20 minutes. I will move on to another question to the CEO. I refer again to the SDS, where it states that it is Building Queensland's role to develop rigorous business cases. Does the reference project for Cross River Rail include nine-car trains? I just heard you refer to the reference.

Mr Gould: In terms of the reference design for the Cross River Rail project, that has been developed to accommodate the provision and service of rolling stock within the project and it has allowed for the future capacity for nine-car rolling stock.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: So it does include the nine-car trains in the rolling stock?

Mr Gould: The reference design incorporates capacity to accommodate the future use of nine-car rolling stock.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: In the south-east corner, how many rail stations can accommodate nine-car trains?

Mr Gould: I apologise, Chair. I do not have that. I will have to take that on notice.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Thank you. Given that answer, you may need to take this on notice as well. Given the fact that you are unaware offhand how many stations there are, are the costs of upgrading those stations that cannot accommodate nine-car trains included in the initial \$5.4 billion cost of the Cross River Rail project?

Mr Gould: The cost estimate for the Cross River Rail project, as developed in the June 2016 business case, relates to the reference design for the Cross River Rail project, so the stations and tunnel infrastructure associated with the Cross River Rail project.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: That is all included in the \$5.4 billion?

Mr Gould: My understanding of the honourable member's question, leading back to the previous question that we have taken on notice, was in relation to whether the costs associated, if they are required, of upgrading capacity at stations outside the Cross River Rail corridor were incorporated in the cost estimate for Cross River Rail. Again, the response to the question is that the cost estimate in the June 2016 business case for Cross River Rail was based on the reference design for the Cross River Rail project, so the stations, tunnel infrastructure and surface infrastructure for the Cross River Rail project.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: That is as clear as mud. I will move on to another question to the CEO of Building Queensland. I want to again talk about the role of Building Queensland to create rigorous business cases but also perform rigorous and transparent analysis. Where is the cost-benefit analysis summary for the Beerburrum-Nambour rail upgrade? According to the Building Queensland website, the detailed business case was completed back in December 2016.

Mr Gould: The detailed business case for the Beerburrum-Nambour rail upgrade project was completed and considered by the Building Queensland board in December 2016. In accordance with our act, the cost-benefit summaries will be provided on the Building Queensland website. We provide those summaries at a point when those projects have been considered by government. As flagged in both our December infrastructure pipeline report and the June 2017 infrastructure pipeline report released today, that project has been flagged as ready for government investment consideration. Once that has been considered by government, the cost-benefit summary will be provided on the Building Queensland website.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Given the fact that the committee has not had the privilege of seeing what is being announced today, are you able to tell the committee whether the benefit-cost ratio is higher for that project than for Cross River Rail?

Mr Gould: I do not have the summary with me. Chair, to be definitive, I am happy to take that question on notice in relation to providing the outline of the benefit-cost ratio for the Beerburrum-Nambour project and how that compares to the published benefit-cost ratio for Cross River Rail.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Excellent. It would be good if we could have that information. I have a question for the Deputy Premier. I refer to Cross River Rail, which obviously has numerous references in your SDS. I table page 38 from the Cross River Rail secret business case and the delivery schedule. I am referring to the delivery schedule. It shows expressions of interest should have been released for four separate packages or work—the rail systems and tracks, the surface works, the tunnel and station package, and development—early in 2017, yet nothing has happened. How far behind schedule is Cross River Rail?

Ms TRAD: The time frames the honourable member is referring to in the business case that has been 'secretly' acquired by the member for Nanango relate to an investment decision by the Commonwealth. These time frames were predicated on the Turnbull government coming to the party and providing Queensland with our fair share of funding for critical nation-building infrastructure. As members of the committee and as all Queenslanders know, we have been given short shrift by the Commonwealth in relation to a whole range of things, but particularly in relation to funding Cross River Rail.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: You are the only one playing politics here.

Ms TRAD: To be really clear, the time frames the honourable member is referring to were predicated on an investment decision by the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth has had the business case for Cross River Rail for more than 12 months. We have entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Commonwealth. We have met all of their requirements and obligations in terms of consideration by the Turnbull federal government for investment in critical nation-building infrastructure. Queensland has played by the rules. We have done absolutely everything the Commonwealth have asked and they have still decided not to fund this project. That has had an enormous impact on the time frames around Cross River Rail.

Despite that, we are getting on with the job. I am incredibly proud of the fact that it is the Palaszczuk Labor government that made a full funding investment decision in the last budget. We have decided that this project must go ahead, with or without the federal government. We are determined to

build it and deliver it, because we know that in the next 20 years our population in South-East Queensland will almost double. We know that in terms of the peak-hour task there will be almost 30,000 additional passengers coming into the city—that is, the inner five kilometres—to work.

We have communities like Flagstone which are going to be built in the next 20 years which will actually see tens of thousands of new Queenslanders call South-East Queensland home. We need to build the critical infrastructure that is going to meet that population growth, that is going to meet demand otherwise we will have to find another 30-lane highway in order to meet the peak hour demand from an increasing population and increasing number of jobs in the CBD.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Can I just clarify—

CHAIR: I now call the member for Bulimba.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Chair, I am not going to ask another question. I just want to clarify if the Deputy Premier is okay with taking the question about the Beerburrum line on notice? I understand that only the Deputy Premier can take the question on notice.

CHAIR: Are you okay with that, Deputy Premier?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I asked the CEO rather than the Deputy Premier. For the *Hansard* record I wanted to clarify that.

CHAIR: I will hand over to the minister.

Ms TRAD: I understand there are two questions—and I will refer to the secretariat who is probably keeping notes—that have been taken on notice so far.

CHAIR: Yes.

Ms TRAD: I am very happy to accept that they will be taken on notice and I will comply with the standing orders in relation to responding to those matters on notice.

CHAIR: Members, we have another document that a member has sought to table. We need approval for that. Leave is granted for that tabling.

Ms FARMER: I have several questions about Cross River Rail. Unlike the member for Nanango, I am a big fan of this project. The Deputy Premier has in her introductory statement and in some responses already talked about the benefits of Cross River Rail. I wonder if the Deputy Premier could elaborate on how fully funded Cross River Rail will benefit residents of South-East Queensland?

Ms TRAD: I do note that the member for Bulimba is a big fan of the Cross River Rail project. The Queensland government's \$5.4 billion investment in Cross River Rail is not just an investment in the south-east but also an investment in the economic wellbeing of our state. We are building Cross River Rail because Queensland absolutely needs it. This seems to be recognised by absolutely everyone except the state and federal Liberal National Party. The RACQ said—

Cross River Rail has been our number one infrastructure project for years and it's good to see funding in the Budget to get the project started ...

The Tourism & Transport Forum said—

TTF has long argued that the Cross River Rail is the number one public transport project for Queensland and we are delighted to see the Government's commitment to go it alone on this project to ensure this critical piece of infrastructure can be built ...

Brisbane Lord Mayor Graham Quirk said—

There has never been a negative word about Cross River Rail from me and there won't be, because the reality is we need that piece of infrastructure, as we do the Brisbane Metro.

Congestion is already costing our economy. With our population forecast to nearly double in the next 25 years, South-East Queensland will grind to a halt unless we act now. Cross River Rail will help deliver the integrated transport network that South-East Queensland needs and deserves by unlocking bottlenecks at the heart of our public transport network.

Let me be very clear—and particularly for the member for Nanango—we need to break the bottleneck at the heart of our network so we can deliver more public transport more often to places like Beenleigh, Caboolture, Redcliffe, Ipswich and the Gold Coast. Thanks to a full-funding commitment from the Queensland government, the work starts now.

Approval has been given for the demolition of the government owned Goprint site at Woolloongabba. Early works are expected to start in September. This will be the starting point for tunnel-boring machines to dig twin tunnels north towards the city and south towards the new Boggo Road station. In total, Cross River Rail is a 10.2 kilometre rail line between Dutton Park and Bowen

Hills, including 5.9 kilometres of tunnel under the Brisbane River and CBD. It will provide four new underground stations at Boggo Road, Woolloongabba, Albert Street and Roma Street and two upgraded stations at Exhibition and Dutton Park.

Along the way, the project will support more than 1,540 jobs each year and 3,000 jobs at the peak of the construction period. More than 500 ongoing full-time positions will also be created to operate and maintain Cross River Rail tunnels, lines and stations. Economic Development Queensland modelling suggests that these positions will be the tip of the iceberg, with Cross River Rail set to support more than 85,000 jobs across the south-east, with up to 65,000 of these jobs located in and around new station precinct developments and areas.

Ms FARMER: Deputy Premier, could I also ask you to outline the broader economic opportunities Cross River Rail will give rise to?

Ms TRAD: As I alluded to, Economic Development Queensland has already started this work. It is a comprehensive project that we are undertaking in terms of the huge economic uplift that such a significant public transport infrastructure project will mean to whole of the south-east and the Queensland economy. It is our highest priority infrastructure project. It is a city-shaping initiative that is going to change how our region develops for decades to come. South-East Queensland simply cannot afford to wait for Cross River Rail any longer.

I have already spoken to this hearing about how Cross River Rail will tackle congestion, improve public transport and deliver real-time savings for commuters right across the South-East Queensland region. Cross River Rail is more than a transport solution; it is the catalyst which will fundamentally transform the entire South-East Queensland region.

I will soon release a Cross River Rail economic development and investment strategy to help drive this transformation. This will provide a blueprint for the public and private sectors to capitalise on the Palaszczuk government's investment in Cross River Rail. The strategy will help catapult the South-East Queensland region into a dynamic, innovative and knowledge based economy, able to compete and prosper in global markets and continue to provide prosperous, liveable and connected communities.

The strategy will maximise economic, social and financial benefits and optimise the value of under-utilised government properties across the South-East Queensland region. By matching private sector innovation and investment with community development opportunities, the strategy will build a road map for securing long-term revenue pipelines for the government to reinvest into local communities and social infrastructure right across the south-east.

This vision will maximise the benefits gained from effective cross-government collaboration and enable the prioritisation and implementation of policies, programs and investment in affordable housing, education, health and tourism. The Palaszczuk Labor government's strategy is about more than the creation of jobs during construction; it will create ongoing jobs for Queenslanders that will attract and retain our greatest talent and make Queensland absolutely a new world-class city.

Ms FARMER: The Deputy Premier talked a little earlier about the benefits to the outer suburban communities. I wonder if you could explain those benefits to outer suburban communities?

Ms TRAD: It is a great chance to refute the claims that have been made by some that this is a project just for the inner-city suburbs. It is actually not true and perpetrated by the LNP because they still do not get the value of this vital project for commuters but also for our economy and for the South-East Queensland region.

Commuters from right across South-East Queensland, particularly in the outer suburbs and in neighbouring cities like Ipswich, Logan and the Gold Coast, will benefit most from Cross River Rail. In fact, only last week Associate Professor Dr Matthew Burke from Griffith University was interviewed in relation to the Cross River Rail project. He had this to say—

It will fundamentally improve services and allow us to improve frequencies right out along 200 kilometres of track and right out to about 140 other railway stations. This is as much about Bald Hills or Bundamba or somewhere like that than it is about the inner city.

For example, for Moreton Bay residents Cross River Rail means travel time savings of up to nine minutes for commuters travelling from Petrie to the southern CBD. It also means an extra 5,400 peak hour seats on the north coast and Redcliffe peninsula lines. For Logan residents Cross River Rail will deliver the additional network capacity we need, allowing the Salisbury to Flagstone extension to go ahead. We know that this is a growing part of our region.

It also means travel time savings of up to 15 minutes for commuters travelling from Beenleigh to the southern CBD and more than 8,600 extra peak hour seats into the city on the Gold Coast and Beenleigh lines. For Gold Coast residents Cross River Rail delivers travel time savings of up to 15 minutes for journeys from the Gold Coast to the southern CBD. For commuters travelling up to Brisbane and back that is an extra half an hour in their day every day that they travel to work and back.

Cross River Rail breaks the bottleneck at the heart of South-East Queensland's rail network. Once that bottleneck is gone we can expand the suburban rail lines and look at finally building long planned extensions like those to Coolangatta, Beaudesert or the Springfield to Ipswich extension. Cross River Rail will increase the ease of access for people to get to work and will provide better access to more job markets right across the region. This in turn will support business, investment and growth not just in the CBD. This is the reason all of the mayors in the South-East Queensland region are big supporters of the Cross River Rail project. They understand how much it means for their local economies.

For businesses and residents in Ipswich, Logan, Moreton Bay, the Redlands, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane connections to the rest of the world economy will be closer than ever before. Even more so than now, these cities will become genuine choices for companies looking to set up in the south-east and for people in Brisbane who are looking for more affordable lifestyles. They will become hubs for innovation and high-value knowledge sector jobs, linked to the capital by high-frequency public transport.

The time is right to build a better, more integrated transport network across South-East Queensland. We need to move people quickly and comfortably both into and out of the inner city and between our regional centres. Cross River Rail will deliver those improvements and boost our economy.

Mrs MILLER: I table a document containing photographs of a development at Bergins Rise, Wellen Street, Bundamba where the development approval is based not on 'if it is flooded forget' but on 'if it is flooded forget about it'. I would like to know what the minister and the department has done about riparian forests being cleared and burned, stormwater sediment and the flooding of houses?

Ms TRAD: I am unaware of this and I will have to take it on notice and report back to the committee.

CHAIR: Leave is granted to table the document.

Mrs MILLER: I also table other documents in relation to that same development. The development approvals have been made for this development but the developer has continued to defy the approvals yet no action has been taken by the council or the state government. Now it has become a cost to the council to repair what has been going on at this particular development. I would like to show members of the committee the riparian forests—

CHAIR: They have not been accepted.

Mrs MILLER: I am tabling those documents now. What happens when the developer and the council are now breaching the act and breaching their own by-laws? What is being done about it? I seek leave to table the documents.

CHAIR: Could you give me some idea of the relevance of this with regard to why we are here today?

Mrs MILLER: This relates to planning issues. I do not have to refer to the SDS given the rulings of the Speaker and the Clerk yesterday.

Ms TRAD: I am happy to answer that.

CHAIR: We are going to have to consider this material at a later time—probably in the break—so if you want to answer the question, Deputy Premier, you can.

Ms TRAD: Just to repeat: I will actually have to have a look at this particular development, but I will make generic comments in relation to development approvals. In the absence of actual detailed information, I would anticipate that a development approval was provided by the council. Undoubtedly they would have issued conditions along with the approval given that there was riparian vegetation.

If those conditions have not been met, it is the council's obligation, as the development assessor, to then pursue the applicant in relation to the breach of those conditions. There clearly are penalties under the Sustainable Planning Act, which would have been the state government planning instrument in force at the time. If the developer has in fact breached those and the council would like to take it further, there is always the Planning and Environment Court.

In the absence of detailed information regarding this particular development, I will have to come back to the committee in relation to it. I do not know if my agency had any involvement at all in terms of the approval of this development. As I said, ultimately local councils are the development assessors in relation to all development applications.

Mrs MILLER: Yes, but you were also the local government minister at the time.

Ms TRAD: Yes, but it is actually in my role as planning minister and as the minister responsible for the Sustainable Planning Act in force at the time. That would be my relevant ministerial role in this respect—not as local government minister but as planning minister. As I said, local councils are the relevant authority that issue approvals for planning applications. A planning approval would have been given in this instance with conditions. If they have been breached, the council has a number of avenues under the Sustainable Planning Act through the Planning and Environment Court to take issue with the developer in this instance.

Mrs MILLER: What if the council refuses to take that action, which it has done so far? Will the state then step in?

Ms TRAD: In that respect, I will have to take that on notice. As I said, I am unaware of this specific development application. I am speaking in generic terms in relation to the application of the Sustainable Planning Act and who is responsible for planning approvals at a local level. In this specific regard, I will take it on notice and have a look at it in greater detail.

Ms FARMER: I have another question about Cross River Rail. In this instance my question is about the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority and how that authority will deliver the project over the coming months.

Ms TRAD: Thank you for the question, member for Bulimba. It is my pleasure to update the committee on the work being undertaken by the delivery authority. The project has been kept apace since the endorsement of the legislation late last year.

It is worth noting that the delivery authority will be celebrating 100 operational days this coming Sunday. I would like to acknowledge some of the milestones that Cross River Rail has reached since 14 April this year. These include the appointment of all 10 board members. This has brought together industry leaders with state experts and the Brisbane City Council to provide valuable insight and expertise. With the approval of the request for project change by the Coordinator-General, the project now has all of the necessary state level approvals to begin construction. Market sounding is ramping up, with the first industry briefing being held on 16 June—just after the state budget came down. An acting head of authority, Mr Graeme Newton, has been appointed to flick the switch from planning to delivery of Cross River Rail. Of course, our government is committed to fully funding Cross River Rail, delivering certainty to the community and to the private sector that this priority project will go forward.

Work for the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority will continue to ramp up. We will have shovels in the ground by September. Early works, which the Premier and I announced in June, are on track to begin in September at the Goprint site in Woolloongabba as planned. Market-sounding activities are also ramping up, with two industry events planned for next month. These events will update major contractors on the kinds of works packages being considered by the authority and give more certainty around time lines and bidding processes. The delivery authority is speaking with the community, with industry and with key government agencies to make sure that everyone is on board for Cross River Rail.

Mr CRAWFORD: Deputy Premier, can you explain how the updated State Infrastructure Plan will support the delivery and prioritisation of infrastructure in Queensland?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Barron River for this excellent question. I am very pleased today to release the 2017 update of the State Infrastructure Plan. I seek leave to table a copy of the updated plan B of the State Infrastructure Plan.

CHAIR: I will have a look at it. It could be a dodgy document!

Ms TRAD: I can assure you, Mr Chair, it is not.

CHAIR: I think I said the wrong thing.

Ms TRAD: I know that when you say it you mean it in jest; others I cannot vouch for.

CHAIR: It is a straight-out document. It is not dodgy. Is leave granted? There being no objection, leave is granted.

Ms TRAD: In March 2016 the Palaszczuk Labor government released the State Infrastructure Plan, which established a bold new infrastructure reform agenda for Queensland. It was the first State Infrastructure Plan released by a state government since 2011. This is in stark contrast to the LNP's lack of vision for the future of Queensland's infrastructure. In three years they failed to provide a single infrastructure plan.

In releasing the updated part B program, the State Infrastructure Plan continues to provide confidence and certainty to industry, local government and the community. This update to the SIP confirms the government's infrastructure investment over the next four years, with a clear program of works and many new projects being delivered. Over the forward estimates we are spending a massive \$42 billion on infrastructure, and the SIP is our blueprint for this investment that ensures we are delivering the right projects at the right time for the right price.

Since the release of the 2016 State Infrastructure Plan, industry have been very supportive of our plan. The clear pipeline of projects gives industry and the private sector confidence to invest here in Queensland which ensures we are delivering jobs across the state. Through the SIP we are seeing transformational projects for our state like Cross River Rail, the Townsville stadium and the Smithfield bypass in the Barron River electorate—all of it is in your seat, I think?

Mr CRAWFORD: All of it.

Ms TRAD:—progressed from concept to delivery. The Infrastructure Association of Queensland recently undertook an industry survey into infrastructure pipeline preferences. I was delighted to see the State Infrastructure Plan part B rank very highly amongst industry. Feedback from key industry stakeholders told us that an understanding of major investments coming over the horizon would also improve their workforce planning and confidence about long-term job security. We listened to this important feedback, and in the 2017 part B update the new Queensland infrastructure pipeline was included in the plan. This pipeline demonstrates how proposals mature from an early concept to a funded government project. The pipeline also provides a framework to plan and prioritise infrastructure investment and delivery in Queensland.

Just over 12 months ago the Queensland government established the Infrastructure Portfolio Office to lead the delivery of the State Infrastructure Plan, its 19 implementation actions and the 2017 part B update. Through the Maturing the Infrastructure Pipeline Program, the Infrastructure Portfolio Office has assessed more than 200 proposals raised through consultation featured in the 2016 State Infrastructure Plan, with the results now shown in the 2017 part B update.

Now that the State Infrastructure Plan is being implemented, we are seeing improvements to the way infrastructure planning is coordinated and integrated right across government. This is reflected in the regional planning section in the 2017 part B update, where region-shaping infrastructure priorities are drawn from regional plans and progressed along the infrastructure pipeline when triggered by community growth and economic development. As Queensland's population grows, our infrastructure needs to grow and evolve. That is why this annual update is so important. The State Infrastructure Plan continues to be well received and I am keen to continue the great work with industry, local government and the community.

CHAIR: I call the member for Nanango.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question is to the director-general, Mr Carroll. I refer to the Works for Queensland program on page 3 of the SDS. On 21 February this year the Deputy Premier claimed that Works for Queensland would support almost 6,000 jobs, yet an internal departmental briefing note from 17 February, which is four days prior, estimates only 5,333 jobs would be supported. Mr Carroll, is the Deputy Premier wrong or is the department wrong? I seek leave to table the internal briefing note. I direct the director-general to page 2, paragraph 4.

CHAIR: We might have to have a closer look at this later.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It is an RTI.

Ms LEAHY: It is an RTI release.

CHAIR: That is a fair point. Is leave granted? There being no objection, leave is granted.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Do you want me to repeat my question?

Ms TRAD: We want to have a look at the document.

Mr Carroll: Thank you for the question from the honourable member. In relation to the document you have tabled, this is only part of the approval in relation to Works for Queensland. There were other approvals made for Rockhampton, Livingstone, Gympie and Wujal Wujal which are not included in that number.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: That is correct. You are suggesting that the Deputy Premier's announcement includes other areas to make up the gap?

Mr Carroll: In total, the projects were approximately 6,000 jobs, as reported by councils.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Carroll, I refer to that program. Did the monthly reports for that program provided by councils include whether the job creation estimates were met?

Mr Carroll: The monthly reporting that comes in from councils reports not only on the progress to date and the actual estimate of time to finish those but also on the jobs. For example, in Yarrabah we have seen a report of 46 jobs for the \$2.8 million in the program just reported to us.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Are those jobs supported jobs—full-time jobs for a full year, as is the normal convention—or are they based on a different methodology?

Mr Carroll: The methodology based on the jobs reported by councils—and I must say they are councils' numbers—are created, supported and maintained jobs, and that is clear in the guidelines.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I refer to my original question. When the Deputy Premier said that it would support almost 6,000 jobs—I take your answer in relation to your internal briefing note—are they part-time jobs or a job for a day or two? To make up that 6,000, what are those jobs? Are they real jobs or are they full-time, part-time or one day here or there?

Mr Carroll: Thank you for the question. In relation to the numbers reported, these are numbers reported by councils. The guidelines state that they be created, maintained and supported jobs.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Deputy Premier, I refer to the Works for Queensland program and that internal departmental briefing note that I have just tabled. Do you, Deputy Premier, really believe that installing three rubbish bins in Townsville at the cost of \$5,000 supports two jobs?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. What I absolutely believe is that regional councils in Queensland have been doing it tough. What I do know is that every single one of them—every single one of them—has applauded this Works for Queensland program. I went to Palm Island. The number of jobs that have been created in Palm Island through our investment is enormous. I went to Yarrabah. As the director-general said, 47 people in the Yarrabah community are now engaged in meaningful work to deliver infrastructure projects in their local community.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Chair, I ask the Deputy Premier to go back to the question.

Ms TRAD: I cannot tell you how proud they are in relation to having this project, having this money in their community, delivering real outcomes including jobs. I met Sam when I was at Yarrabah. Can I tell you that Sam is doing—

Ms LEAHY: Mr Chair, I raise a point of order in relation to standing order 115. The question is quite specific—

Ms TRAD: I am answering the question. They might not like the way I answer the question, but I can guarantee you—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: The question is about rubbish bins in Townsville, Deputy Premier.

Ms TRAD: Let me talk about Townsville.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Yes, let's talk about Townsville.

CHAIR: We need to respect the process. The Deputy Premier has been asked a question. She is entitled to answer the question in the way she sees fit—in the best way that the committee can get the information and to assist you in the question that you asked. Please let the Deputy Premier finish.

Ms TRAD: As I was saying before, Sam from Yarrabah was a concreter and is now gaining qualifications to become a carpenter through the Works for Queensland program. He is engaged in infrastructure delivery in the Yarrabah community over the next 12 months and maybe longer because we made an additional investment in this year's budget.

What we know is that this program is having real results in local communities in terms of jobs, economic activity and legacy infrastructure for these communities. In Townsville alone more than \$20 million has been allocated in round 1. Additional moneys will be allocated in round 2 after applications are received at the end of this month. Can I tell you that I have not met one person in Townsville, whether in the council or the community, who has rubbished this program and said, 'No, we don't want it.' I think the only people who are rubbishing the Works for Queensland program are the LNP. What that says to me is that, if they are elected, they will scrap it. That is what that says to me.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Chair, unfortunately, the Deputy Premier has been unable to answer the question.

Ms TRAD: I answered it. You might not like my answer but I answered it.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It was a simple question about—

CHAIR: Could we move on to the next question because that is all you are getting.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Yes, I will. Deputy Premier, you have estimated that the installation of \$20,000 worth of signage at a dog park will create three jobs. Are they full-time jobs or are they part-time jobs? How can you tell the people of Townsville whose unemployment rate is sitting at 11 per cent that those three jobs are going to put food on their table for over a year?

Ms TRAD: I acknowledge the question from the member for Nanango. As I said, I am yet to meet one person who has rubbished this program. If the member for Nanango thinks that councils have put up projects that are insignificant and meaningless for their local community, for their workforce or for their future aspirations, then she should go to Townsville City Council and say, 'I think the projects you have put up for the Works for Queensland program are rubbish and you should not be doing it because, quite frankly, I think putting up signage is an irresponsible use of state government funding.'

Ms LEAHY: I raise a point of order. The question is quite specific. Are they part-time or full-time jobs? The question is quite specific, and I ask you to rule in relation to relevance under standing order 118.

CHAIR: I think there should be a bit more relevance to the question that was put.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Chair, it is obvious that the Deputy Premier is unable to answer questions around the 6,000 jobs that she has talked about in her media release. It is misleading the people of Queensland because obviously the jobs are not there in those regional centres.

Mrs LAUGA: I raise a point of order. The Deputy Premier is entitled to answer a question in whatever way she deems proper. I see that the Deputy Premier has answered the question. We are seeing relentless point of orders from the opposition. I ask that you deem this relentless—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am not sure it is relentless yet.

Ms TRAD: Yes, I agree with you actually.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: With me or with Brittany?

Ms TRAD: No, I agree with the member for Nanango: it is nothing near relentless. Can I say in relation to the Works for Queensland process that one of the reasons councils have absolutely embraced this program is that they are in the driving seat in terms of identifying the projects that they need in their local communities which they believe will support, sustain and create jobs going forward. It is entirely up to councils in terms of managing their workforce. Honestly, when we came to power in 2015 because of the legacy of cuts by those opposite—by the LNP—to TIDS, to road funding, to the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program, these councils were looking at laying off people who were currently employed in councils. They were looking at laying them off, Mr Chair, and I know that you know that because mayors and councillors have come and spoken to you about that. Because this government has invested not only in grants but also in programs like Works for Queensland, these councils are not only sustaining their workforce but also creating new jobs and supporting other jobs.

It is entirely up to councils how they shape their workforces in order to deliver the projects that we have funded them for. In relation to the Works for Queensland program Mayor Paul McVeigh of Western Downs Regional Council said—

... the real beauty of the Works for Queensland package is about creating jobs. This funding is to be used on projects that immediately create jobs.

...

It is really very exciting, not only do we have the opportunity to boost jobs across our region but also deliver key projects for our communities.

The mayors have voted on this and they have said that this program is critical for their communities. It means jobs on the ground. If those opposite want to keep trashing it, it means that they are going to cut it if Tim Nicholls becomes Premier of Queensland.

Ms LEAHY: That is debate.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: If I can continue, it appears that the Deputy Premier is sitting here trying to justify her own program. What we are talking about and my questions—

CHAIR: Do we need to go down this track? How about you ask the Deputy Premier a question?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I have been trying to ask the Deputy Premier about jobs in regional Queensland. I refer the Deputy Premier to the member for Bundamba's comments yesterday where she stated—

There is only one truthful answer—

in relation to jobs—

and that is the number of full-time-equivalent jobs.

The member for Bundamba was talking to the Premier through this process yesterday in the estimates hearing, and she said that there is only one truth for a job and that is a full-time-equivalent job. The Deputy Premier in her media statement has said that she is creating 6,000 jobs in regional Queensland. I will put another question to the Deputy Premier: does top dressing a sporting oval really support five jobs? Are those five jobs full-time jobs? For how long will those jobs be full-time? How much do those people get paid?

Ms TRAD: I acknowledge the question from the member for Nanango. If the member for Nanango wants to quote other members in this place in relation to what is a job and what is not a job, let me remind the member for Nanango that 14,000 real jobs held by Queenslanders in the last term of government were axed—were cut—by the member for Nanango and the member for Clayfield when they were in government. If they want to come in here and talk about the value of jobs they should look at their track record and how many jobs they cut from the Public Service in Queensland. Not only that; let us talk about all of the jobs that were cut as a consequence of their ongoing cuts in Queensland. If the member for Nanango wants to quote somebody, she should be quoting the mayor in her own community, in her own seat of Nanango. South Burnett mayor Keith Campbell—

Mrs MILLER: I raise a point of order—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I raise a point of order, Mr Chair. Does the Deputy Premier—

Ms TRAD: Her own mayor, Keith Campbell, said—

CHAIR: If you are going to keep this up, we will go down the backstairs and have a talk about it. This is getting a little bit out of hand with people yelling at one another.

Mrs MILLER: I have a point of order, Mr Chair. I think it is unparliamentary that I be referred to as 'somebody'. I am personally offended by that and I ask that that be withdrawn.

Ms TRAD: I withdraw. In conclusion, can I say that the South Burnett mayor, the mayor within the member for Nanango's own seat, Keith Campbell, in relation to the Works for Queensland package said—

I am absolutely delighted with the stimulus package as it is intended for job creation purposes ...

I want to acknowledge the Palaszczuk Government for recognising that our region is one that suffers from unemployment.

This money will be well used within our region.

I am yet to find one mayor or one councillor who has said that this program is rubbish. I have yet to meet one single person in one community who says that the jobs created out of the Works for Queensland package and the projects identified by councils are rubbish. All this says to me is that come the next election Tim Nicholls and Deb Frecklington will have an election commitment to axe Works for Queensland.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Chair, I have one final question for the Deputy Premier. Do you agree with the comments from the member for Bundamba that were made yesterday in this hearing?

Ms TRAD: It is actually not relevant to the budget.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Jobs are not relevant to the budget?

Mrs LAUGA: I raise a point of order. Which page of the SDS are you referring to?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It is in regard to jobs. Are you saying that the Labor government is not interested in jobs in their budget?

Mrs LAUGA: Your question has to be relevant to the SDS. My point of order asked which page of the SDS you are referring to.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: We could go to page 3 of the SDS.

Ms TRAD: You do not need to go to page 3. Jobs are at the heart of this budget. The Premier has made it clear. The Treasurer has made it clear. Every single member of the Palaszczuk Labor government has made it absolutely clear.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: The question was—

Ms TRAD: The argument that the member for Nanango wants to make in relation to Works for Queensland I think reflects the fact that the member for Nanango and the member for Clayfield have a plan to axe this program if they are elected.

CHAIR: Thank you, Deputy Premier.

Mr KNUTH: My question is to the Deputy Premier. With reference to page 3 of the SDS for the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, can the Deputy Premier advise how saving an estimated average commute time of 10 minutes across the four new underground services for passengers travelling in South-East Queensland has been prioritised over establishing water infrastructure security and food production projects in North Queensland by building large dams with storage capacity to increase agriculture production and employment in rural and regional Queensland?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Dalrymple for the question. I think it is a good question because it goes to the heart of our infrastructure reform program. When we came into government there was not a State Infrastructure Plan or an independent infrastructure adviser to government. What this meant is that projects like No. 1 William Street got prioritised over other critical infrastructure projects here in Queensland. We wanted to make sure that did not happen again, so we established Building Queensland and we started the process of reforming infrastructure planning and prioritisation here in Queensland.

Building Queensland has been assessing a number of large-scale water infrastructure projects. We need to ensure that the infrastructure projects our state needs are properly assessed with detailed business cases and prioritised in order of when the economics, the business case and the demand in the local community are all there. We know that by doing that work we will absolutely deliver the right infrastructure in the right place at the right time. As I said, Building Queensland is currently looking at a number of water infrastructure projects like the Lower Fitzroy River Infrastructure Project. They know that by doing this work they can properly assess and report to the people of Queensland and to regional communities the economics around such projects and make sure that that information is also there for private sector investment. It is only by doing that work that we are going to make confident government investment decisions in large-scale infrastructure projects but also signal to the private sector that we have done the necessary work in order to get these projects up and out in the public domain ready for private sector investment.

Ms FARMER: I have another question about Cross River Rail. Could the Deputy Premier provide further information on the limitations of the Merivale Bridge and the need for Cross River Rail?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Bulimba for the question. We have heard some argument put by the member for Nanango in terms of patronage figures in relation to capacity over the Merivale Bridge. It is a great opportunity for me to set the record straight in relation to this. Currently up to 21 trains cross Merivale Bridge each hour at peak time. I remind members of the committee that this is our only heavy-rail crossing for the whole South-East Queensland network. The Merivale Bridge has a maximum capacity of 24 trains per hour. Currently there are 21 trains per hour during peak hour. The capacity is 24. Undoubtedly, this means that the addition of just three more trains will see the bridge at capacity.

Once completed, Cross River Rail will actually double that capacity to 48 trains per hour. With our region's population set to grow from 3.4 million today to 4.9 million in 2036, it is very clear that we will need to continue growing the number of services on our heavy rail network. The Cleveland, Gold Coast and Beenleigh lines all rely on the Merivale Bridge to ensure that commuters get into the CBD. These lines are on a knife's edge, with the likelihood of passengers having to stand increasing on these long journeys.

The estimated load is 7,575 in the a.m. peak on these lines between 7.30 and 8.30. That is the peak; that is the actual estimated load in the documents that the member for Nanango tabled earlier today. The seated capacity is 8,295. At peak we are at 7,575, and the capacity is 8,295. According to the document that was in fact tabled by the member for Nanango, the estimated load is at 91 per cent capacity now.

Additionally, we know that the actual passenger load in 2013 was higher than the estimated passenger load for these lines. Growth of just 2.3 per cent from 2016 would see the standing capacity exceeded in the next five to six years. That means we need to address the capacity crisis which is going to come in the next few years. Even the Newman government's own hand-picked panel that reviewed Cross River Rail in 2012 confirmed that the Merivale Bridge was nearing capacity. The review found—

The rail system is becoming increasingly constrained by inner city track and platform capacity because of the continuing growth in travel to the CBD in peak periods. The first lines to reach capacity are expected to be the southern lines via the Merivale Bridge within the next 5-8 years.

There is no doubt that we will reach capacity on the Merivale Bridge in the near future. Even the Leader of the Opposition knows this. Just yesterday he was in the *Courier-Mail* saying that he had 'always said that there's going to be a need for another link across the Brisbane River'. The real question is whether or not they can put politics aside in order to make sure that this project goes ahead—or are they going to cut it again?

They cut it when they had funding from the federal government. When they had a funding agreement locked and loaded from the federal Labor government, they turned their back on that. They ripped up that funding agreement. Now they are saying that they will not fund it unless there is money from the Turnbull government. The Turnbull government have made it very clear that they are unprepared to invest in this nation-building infrastructure right now. They can give New South Wales a hell of a lot of money for infrastructure—billions and billions and billions of dollars. They can give Western Australia money for infrastructure that does not even have a business case, but they have been sitting on the business case for Cross River Rail for more than 12 months now. It has been assessed by Infrastructure Australia twice. It was ranked as the highest public transport infrastructure project in our nation in 2012, and the LNP again and again and again have cut this program. We saw the industry come out recently as well saying it is time for the LNP to back this. Industry wants certainty. Commuters want certainty. I think the people of Queensland deserve certainty in relation to Queensland's No. 1 infrastructure priority.

Mr CRAWFORD: I go back to the State Infrastructure Plan, which reveals a new Queensland Infrastructure Pipeline. Can you advise how this pipeline will provide greater clarity to industry about planning, investment and delivery of Queensland infrastructure?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Barron River for his question. The State Infrastructure Plan is transforming the way that the state plans, prioritises and funds vital infrastructure projects. After three years of neglect under the former LNP government—who failed to produce a single state infrastructure plan—we are delivering a responsible pipeline of projects for the people of Queensland. As I touched on earlier today, the 2017 update to part B of the State Infrastructure Plan reveals a new Queensland Infrastructure Pipeline. With the permission of the committee, I would like to table the next Building Queensland Infrastructure Pipeline Report.

This new pipeline illustrates how projects mature and move from early concepts to address an identified service need through to solid projects funded by government. It is designed to give greater clarity to industry and provide increased confidence for private sector involvement. The stages of the pipeline are aligned with the Queensland government's project assessment framework, ensuring each project meets strategic objectives and achieves value for money for Queenslanders. The pipeline provides a coordinated and integrated approach to the planning, prioritisation and funding, and delivery of infrastructure in Queensland. It brings together elements of the State Infrastructure Plan, Building Queensland's pipeline, Infrastructure Australia's infrastructure priority list and the asset strategies of government agencies.

The planning phase of the pipeline shows the maturity of infrastructure proposals and strategies as they progress through various planning phases, from concept through to business case development. In the second phase of the pipeline, investment decisions are made according to a number of principles, including strategic need, deliverability and economic, social and environmental outcomes. The delivery phase of the pipeline reflects the Queensland government's capital program as shown in the State Infrastructure Plan 1-4 year program and Budget Paper No. 3. Clarity around the 1-4 year program will help small- to medium-size enterprises all around the state to plan their resources and access work not previously visible to them. At the same time, major contractors and professional service firms receive a greater sense of the significant infrastructure initiatives being planned beyond the 1-4 year program.

We know that helping industry and the community to stay informed about potential future investments, while lifting our four-year infrastructure funding commitment to \$42.75 billion, will deliver real jobs and boost our economy in the long term.

CHAIR: Members, the Deputy Premier has asked if she can table this document. I have had a look at it. It is just a policy document. Is leave granted? There being no objection, leave is granted.

Mr CRAWFORD: Referring to page 7 of the SDS for the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and the infrastructure policy and planning service area, can you outline some of the key regional capital projects and the proportion of capital spending going to the regions and how this compares to previous budgets?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Barron River for the question. I want to acknowledge that he has absolutely been a champion for regional infrastructure projects, as has the member for Keppel and also the member for Mirani in terms of projects through the State Infrastructure Plan and the State Infrastructure Fund. In the 2017-18 financial year, the Palaszczuk government will deliver a \$10.171 billion capital program focused on growing the Queensland economy through job-creating investment, infrastructure and innovation right across our state.

The capital program will support an estimated 29,000 jobs across the state and will be distributed right across the state, with \$6.688 billion, or around 66 per cent of the entire allocation, being outside of Brisbane, Ipswich and Logan. This means that approximately \$2,280 per capita is being spent outside the greater Brisbane area, compared to \$1,824 per capita in Brisbane, Ipswich and Logan. This reflects that the regions often have a greater need for infrastructure and that the cost of provision of infrastructure can actually be greater and more costly in the regions.

This attention to regional Queensland reinforces that this government is about delivering results for all Queenslanders. A great example is the Far North Queensland region, where this year we have increased on last year's capital budget by nearly \$200 million, bringing the total to \$819 million. This will support delivery of vital infrastructure for the regions, such as \$30 million to construct the Cairns Innovation Centre at James Cook University and \$240 million to expand and improve social housing in Far North Queensland. There will be 2,300 jobs supported as a result of delivering infrastructure to the Far North Queensland region.

In the Central Queensland region, \$788 million will support an estimated 2,200 jobs in the region. This will go towards funding key infrastructure projects, such as \$25 million for the flood levee in south Rockhampton and \$53.8 million to upgrade the control system and undertake a major refurbishment and upgrade of the Stanwell power station. Work will also commence on the correctional facility in the Rockhampton region, the Capricornia Correctional Centre.

There will be \$917 million spent in the Darling Downs region, including \$252 million towards the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing from the Warrego Highway at Helidon to the Gore Highway at Athol. In addition, as part of the Enhancing Regional Hospitals program, \$18 million will go towards the redevelopment of the Roma Hospital. Projects like these will not only deliver key services to the community but also support an estimated 3,700 jobs in the region.

The \$649 million being spent in the Wide Bay region—which is \$10 million more than last year—will not only support 1,800 jobs but also contribute to the delivery of critical infrastructure, such as the new emergency department at the Hervey Bay Hospital which will receive \$35.2 million. Another very important project for this region is the redevelopment and upgrade of the Mon Repos Turtle Centre, and \$5.7 million will go towards supporting this project in 2017-18. This is one of the many projects being funded under the Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program, SRIPP, to provide a new state-of-the-art interpretive centre covering marine life, cultural heritage and history of the area. We know that this is a big tourism attraction for the Wide Bay region.

This budget has added over \$80 million to the Mackay region, taking the total capital program allocation to \$519.4 million. This will support an estimated 1,400 jobs in the region and will go towards delivering projects such as the Whitsunday airport upgrade, where \$15 million will contribute to the remediation of the existing runway and upgrade of the domestic terminal. There is \$70 million allocated to the Mackay region in 2017-18 to construct the new \$497 million two-lane Mackay Ring Road, which is due for completion in July 2020.

There is \$48.3 million to expand and improve social housing in outback Queensland, and this is just one of the projects that will be delivered as part of the \$428.2 million allocation to the outback region. This will support an estimated 1,200 jobs. Another example is the \$16 million out of the \$50 million total spend to pave and seal sections of the Kennedy Development Road between Hughenden and The Lynd.

Up by just over \$100 million from last year, the Townsville region has been allocated \$689 million which will support an estimated 1,900 jobs in the region. This includes \$10 million as part of \$225 million being spent to deliver a sustainable and secure long-term water supply for Townsville over the next four years. The Townsville region is also receiving \$46 million in 2017-18 to continue delivery of the \$250 million 25,000-seat best practice, purpose-built stadium in Townsville, which will be completed in time for the commencement of the 2020 NRL season.

Mrs LAUGA: I refer to page 3 of the SDS, which indicates that Works for Queensland will deliver vital infrastructure in regional Queensland. Can the Deputy Premier update the committee on how the 2017-19 program will support disaster resilience and preparedness works for Central Queensland?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Keppel for her question. I would like to acknowledge the member's absolutely fierce advocacy for her community and hard work on the front line helping locals impacted by Tropical Cyclone Debbie, and very soon after Tropical Cyclone Marcia.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has allocated \$400 million over three years from 2016-17 for the Works for Queensland program. This has been an incredibly well received and successful program that supports local governments, communities and families right across regional Queensland. Earlier this year, more than 700 projects were approved for 65 local governments under the Works for Queensland program. Local governments estimate that this has supported, sustained or created almost 6,000 jobs in regional Queensland.

As at the end of June, reports show Works for Queensland has already supported 2,875 jobs. That is 2,875 people working in regional Queensland as a result of our Works for Queensland program. Almost \$120 million has gone out the door and into the hands of rural and regional councils for the benefit of their communities. In the first round, the Banana Shire Council had the initiative to undertake disaster resilience works to redevelop the existing railway yard offices into the Biloela SES command centre. This project will provide a one-stop shop where the SES can conduct its operations and training. The mayor of the Banana Shire Council, Nev Ferrier, described the program as—

... the best funding program I have seen in 13 years in Local Government—council can deliver projects that we always seem never to have enough money to do.

Regional Queensland has been delivered another major boost with the additional \$200 million over two years allocated to councils through the Works for Queensland program. As part of this extra funding, Central Queensland councils will benefit from an extra \$23.9 million.

The widespread economic and social benefits of Works for Queensland are unstoppable, but the only criticism we ever hear of the program is from the LNP and it is just absolutely disgraceful. Actually it is not all of the LNP I have to say because the member for Gympie recently welcomed funding for the Mary Valley Rattler. The member for Gympie was quoted as saying in the *Gympie Times*, 'This is great news for the Gympie region and supporters of the Mary Valley railway and especially the many volunteers.' It just seems that—some of the LNP do not like—

Mr PERRETT: The LNP committed—

Ms TRAD:—the program—not all of them.

CHAIR: That is politics.

Ms TRAD: That is absolutely right.

Mr PERRETT: I want to clarify for the Deputy Premier—

Ms TRAD: Mayors right across Queensland are supporting Works for Queensland because they know our plan is delivering real jobs in their communities. For the 2017-19 program we expanded the guidelines to include disaster resilience and preparedness works. This will help regional communities to deliver projects to protect existing essential public infrastructure or build resilience into future natural disaster events, supporting 65 local governments including those in Central Queensland to improve their future readiness. This is on top of the work we have already been doing including the release of Operation Queensland Recovery, a comprehensive plan to get individuals, businesses and communities back on their feet as soon as possible. We asked the Commonwealth to partner in a \$220 million NDRRA Category D program that includes key job-generating infrastructure projects that boost local economies, drive community recovery and build resilience. However, on Friday night the Turnbull government short-changed Queensland communities with their callous refusal to match our \$110 million commitment to recovery funding. This is actually a kick in the guts to communities from Beenleigh to Burdekin who are doing the hard work of rebuilding after Cyclone Debbie.

Ms LEAHY: Point of order, is that parliamentary? Can I get a ruling in relation to that?

CHAIR: I have used it before.

Mrs LAUGA: Maybe clarify what it is first and then make a point of order.

CHAIR: I do not have a problem with it.

Mrs LAUGA: I am pretty sure I have heard your side use it before.

Ms TRAD: LNP members who claim to be part of team Queensland should be appalled by the actions of their Sydney based leader. The Palaszczuk government is standing by these communities and we will look at whatever measures and funding we can find to drive their recovery. In fact, we met with a number of mayors, including Margaret Strelow from Rockhampton, yesterday to discuss what to do now in light of the fact that the Commonwealth government has refused to pay their fair share in terms of the category D NDRRA application put forward on behalf of the local governments of Whitsunday, Mackay and Rockhampton. They are describing this as a 'kick in the guts'; let's be clear. The mayor of Whitsundays actually said his community is just white hot with rage about why the Prime Minister from Sydney, who came up when the disaster had struck, when Tropical Cyclone Debbie had wreaked havoc and it was still in the 24-hour news cycle—

Mrs LAUGA: He got a bunch of selfies.

Ms TRAD: He got a bunch of selfies while he was up there, but now five months later when the hard work is really needing to take place and federal government funding is absolutely required to get that recovery and reconstruction work underway, he has not gone up there. He has basically said, 'You're on your own. We're not going to fund you. In fact, the money we give these communities in relation to the category D funding is 0.006 per cent of the federal budget.' I think this is a slap in the face for these communities and the whole of Queensland, quite frankly.

CHAIR: Government members' time has expired.

Mr WALKER: I take you to page 11 of the SDS and in particular to the reporting of SARA, the State Assessment Referral Agency. For those listening in who might not know what it is, I can tell them that it is a key part of the government's involvement in the planning process and an initiative of the former LNP government. It won the PIA planning prize in 2014 for the best reform for planning. It is an important part of our process. I take you to the 'concurrence agency responses' line where the target was a 20-day response and the estimated actual was a 25-day response. That is 25 per cent outside the framework. Can you explain why there was a delay and whether you are satisfied with that?

Ms TRAD: I acknowledge that, yes, the measure is some 25 per cent higher. I know that the honourable member does understand the complicated cross-agency assessment work that SARA undertakes on behalf of large-scale development in Queensland. Some of this is incredibly complicated and requires significant analysis.

I think it is absolutely prudent for SARA to ensure that the proper analysis, the proper coordination and the proper consultation with concurrence agencies is undertaken rather than rushing the system. I do want to see better efficiencies—absolutely—but I do know that it is absolutely essential that they acquit their job and their responsibilities with due diligence. I do not want to see that compromised.

In terms of examples of where targets were not met but median targets for statutory time frames were met, I am advised as concurrence agency the median time taken to assess an application and issue a concurrence agency response was 25 business days. The target was less or equal to 20 business days while the statutory time frame is 30 business days. Sometimes it is less; sometimes it is more, depending on the complexities involved in the application before SARA.

Mr WALKER: I would not argue against the need for dealing with complex matters, but your own target was 20 days. It was overshoot by 25 per cent. If you look at the line above, the percentage issued within agreed time frames, your target was 80 per cent and yet they only made 75 per cent. What are you doing about that and how are you going to improve that to ensure the target is met?

Ms TRAD: Let me just restate for the honourable member: the statutory time frame is 30 days.

Mr WALKER: I understand that.

Ms TRAD: Even with 25 days, it is five days less than the statutory time frame. The 20-day time frame is an internal target. Yes, we always want to improve, but even the 25 days is less than the statutory time frame for consideration of these applications. I want to commend the work that SARA does. Is there the ability to improve? There is always the ability to improve, but right now they are actually turning around assessments even below the statutory time frames of 30 days.

Mr WALKER: The feedback I get from industry and from local government is that the SARA system is falling apart and that departments are going back to a silo based way of assessing things. The department of main roads is particularly referred to as one that is doing that. I ask: is that a factor in SARA not working properly and the time frames blowing out as significantly as they are?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I will seek your guidance. The member is asking me to comment on hypothetical—or conversations he has had with people that I am unaware of rather than actual fact.

Mr WALKER: It is not hypothetical. I am saying that is what I hear. I ask the Deputy Premier if that is what she hears.

Ms TRAD: You are claiming that people are telling you that SARA is breaking down. I regularly meet with industry, property developers and individuals involved in the development industry. I get thousands of pieces of correspondence into my office on a weekly basis. Not one person has said that the SARA system is falling apart. I am not sure who the member for Mansfield is talking to, but I can tell him that is not an issue that has been raised with me or my office at all, and I have a deep engagement with the property and development sector in this state, as I should as planning minister.

Mr WALKER: It is interesting to see that this measure, which has failed quite significantly, is going to be a discontinued measure under your government. I draw your attention to note 4, which says—

This service standard has been discontinued and replaced with more exhaustive measures that reflect the service objective.

Can you explain to the committee what those more exhaustive measures are?

Ms TRAD: In relation to the change in the Service Delivery Statement targets, these were changed for 2016-17 to incorporate measures that are better aligned to aspects of the new planning system under the Planning Act of 2016. The new measures focus on stakeholder satisfaction with the accessibility and transparency of the planning system and also on how efficiently the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning manages its SARA resources. It is on page 9 of the SDS if the honourable member would like to read that far.

Mr WALKER: I have read those. They could hardly be said to be more exhaustive measures than the ones that you are booting. Are you not booting measures that very strictly measure performance and replacing them with stakeholder satisfaction measures? The real measure is how quickly and efficiently SARA is dealing with these matters. That is the very measure that you are getting rid of. How could you possibly say—no-one could say—that those measures on page 9 are more exhaustive measures?

Ms TRAD: As the member for Keppel would know because she is actually a qualified planner, it is not only about the speed with which decisions are made; it is also about the quality of the decisions that are made and the engagement that occurs in relation to the applications' assessment. That is why the rating of satisfaction has been included so that we can reflect how the engagement with industry, councils and the sector is going. It is not only about the speed with which decisions are made; it is about the quality of the decisions and the engagement with the sector. I think that is a far better measure than simply the turnover of decision-making.

Mr WALKER: One is objective and one is subjective; it cannot be a better measure.

Ms TRAD: We measure satisfaction all the time in a whole range of things that we do as a state government that provides services to the people of Queensland, as we should. We should actually measure customer satisfaction. If we are to be a customer focused government, which this government wants to be, we want to create jobs, we want to be delivering for the people of Queensland, whether that is in hospitals, schools, the development industry or through the Transport portfolio. Our job is to—

Mr WALKER: You are not delivering here and yet you are getting rid of the measure.

Ms TRAD:—deliver to the people of Queensland. I think that measuring the satisfaction of the engagement with the people of Queensland and industry so that we can continually improve is not only wise but necessary.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I have a question to the CEO of the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority—the acting CEO.

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I seek your guidance. There is no acting CEO of the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority. We are currently recruiting for the CEO and I am happy to take questions.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My understanding is that someone was appointed on 15 June.

Ms TRAD: That is not the CEO. The person appointed on 15 June is currently the head of authority and was not listed in terms of those officials to be present at this hearing.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: You do not have an official here today who can answer questions on behalf of the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority?

Ms FARMER: I rise to a point of order.

CHAIR: I would like to see the Deputy Premier—are you prepared to answer questions?

Ms TRAD: Absolutely.

CHAIR: I thought you might be.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Just so I am aware and for noting by the committee, there was not anyone available to answer on behalf of the authority—

Ms FARMER: I rise to a point of order.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will move on.

Ms TRAD: Just for the benefit of Hansard—

CHAIR: I have a point of order and I am going to take that point of order.

Ms FARMER: It is my understanding that members of the opposition were able to see a list of officers who were approved to attend this hearing. They had an opportunity if they had any problems with that to raise it at that time.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My understanding is there was someone on the list.

CHAIR: We have a problem. There was no person—

Ms TRAD: I have a point of order. That list was published in the parliament. Every single member of parliament had an opportunity to have a look at the list of CEOs who were requested to attend estimates hearings and to answer questions. There was no CEO of Cross River Rail Delivery Authority. The member for Bulimba is quite right; there was an opportunity for members of the opposition to be involved in that and nothing was heard from the member for Nanango. I am very happy to take any questions.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I have a question to the CEO of Building Queensland, Mr Gould, if you could come forward again. I refer to the SDS which states that the function of Building Queensland is to analyse infrastructure proposals that provide value for money. The Building Queensland proposal summary for the Capricornia correctional facility is to provide an additional 244 beds, yet the announced project only has 164 beds for the \$200 million. How did the government lose 60 beds between Building Queensland and the department of corrections?

Mr Gould: In relation to the process that Building Queensland undertakes to assess proposals that are assessed as part of the infrastructure pipeline report, we assessed the proposal in relation to the correctional centre. Building Queensland's role is to report and to provide independent expert advice in relation to the priority of relevant proposals and report those in the infrastructure pipeline report. The decisions are ultimately for government in relation to making funding commitments relating to these proposals. It is not the role of Building Queensland.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: From Building Queensland you were able to provide a proposal summary for 244 beds, but the proposal that has come out of government has lost those 60 beds. I understand that. If we can move on, again I refer to the SDS, which states that the function of Building Queensland is to analyse infrastructure projects and provide value for money. Given that, and given that the proposed extension of the Capricornia Correctional Centre costs over \$1.2 million per bed—so-called penthouses for prisoners—what other extension options—

Ms FARMER: Point of order, Chair. I seek your guidance on this quite lengthy preamble from the member for Nanango. I think it is under standing order 113 or 115; I cannot recall.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am nearly there.

CHAIR: I have been asked to rule on a point of order. I believe that the member for Bulimba is correct about the time it is taking you to get to the question, but if you want to take up your time that way then go ahead.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Given that the proposed extension of the Capricornia Correctional Centre costs over \$1.2 million per bed, did Building Queensland examine other extension options such as extending the facility at Gatton?

Mr Gould: In relation to the role that Building Queensland undertook in relation to the Capricornia Correctional Centre expansion, it has been assessed as part of our infrastructure pipeline report process. Building Queensland also assisted in the process of providing some updates to the business case for the Capricornia Correctional Centre on the basis that that business case had been prepared in 2014, which predated the establishment of Building Queensland. We assisted in the role in providing some updates to the 2014 business case for the Capricornia Correctional Centre. As indicated in my previous response, we provide our advice in relation to those proposals ultimately in relation to funding decisions made by government. Those are policy decisions for government.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Did your advice include extending the facility at Gatton? If not, how can you be sure that the proposal provides the best value for money?

Mr Gould: I apologise, Chair, because my understanding of the question previously was in relation to the Capricornia Correctional Centre. In relation to the Gatton, or south Queensland, correctional facility, likewise Building Queensland also played an assisting role in relation to updating the components of the business case, as the business case for the south Queensland correctional facility expansion was prepared in 2014, before the establishment of Building Queensland. Again, it was a similar process in terms of assisting with updates to components of the business case for the Gatton, or south Queensland, correctional facility project.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Deputy Premier, I refer to the administrative arrangements included in your function as minister which include principal ministerial responsibility for railways and transport infrastructure. Do you support the development of a new thermal coalmine in Queensland?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I would like to understand the relevance of this question to my SDS.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I can refer you to page 3 of the SDS, where it includes 'creating jobs and a diverse economy'.

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I think that is stretching it.

CHAIR: That is stretching it a bit.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: The Deputy Premier cannot confirm whether she—

CHAIR: I have made the decision—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I asked the question, Mr Chair.

CHAIR:—that you are stretching it. You may want to rephrase the question. It is not relevant to what we are doing here at the moment.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Creating jobs in Queensland is not relevant to the Deputy Premier's portfolio, Mr Chair?

Mr CRAWFORD: Point of order, Chair. You have made your ruling. I think the member for Nanango has to move on.

CHAIR: That is exactly right, and I would appreciate it if the member did.

Mr KNUTH: My question is to the Deputy Premier, and I ask: with reference to page 4 of the SDS for the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, can the Deputy Premier advise what measures are introduced in the state budget to assist local governments to meet the onerous requirements of the new Planning Act, which commences 3 July 2017?

Ms TRAD: I thank the honourable member for Dalrymple for the question. I think the premise of your question is right. Assisting local councils—which are primarily the development assessment tier of government here in Queensland—to adopt to a comprehensive change in the new planning laws in Queensland is a critical part of the role that we play as a state government and state planning authority. I am absolutely delighted to inform the committee that to aid the transition process we allocated \$59.4 million over five years to reform the planning system and to assist in the transition to the new planning system. To date we have spent \$28.827 million of this \$59.4 million, with a further \$30.5 million allocated over the next two financial years. A key component of our transition plan is the Planning Reform program. This is a \$15.84 million initiative to help councils implement the new system and improve their planning processes. Of this, we have spent or awarded over \$8 million from the \$15.84 million allocated. The remaining \$7.77 million is budgeted for further support during this financial year.

We have empowered these councils to use this funding to tailor their transition strategies to the specific needs of their local communities and their own planning systems. Last week I was able to advise mayors from 27 councils that they had been successful in round 1 of the Innovation and

Improvement Fund to the tune of over \$2.55 million. Due to partnerships and collaborations between councils, this will deliver improvements to support 40 councils across the state. It is not just those 27 councils, but through innovation and collaboration it will have flow-on benefits in terms of up to 40 councils. The Innovation and Improvement Fund is available to councils to help them deliver major improvements to their planning systems. There were some very impressive ideas, and I look forward to seeing them delivered over the coming year. That funding was on top of the \$1.44 million provided to 36 councils to help them transition their existing development assessment IT systems and bring them up to speed with the new planning framework. That was purely about bringing their IT systems up to the new planning framework. This is a major investment in improving planning systems and planning outcomes for Queensland communities. As a result of our work, all local government planning systems across Queensland are now at a higher standard.

These are just the direct financial contributions we have made to councils, but by far the largest effort has been state time and resources dedicated to helping local governments get ready. This assistance has been extensive and it includes: readiness checklists and business readiness tools; a planning scheme transition tool; a state funded panel of planning practitioners to assist councils; statewide workshops and roadshows; development of an e-planning portal; a suite of fact sheets, online videos, live-stream events; and a planned chat forum. We have also invested \$3.8 million to help councils transition their planning schemes and improve their development assessment systems. More importantly, we have made sure there are officers on the ground dedicated to supporting transition in every region of the state every step of the way. If there are savings from any of the transition programs over the next year, I have asked the department to allocate this to the Innovation and Improvement Fund so that councils can continue to develop their systems and processes.

In addition to the work that we have done for councils, we have also worked with industry and the community. This included hosting over 50 information sessions and meet-the-planner opportunities. The feedback we have received on the new planning system so far has been extremely positive. I look forward to hearing more feedback over the coming months so we can make any changes that are necessary. We all know that there are adjustment issues when a new statewide system commences, but it is evident that the time and resources we have invested are already paying off.

Mr Chair, can I refer to something I said previously and correct the record. In terms of schedule 7, '2017 Chief Executive Officers', the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority was listed but, as was clear in my press release from 16 June—which the honourable member for Nanango was referring to in terms of the appointment of a head of authority—I made it clear that the head of authority was not the CEO and we had started a recruitment process for the CEO. The position is vacant and therefore there is no person to attend the committee.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: To be clear, it was on the schedule.

Ms TRAD: To be clear, there was a press release articulating that there was no CEO.

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions has expired.

Mrs MILLER: I refer to numerous town plans, developments and approvals which allow for the wanton destruction of vegetation including every tree, shrub and blade of grass in some development areas in Bundamba, Redbank Plains, Blackstone, Collingwood Park, Bellbird Park, Goodna, Springfield Lakes and Augustine Heights. My constituents are obviously disgusted about these scorched-earth planning policies. What I would like to know is what the Labor minister is doing in relation to these scorched-earth planning policies and approvals, because they expect more.

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. As the member for Bundamba would be aware, the regulation of local native vegetation is incorporated into local planning schemes. I am not intricately over all of the Ipswich Regional Council's local vegetation conditions and issues, but I am happy to talk about the state architecture and regime around vegetation management and protection in this state. Of course we know that in the last term of government the Newman government went forward and changed the Vegetation Management Act after promising the people of Queensland that there would be no statutory reduction in tree-clearing laws in Queensland. That promise was broken, as so many other promises were broken by the Newman Liberal National Party government. What that meant was the return of broadscale tree clearing in Queensland.

Mrs MILLER: And in my electorate, Minister.

Ms TRAD: Yes, I understand that, but urban vegetation is governed by councils, and councils need to have regard in their planning schemes for local—

Mrs MILLER: Will you take it over? Will you amend the act?

Ms TRAD:—vegetation protection and riparian vegetation protection. We know that, after promising the people of Queensland not to reduce the statutory protections for native vegetation in Queensland, the LNP broke that promise. It was in fact the member for Hinchinbrook who, a matter of weeks after the election and after the promise was made to the people of Queensland, got up and said that he was going to take a chainsaw to tree-clearing laws in Queensland, and they certainly did that.

Mrs MILLER: Point of order, Chair.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: That is irrelevant.

Ms TRAD: I have been asked about vegetation; I am pretty sure it is relevant.

CHAIR: If you continue to carry on like you are, we will call this session to an end. We only have a few seconds left.

Mrs MILLER: Mr Chair, my point of order is that my question was confined solely to my electorate. I am not interested in what the LNP is doing or has done or what we have done in the past. This is a real issue to my electorate, because every day dozers are in there wantonly destroying everything that moves.

Ms TRAD: I think the member for Bundamba raises a very important point. As I said, the regulation of local urban vegetation is governed by councils. What I can advise the committee is that, as part of my responsibility as planning minister, and as is articulated in the SDS, we will commence work around a strategic assessment for the South-East Queensland corner. That means that we will undertake proper environmental assessments right across the region for local, state and national matters of environmental significance, including vegetation, so that we can not only properly map and ensure speedy assessments and firm protections for local vegetation within the South-East Queensland region, including the Bundamba electorate, but also make sure we identify the appropriate locations for offsets going forward.

We know that currently when vegetation is damaged or removed in order to facilitate urban development the offset process is a patchwork process within local councils and across the region. We want to identify—

Mrs MILLER: We have got offset processes, but they do not work and they are not—

CHAIR: Could you wind up thank you?

Ms TRAD: Yes, sure. I understand, but through the strategic assessment what we will do is work with all councils across the South-East Queensland region to identify the areas that need protection to ensure that there is a speedy way in which development can be assessed according to local, state and national matters of environmental significance and make sure that we have a comprehensive facilitation of offsets right across the region.

Mrs MILLER: Words, no action.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. The committee will now adjourn for a break. The hearing will resume at 11.30 am with the examination of the estimates for the Transport portfolio.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Chair.

Proceedings suspended from 11.01 am to 11.29 am

CHAIR: The hearing is resumed. I welcome back the Deputy Premier and officials. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure for the Transport portfolio. Before we go to that, earlier the member for Bundamba sought to table documents related to her question on local government management of development in the Bundamba area. The committee has considered the request to have those documents tabled and we have resolved not to accept the documents.

Mrs MILLER: Point of order: I thank you very much for that and I will be releasing those documents publicly anyway.

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, can I just get some clarification because I do understand that I took that on notice, so does that now lapse if the committee chooses not to accept those as tabled documents?

CHAIR: Yes.

Ms TRAD: Okay. Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Do you have an opening statement?

Ms TRAD: I do, Mr Chair, if that is okay. Again, good morning. I acknowledge the member for Glass House, who has joined the committee hearings, as well as the member for Logan. I am pleased to outline the Palaszczuk government's record and our transport agenda. In the last year we delivered the most significant change to South-East Queensland's public transport fares in more than a decade—

Fairer Fares. Fairer Fares makes public transport simpler and more affordable for customers throughout South-East Queensland and it has already saved commuters more than \$33 million on public transport since its introduction in December 2016. This is a real cost-of-living relief for countless households. But we are not just providing relief for South-East Queensland. We have been providing more affordable regional air travel since we introduced the Local Fare Scheme that was cut by the LNP. More than 11,000 discounted bookings have been made using this initiative. This is why we recommitted to the scheme in Cape York and the Torres Strait and in this budget we extended it to Doomadgee, Mornington Island and Weipa in our most recent budget. We are also building the transport infrastructure our network needs. I am incredibly proud to say that the Gold Coast Light Rail stage 2 and the duplication of the Gold Coast heavy rail line are both well on track to be delivered ahead of the Commonwealth Games. We are also upgrading a number of stations on the network after they were ignored by the previous LNP government.

A critical priority is my work to fix the trains so that we can give Queenslanders the modern, reliable public transport that they deserve. I know from my own experience on the transport network that customers are noticing our progress already. Satisfaction is up and cancellations are down. Preliminary results provided to me yesterday indicate that customer satisfaction with train services in South-East Queensland is at 70 out of 100—that is, two points higher than in May. Satisfaction with safety and security also increased by three points to 76 out of 100 and there have also been more reliable services since the lows of last year, with a 70 per cent decrease in cancellations.

Today I am announcing that Queensland Rail will take the next step in its plan to recruit more drivers and open applications next month for external recruitment. I have also been focused on getting the New Generation Rollingstock trains back on track following the LNP's botched procurement process. These trains will be a critical part of the future of the South-East Queensland public transport network. We know this project has faced challenges since the contract was awarded by the former Newman-Nicholls government in late 2013. The Department of Transport and Main Roads and Queensland Rail have been working around the clock with Qtectic so that these trains can enter passenger service as soon as possible. We have been working to resolve the issues with NGR trains and I can advise that we now have stabilised the trains' braking rate, addressed issues with sight lines from the driver's cab and fixed the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system. We are continuing to engage and work together with the disability sector to address concerns raised by the trains' accessibility and functionality. Mr Chair, I am now happy to take questions about the budget.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Deputy Premier. I welcome the member for Glass House and the member for Logan for this part of the hearing. I call on the member for Glass House.

Mr POWELL: Thank you, Mr Chair. Good morning to you and to your committee and also to the Deputy Premier and her departmental staff. I would like to direct my first questions to the CEO of Queensland Rail, Mr Nick Easy, please. Good morning, Mr Easy. Welcome to the job and welcome to estimates. Mr Easy, I refer to the postponement of the New Generation Rollingstock, or NGR as everyone knows it, to the finance lease as referenced at note 7 on page 35 of the SDS. Can you tell the committee as part of the transport operations planning for the Commonwealth Games how many NGR units were expected in service for the Commonwealth Games in April 2018?

Mr Easy: We are working very closely with the Department of Transport and Main Roads on the integrated timetable for the Commonwealth Games, and that includes the delivery of heavy rail services. An important part of that is the timetable, and that timetable needs to be developed. It needs to take into account a range of factors to respond to what is the expected demand and a service uplift for the Commonwealth Games. That timetable development is not completed and what it will do is take into account what is the available rolling stock as part of that integrated timetable, so the rolling stock will be a by-product of the integrated timetable.

Mr POWELL: Interpreting that answer, if there is not additional rolling stock to cover the services required as announced by the government for the Commonwealth Games, that would involve taking units from existing services elsewhere in the network?

Mr Easy: There are two possibilities.

Ms TRAD: Point of order: I am sorry, Mr Easy, but that is a hypothetical. As the CEO has outlined, the work is being progressed around the timetable which will inform what measures need to be taken including additional rolling stock. The member is asking the CEO to make a hypothetical statement around work that has not yet been completed.

Mr POWELL: Not been completed, but surely Queensland Rail has had input, as Mr Easy alluded to, to the number of units and number of drivers required—

CHAIR: I think you need to rephrase the question.

Mr POWELL: I was, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Okay, but you did not give them a chance to respond.

Mr POWELL: Queensland Rail have clearly fed into that planning the number of units and drivers required for those additional services as announced by the government. If those additional units and drivers are not in place, what modelling has been done on existing rail network services on other lines?

Mr Easy: When you say that Queensland Rail has fed into those outcomes, at this stage given that no integrated timetable has been determined there are no assumptions or commitments or principles that have been established around what those numbers might be at this time. It is an incremental process which builds on a number of inputs, so we are working on a process where we look at the uplift in service demand for what is a very unique international event where, yes, there will be an increase of services on the Gold Coast line. One of our principles in the planning for the integrated timetable is that there will be no closures on other lines, but the service mix in terms of what will occur along the Gold Coast line and the other corridors will only be a by-product of the integrated timetable which will not be developed until later this year. That will be released as part of what will be the specific Gold Coast journey planner which will be released in early 2018.

Mr POWELL: You have mentioned there, Mr Easy, that there will not be closures on other lines. Have you done modelling on reducing services on those other lines?

Mr Easy: We are in the process of developing the timetable and we are doing a number of scenarios around what will be required to provide an increase in services for the Commonwealth Games. I can say that that does not include any closures on those lines, but in terms of the service mix that is still being considered as part of that process.

Mr POWELL: This event is nine months away and we are not going to see a timetable until later this year. Is that correct? Is that what you have just said?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, for the benefit of the committee—

Mr POWELL: It was a question to Mr Easy, Deputy Premier.

Ms TRAD: Yes, we are meeting the timetables as established by the Commonwealth Games Federation. We are required to release in November this year the single timetable and that is what we are working towards.

Mr POWELL: That might be nice for the Commonwealth Games committee, Mr Easy, but for the commuters of South-East Queensland I am sure they expect a bit more notice than perhaps what the Commonwealth Games committee are seeking. It is the intent of Queensland Rail and the department of transport to release a timetable later this year, so can you give me a month that that will occur?

Mr Easy: Our intention is to work to the commitments to the committee that are managing and in charge of the Commonwealth Games. In terms of anything outside of that, I am not able to offer you an answer on that.

Mr POWELL: Mr Easy, I refer you to question on notice No. 12. Before I do that, what is the average number of kilometres a new train would normally have to undertake as part of dynamic testing to then move into provisional acceptance and revenue service?

Mr Easy: As part of the testing for the new generation trains, this is a matter that might be dealt with really in the contract provisions around what is required to put these trains into service. The expectation is that they have fault-free running as part of the testing process before they move into passenger services.

Ms TRAD: And the honourable member should know that they took the contract off QR and gave it to DTMR, so in terms of the appropriate head to question I think the honourable member should rethink who he should be asking that question to. You are the ones who took the contract off QR and gave it to DTMR, so you should know who to ask the question to.

Mr POWELL: Let me take that advice from the Deputy Premier and ask the Director-General of DTMR, Mr Scales: what is the average number of kilometres a new train would have to undertake as part of dynamic testing to then move into provisional acceptance and revenue service?

Mr Scales: I thank the member for Glass House for the question. Under the contract the fault-free running has to be about 500 kilometres.

Mr POWELL: Five hundred Kilometres, so, Mr Scales, on the basis of question on notice No. 12 it shows 10 of the 15 NGR units currently in Queensland have not moved an inch and have had zero on-track dynamic testing. Can you explain to the committee why that is?

Mr Scales: Yes, I can. We are testing five units and when the first unit arrived at Wulkuraka we took it apart to see how it was constructed and that it had been constructed in the proper manner and then we began testing. Just to answer the member's question, I think there is no average that I can find. Just to give you an example for the benefit of the committee, the Waratah trains—the first one—did 40,000 kilometres before they entered service. The contract says 500 kilometres fault free and the faults are described in the deed—in the contract itself—and we have not achieved that yet.

Mr POWELL: Mr Scales, the question on notice also states that the NGR project deed did not set dates for entering revenue service, so what are the dates for provisional acceptance for each of the existing 15 units?

Mr Scales: As has been explained, the NGR trains for passenger service will be accepted by the state when we are sure that they meet Queensland's strict safety, engineering and operational standards. We have in place a comprehensive operational testing and commissioning program and once those standards are met and our colleagues in QR are happy with it then the trains will be issued with a certificate of engineering compliance by QR. Once that is done, then they will enter service.

Mr POWELL: So there is no set date, not for any of those 15?

Ms TRAD: They have to meet our engineering and—

Mr POWELL: Sorry, but the question was for Mr Scales.

Ms TRAD: Yes, but they have to meet our engineering safety standards.

Mr Scales: For the benefit of the committee, it is hard to put a date on it because we have to meet the certificate of engineering compliance before we do that. If I was to give a date now and something was not to be fixed in time then I might be wrong, so I am not really able to give you a date, Mr Powell.

Mr POWELL: Mr Scales, on page 133 of the Capital Statement in this year's budget there is a line item for \$12 million for other New Generation Rollingstock operational readiness projects. Can you please tell the committee what these projects are?

Mr Scales: Operational readiness is actually preparing things like the five stations on the Gold Coast line that require sight lines or markings on the platforms to be provided so that the drivers have an indicator on where to stop and things like that, so minor or relatively minor capital items on the network would be an example.

Mr POWELL: \$12 million worth of minor capital works on the network?

Mr Scales: That would be an example.

Mr POWELL: Director-General, staying on NGRs, on 2 November last year on ABC Radio you were asked about issues being raised regarding the design of the NGRs. You replied, 'Oh, yeah. I fixed them and the bottom line is that we're aware of all these issues on a cab mock-up. We got an independent ergonomist to have a look at the cab and they made five recommendations. Those recommendations have been implemented.' What were those five recommendations, Mr Scales?

Mr Scales: I thank the member for the question. I remember the interview on the Steve Austin program. I have a copy of the independent ergonomist's report. If it would please the committee, I could table that. The issues were minor in nature—things like seat position, the position of the microphone for the driver to use—and there were some minor modifications. The details are in here.

Mr POWELL: In that same interview you made reference to a cab committee.

Mr Scales: Yes.

Mr POWELL: Can you provide the committee with the details—and I am happy if you need to take this on notice—of how many times that cab committee has met, who is represented on that cab committee and which meetings they attended?

Mr Scales: The cab committee is a mechanism that we use to prove the concept of the cab. We had two mock-ups that were provided by Bombardier. The members of the committee are trade unions on one side and management and Bombardier on the other side. I attended two or three of those meetings. I will have to check my diary to give you the exact number.

The trade unions have their own representatives who attend these meetings. As to the management side, I attended on more than one occasion. The whole point was to make sure that we got to a point before the vehicles enter service that the cab is fit for purpose. The point that I was making to Steve Austin was that the alleged site problems that were raised in the press had been dealt with. Again, for benefit of the committee, I can table photographs of the site from the NGR cab, if it would help.

Ms TRAD: Certainly, for the benefit of the committee, the cab committee has been going for quite some time, including during the member's term in office as well.

Mr POWELL: Mr Easy, have you attended any of those cab committee meetings?

Mr Easy: No, I have not.

CHAIR: I have a document here titled *Queensland Rail independent review* that is sought to be tabled by Mr Scales. Are there any problems? Thank you. Carried.

Ms TRAD: Do you want the photographs tabled, too?

CHAIR: Not me particularly.

Mr POWELL: I am happy for them to be tabled, but I am not on the committee.

CHAIR: Okay.

Mr POWELL: Can you tell the committee what changes have been made to the cabins since the NGRs have arrived in Australia?

Mr Scales: The driver cabins?

Mr POWELL: Yes.

Mr Scales: We have changed the five items that are detailed in that report. It is an iterative process. As we went through the process with the cab committee, we looked at the position of the handset for the radio and also the pressure on the foot rest—there is a foot rest that the driver has to press down on—and seat adjustment, which is very important. These are the first trains with an improved level of adjustment on the network. We looked at a panel infill strip and we looked at the depth of movement under the desk. Those five issues are detailed in that report in some expanded detail.

Mr POWELL: And the changes made, or proposed to be made, to the broader unit itself, not the cabin?

Mr Scales: We are still working, as the Deputy Premier said in her opening address, with our colleagues in the disability sector to have a look at various items on the inside of the saloon, or the cabin area, but not in the driver's compartment.

Mr POWELL: With all of that work that you have just mentioned, what additional cost has that added per unit?

Mr Scales: It would be very difficult to get a cost. I would say that the costs are pretty marginal, because they were just the locations of equipment. There were spring constants that had to be changed on the foot rest pressure side of things. In the scope of a \$4.5 billion program, it is probably marginal.

Mr POWELL: 'Marginal' includes the disability work that needs to be done?

Mr Scales: The disability work, as the Deputy Premier has said, is still underway. It is still on foot.

Mr POWELL: You have no idea of the cost of that yet?

Mr Scales: Not as yet, because we have not agreed on anything.

Mr POWELL: Not \$200 million for 15 units?

Mr Scales: I would be speculating.

Ms TRAD: That is hypothetical. The information is not available.

CHAIR: You are asking for an opinion.

Mr POWELL: Director-General, did the minister consult you about her decision to halt the order of any further new NGR units?

Mr Scales: Yes, I was consulted.

Mr POWELL: Did you provide the minister with any advice about damages that the government may owe Bombardier as a result of deadlines being missed?

Mr Scales: I think on a commercial position I would not want to comment on that. All I would say is that the state is in a very strong commercial position.

Mr POWELL: You are not willing to comment on whether you provided the minister advice? I am not asking for the detail; I am asking whether you provided—

Mr Scales: I provided the minister advice, yes.

Mr POWELL: Was any legal advice requested about what is in the contract about unilaterally stopping an order?

Ms TRAD: For the record, I have not stopped the order. I have stopped the delivery of additional units pending the acceptance and the provisional qualification of units that we currently have in Queensland, which is some 15 units. For the benefit of the committee, the contract has not been stopped. The delivery of additional units has been suspended.

Mr POWELL: I did not say, Deputy Premier—

Ms TRAD: You said 'stopped'.

Mr POWELL: I said stopping the—

Ms TRAD: You said 'unilaterally stopped'.

Mr POWELL: Unilaterally stopping an order, not a contract.

Ms TRAD: No, the order has not been stopped. To be absolutely clear, this is a \$4.4 billion project and the terminology is important.

Mr POWELL: The question still stands.

CHAIR: This is not a debate in the parliament. Mr Scales, if you refuse to give details to our question, the committee can note that.

Mr Scales: Yes.

Mr POWELL: Can I repeat the question so that Mr Scales can give advice on whether he is able to answer it? Was any legal advice requested about what is in the contract about unilaterally stopping that part of the order?

Mr Scales: As far as that bit is concerned, the Deputy Premier sought and received comprehensive advice, including legal advice. Whilst that pause is underway, TMR, Qtectic and Queensland Rail continue to work around the clock to ensure that the new trains can enter passenger service as soon as possible. To answer your question, we are not taking any more new trains until we have a certificate of engineering compliance from our colleagues in QR. We are still working quite hard on the contract.

Mr POWELL: For the benefit of *Hansard* and the public interest, Director-General—and, again, I do not need you to go into the tender details—can you confirm that two consortia bid for the NGR contract?

Mr Scales: No, I cannot. That was before my time.

Mr POWELL: You have no history of how many bids there were for the NGR project?

Mr Scales: That was before my time.

Mr POWELL: You have not been advised since how many bids—

Ms TRAD: I think he has answered the question.

CHAIR: I think he has answered the question.

Mr POWELL: Thank you, Mr Chair. Mr Easy, I refer to the increased expenditure under the transport service contract with Queensland Rail, as referred to on page 27 of the SDS. I particularly want to focus on that service contract and how it relates to the Strachan commission of inquiry. Recommendation 14 of that inquiry called for open recruitment processes for drivers and guards to external applicants, including applicants with no previous rail experience. In acknowledging the statement made by the Deputy Premier, can you explain to the committee who is currently allowed to apply to be a driver?

Mr Easy: We have undertaken a number of recruiting programs. What is important here is that we have now implemented a rolling program for recruitment. With respect to that recommendation for external recruitment, we have undertaken that first in a staged way. We have advertised to ex-QR drivers. We have 22 people who are in the final stages of that process that we hope will be recruited

and be able to be trained to be trainee drivers on the network. We have always said that it will be a staged process. The next stage, which has been referred to in the opening today, is to open that recruitment externally. That will fully fulfil the recommendation in the commission of inquiry recommendations. It is a staged process, a rolling program for recruitment, which is all about building the supply of our train crew so that we can move towards restoring and increasing our services.

Mr POWELL: Just to be clear, when you say 'former QR staff' was there a time constraint placed on how 'former' they must be currently?

Ms TRAD: Former drivers.

Mr Easy: No, I do not believe so.

Mr POWELL: Former drivers, not former since 2010?

Mr Easy: No, I do not believe there was a constraint to that effect.

CHAIR: Thank you. Time has expired. I call on the member for Logan.

Mr POWER: I refer to page 13 of the Transport and Main Roads Service Delivery Statements. Can the Deputy Premier outline for us any progress made on driver and guard training and recruitment within Queensland Rail?

Ms TRAD: I thank the honourable member for the question and welcome him to the committee. Hiring and training more drivers and guards is critical to our plan to fix the trains, which is why we have been so strongly focused on boosting train crew numbers in a two-part strategy. In the eight months since October 2016, 77 guards and 28 drivers have graduated from training and are working on the rail network. As at 28 June 2017, Queensland Rail has selected more than 260 trainee guard candidates and more than 100 trainee driver candidates. Also as at 28 June, Queensland Rail has 85 trainee drivers and 40 trainee guards, which is the largest number in training at any one time. On this point, I acknowledge the work of my predecessor the member for Sandgate in relation to also looking over the recruitment campaigns.

Let us not forget why we have a driver shortage. The LNP cut driver training in 2014. They suspended the recruitment of drivers into the network. If that had not happened, we would have had an additional 30 drivers when the Moreton Bay rail line opened last year. We are recruiting an extra 200 drivers and 200 guards and we are working to speed up the training program to make sure that we get drivers and guards fully qualified and out on the rail network as soon as possible.

I am pleased to announce today that Queensland Rail will soon commence the next step in its recruitment campaign, as I advised in my opening statement, which is opening up external recruitment for train driver roles. This is part of a staged recruitment process that began when Queensland Rail opened up external roles to ex-Queensland Rail drivers. Queensland Rail chose to target those with experience on its network first, as this offered the best chance to speed up training times without compromising on safety. We needed to complete that process before opening recruitment more broadly, and I am pleased to say that as at 28 June 2017 some 28 external ex-Queensland Rail drivers were progressing through the final stages of recruitment, as the CEO has advised.

Advertisements for driver roles will open in August. Our recruitment process is rigorous and industry leading, but it is also fair. Candidates work through psychometric and psychomotor testing, an interview and a medical fitness test before being offered a position. We are determined to get the best quality candidates for these critical roles, which are responsible for keeping customers safe. Nothing is more important than that. The testing regime has been designed specifically for the requirements of driving safely on the South-East Queensland rail network and tests the core traits that are required in the safety critical role of train driver. Following a review of our program less than two years ago, the Melbourne Metro Rail Authority has adopted both of our tests.

The Strachan commission of inquiry recommended that Queensland Rail open its train crew roles to external recruitment, and that is what we are doing. In addition, there are a range of measures being undertaken to accelerate training. These include recruiting an extra 10 tutor drivers and 10 tutor guards. There are now more than 80 mentor drivers, which allows for more concurrent training and helps to reduce the bottleneck that occurs when trainee drivers finish theory and begin intensive one-to-one on-track training.

We have also partnered with GHD and the Centre for Excellence in Rail Training—referred to as CERT—to identify ways to further accelerate training. Since October last year, driver training duration has averaged approximately 13 months, which is down from the average 18 months identified in the Strachan report. We have set a goal of safely reducing training time to nine months, in line with other similar railways.

Mr POWER: When I was on the transport committee we went out to see the virtual reality training that they do for the ports and harbours. With reference to page 13 of the SDS, how is the government reforming the way training is delivered at Queensland Rail and taking advantage of new ways of training drivers?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Logan for the question. As referred to in my previous answer, one of the commitments we made as a result of the Strachan commission of inquiry was to look at ways we can modernise the training regime. Having new elements incorporated into the training program is going to be key to ensuring we can safely minimise the required amount of training that train crew will need in order to become fully operational. It also is about modernising—modernising not just through equipment but modernising through best practice going forward.

As I have reported, since June we have 85 drivers and 40 guards in training, which are essentially the largest schools that we have had. We have an enormous challenge ahead of us to meet demand and the increase in supply, in order to have our network fully functioning in the next two years. As I said, we have set a goal of further safely reducing training times to nine months, in line with similar railways.

Queensland Rail's analysis has already identified two weeks that can be shaved off driver theory school by recognising prior learning. Since October last year, Queensland Rail has undertaken a range of measures to accelerate its driver training program, which includes new tutor drivers and new tutor guards. This is critical, because it means that we can conduct more schools. It was tutor drivers who were retrenched when the LNP was in government. They formed part of the huge exodus of some 3,000 workers in Queensland Rail and DTMR who were retrenched or sacked as part of the 14,000 sackings that the LNP oversaw during their time in office. Tutor drivers left during that period; we are getting them back. We know how critical they are in terms of having more driver training schools and guard training schools.

We are progressing closer supervision and support of trainees to keep track of their progress. More people in the training system means people can get more one-on-one support in order to progress as quickly as possible through the training program. A prestart pack means trainee candidates can work through material before commencing driver school, to give them a head start. That is particularly important, because we are recruiting and we need to increase the number of driver training schools, but in the interim if we can get people studying from a prestart pack they will be well prepared or better prepared when the schools commence and when there is room in the schools for them to commence.

We have personalised training plans, which enable high-achieving trainees to accelerate through training more quickly, while offering increased support for those needing more help. That is critical when you think about adult learning methodologies that need to apply through this process. Some people will be much quicker in terms of understanding and being trained through the system and some people will need additional support. You have to have that approach in order to ensure that people are accelerating as fast and as safely as possible through the system.

We are greatly increasing the use of mentors with more than 80 mentor drivers and 58 mentor guards now training to support one-to-one on-track training, freeing up driver trainers and allowing more trainees on the network concurrently. That is about mentor drivers being in the cabin with trainees, making sure that they are getting mentoring support on the network while they are training, rather than taking tutor drivers out of the schools. We need more schools running, more tutor drivers and more mentor drivers to make sure that people are progressing through the system in a parallel way as quickly as possible.

As part of future measures to accelerate training, Queensland Rail will introduce route simulators at the theory school stage to allow trainees time to become familiar with the technology earlier in the training process. I was pleased to welcome one of those new simulators earlier this year. In terms of the lifelike features on all of the routes that have been programmed into the simulator, it is quite incredible. Many of the drivers and tutors themselves have told me that this is really an acceleration in the quality of simulation that they can now access to train. It is fantastic.

We have also developed a detailed supply-and-demand model for trainee train crew, which includes allocating trainee drivers and their tutors to drive revenue services rather than the old practice where the trainer and trainee commandeered a service, with the qualified driver not working for the duration of the training session. This enables us to maximise the work force used for revenue services.

We want to ensure that our newest recruits can work through the theory and practical on-track knowledge to build the skills that they need to get on the railway network as quickly as possible. I am sure you will agree that we are doing everything humanly possible to get that training accelerated as quickly as possible and responding to the unique demands of these trainees within the system, so that they can accelerate as quickly as possible.

Mr POWER: Those route simulators are amazing.

Ms TRAD: They are.

Mr POWER: Obviously, the Strachan inquiry made a lot of recommendations. Can you give us an overview of the progress on the implementation of the Strachan inquiry throughout the network?

Ms TRAD: As I have reported to the House, we are incredibly serious about ensuring that we fix the trains and that we implement every single recommendation of the Strachan inquiry. We are starting to see an improvement in services, with fewer cancellations and better on-time running. Fixing the Trains is our action plan for transforming the delivery of rail in Queensland. The plan calls for Queensland Rail, the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Citytrain Response Unit to work together to stabilise, recover and transform Queensland Rail. As outlined in the Fixing the Trains June quarterly report, we have made real progress towards getting Queensland Rail back on track and transforming the way we deliver rail services. Seven of the recommendations have now been completed. For the benefit of the committee, I seek leave to table the June quarterly report of Fixing the Trains.

As part of Queensland Rail's commitment to the 100-days initiative, it has also made progress in accelerating recruitment practices and overhauling training. This has included: of the 200 driver positions to be filled, Queensland Rail has already selected 170 trainee drivers; since October, 77 guards and 28 drivers have completed their training and are working on the rail network; delivery of a new state-of-the-art train simulator; the appointment of an additional 50 driver mentors since October; and an increase in class sizes for trainee drivers. Queensland Rail has also improved demand and supply forecasting to better predict stress on the timetable and improve train crew management tools to better manage resourcing. When stress periods are identified, plans are put in place to manage those periods. The key benefit of those improvements is that customers will be able to be advised earlier as to any timetable changes, so that they can better plan their journeys. Other improvements for customers include enhanced customer engagement, a refresh at station amenities, and clearer and more up-to-date information both at stations and online. Preliminary consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders on major project delivery arrangements.

The Citytrain Response Unit is leading a review of the governance, legislative framework and structure of public transport delivery in Queensland to assess, make recommendations on and oversee the implementation of a bespoke integrated public transport model for Queensland. CRU is also leading a whole-of-business review of Queensland Rail to identify any systemic organisational issues outside of train crewing and develop action plans to address those issues. Again, that was a recommendation from the Strachan report.

We know we have a long way to go to restore customer confidence and return to a full service timetable, but we are well on our way. I am absolutely confident that the people of Queensland will see a true transformation in the way we deliver rail services into the future. To correct the record, I think I said 170 trainee drivers; the number is 107.

Mrs MILLER: I would like to ask a couple of questions in relation to school student transport. WoodLinks State School has been advised that a bus route is available for their students in the mornings, but not in the afternoons. Obviously parents are outraged about this. They want to know about the safety of their students who will not be able to get home. They are concerned about their kids becoming another Daniel Morcombe. Why was this ridiculous decision made in the first place and when will it be fixed?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I would like to take on notice the question on the WoodLinks State School. I would like to know who the operator is and do a bit of a deeper dive into the issues in relation to this particular matter. I will take it on notice, by leave of the committee.

CHAIR: Thank you. That is fine.

Mrs MILLER: I have a follow-up question in relation to school transport. I would like to know why the afternoon school train out of Ipswich only runs on a Friday. You cannot get a school train out of Ipswich between Monday and Thursday, but you can on a Friday. That is absolutely absurd, because our students have to rely on other means of transport. When will the school students of Ipswich get back their train on Mondays to Thursdays?

Ms TRAD: Again, Mr Chair, this is a question about a very specific topic in the member's electorate. I seek leave to take that on notice, so that I can provide an accurate answer to a very specific question.

CHAIR: Leave is granted. Before moving back to opposition members, the Deputy Premier sought to table the Fixing the Trains progress report. I seek leave to have that tabled? Leave is granted.

Deputy Premier, I refer to page 13 of the DTMR's SDS. Can you please outline the improvements in the reliability of rail services under the Fixing the Trains action plan? It is a great plan, they tell me.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Chair. As I have said, we have a plan to fix the trains and make Queensland Rail a more modern customer-focused rail service, particularly after the LNP, when in government, put the brakes on driver recruitment and training and sacked tutor drivers. We know that what South-East Queenslanders want from their rail service is reliability and consistency. They want to know that when they get to the station their train will be there on time and will take them to their destination safely. Since the Strachan commission of inquiry and the Fixing the Trains action plan, Queensland Rail has made changes to prioritise quality service and reliability for customers.

Every week, the Citytrain network delivers more than 7,800 services across the south-east rail Citytrain network. That is more services than were delivered by the previous government on a weekly basis. Queensland Rail returned to a level of 94.9 per cent peak on-time running during the January to March quarter. We want to see that level rise above the 95 per cent target once more.

Getting more qualified drivers and guards out on our network is the key to improving reliability and to increasing services in the future. To do this, we are fast-tracking training and recruitment, including working to overhaul and modernise the training program without compromising on safety. As at 28 June, Queensland Rail selected 107 trainee drivers and 263 trainee guards, with 85 drivers and 40 guards currently in training. Those are the largest schools to date.

Queensland Rail's recruitment process is rigorous and industry leading. We are determined to get the best quality candidates for these critical roles, which ensure that customers travel safely. As I have mentioned, an extra 10 tutor drivers and 10 tutor guards have been recruited to boost the amount of trainee drivers doing important on-to-one on-track training. To support this, we also now have more than 82 drivers to mentor new trainees and streamline on-track training, freeing up time for driver trainers to get more trainee drivers out on the network.

Our goal is to get the average training time down to nine months to help boost the supply of train crew necessary to increase services and ensure a steady surplus supply to match future demand. In addition, Queensland Rail has hired additional support staff to allow train crew to focus on operating rail services and taking care of customers. We will continue to deliver on the measures set out in the Fixing the Trains action plan and go above and beyond it to prioritise the return of excellent rail services to Queenslanders.

CHAIR: We will go to the member for Glass House.

Mr POWELL: Mr Easy, I wish to pick up the line of questioning with which we ended the last bracket. You explained that, currently, driver recruitment is open to any former Queensland Rail driver or employee. I would like to ask some questions about Mr Shayne Kummerfeld, a new recruit of yours, I understand. Why does Mr Kummerfeld qualify to return as a driver when other applicants, who are former Queensland Rail staff from the same time period and current Aurizon drivers, are being turned away?

Mr Easy: Perhaps if I can clarify, Mr Kummerfeld is not a new recruit. He was away on leave without pay. He has been an employee of Queensland Rail on a continuous basis and still is today. He was on leave without pay. He has resumed performing train tasks. He will do that through some revised training to ensure his competencies are up to date. Just to be clear, he has been an ongoing Queensland Rail employee.

Mr POWELL: Surely that same modified training could be applied to former Queensland Rail staff or Aurizon drivers who have also applied for those positions but have been knocked back, whereas Mr Kummerfeld has had a free ride back into a job.

Mr Easy: The policy applies to those who do not work for Queensland Rail—that is, in terms of undertaking the full testing. Given Mr Kummerfeld is an employee, has been a train driver for many years and has maintained his competencies for a period of time—also when we was absent on leave—those policies do not apply.

Mr POWELL: Can you tell the committee how many other train drivers are on the same leave arrangements as Mr Kummerfeld?

Mr Easy: To the best of my knowledge, I do not believe anybody is under those same arrangements, but I am happy to confirm that, if you wish.

Mr POWELL: I would appreciate that confirmation because obviously the question arises: what ability does Queensland Rail have, given the severe driver shortage that the Deputy Premier goes on about, to request these drivers come back from that leave or, if they will not, to terminate their employment with Queensland Rail? If you are able to ascertain how many are on similar leave arrangements and whether you have the ability to force them to come back to be train drivers in the same way, that would be useful.

Mr Easy: Perhaps we can confirm before the end of this session whether any parties are on those arrangements.

Ms TRAD: Just take it on notice. Just so I understand the question correctly, is the honourable member suggesting that we identify a number of train drivers on leave without pay and force them to come back to driving trains rather than them making up their own free mind about whether or not they want to come back as train drivers?

Mr POWELL: Given you have a shortage of drivers and Mr Kummerfeld set the example, I suspect, where he was happy to come back from leave without pay to take up a position, surely those other people might be interested in the same.

Ms TRAD: Just to clarify for the benefit of the committee, I am not prepared to force back drivers who are on extended maternity leave without pay—

Mr POWELL: I did not say 'maternity leave'; I said 'leave without pay'.

Ms TRAD: That is leave without pay as well.

Mr POWELL: They were Mr Easy's words too.

Ms TRAD: For the benefit of the committee, can I just say that these leave without pay provisions are provisions that are mirrored throughout the Public Service in Queensland. For example, the Queensland Police Service has similar provisions which allow serviced officers to go into union positions for extended periods of time. They can leave their positions and have leave without pay so that they can take up roles as industrial advocates for the workers within the services that they represent. These are provisions that are mirrored throughout the Public Service.

Mr POWELL: Mr Chair, the Deputy Premier has offered to take this on notice. I think that is sufficient at this stage.

CHAIR: I know she has offered to take it on notice, but she was—

Mr POWELL: Can I again ask a question of Mr Easy?

CHAIR: You might talk over the people sitting opposite you, but I am not going to have you talk over me, if you do not mind. Deputy Premier, is there a need for you to continue to respond to that question?

Ms TRAD: I am just seeking clarification around the question. Does the honourable member want us to force current drivers who are on extended leave without pay, including those who are actually on maternity leave, to come back to work to keep their jobs and stop their leave without pay or continue their leave without pay provisions? If that is what he wants us to answer, I am very happy to take that on notice.

Mr POWELL: Mr Chair, I am not going to have my words twisted by the Deputy Premier. *Hansard* has my comments on record.

Ms TRAD: We do not function in the industrial period in the—

Mr POWELL: Can I ask the next question?

CHAIR: There is a lot of twisting of words going around. Do you have a question or do you want to move on?

Mr POWELL: Having a look at the Queensland Rail Citytrain fleet website I see that the suburban multiple unit, known as SMU260, trains entered service between 2008 and 2011. I know that it is before your time. This is also during the time that Mr Kummerfeld was operating in a union position and therefore has no experience on units. Can you tell the committee how many SMU260 units are in operation in Queensland Rail at the moment?

Mr Easy: I will need to take that question on notice to answer it.

Mr POWELL: I look forward to receiving that. I anticipate that, based on that answer, it is established that Mr Kummerfeld will be unfamiliar with a certain range of the current trains Queensland Rail operates and therefore that is what he will require training on; is that correct?

Mr Easy: I am unable to confirm that until I answer your first question.

Mr POWELL: Union heavy Shayne Kummerfeld walked back into a Queensland Rail train driver's job after being away—

Ms TRAD: Not as heavy as you.

CHAIR: Member for Glass House, I have erred in my role as the chair by allowing you to name a person in the questions you keep putting. I have not responded to this earlier. I am asking you to, from this point on, not mention any more names.

Mr POWELL: A union heavy has walked back into a Queensland Rail train drivers job after being away since 2006, as we have just been through. What do you then say to Dallas, who wrote to you last week—and I table his email—saying—

I am currently a qualified freight locomotive driver positioned at Fisherman Island freight depot. I initially joined Queensland Rail in 2006 as a customer service officer. In 2008 I passed the required aptitude testing put by Queensland Rail to become a train driver. I have been at Fisherman Island depot since 2008, firstly as QR National and now Aurizon. Just recently I was notified by Queensland Rail HR I was unsuitable for a position as experienced train driver after progressing through to and having an interview for the experienced train driver position advertised in February of this year. I find the decision by Queensland Rail not to offer me a position bewildering, humiliating and disappointing given the current Queensland Rail driver shortage, the experience I have driving on the Queensland Rail network and the knowledge of the safe working systems and equipment used by Queensland Rail.

What do you have to say to Dallas?

Ms TRAD: I acknowledge the disappointment felt by this applicant in relation to the most recent recruitment campaign. Let me first start by saying that I know that people will be disappointed when they miss out on jobs. I absolutely know that. I also know that, in terms of Queensland Rail, we have a very comprehensive recruitment and selection process that is absolutely necessary. It has been held up as nation leading, quite frankly. The psychometric and psychomotor testing regime has been replicated in other jurisdictions and acknowledged for its value in terms of providing a proper selection process for people to come onto our network. I can absolutely understand how someone who has experience on another form of network would feel like they could easily transfer over. As I said, we have had psychometric testing within the Queensland Rail selection process since the start of this century. It is held up as international best practice. It is the same—

Mr POWELL: He has passed it. He passed it in 2008.

Ms TRAD: Yes, but he applied again in 2017, almost a decade later.

Mr POWELL: He has been driving more trains than Mr Kummerfeld.

CHAIR: I asked you not to name that person.

Mr POWELL: He has been driving more trains than said union official.

Ms TRAD: The imputation by the member for Glass House is probably a little bit distasteful. Let us be clear in relation to the individual identified by Mr Powell, the member Glass House: Mr Kummerfeld is a QR employee and has been for a long period of time—

Mr POWELL: Is the Deputy Premier allowed to use the name?

CHAIR: Do not use the name. I have tried to cut it out. I went too far.

Ms TRAD: He has taken time off in order to fill a role to advocate on behalf of his co-workers, and he has done an excellent job. He has done this in the same way that service police officer Ian Leavers has taken leave without pay to represent his members—and he has done a fantastic job as well. These are important provisions within the Public Service to make sure that workers who understand what their colleagues face on the front line each and every day can take up advocacy roles within industrial organisations to fight for fair conditions and fair wages for their co-workers. I think it is an important policy, regardless of the smear that the member for Glass House wants to attribute to it. It is an important function and it is one that should be preserved. To get to your point, I would encourage Dallas, if he wants to, to apply when we go to external recruitment next month.

Mr POWELL: He has already applied but was knocked back.

Ms TRAD: We have nation-leading selection processes. The review conducted—

Mr POWELL: He has been humiliated once and you want him to have another crack.

Ms TRAD: You are humiliating him again now publicly—well done, member for Glass House. If the person in question wants to apply again I would fully encourage him to do so. I am not making any apology for Queensland Rail having a nation-leading selection and recruitment process to make sure that we get the right people driving trains that will carry thousands of passengers across our network. I make no apology for that. I invite this individual to reapply if he wants to.

CHAIR: Member for Glass House, before you go on, am I right in saying to you with regard to this letter that you have tabled that you have actually read that letter into *Hansard*?

Mr POWELL: Yes, I have.

CHAIR: There is no need then for us to table it.

Mr POWELL: Thank you, Mr Chair. Was the deal with the said union official stitched up at your meeting with him on 9 February 2017?

Ms TRAD: I ask for an SDS reference to this distasteful question.

Mr POWELL: I refer to the same reference I gave Mr Easy—page 27 of the SDS where it refers to increased expenditure under the transport service contract with Queensland Rail.

Ms TRAD: I am unsure what the link is.

Mr POWELL: You are allowed to talk about recruiting train drivers and I am not, Deputy Premier? Is that what you are saying?

Ms TRAD: I think—

Mr POWELL: Did you stitch up a deal with the said union official at your meeting with him on 9 February 2017?

Ms TRAD: I do not think the honourable member actually understands industrial provisions. This is a person who is an employee of Queensland Rail and has been on leave without pay for a period of time. He is entitled to come back to his substantive position. I understand that the member for Glass House does not agree with provisions like this. He probably does not agree with long service leave provisions. He probably does not agree with paid maternity leave provisions. He probably does not agree with annual leave provisions.

Mr POWELL: That is hypothetical.

Ms TRAD: He probably accepts that there should be penalty rate cuts to some of the lowest paid workers in Australia.

CHAIR: Deputy Premier, please wait. Member for Glass House, I am not giving you—

Mr POWELL: I am waiting.

CHAIR: There are a lot of imputations and statements being made that I do not see have any connection to the budget papers we are talking about. Language is being used and you are naming people. I think it is getting a little bit out of hand. Let us get back to you doing your job and the Deputy Premier responding in a way that she should.

Mr POWELL: Deputy Premier, admit it: you do not care about jobs for Queenslanders, just your union mates.

CHAIR: Is that a question? It was a question, but it is not the type of question that we need. Come on; give us go. There is a lot of love here and I am trying to spread it around.

Mr POWELL: I have a question to Mr Scales.

Ms TRAD: I am happy to answer a question about jobs and the 3,000 jobs they cut from Queensland Rail and DTMR. Let us not forget that. Let us understand who cares about jobs. It is not you.

Mr POWELL: Did Transport and Main Roads provide the historical rail patronage data which shows a 10 million drop in patronage from 2008 to 2016 to Building Queensland during the development of the Cross River Rail business case?

Mr Scales: I would not have that detail because the responsibility for the business plan for Cross River Rail was examined in the earlier session with the DP. It is a matter for them.

Mr POWELL: To be clear, they referred to information provided by TMR which is why I am asking the question. Did TMR, as Building Queensland has alluded to in questioning this morning, provide data showing a 10 million drop in patronage from 2008 to 2016?

Mr Scales: We would have provided the same modelling information that we used on—

Mr POWELL: I am not asking for modelling; I am asking for the historical data—

Ms TRAD: Just let him answer the question.

Mr POWELL:—showing a drop in patronage between those years.

Mr Scales: We would have provided the modelling information that we provided for the bus and train tunnel and also the previous Cross River Rail project.

Mr POWELL: That is a very good answer, but it does not answer the question.

Mr KNUTH: My question is to the Deputy Premier. I refer to the Service Delivery Statement for the Department of Transport and Main Roads on page 27 in relation to the construction of the new generation rolling stock for Queensland Rail which was moved from Maryborough to India and is experiencing significant delays. Can the minister advise how much money has been included in the budget to cover the overcosts and whether the government will commit to moving rolling stock construction back to Queensland given the poor outcome of this project?

Ms TRAD: I thank the honourable member for the question. I acknowledge that this is an issue that has received quite a lot of attention in the media. In terms of the contract and the approval of the final specifications and design for the new generation rolling stock, that was a contract signed by the former Newman-Nicholls government. The member for Glass House was right in terms of the procurement process. Let us just say that the procurement process was such that local contractors, local companies, fell out of that procurement process. That then led the government into a position where they awarded a contract to a consortium where these trains—some 75, six-car sets—were contracted to be manufactured in India. The member is right. At the time the member for Clayfield, now the Leader of the Opposition, and the member for Indooroopilly, who is the shadow Treasurer, put out a press release crowing about how they had achieved half-price trains—sewn up a contract for half the price because they were manufactured outside of Queensland and abroad.

We are working through the outstanding issues, and there are some outstanding issues. As the director-general of DTMR has said this morning, we are yet to achieve a fault-free run on the modules that we have in Brisbane. We are determined to work through the issues and we are working collaboratively, particularly with the consortia Qtectic, to resolve these outstanding issues. I am determined that these trains achieve certified engineering compliance, as the director-general said, and are commissioned into passenger services as soon as is safely possible. I know that Qtectic is focused on that as well.

Unfortunately, the issues that will continue to be an ongoing concern for this government are issues that were germinated, originated, by the fact that the former LNP government chose to contract half-price trains and they crowed about it at the time. Ultimately, you have to deal with the contract in front of you. I am determined that Queenslanders get the best outcome possible from the contract that was signed by the former government.

CHAIR: I call the member for Keppel.

Mrs LAUGA: Deputy Premier, I refer to page 79 of BP No. 4 and ask: what parts of the Strachan inquiry is the Citytrain Response Unit working to deliver?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Keppel for the question. This is an important question because the Citytrain Response Unit, which is a new function within government, is playing a very, very important role in terms of ensuring the adequacy of advice that is being received around some of the critical issues to do with the *Fixing the trains* report, the implementation of the Strachan inquiry recommendations, but also in terms of looking at the future of passenger services, public transport services, here in the south-east particularly.

It is an independent body reporting directly to me to enable effective assurance of the work of both Queensland Rail and the Department of Transport and Main Roads in implementing the Strachan inquiry recommendations. CRU is led by the chair, Ms Jacqui Walters, who is an expert in designing and implementing organisation-wide change. I meet with the Citytrain Response Unit regularly to discuss the progress of our plans to fix the trains. You will see that they provide a report within *Fixing the trains* assuring the information that is being provided.

In line with recommendation 35 of the Strachan inquiry, CRU monitors and assures the implementation of all inquiry recommendations. Implementation progress is set out in the quarterly reports that are available on the CRU website. The most recent quarterly report is June 2017, which the committee accepted for tabling earlier. It demonstrates the tangible progress towards getting Queensland Rail back on track and transforming the way we deliver rail services for Queensland.

In stabilising operations, Queensland Rail has made significant progress. Queensland Rail has assessed the sustainability of the current timetable and confirmed that it will remain in place, noting there will be a number of stress periods over the coming 12 months. They have also improved demand and supply forecasting to better predict stress in the timetable and improve train crew management tools to better manage resourcing. The customer experience has been improved through enhanced customer engagement and a refresh of station amenity. Queensland Rail has also made progress in activities that support organisational recovery. This has included commencing the overhaul of training and recruitment practices to modernise and streamline Queensland Rail which I have detailed earlier.

To action recommendation 36 of the Strachan inquiry, CRU is leading two significant pieces of work: firstly, a review of the governance legislative framework and structure of public transport delivery in Queensland. This review will assess and make recommendations on an integrated public transport model for Queensland. The second review is a whole-of-business review of Queensland Rail to identify any systemic organisational issues and develop action plans to address these issues. This review will include consideration of matters outside issues related to train crewing. The first stage of both reviews is currently underway. I am absolutely confident that through the work of Queensland Rail, the Department of Transport and Main Roads and CRU the people of Queensland will start to see a true transformation in the way we deliver rail services, and public transport more broadly, well into the future.

Mr CRAWFORD: Deputy Premier, can you explain how the government's \$23½ million investment in the duplication of the Gold Coast line between Coomera and Helensvale is going to benefit residents on the Gold Coast?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Barron River for the question, because I do know that the Far North Queensland region will absolutely benefit once the Commonwealth Games is here because I think that many spectators who come along to the Commonwealth Games are going to take the opportunity to go up to Far North Queensland to have a look at the reef and the beautiful Daintree and everything that his part of Queensland that he represents has to offer. The Queensland government's Coomera to Helensvale line duplication project is nearing completion and on track to be commissioned during the Queen's Birthday long weekend in October 2017. This major infrastructure project will transform the region's public transport network, and it was accelerated for the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in 2018.

This project will duplicate the only remaining section of single track on the Gold Coast line and will significantly improve train capacity and reliability on the line ahead of the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. Construction commenced on this significant upgrade in May 2016. It includes the construction of 8.2 kilometres of track and eight rail bridges, installing overhead electrification and signalling systems, and replacing 3.8 kilometres of timber barrier screening. Importantly, upon completion the project will have supported more than 200 jobs in trades such as engineering, electrical, steel fixing, concreting and carpentry. To date, workers have clocked more than 400,000 construction hours on the site.

The Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to ensuring public transport services are ready for the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. It is a once-in-a-generation event that will focus the world's attention on Queensland and, in particular, the Gold Coast. The Coomera to Helensvale rail duplication will not only support the Gold Coast region to host the largest sporting event in Australia this decade but also cater for the region's growing number of residents and visitors into the future. The Gold Coast rail line is a key gateway from Brisbane to the Gold Coast region and records around 4.5 million passenger journeys per year, but it is currently at capacity during peak hours. This project will deliver the capacity needed to double the number of trains travelling to the Gold Coast in morning peak and back to Brisbane in afternoon peak.

Alongside the Coomera to Helensvale track duplication, we are investing a further \$10 million to refurbish six Gold Coast stations ahead of the games, as the director-general has already outlined. These refurbishment works are underway at Ormeau, Coomera, Helensvale, Nerang, Robina and Varsity Lakes stations, supporting around 30 new jobs for Queenslanders in the construction industry. These stations will be a major transport hub during the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, and these upgrades will ensure that they are looking good for international visitors and guests come games time.

As part of the program, the pedestrian subway at Coomera station will be completely retiled and the Ormeau footbridge will be upgraded, while modernisation works will be carried out on the lifts at Coomera and Nerang stations, along with a number of other initiatives. This project will provide a comfortable, modern environment for local customers and visitors into the future. Commuters can look forward to the unveiled new-look Gold Coast stations early next year.

Mrs MILLER: I have a couple of brief questions for the director-general. Mr Scales, at the outset I would like to thank you for getting back to me in relation to the estimates last year, even though it was two weeks ago. Mr Scales, could you please advise me whether there were any consultants employed to provide advice concerning the Disability Discrimination Act and the new generation rolling stock? If there were any consultants, who were they? What payments were made to date and what is the expected payments?

Mr Scales: I thank the member for Bundamba for the question. On new generation rolling stock we have just appointed an independent consultant to look at the access side. I do not have the details of how much we are paying the lady, but if the DP will allow me I can take that on notice.

Mrs MILLER: Is the lady Margaret Stack?

Mr Scales: That sounds about right.

Mrs MILLER: As we know, the new generation rolling stock is out at Wulkuraka, in Ipswich. Director-General, could you advise me and the committee as to who will have to pay to alter the contract to fix these trains to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act and who will have to pay to alter the design faults, to the best of your knowledge?

Mr Scales: I thank the member for Bundamba for the question. Clearly, if it is an issue that is a specification problem then the supplier will have to do that. If it is a modification that we institute as a state through the Department of Transport and Main Roads then we would have to pay for that. As we said earlier in the hearing, we are still undergoing that process is.

Mrs MILLER: Getting back to my previous question about the consultant, how long would that contract be and can you provide us with the terms of reference for that consultant's work?

Mr Scales: With the DP's allowance, I will take that on notice. I can certainly get that for you.

Mr CRAWFORD: Deputy Premier, I note that there is an \$18.3 million investment towards station upgrades at Alderley, Morayfield, Newmarket, Graceville, Dinmore, Strathpine and Boondall. Can you explain how that will benefit rail travellers at those stations?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for the question. This is a very important issue in terms of amenity and access for commuters on our rail network system. That is why in 2015 the Palaszczuk Labor government announced a \$212 million package to deliver the Station Accessibility Upgrade Program over five years, delivering accessible stations and 3,500 construction jobs for Queenslanders. It is not the only funding source available for improving stations across the Queensland rail network, but it is certainly an important one.

Any station upgrades that occur will provide independently accessible stations in accordance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. Each station upgrade can include new footbridges and lifts, raised platforms in core boarding zones for step-free train access, accessible parking and toilets, extended waiting shelters and accessibility features such as hearing aid loops, tactile layouts and lower ticket counters. These upgrades also include security improvements such as new lighting and CCTV.

These upgrades are well and truly underway, with Nambour and Dinmore station upgrades completed earlier this year. Construction at Graceville, Alderley and Newmarket stations will be finished by the end of this year. Early works are commencing on the heritage restoration of Shorncliffe station by the end of July 2017. Detailed design work for Strathpine, Morayfield and Boondall stations are underway, with early works commencing in November at Strathpine and Morayfield and in February at Boondall. The Auchenflower station feasibility study was completed this year and the geotechnical investigations and survey works are underway to identify the best option for upgrade works. Design works are also underway for the upgrade of Dakabin station. I take a moment to commend the member for Kallangur, Shane King, and Minister Steven Miles for their strong advocacy on behalf of the community for this project.

During the design stages of the station upgrade, significant effort is directed to minimising the impact on customers. This can include the installation of temporary platforms and staged construction. As a result of this innovative approach, all stations have remained operational during upgrades to allow

commuters to continue to use their local station during construction works. This is in stark contrast to the LNP's plan to close down stations for up to five months, leaving customers stranded and without access to their local stations. We are determined to upgrade these stations without impacting on the accessibility of commuters who currently use them.

Mr POWER: I refer to page 12 of the TMR SDS. Can you outline how public transport affordability has been improved in the south-east for Queensland commuters as a result of the Fairer Fares package?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Logan for the question. I do understand that commuters from his part of the region will benefit enormously from the Fairer Fares package. The Palaszczuk Labor government's Fairer Fares package is the biggest change to public transport in South-East Queensland in over a decade. More than 93 per cent of South-East Queensland public transport users are now saving money with cheaper fares. That is 93 per cent.

In the last customer satisfaction data released by TransLink, affordability is tracking at its highest level since 2012 due to the Fairer Fares package. Key changes introduced as part of the package include fewer zones and cheaper fares across all zones of travel. Peak period now starts from 6 am rather than 3 am, providing an extended off-peak discount. Children under the age of 15 also travel free on weekends on the child go card. The 'nine and free' scheme has been replaced with an 'eight and 50 per cent off subsequent journeys' incentive to ensure more commuters receive a benefit. Importantly, the One, Two, Free incentive for seniors and pensioners has been retained to ensure that these groups continue to have affordable access to public transport.

The Palaszczuk government's Fairer Fares package makes public transport more affordable for local travel as well as travel by public passengers over longer distance. As part of the package, on 3 April this year the government introduced concessions for jobseekers receiving Newstart Allowance or the Youth Allowance as well as asylum seekers who reside in Queensland. The new concession fares will provide much needed relief for two disadvantaged groups in the community, connecting jobseekers and asylum seekers with important services such as employment, education, health and settlement support.

For the 2016-17 financial year, it is estimated that just over 77 million trips across the South-East Queensland public transport network will be eligible for savings from the Fairer Fares package, with customers on average saving 43 cents per trip. Free weekend travel for children under the age of 15 travelling on a child go card has been incredibly popular, with figures showing it has encouraged greater patronage on our network on the weekends. It is estimated for the 2016-17 financial year that this group will save almost half a million dollars and conducted over 384 trips.

We have also seen a 29 per cent increase in the number of customers benefiting from the frequent travel incentive, with an estimated 5.3 million passenger journeys attracting this saving. For the 2016-17 financial year, it is estimated that over one million more journeys will have qualified for the 'eight and 50 per cent off' incentive than would have benefited from the 'nine and free'. That is a million more journeys on the 'eight and 50 per cent off' scheme, which was a recommendation from the Fairer Fares task force that we established. A million more journeys have benefited from that particular incentive rather than the 'nine and free' scheme. All of this means that commuters are choosing public transport and saving potentially hundreds of dollars each year. This is keeping cars off our roads and making sure that our public transport system operates effectively.

Mr POWER: I know it is a huge benefit for people in Jimboomba and Park Ridge. Can the Deputy Premier outline how access to transport hubs and community services, especially through to Browns Plains Bus Station from areas like Munruben and Park Ridge, will be improved through the Demand Responsive Transport trials in Logan?

Ms TRAD: I want to thank the member for Logan for the question. I do want to place on record his very strong advocacy for improved public transport in the areas of southern Logan particularly and right throughout his electorate. It is an issue that has also been personally raised with me by Mayor Luke Smith for the City of Logan. I do understand that there is enormous work to be done, and the Demand Responsive Transport that has recently been announced I think is exciting. I think it is a great precursor to more work in this area.

We are committed to providing access to integrated and affordable public transport services right across Queensland. This involves trialling innovative transport solutions in areas experiencing population growth but not yet supported by traditional mass passenger transport services. This is why

the Palaszczuk government has announced the Demand Responsive Transport trial commencing in Logan from September this year. I do understand that consultation has been really well received. People are really responding—

Mr POWER: They were down at the Park Ridge shops just recently.

Ms TRAD: Fantastic. By prebooking a trip via a mobile app or through a call centre, customers will be able to specify their end destination and will be provided with a specific journey plan. This may involve taking a Demand Responsive Transport service to a transport hub to continue their journey by bus or train to their final destination.

The Demand Responsive Transport solution will complement rather than compete with mass transit. It is specifically focused on communities where there are limited public transport options. Demand Responsive Transport will increase accessibility for customers in areas where public transport is not available and will help to decrease social isolation by providing a public transport option that is matched to the needs of the community. Demand Responsive Transport can also provide a flexible, targeted service for customers to interchange onto the mass transit network or support demand by connecting with a park-and-ride.

TransLink have undertaken an extensive community consultation campaign which I launched on Wednesday, 17 May in Logan and which closed on Sunday, 9 July. During this time community input was gathered through workshops and online surveys such as where pick-up and drop-off locations will be most beneficial to the community. This community input will now inform the Department of Transport and Main Roads in their ongoing engagement with industry to finalise the design of this service. This will ensure that the project improves access to transport hubs and community services in order to meet the needs of Logan residents. I am really excited about the trial starting in September this year, and I hope to be down there with the member for Logan and other members in the Logan region to launch the trial. I think it is really exciting.

Mr POWELL: I refer to page 4 of the SDS which talks about preparing for the freight system requirements of the future. Director-General, can you commit to consult the regional communities on the terms of a new livestock and regional freight service contract? What terms of the arrangement is the government seeking to change?

Mr Scales: I thank the member for Glass House for the question. The contracts that you are referring to are subject to commercial confidentiality. We are attempting to get to a landing on them so we can get those contracts in place by December 2017. We have already extended the contracts until that point. We do have an opportunity, if we are not in a position to award contracts, to further extend those contracts, but they are commercially confidential at the moment.

Mr POWELL: Is there any capacity to engage the communities that these contracts affect?

CHAIR: Director-General, you have a right to decline to answer.

Ms TRAD: We do not normally negotiate contracts with communities for commercial—

Mr POWELL: That is not what I asked, Deputy Premier.

Ms TRAD: I think it is what you are asking.

Mr POWELL: No. As part of finalising these contracts, will the community be consulted?

Ms TRAD: I wish they had negotiated the commercial contract for the New Generation Rollingstock with the disability community before they signed off on specifications—

Mr POWELL: The question was not regarding the NGR, Mr Chair, with all due respect; nor was it to the Deputy Premier.

Ms TRAD:—for trains that have accessibility problems for people with a disability.

CHAIR: Thank you, Deputy Premier. I think you have been here long enough: just reframe the question so you have it right.

Mr POWELL: Is there capacity for TMR to consult those regional communities affected by this contract?

Mr Scales: Once we have awarded the contract we would normally consult anyway, but we cannot consult until that point because it is commercially confidential.

Mr POWELL: Surely communities' expectations around these contracts would have informed your negotiations?

Mr Scales: We have taken that into account during the process.

Ms LEAHY: My question is also to the director-general in relation to page 4 of the SDS. Director-General, can you confirm that between 28 June and 2 July this year there was an empty train that travelled from Toowoomba to Quilpie and back?

Mr Scales: I thank the member for the question. Through the chair, there are thousands and thousands of train operations across the whole of the network. Whether one individual train was empty or not empty I would not be able to answer. I could check.

CHAIR: Could you take it on notice?

Ms TRAD: I am happy to take it on notice.

Mr Scales: I will take it on notice, certainly. That would have been a cattle train, I would have thought, on that particular line.

Ms LEAHY: Yes, that is correct. Are you able to take on notice and provide a list of the times last year that we have had a government subsidised freight train service running empty or under half capacity?

Ms TRAD: Through you, Mr Chair, could I ask the honourable member to repeat the question?

CHAIR: You certainly can.

Ms LEAHY: Director-General, are you able to take on notice and provide a list of the number of times in the last year we have had a government subsidised freight train service running empty or under half capacity in Queensland?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I seek your guidance. I think this is an incredibly onerous request on the department. When freight services deposit their freight they often go back empty to collect additional freight. I am not sure what the purpose of this question is, but what the honourable member is seeking is quite an onerous task for the agency.

Mr POWELL: Cattle trains do not leave Quilpie without cattle.

CHAIR: Can you lead it into another question?

Ms TRAD: Well, if the cattle aren't there—

Ms LEAHY: Okay, I will continue on then. Under the transport freight service contract, can you advise how many times a contractor has been fined for failing to deliver the service? My understanding is that the general fine would be about \$30,000.

Mr Scales: I thank the member for the question. I am not sure whether that is commercially confidential as well. I am not avoiding it, because we would publish it eventually. Under the terms of the contract, and certainly with the DP's leave to take it on notice and check—

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, with your permission we will look at whether or not this contravenes the confidentiality provisions of the contract. If we can supply information anonymised without compromising the confidentially commercial nature of the contract we will endeavour to do so, but we will liaise with you and the committee in relation to providing that information.

Mr Scales: I am not avoiding the question. I am just fettered by whatever is in the contract. Sometimes the contract conditions do not allow me to make certain abatements public.

CHAIR: I am more than happy with that response.

Mr PERRETT: My question is to the director-general. I refer to page 14 of the SDS and enhancing customer experience of public transport. Mr Scales, can you advise whether the bus safety review announced by former minister Hinchliffe on 29 September 2016 has concluded?

Mr Scales: I thank the member for Gympie for the question. The bus safety review was undertaken by our colleagues in Deloitte. It identified after a lot of work that the issues exhibited by certain passengers were about fare conflict; alcohol issues or drug issues; passenger attitudes; student attitudes; and also if there was a matter of delay. That has led to issues of verbal aggression, threatening behaviour, physical assaults and objects being thrown at vehicles. That report was received by the department on 20 April 2017.

On 5 May this year there was a workshop with the bus safety forum which I attended. The bus safety forum has now been strengthened by the addition of a senior network officer, that is one of our enforcement people, and also a bus driver. There are a lot of stakeholders in that. I was able to sit through a lot of the workshop, where 24 different solutions were proposed by Deloitte and each one was workshopped.

Out of the 24 different solutions proposed, nine require further policy work, including driver assault screens, radios, more senior network officers, CCTV et cetera. I can confirm for the benefit of the committee that the anti-shatter film, which was one of the issues that we got out of that report, has now been installed on certain buses on the Gold Coast and in Cairns. I actually took the opportunity while I was in Cairns last week to look at the anti-assault screens that TAG have installed on their Sunbus and Surfside bus fleet.

There is a lot of work going on. The Bus Safety Committee has been strengthened. Its frequency has been increased. I managed to attend the 5 May workshop. For the benefit of the committee, I mention that there is another Bus Safety Committee happening this month. The report itself has been delivered to the government and the government is still considering that report. I would just say to the member for Gympie that there is a considerable amount of work being done. There were 24 different initiatives, nine of which required trialling. Sunbus have done something on their two fleets on the Gold Coast and in Cairns. We are looking at it.

Mr PERRETT: I will now ask the Deputy Premier and minister a question. Have you discussed the recommendations and the government's response with the Rail, Tram and Bus Union and the Transport Workers Union?

Ms TRAD: Yes. I thank the member for Gympie for the question. The Rail, Tram and Bus Union are represented on the Bus Safety Forum and have been for quite some time, including when the member for Indooroopilly was transport minister. Their involvement in that forum is important and key. If the member for Gympie is trying to draw some sort of connection between the work around the Bus Safety Forum and this particular industrial organisation's involvement in that bus forum and the current dispute between the RTBU and the Brisbane City Council, then I think you need to make clear what your actual linkage is.

Mr POWELL: How about I do that for you?

CHAIR: No. I am deciding now that the member for Dalrymple should have an opportunity to ask a question.

Mr KNUTH: My question is to the Deputy Premier. With reference to the Deputy Premier's opening statement about the subsidies in regional transport, including flights, does the Deputy Premier accept that there is a market failure when it comes to the cost of regional flights in many of the unregulated and unsubsidised regional routes—for example, Townsville to Mount Isa—that is leading to an unacceptably high level?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Dalrymple for this question. I do know it has been an important issue that the member for Dalrymple has raised, the member for Cook has raised and the member for Mount Isa has raised. I do understand that regional air services are an issue for many people living in remote and regional Queensland. That is why in this budget we actually announced the extension of the Local Fare Scheme, which is a subsidisation of long-distance air travel throughout regional Queensland in the cape community. We continued the program in the cape communities, but we also extended it to the western communities of Doomadgee, Mornington Island and Weipa. We will be trialling that Local Fare Scheme in those communities to help give those Queenslanders who live in very remote and regional places of our state the opportunity to access discounted air travel so that they can access health services and education services. They will be able to go to major population centres like Cairns and Townsville, for example, for whatever they require so they will feel less excluded and less isolated than they currently do.

On 14 September last year, the Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, the former minister for transport and Commonwealth Games, announced in parliament a refresh of the long-distance passenger service review. The outcomes will determine whether service levels are still appropriate for regional Queensland given the changes in economic and market conditions. I do acknowledge that significant changes have occurred in regional communities, particularly over the past few years.

Deloitte Australia was engaged to conduct the refresh of the 2013 long-distance passenger service review with the aim to assess: firstly, whether the service levels recommended by the LDPSR are appropriate taking into account current economic and market conditions; secondly, whether routes deregulated following the LDPSR have maintained appropriate service levels for the community taking into account current economic and market conditions; and, lastly, whether there are routes that should be considered for regulation taking into account current economic and market conditions.

The refresh investigated government supported passenger services in the aviation, long-distance coach and rail sectors. As part of the refresh of the long-distance passenger service review, the Department of Transport and Main Roads assessed the affordability of air fares on regional routes and

made recommendations to government. The outcomes of the refresh were presented to government on 30 June for consideration. Once we have made that consideration, we will make that report and the government's response public.

Mr KNUTH: I have another question. I refer to page 97 of budget paper 2. What is the return in percentage terms and the profit that Queensland Rail is expected to make on the regulated Townsville to Mount Isa rail line in the 2017-18 financial year?

Ms TRAD: Member for Dalrymple, I am very happy to take that on notice, unless the D-G has something to contribute.

Mr Scales: I thank the member for the question. That particular line has not had an increase other than CPI for a number of years now. I do not have the entire details. I am speaking from knowledge when I was actually in QR. That particular line, as I said, does not have any increases other than CPI.

Ms TRAD: Are you asking what the return is to the government on this particular line?

Mr KNUTH: That is correct, for 2017-18 projected.

Ms TRAD: Are you asking for 2016-17? That might be in the annual report.

Mr KNUTH: I am happy to ask for the 2016-17, and whether the 2017-18 projected forecast can be taken on notice.

Ms TRAD: We are happy to take that on notice and come back to you and the committee.

CHAIR: I call the member for Glass House for his last question.

Mr POWELL: Minister, when were you made aware of the strike this morning and yesterday morning by Brisbane transport drivers?

Ms TRAD: When it was announced—

CHAIR: What is the relevance to the budget discussion that we are having here?

Mr POWELL: If I can follow that up, Mr Chair, so I can show you the relevance.

CHAIR: I want the relevance first.

Mr POWELL: It relates again to the line of questioning the member for Gympie was asking pertaining to page 14 of the SDS. Minister, given that it has been widely reported that action was taken because of bus safety, why won't you release the report which may have provided bus drivers with more certainty about safety measures and therefore prevented the strike?

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I seek your guidance. I think the imputation in that question is that the release of the bus safety report by Deloitte would have averted the industrial disputation currently underway. I just think this is fanciful. It is clear that the member for Glass House has not done any homework in relation to the SDS or the budget before him and he is trying to make cheap political point-scoring. He is using this estimates committee hearing for that purpose.

CHAIR: Thank you, Deputy Premier. We will leave it at that.

Mr POWELL: I have one final question. Building Queensland identified and continued to report on their website as recently as prior to coming into this estimates committee this morning that the Beerburrum to Nambour rail upgrade remains the only project ready for government consideration as part of the budget process, yet it received no funding in this budget. Why not?

Ms TRAD: I thank the honourable member for the question. I do think it is actually an important question. The Beerburrum to Nambour business case was actually progressed by the Palaszczuk Labor government. This has been an issue for some time. The member for Glass House represents this part of the region. Can I say that under his watch when he was in government, sitting around the cabinet table, nothing was progressed on the duplication of the Beerburrum to Nambour line—absolutely nothing.

Mr POWELL: It is sitting on a web site. When will you fund it?

Ms TRAD: We have done the business case. What I am very happy to advise the committee and announce here today is that we have submitted that for consideration by Infrastructure Australia. We know that this project is particularly important in terms of the freight task that we have ahead of us. I know that the federal government makes a lot of noise about finding the right freight solutions for the national land and transport network. This is a key constraint. The Beerburrum to Nambour is a key constraint, where both freight and passenger services have to compete on the single line. By duplicating the line, we actually relieve this constraint and make sure that our economy does not suffer because of the lack of duplication and the lack of access by freight.

As I said, we have sought funding from the Turnbull government, in the same way as when the Cross River Rail business case was done and its need identified we sent it down to the federal government for consideration. We know how important the duplication of Beerburrum to Nambour is and we would like the federal government to work with us to fund this very important project. As I said, it is the Palaszczuk Labor government who is serious about investing in public transport infrastructure and freight transport infrastructure. We would like the federal government to give us appropriate consideration in relation to this important project.

CHAIR: We will move to the member for Barron River.

Mr CRAWFORD: Deputy Premier, I refer to the extension of a 12-month trial of the Local Fare Scheme to the Weipa Town Authority, Mornington Island and Doomadgee. Can you give us a run-down of how that will benefit the residents in those communities?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Barron River for the question. The state government currently regulates and subsidises seven air routes to regional and remote communities in Queensland where passenger services would not otherwise operate due to the commercial unviability of the routes. The Palaszczuk government established the current Local Fare Scheme in July 2015 after it was axed by the former Newman-Nicholls government.

In this year's state budget, this government committed \$2 million to expand the Local Fare Scheme on a trial basis to Doomadgee, Mornington Island and the Weipa Town Authority. The trial will run for at least 12 months which will enable the Department of Transport and Main Roads to collect data to determine if the Local Fare Scheme is a viable solution to improving the cost of travel in these communities. The Local Fare Scheme improves the standard of living in remote communities, allowing residents to experience better connectivity to other parts of Queensland by reducing the cost of air travel. Local residents who have lived in the community for three or more years can receive a discount of up to \$400 on return flights. As a result, these residents are able to access key services in major centres, such as health, education and employment. Residents also experience social and recreational benefits.

Doomadgee and Mornington Island form the existing regulated gulf air route which is operating by Regional Express Airlines. These regulated air services provide a minimum of four return services per week to Cairns, Mount Isa and other gulf communities. The trial is expected to commence in August for Doomadgee, Mornington Island and Weipa Town Authority residents. This will coincide with the commencement of an additional fifth weekly service being added to the gulf route, providing additional connecting flight options for locals.

I want to place on record my thanks to the mayor of Mornington Island, Brad Wilson, who came and saw me some time ago about providing the Local Fare Scheme to members of his community. I want to acknowledge that he is a terrific advocate and leader for the Mornington Island community. The Department of Transport and Main Roads has contacted the councils for these communities to ensure residents in those communities are aware of the expansion of the scheme and what the inclusion of the scheme will mean for the community and its residents.

CHAIR: Deputy Premier, I refer to page 14 of the SDS. Could you please outline the public transport facilities improvements that will be delivered through the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program?

Ms TRAD: I thank the chair for the question. Through the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program, or QTRIP, the Palaszczuk Labor government is delivering over \$35 million in 2017-18 to deliver critical infrastructure to support the delivery of a reliable, safe, accessible and attractive passenger transport network. The projects include: public transport stations, shops and facilities; bus priority projects; park-and-ride facilities; signage, wayfinding and technology projects; funding grants to assist providers to upgrade public transport infrastructure to meet accessibility standards; and transit oriented developments. There are \$14.3 million worth of upgrades to bus facilities underway at the Helensvale station in the lead-up to the Commonwealth Games and in connection with the Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 2.

Helensvale will become a model transport hub that will service buses, trains, trams and taxis. The construction is being staged to allow a bus facility for use during the Commonwealth Games to cater for the extra event demand. On completion, the new bus station facilities will improve pedestrian safety and access to the station. This includes six sheltered bus platforms, upgraded bicycle facilities, upgraded taxi and kiss-and-ride facilities and an upgraded park-and-ride including additional accessible parking spaces. There will also be easy connectivity between train, tram and bus services.

An amount of \$3 million is committed to upgrading park-and-ride facilities at Murarrie train station which will be completed in two stages. The project will provide more capacity for commuters and parking and will contribute to reducing congestion on the road network. The first stage is underway on the southern side of the station and will more than double the parking capacity to almost 100 new parking spaces including new parking bays for people with disabilities. The upgrade will also include improved safety and security for commuters with improved lighting and security cameras. The first stage is expected to be completed at the end of 2017, construction and weather conditions permitting. QR is also working through planning and approvals to commence the second stage of an upgrade to the car park on the north side of the train station.

The \$3 million upgrade of the Queen Street Bus Station is now underway to improve the station and waiting environments for passengers and visitors and to upgrade facilities to meet national disability access standards. The works are due to be completed in early 2018, ahead of the Commonwealth Games. As a part of this upgrade, design will also be completed for a new lift to Queen Street Bus Station platform 2.

Construction is also underway for a new multistorey car park at Mains Road which will provide a total of 680 commuter parking spaces. The \$7.3 million upgrade is being delivered in conjunction with the Queensland government's development of the State Netball Centre and is expected to be completed in mid-2018. Fifteen new bus stops will be delivered as part of the Gold Coast bus service change for the opening of stage 2 of the Gold Coast Light Rail network in late 2017. Over \$5 million is allocated to funding contributions to 18 local governments across Queensland to assist their program to upgrade urban bus stops to meet accessibility standards, and more than \$7.2 million is allocated in total across the financial years for a new Victoria Point central bus station—construction is to start in mid-2018—which will improve bus capacity, travel time and reliability as well as passenger comfort and safety.

Mrs MILLER: On behalf of the rail commuters in South-East Queensland, what date will the Monday-Friday consistent timetable be returned to service?

Ms TRAD: The question is very important. It goes to the heart of the Strachan report and our determination to implement the Strachan recommendations and to fix the trains. As the member would know, I reported to the parliament in relation to the current sustainability of the timetable. This was a recommendation of the Strachan inquiry. It was assessed as being sustainable. We do note that there will be some stress periods in terms of the timetable. They include school holidays, the Christmas period and the Commonwealth Games. We are working through all of those issues to ensure that what customers get is absolute reliability around the timetable, and where things change we will advise them.

We know, as Strachan has identified, that in terms of fixing the trains the undersupply of train crew has been a long time coming and it will take at least two years to fix. That is why we are absolutely determined to recruit and we have a number of recruitment campaigns that are locked and loaded, including an external recruitment campaign that starts next month. We are also accelerating training right throughout the system to ensure we are getting train crew in trains driving passengers as soon as possible. We are actually running more rail services each week than the LNP did. Currently, we have more than 7,800 services per week compared to 7,500 services before the Redcliffe peninsula line was opened and under the LNP.

Mr Chair, with your permission, can I respond to some of the questions the member for Bundamba asked earlier which I took on notice? Firstly, in relation to the Ipswich school train and WoodLinks school bus, I advise that the Ipswich train timetable after school hours runs Monday-Thursday; trains depart Ipswich at 3.26 pm and 3.37 pm.

Mrs MILLER: I know, but it used to depart much more quickly through the week, Monday-Thursday.

Ms TRAD: I understand that the question posed to the committee was about the absence of services.

Mrs MILLER: Yes.

Ms TRAD: I am advised that there are two services, one at 3.26 and one at 3.37 Monday-Thursday as well as the Friday service.

Mrs MILLER: And there was a Friday one.

Ms TRAD: On Friday, the first train after school hours departs at 3.07 pm, followed by another train service at 3.37 pm. Queensland Rail service reliability and frequency will continue to be reviewed and enhanced in the medium and long term. The Queensland government is absolutely committed to working closely with Queensland Rail to ensure we are doing everything possible to deliver a customer focused timetable with clear and early information about any adjustments required.

In relation to the WoodLinks State School bus, I am pleased to inform the committee that a morning bus service was provided to WoodLinks State School students commencing last Monday, 17 July. This bus service is at no cost to students and has been implemented on a trial basis to determine if there is a demand for an afternoon service. I am advised that the school has requested an afternoon service from January 2018, when enrolments are likely to improve the viability of the service. Given my response in relation to these three questions, they are no longer on notice, I assume, Mr Chair.

Mrs MILLER: I have a follow-up question in relation to the Citytrain Response Unit to the director-general, Mr Scales. Can you please advise how much the Citytrain Response Unit is costing? Can you provide the committee with an organisational chart of this unit?

Mr Scales: It has been established, as the Deputy Premier says, as an independent unit reporting directly to the Deputy Premier. It has a core team of five full-time staff. The chair is part-time, Ms Jacqui Walters. The Citytrain Response Unit operated with a budget of \$3.517 million in 2016-17, and a further \$3.704 million is allocated for 2017-18. In line with the Strachan inquiry recommendation No. 35, the CRU members report on the implementation of Queensland Rail's response and recovery plan and the agreed recommendations. To the point, they are the numbers. On an organisational chart there are only really five full-time staff.

Mrs MILLER: Can you give us the positions and their duty statements, please, as well as the organisational chart? Can you take that on notice?

Mr Scales: I think so, if the DP says so.

Mr CRAWFORD: Can you explain how safety on buses will be improved for drivers and passengers as a result of measures implemented in response to the bus safety review?

Mr POWELL: We are not allowed to talk about that, apparently.

Ms TRAD: Point of order, Mr Chair, I actually think that is a reflection on you. I think it is misplaced, quite frankly. I do not think the chair ever said that we could not talk about the bus safety review. I think the issue was the industrial disputation which the member was referring to. I am very happy to talk about the bus safety review.

CHAIR: Thank you Deputy Premier. I was not listening, so it was my fault, but thank you for looking after me.

Ms TRAD: It is just another example of how those opposite actually distort—

Mr Powell interjected.

CHAIR: Member for Glass House, that was totally unnecessary. With my background and how I have spent most of my life, I find that very distasteful. I might ask you to withdraw.

Mr POWELL: Mr Chair, I withdraw.

Ms TRAD: I do want to talk about the very serious issue of bus safety for bus drivers in Queensland. I thank the member for Barron River for the question. As was mentioned earlier, it was the former minister, Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, who commenced this review and I do want to commend the work he did in this space. We do see quite a number of terrible assaults against bus drivers in Queensland and we did have an horrific one last year on the Brisbane City Council bus network—a bus driver at Moorooka. I do want to express my condolences to that driver's family and bus drivers generally who face very difficult circumstances, particularly when the points of conflict come into play. Sometimes that is about fare evasion and fare conflict. As the director-general said before, it is about alcohol and drug consumption. It is about different perceptions that customers have about services unavoidably running late and people getting angry about those sorts of things.

The review that was undertaken by the former minister was the right way to go about it. As the director-general talked about, a number of comprehensive initiatives were identified. Those initiatives are being worked through in the Bus Safety Forum, which has been beefed up, as the director-general said, with a senior network officer and a bus driver. We think it is really important to have workers from the front line who experience this every single day on that Bus Safety Forum to provide advice. They are working through the initiatives.

I was in Far North Queensland, in Cairns, to announce the implementation of that shatter-proof film for buses in Cairns and the Gold Coast. This is a trial. I do want to commend Sunbus for agreeing to trial this, both in Cairns and on the Gold Coast, which are hotspots in terms of bus driver assaults. We know that bus drivers often face flying missiles coming into buses and we know that we need to improve some of those protections in order to make sure that not only bus drivers but also passengers are safe. That seems to happen on holidays particularly. We think this trial will point the way to improving the infrastructure, the stock, that we have. It is a relatively low-cost option to give bus drivers some sort of comfort and security around not being hit by flying missiles. We will continue to work through the recommendations of the report. Once the bus forum and the government have a position in relation to all of these, we will release this publicly, of course.

CHAIR: I want to say thank you because the time allocated for the consideration of the estimates of expenditure in the portfolios of Transport and Infrastructure and Planning has expired.

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I thank you and all committee members. I particularly thank the secretariat, who are the unsung heroes in all of this. I want to thank those from my agencies. I thank my Director-General of DILGP, Frankie Carroll; Kathy Parton and all the deputy directors-general, CEOs and their key support staff: Tim Fell, the Director of the Office of the Director-General; Sarah Charwood, Executive Director, Strategy Governance and Engagement; Jodie Meerten and Filomena Pastore from the Cabinet and Executive Services team. From DTMR; my Director-General, Neil Scales; Matthew Longland; and all the deputy directors-general and key support staff; Nick Easy, newly appointed Queensland Rail CEO—welcome to your first estimates; Zoe Scott from Queensland Rail; Mr Dylan Southee, DTMR estimates coordinator; and Mary Weaver from Executive Services. Can I thank my chief of staff, Matt Collins; my deputy chief of staff, Mark Bellaver; and all of my ministerial staff who put in an enormous effort to making sure I was prepared for today.

CHAIR: My recollection is that there are approximately 12 questions that you have taken on notice. We would appreciate it if we could get a response to those by 5 pm on Friday. The transcript of this session of the hearing will be available on the Hansard page of the parliament's website within two hours. You cannot get a better service than that, can you? Two hours!

Ms TRAD: It is amazing. Thank you, Hansard.

CHAIR: Thank you Deputy Premier and departmental officers for your attendance. The committee will now adjourn for a break. The hearing will resume at 2.30 pm with the examination of the estimates for the portfolios of the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Thank you, Deputy Premier; thank you, committee members; and thank you, Hansard.

Proceedings suspended from 1.28 pm to 2.30 pm

ESTIMATES—INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE—STATE DEVELOPMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES

In Attendance

Hon. AJ Lynham, Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines

Mr P Woodland, Chief of Staff

Department of State Development

Mr M Schaumburg, Director-General

Mr R Alcorn, Director, Policy and Legislation

Mr Barry Broe, Coordinator-General

Mr M McKee, Deputy Director-General, Business Solutions and Partnerships

Department of Natural Resources and Mines

Mr J Purtill, Director-General

Ms K Platt, Chief Finance Officer



CHAIR: The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure of the Appropriation Bill 2017 for the portfolio areas of the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. The committee will examine the minister's portfolio until 6.30. We will suspend proceedings for a break at around four o'clock. Visiting members present today are the member for Nanango and the member for Bundamba. I intend to guide proceedings today so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members of the committee. On behalf of the committee I welcome the Minister, the Director-General, departmental officers and members of the public to this hearing. For the benefit of Hansard I ask that departmental officers identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the minister or the DG. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of state development open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

Dr LYNHAM: Firstly, let me apologise to the committee for the late arrival of the answers to your questions on notice. This was caused by a communication issue with departmental staff and I apologise sincerely, Mr Chair.

My portfolio in this Palaszczuk government is about building and creating: creating new jobs, building new industries and creating new opportunities in Queensland. This is in stark contrast to the LNP, who were cutters and sellers. We are growing the jobs and industries of the future like biofutures and advanced manufacturing. It is our advanced manufacturing capacity that has drawn Rheinmetall to choose Queensland as their headquarters for its bid for the \$5 billion LAND 400 Phase 2 contract. Manufacturing is an industry that the LNP did not even recognise as one of its economic pillars. We are investing in the industries that will give us the highly-skilled, highly-paid jobs of the future—industries that will generate jobs in regional Queensland.

We have six biofutures projects in train that could generate more than 330 jobs in regional Queensland, including MSF Sugar's \$60 million Atherton biorefinery, which I visited just last week, and the \$26 million expansion of United Ethanol's biorefinery which I visited in Dalby last month. This morning at the Core Group's premises in Albion I launched an action plan for our \$7 billion mining technology sector that could see an extra 3,000 jobs over the next decade. That is another job generator that did not make the grade in the LNP's myopic view of the future. Their whole vision was cutting and selling. Importantly, we continue to bolster our battered regional communities through our \$375 million Building our Regions program, funding 174 projects from the Torres Strait to the border which will generate around 1,760 jobs. That is in comparison to the LNP's discredited—and now recycled—Royalties for the Regions scheme, which managed to generate 700 fewer jobs and funded less than half the number of projects.

The budget before us allocates \$445.9 million to manage our land, water and mining resources. We are supporting the resources sector with exploration incentives, our resources development policy and the North West Minerals Province blueprint that I released this morning. These policies will support

the next generation of resource development in Queensland. We continue to deliver on our election commitment to the industry to not raise royalties. Let me contrast this with the LNP. Their contribution to the resources sector in their first budget was to stick the knife into a struggling coal industry by raising royalties. In the past financial year I have approved a grant of 54 mining and petroleum leases for projects across this state, including the Colton coal project in Maryborough and Byerwen Coal's proposed mine near Glenden. We are on the front foot with gas policy with our release of land for gas for the Australian market only and our work with junior explorers. Mr Nicholls' colleagues in Canberra continue to rebut our request for joint initiatives like pipelines and studies to open up new gas fields, instead choosing to find ways to take away our LNG royalties.

Unlike the LNP, the Palaszczuk government is getting on with driving investment and planning development in our resources sector. I will soon release Queensland's second annual exploration program which will give certainty to industry, traditional owners and communities alike. We continue to make water available under water resource plans to support growth and jobs in regional Queensland. Mr Chair, instead of slashing and trashing like the LNP, the Palaszczuk government is focused on the future, on jobs and sustainable industries of the future. This budget underpins this future.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Chair, I thank you and the committee for allowing me to be on this committee today. Minister, I refer to your failed Building our Regions fund—an alleged key priority of your department—and I refer you to page 2 of the SDS. At the 2015-16 estimates you said that that program would be fast-tracked, and last year you failed to deliver 99 per cent of the infrastructure promised. You said—

A low spend in the first year of a new grants program is not uncommon. Whilst spending may appear slow, I can assure you that the program is rolling out according to plan. In fact, better than originally anticipated.

Minister, this year's budget shows that you again failed to deliver almost half—it is actually 47 per cent—of the infrastructure you promised. Minister, why have you again failed to deliver one of the key priorities of your department?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Nanango for her question on Building our Regions. I note that part of your election commitment is to return Royalties for the Regions. God help the people of Queensland if that comes back because when we look at simple comparisons, we have committed \$225 million in program funding for Building our Regions; your Royalties for the Regions program was \$174 million. We have leveraged investments of \$353 million compared to your \$171 million. Our total capital expenditure is \$580 million compared to your \$346 million. For every dollar we have invested with our program we have leveraged \$1.56; for every dollar you spent you got 99 cents back.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Are you going to talk about the 47 per cent you failed to deliver or are you going to read your notes?

Dr LYNHAM: That is 1,762 jobs versus your 1,054; 174 projects versus your 79—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: What is the value of the projects, Minister?

Dr LYNHAM: The value of the projects? Funding committed is \$225 million, as I said, compared to your \$174 million. My department administered the Building our Regions program and delivered the \$225 million three-year program in two years. We have leveraged \$353 million from our program. I recall that the member for Mansfield was in Bundaberg recently—I think you recall that visit as well—and as one of his commitments he said, 'We will bring back'—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Absolutely.

Dr LYNHAM:—'Royalties for the Regions in Bundaberg.' God help the people of Bundaberg if they ever bring that back to Bundaberg, because if we look at a comparison in relation to Bundaberg, under your Royalties for the Regions you highlighted that \$3.4 million in funding for three projects—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Are you going to get back to the question?

Dr LYNHAM:—leveraged only \$2.4 million, which is a total investment in Bundaberg of \$5.8 million.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Let us get back to the question, Mr Chair.

Dr LYNHAM: Eighteen jobs in Bundaberg.

CHAIR: He is answering the question.

Dr LYNHAM: If you look at Building our Regions, we provided over \$20 million, five projects, leveraged \$79 million—\$100 million in Bundaberg, 300 jobs. That is 300 jobs in Bundaberg versus your 18 jobs in Bundaberg. We provided \$20 million versus your \$3.4 million. We leveraged nearly \$80 million. In Bundaberg you leveraged \$2.5 million compared to our \$80 million, and you would compare your Royalties for the Region program to our Building our Regions program?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Are there many coalmines in Bundaberg, Mr Chair?

Mr CRAWFORD: Point of order, Mr Chair. I think the minister is trying to answer the question.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: He is trying not to answer why he has not delivered—

Dr LYNHAM: I can hear the Auditor-General's pencil sharpeners running like mad sharpening up their pencils for your Royalties for the Regions program.

CHAIR: Order!

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Minister, you were talking about what you have committed, but unfortunately you have failed to address what you have actually delivered. I would refer you now to Labor's financial statement for your election commitments in 2015, where you stated that your commitment for Building our Regions was \$200 million to be delivered in two years. After two and a half years of the Palaszczuk Labor government you have failed to deliver over half of the funding that was promised. Surely, Minister, you will agree that that is a completely broken election commitment.

Dr LYNHAM: Any comparison of the rollout of Building our Regions—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: We are talking about—

Dr LYNHAM:—exceeds your Royalties for the Regions at any stage during the rollout.

CHAIR: Member for Nanango, you have asked the question. You have to at least give the minister a chance to—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am happy to talk about Royalties for the Regions, but the minister has an opportunity—

CHAIR: I would not start on it if I were you.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON:—to answer the opposition's question whether he has delivered a broken election commitment. We are talking about your program, not our program.

Dr LYNHAM: At any stage a comparison of the rollout of Building our Regions—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: You are admitting—

CHAIR: Member for Nanango, let him answer the question.

Dr LYNHAM:—exceeds any rollout of Royalties for the Regions. We are well ahead of your rollout at any stage over your three years of government versus our two and a bit years of our Building our Regions program.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Minister, you admit that you failed to get the money out the door and you have broken your election commitment to the people of Queensland.

Dr LYNHAM: Our money has gone out the door much more rapidly than your Royalties for the Regions projects.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It is like tit for tat, Minister.

Dr LYNHAM: Our investment spend has been astonishingly more rapid than yours, and I have said it time and time again. I am glad you led off with a question on Building our Regions versus Royalties for the Regions, because any comparison shows that we are spending—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Minister, you have obviously practised way too hard because the question is around—

CHAIR: Member for Nanango, I have worn this beautiful tie today so that everybody keeps cool—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am trying to encourage the minister to answer the question.

CHAIR: No, if you do not mind, I am speaking at the moment. I wore this tie so that everybody keeps cool. If you two are going to sit and argue without giving each other an opportunity, I will go downstairs with the rest of my committee and we will sort out what to do about it. Let's get on with the job and do it properly. There are people out there watching you on TV.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It is good that they are watching, because I know that people in rural and regional Queensland want to know why the Palaszczuk Labor government has broken their election commitment. Mr Chair, if I could continue with my question of the minister.

In Labor's first budget the Building our Regions funding was brought forward with all the allocated funding of 2015-16 and 2016-17. Minister, you have clearly failed to deliver \$111 million of that funding. Is that why cabinet did not give you any additional funding for your Building our Regions fund, given that there is no longer any funding in this year's budget for your so-called Building our Regions fund? All you have in this year's budget are the leftovers of what you did not spend in the last two.

Dr LYNHAM: For some reason you are lamenting the fact that Building our Regions is somehow disappearing, and it is great to hear you lamenting the fact that it may be disappearing.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: The budget figures do not lie, Minister.

Dr LYNHAM: And I have news for you. Any spend that we have spent—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Sounds like an election promise coming up!

Dr LYNHAM: The total of our spend is double what you have spent in your rollout of Royalties for Regions. At any time and on any indexes, what we are spending is almost double and we genuinely give it to our regional communities. None of our money is being spent in South-East Queensland.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Minister, you agree, then, that because you have refused to get this money out the door the people of Queensland have been left with the scraps from your last two years of failing to get the money out the door? You have had the money in the budget, you failed to get it out the door and the people of rural and regional Queensland have not seen the benefit of that money.

Dr LYNHAM: If you want to take that tack, you were getting it out at half the rate we got it out under your Royalties for Regions program, so the people of regional Queensland—if you are taking that argument—can lament the fact that you are never going to bring Royalties for Regions back. After 18 months of Building our Regions we saw \$41 million go out the door. Under your Royalties for Regions that figure was \$29 million. If you are taking that line and you are suggesting that you are going to bring back Royalties for Regions, like I said before, God help the people in regional Queensland because your money is going to come out slower and your money is going to be spent in South-East Queensland! I do not know if there is another airport in Callide that needs an upgrade. There must be one or a couple in Callide that may need an upgrade.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: The people of Callide are very happy with their airports, and I thank you for raising that. There are many major infrastructure projects that—

Dr LYNHAM: And the pork-barrel manufacturers of Queensland must be just waiting for their industry to boom after your Royalties for Regions!

CHAIR: Excuse me, Minister. I am here today to try to learn something about the budget. I say to the member for Nanango: I am going to warn you under standing order 253. If you keep interjecting, I am going to have to take a more serious look at it. Just have some respect.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Thank you, Mr Chair. Minister, it was pleasing to hear you congratulate the LNP on our Royalties for Regions program, particularly in the seat—

Dr LYNHAM: I did not; I denigrated it! Get the pronunciation right!

CHAIR: Minister, the same applies. Let her ask the question.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Thank you, Mr Chair, because I know the good people of Callide do enjoy their airports. Minister, surely your inability to deliver your Building our Regions fund is the reason Jackie Trad has taken all the funding and is funnelling any funding into her schemes.

Dr LYNHAM: Mr Chair, there is a lot of inference in that question. That is more a statement than a question.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Okay; I am happy to move on, Mr Chair. I have a question to the director-general. Director-General, how many projects have been funded from Building our Regions for the Lockyer Valley, Southern Downs, Goondiwindi and the Somerset local government areas?

Mr Schaumburg: The number for Goondiwindi is zero. Southern Downs is zero. I would have to check the other two.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I look forward to getting the figures for the Lockyer Valley and the Somerset local government areas, particularly the Somerset local government area because that is one of my wonderful councils. I can tell you, Director-General, that the answer will be none or zero, as you

put it. Minister, how can Labor claim Building our Regions is a program for all of regional Queensland when these local government areas that your director-general correctly pointed out got zero funding—and they are all LNP held seats—have not received one dollar of funding from your Building our Regions program?

Dr LYNHAM: Again, I am happy to compare the number of councils funded under Building our Regions throughout regional Queensland with your program, which funded South-East Queensland. It was supposed to be for the regions, but your money went into South-East Queensland. Some 62 councils throughout regional Queensland have been funded under our program. How many councils did you fund? Forty-five. Seventeen councils have missed out completely, when we compare our program to yours. I would hate to be on the election trail trying to promote this dodgy program. If you ever get elected the Auditor-General will have to hire more staff to go through your Royalties for Regions program. Mr Chair, I wish to table for the benefit of the committee—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Point of order. Mr Chair, can I have clarification: was the minister just referring to Building our Regions as a dodgy program?

Dr LYNHAM: No, Royalties.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: You were talking about your program, then?

Dr LYNHAM: No, Royalties for Regions.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I did not hear you mention that word. I just assumed you were talking about your program.

CHAIR: Your assumption was wrong. He mentioned your program.

Dr LYNHAM: I am happy to table this chart, which clearly shows how regional Queensland has benefited from our Building our Regions program.

CHAIR: You may pass that on.

Dr LYNHAM: It shows how 62 councils have benefited compared to their 45—

CHAIR: That is enough.

Ms LEAHY: You need to table it.

Dr LYNHAM:—and how the Palaszczuk Labor government is genuinely looking after regional Queensland.

CHAIR: No props.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Chair, we are not allowed props—I appreciate that—but I have one here as well. Dr Lynham, is it possible that you could get that map back for a second? We will not use it as a prop here. Dr Lynham will keep it low, I am quite sure. Would you be able to point out for me where on that map the town of Goondiwindi is?

Dr LYNHAM: Sure.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: You know where that is?

Dr LYNHAM: Of course I do.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Minister, would you agree that Goondiwindi should be considered a regional centre in Queensland?

Dr LYNHAM: Goondiwindi?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Yes.

Dr LYNHAM: It is. Can I suggest to you the other 17 regions you missed out. The dots on this map are spread throughout regional Queensland. I would suggest that there would be a lot of dots missing under your Royalties for Regions program—an inordinate amount—especially in some Labor electorates. I remember back to those three years. There would be a lot of dots missing in those Labor electorates.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Minister Lynham, if we can take you back to your program, which has been well versed today. You have been unable to answer the questions about your failed Building our Regions fund because you have been unable to get that money out the door. Minister, how many projects have you funded from your Building our Regions program in the regions of Southern Downs, Goondiwindi, Lockyer Valley and Somerset?

Dr LYNHAM: I am happy to talk about the five in Longreach, the three in Cloncurry, the two in McKinlay, the two in Richmond, the two in Flinders, the three in Charters Towers, the two in Etheridge. I am happy to talk about the 62 regions that we funded compared to your 45. It is a nonsense that you are asking me. If ours is a failed program, then your program was a disgrace.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Minister—

Dr LYNHAM: The Auditor-General probably nearly called it that, too.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Minister, given my question that you have been unable to answer and that you failed to answer, you talked about the area—

Dr LYNHAM: Questions? You have given me the best dixer I have ever had!

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: You referred to the area of Longreach. Minister, are you telling the people of Southern Downs and the Lockyer Valley and the Somerset that they are anywhere near Longreach and the other areas that you referred to?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: With the greatest respect, these people are looking for that money.

Dr LYNHAM: And with the greatest respect, I am trying to dig you out of a hole here. It is up to the councils also if they apply. We can check and I can take it on notice to see if Southern Downs did apply for any Building our Regions funding. If they did not apply then obviously there is no funding committed. They also have to put in a submission, so we have to see whether they did even apply. Can you tell me if Southern Downs even applied for the funding?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Minister, with leave of the committee, would you like me to answer your questions?

Dr LYNHAM: I will take it on notice. I will find out for you if Southern Downs even made an application.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: That was a quick swing around, Minister. I am more than happy to help you out—

Dr LYNHAM: I am being generous.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON:—anytime. Minister, in relation to your failed Building our Regions program, where you have been unable to get \$111 million out the door, can you explain to the committee why it is that there has been no additional funding for your program if it is such a success as you lament today?

Dr LYNHAM: I love the fact that the member for Nanango is lamenting the possible loss of this program. She spent no less than three years trying to denigrate this wonderful program and now she is somehow lamenting the loss of this program. It amazes me, and you will have to wait for some more good news.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Minister, I take it, then, that the good people of the Southern Downs, Goondiwindi, Somerset and Lockyer Valley areas are to just wait until you are prepared to agree to any more money in the budget for this so-called Building our Regions program. Minister, I put to you that you do not believe that these people are regional.

Dr LYNHAM: There are 62 regions that we supported, compared to your 45. We are open to applications from any region except South-East Queensland, whereas you placed your money into South-East Queensland. Also, we are happy to accept applications from all regions throughout Queensland—unlike your program, where you gave funding where people did not even apply for the funding. Councils that had very limited resources that put in detailed applications under your program were refused and you simply gave the money to some councils that never even put in an application—councils in areas that you thought needed some pork-barrelling before the last election. That is hardly a fair program—hardly a fair program.

Ms LEAHY: Name them.

Dr LYNHAM: Townsville had some school zones placed without any application made—without any application made—under your Royalties for Regions program.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Minister, are you suggesting that the children in Townsville do not deserve a school zone?

Dr LYNHAM: Oh my God! What I am suggesting and what I told you—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I just need to clarify that.

Dr LYNHAM:—is that you gave money to councils that did not even place an application for your program, and that is in the Auditor-General's report. The councils did not even apply and you gave money to these councils. They did not even apply.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It sounds very generous.

Dr LYNHAM: There were some councils that put in detailed applications that were refused. There were also some generous applications, like the three airports in Callide that you sponsored under your Royalties for Regions program. The Auditor-General is quite clear in denigrating the Royalties for Regions program. Have you read the Auditor-General's report? We read it with some relish and saw how that program was completely discredited, and you are tramping around Queensland talking about that discredited program—and I think that is the highlight of the whole election policy that I have heard from the LNP: a discredited program. The people of Bundaberg would be very happy to see that you are stumping up some paltry 18 jobs compared to our 310 jobs in Bundaberg under our program. On any day I relish the comparison between Building our Regions and your shonky Royalties for Regions.

CHAIR: The time has expired. With regard to the map that the minister referred to, can I have agreement from the committee to table it? Given all those in favour, it is tabled. Minister, I refer to page 2 of the SDS. Will you please detail to the committee how the Palaszczuk government is promoting the development of the mining equipment, technology and services, or METS, sector in Queensland?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank you, Mr Chair, for your question. The Palaszczuk government has an ambitious plan to generate more than 3,000 extra jobs over the next decade in the world-leading mining equipment, technology and services sector, the METS sector. Just today I released a 10-year road map and action plan to make the state's existing \$7 billion mining equipment, technology and services sector a world leader. This government recognises that resource companies are under increasing pressure to provide the world with mineral and energy resources more cheaply and with better environmental outcomes.

Queensland's METS companies are already providing the world with the know-how they need, but with the right government support there are so many more opportunities that we can make ours. Our action plan will lay the groundwork for the METS sector's next wave of growth. The METS 10-year road map and action plan outlines the key strategies we have in place to grow the sector, which already employs 19,500 people statewide. The road map's initiatives will make it easier for companies to turn their ideas into commercial products for market; increase collaboration between researchers, miners and METS companies so they are all working on solutions to industry's current pressing challenges; and upgrade METS companies' capability in innovation, business management and marketing.

This morning I visited Core Resources at Albion. Core is one of the many Queensland companies that contributed to the development of our action plan. By working with these businesses, we have developed initiatives such as our Mackay innovation pilot to focus researchers, METS companies and miners on the Bowen Basin. Local miners will identify the challenges and the researchers and mining technology companies will work together to develop Bowen Basin specific solutions. If the Mackay pilot works, we will apply it in other METS centres around the state.

Our other initiatives include a mentoring program that helps companies turn their ideas into commercial products; a stocktake of the state's existing and potential testing facilities to identify where METS companies can contest their new products, processes or services; an energy and resources technology networking statewide series to bring together miners and METS companies to share information about new technology; a new energy measuring tool that will help METS companies develop energy-efficient products and services; and a centre at QUT in Brisbane to develop management capabilities and business models for METS companies. The action plan is backed by a \$7 million METS-specific investment as well as the Palaszczuk government's leading \$420 million Advance Queensland initiatives. As we continue to diversify and strengthen the Queensland economy, METS will play a vital part.

Unlike the former LNP government, which completely overlooked this valuable METS sector, this government recognises the importance of the \$7 billion contribution to the state's gross revenue that this sector makes. We recognise the sector's potential for further domestic growth and even greater expansion overseas. We will continue to work with the industry to ensure that it has a strong future here in Queensland.

Mrs LAUGA: With reference to page 3 of the SDS, will the minister detail for the committee the recent success the government has had in growing Queensland's defence industry?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Keppel for her question. You would be aware that, last Friday, I joined with the Premier and the Treasurer to announce Queensland's partnership with the major European defence company Rheinmetall to position Queensland as the base for the construction of the armoured fighting vehicle to be selected for the Australian Army. This is a very significant achievement, but there is still much to be done. It is important now that we work diligently to ensure that Rheinmetall and Queensland wins the final selection process.

This project, which is called Land 400 Phase 2, will involve the construction of 220 impact vehicles. Phase 2 has an estimated value of \$5 billion for the construction and maintenance of these vehicles. If Rheinmetall wins this massive contract, it will develop a military vehicle centre of excellence in Brisbane. This will not just be for the initial phase 2 Boxer contract; it will also be for future phases of the Land 400 project and to escalate its existing Land 121 project to build heavy trucks for the army. They will also be looking to export Boxers and other vehicles to Asia and develop a marine gun capacity in Brisbane. Queensland is well placed to build the vehicles and, importantly, to carry out the maintenance of these vehicles over a 20- to 30-year period. In this respect, Queensland is well placed to carry out the maintenance work, because more than half of these vehicles will be based at Enoggera and Townsville.

Rheinmetall said that when it first looked at Queensland, it found little interest for this project here. Indeed, when I first went to Canberra to talk about a Queensland bid, I was told by many in the defence industry not to bother. We did bother. We became quite a bother. I am very proud of what we have potentially achieved for Queensland. The Rheinmetall partnership for the Land 400 project is a coup for this state, because it complements the existing efforts of Queensland industry in the defence area, which currently employs 6,500 people in Queensland. At the same time, we have not given up on becoming the preferred partner for the other Land 400 contender, BAE Systems. Our success so far in the Land 400 project is great, but we must redouble our efforts to ensure that we win the big prize. As the Premier said yesterday, it is time for a bipartisan effort to win this one for Queensland, too.

Mr CRAWFORD: With reference to page 2 of the SDS, can you detail for the committee how the government is promoting the development of biofutures in Queensland?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. Since day one, the Palaszczuk government has been committed to growing and expanding in Queensland a biofutures industry to capture global demand. Our vision is for a \$1 billion sustainable and export orientated industrial biotechnology sector by 2026. The \$4 million Biofutures Acceleration Program is a key initiative of the Biofutures 10-Year Roadmap and Action Plan, launched by the Premier in June 2016. The program aims to attract keystone investors to Queensland to develop or expand commercial scale biorefineries. In September 2016, we launched an international request for information and targeted industry consultation. The intent was to raise the profile and market awareness of the program, gauge the level of market interest in Queensland sites and understand the issues, obstacles and opportunities faced by commercial biorefinery proponents.

The invitation for an expression of interest was issued on 9 November 2016 and closed on 18 January 2017. The invitation for an expression of interest was an overwhelming success, with 26 proposals received from companies based in the USA, Asia and Europe as well as Australia. It included a wide range of feedstocks, locations, technologies and products.

The Biofutures Acceleration Program attracted almost \$200 million of potential investment in biorefinery proposals that could generate more than 330 jobs in regional Queensland. A number of the expression of interest proponents have been invited to enter into arrangements with the state to accelerate their projects. On 21 June 2017, the Premier announced that the proposal by US biotechnology company, Amyris, for a Queensland biorefinery would be accelerated. The proposed biorefinery would aim to produce 23,000 tonnes a year of a sugarcane based ingredient called farnesene used in products, including cosmetic emollients, fragrances, nutraceuticals, polymers and lubricants. The state and Amyris will now work together closely to develop a feasibility study that will consider site options within the sugar-producing areas of regional Queensland.

On 27 June 2017, I announced that United Ethanol's planned \$26 million expansion at Dalby will also be accelerated. The proposed \$26 million expansion could generate 50 local jobs and boost demand for sorghum on the Darling Downs. The expansion would boost United Ethanol's biofuel production capacity by 24 million litres to 100 million litres a year to help meet the expected growth of biofuel usage across Queensland.

On 10 July, I was pleased to be in Mareeba to announce that the Queensland government would be supporting the new \$60 million MSF Atherton Tableland biorefinery, which could generate up to 130 additional regional jobs and encourage diverse cropping. Further announcements will be made about the Biofutures Acceleration Program as arrangements with the various proponents are settled.

In addition to the Biofutures Acceleration Program, the government entered into an agreement with Bio Processing Australia for the development of a new integrated biorefinery to be located at Mackay. This project is being supported under the \$130 million Jobs and Regional Growth Fund. The commercial scale biorefinery is planned to produce 26,000 tonnes of soy milk, 2,000 tonnes of yeast products for the animal feed market and 15 million litres of biodiesel suitable for heavy transport industries. The project's oilseed crushing plant is likely to establish large scale soy bean cash cropping in the Mackay region, creating an initial income stream for farmers. The proposed BPA biorefinery is expected to deliver up to 70 construction and 45 skilled operational jobs and attract significant investment and further jobs in the Mackay region. The Palaszczuk government is leading Australia's biofutures revolution. I look forward to making further announcements soon.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Mrs MILLER: Minister, I represent the Dinmore meat processing plant. It is the largest meat processing facility in the Southern Hemisphere. It employs 2,000 people, many of whom are local. They work eight shifts from Tuesday to Friday. What priority is the state government placing on supporting their costs to operate and the competitive challenges faced by Queensland's largest manufacturing industry and major exporter, that is, meat processing?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for her question regarding Dinmore meats. When I am travelling to see my children in Toowoomba we pass the factory quite regularly. I know what a huge enterprise it is and the number of people it employs in your area.

I also recognise the importance of manufacturing to the state. Just to remind those on that side, manufacturing was not even a pillar of their platform. I know that it has been added. I do not know which architect was used, or what paint job they used, but I notice that on their side of the House manufacturing has been recognised now as a pillar for economic growth. It was not before.

I know that Dinmore meats has input costs that are important. Our meat processing industry is still very world competitive. I know that, in my role as Minister for State Development, a great number of regional centres have expressions of interest for meat processing facilities in their area. I am presently in discussion with the Charters Towers community about a meat processing centre in Charters Towers. I know that Emerald also has opportunities for meat processing.

In regard to processing, one of the areas that I know that meat processing needs input into is the supply of gas. Queensland has led the way in having domestic acreage set aside purely for the domestic production of gas. We had a small pilot program of 58 square kilometres. That has now been added to, with over 350 square kilometres. That tender has been very successful and I expect that the 350 square kilometres will be very successful as well.

I have also met with small to medium sized gas producers in my rooms. I have had them all around the table. These small to medium sized producers are—

Mrs MILLER: I think you meant in your offices, rather than in your rooms.

Dr LYNHAM: These small to medium sized producers are mostly Australian players. It will be fantastic to have Australian companies producing this gas from Australian fields going to Australian industries. We need federal government assistance because, for the small players, to get that gas to industry the infrastructure costs are enormous. This is where we need common-user infrastructure. I have made the call to the federal government to assist in common-user infrastructure to open up the Galilee, to open up the Bowen Basin, for the supply of domestic gas. We need Australian companies to get in there and supply gas to Australian industry—to get this gas as efficiently as we possibly can from our gas-producing areas to Dinmore meats.

I know that, at the present time, the input costs are high, especially in gas, but what the federal government is doing simply will not cut the mustard. It will not work. Increased supply is the key to having that gas supplied to our domestic industry. The federal government is risking the royalties that we receive for the gas that Queensland produces. Queensland is leading Australia in the production of gas and we are being penalised by the federal government. There are explicit penalties to our royalties if they should hook in with their initiative. There is sovereign risk involved as well as royalty risk. Those royalties are paying for our schools, our hospitals and our roads. All of that is risk with the federal government's initiative. Queensland is leading the charge. We have the solution with the market supply condition of setting aside these acreages.

We have also supported the electricity costs, with our \$1.16 billion initiative for electricity throughout Queensland. I suggest that, when Minister Bailey has his estimates hearing, you may wish to take the electricity costs initiative further. Definitely with gas supply Queensland is leading the way. I know how important it is for industries such as the meat processing industry. I know how important it is for industries such as Incitec Pivot as well.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question is to the minister and it refers to page 2 of the SDS which states—

- providing whole-of-government case management to attract increased private capital investment.

Minister, can you tell me whether business investment increased in Queensland in 2016?

Dr LYNHAM: Current economic growth, the gross state product, is forecast to strengthen from 2.4 per cent in 2015-16 to 2.75 per cent in 2016-17, well above the 1.75 per cent growth forecast for the nation in 2016-17. We are leading the charge with gross state product. A lot of that is private investment within the state. It is forecast to strengthen further, to three per cent in 2018-19. Further economic growth prospects remain very positive for the state. We have improved business confidence, increased consumer sentiment, a strong investment pipeline, increased exports and forecast employment growth as the economy—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Point of order, Mr Chair. I ask the minister to go back to the nub of the question, which was whether business investment has increased in Queensland in 2016. It is a yes or no.

Dr LYNHAM: We have a solid investment pipeline already of \$156 billion worth of definite and planned projects. That is according to Deloitte Access Economics.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: You agree with the Queensland Treasury State Accounts that business investment declined by 16 per cent, or almost \$6.3 billion, last year?

Dr LYNHAM: No.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am happy to table the document.

Dr LYNHAM: Private new capital expenditure has increased by \$0.18 billion compared to the March quarter in 2016.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: So you are disagreeing with the Queensland Treasury State Accounts where it outlines that investment has declined by 16 per cent under your role to attract investment?

Dr LYNHAM: I am happy for you to table that and I will take that on notice.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will get that document to you. I thought I had it here, but this is a different document I have in front of me. I am happy to get that. It is your government's document. It is actually the Queensland Treasury State Accounts.

CHAIR: Do you have copies for the table?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: No, I do not. That is why I apologised.

Mr CRAWFORD: Point of order, Mr Chair. If there is no document to table then we cannot ask the minister to respond to that.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am happy to rephrase the question for you, Minister, given that I am referring to your own government's documents and your own budget and whether you agree that in your role to attract increased private capital investment in the state, we can move on to it, but it is just simply by agreeing that investment has actually declined by 16 per cent under your watch.

Mrs LAUGA: Point of order. I do not think there is any proof of that because the document is not here.

Dr LYNHAM: It is just made up. What period are you referring to, member for Nanango?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: From the Queensland Treasury State Accounts of last year.

Dr LYNHAM: My congratulations on your preparation for this estimates hearing. I do not have a document. I am happy to take anything on notice. I am trying to help.

CHAIR: Do you want it placed on notice?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: No, that is fine. I am happy to move on. I refer to the Major Projects Pipeline Report, published by Construction Skills Queensland, which shows a sharp decline in the major projects work in 2015-16, a trough in 2016-17 and an extremely uncertain investment pipeline in 2017-18. Why is your department failing so obviously in one of its core functions? I can table that document. I note that this is an independent document, not government propaganda.

Dr LYNHAM: I do not have a copy of that document.

CHAIR: It is now tabled.

Dr LYNHAM: I am happy to assist the member for Nanango again. She might like to reflect that the LNG boom was in this period and this just reflects the tail of the LNG boom and the mining boom.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: If I can go back to the question, for the sake of completeness—

Dr Lynham interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Sorry, Minister? Would you like to say that again for the committee?

Dr LYNHAM: That is all right.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Are you sure?

Dr LYNHAM: Yes, absolutely.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Happy to hear it again.

Dr LYNHAM: It is okay. I am trying to assist.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Chair, I refer the committee, particularly Mrs Lauga, to Budget Paper No. 2 at page 37, which clearly shows business investment decreased by 16 per cent last year. Director-General. I refer you to page 3 of the SDS in relation to the Made in Queensland Grants Program, announced in December last year. How many applications have been made for funding by businesses in Cairns, Townsville and Wide Bay?

Mr Schaumburg: I have broad figures here. The first process of that is to do benchmarks. It has been highly successful in terms of the number of benchmarks. Once the benchmarking program is done, the companies can then understand what it would take for them to advance their projects to maybe be exporters, to become advanced manufacturers, and then they are able to make an application for the dollar-for-dollar grant funding. If you want to know how many have come from particular regions, I would have to take that on notice and check exactly which grants have come from where.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I was asking not in relation to benchmarks but in relation to how many applications have been made to the department for that program by businesses in the areas of Cairns, Townsville and Wide Bay.

Mr Schaumburg: I was explaining that there have been 508 requests for benchmarks in total. Some 236 benchmarks have been completed and then it transfers into the application stage. We now have 43 applications that have been submitted statewide. Thirty-seven of those are under assessment, five have been approved and two have been announced by the minister. I am happy to take it on notice.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: For those specific areas.

Mr Schaumburg: Would you mind listing those specific areas again?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Cairns, Townsville and Wide Bay.

Dr LYNHAM: I made a huge call for those areas to please apply for Made in Queensland grants.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Minister, I was not asking you what you had done. I had asked what applications—

CHAIR: No need to go down that line. We are all friendly here. We love one another.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Well, I am.

Dr LYNHAM: I am trying to help.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I would now like to move on and refer to SDS page 2, which states—

- partner with regional stakeholders and grow regional economies through investment, exports and job creation

Minister, we have heard you discuss your programs today, but what can you say to the fact that since Labor's election almost 6,000 youth jobs have disappeared from the Townsville region?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. I would like to reflect on what we are doing for the Townsville region for job promotion. Nothing comes to mind quicker than the wonderful North Queensland stadium development that we are producing up there with Watpac.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Point of order. I asked a specific question to the minister in relation to his role in the Labor government losing 6,000 youth jobs in the Townsville region.

CHAIR: Minister, I heard the member for Nanango mention jobs, and I understand that the first part of your response was about jobs so there is a connection there.

Dr LYNHAM: Absolutely. We are growing jobs in North Queensland. There is no doubt that our priority is to regions and one of those important regions is the region of North Queensland. We are growing jobs in that region. Nothing says it more than the North Queensland stadium proposal. It is a stadium being developed now—a \$250 million North Queensland stadium—with 750 jobs and 2,000 people working on that site. It is a wonderful initiative. I know that we put \$140 million on the table and your federal colleagues had to be dragged kicking and screaming to support that stadium and support job creation progress in the north. You might talk about what was the past; I am talking about what is the future for North Queensland, and it is a bright future.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am actually sitting here quite respectfully being quiet, Minister.

Dr LYNHAM: The future for North Queensland is job growth and job stimulation through a Palaszczuk Labor government.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: How is that going for you? Some 6,000 youth jobs disappeared.

Dr LYNHAM: You sat there and did nothing for three years. We put the runs on the board immediately we came into office. We have the stadium, the Townsville port expansion, the blueprint—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: And record unemployment in Townsville.

Dr LYNHAM: We have the Byerwen coal project and we have the Adani coal project, where we are supporting that mine.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: You are.

Dr LYNHAM: We are active in North Queensland supporting job growth and job creation in North Queensland. Also do not forget we are engaging local industry. Eighty per cent of this stadium will be built by North Queenslanders. That is a North Queensland stadium built by North Queenslanders. Not only do we have these job creation projects; we are also maximising local job content throughout these projects. Sun Metals have started one of the largest solar plants, and they have started that on the Townsville SDA. That is equivalent to powering 47,000 homes from that Sun Metals plant. Things are really happening in North Queensland with the assistance of the Palaszczuk Labor government. This is the spark that will ignite job creation in North Queensland.

I always enjoy going up there to visit the mayor in Townsville. She is a great supporter. She knows how important these job creation projects are. I am always happy to get up there because that is a place that really wants jobs to happen. The Palaszczuk government is working with local industry up there to make sure that North Queensland is there for the future and growing for the future.

Mr PERRETT: I refer to page 24 of the Service Delivery Statements and the reference to the sale of the properties in the Mary Valley purchased for the government's failed Traveston Dam project. Does the government view the subsequent writedown of \$320 million from the purchase price of \$520 million for 655 properties in the Mary Valley, of more than 50 per cent, as a fair and prudent use of taxpayers' dollars?

Dr LYNHAM: My department has been coordinating the sale of land in the Mary Valley acquired for the Traveston Dam. Quite rightly, as you say, the Traveston Dam simply did not go ahead. We have been divesting this land since 2012, including developing a number of leases aimed at fostering new industry, as your government divested land when you were in power. Your government divested the same land.

Mr PERRETT: They did not purchase it. They did not pay \$520 million.

Dr LYNHAM: You were part of the divestment process as well. To be frank, the dam did not occur. The properties were to be divested. The market has shifted. We have been successful in re-establishing local communities and returning properties to private ownership and supporting enterprise and job creation. It has been a key government objective. By April 2016, 500 properties had been sold to private owners. My department commenced a marketing campaign on 9 April 2016 to divest the remaining Mary Valley properties. This was a successful campaign with all land being sold, including 10 properties settled since 1 July 2016.

The department has successfully divested properties at or above market value as determined by a registered independent valuer. Simply put, the market value has changed during that time. The government also implemented a range of economic development strategies resulting in increased economic activity in the region. As part of this strategy, 21 development leases were established across the Mary Valley portfolio, aimed at fostering new industry. To enable the provision of government service delivery, such as the Bruce Highway upgrade and community and educational facilities, a number of properties were transferred to the relevant state government agencies, as well as the Gympie

Regional Council. They included 119 hectares of farming land that fronted the Mary River and was transferred to the Department of Education for agricultural training through the Noosa District State High School. Three Mary Valley properties in the Wide Bay/Burnett region are still owned by the state. Those properties have development leases that will continue through to 2018.

The cost of purchasing undertaken by Queensland Water Infrastructure Pty Ltd should not be compared to the current sale proceeds, as the cost of purchasing included compensation payments in addition to property value. Those people were paid compensation, as well as the property value.

Mr PERRETT: I do not believe that that is correct.

Dr LYNHAM: Many of the properties were sold either in a different configuration or with different improvements onsite. Therefore, there are many instances where it is not possible to compare like with like on the purchase and sale. As it states, there was purchasing plus compensation. You are comparing purchasing plus compensation with just a raw sale price.

Mr PERRETT: Minister, I have not referred to the other costs that were also included. There was \$200 million by QWI to build a case, plus the loss of business. I ask the director-general: has the department learnt from this process and would it do that again?

Mr Schaumburg: We are looking at doing something similar in the Beaudesert area at the moment. We certainly take on board any processes that we have done previously and make sure that the department learns from those instances.

Mr KNUTH: Minister, the Mission Beach safe boating facility project has been on the state government's website for major projects since 2011. The service delivery statement, at page 2, states that a key priority is securing long-term tourism, sporting and community benefits through the delivery of major projects. With this in mind, Minister, can you fast-track or give an indication of the time till the breakwater is completed? Minister, will you support the community by agreeing to start construction of the boat ramp and recreational aspects of the project while waiting for the approvals from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, as the authority needs to give the approval only to the breakwater area and not the recreational aspects of the project?

Dr LYNHAM: I know that the member has been very interested in this area. I also note that the Mission Beach area is in the federal electorate that is represented by Mr Bob Katter, who has made representations to me regarding Mission Beach. Member for Dalrymple, it is a credit to you that you have been intimately involved in this project since before the redistribution. I know you have been engaging with the people of Mission Beach.

For the benefit of other members of the committee, I can say that we have allocated \$15.3 million and the Australian government has committed \$5.5 million in funding towards providing safer boating infrastructure at Mission Beach. The project will assist the Mission Beach community through the re-establishment of the reef-based tourist market and by providing improved recreational boating facilities. I have visited the site and personally undertaken negotiations with the various community groups to reach a resolution on what was, as you will agree, a difficult issue at that time for the community. I thank you for your assistance and the role that you have played in reaching a resolution for this particular site.

Concerns were raised because, as you will remember, there was an overtopping breakwater at the Perry Harvey Jetty, as well as consideration given to the Clump Point boating facility. Funding has now been redirected to the Clump Point facility. The Clump Point facility does go into the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority territory and Maritime Safety Queensland is also involved. I understand that there has been a great deal of community consultation and, at the start, there was a great deal of community angst about which was the most appropriate project to go ahead. I understand also that the community wants this project started as quickly as possible. With it going into the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park zone, various approvals now have to be obtained. I am pleased to report that, with those approvals, the level of cooperation with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has been exemplary. We are still some way away. I am happy to update you on progress. I am happy to contact the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority on this.

We have worked closely alongside the Department of Transport and Main Roads, the Cassowary Coast Regional Council and representatives from community groups. The process has now been passed to the Department of Main Roads and Transport, so this project is now under the auspices of Minister Bailey. I suggest that, when he appears before estimates, he can provide you with an update on where the boat ramp is at, as well as the roadways, et cetera, leading up to the boat ramp. I am happy to contact the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and find out at what stage the approvals are at and advise you accordingly.

In finalising, I thank you for your involvement and for stepping in when you did. The project was rather difficult and the community was quite flustered about where this project was heading. Thanks to the great cooperation between yourself and the state government, we have been able to sort out this project, which we inherited from the previous LNP government.

Mr KNUTH: Minister, in regard to the—

CHAIR: I am sorry, member for Dalrymple. You have to communicate with these guys a little more, to make sure that you get some time. We have gone well over this time. I am happy to give you the questions, if we can get them allocated. I go to the member for Keppel.

Mrs LAUGA: Minister, with reference to page 3 of the SDS, how have you assisted businesses in Queensland in becoming more internationally competitive?

Dr LYNHAM: I know that the member is pleased to see the Palaszczuk government working hard to support Queensland's manufacturers and to help them grow jobs. As I said, this is a \$20 billion industry that is the sixth largest employer in this state. It is 16,400 companies employing almost 170,000 workers, 80 per cent of whom are full-time workers. Manufacturing employment grew by 5.5 per cent in the 12 months to November 2016. In 2015, Queensland's manufacturing export earnings totalled around \$16 billion or nearly one-third of Queensland's total export earnings.

I know that many Queenslanders working in the manufacturing industry, like those at Dinmore meat works, are quite pleased to see that advanced manufacturing was identified as a key priority sector by the Palaszczuk government. By contrast, the LNP was so dismissive of the role that manufacturing plays in the Queensland economy they did not even include it in their four-pillar strategy. Credit where credit is due, though: the LNP have recycled the four-pillar strategy into what I understand is now a five-pillar strategy that includes manufacturing. It has been only five years since they tossed it aside. I am not sure how much they spent on redesigning the floor plan with that extra pillar or how much was spent on new wallpaper, paint or real estate agents. However, I can promise this: the Queensland public will not buy it at the next election campaign, when they go along promoting manufacturing.

By contrast, the Palaszczuk government has an Advance Queensland Advanced Manufacturing 10-year road map and action plan. Part of that road map is a benchmarking program that allows businesses to measure their performance against international best practice and identify how they can improve to grow and innovate. That benchmarking program underpins our highly successful \$20 million Made in Queensland initiative. Made in Queensland aims to support existing jobs while increasing the number of jobs in Queensland manufacturing and growing Queensland's economy. Companies start with the benchmarking program. This allows them to identify innovations they can make. They can then apply for dollar-for-dollar grants, from \$50,000 to \$2.5 million, to help them become more internationally competitive and adopt innovative processes and technologies. The benchmarking shows them what they can do to move to new levels of efficiency and growth, and the funds allow them to implement those changes. This is all about making our small to medium manufacturing enterprise companies more productive and competitive, creating jobs as they grow.

I went to Toowoomba to meet the first recipients of these grants, Gessner Industries from Toowoomba and Global Rotomoulding from Helidon. Gessner Industries manufactures equipment solutions for the agricultural, industrial, mining and construction sectors. Global Rotomoulding produces plastic products, such water tanks. Both companies will use their funds to streamline their operations. Since the Made in Queensland program opened in 30 January 2017, 504 registrations of interest have been received to participate in the program, 248 participants have completed a benchmark, and 40 applications are currently being actively assessed across the pharmaceutical, metal processing, food, agriculture and construction equipment sectors.

Manufacturing is fundamental to a modern and competitive economy and is vital as a source of innovation, exports and jobs. Made in Queensland is a clear demonstration of the practical and tangible assistance that the Palaszczuk government is providing to small and medium manufacturers in this critical sector to help them to compete, innovate and grow the highly skilled, highly paid jobs of the future.

CHAIR: With reference to page 3, Minister, could you please outline how the Department of State Development is working to encourage investment in Queensland?

Dr LYNHAM: The Palaszczuk government understands the need to attract Queensland projects that support job creation, regional growth, increased innovation and the building of local supply chains. That is why we announced the \$40 million Advance Queensland Industry Attraction Fund in the 2016-17

budget. This scheme has been established to attract geographically contestable projects to Queensland. The scheme is open to overseas and interstate companies seeking to relocate or establish a new project in Queensland and Queensland-based firms interested in expanding their local operations. Financial assistance available includes payroll tax rebates, transfer duty concessions and, in some cases, cash grants. No loans are available under this scheme.

Since that announcement, my Department of State Development has been working with companies from a broad range of sectors, including advanced manufacturing, defence, aerospace, biomedical, biofutures and solar energy storage. Since implementing the fund, we have successfully finalised three agreements, with a further six currently being negotiated. Oji Fibre Solutions is building a corrugated box manufacturing facility at Yatala, creating up to 55 operational jobs. As the Premier said yesterday, Japan's SoftBank is establishing its Australian robotics headquarters here in Brisbane, at the start-up precinct in the TC Beirne building in Fortitude Valley. SoftBank is one of the leading robotics firms. Their presence in Queensland gives a critical mass and competitive advantage in this vital field for skilled jobs of the future. Southern Oil, a renewable fuels company, has built an advanced biofuels pilot plant in Gladstone. If the pilot plant is successful, this could lead to the establishment of a commercial plant able to produce greater than 150 million litres per annum of advanced biofuels. Those three projects alone will generate more than \$84 million in capital expenditure and more than 60 new jobs. I expect to be announcing more projects very soon.

The projects currently committed, approved or under consideration have the potential to generate more than 900 new jobs and \$220 million in capital expenditure to Queensland. Proactive industry attraction is a key contributor to the ongoing growth and diversity of the Queensland economy. The projects attracted to Queensland will create new supply-chain prospects for Queensland businesses, encourage new business and investment, and generate sustainable new jobs and business activity. This is a government committed to creating jobs, because we know that the dignity of a job and a regular pay packet are the most fundamental contributions that we can make to a Queensland family. We have some answers available to some questions we took on notice earlier. Would now be an appropriate time to give those answers?

CHAIR: I might leave that to the last couple of minutes. As a sign of good faith, I want to give the member for Buderim an opportunity to ask a question.

Mr DICKSON: Minister, you look very jolly today and you are answering those questions well. I note in your department's 2017 SDS at page 16 under the heading 'Departmental balance sheet' it states—

The department's major assets consist of property, plant and equipment and intangibles.

I assume that includes dams. There is no reference in the SDS to funding for new water infrastructure, such as dams, being constructed. It also states—

Property, plant and equipment balances will fluctuate over the forward estimates as a result of the accumulated depreciation on buildings, stock routes and water storage ...

On 1 June 2017 in the federal parliament the Deputy Prime Minister stated—

... Member for Kennedy, you would be interested to know that this year we have been accepting applications from state governments for further construction funding. How many dam projects has the Queensland Labor government come through with? None. Zero. Not one.

Is it correct that the Queensland government has not put forward any business cases to the federal government for the funding and construction of dams to enhance the depreciating water storage capacity? How does the government intend to deal with the increased demand for the growing population and the looming water shortage in Queensland?

Dr LYNHAM: Minister Bailey is responsible for the water resources and dams of this state. I know that the Coordinator-General has some coordinated projects for dam infrastructure. I would ask the Coordinator-General to comment.

Mr Broe: One example is that I approved the Nathan Dam project at the end of May. Very shortly after that the Commonwealth approved it. It approved it within six weeks. That is one project where there has been a longstanding EIS—

Mr DICKSON: With respect, Minister, I asked you. The question was: how many dams have you applied to the federal government to build? You are in charge of infrastructure.

Dr LYNHAM: Infrastructure is Minister Trad. Minister Bailey is responsible for water. The Coordinator-General—

Mr DICKSON: Is the answer zero?

Dr LYNHAM: You simply have the wrong department. You have to talk to the Department of Energy and Water Supply. Building Queensland is doing the—

Mr DICKSON: I am referring to applications to the federal government which your department also has to apply for.

Dr LYNHAM: I am advised that that is Minister Bailey.

Mr DICKSON: I think you might be advised wrong.

CHAIR: Minister, are you the appropriate minister to be asked this question?

Dr LYNHAM: My advice is that Minister Bailey is the appropriate minister to make applications to the federal government.

Mr DICKSON: No application? Is that the answer?

CHAIR: You have the wrong minister.

Dr LYNHAM: I apologise, but you have the wrong department.

Mr KNUTH: I refer to the departmental overview on page 2 of the Service Delivery Statements for the Department of State Development. After repeated discussions and lobbying with regard to the proposed Big Rocks Weir in Charters Towers, can the minister advise what progress he and his department have made to further progress this project?

Dr LYNHAM: I know how important the Big Rocks Weir project is to you personally and to your community. It is unfortunate that with the redistribution the community of Charters Towers will not be your responsibility. I know how you loved your community.

You have been a tireless advocate for this project. I know that you have made several representations to my office and we have had discussions and teleconferences with the council up there. You have showed me personally the site of Big Rocks Weir. The proposed weir would provide 10,000 megalitres of total water storage. It is 23 kilometres upstream of the Charters Towers Weir. It would provide a wonderful recreation area. The main purpose of the weir is to provide security of water supply to the community of Charters Towers and allow Charters Towers to grow, develop and attract industry to that area.

The council applied for Commonwealth funding for a feasibility study through the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund but, unfortunately, was unsuccessful in its application. In early 2017 the council sought assistance from my department to work across government departments to progress this project. Together with yourself, I asked the department to facilitate a whole-of-government meeting. In March this year the meeting occurred and the council agreed on a way forward for the Big Rocks Weir proposal.

The Department of Energy and Water Supply and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines provided detailed information to the council on the additional documentation that is required to support the progression of this project. A number of actions were agreed, including the requirement for a demand assessment to quantify the volume and use of the unmet water requirements. I know that you approached me some weeks ago asking whether I had the ability to fast-track some of the studies. As a result of your approach, I had a conversation with the officers in my department. What they have identified is the ability to utilise information gathered in the Hell's Gate feasibility study—another project I know you have been quite vocal in your support for.

Townsville Enterprise Ltd recently received \$2.2 million for the Hell's Gate feasibility study. This study will inform the economic expansion of North Queensland by investigating the technical, economic and financial feasibility of major water storage in the Upper Burdekin Basin as the location for Big Rocks Weir as well. That is funded under part 1 of the Australian government's National Water Infrastructure Development Fund.

My officers had discussions with TEL. We have also identified that its proposed site for Big Rocks Weir is also in the Upper Burdekin Basin. The Hell's Gate feasibility study will include consideration of the Big Rocks Weir proposal. The Hell's Gate Dam feasibility study will include a demand assessment and an assessment of land availability and soil suitability for a number of crops that could be irrigated on land downstream of Hell's Gate. I do note that that is not the primary purpose of this particular piece of water infrastructure. I am advised that the study will make recommendations on the type of irrigation infrastructure which would then be required to service land and cropping opportunities.

Big Rocks Weir will form part of the overall consideration for infrastructure as part of the Hell's Gate Dam feasibility study. It is due to be completed in early 2018, so we do not have to wait too long. It will help inform further progression of Big Rocks Weir. My department has been invited onto the Hell's Gate Dam feasibility study steering committee as an observer. We will report to you in our role as an observer on how this project will proceed.

May I offer an explanation to the member for Buderim regarding his previous question?

CHAIR: Go ahead.

Dr LYNHAM: As in Big Rocks—I know we are talking about dams now—

Mr DICKSON: I was listening very intently too, of course.

Dr LYNHAM: Exactly. State Development looks at how commercial projects are. Through the Coordinator-General some projects are nominated as coordinated projects, like Nathan Dam. Advancing funding is the responsibility of my colleague Minister Bailey. We are involved in the feasibility of dams; the Coordinator-General is involved in coordinated projects. Some of these coordinated projects may be dams, but, specifically to your question, I can guide you that the correct person to be answering the question would be Minister Bailey.

Mr DICKSON: I think what we are talking about is water storage and that definitely comes under your portfolio. Your director-general should know that because he is paid an immense amount of money.

CHAIR: I do not think that is necessary.

Dr LYNHAM: If you are talking about water storage and water plans, that comes under the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. That is coming up very shortly.

Mr DICKSON: You are talking about dams a lot today. I think your government has been inept in not applying, and you know it.

CHAIR: I believe the member for Nanango has a correction.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I have a matter of privilege suddenly arising. For the sake of correcting the record, Budget Paper No. 2 for 2017-18 at page 37 shows business investment collapsed by seven per cent last financial year. The latest Queensland Treasury State Accounts show a decline of \$6.3 billion, or 16 per cent, over the 2016 calendar year. This is a public data set available on the Queensland Treasury website. I table the index of this large spreadsheet. It is disappointing that the minister did not come to the estimates prepared to answer questions about declining business investment on his watch, especially given it is clearly documented in the budget papers.

CHAIR: I have given you the opportunity to make a correction. I do not think we need to lecture the minister as well. We are getting close to running out of time.

Mr KNUTH: Basically the minister is saying that the feasibility study for Hell's Gate is going to be included in the Big Rocks Weir project?

Dr LYNHAM: As I said, the demand study, which is part of what we asked the council to perform, will be performed as part of the Hell's Gate proposal. We are acting as an observer on that study. They should have completed the study in early 2018. Hell's Gate will look at the demand study—the demand for water—and the soil suitability for agriculture from water from the proposed Hell's Gate Dam.

CHAIR: I know that members to my left are getting a bit excited, but the last three or four questions have been in government members' time so the last question for this section will be from the member for Bundamba.

Mrs MILLER: Before I ask my question, can I ask the director-general to please contact Mr Chris Odlin about his correspondence to your department. He has not heard back in several months and it is about his property.

My question is again related to the meat-processing industry. As it is an important manufacturer, which you are aware of, there have been some concerns about the increased live-cattle exports and also increased meat processing overseas. Has State Development looked at this issue, considering there is a view within the industry that processing may be devastated in future years? I am happy for you to take that on notice.

Dr LYNHAM: It is a very important issue for a lot of regional centres and our agricultural producers—that is, the competition between live exports and the number of animals processed in Australia. That would also be a question for the Minister for Agriculture. I am happy to take that on notice and see what information I can provide to you through my department.

CHAIR: With reference to page 3 of the SDS, will the minister please outline how the Department of State Development is working to encourage investment in Queensland? I think I have already asked the question. If you want to give me a response I will be happy. You need to tell us you are doing a good job and leave it at that.

Dr LYNHAM: The Palaszczuk government understands the need to attract Queensland projects to support job creation, regional growth, increased innovation and the building of local supply chains. This is why we announced the \$40 million Advance Queensland Industry Attraction Fund in the 2016-17 budget. This scheme has been established to attract geographical contestable projects in Queensland. The scheme is open to overseas and interstate companies seeking to relocate or establish a new project in Queensland and Queensland based firms interested in expanding their local operations.

CHAIR: Is it going well?

Dr LYNHAM: It is going very well.

CHAIR: I think I am happy with your answer. Leave is granted for the document 'Queensland State Accounts—Tables: December quarter 2016' to be tabled. Thank you for your cooperation so far, but there is more to come. We will take a break for afternoon tea. We will commence after the break with the examination of the estimates for the Natural Resources and Mines portfolio. It is something I have been waiting all day for.

Proceedings suspended from 4.00 pm to 4.30 pm



CHAIR: Welcome back, Minister, and officials. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure for the Natural Resources and Mines portfolio. We will go to the opposition first.

Mr CRIPPS: I refer to page 2 of the SDS and the departmental overview, which states—

The department's work is subject to changes in the external environment which bring new challenges. Changing expectations about the protection and allocation of our natural resources are leading to conflicting aspirations in the community and challenges for decision-making in the department.

Minister, I refer to the 2016 Working for Queensland survey of Public Service employees for the Department of Natural Resources and Mines released yesterday which shows that confidence in the organisational leadership of the department and levels of innovation within the department are declining. Minister, do you need me to come and give you a hand?

CHAIR: That was just friendly banter.

Dr LYNHAM: That is more like a statement, Mr Chair, rather than a question. I cannot understand how it is relevant to the Appropriation Bill. There was a thin thread of relevance being woven into that leading right uppercut that is so expected. I cannot see the relevance and I ask your ruling on it.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, if you have declining levels of innovation within the department and confidence in the organisational leadership of the department as per the survey released yesterday, what are you going to do to rally the troops?

Dr LYNHAM: The department under my leadership is going far better than under your leadership. I remember talking about exploration when exploration under your watch declined by 70 per cent in Queensland. I also know the stimulus you gave to the resources sector when you first came in was to whack a great royalty on coal which was a great stimulus package but goes against Economics 101 that when there is a recession you offer the hand of friendship and the hand of assistance and you help the industry through their period of recession. You do not whack another great tax on industry, as you did, and see exploration decline by 70 per cent. Our department has been working very hard—

Mr CRIPPS: It is confidence in your organisational leadership that is declining, as per the Working for Queensland survey of Public Service employees in the department that you head, Minister, isn't it?

Dr LYNHAM: My department has done stellar work. Green shoots are appearing in the resources sector. We are seeing more employment in the resources sector. Some 3,000 more people were employed in the last six months in the resources sector, and there appears to be more employment on the horizon. My department has been working very hard to make sure that the resources sector is growing and is blossoming in this state. I am sure it will be continuing to assist the resources sector into the future, unlike under your watch when you did virtually not much and just sat back and watched the decline.

Mr CRIPPS: The numbers in yesterday's survey of your own employees I think tell the story. I refer to pages 2 and 3 of the SDS which refer to the department's service area strategic objective of sustainable management of Queensland's land and water resources. I refer to the speech made by the

member for Mirani on 24 May 2017 in the Queensland parliament, and I ask: have you facilitated the member for Mirani's request that farmers be able to take machinery in to dig up the bed of the creek to carry out restoration and clean-up works associated with Cyclone Debbie?

CHAIR: That is a bit unfair. That was my question.

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. I acknowledge the damage caused by Cyclone Debbie in the chair's own electorate. I also note the damage that Cyclone Debbie caused not only in the north of the state and in the south-east but all the way through to New Zealand. I note that just recently the Queensland government committed \$110 million for the restoration of damage caused by Cyclone Debbie. Your Prime Minister was at your conference. You had the opportunity to talk to the Prime Minister about supporting your area, the chair's area and the member for Keppel's area, to assist them to repair the damage caused by Cyclone Debbie. I have seen photos. Mr Chair has shown me photographs of the damage, the siltation and the debris caused by this cyclone. To have a mere \$29 million, I believe—

Mr CRIPPS: What about facilitating, as the member for Mirani requested in his speech, the ability of farmers to use machinery—

Dr LYNHAM: Mr Chair, I am still trying to answer—

Mr CRIPPS:—in the bed of the river to undertake clean-up works associated with Cyclone Debbie?

CHAIR: Member for Hinchinbrook, let us get this sorted out. You have come in about sixth bat. You have a big bat and you are going to try to swing it. Let us go by the proper processes. You had already asked the minister a question. He was in the process of answering it. I would appreciate it if you would let him finish answering the question.

Dr LYNHAM: Firstly, member for Hinchinbrook, I am very aware of the significant fears regarding the health of various waterways in Northern and Central Queensland after Cyclone Debbie and the call for funding and the creation of a new river improvement trust. It has been in the media. The member for Mirani has been very vocal in the parliament and has also made representations to me regarding this very issue because he cares about his local electorate. The Department of Natural Resources and Mines is currently preparing a contract with the State Council of River Trusts for 2017-18 funding. Funding remains consistent, with up to \$600,000 available to support priority works around the state.

Mr CRIPPS: That is the annual grant funding, isn't it?

Dr LYNHAM: This has been the general level of funding—I was just getting to that—

Mr CRIPPS: I agree.

Dr LYNHAM:—for river improvement trusts. They can also access additional funding through their relevant local governments by a precept under the River Improvement Trust Act 1940.

Mr CRIPPS: Of course, that is not my question, is it?

Dr LYNHAM: My department continues to work closely with the state council to ensure that available funding is strategically allocated to support state priorities into the future. You may be aware also that with Cyclone Marcia—

Mr CRIPPS: I raise a point of order, Mr Chairman. My question was rather specific about facilitating the ability of farmers to go into creek beds with machinery to carry out restoration works and clean-up works associated with the cyclone. I am aware of the annual precept paid to the State Council of River Trusts. I am following up on an issue raised by a member in relation to specifically any regulations or legislation preventing landowners from doing what, as he described in his words, 'they know is best for their area'. Are you facilitating that request from the member for Mirani to enable landowners to undertake those restoration works?

Dr LYNHAM: The Don River Improvement Trust has approached my staff in the central region seeking support for field inspections and application for funding to deal with the damage caused by Cyclone Debbie. I have asked my department to assist. Specifically to your point, I have asked the department to engage with affected landholders in the area to be explicitly clear with them regarding the circumstances, as you relate, that a person can undertake works in a watercourse for the purpose of the protection of his property—which is obviously removing damage, siltation et cetera.

I have also instructed my department to investigate options for obtaining additional sources of funding to assist in this matter for water rehabilitation post Cyclone Debbie. There is \$15 million of additional funding available to help support the communities hardest hit by Cyclone Debbie and the

associated flooding. You may recall after Cyclone Marcia—the member for Keppel will recall—that we assisted the City of Rockhampton with a grant program to assist them in clearing the debris from their waterways and having access to them.

Mr CRIPPS: Thank you, Minister.

Dr LYNHAM: May I continue?

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, you have made it quite clear—

Dr LYNHAM: With the NDRRA category D funding, the priorities and details of how these funds will be delivered are yet to be finalised, and it is expected that local governments—

Mr CRIPPS: I raise a point of order, Mr Chairman. My question was not about funding; it was about any barriers to the legislation or regulations. I was quite clear about that. I am satisfied with the minister's answer. My next question—

CHAIR: No. I am not satisfied with the minister's answer. I am running this show, not you. You have asked the question. Let the minister answer the question in the way that he wants to answer it. If this keeps up, we will go downstairs and we will have a talk about it and take up your own time. It is up to you.

Mr CRIPPS: The minister is taking up my time.

CHAIR: No. You are taking up time.

Mr CRIPPS: He has answered the question to the best of his ability.

CHAIR: Order!

Mr CRIPPS: My question did not relate to funding, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: Do you want to stay here for the rest of this meeting? If you do, I would suggest that you try to understand that I am being as fair as I possibly can. I cannot be fair if you keep jumping in over the top of the minister. Let him answer the question.

Dr LYNHAM: Thank you, Mr Chair. As I said before, there are specific features of every watercourse in relation to where access can be obtained to remove debris. I have asked my department to engage with each individual affected landholder to be explicitly clear in which circumstances they can enter to clear and cannot enter to clear.

Mr CRIPPS: You have said that before.

Dr LYNHAM: I did.

Mr CRIPPS: Now you are repeating yourself.

Dr LYNHAM: You did not seem to really get it in the first place.

Mr CRIPPS: I got it. I was listening.

Mrs LAUGA: I raise a point of order, Mr Chair. I understand that you just made a ruling and asked the member to stop interjecting after he has asked the question and to let the minister answer the question. The member is continuing to interject whilst the minister is speaking. I ask for your guidance.

CHAIR: I am going to warn the member for Hinchinbrook under standing order 185(1), as your conduct is grossly disorderly and disruptive. If it continues, I will have no option but to ask the honourable member to withdraw from the hearing, and I will do it if you keep going. Respect for one another is what I want.

Dr LYNHAM: I will move quickly to the conclusion of this question by simply repeating that the Queensland government is trying to assist these farmers. We have put \$110 million on the table. They had the opportunity to ask the Prime Minister directly for extra funding and they did not. Specifically, each individual farmer has individual circumstances regarding access into that creek. I am happy to take that on notice and get back to the member for Hinchinbrook regarding any particular areas or any particular farmer or grower who may have some concerns and I am happy to assist. We are out there assisting people affected by Cyclone Debbie. We are not, as the LNP federal government is doing, trying to impede the restoration of North Queensland after Cyclone Debbie. We are the government assisting, not the government blocking.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, what is the current FTE strength of GSQ?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. I am happy to pass that on to the director-general or the chief finance officer.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, would you be prepared to take that on notice while the chief finance officer is trying to find the information?

Ms Platt: As at 30 June it was 81.6 FTEs.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, will you provide a guarantee to the committee that the current FTE strength of GSQ will not be reduced?

Dr LYNHAM: There are no plans for a reduction of this strength. It seems bold for a government that cut 14,000 public servants to suggest—

Mr CRIPPS: Mr Chairman, I raise a point of order. That was a pretty straightforward question.

Dr LYNHAM: And I said there were no plans for a reduction.

Mr CRIPPS: There was no embellishment. It was a straight question.

CHAIR: It was a straightforward question and the minister is answering it.

Mr CRIPPS: There are no plans. Is that the minister's answer?

Dr LYNHAM: I have been advised by the director-general that there are no plans to cut GSQ staff.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, in addition to the service standard measure on page 7 of the SDS relating to exploration applications being decided within 12 months, what has been the average length of time for an exploration permit to be decided for coal, mineral, and petroleum and gas for the last three years? If it is possible to get that figure separately, I would be grateful.

Mr Purtill: We should be able to get that for you by the end of the session. I will ask the officers to get you the specifics.

Mr CRIPPS: I am obliged. I refer to page 6 of the SDS and the service area highlights to deliver the Queensland Gas Supply and Demand Action Plan. The minister's media release of 8 July 2015 stated that the action plan would be released in the first quarter of 2016. The minister's media release of 15 May this year advises that the development of the action plan is underway—more than 12 months after it was meant to be completed. The Queensland Gas Supply and Demand Action Plan is now 18 months overdue. Why is the action plan now 18 months overdue and when will it be finally completed and released?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Hinchinbrook for the question. Obviously he would have read the media reports, seen the issues we have with gas in this state and realised that we are working in a very dynamic field. Secondly, this is a consultative government and a government that is proud of its consultation record. I dare say had you been consultative you might have outlasted your three-year stay in office.

This government prides itself on consultation. This piece of work, as with any piece of work that we are producing, has a strong consultation basis and the gas action plan is no different. We have consulted with the community in regard to this. It is an area that requires strong social licence, so a great deal of community consultation was achieved with the gas action plan, but it has been a moving feast thanks, again, to your federal counterparts. The federal government has changed its policy time and time again regarding gas and does not really reach a conclusion. It still, in my opinion, has not reached a conclusion except to damage Queensland's reputation and damage Queensland's royalty base with its particular plan.

We have responded to domestic gas issues and they have taken priority. We have set aside acreage for domestic gas production. We have also engaged with small- to medium-size players. As I said before in my response to the member for Bundamba's question, a lot of these players are Australian companies, as you would realise, and nothing would be better than to have that gas produced from Australian acreage going to Australian industry from Australian companies, but we have put our bid out there to the federal government for infrastructure to support this. As you know, common-use infrastructure is a barrier to gas being brought to our industrial markets—our domestic markets—and we have asked for federal government assistance with this as well.

Mr CRIPPS: With all due respect, Minister, can I bring you back to the question about when the action plan will be completed and released?

Dr LYNHAM: It will be completed and released very shortly. To summarise, there are two reasons for the delay.

Mr CRIPPS: 'Very shortly' in the biblical sense or in the calendar sense?

Dr LYNHAM: The two reasons are that we are a government which consults and we have had to deal with a moving feast courtesy of the federal LNP government with its inaction, misaction and distraction on gas and gas supply for the Australian domestic market.

Mr CRIPPS: In talking about gas supply, Minister, I refer to page 6 of the SDS and the service area description of identifying critical resources requiring protection for the future. In relation to the government's prospective gas production land reservation policy, has any modelling been undertaken on the impact that the implementation of a domestic gas reservation policy will have on the domestic gas price? If so, will you provide the results of that modelling?

Dr LYNHAM: Thank you for the question. Our policy is to have acreage available for domestic gas reservation. If you are referring to a policy of Western Australia, it is a very different policy from the Western Australian policy of gas reservation. As I have said, it always has been a pilot program of 58 square kilometres. It has been a very successful pilot program. We have released further acreage, but I think you would have to agree that cost pressures can be reduced by increasing supply. Supply is the key. Unlike artificial restrictions put in place by the federal government—and I hope you made representations to your federal government colleagues when they were up here regarding the ineptitude of their response, because you understand how this will affect Queensland's royalties—

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, what about the question whether any modelling has been done to indicate if the policy that your government is implementing will have an impact on the domestic gas price?

Dr LYNHAM: No such modelling has been done by my department, but you will have Minister Bailey here for estimates in the future. It might be a question that I can assist you with by redirecting that to Minister Bailey.

Mr CRIPPS: In regard to those gas tenures that you have been describing as very successful, with respect to those gas tenures released and those identified for release under the prospective gas production land reservation policy, when will the first gas be produced from those tenures and available to the domestic market?

Dr LYNHAM: For the pilot program—the 58 square kilometres—the tender process is still in progress. It is nearing completion, but it is a matter for the market when that gas will be produced to the market. It depends on who wins and their negotiation with us on when they commence gas production.

CHAIR: The time for opposition questions has expired. Minister, in reference to page 2 of the SDS, will you please detail to the committee how the Palaszczuk government has delivered for north-west Queensland?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the chair for the question. I am glad the member recognises the importance of the north-west to the Queensland economy. Today I have released a strategic blueprint for Queensland's North-West Minerals Province. This is the result of extensive work by the North West Minerals Province Taskforce, made up of representatives from government, industry and stakeholders across the region. I would like to thank the task force for its report and the contribution it has made to the future of this important region. The task force provided recommendations to government to ensure mining in the region survives and thrives. Those recommendations included the efficient provision of key enabling infrastructure, better approval processes, encouraging the processing of waste material, driving greater exploration success and attracting new investment capital. These recommendations have been carefully assessed in developing initiatives for the strategic blueprint released today.

The North-West Minerals Province has delivered significant benefits to the state over an extended period of time. A number of more significant mining operations in the region have reached or are about to reach the end of their operational lives, but this is not just about the north-west. Its future is tied to the whole state's future. The lack of renewal and resource projects generally may have a significant structural impact on the region and wider Queensland economy. It is critical for the region and the state that we stimulate exploration investment and identify new job-creating projects in the north-west.

The Treasurer announced in the budget \$30.9 million to facilitate continued resource sector development. I can now detail how this will be invested. It will fund large-scale geological surveys to identify new commercial deposits; a four-year program to support exploration in greenfield and high-risk areas; more international promotion to investors including an annual investor forum in Townsville; and red-tape reduction for explorers including a hands-on team to help smaller miners get their projects over the investment line.

To help diversify the economy and protect against the swings in commodity prices, the blueprint funds a long-term regional economic diversification strategy. This includes an integrated agriculture plan and a visitor survey to identify and drive palaeo- and ecotourism opportunities. We will set up a blueprint implementation team in Mount Isa to coordinate this effort which will include running a North West Futures Forum later this year to bring experts and locals together to implement the blueprint.

The North-West Minerals Province has been a resources powerhouse of jobs and economic growth for this state for almost a century. The blueprint will underpin the next wave of resource development and a new industry for the north-west. I would like to table for the benefit of the committee a release by the Queensland Resources Council which states—

The Queensland Resources Council ... welcomes the state government's ongoing commitment to the development of the mineral rich North West Minerals Province as a major driver of prosperity in North Queensland.

QRC Chief Executive Ian Macfarlane said the targeted incentives announced by Minister Lynham would encourage investment and deliver jobs for regional communities.

"The QRC commends the Palaszczuk government on its proactive and consultative approach by working with industry, local government, unions and the community to ensure all stakeholders were considered in mapping out this blueprint for the North West," Mr Macfarlane said.

"Locating a hyperspectral logger in Mount Isa at the government's existing drill core facility is an excellent initiative. It's a simple practical approach that can deliver cost savings and efficiencies for explorers in the region.

Mr Chair, one of the world's largest zinc companies, Teck, has been granted a tenure to explore 102 square kilometres near Cloncurry which will be a huge shot in the arm should that exploration be successful in that local community.

CHAIR: Minister, I note that what you wanted to table you read into *Hansard*, so there is probably no need to have it tabled. Are you happy with that?

Dr LYNHAM: I am very happy with that.

CHAIR: As a former coalminer—and I consider myself a local representative of coalminers right across Queensland—could you inform the committee of the progress made in implementing the recommendations from the Monash review into combatting coal workers' pneumoconiosis?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. At this stage I would also like to acknowledge the member for Bundamba for her work on the select committee and the member for Barron River, who is also on the select committee.

Mrs MILLER: Minister, could you also comment on our report—

CHAIR: No, he cannot at the moment. He is commenting on my question.

Dr LYNHAM: As I said all along, I am absolutely committed, as other members here are, to fixing this problem for good as quickly as possible, and that is exactly what this government is delivering on. We have delivered on our commitment to address coal workers' pneumoconiosis by ensuring risk from respirable dust exposure is minimised, disease is detected early and a safety net for workers is available.

When we became aware of a small number of cases back in 2015, I acted promptly to address this problem. I announced a five-point plan which included the Monash review. Alongside new dust control and monitoring standards, significant reforms have flowed from the independent review by the Monash University in collaboration with the University of Illinois, Chicago into the Coal Mine Workers' Health Scheme. I acknowledge Professor Cohen's support for this review. He is also part of an implementation team, and I note that you have accessed his expertise extensively as part of your review.

Mrs MILLER: Yes.

Dr LYNHAM: The review identified issues including the quality, reading and reporting of chest X-rays and spirometry, and the failure to adequately survey the respiratory health of the workforce. Immediate action was taken to address these concerns and restore confidence in the health scheme. Since July 2016 all coalmine worker chest X-rays under the health scheme have been assessed at least twice—first by an Australian radiologist and then by US based experts. As of 10 July 2017, 11,274 X-rays have been transferred to the US for reading to the International Labour Organization classification. As of 14 July, unfortunately 23 confirmed cases of coal workers' pneumoconiosis have been reported to the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. Only one case of coal workers' pneumoconiosis has been detected after positive identification during chest X-ray screening performed in the United States. Four other cases, unfortunately, have also been detected since the dual-read commenced. In these cases a differential diagnosis was made and a CT scan requested. The CT scan did in fact identify CWP in those cases.

As we pass the 12-month anniversary of the Monash review, I am pleased to advise that the majority of recommendations have now been implemented or have been finalised. Most notably, the reforms thus far include a tender for the appointment of an Australian based radiology provider to

dual-read chest X-rays to international standard using B reader trained radiologists; the development of stringent requirements for facilities taking these X-rays; draft spirometry standards developed by the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand; opening of applications for a register of accredited doctors, spirometry practitioners and X-ray imaging clinics that are capable, qualified, trained and experienced in performing health assessments for coalmine workers; tenders for the delivery of a doctor training program and the provision of accredited services to assess health providers seeking to be registered; the appointment of Ernst & Young to design an audit program for the reform scheme including an audit of registered doctors and clinics and the accreditation provider; and engagement of the department's eHealth division to design a new electronic management system for coal records.

Information for current and former workers about the disease has been disseminated to mine sites and to medical practitioners and is available online. The department has also engaged a communications specialist to develop an online information portal for workers by September 2017.

There is a tender for a research body to undertake a scoping study on the coalmine worker health dataset currently held by the department to inform future research and surveillance opportunities. In addition, a number of regulatory amendments took effect on 1 January 2017 to ensure workers undergo a chest X-ray and respiratory function test at least, at this stage, every five years for underground coalmine workers and every 10 years for above-ground workers. Also, from 1 January 2017, retiring coalmine workers have had the opportunity to undergo a retirement examination paid for by the employer.

My colleague the Hon. Grace Grace, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, is working to ensure there is a compensation safety net for those affected by the disease. I will continue to work with the coal operators, the unions and the medical profession until this disease is again confined to history.

I recognise the hard work of the select committee over the last few months. It is my duty as the responsible minister to work to protect Queensland miners as quickly as possible, and that is what I have done. I have not wasted a moment in having the Monash review undertaken and implementing these recommendations that he provided to ensure the core medical components are in place and working soundly. This is not to detract from the work done by the select committee, which the government is preparing a response to as we speak.

Mrs LAUGA: Minister, I refer to page 2 of the SDS and the objective of 'creating jobs and a diverse economy by stimulating economic growth through the responsible use of our natural resources'. Will the minister please provide examples of projects which facilitate this objective in the resource sector?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. The resources sector provides a great many jobs for Queenslanders, and the flow-on effects for the economy should not be understated. Although global commodity prices are low, investment activity in Queensland is continuing to flourish under our watch. Queensland remains an attractive proposition for investment in the resources sector. In 2015-16, Queensland's mining sector contributed \$21.5 billion to the gross state product. This translates into more than 62,000 direct jobs across coal and metals mining and the petroleum industry. As we know, there are many more indirect jobs throughout this state.

In the six-month period to May 2017, jobs in the coal industry alone increased by 20 per cent to 22,000 jobs, and this number is set to keep growing. Employment in the resources sector is predicted to grow, and the Palaszczuk government is doing what it can to ensure that Queensland is still a destination of choice for resources investment. This continued growth continues to yield jobs for regional Queenslanders, and it is sustained economic growth.

This year Queensland has seen a number of coalmines re-enter production, including Batchfire Resources' Callide mine, QCoal and JFE Steel's Byerwen joint venture and Stanmore's Isaac Plains. In June this year, the Byerwen coal project began construction. This means up to 350 jobs for Queenslanders during the construction phase and up to 545 jobs during the project's operation. The project alone is expected to add an additional \$289 million of direct value per year to the regional economy and a further \$143 million per year to the wider Queensland economy.

This is just the first of many examples of the Palaszczuk government's objective to create jobs and a diverse economy. However, it is not just coalmines we have seen kicking off again. Investment in exploration in Queensland has been increasing, with exploration up over the six-month period to March 2017 by \$23 million. This means a \$168 million investment in exploration in Queensland over the last six months and an additional 3,300 jobs looking for the minerals of the future.

Let us not forget Queensland's metals industry. Base metal prices have been improving significantly since 2015. CuDECO's Rocklands Copper Project, which saw mining recommence in March this year, will see approximately 230 jobs as production ramps up. In addition to CuDECO, Capricorn Copper was granted prescribed project status by the Coordinator-General in April this year. This \$125 million project north of Mount Isa is set to reopen this year. This will translate to an additional 90 construction jobs and more than 200 operational jobs. Only on Monday, Capricorn Copper announced they now have a final funding agreement to proceed. Capricorn Copper's investment is clear evidence of the opportunities to be had in Queensland. The Palaszczuk government continues to drive investment in jobs growth across regional Queensland. We will continue to support the sustainable development of our resources sector.

Mrs MILLER: Minister, in 2006, premier Peter Beattie announced during my fourth re-election campaign that the permanent mining memorial for Queensland would be located at Redbank in my electorate. I am known for my patience, but I am getting a bit cranky because 11 years later it still has not been built. Could you update the committee on how the permanent Queensland miners memorial is going?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Bundamba for her question. It is with absolute pleasure I can confirm that a state miners memorial will be located at the old Redbank Rifle Range near the Redbank sports centre alongside the M2 motorway in Redbank, Ipswich. I would like to pay tribute to the member for Bundamba, who tirelessly lobbied for this monument as far back as 2006. If the lobbying back then was as it is now, I am sure the members back in 2006 would have been harangued, as I am now, about this memorial. It is a fabulous memorial. I would also like to point out that this monument is becoming a reality thanks to Mr George Pringle, a former Ipswich coalminer and your father, along with the efforts of countless former mine workers from the local area and also their representatives, the CFMEU mining division.

This project was originally, as you said, supported by former Queensland premier Peter Beattie. It pleases me that this project is finally coming to fruition. It is an important project to remember those workers who have lost their lives in the mining industry in Queensland. Mr Scott Maxwell, a well-known Queensland artist who has worked on many pieces of public art, completed the design of the miners memorial monument following an assessment process undertaken through the public arts unit of the former department of public works. The artist has confirmed that the miners memorial monument has been fabricated and is ready for installation once site works are complete. I am advised that work at the site will commence shortly. I am looking forward to updates on its progress. Queensland's 2017 Miners Memorial Day service will be held on 19 September 2017 at the site, and the monument will be previewed at the same time as the service.

I remember the stress when we first came into government and you realised that the monument was not going to proceed at that site. I reflect back to the time you took me to the site and what a poignant site it is for people driving past. The community of Redbank Plains will be able to reflect on their heritage. I know the last coalmine in Ipswich has gone so that heritage is strong in your area. That memorial will recognise those who have worked in the industry and those who have lost their lives. It will also serve as a reminder for those driving past. They will always recognise the heritage that was your area, the heritage that was Ipswich and the heritage of coalmining in that wonderful area.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, is there a reason why the Resources Investment Commissioner is not present? I notice that the commissioner for mine safety is present, but the Resources Investment Commissioner is not present.

Dr LYNHAM: I am happy to talk about the Resources Investment Commissioner.

Mr CRIPPS: I did not ask a question. I asked if there was a particular reason why he is not present.

Dr LYNHAM: I am advised that he is at a mining conference for investors. Also, it is not a statutory position, I am advised.

Mr CRIPPS: I refer to page 2 of the SDS and the objective of 'creating jobs and a diverse economy by stimulating economic growth through the responsible use of our natural resources'. Minister, I refer to the answer to question on notice No. 175 from May 2015 and the confirmation that you gave that the Palaszczuk government would be continuing to pursue the ResourcesQ initiative. Further to that answer, can you advise the committee what further analysis of the ResourcesQ strategy has been undertaken?

Mr Purtill: Many of the actions that have come out of ResourcesQ continue to be progressed with, just simply not under that specific banner. Ones that spring to mind are elements of the exploration acreage releases. For example, the component of the Cooper Basin work that was done for the 11,000 square kilometres of acreage is consistent with that. We are also very keen to make sure that we are implementing a range of initiatives that are consistent with that work that was done with government and industry, and also I suppose in a new contemporary setting where we are trying to, if you like, reduce the barriers for land access by implementing more proactive assessment work—for example, to identify opportunities to do regional groundwater modelling and assessment ahead of additional development opportunities, biodiversity and bioregional assessments either with or in tandem with Geoscience Australia or other interested parties.

We are also looking at opportunities to engage more deeply and earlier prior to exploration releases, which has been incredibly successful in the last acreage release. Traditionally, the model has been to release land, advertise in the newspaper and then go and talk to landholders and community members. We have flipped that around now and we are going and speaking with communities, traditional owners and local governments prior to land releases. Specifically, this is to get more information into the hands of those people who might be directly affected by resource development so that we can get a far more harmonious outcome.

All of that work that I have outlined is reasonably consistent with the type of work that came out of ResourcesQ. One of the encouraging elements about the world of exploration and resource development is that there is a very strong, deep-seated support for it. You do not hear much about it, but there is strong support particularly in communities that are desiring to diversify their economies.

Mr CRIPPS: One of the things you indicated in your answer to that question on notice, Minister, was that your department was in the process of establishing an advisory committee to continue dialogue with industry about those ResourcesQ initiatives. Was that advisory committee established? If it was, can you provide the membership of that committee and how many times it has convened?

Dr LYNHAM: That was replaced with the resources round table. These initiatives were discussed at that round table. The two round tables have been a wonderful initiative—the resources round table and the Resources Community Roundtable. There was genuine consultation at both forums. This is a very open, consultative government.

Mr CRIPPS: I refer to page 3 of the SDS and the service area objective relating to the sustainable management of Queensland's water resources. On 22 August 2015, you stated—

The Gilbert River catchment reserves will not be made available until after the environmental impact assessment process for the proposed Integrated Food and Energy Developments project in the Gulf has been completed.

The EIS process for the IFED process lapsed on 5 September last year. It has been 10 months since that occurred. When will the water reserves be released in the Gilbert catchment?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. If I can answer directly about the scientific study that you talked about in your question, the scientific study was only for the purposes of the IFED project. It was an independent scientific study paid for by IFED, but since that project has lapsed the water resources will be allocated in an environmentally sustainable way. We are proposing to make available up to a total of 92,500 megalitres of general reserve unallocated water from the Gilbert and also from the Cloncurry, which you would realise is a tributary of the Flinders River, in the gulf water plan. We have had two additional tenders of 194,220 megalitres of water. That was in the Flinders. The release of the water is to be made available through a fixed price sale but that is after engagement with the landholders in that area.

We want to make sure that we consult with them first and to make sure this is an appropriate mechanism for sale of the water. The price will be based on the previous prices that we obtained on the water from the Flinders. Rather than a tender, it will be a fixed-price sale. We believe that this is probably the most efficient way to allocate that water at this time, but we want to bed that down with the landholders. The release of this water will support sustainable agricultural development in these areas through a faster and simpler fixed-price process. It is aimed at genuine shovel-ready or existing projects to ensure the water is utilised quickly and the water licence will be conditioned to ensure the use of the water for on-ground development.

Mr CRIPPS: That 92½ thousand megalitres is going to be in the Gilbert catchment?

Dr LYNHAM: In the Gilbert and a small portion in the Cloncurry River, which is part of the Flinders catchment. If my department proceeds with this fixed-price sale, the terms of sale for this fixed-price sale will be available on my department's website. My department will also be holding information

sessions prior to its release. My department is anticipating to be accepting applications for this water from late August, with the opportunity remaining open to ensure proponents can apply at any time when they have fully considered and can address the requirements outlined in the terms of sale.

Mr CRIPPS: I am sure you are aware that the release of about 90,000-odd megalitres in the Gilbert represents much less than a quarter of the general reserve held in that catchment. What is the reason that your department is not prepared to make available the water that is in the general reserve in the Gilbert catchment?

Dr LYNHAM: As you would realise, we want that water to be used immediately for shovel-ready projects. Our assessment is that at this stage 92,500 megalitres of water can be used for shovel-ready projects. Do you have anything to add on that, DG?

Mr Purtill: Only the split—the 7,500 megalitres in the Cloncurry.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, how can the department judge what the current market demand for unallocated water in the Gilbert catchment is without a full release and a tendering process similar to that which has occurred on a couple of occasions in the Flinders catchment?

Dr LYNHAM: Because we consult with the local community. We have consulted extensively with mayors such as Warren Devlin regarding this release. We have also consulted with the local members in that area regarding the release of this water. We are also trying to reduce red tape to get this water out—

Mr CRIPPS: Local members of parliament?

Dr LYNHAM: Members of parliament as well. We are trying to reduce red tape regarding the release of this water. No tender bidders will be disadvantaged; it is a fixed-price process. It does not mean that we will not be precluding a late tender; it is just a faster, more efficient process to get water out more quickly. As I said, we have been consulting at length with the local community. One of those members of the local community is the mayor, Warren Devlin, who has been very passionate about how this water should be used in his local community. I think you would agree that consultation is extremely important with such a vital resource as water to make sure it is allocated correctly and fairly, according to what the local community wants. The 92,000 does not preclude further releases.

Mr CRIPPS: I refer to page 2 of the SDS, which refers to the sustainable management of native vegetation as a key priority. Your answer to question on notice No. 568 states that the Queensland government does not consider vegetation management activities associated with thinning, fodder harvesting, rural residential development, urban land use and privately owned plantations to be clearing to establish pasture. Why does the Queensland 2015 *State of the environment* report assert on page 17 that these vegetation management activities are used to establish pasture?

Dr LYNHAM: Can I get those vegetation activities again that you asked for?

Mr CRIPPS: They were thinning, fodder harvesting, rural residential development, urban land use and privately owned plantations, as outlined in question on notice No. 568 and the answer to that which you provided. You have indicated that the Queensland government does not consider those activities to be clearing of vegetation to establish pasture, but the Queensland 2015 *State of the environment* report does assert that on page 17 of that report. Why is there an inconsistency between the Queensland *State of the environment* report and your answer to question on notice No. 568?

Dr LYNHAM: As you know, the *State of the environment* was a matter for Dr Miles. I am happy to take that on notice. I will also liaise with Minister Miles. He might provide an answer in his estimates hearing regarding that.

Mr CRIPPS: For clarification of that matter, I did ask Minister Miles that question on notice in the parliament and he told me to ask you the question about whether or not those vegetation management activities constituted clearing for the purposes of establishing pasture, which I did in question on notice No. 568 and you said it was not. My concern is that the Minister for Environment is asserting in a report he has tabled in parliament that those vegetation management activities are clearing for the establishment of pasture, but your answer to my question says that they are not.

Dr LYNHAM: I will provide an appropriate response for you. It is obviously a matter of some complexity. I am happy to provide a response for you.

Mr CRIPPS: I appreciate that.

Mr KNUTH: In the department's overview on page 2 of the SDS for the Department of Natural Resources and Mines it states that protecting the environment by ensuring sustainable management of our natural resources, supporting responsible development and protecting the Great Barrier Reef are

key goals of the department. Can you explain why the property in the cape Springvale Station was purchased by the government in 2016 to stop tonnes of sediment from the property washing from the West Normanby River into the Great Barrier Reef and then mining leases were approved—a gold and a tin mine—on Springvale Station? Why is the department of environment taking the department of natural resources to court regarding this?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. I note the press statements regarding that. The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection purchased Springvale Station on 25 May 2016. It purchased the property to conduct activities to reduce sediment run-off into the Great Barrier Reef, as you correctly stated. Two mining lease applications located on Springvale Station have been lodged with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. These applications for alluvial tin and gold—

CHAIR: Excuse me, Minister, can I check please to make sure this is not before the courts.

Dr LYNHAM: I am happy to go through the history. I will couch my answer based on my concerns that there are some issues. The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection wrote to my department recently and advised that they had commenced a process which will lead to the dedication of Springvale Station as a conservation park, a class of protected area under the Nature Conservation Act. This information has been put to the applicants for mining lease Nos 100057 and 100058. They are currently being provided with an opportunity to make submissions before these applications are decided. Before deciding on the grant of the mining leases, as with any mining lease—I take the granting of a mining lease very seriously indeed—I will consider these submissions and the statutory criteria, including if these leases are in the public interest.

Mr KNUTH: In part you answered this question, but you might have to elaborate. I refer to service area 'source of revenue' on page 11 of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines Service Delivery Statements in relation to water pricing and allocation from the northern rivers system such as the Flinders and the Gilbert. Can you please advise if the department is looking at alternative pricing and allocation models to the current tender based process?

Dr LYNHAM: As I said in my answer to the member for Hinchinbrook, the Gilbert is a proposed fixed-price contract, and that price is based on the water that was purchased from the adjacent Flinders catchment. We will be consulting at length with the local community and, again, the local members and the mayor to make sure this is an acceptable way forward.

Mr CRIPPS: On that Gilbert release, in my previous question I asked when those reserve water allocations are going to be released. I know you have answered that you are consulting, but when will that consultation come to an end and when will you release the water?

Dr LYNHAM: In late August is my response.

Mr CRIPPS: In August this year?

Dr LYNHAM: Late August. My department is anticipating to be accepting applications for the water from late August.

Mr CRIPPS: 2017?

Dr LYNHAM: 2017.

Mr CRIPPS: Regarding those vegetation self-assessable codes and further to your answer to question on notice 568, would you agree that the purpose of the self-assessable code to manage regrowth vegetation is to manage regrowth vegetation?

Dr LYNHAM: As you know, we had the Cardno review looking at self-assessable codes. We had to ensure the codes were consistent. We have had outcomes of the review and feedback from the rural industry and conservation groups. It is still out for consultation because peak stakeholders have asked us to continue with the consultation process regarding the self-assessable codes. The self-assessable codes are for thinning and fodder harvesting. If you are talking about fodder harvesting and regrowth of, say, brigalow for fodder harvesting, it is regrowth, but also you are talking about mulga—

Mr CRIPPS: Can I just clarify? I know that thinning and fodder harvesting are the two that are under consultation at the moment, but my question specifically is about the SAC regarding regrowth. Would you agree that the purpose of the self-assessable code to manage regrowth vegetation is to manage regrowth? I would have thought it stands to reason.

Dr LYNHAM: That self-assessable code has not been out for public consultation yet.

Mr CRIPPS: Yes, I know.

Dr LYNHAM: We will take that on board when the public consultation is out there and look at that self-assessable code. We were sincere in retaining self-assessable codes, but we are also sincere in maintaining vegetation protection in Queensland.

Mr CRIPPS: It is not a trick question. I am just trying to confirm that the purpose of the self-assessable code for managing regrowth is to manage regrowth. I have another question about confirming that the purpose of the self-assessable code for managing—

Dr LYNHAM: Can I ask: are you worried that it is not to protect regrowth?

Mr CRIPPS: Yes.

Dr LYNHAM: Do you think there is some sort of—

Mr CRIPPS: Would you agree with that statement that the purpose of the self-assessable code to manage regrowth vegetation is to manage regrowth vegetation?

Dr LYNHAM: But it is your code.

Mr CRIPPS: I know that.

Dr LYNHAM: You made the code to manage regrowth on the self-assessable code.

Mr CRIPPS: Correct.

Dr LYNHAM: What we have done with the Cardno report is make sure these codes meet with our commitment to reinstate Queensland's leading vegetation management laws.

Mr CRIPPS: I know that my time is running out. What I am trying to address—and I have referred to question on notice 568 on a couple of occasions. That answer you gave on a couple of occasions indicates to me, with respect to managing encroachment and managing regrowth, that you believe that those codes can be used to establish pasture, whereas what I am trying to establish for the purposes of these proceedings is that the purpose of the SAC for regrowth and the SAC for managing encroachment is what they are named after—

Dr LYNHAM: I understand. There was a previous question to me regarding that. I am happy to take that on notice and provide you with an appropriate response.

Mr CRIPPS: I am delighted.

Mr CRAWFORD: Can you advise the actions taken by government to assist in the supply of gas to domestic users at a time when it is difficult to obtain gas supplies at competitive prices?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Barron River for his question. The situation in the eastern Australian gas market is complex. Gas supplies in the eastern Australian market are tight and prices have increased significantly. This has been driven by several factors including the move to more expensive gas as low-cost reserves are depleted, the lack of liquids and oil in new gas basins and demand pressure from LNG exports. Moratoria and other forms of bans in New South Wales, Victoria and the Northern Territory that have delayed the development of new sources of gas have not helped. The Palaszczuk government has continued to do the heavy lifting for gas supply on the east coast and supported the gas industry in Queensland. Part of that support has been the continued development of the Surat Basin and the development of our LNG industry which is benefited by a bipartisan approach.

The unfortunate thing is that, as changing circumstances require new approaches, the LNP opposition has failed to keep up. Earlier this year we announced the release of land under the Australian market supply condition. The provision has been in the petroleum and gas act since 2011 and was inserted in anticipation of future supply problems. This provision was available to those opposite during their time but it was not used. In part, we used the Australian market supply condition as a means of shaking up the market. It was disappointing that the opposition were critical of our policy, saying that we should have kept the gas in Queensland. As the opposition should have been aware, the Australian Constitution would have made that extremely difficult indeed. However, we were successful in our efforts to shake up the market when the federal energy and environment minister introduced the Australian Domestic Gas Security Mechanism, which threatened to stop the export of Queensland gas. The interesting thing is that we did not hear a word of criticism from the LNP opposition—not a word—against their good mate the Prime Minister.

Our policy is to put more gas into the market. The federal government's policy is to punish Queensland and to help New South Wales, which still refuses to make any effort to produce gas in their state. More gas is the answer. As the LNG plants reach capacity, more gas will be available to the domestic market. More gas could come from the Galilee and Bowen basins if the Commonwealth were to support a pipeline linking these basins to the east coast grid. The Commonwealth's response was to call NAIF, which is an organisation that has not got a cent out the door. When the Commonwealth made

a grab for our gas they did not even bother to pick up the phone to call me or the Premier. We need to see the opposition support Queensland's case. We need them to say to their LNP friends in Canberra, and indeed their friends who were up here in Brisbane last weekend, to support gas infrastructure in Queensland, where they have a government prepared to do the hard work and the heavy lifting. We did not need our colleagues over there to talk about traffic light signals at the LNP state conference: we need them to talk to the Prime Minister about security of domestic gas supply. Now is not the time to go missing in action when it comes to tackling the issue of gas supply on the east coast.

Mr CRIPPS: What about Danny down in Victoria?

Dr LYNHAM: You were the resources minister. You obviously did not even realise that Victoria is still a major producer of offshore gas which enters our market. In New South Wales your mates produced next to nothing for three years—

Mr CRIPPS: Offshore gas is regulated by the federal government too, isn't it?

CHAIR: Members, you have had a little bit of fun. I hope you've got it off your chest and everybody is happy now, but we still have to carry on.

I ask the minister to outline for the committee how the Queensland government is delivering sustainable management of the Great Artesian Basin—this is a very important question—for the benefit of all Queenslanders, particularly those in rural Queensland.

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the chair for his question. I know that as a rural member he has travelled extensively across Queensland and understands the reliance that so much of our communities have on the health of the Great Artesian Basin. Indeed, in my time as the Minister for Natural Resources I have heard numerous stakeholders impress upon me the importance of initiatives such as the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative. I have heard that from local councillors, the Great Artesian Basin Advisory Council and stakeholder groups such as AgForce. I am sure all members are aware that uncontrolled flows from the basin have resulted in significant decline in pressure rates, which in turn leads to flow impacts on both important bores and dependant springs. Since the Beattie Labor government entered into an agreement in 1999 with the then Australian government, successive Queensland governments have ensured that over \$187 million has been spent in this state on bore rehabilitation and piping through the GABSI program.

GABSI provides financial assistance to landholders to rehabilitate water wasting, uncontrolled flowing bores and replace associated open bore drains with piped water reticulation systems. This has saved over 200,000 megalitres of water per annum, which is a remarkable achievement. Indeed, we are now seeing bores that had stopped flowing recommence flowing due to the increase in pressure that GABSI is delivering. When I was talking to the Great Artesian Basin Advisory Council, they mentioned that some of the earlier caps have failed simply because they could not withstand the pressure that has now built up within the Great Artesian Basin. It is a bit perverse, but it is wonderful news to see these failing and being replaced because they simply were not up to the standard they expected due to the recovery of the Great Artesian Basin. In the recent GABSI phase 4, which the Palaszczuk government signed in May 2015, projects totalling \$8.44 million are now delivering water savings of 8,538 megalitres per annum. There can be no doubt that this is a program that enjoys widespread support from all stakeholders and the Palaszczuk government.

On 14 May 2015 I stood up to announce that the Queensland government would provide up to \$5.8 million over two years to extend the GABSI program. In November 2016 I wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Barnaby Joyce, seeking an extension of the GABSI program to allow the Queensland government to continue funding. In April 2017 I again wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister. On 12 May 2017 the Deputy Prime Minister announced \$8 million for water infrastructure upgrades for two years, 2017-19. Whilst significantly less than what was previously made available under GABSI phase 4, I am pleased that Canberra begrudgingly again recognised the importance of GABSI to Queensland. It is not too dissimilar to the limp support for the extension of GABSI by the Liberal Nationals down in Canberra when they could not find money to keep the program running. Regardless, as a result on 13 June I was proud to announce the ongoing participation of the Palaszczuk government in this indispensable scheme by committing up to \$4 million. This is based on Queensland's historic share of federal GABSI moneys.

I recall dragging Tony Abbott to the table. I would love to advise those in attendance exactly what the figure will be, but alas my department is still awaiting information from Canberra on the details of the new program and what the draft project agreement will look like. I think the Deputy Prime Minister should hurry up and get the GABSI funding out before Mr Abbott returns as Prime Minister, because it was Mr Abbott who we dragged kicking and screaming to supply GABSI funding.

Ms LEAHY: Kevin Rudd axed it.

Dr LYNHAM: If Mr Abbott gets in—

CHAIR: Members, I should not have to repeat myself.

Mr CRAWFORD: Minister, can you please update the committee on what the department is doing to support the development of mineral exploration in Queensland?

Dr LYNHAM: Exploration is the lifeblood of the next generation of resource projects, and this government has taken a number of initiatives to sustain the exploration industry in difficult times and maintain continuity. These initiatives are focussed on investing in geoscience programs to increase our knowledge of the state's resources, provide supply of new acreage available for exploration and ensure that we market Queensland as an exploration investment destination of choice. Queensland's inaugural 2016-17 annual exploration program made available 826 square kilometres of land for minerals, coal and petroleum and gas exploration. This plan will give certainty to landholders, traditional owners and, most importantly, explorers.

From the first plan two tenders were released for gas covering areas of 451 square kilometres respectively in the Bowen and Surat basins. Four coal tender areas were released in the Bowen Basin, providing a total of approximately 273 square kilometres. I was pleased to announce earlier today that the minerals tender area of approximately 102 square kilometres has been awarded to Teck Resources, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of a major Canadian miner. The 2017-18 annual exploration plan will be out soon. Further, as I mentioned earlier, we are investing millions of dollars in the north-west through the strategic blueprint. This includes a new four-year \$20 million strategic resources exploration program that will deliver a range of geoscience programs including geochemistry, geophysics, mineral synthesis and research. A collaborative exploration program is underway for 2017 with eight projects supported. Expenditure in the 2017-18 financial year is expected to be \$1 million. As of 30 June 2017, our Exploration Industry Expenditure Concession has provided about \$36 million in financial relief for our exploration sector since March 2016.

Domestic gas supply is a key subject of policy debate, and Queensland has been doing the heavy lifting on this. For the first time this government used legislative powers to release land for gas development that restricts the gas for domestic use. On the back of the positive response I received, I announced that an additional two areas of land totalling 395 square kilometres will be released in the Surat and Bowen basins. The Queensland government is supporting the Queensland Exploration Council to develop a Queensland exploration investment gateway. The gateway is a single go-to point for explorers, investors, brokers, service providers and government to increase exploration and discoveries in this state. We support the exploration sector and the resources sector. When we got into government we offered support; when they got into government they offered increased royalties.

CHAIR: I have a question that I would like to ask which was put to you earlier, Minister, but the response did not have enough detail in it for me. I have visited some 50 properties, corresponded with a number of people and talked to people in the street, so this is pretty important to me. This question is with regard to Tropical Cyclone Debbie. As you know, I told you quite bluntly that it has eroded riverbanks and shifted and dumped enormous amounts of debris and impacted the flow of watercourses, and we need to take this matter quite seriously. Would you please outline what can be done to assist the protection of landholders' properties?

Dr LYNHAM: I understand the significant concerns the chair has raised with regard to this matter. I covered some of this when I answered the member for Hinchinbrook's question, but for the benefit of the member for Mirani I would like to detail this again and provide further information. It will be a pleasure to provide this detail to you without interruption, Mr Chair.

I am aware of significant fears regarding the health of various waterways in northern and central Queensland after Tropical Cyclone Debbie and the call for funding and the creation of new river improvement trusts. I have asked my department to examine the extent of damage in multiple catchments ensuring onsite inspections, aerial photography and engagement with affected landholders. This also includes engaging with local river improvement trusts. In circumstances where stakeholders have sought the establishment of a river improvement trust, I have asked the department to assist landholders in engaging with the local relevant government who is responsible for the creation and administration of river improvement trusts. I have also asked the department to engage with affected landholders and to be explicitly clear regarding the circumstances under which a person can undertake works on a watercourse for the purpose of protection on the property, and I outlined this earlier.

I have also instructed my department to investigate options for obtaining additional sources of funding for waterway rehabilitation post Tropical Cyclone Debbie, and \$15 million in additional funding is available to help support the communities hardest hit by Tropical Cyclone Debbie and associated flooding. This funding will be delivered through an NDRRA category D declaration and funding support, environmental recovery. The funding priorities and details on how the funds will be delivered are yet to be finalised, and it is expected that local governments, river improvement trusts and regional natural resource management bodies can apply, but my department will make further inquiries and provide assistance where possible to those affected where possible.

The Queensland government has put a total of \$110 million on the table to help support the communities hardest hit by Tropical Cyclone Debbie. The government is extremely disappointed at the federal government's failure to match the commitment proposed to be delivered as a natural disaster relief and recovery arrangements category D declaration. This proposed funding did include an environmental component which could have been used to support applications from local governments and river improvement trusts to address the riparian impacts of Tropical Cyclone Debbie and associated flooding.

However, the federal government's failure to provide adequate funding means this opportunity is effectively off the table. I will continue to work with my department and cabinet colleagues to lobby for additional money from Canberra in the identification of opportunities to provide as much as possible. The Queensland government will continue to work with key stakeholders on strategic flood mitigation projects and riparian zone management in Queensland. I would ask those in the LNP to lobby their federal colleagues to have category D funding through the NDRRA given to this state where this state needs that money most, and that that money is towards your local community, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Minister, you will not simply be turning your back on these people, because they are a very important part of Queensland?

Dr LYNHAM: We absolutely have not turned our backs on these people of Queensland—unlike those opposite, who failed to lobby their colleagues when they were at the state conference. As I said before, they would rather talk about frivolous issues at the state conference rather than important issues such as looking after their own communities.

Mrs LAUGA: I refer to page 3 of the SDS. How is the Department of Natural Resources and Mines ensuring that stakeholders, including the Queensland public, can best understand and plan for future flooding events on the Brisbane River?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Keppel for the question. With regard to flooding of the Brisbane River, as you may be aware, recent flooding events across Queensland mean that flooding is a natural disaster that unfortunately all have come to know too well. There would have been media reports in Keppel about the flooding events in the Brisbane River.

As the committee well knows, in January 2011 Queensland experienced a devastating flood that demonstrated the savagery of nature. Sadly, 35 people died in South-East Queensland at that time. In January 2011, then premier Anna Bligh established an independent commission of inquiry to examine the flood disaster. The report was commissioned to examine the chain of events leading up to the floods, all aspects of response and the subsequent aftermath to the flooding events. The committee handed down its final report on 16 March 2012. Amongst the report's findings was recommendation 2.2, which recommended that the Queensland government, along with relevant councils, complete a comprehensive flood study of the Brisbane River catchment that provides analysis of the characteristics of floods on the Brisbane and Bremer rivers and provides flooding probabilities along the stretch of the system.

The final flood study was publicly released in May after extensive work, led by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines and in collaboration with the Brisbane City Council and Ipswich City Council, Somerset and Lockyer Valley regional councils, Seqwater and other state agencies. The flood study along with all of the key technical reports, computer models and information brochures are now available on the Queensland government's business and industry portal, and I strongly recommend interested stakeholders have a look.

This study consisted of several major components—namely, data collation and review, a specialist survey of the Lower Brisbane and Bremer rivers and hydrologic and hydraulic assessments. The hydrologic assessment, completed in June 2015, was undertaken by a consortium of local and internationally recognised experts in hydrology. This hydrologic assessment has developed new methodologies in the analysis for concurrent floods for the Brisbane and Bremer rivers and an innovative simulation framework to account for the high degree of variability of rainfall and complex

behaviour of floods in the large Brisbane River catchment. The hydraulic assessment, completed in December 2016, was undertaken by BMT WBM Proprietary Ltd, a specialist consulting company based in Brisbane. This hydraulic assessment has developed state-of-the-art hydraulic models to run several thousands of computer simulations to identify a suite of design flood events required for determining the flood planning levels, infrastructure design and flood emergency management. An overall technical summary report was completed in February 2017 which integrated and summarised about 3,000 pages of 16 key technical reports from the comprehensive hydrological and hydraulic assessments.

CHAIR: We have run out of time. I call the member for Hinchinbrook.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, I refer to government question on notice No. 5 to which the answer states in part—

... Queensland Government support for the recent Northern Basin Review by the MDBA is conditional on additional assistance being provided to Queensland communities impacted by water recovery.

Can you please explain to the committee what the Queensland government will do if additional assistance is not forthcoming to support communities impacted by water recovery? Do you have a minimum quantum of additional assistance in mind?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for his question. As you know, the governance of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority is mainly a federal government matter and you know our role in this. We agreed with the target reduction from 390 gigalitres to 320 gigalitres. We also asked for flexibility in recovery of this water—we requested flexibility—and that the water come from willing sellers. We specifically said that for our communities that have been affected we want structural adjustments to be fully funded by the federal government and also toolkit measures to be fully funded by the federal government. It is a federal government initiative. We do not think the state should be responsible for the costs involved with this.

We expect a good outcome from this. In terms of my indications when speaking with the Deputy Prime Minister, I have received no negativity regarding this, although I have not received complete affirmation regarding this. We will be working closely with the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the federal government to make sure these communities receive appropriate structural adjustment and compensation for the loss of their water resources to maintain the health of the Murray-Darling Basin program. The regional economic diversification program is funded by the federal Australian government to support the economic base of regional communities, and Queensland has been allocated, for your information, over \$15 million to undertake eight projects to support regional communities with structural adjustment and regional economic diversification. These projects are located at Goondiwindi, St George and Darling Downs, but I can run through those projects for you.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, I am aware of those projects. I draw you back to the answer you gave to the government question on notice in which you said that the government's support for the review is conditional on additional assistance being provided. What is the Queensland government prepared to do if that additional assistance is not forthcoming? I asked previously if you had a quantum of assistance in mind.

Dr LYNHAM: I am not going to pre-empt our negotiations with the federal government, but I think the communities will have a right to protest—and they should—and should receive appropriate representation such as I will be making to the federal government in very strong terms that they should provide structural adjustment to those communities affected. I hope you are not suggesting that they should not.

Mr CRIPPS: No, Minister, I did not say that at all.

Dr LYNHAM: That is fine.

Mr CRIPPS: I thought my question was pretty clear.

Dr LYNHAM: We demand structural adjustment and we are providing. We are the givers to the Murray-Darling Basin and we are providing the water for economic recovery of the Murray-Darling. It is only right and proper that our communities are adequately compensated for that loss to maintain the health of the Murray-Darling Basin. I have been quite forward with the Deputy Prime Minister already. I have received no negative comments from the Deputy Prime Minister, but I also am awaiting affirmation that they will provide structural adjustment and toolkit measures for these communities.

Mr CRIPPS: Non-government question on notice No. 14 states that ecological assessments indicate that under the 320-gigalitre scenario 22 of the 43 environmental indicators will be met but under the previous 390-gigalitre scenario only 21 of the 43 environmental indicators will be met. Given the

environment will now be better off with 70 gigalitres less water being recovered from the northern basin, how can water entitlement holders and local communities in the Queensland section of the basin have confidence in this process and the science behind it? Do you have confidence in it, Minister?

Dr LYNHAM: I have confidence in it, but I suggest you direct that question to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. I have confidence in science and research and they have advised me that with the reduction from 390 to 320 there will be an increase in scientific indicators, but reducing it further to 278 will create more harm to the Murray-Darling Basin system. You must remember that the initial science on the 390 was done in 2011. This is the best and the latest, so with that update down to 320 it is showing that more indicators are present. The latest science has proven that we can do the same or more under 320. With the old science back in 2011 it was 390, so science has benefited our regional communities. I am afraid that with the latest update 278 just simply is not enough water recovered.

Mr CRIPPS: I did not mention 278 in my question.

Ms LEAHY: Minister, I too refer to the northern basin review of the Murray-Darling Basin. Will the Queensland government release to the public the submissions they put forward to determine the distribution of the shared reduction as assumed in the modelling of the 320-gigalitre scenario?

Dr LYNHAM: We will take it on notice because we have to consult with the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the federal government for something of that nature.

Ms LEAHY: You did do a submission?

Dr LYNHAM: We will take that on notice. We will get those details for you.

Ms LEAHY: Can you give me a yes or no that the Queensland government did do a submission?

Dr LYNHAM: Mr Chair, we have taken that on notice.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, I want to explore the Cape York water resource plan development process. On page 3 it is a service area highlight and you indicate that you will be finalising water allocation and management frameworks for the cape in the near future. In relation to local participation in the water resource planning process through involvement in the Cape York water consultation group, are you able to provide the committee with a membership of that group?

Mr Purtill: Yes, I am happy to give you an indicative membership now and then get you the absolute specifics. There are a number of groups. There is a north and western group and a southern group, which includes Lakelands for example. It will include members of the agricultural community, council and Aboriginal councils. The northern and western group are a majority of Weipa town council, traditional owner groups from the north and west and other pastoral interests there, but I will get you the specific membership for both.

Mr CRIPPS: Can you take that on notice?

Dr LYNHAM: Yes.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, when will the draft Cape York water resource plan be released for public consultation?

Dr LYNHAM: That is a work in progress and is expected to be released in mid-2017. I have just been advised late 2017.

Mr CRIPPS: Later this year?

Dr LYNHAM: Again, as with the self-assessable codes, the community has asked for an extension of time for further consultation and we are quite happy to grant the community's request. Self-assessable codes are delayed because the communities out there have asked for further consultation. With regard to the Cape York water plan I have just been advised by the DG that the community has asked for further consultation, so the indicative date was mid to late 2017 but now the community has asked for further consultation on the Cape York water plan as I am advised.

Mr CRIPPS: Was that from the water consultation group members, Director-General?

Mr Purtill: Yes.

Mr KNUTH: Minister, with reference to page 6 of the Service Delivery Statements for the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, can you advise what policy improvements have been implemented to ensure that people living in rural and regional communities are guaranteed rapid delivery for vital medical equipment and supplies to support lung dysfunctions that are due to work related injuries such as coal workers' pneumoconiosis and silicosis?

Dr LYNHAM: Member for Dalrymple, can I clarify that the question was regarding treatment for people who have been diagnosed with coal workers' pneumoconiosis?

Mr KNUTH: That is correct, and it is with reference to page 6 of the Service Delivery Statements.

Dr LYNHAM: I am happy to take that on notice. The primary prevention, secondary prevention, compensation matters—in terms of the primary and secondary prevention, that is the screening—and the prevention of dust diseases are a responsibility of the department. Once the disease has been detected, the treatment of the disorder is the responsibility of the Department of Health and the patient's medical practitioner. Also, the Minister for Industrial Relations is involved with workers compensation for these cases. You are right. It is a good question about how people in regional areas can source vital treatment for these conditions. I am happy to take that on notice but I suggest that, when the Minister for Health is at this desk, it may be a question to ask the Minister for Health as well.

As I said before, and the member for Bundamba joins me, it is a terrible disorder. My role is certainly for primary and secondary prevention but for treatment, which is the tertiary stage, we must make sure that these people are adequately treated as well. I have a matter of clarification from the director-general, if I may?

Mr Purtill: I would like to clarify that response that I gave you regarding the feedback on the water plan. It was through the consultants that we have advising us on the traditional owners. I have made the assumption that they have received that feedback from the traditional owner members of those groups, but it is not specific. It came via our consultants. I just want to clarify that.

Mr CRIPPS: The request for additional time for consultation?

Mr Purtill: The feedback from our consultation was that the time frames were too aggressive and that we needed to expand it and have greater levels of knowledge sharing around the complexities of the water plan.

Mr CRIPPS: It was not through the water consultation group that there was a request for additional consultation time?

Mr Purtill: The two groups are the primary conduits, but I cannot specifically say that that feedback has come from them, because it came from the consultants who we have doing that work with traditional owners.

Mr CRIPPS: Mr Chairman, is that the matter that the director-general was to take on notice to clarify later?

CHAIR: Ask the minister if he wants to take it on notice.

Mr Purtill: Yes, I am happy to.

Mr KNUTH: That matter that I raised in relation to that vital medical service and equipment, that is taken on notice? Is that right?

Dr LYNHAM: Quite honestly, member for Dalrymple, it should be asked of the Minister for Health when he is at this desk. I will look at what assistance I can provide for the answer but, realistically, it should be for the Minister for Health.

Mr KNUTH: That will be handy, thank you. With reference to page 3 of the Service Delivery Statements for the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, can the minister update the committee on what investigations are underway to boost water availability through the water infrastructure projects in the Atherton Tableland region?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question regarding the Atherton Tableland and the Tinaroo. You have made strong representations to me and, indeed, on many occasions I have met with members of your local community in that area. Also, I was up there with MSF Sugar at Mareeba. It shed light on the matter of alternative crops being in there as well, with blue agave crops, which require very little water to produce a crop for renewable energy at that sugar mill. That is for co-generation and also for bioethanol production. I thought—and you would acknowledge—that that alternative crop, which does not require irrigation, would be a viable source for farmers for the future.

The question you asked regarding the applications is really a question for Minister Bailey. I look after the Atherton groundwater management area with the water resource plan in that area. The application of the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund is looked after by Minister Bailey. I look after the water-sharing rules, the plan and the entitlements. Under the water-sharing rules in this plan, they were developed and finalised in September 2015. Under the water-sharing rules, the entitlements were determined for the start of July for the commencement of this water year and are based on local groundwater levels.

Each management zone within the area can be on a different announced entitlement depending on the local rainfall, the recharge to the aquifer and the impacts of local extraction. These announced entitlements notify our water users of the percentage they are permitted to use under their water licence in the coming water year. The groundwater levels are reviewed at the start of every month. It is monthly monitoring. The announced entitlement percentage may be increased if the water levels recover during a particular year.

Following the 2016 wet season—and, as you know, there was almost no recharge; it was a very disappointing season—the entitlement in some areas in the south-west zone, and I remember seeing these affected farmers, was zero percentage entitlement, which was very disappointing for them. Throughout the latter part of the year, the area received recharge and that provided increased percentages to some zones, including the south-west zone, where, pleasingly, in April it was raised to 75 per cent.

Despite the rain that the Atherton area has received this wet season, the Bureau of Meteorology has advised that rainfall in this area for the previous five years has been well below average and groundwater levels have already started to fall in some departmental monitoring bores. This is very disappointing. In the start of May 2017, all licensees were notified of potentially reduced entitlements to enable them to prepare for the upcoming 2017-18 water year and manage their businesses accordingly.

The announced entitlement percentages for the 2017-18 water year were decided on 3 July. The central, Yungaburra and south-west zones are now on 50 per cent announced entitlement and the north-west is on 75 per cent entitlement. On 3 July, all licence holders in the Atherton groundwater management area were sent a written notice about the 2018 announced entitlements. A notice was also placed in the local newspaper and the percentages can be accessed through the Queensland government's Business Queensland web page. It is recognised that, having an announced entitlement of less than 100 per cent can impact on a grower's livelihood, as I heard firsthand. However, short-term decisions need to be made for the longer term sustainability of this water system. As I said before, to see alternative crops that require less water coming on at a rapid rate in that region may be a viable option for some of the farmers up there. They could make their properties more economically viable with growing crops off the irrigated portion of their properties as well.

Initially, I went there looking at just the co-generation and the production of ethanol for our biofutures program, but when I saw firsthand the amount of production they were going to use with the agave plant, immediately I thought of the groundwater problems in this Tablelands area. You could see yourself the amount of irrigated land, as you showed me on the maps, some property owners have, but they also have some portions of non-irrigated land. This crop could be a winner for that community.

Mr KNUTH: The south-west zone—

Dr LYNHAM: I am quite happy to provide you with the latest briefing after this to be able to take back to your community.

Mr KNUTH: That is fine.

Mr CRIPPS: I would like to return to the Cape York water resource plan process for a moment. How will the draft Cape York water resource plan deal with the management of ground and surface water resources within areas covered by special agreement acts on Cape York Peninsula?

Dr LYNHAM: I lost the last bit of your question, sorry.

Mr CRIPPS: How will the draft Cape York water resource plan deal with the management of ground and surface water resources within areas covered by special agreement acts on Cape York Peninsula?

Dr LYNHAM: Existing entitlements will be honoured. I am advised that that the proposal is to have no impact on the existing area, such as the Weipa area that you refer to.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mrs MILLER: I have two questions, Minister. The first one is in relation to Collingwood Park, the suburb in which I live. Can you provide an update on the status of the mine subsidence at Collingwood Park? Will you please inform us whether the government is willing to fill in the voids underneath that suburb?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. I also note that you take a keen interest in this very important suburb in your electorate.

Mrs MILLER: I live there.

Dr LYNHAM: Very close to—

Mrs MILLER: They are my neighbours.

Dr LYNHAM: Very close to Jo-Ann Miller Drive?

Mrs MILLER: Yes, Jo-Ann Miller Drive is around the corner from where I live.

Dr LYNHAM: Is it Andrew Cripps boulevard where you live?

Mrs MILLER: No, you have to be a member of the Labor Party to get a street.

Dr LYNHAM: I am pleased to report that the latest seismic monitoring, as of 8 July, indicates that there has been no activity that would potentially lead to subsidence. The area continues to be stable. I know that is not addressing your question directly. There have been substantial studies undertaken into a number of different methods to fill the mine voids in Collingwood Park, including the same technology that was used to fill the voids under the Ipswich Motorway. I know that is the solution that you relate to me mostly—that the suburb could be treated the same way as the motorway.

We have had two internationally recognised mine subsidence strata control experts. They were part of the expert panel who oversaw the development of a business case detailing options and costs for long-term solutions to Collingwood Park. We engaged directly with those internationally recognised experts to advise us on Collingwood Park, as they had directly worked on the motorway, as you have identified.

Some have proven to be not feasible, but this area is one of cost. The abandoned mines unit is maintaining a ground-monitoring program and continues to respond to requests for investigation or repairs. It is continuing to monitor any industry, or technological advances that may assist in the development of feasible long-term solutions for Collingwood Park.

I think it was only last week that I asked—because I knew your passion for this question—my department to again have a look at the research so that I could update you if any research was available. Collingwood Park is one of those areas of the world that people are looking to for solutions. Other people around the world are looking to us and we are looking to them for solutions to mine subsidence of such a nature. There was no research, but I have instructed my department to keep looking to see if there are any research options available or any teams that are leading the research on how to fix these areas. I know that an area in Cornwall in England and in Newcastle in Australia have similar problems with mine subsidence.

Although this is not related, you remember the sink hole issue in August last year. It was obviously distressing, but the response from my unit was swift and the problem was fixed promptly. Honestly, until we have a viable option—and we are looking actively for a viable option—for Collingwood Park, the only option we have at the present time is to be vigilant and monitor the site. I also advise that if members of your community have any concerns to please contact my department. I know that you are probably the—

Mrs MILLER: They will knock on my door.

Dr LYNHAM: I know they will knock on your door first. Certainly, direct their inquiries to my department. We take this seriously. When that subsidence happened, we were out there as quickly as we possibly could to remedy that situation, because waking up to a huge hole in your backyard, or a big crack down the side of your house, is something that would be quite distressing. It is your house, your home, the most significant investment in your life. We have an offer of assistance, but the cost at this time is just excessive to what any government could possibly afford, but we are vigilant.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you. My second question is in relation to the New Acland mine. As you know, it directly employs 550 people and there are 504 contract employees. Can you advise when you think a decision may be made on the expansion of the New Acland mine, application number NAC03? The reason I am asking this question is that I have lots of miners in my electorate—and in Ipswich generally—and their lives are currently on hold depending on any decision. Even a rough timetable would assist them.

Dr LYNHAM: I understand completely how sensitive this issue is for your local community and also for the local community around that area. As you know, on 31 May the Land Court delivered a recommendation on the New Acland stage 3 expansion project. The Land Court recommended that the environmental authority be refused and that I reject mining lease applications 50232 and 700004, all of which relate to the stage 3 expansion of the New Hope Group's New Acland mine.

Given the length and complexity of the Land Court decision on 26 June 2017, I sought an extension of time until 31 January 2018. I sought that extension of time firstly because there was over 100 days of hearing. There were many submissions. I want to be fully briefed on the details of this Land

Court decision so that before I make a decision—I take all decisions about mining leases in this state very, very seriously indeed—I am fully informed. Secondly, based on the briefings that I am receiving—and I have been receiving briefings already from my department—I have to decide whether I should pass on any additional information I obtain from these briefings to the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection to assist them in deciding whether to grant an environmental authority under section 193 of the Environmental Protection Act 1994.

At this stage I am, as I said, taking this very seriously indeed and am receiving and will continue to receive expert briefings until I am satisfied that I am fully informed regarding my decision so that if I make a decision I will be able to justify that decision.

Mrs MILLER: In summary, it could be late 2018 or even 2019 sometime?

Dr LYNHAM: I have sought an extension of time until 31 January 2018.

Mrs MILLER: So it could be in the 2018 year but will not be before then?

Dr LYNHAM: Earlier, later—it depends on how long it takes me. Some of the briefings I have already received have very complex hydrogeological data that has been part of that submission.

Mr CRAWFORD: Minister, can you detail how delivering the innovative resources tenure framework will support the mining and resource sectors?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Barron River for his question. The framework aims to optimise the resource sector's ability to respond to global market pressures and remain internationally competitive without compromising environmental regulation, land access or native title processes. On return to government in 2015 we moved quickly to address the unacceptable impacts of the Newman government's Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014—that is, the MER(CP) Act—on the rights of rural stakeholders. Specifically, we amended the MER(CP) Act to repeal yet-to-commence provisions within the MER(CP) Act which limit notification objection rights for mining projects to include key agricultural infrastructure within the definition of 'restricted land' and enshrined the distances for restricted land in the primary legislation. Also, we repealed the proposed change that would have allowed a mining lease to be granted over restricted land where landholder consent had not been given and compensation was not agreed. Also, we removed the minister's power to extinguish restricted land for mining lease applications where co-existence is not possible on the mining sites.

The Palaszczuk government has been working closely with key stakeholders to identify options for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the permit and licensing systems that regulate our vital energy and mineral resource sectors. This includes examining legislative and administrative options to deliver simplified regulation, reduced compliance costs and faster and more efficient delivery of service for industry.

Under this government a range of improvements have been delivered to simplify and streamline the administration of resource tenures. Proponents can lodge a transfer over multiple resource authorities. This can now be done through one application process, removing the requirement to lodge one transfer application per permit. Proponents can nominate an authorised holder representative in association with an application to transfer an authority, again reducing multiple application processes. Proponents can submit all of their applications and notices for mining related activities through the one MyMinesOnline portal, with the duplicate system being decommissioned.

In addition, a number of sensible administrative and legislative enhancements to the tenure administration framework are being considered. My department has been undertaking ongoing and extensive consultation with a wide range of key stakeholders on these enhancements. The Palaszczuk government will continue to work towards targeted improvements that will give the greatest flexibility to the resources sector to ensure there is continuation of investment and job generation.

The reforms of highest priority across the resources sector include refining project based administration to better facilitate streamlined apportioning of land relinquishment across a number of exploration authorities; clearer settings for the geological knowledge thresholds required for a progression to a higher tenure; and removing the identical holder requirements for parties seeking project status to enable related companies to work collaboratively, optimising exploration. These reforms will go hand in hand with a range of other initiatives the Palaszczuk government is implementing to support our resources sector, initiatives such as the annual exploration program, geoscience projects led by the Geological Survey of Queensland and the North-West Minerals Province blueprint. My department is now finalising a program of legislative and operational changes to deliver these enhancements.

Mrs LAUGA: With reference to page 2 of the SDS, the Palaszczuk government has previously announced that it would phase out sandmining on North Stradbroke Island and, as part of that process, facilitate the transfer of land back to the Quandamooka people. What progress has been made on this project?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. I know that, as do all members of this government, she appreciates the importance of recognising Indigenous native title rights. The traditional owners of North Stradbroke Island are the Quandamooka people. They are represented by a prescribed body corporate known as QYAC. In 2015 the Queensland government announced its commitment to reinstate the 2019 end date for sandmining on North Stradbroke Island. On 20 May 2016 parliament passed the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015, which will substantially end sandmining by 2019. Since this bill passed the House my department has been working with QYAC, Sibelco and other state government departments to identify those sites with mining tenures over them that have not been mined or can be rehabilitated and, where necessary, transferred to QYAC. These parcels will then be ready for economic development consistent with the aspirations the Quandamooka have had for their land.

As the mining leases have prohibited the Quandamooka people from accessing their land, the return of land, especially areas of high cultural significance, is very important to the community. Many land matters have been completed consistent with the existing ILUA. This includes QYAC becoming trustee of 145 hectares and the dedication of a national park in a joint management arrangement between QYAC and National Parks. The transfer of 13 parcels of freehold land totalling seven hectares has been approved subject to final acceptance by QYAC. A further 15 lots of about 19 hectares have been identified to be offered as freehold land in the coming months. Other pieces of land will be given protected area status, adding to a portfolio of sites on the island which are already under joint management.

Some of the projects QYAC have identified for this land have been partially or fully funded by the Queensland government's North Stradbroke Island Economic Transition Strategy and include Minjerribah Cultural Centre, a state-of-the-art facility for visitors to connect to and learn about the natural and cultural history of the island, ecotourism sites, areas for camping, glamping, nature walks, traditional ceremonies and a whale-watching facility. Other pieces of land will be given national park status, adding to the portfolio of sites on the island which are already under joint management between the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and National Parks.

Mr CRIPPS: Minister, I want to return to the Cape York water resource planning process. How will the Cape York Water Resource Plan treat the water entitlements associated with Springvale Station, which was acquired by the Queensland government for conservation purposes? Do you know if the entitlement will be maintained or retired from the Cape York Water Resource Plan?

CHAIR: Is that hypothetical?

Mr CRIPPS: No. Springvale Station has been acquired by the government and there is a water entitlement there and there is a water resource planning process underway right now so it is very real and not hypothetical.

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. You are correct: it is real. The Cape York water plan is being prepared now. After the water plan has been prepared we will take the water licence on Springvale Station into account, but I will take that question on notice so that I can provide some detail. I suggest it will be after the water planning process and we will have regulations in place on how we deal with not only Springvale Station but also other stations in that area for your benefit.

Mr CRIPPS: Do you know if that water entitlement associated with Springvale Station will be incorporated into the general reserve within the relevant catchment or if it will be available to be traded within the catchment by the state?

Dr LYNHAM: I am not aware, as you would understand, of the water planning process. It is presently being undertaken on Cape York. Once the planning process is complete I can share that knowledge with you.

Mr CRIPPS: You will take that on notice as well?

Dr LYNHAM: There is no decision yet. I am happy for you and I to meet after the water planning process is complete so that you understand. I am happy to take it on notice, if you like, to provide a response.

Mr CRIPPS: Thank you, Minister, I do appreciate that.

CHAIR: The time allocated for the consideration of the estimates of expenditure in the portfolios of State Development and Natural Resources and Mines has expired. Minister, do you have a closing statement?

Dr LYNHAM: I have two questions taken on notice that I can answer. In relation to the Queensland government's submission to the northern basin review, I am advised that the Queensland government's submission on the northern basin review is public and available on the Murray-Darling Basin website. I encourage members to peruse the submission.

In relation to the early cleaning up of waterways post Cyclone Debbie, under the riverine protection permit exemption requirements under section 96 of the Water Regulation 2016, riparian landholders are able to remove up to 500 cubic metres of material from the bed or banks of a watercourse to assist in recovery from flood events and to mitigate the effects of future events without the need for a riverine protection permit. Where appropriate, larger amounts of material may be removed from the watercourse under the authority of a riverine protection permit issued by my department. My department continues to engage with landholders, river improvement trusts and local governments about appropriate flood repair and mitigation works in Central Queensland.

In answer to the member for Dalrymple's question in relation to Atherton groundwater entitlements, presently the north-west has 75 per cent, central 50 per cent, Yungaburra 50 per cent and south-west 50 per cent. That is the latest update on those entitlements. We will be working closely, with your requests, with landholders as well, Mr Cripps.

CHAIR: Minister, do you have a short closing statement?

Dr LYNHAM: I would like to thank you, Mr Chair, and all members of the committee for their time and for adhering mainly to matters related to the budget. I would like to thank my directors-general, Michael Schaumburg and James Purtill, the Coordinator-General, Barry Broe, and Projects chief executive David Edwards for their assistance and advice today and in our day-to-day business. I would also like to thank officers of both my departments and also my ministerial staff. Many people have put a lot of hours into the estimates process. I know that all ministers appreciate this. In saying that, I also want to repeat what I said last year. That is, this process may be time-consuming and sometimes a little dull for the media gallery; however, it remains a valuable part of a functioning democracy and I am always proud and prepared to contribute.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The committee has resolved that answers to questions taken on notice—I believe there are several questions—must be provided to the committee secretariat by 5 pm on Friday, 21 July. The transcript of this session of the hearing will be available on the Hansard page of the parliament's website approximately three hours after this session has been closed.

I thank you, Minister and departmental officers, for your attendance and the way you have gone about answering questions. I also want to thank committee members for their cooperation during this period of time. The committee will now adjourn for a break. The hearing will resume at 7.15 with the examination of the estimates for the portfolios of the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. The committee has resolved to examine the Local Government portfolio first and will continue with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships portfolio from 8.30 pm.

Proceedings suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.15 pm

**ESTIMATES—INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE—LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ABORIGINAL AND TORRES
STRAIT ISLANDER PARTNERSHIPS**

In Attendance

Hon. ML Furner, Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Partnerships

Ms L Foley, Chief of Staff

Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning

Mr F Carroll, Director-General

Ms K Parton, Deputy Director-General—Strategy, Governance and Engagement

Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

Ms C O'Connor, Director-General


Ms H Wright, Deputy Director-General, Economic Participation and Culture

Ms T Williams, Deputy Director-General, Policy

Ms C Orange, Chief Financial Officer

Family Responsibilities Commission

Mr D Glasgow, Commissioner

 **CHAIR:** The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2017 for the portfolio areas of the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. The committee will examine the minister's portfolio until 9.30. Tonight, the member for Glass House has been granted leave to attend the hearing.

I remind those present that the committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and are subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament also apply in this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in that regard. Questions should be brief, relate to one issue and not contain lengthy or subjective preamble, argument or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings today so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members of the committee.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the minister, the director-general and departmental officers and members of the public to the hearing. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental officers to identify themselves the first time that they answer a question referred to them by the minister or the director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish you may make a short opening statement.

Mr FURNER: Thank you, Chair. I will start by respectfully acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which this hearing is taking place as the custodians of that land and elders past, present and emerging. Providing jobs and opportunities for Queenslanders is a core of the Palaszczuk government's 2017-18 state budget. It stands in stark contrast to the former Newman government, which cut and culled, ripping jobs, services and dollars out of local communities and decimating local economies. Our approach is vastly different.

The Palaszczuk government's third budget dramatically increases local government funding. It also improves flexibility for this vital third tier of government. In partnership with the councils, we are boosting regional economies and creating jobs. In 2017-18, the Palaszczuk government will fund councils to the tune of \$306 million, which is \$203 million more than Tim Nicholls's last budget in 2014. This means jobs and a great many of them.

Across the length and breadth of regional Queensland, mayors have expressed their delight with the Palaszczuk government's support for local government. The Local Government Association of Queensland said that they were 'happy campers' on the day that the budget was brought down. Last week in Cairns the Premier and I met with mayors and councillors from the Far North Queensland Region of Councils. Some of them said things such as, 'We have just about every available person employed that we can'. Another told us, 'It has been wonderful to have been listened to'. Another mayor said, 'What more can we possibly ask of a state government?' As you can see, the expression of appreciation is very strong amongst the 77 local government councils. That impressive feedback from councils not only justifies the work we are doing but also showcases the model of providing flexible funding which creates jobs in regional Queensland. This budget builds on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to good governance and capacity building in local government.

We know that some councils have small rate bases, which is why we have: increased funding for Indigenous councils—funding that was either cut or frozen when Tim Nicholls was treasurer; restored state government financial aid to 2012 levels and we will apply indexation of SGFA funding for future years; and made \$120 million available for water and waste works in Indigenous communities. In the coming year, the department of local government and planning will continue its good work with councils and councillors to build capacity and ensure best practice.

This budget is also about transparency and accountability. I seek leave to table a report titled *Councillor complaints review: a fair, effective and efficient framework* and the government's response.

CHAIR: We will take a copy and have a look at it.

Mr FURNER: The proposed introduction of an independent assessor will ensure public confidence in the councillor complaints system. The Palaszczuk government proposes to give the independent assessor significant powers to assess and prosecute complaints. Importantly, the independent assessor will also be able to dismiss or prosecute frivolous, vexatious or out-of-time complaints. It will also be an offence for an accused councillor to attempt or to take a reprisal against any employee or another councillor who makes a complaint of misconduct.

A new mandatory uniform code of conduct that sets out acceptable standards of behaviour for elected councillors is also proposed. I want councillors who bring down the standard of hardworking men and women councillors around the state to be held accountable for their actions. The proposed changes are part of a suite of measures that address integrity and accountability issues in local government in Queensland. As elected representatives, councillors and mayors should be held to the highest possible standards of ethical and legal behaviour, placing the interests of their communities above their own personal interests.

I fervently believe that the policy area of local government is not just focussed on the good governance of Queensland but also acts as a conduit for service provision in infrastructure delivery and job creation. Those goals are consistent with the ethos of the Palaszczuk government and of this budget. That is why I made sure that we are either maintaining or expanding the funding for a number of key grants and funding schemes. In the 2017-18 financial year, the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program has been funded nearly \$29 million, which is part of a \$306 million whole-of-department spend on local government. A big win for Indigenous councils comes in the form of the restoration of funding for the state government's financial aid program, which also was gutted by the former Newman LNP government when Tim Nicholls was the treasurer.

Of course, local government in Queensland faces a number of challenges that this Palaszczuk government has been proactive in meeting. For a number of years now, the federal Abbot-Turnbull coalition government has frozen the financial assistance grants to local councils. While we welcome the change of heart in this year's federal budget, Queenslanders are receiving less federal financial assistance funding per head than the average Tasmanian, the average Northern Territorian, the average Canberran and the average Western Australian.

Mr Chair, thank you for the opportunity to prosecute the Palaszczuk Labor government's case at this evening's estimates hearing. I look forward to the committee's questions.

CHAIR: Committee members, the minister has asked to table a document under the heading of *Queensland government response to the report by the independent councillor complaints review panel, 'Councillor complaints review: a fair, effective and efficient framework'*. Is leave granted? It is tabled, thank you very much. I now go to the member for Glass House.

Mr POWELL: My first question is to Mr Carroll. Mr Carroll, I refer to page 6 of the SDS, in particular, funding programs and community initiatives. Regarding the Works for Queensland program, we heard yesterday from Mr Murphy, the Under Treasurer, about the number of jobs that that program was expected to support and create. I quote—

We provided the number of 600 to local government. Local government boosted that up to 6,000. That is where the 6,000 number comes from.

Mr Carroll, can you please explain how, as Mr Murphy said, you boosted the figures?

Mr Carroll: In relation to Works for Queensland, it is a \$400 million program that the government has put up. In 2016-17, there was \$200 million put to the program, with 700 projects approved for 65 local councils. The estimate for supporting sustained or created jobs was almost 6,000 in regional towns and cities battling high unemployment. On Works for Queensland projects for minor infrastructure, the information in relation to the jobs number came directly from councils to the department based on supported, sustained or created jobs.

Mr POWELL: Mr Carroll, if the information came from councils, what level of scrutiny did you or your department provide to those submissions from councils around jobs created and sustained?

Mr Carroll: In relation to the estimates that have come from council, we continue to monitor those on a monthly basis. We have seen an increase in job numbers. For example, in Cairns from memory there are I think 77 jobs. That is the number now in Cairns, which is the supported, sustained or created jobs. I think it is 48 in Yarrabah, which I have seen come in, as well.

Mr POWELL: Mr Carroll, do you check the costings and the job estimates provided to your department by the councils themselves?

Mr Carroll: The information is provided from councils.

Mr POWELL: Do you check that?

Mr Carroll: We believe councils' information as it is provided to the department.

Mr POWELL: You take it as read?

Mr Carroll: Absolutely.

Mr POWELL: When a council submits that developing a shade structure over a Townsville park at a cost of \$1 million will create eight jobs, is the assumption that five of them are out there holding up umbrellas or do you just assume that Townsville City Council has that right?

Mr Carroll: In relation to the jobs, it is supported, sustained or created jobs. It is not just jobs created.

Mr POWELL: Is there any double counting of supported or sustained jobs?

Mr Carroll: The guidelines that are on the website allow councils to count supported, sustained or created jobs.

Mr POWELL: If I may, I will now direct my questions to the minister. Minister, what is your role in the endorsement process for Works for Queensland projects?

Mr FURNER: As you would be aware, as the Deputy Premier was before the committee today, that is a portfolio matter under her jurisdiction. Certainly that project has been delivered on two budget outcomes at a total of \$400 million. The project falls under her jurisdiction. Notwithstanding that matter, it does not surprise me that overwhelmingly the mayors and councillors with whom I come in contact—and just last week it was in Cairns, up in the gulf and on the cape—are expressing their appreciation of this sort of money, which is delivering real infrastructure growth and real jobs on the ground for their communities.

Mr POWELL: Minister, I find it interesting that you are willing to put that back on the Deputy Premier as something that she administers when I refer to a press statement from yourself dated Thursday 15 June this year, in which you take great credit for and extoll the virtues of \$200 million being placed on the table over two years for Works for Queensland. Again I ask: what role do you personally play in the endorsement of Works for Queensland projects?

Mr FURNER: I endorse it as a member of the Palaszczuk Labor government and a member of the Palaszczuk cabinet. It does not surprise me, wherever I go, that mayors are taking the opportunity to provide me with information and take me around their communities to show what the program is delivering. As you can appreciate, it is a fund or a provision that, in many cases, works hand in hand with other projects that fall under my portfolio. I am happy to go through the projects that fall under my portfolio, if you choose to—

Mr POWELL: We will get to those in due course, Minister.

Mr FURNER:—so there is no misunderstanding of what the difference is under the Deputy Premier's portfolio and mine as local government minister.

Mr POWELL: The arrangement is that the Deputy Premier is happy for you to take credit for some of her work, obviously.

Mr FURNER: I would not say 'take credit'. I am sure I speak on behalf of the government members of this committee when I say that it is a proud example of what the Palaszczuk government delivers. It is an example that you should be proud of as well. Just recently in Gympie, the Mayor of Gympie, Mick Curran, was showing me the highlights of the growth in infrastructure in the town that the member for Gympie represents.

It is little wonder that you are trying to draw a parallel in terms of ownership between me and the Deputy Premier. It is about being proud that as a government we deliver for local governments and deliver for the constituents and the communities that they represent. The Palaszczuk Labor government has been able to achieve what I believe is one of the highest levels of funding provided to local governments for some time.

Mr POWELL: Mr Carroll, did Treasury raise with your department that discrepancy in the job figures—the 600 versus the 6,000?

Mr Carroll: Not that I am aware of.

Mr POWELL: Just to be clear, yesterday we had Mr Murphy, the Under Treasurer, saying that he has advised your department that the figure should be 600 and that you have raised it to 6,000. You are not aware that Treasury has provided that advice to you?

Mr Carroll: I am personally not aware of that advice.

Mr POWELL: Do you want to check—

Mr Carroll: I can check for you, but I am not personally aware of the advice.

Mr POWELL:—with any of your staff whether they have been advised by Treasury of that number, because that is quite a large discrepancy?

Mr Carroll: I can check, if that is all right with the minister.

CHAIR: Will you take that on notice?

Mr FURNER: We will take that on notice.

Mr POWELL: Minister, at any stage did you raise with the Deputy Premier the absurdity of the number of jobs these projects were expected to support, based on the advice we have received from Treasury?

Mr FURNER: On occasions in the chamber I have mentioned the virtues of the program and indicated its success. I am sure there were times that the Deputy Premier was there as well. I believe that is the position I have taken in conjunction with the Deputy Premier when the occasion has arisen.

Mr POWELL: Perhaps for the benefit of transparency, and particularly for the benefit of taxpayers, would you commit to tabling or providing on notice the Works for Queensland 2016-17 schedule of recommended projects for endorsement, including the 'jobs supported' and 'jobs created' columns? If it helps your department, it was an attachment to briefing note MBN 17/166.

Mr FURNER: I think, member for Glass House, that is a matter that you should have raised with the Deputy Premier this morning when you had the opportunity. That opportunity has now been lost.

Mr POWELL: Perhaps I should direct the question to Mr Carroll, given that it is something that he as director-general administers. Director-General, would you, in the interests of transparency, table that document through the Deputy Premier so that all taxpayers can see the schedule of recommended projects for endorsement, including the 'jobs supported' and 'jobs created' columns?

Mr Carroll: Chair, can I get some direction, because it is a briefing note for the Deputy Premier. I do not know whether I can table that without the Deputy Premier's advice.

CHAIR: Could you hit me with that again, please?

Mr Carroll: The briefing note that the member is talking about is to the Deputy Premier. I do not think I can table that without the Deputy Premier's advice. I think it is a matter for the Deputy Premier. That is my understanding.

CHAIR: You miss out.

Mr POWELL: It is not me who misses out; it is the taxpayers of Queensland who clearly miss out on this.

Mr FURNER: Once again, this is a matter that should have been raised this morning. I am not certain whether the member for Glass House was here this morning, but that opportunity certainly existed then. I certainly would believe the mayors and councillors of the 77 councils they represent any day of the week in terms of what they are informing the government when it comes to the delivery of jobs and the provision of infrastructure growth throughout our state. Once again, that opportunity is lost as a result of the member not raising that this morning when considering the portfolio of the Deputy Premier.

CHAIR: I think that is a fair response, member for Glass House.

Mr POWELL: I now turn to the service standard 'cost of capacity building per local government' at page 5 of the SDS. In 2015-16 that target was \$13,800 whereas the actual was \$19,000—that was a blowout of \$5,200 per local government or \$400,000 across-the-board. The reason given was that 2016 was an election year for local government. In this budget we have seen your department again go way past the target, the 2016-17 target of \$17,750 per local government—a blowout of \$147,000 or \$1,910 per local government. Can you explain the reason for this?

Mr FURNER: In 2016-17, 65 scholarships, to the value of \$262,000, were awarded for local government employees to undertake the Local Government Association of Queensland nationally accredited diploma and certificate IV programs in governance and administration, leadership and management, asset management, project management, financial management and planning. More than 20 scholarships, to the value of \$90,000, were awarded to female council employees to undertake Local Government Managers Australia's Propeller, Ignite and Executive Management professional development programs.

On the subject of women councillors, a highlight of 2016-17 was the implementation of the Women in Local Government Strategy to promote greater diversity and inclusion in local government and in particular to provide female councillors and council officers with access to a range of mentoring and professional development opportunities. It has been an increased focus of the department to proactively target and identify the capacity-building needs of council staff and develop the program through a regional presence.

Mr POWELL: To be clear, that capacity building allocation has been used for scholarships and programs, including for women in councils. Is that a fair summary of what you have just said?

Mr FURNER: And other capacity building. We have to appreciate that there were a lot of changes after the 2016 election. There was a need to make sure that the new councillors and mayors after the 2016 election were given that opportunity.

It is a suite of follow-up programs to build on the successful councillor induction program delivered following the March 2016 elections. Some 67 face-to-face workshops were delivered across the state for 935 participants on topics including councillor conduct, ethical behaviour, complaints management, roles and responsibilities. It is a program that is certainly valuable. It is a program that certainly not only assists those new councillors but also provides an opportunity for a refresher for other councillors.

Mr POWELL: I am just a bit confused. It sounds very clearly like the kinds of things this money is being spent on are known well in advance—they are workshops for the councils and councillors, they are programs, they are scholarships—and yet year in and year out under this government that estimation has not been met. The actual has been significantly over what was budgeted in both 2015-16 and now 2016-17. We see a further increase in 2017-18 to \$20,200. If those programs, scholarships and workshops are known, where are you overspending according to that target?

Mr FURNER: We do not know the outcome of elections in local government.

Mr POWELL: That election was 18 months ago now.

Mr FURNER: Eighteen months ago there was a need to provide the training for those newly elected councillors and mayors. Particularly in an election year, that money needs to be available. We are definitely responding to the needs and requests of local government to make sure that the training is available to them to give them the skills they need to fulfil their requirements to represent their constituents.

Mr POWELL: Will we be back next year using the 2016 local government election as an excuse?

Mr FURNER: There is not another local election—

Mr POWELL: How long are we going to use this as an excuse for not getting the measure right?

Mr FURNER: There may be other opportunities as a result of further training. I know that the department and the Local Government Association of Queensland work to assist in the training of councillors as a result of their engagement with them on a regular basis.

Mr POWELL: We have established that there has been a \$6,400 per council increase in the planned budget for capacity building in the last two years. That is a 46 per cent increase. You have explained what that is being spent on. What are you doing to measure whether this is money well spent? Where is the measure on the effectiveness of this money being spent?

Mr FURNER: I might get some clarity from the member for Glass House, because page 5 of the SDS indicates a targeted estimate of \$17,750 and the actual result is \$19,660. I am not certain where the figure the member for Glass House is purporting to represent is coming from.

Mr POWELL: From there. I actually referred to \$17,750 and then a blowout of an additional \$1,910 per council. If we go back to our discussions last year at estimates, there was an increase. The target was set at \$13,800. It came in at \$19,000. Last year it blew out by \$5,200. I said that over two years there has been a 46 per cent increase over the estimate. My question is: what performance indicators are you putting in place to make sure this money is being well spent?

Mr FURNER: Definitely, identification was made of additional training required. That was one of the reasons there is always a case for supporting local governments. I am sure the member for Warrego would support that as well, given she was previously a councillor, as was the member for Gympie.

Ms LEAHY: Point of order, Mr Chair. I am not a previous councillor.

Mr FURNER: I am sorry, I thought you were.

Ms LEAHY: That is not true.

Mr FURNER: I will retract that.

Mr POWELL: No-one is questioning any support for local government. The question is: are you measuring the effectiveness of this being spent or are you just accepting requests to participate in these workshops and diplomas and gain scholarships without really challenging whether what they are proving is useful?

Mr FURNER: The service standard on the same page you refer to in the SDS certainly is measured. It is measured in the line above where you are referring to. That is the test of the result of what the training is delivering.

Mr POWELL: If the participant tells you that it was good then it is good? Of course the participant is going to tell you it is good, because they went on a course and you paid for it.

Mr FURNER: I think the proof is in the pudding when you engage with a number of the councils. Certainly the ones I engage with are delivering competent, professional services to the constituents they represent. That is why we as a government are proud to assist them. As I have engaged with the councillors through my travels in my short period of only five months as minister, councillors have asked for this. It is important that we deliver on-the-ground outcomes that they are requesting. We need to make sure they have the capacity to deliver in their local communities.

Mr POWELL: It is the 'proof in the pudding' test, is it, Minister?

Mr CRAWFORD: Referring to page 6 of Budget Paper No. 5, the SDS of the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, making particular note of the additional funding of \$3.4 million under the State Government Financial Aid program to assist Indigenous local governments in delivering key services to their communities, I ask: what other measures are being undertaken by government to ensure the long-term sustainability of Indigenous local governments in Queensland?

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for Barron River for his question. You are absolutely right, member for Barron River. The state government's financial grant is already assisting Indigenous councils to plan for and also build vital community infrastructure and to support jobs in regional Queensland. As you would know, I was only up in your part of the world just last week and was able to travel to many of those Indigenous locations like Mer and Saibai islands, Lockhart River and also Kowanyama, New Mapoon and Napranum. It was a fantastic opportunity to engage with those communities. Once again, like all of the other councils, they are extremely proud and happy with the outcomes of the Palaszczuk Labor government.

The \$3.37 million increase to the State Government Financial Aid program means that the program now totals \$33.7 million and brings it back in line with budget figures that were in place prior to the Newman government's cuts which commenced in 2012. The cost of doing business for councils

around the state is increasing year on year as Indigenous councils are currently unable to raise rates. The SGFA program allows these councils to provide vital services to their communities. The Palaszczuk government's annual increase in the SGFA program will allow Indigenous councils to deliver and maintain essential services such as water and waste systems on an ongoing basis in line with other councils that are able to increase revenue through rate increases.

The SGFA program is not the only way the Palaszczuk government is supporting the short- and long-term financial sustainability of Queensland Indigenous communities. The Indigenous Local Government Sustainability Program encourages councils to apply for a share of more than \$8.1 million for capacity-building initiatives to improve the long-term sustainability of their communities. This program mitigates the impact of the discontinued Commonwealth municipal and essential services program. All 16 councils are eligible under the guidelines for the program delivered in consultation with the councils themselves. Each council is eligible for an allocation of more than \$500,000, which is to be spent on projects and initiatives that build council capacity and capability and contribute to long-term sustainability.

Some outstanding examples of the work done by councils using this program include the Mornington Shire Council, which spent their full allotment on staff development and an asset management and renewal project, and the Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council, who installed an integrated financial management system. These upgrades and works will ensure extended sustainability and security within these communities for many years to come.

Mrs LAUGA: Minister, I refer to page 4 of the DILGP SDS. Can you advise the committee of progress and outcomes related to the Women in Local Government Strategy?

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for Keppel for her question. That is an issue that is obviously close to your heart as well. I am very pleased that you have raised that. The Palaszczuk government recognises the importance of promoting greater diversity, inclusion and gender equality in governance. That is why eight of the 17 ministers in the government, including the Premier and Deputy Premier, are women.

In my time as minister, I have travelled around the state and have seen the brilliant work that women do in local government on a daily basis—for example, on a recent road trip to Charleville I witnessed the tireless efforts of Murweh mayor Annie Liston to encourage economic growth in her region which demonstrate strong local representation. Other examples include Douglas shire mayor Julia Leu. The role of women in councils around the state should be celebrated and encouraged.

One of the major initiatives the department has undertaken to help achieve this is through the implementation of the Women in Local Government Strategy. A key component of this strategy is the empowerment of more female councillors and officers to assure greater leadership roles. This includes providing them with the opportunities to develop the necessary skill sets, confidence and work-life balance approach to assist them to realise and maximise their potential. This is underpinned by improving women's access to professional development and mentoring programs.

As part of the implementation of the Women in Local Government Strategy, the Palaszczuk government has invested approximately \$140,000 in a range of training and mentoring activities for female councillors and council employees. Through the department, the Palaszczuk government also sponsored the Women in Local Government Excellence Conference held in Brisbane in November last year. This included 11 delegate support packages valued at \$1,000 each to help female councillors and officers from small rural and remote councils attend the conference. We also sponsored up to 24 local government officers to participate in the local government mentoring program and provided up to 10 delegate support packages for officers from small rural and remote councils to participate in the Inspiring Women's Leadership in Local Government Forum, which was held last weekend.

The potential benefits for the community in having greater female representation at both the elected and managerial levels of local government include providing councils with a broader range of ideas and insights to draw on decision-making and policy development. Moreover, it helps foster a workplace that better reflects the local community and its constituents, leading to a greater alignment between community needs and service delivery outcomes.

CHAIR: Minister, I refer to page 4 of the DILGP SDS and dot point 1 under the governance and statutory services highlights, as well as your remarks in your opening statement. What benefits will be achieved from the government's response to the *Councillor complaints review: a fair, effective and efficient framework*?

Mr FURNER: I thank the chair for his question. It is one of those areas that I am very proud of as the Minister for Local Government and in tabling the report this evening. From the outset can I say that I am confident that every member of the committee here wants to ensure that local governments are as transparent and accountable as possible, as their ratepayers and residents expect of them also. That is why the Palaszczuk government has undertaken a number of steps to improve transparency around local government elections. That has been done by changes to legislation and regulations which have come about as a result of a variety of reports, reviews and hearings.

The real-time disclosure of donations, which you would be aware of, recently handed down means that candidates and the public can see who is donating to their local candidates within seven days of the donation being made. This government has banned the use of titles such as 'mayor' or 'councillor' in the names of accounts used for receiving political donations, and incorporated associations can no longer hold or receive campaign related funds.

We have regulated the use of unspent campaign donations. Unspent moneys intended for campaign purposes now must be treated in one of three ways: donated to a registered charity, returned to a political party of which the candidate was a member during the campaign period or maintained in the account of future campaign activities. We have also rationalised the donation threshold from \$200 to \$500. It brings about consistency compared to some other states also.

The committee is no doubt aware of the Crime and Corruption Commission's Operation Belcarra hearings. I look forward to receiving the report from the CCC. The government will consider any recommendations from that report in due course. We have also implemented a number of guidelines and policies in relation to fraud management, as well as transparency in rating policies.

In response to the Auditor-General's report No. 19, the Palaszczuk government fully supports the recommendation, and my predecessor made amendments to the Local Government Regulation 2012 and the City of Brisbane Regulation 2012 to implement such. I am pleased to advise that 68 of the 77 local governments in this state have fully implemented the Auditor-General's recommendation, with a further eight well advanced with their fraud and corruption management regimes. Only one council—Woorabinda—is yet to begin this process. Assistance has been offered on various occasions but the council has not sought any assistance to date.

In relation to transparency in rates and charges, members of the committee may remember that before the last election Labor committed to publish best practice guidelines, establishing principles to assist local government in implementing fair and equitable rating systems while ensuring flexibility for raising sufficient own-source revenue. The guideline has been developed and is available for councils to access on the DILGP website. It has been developed after consultation with the Property Council of Australia, the Urban Development Institute of Australia, the Queensland Resources Council and the Shopping Centre Council of Australia. The guideline provides advice on the importance of equitable rating of similar properties, ensuring a user-pays approach, that there are meaningful contributions by different types of land uses, that annual rating is predictable and, above all, that the system is fair.

Mrs MILLER: Chair, I table documents that I understand have been released under RTI in relation to complaints concerning a local government. I understand this is a typical type of complaint that your department may receive. How many complaints does the department receive every year in relation to local governments in Queensland? How much does it cost for the department to investigate these matters?

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for Bundamba for her question. That is really why we are making these changes—

Mrs MILLER: I understand that.

Mr FURNER:—in the report that I have tabled tonight, to bring about some cost-efficiency measures and the continuance of the ability to make these complaints available furthermore. In the 2016-17 financial year, there were 140 councillor conduct complaints received by the department, comprising 262 separate allegations—a total of 169 complaints, comprising 349 allegations. They were finalised during the same period.

Mrs MILLER: I am not talking about complaints against councillors. My question is about complaints against local government in any shape, manner or form.

Mr FURNER: Generally, complaints against councils—

Mrs MILLER: It might be about rats, roads or rubbish.

Mr FURNER: Those complaints would go to the council and then to the Ombudsman but not the department in those circumstances.

Mrs MILLER: No. They are writing to your department. I know that. There could be complaints about local government that they choose to write to you, as minister, or to previous ministers or direct to the department about. It could be about rubbish trucks not turning up. I am not talking about councillors here. I am talking about general complaints. I do know you get them.

Mr FURNER: We have had a small number of complaints through my office which are naturally referred on to the department for consideration. Once that response is forthcoming from the department, my office then responds to the particular complaint.

Mrs MILLER: Director-General, I do understand that complaints sometimes go directly to you in your position in relation to local government. Do you actually keep statistics on the number of complaints that come in?

Mr Carroll: I thank the member for the question. If a complaint does come in from a resident in relation to a council, usually it gets referred to a regional office, and the regional officers have a conversation with the council to get some background and to see if we can facilitate a response to that. That would be general correspondence. It would not be logged as a complaint because, under the act, councillor complaints is what the department is there to take care of. Normally those complaints would go to the Ombudsman. That is where the statistics would be held.

Mrs MILLER: So the only way I could get this information would be to RTI your department for every single complaint that would have come in, because you do not keep a log of complaints that come in in relation to local government?

Mr Carroll: It would be just general correspondence. It would not be logged as a complaint, because it is not a complaint against the department and it is not a councillor complaint so it would be logged as general correspondence.

Mr FURNER: The member for Bundamba also asked about the cost. The cost of dealing with councillor conduct complaints for the year 2016-17 amounts to nearly \$1 million, and that is including additional temporary resources made available to deal with a significant increase in the number of complaints made in the six months following the March 2016 local government elections.

Mrs MILLER: To tease this out a little further, a family or a ratepayer might write to the department, the department logs it as general correspondence, it goes to a regional office which then talks with the council concerned and then they get a letter back, I presume. What if the ratepayer is not happy with the response? What happens then?

Mr FURNER: Then it goes to the Ombudsman, generally. On many occasions these complaints are initially raised with the CEO and if it is not satisfied there it goes on to the Ombudsman.

Mrs MILLER: What if they have gone to the Ombudsman first and they are not happy with that process and they then come to you? Director-General, I am happy for you to answer that.

Mr Carroll: I thank the member for the question. In relation to complaints raised against council, let me talk generally about that and then try to get to the answer that you are looking for. Council must have a complaints system which logs all the complaints. It is standard that every council in Queensland has that complaints system—

Mrs MILLER: Yes, I know that. I am a trained town clerk; I know that.

Mr Carroll: If there is a complaint, the normal course is that it goes to council to start with. If the complainant is not happy and writes to the department, we try to facilitate an answer back to the person who has complained. If the answer is not sufficient, it then gets transferred to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman cannot help, unfortunately that is a question you will need to ask the Ombudsman. I am not aware of the Ombudsman legislation.

Mr FURNER: In following up, member for Bundamba, that is one of the reasons we need to consider the results of the report which we have tabled this evening, to look at those recommendations and consider where the future lies in respect of streamlining a number of those areas and making it more accountable and transparent for people to be satisfied as a result of what complaints need to be investigated. That is the decision we are making as a government to satisfy a number of these complaints.

Mrs MILLER: Yes, because it is a real issue.

Mr FURNER: Agreed.

Mr KNUTH: In reference to page 3 of the Service Delivery Statements for the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, can the minister explain how the local government will be supported to administer the new planning system that the government has implemented? Will they be providing additional financial support to the Local Government Association to manage and administer the new planning system?

Mr FURNER: Unfortunately, that is a matter for the Deputy Premier. Planning is outside of my jurisdiction. That is a matter that should have been raised with the Deputy Premier this morning, unfortunately.

Mr KNUTH: In reference to page 4 of the SDS for the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, can the minister advise whether the Women in Local Government Strategy events will be hosted in rural and regional Queensland to ensure that women from all areas of Queensland have an opportunity to attend these important workshops?

Mr FURNER: That is a proud achievement of our government in terms of underpinning and improving women's access to professional development through mentoring programs. As part of our implementation of the Women in Local Government Strategy, the Palaszczuk government has invested approximately \$140,000 in a range of training and mentoring activities for female councillors and council employees. The government has also sponsored the Women in Local Government Excellence Conference, which was held in Brisbane in November last year. The department sponsored the Local Government Managers Australia Queensland Women in Local Government Excellence Conference, once again in November last year, which included 11 delegate support packages which were valued at \$1,000 each to help female councillors and officers from small rural and remote councils attend that conference.

The member for Dalrymple, being a man who represents vast areas in his jurisdiction, understands the tyranny of distance and the importance of women being able to attend those conferences. It is a great initiative—an initiative that will continue to ensure that women are given every opportunity to enhance their capacity to receive training where possible.

Mr POWELL: Minister, in light of the news that Minister Bailey has been stood aside, can you please rule out having used a private email for ministerial matters?

Mr FURNER: Member for Glass House, that is not really a matter that we are investigating here this evening—

Mr POWELL: So you will not rule that out, Minister?

Mr FURNER: Once again, if you can demonstrate where that sits in the SDS that would be of some assistance, but it is not a matter that we are here for tonight.

Mr POWELL: Your answer is very enlightening, Minister.

Mr FURNER: It surprises me that someone who has not bothered once to ask me a question on local government since my short term in office of approximately five months—it has been 2,513 days, I think, since the member for Glass House has bothered to ask a question on local government—tonight in these hearings wishes to divert his attention to something that has nothing to do with this portfolio examination and wants to concentrate on something that is totally irrelevant to the purpose we are here for this evening.

CHAIR: I do not have a problem. I am sure the member has another question.

Mr POWELL: I do. Thank you, Mr Chair. The Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program was funded to the tune of \$46 million in 2016-17, yet the funding in 2017-18 is only \$28 million. Can you please explain this cut of over \$17 million?

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for Glass House for his question. Firstly, my understanding is that the \$28 million you are referring to is the current funding program. Once again, this grant supports local governments to deliver community, economic and social infrastructure projects. I will run through the objectives of those projects, which are to build funding and assistance to local government projects—

Mr POWELL: You actually just explained the \$17 million cut—

Mr FURNER:—that align with state, regional and local priorities. It supports economic growth, innovation and community development. It increases local job creation and training opportunities to contribute to building safe, caring and connected communities.

Mr POWELL: So why cut this by \$17 million?

Mr FURNER: Of all the 77 local governments that are eligible to submit projects for regional assessment as part of the annual application base competitive funding round, funding for 2017-18 LGGSP will be available for the first quarter of 2017-18. It provides up to a 60 per cent subsidy on eligible project costs, although this can be varied in particular circumstances.

I will give you some examples of the projects approved in the 2016-17 round. Bulloo Shire Council was approved a subsidy of \$309,201 for the Thargomindah aerodrome runway lighting system upgrade, replacing aged and unreliable lighting to allow 24-hour operation of the airport. To go back to your question, \$28 million is annual and the value in last year's budget included carryover from previous years. Another example closer to Brisbane is the Scenic Rim Regional Council, which was approved a subsidy of \$285,000 for landscaping and upgrade of the car park at the Tamborine Memorial Hall to keep it functioning as a vibrant local community facility. Rockhampton Regional Council was approved a subsidy of \$348,000 for Mount Morgan streetscaping improvements, creating a vibrant CBD area that the community can use and encouraging tourists passing through to enjoy the sights and visit local business.

It is hard for local governments as a result of wet weather and cyclones. We have been working with the director-general to get the money out the door faster. This is a matter that needs to be taken into consideration when looking at funding, particularly for areas that have been affected by the recent Cyclone Debbie.

Mr POWELL: In speaking about cyclones and disasters, the Community Resilience Fund was funded to the tune of \$41 million in 2016-17 yet the funding in 2017-18 is only \$5 million. That is over \$35 million you have ripped out of the program. Can you please explain why?

Mr FURNER: The question in respect of the resilience fund is a matter for the Deputy Premier. Once again, that is an area that should have been taken into consideration—

Mr POWELL: What do you actually do as the local government minister?

Mr FURNER: I think that is half the problem, member for Glass House: you have no understanding and no appreciation of the separation between the Deputy Premier's and my own portfolio. It surprises me, but once again I come back to my earlier statement. That is why you have not bothered to ask me one question during question time or even bothered to put a question on notice, because you do not have a clue.

Mr POWELL: You do not do anything, clearly.

Mr FURNER: You are clueless. You are absolutely clueless.

CHAIR: Order! I will go to the member for Warrego.

Ms LEAHY: With reference to the Queensland Audit Office report into forecasting the long-term sustainability of local government, has the department allowed councils to set their own financial sustainability targets where they can justify that a different target is a more appropriate indicator of the long-term financial sustainability?

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for Warrego for her question. From the outset I can advise the committee that the Palaszczuk government is committed to encouraging sustainability in local councils across Queensland in working with stakeholders such as the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Queensland Treasury Corporation to achieve positive outcomes. As the committee may be aware, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly tabled in parliament the Auditor-General's report on long-term sustainability and local government on 11 October 2016.

This is obviously of concern for the government. This committee initiated an inquiry into council sustainability, the outcomes of which I look forward to receiving. While the government agrees in principle with the recommendations of the Auditor-General's report, I must stress that, in my view, there is no one size that fits all. As you travel around the state and see the diversity of our local councils, you quickly realise that all parties need to continue to work together to aim for long-term council sustainability without adding more red tape.

The department is currently consulting with the local government sector and other stakeholders about how these recommendations may be implemented, the costs and benefits of implementing them, and whether their implementation is appropriate across the different local governments that exist in Queensland. The department expects to complete this consultation in 2017, with resultant recommended changes to the legislative framework and guidelines to be progressed in late 2017.

Ms LEAHY: Can you explain to the committee what actions have been taken by the department to support councils to help them build their capability and capacity to produce the 10-year financial forecasts and asset plans?

Mr FURNER: I might refer to the director-general on that.

Mr Carroll: I thank the member for her question. In relation to the 10-year financial plans, QTC and the department are working very closely with all local councils. QTC have developed modelling in relation to those financial plans and are currently trialling most of those in local governments. I do not have to hand the details of which ones were trialled but I can provide that if you require.

Ms LEAHY: That is QTC, but what assistance is the department of local government—

Mr Carroll: It is in conjunction with the department itself. In relation to the financial sustainability, QTC and the department are working hand in hand in those things.

Ms LEAHY: You just mentioned the financial forecasts. What about the asset management plans?

Mr Carroll: Thank you very much for that question. In relation to the asset management plans, we are actually working with a large group on that—the QAO in relation to their report that has been tabled in parliament, the Queensland Treasury Corporation, LGAQ, the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia, the department and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority—to bring together financial asset management plans that are fit for purpose for councils. As we have found in relation to asset management plans, depending on where you are and what council you are, they can be from a very sophisticated model to a not-so-sophisticated model. We are trying to standardise that process and have a solution that is a fit-for-purpose solution for councils.

Ms LEAHY: When do you think you might have that work completed?

Mr Carroll: We are hoping to trial something later this year in relation to those. We want to try it as a pilot so we can try it in some of those smaller communities that do not have asset management plans.

Mr PERRETT: My reference is page 6 of the SDS and the objective to 'administer the department's local government and community funding programs'. Has the department made changes to require councils to include in their annual budget the long-term financial forecasts for at least three subsequent years after the budget year and the reporting analysis of actual budget figures?

Mr FURNER: Can you take me to which part on page 6 of the SDS?

Mr PERRETT: I just reference the local government and community funding programs. It is relevant to the department of local government. It is an important part of budget forecasting for local governments and something that we have heard plenty about during our inquiry.

Mr FURNER: I will refer to the director-general to answer that.

Mr Carroll: I thank the honourable member for the question. Could you repeat the question? I want to make sure I get the right answer for you.

Mr PERRETT: Certainly. Has the department made changes to require councils to include in their annual budget the long-term financial forecasts for at least three subsequent years after the budget year and the reporting analysis of actual budget figures?

Mr Carroll: I thank the member for the question. I am going to answer the last part of the question first. In relation to reporting budget against actual figures, a new accounting standard has come in. Each local council needs to report the differential between what the budget and actual number is in relation to that. It is an accounting standard that is audited by the Queensland Auditor-General, so yes is the answer in relation to that.

In relation to having a budget cycle, as I said, this is why we are working with council in relation to the financial sustainability which you are well aware of in relation to trying to actually improve their financial sustainability. One of the biggest costs to councils is asset maintenance. As the member has just asked, that is what we are trying to get to the bottom of, in relation to understanding the asset maintenance of those councils. If we can actually improve the length and life of those assets, the depreciation cost that is in councils will decrease and hopefully they will be more financially sustainable.

Mr PERRETT: Director-General, how many of the 77 local councils across Queensland do not yet comply with this requirement?

Mr Carroll: The requirement for reporting budget against actual?

Mr PERRETT: Absolutely.

Mr Carroll: It is a new accounting standard that has come in this year so I cannot really answer that because we have not seen the financial statements that have come through. It is a standard statement that would be in the financial statements this year from the Queensland Audit Office.

Mr PERRETT: Are you confident that the 77 councils understand the requirement now that they need to actually do that?

Mr Carroll: I thank the member for the question. We have been working closely with councils in relation to the new standards that have come in, as I know the Queensland Audit Office has been as well, and how it would impact those councils.

Mr PERRETT: Director-General, has the department yet broadened the number of ratios required to be calculated over 10 years to include the asset renewal funding ratio?

Mr Carroll: I thank the member for the question. We are working with councils and stakeholders in relation to looking at those financial sustainability measures. The department has committed to further consult with councils before making any changes to the current regime of statutory financial sustainability reporting. Submissions to the inquiry and the findings will also inform any response from the department and further consideration, including balances, regulation, public accountability and practical outcomes. I am waiting on the report from the committee itself.

Mr POWELL: I have a question to the minister. Basically, to sum up, we have heard this evening of millions coming out of various programs and we have just heard through questions from the member for Warrego and the member for Gympie about some patchy achievement and progress towards the recommendations you had from the Auditor-General to improve our councils' financial sustainability. Can you actually point to any tangible outcomes that have been achieved in improving the financial sustainability of our councils?

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for Glass House for your question. I will go through this with you in terms of each area. We see from 2015-16 an increased projection of funding in total, starting in 2015-16 from \$133,820,000 up to the next year of \$291,129,000 and in this budget \$306,716,000. There definitely have been no cuts in funding. There has been a graduated increase in the overall funding of the SGFA. There is the Revenue Replacement Program, the Indigenous Economic Development Grant and the water, wastewater and solid waste infrastructure fund.

I refer to the example I used earlier of my visit the other day to Murray Island, or Mer, where they rely upon freshwater through their desalination plant. This is an example where those sorts of communities would not survive without the assistance of the increased funding the Palaszczuk Labor government has provided. It is a great story. That funding of \$120 million over four years will provide water for that community and other communities in need.

Another example is \$5 million over two years from 2017-18 to assist smaller local governments with infrastructure costs associated with the introduction of fluoridation. We will deliver additional funding of \$3.37 million, making a total of \$34 million under the SGFA funding with respect to assisting those Indigenous communities to meet the costs of delivering their key service in their communities.

Further, \$29 million is available through the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program to assist the local governments provide priority capital community infrastructure which supports economic growth, innovation and community development. That is a focus of projects that generate and sustain local government. Once again, over the period of the last three budgets, there has been a steady substantial increase of overall funding and no cuts to local government in those grants that are available.

Ms LEAHY: Yet we have more financially stressed councils.

CHAIR: Thank you. Earlier the member for Bundamba sought leave to table a document. In the interests of the precedence that has already been determined by this committee, I am not allowing the documents to be tabled at this time.

Mr CRAWFORD: Minister, I refer to page 55 of budget paper 4. Can you provide detail on where projects associated with the Indigenous water infrastructure program are being constructed and why these projects are needed?

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for Barron River for your question. As you are a member who comes from regional and Far North Queensland, you would appreciate the benefit of this particular program. The health, wellbeing and future prospects of Indigenous Queenslanders is of the utmost importance to not only me in my duties acting as both Minister for Local Government and Minister for

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships but also the entire Palaszczuk government. That is why we have invested \$120 million over four years to improve water, wastewater and solid waste infrastructure in Queensland's Indigenous communities.

As I indicated, and I will keep coming back to this, last week I travelled through several Indigenous communities in the cape as part of governing from the regions week in Cairns. We are providing consistent access to fresh, clean drinking water along with ensuring that a functional waste management system is a basic right for people in remote communities. This \$120 million commitment from the Palaszczuk government shows that our priority is to ensure the future supply of these amenities. Last year, an assessment was undertaken of water, wastewater and solid waste assets of all 16 Indigenous councils. This assessment highlighted a consistent issue arising due to a lack of regular maintenance, which in turn is resulting in a shortened life span of these critical assets which creates potential health issues. In conjunction with the Indigenous councils, a program of works is being developed based on the outcomes of those assessments.

A final report on the conditions of the assets and the strategic plan for the upgrades is due next week. The prioritisation of works will be based on the age and condition of assets and improved public health outcomes in these communities. Works will include everything from fencing and lagoon cover repairs to the entire replacement of failed water treatment plants. It should also be noted that these infrastructure projects and upgrades will support capacity building of staff working in Indigenous councils through training and onsite support. This ongoing support for Indigenous councils will not only provide operational support for jobs in these communities but will also extend the life span of these critical assets.

CHAIR: Given the time, we will now move to the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. We only have about half an hour for this one because we also want to talk to the Family Responsibilities Commission.

Mr FURNER: I will try to keep my opening statement short then.

CHAIR: Do you really need one? Keep it short, please.

Mr FURNER: There are some success points. Once again, I will acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which we gather, the senior elders past, present and emerging. It is my absolute pleasure and privilege to be here this evening before you as the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Since taking on the role in February, barely a week has gone by that I have not had the very good fortune of meeting Indigenous Queenslanders and hearing the hauntingly beautiful tales of their rich and diverse culture, language, identity and history. This is an incredible, long, rich history about which non-Indigenous Queenslanders know far too little. These proud and capable people walked this land in self-sufficiency for many thousands of years and today, as we walk the path of reconciliation together, we know the aspirations of young Indigenous Queenslanders differ little from the youth of non-Indigenous Queenslanders. They want jobs, education and home ownership. They want the realisation of full economic and social participation and the surety of a strong future. That is what this budget is all about. It is not just about righting the wrongs of the past but also about moving forward to a future with better health and economic outcomes and more local control over decisions that directly affect the families and communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Home ownership rates are around half those of non-Indigenous Queenslanders, unemployment is higher than I would like and opportunities, though growing, are still far too few. Far too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders die before their time in comparison to non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

In this budget the Palaszczuk government is resolving land tenure issues so as to boost home ownership. As the budget document shows, in 2016-17 the Palaszczuk government worked hard to mow down the impediments preventing equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. Just last week I met with two home owners in the town of Lockhart River on beautiful Cape York—two wonderful women: Irene Namok and Evelyn Omeenyo. After decades of paying rent to the state, they are now proud owners of the house in their community that they had called home for decades. We are providing new home owners with the opportunity to create a legacy for their children and for grandparents to pass their prosperity down the line.

The 2016-17 budget allowed us to establish Community Enterprise Queensland, a merged entity responsible for running community stores, and already we are seeing improvements. Overall prices have dropped, fresh food deliveries are more frequent and local Indigenous people are being employed. These measures will go a long way towards improving health and life expectancy for Indigenous Queenslanders living in remote communities.

Also in this budget the Palaszczuk government has committed additional funds to enhance the productivity skills of Indigenous Queenslanders. An amount of \$1.2 million will be made available over three years to expand the Youth Employment Program. This program allows us to secure sustainable employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In the next 12 months we will build on the successes of 2016-17 which, among many other things, include 600 Indigenous people being placed in employment, putting these young children on a path to success. We are setting them up for the qualifications and skills they need to flourish in today's job market. High school education is an important predictor of future employment and economic outcomes. The Palaszczuk government has allocated an additional \$4.2 million to provide education scholarships for an extra 2,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students over the next four years.

In 2016-17 the Palaszczuk government procured around \$170 million in goods and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business—more than \$130 million above the SDS target. In July 2016 the Ministerial Champions Program was established to operate in conjunction with the Government Champion Program. This program has strengthened relationships with the mayors and community leaders and is again funded in this year's budget. It supports direct engagement of ministers with Indigenous Queenslanders and their leaders and helps us to make sure our efforts hit the mark. The Palaszczuk government recognises that it takes a multifaceted approach to continue caring in Indigenous communities. This budget delivers that. I look forward to the committee's questions.

Mr MINNIKIN: May I begin my opening remarks by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet this evening. I, too, pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. My first question is in relation to the jobs placement service measure. Minister, in your response to question on notice No. 14 you said that 261 jobs are to be created in the Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office region and 30 created in the Government Coordination Office region. Can you please explain what this means and where these jobs were actually created?

Mr FURNER: The answer contains a table of the job creation in each region, being Torres, Far North Queensland, the Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office, the Government Coordination Office, North Queensland, Central Queensland, South-West Queensland, South-East Queensland north, South-East Queensland south—a total of 1,074 jobs. It is the 813 candidates who have secured job placement as a result of the department implementation of the YEP and the remaining 261 placements as a result of implementing the social housing integrated capital works program through the Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office.

Mr MINNIKIN: In relation to those 261 jobs in particular, are there any geographical towns, cities, centres or communities that they are predominantly being created in? I acknowledge there is regional tabular support, but I am looking for actual geographical towns or communities.

Mr FURNER: My understanding is that those remote communities are the 19 remote discrete communities that are throughout Cape York and in the Torres as well.

Mr MINNIKIN: In relation to NAIDOC appreciation service measures—and I refer to question on notice 16—can you tell the committee if you think interviewing 55 people across south Brisbane, Cairns, Hervey Bay and North Stradbroke Island is good enough to get a true measure of community appreciation of NAIDOC Week? I repeat: south Brisbane, Cairns, Hervey Bay and North Stradbroke—55 people only, so 'n' equals population size of 55 people.

Mr FURNER: My understanding is that that was 55 people who actually responded. Eighty-nine per cent of the respondents indicated that the events they attended certainly enhanced their appreciation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. It is always difficult to get people to respond to surveys and other engagement. Of all the NAIDOC celebration events that I was able to attend in my capacity as minister, there were literally thousands and thousands of people attending those events, as you would understand, enjoying the rich, diverse culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

If we look at the value of the events, it was a total value of \$52,000 for the operation of those events across-the-board. The total cost of two external events was \$12,017.54. If you use the example of 69 in Musgrave Park, 31 at the corporate breakfast in Cairns—and we are still waiting for feedback on the event in Cairns which I attended for the opening in Fogarty Park after the national NAIDOC celebrations in Cairns that Saturday night. Some of those figures are still coming in from participants who were involved in those events. Unfortunately, if you recall, the celebration at Musgrave Park was literally rained out as a result of the inclement weather.

Mr MINNIKIN: Yes, it was.

Mr FURNER: Notwithstanding that, there was a good turnout of not only Indigenous people but also non-Indigenous people exploring and getting the value of the rich culture our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have in Brisbane and surrounds.

Mr MINNIKIN: Several months ago when I was also elevated to this shadow ministerial role I gave you a personal commitment to, wherever practicable in this particular ministry area, provide complete bipartisan support, as there should be. In relation to gauging a true effectiveness quotient for the success of NAIDOC Week, despite some of the points that you raise, fairly in my opinion, I go back to my point: what more can be done to encourage better participation in relation to getting more surveys back, for example, to make sure there is a more statistically valid measurement of the real success? Again, 89 per cent in itself is a very high mark, but it is of 55 people. What more can be done to try to encourage more participants in survey instrument work?

Mr FURNER: As you would know, DATSIP is a whole-of-government department. It captures the breadth of all the departments. Certainly if you use a yardstick of the engagement of more and more people—and I will use one example of the Laura dance festival, which I was so privileged to attend on the Friday before the national NAIDOC awards dinner in Cairns. There were a variety of people up there—from across Queensland, from New South Wales, from Victoria and from further afield in Japan and Los Angeles—who were enjoying the rich culture of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. You will not ever capture everyone's identity or everyone's exposure to the culture across-the-board. I am prepared to have further discussions with the department or look at other measures and ways we might explore that continual exposure. We need to look at other attendance and surveys from other areas outside of Brisbane as well such as Acacia Ridge and other areas that may not have been forthcoming in supplying feedback on that particular exposure.

Mr MINNIKIN: I appreciate that. I turn now to some of the budget measures. I am referring to Budget Paper No. 4, page 73, the Indigenous performance budget allocation. Can you tell me what performance indicators are in place to measure whether this money is well spent—the effectiveness of this particular spend? It is just over \$2 million.

Mr FURNER: Rather than take up time now, we will take that on notice and get back to you about that.

Mr MINNIKIN: I appreciate that. I refer to the budget measures allocated to your department; namely, the community and personal histories resourcing and cultural acknowledgement and promotion. Could you advise the committee what outcomes are being measured for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders by these specific initiatives—community and personal history and cultural acknowledgement and promotion?

Mr FURNER: I had the privilege of attending the university to gain a real appreciation of some of the history of our Indigenous people. It is a very moving experience to be part of an opportunity to understand a bit about the culture and history behind some of our Indigenous people, to hear some of the personal histories and acquire an understanding of how they continue to partner and support Link-Up Queensland and other link-up services around Australia. The research staff at Link-Up Queensland also provided full access to the department's records, and Link-Up research manager Ruth Loy has stated that the benefits of working together include the ability to conduct targeted research to meet clients' specific needs, reducing the time it takes to progress client cases through the research stage to a reunion and eliminating the duplication of work between the two services. They receive regular feedback from the community about the positive benefits of this service. It is a service where the average cost per request has risen from \$3,000 to \$4,000 due to the change in the type of requests that are being received. It is not an easy process to assist someone to work through their family tree or the involvement of their cultural engagement through their family. As you would appreciate, there is an increased interest with respect to exploring their cultural and family connections.

Mr MINNIKIN: Do you have any more detail in relation to how the outcomes are measured specifically within those programs? What are the KPIs specifically?

Mr FURNER: The cultural package includes following things like reconciliation and peak body support, which is support for grassroots reconciliation activities, languages—which is the theme for NAIDOC Week this year, Language Matters—and funding to work for the State Library of Queensland. The communities support the development of a Queensland government language policy, recording stories of Indigenous astronomy, men and women's sports teams, arts marketing and working through Arts Queensland to build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual artists to develop digital marketing opportunities. I was privileged to be in Cairns last Thursday for the launch of the Cairns

Indigenous Arts Fair, and I could not walk past a particular piece of art without purchasing it. I am looking forward to that arriving in Brisbane shortly so that I can display it in my office. You would appreciate that; I know that you are a man of great culture.

Mr MINNIKIN: Discerning quality and culture; I could not have it better myself, Minister.

Mr FURNER: You took the words out of my mouth.

Mr MINNIKIN: If I could move to something which is very close to my heart—in fact, I spoke in parliament recently on this very topic—Closing the Gap. I refer specifically to page 26 of Budget Paper No. 4, the Closing the Gap budget item. There is approximately \$7.6 million in Closing the Gap funding allocated to your department. Across the country, sadly we are only meeting one of the seven Closing the Gap targets. Queensland has a big part to play in this space. My question is what criteria have you put in place to finally get on top of measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of this funding pipeline against meeting these vital targets?

Mr FURNER: As you would know, during my previous role in the other place in Canberra hearing the results of Closing the Gap reports was near and dear to my heart. I believe strongly that, as a result of the Palaszczuk government's Champions' Program, ministers and directors-general have a direct passage and connection with each discrete community. That is one example of showing how connected and sincere we are about looking at measures to close the gap. That is a whole-of-government department which relies upon other services for assistance, and it is a department that will continue to engage with all of those discrete and urban centres to make sure that we take steps to close the gap.

You are quite right that we have only met one measure, and that is the proud measure of reaching year 12 attainment. Our record is a shining light compared to the other states in this nation, but the other measures need to be consistent and sustainable so that we can ensure they are also reached. That is one of the reasons why I have engaged in round tables with the discrete mayors since my appointment. You would realise that seven of those communities are at an utmost disadvantage as a result of the situation they are in, and we need to work harder. I appreciate your comments about working in partnership. It is always pleasing to do that as a parliament to make sure we deliver on those bases. There is a national framework of measures, and all states are using the same framework. All ministers and DGs are required to be part of that involvement as well. I will continue in my role as the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships to deliver those measures to make sure that we eventually close the gap for our first nations people.

Mr MINNIKIN: Minister, in your answer you used the term whole-of-government coordination or approach. In the interests of getting better outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community do you believe that, through a whole-of-government coordination, it would be better for the efforts of your department if they were maybe sharpened by becoming an arm of the Department of Premier and Cabinet?

Mr FURNER: I might defer to the Director-General for that answer.

Ms O'Connor: I think decisions about the shape and nature of government departments are for the government of the day to make. There have been many models tried over the years in terms of where to position Indigenous affairs. You will recall that under the LNP government it sat alongside multicultural affairs. That did not suit many first nations people because they are very particular in terms of first nations status. Nationally, you may recall, there were efforts to position Indigenous affairs within the Prime Minister's portfolio area. They were not overly successful because we were still facing the same Closing the Gaps efforts that we are now.

The thing is that we operate on a whole-of-government basis, so to have the influence and to be supported by all ministers and all other directors-general is the key to this. It does not necessarily matter whether we sit with the Premier or the Treasurer in a stand-alone department. What matters is that everybody is attuned to the agenda and holds it as the priority.

Mr MINNIKIN: A whole-of-government buy-in; is that what you are saying?

Ms O'Connor: Yes. We operate things like cultural capability programs across government where we work with the other departments. They are held to account in terms of their service delivery to make sure that the services they provide are culturally capable. They have to report on that. All of the other directors-general, through the government's Champions' Program and other whole-of-government initiatives, report back and steward initiatives across the remote communities as well as the regional and the urban communities.

If you have a look at some of the initiatives that are being led across the remote communities at the moment, we will see great change come from them. The infrastructure program that the minister talked about before when Director-General Carroll was here which has arisen from that audit will deliver great things over the next four years. There is a trial of solar power in Lockhart River, and its transferability across all the other communities is being assessed. We know that in these communities they have a lot of sun and if we can make use of that, that is a good thing. There are other initiatives in terms of telecommunications et cetera that we want to pursue.

Mrs MILLER: Minister, I have a question in relation to the Hymba Yumba school which is in my electorate at Springfield. This school is a very successful Aboriginal school, and it has been having dreadful problems expanding. It really does need to expand quite urgently because of the numbers there. In your position as Minister for Aboriginal affairs and Minister for Local Government, would you consider using the Acquisition of Land Act to get the extra land that they need to expand this school? My understanding is that the Ipswich City Council is standing in their way. I understand that they need land so they can expand and continue on with their excellent work. I do not want to hear that it should be shoved to the education minister, because I believe that you can use the Acquisition of Land Act.

Mr FURNER: I might take that question on notice and get some more detail from you, if you do not mind. I think that is an area that needs to be explored.

Mrs MILLER: I do not mind if you take it on notice, but I want to place on record that this school does an excellent job and it is being hindered in its expansion. It needs all the help it can get.

Mr CRAWFORD: Minister, referring to Budget Paper No. 5 and the DATSIP service delivery statement at page 4, can you explain to the committee the additional 100,743 hectares of state land and national parks transferred to traditional owners in Cape York Peninsula?

Mr FURNER: The member would very well appreciate the importance of land handbacks in your part of the world and the opportunities that exist for our Indigenous people in respect to that process. The Queensland government places huge importance on handing back state owned land and recognises the continual cultural connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to their traditional country. Not only does the Palaszczuk government recognise the cultural connection but the ongoing joint management of these traditional lands provides economic opportunities for Aboriginal traditional owners. Almost 3.7 million hectares has been returned to traditional owners on the cape, resulting in 28 national parks covering an area of 2 million hectares; almost 1.5 million hectares of unfettered Aboriginal freehold land; 19 Aboriginal owned and managed nature refuges; and 25 Aboriginal landholding entities that between them have an income of over \$3 million per annum for national park management. This funding, which is committed through Indigenous management agreements and administrated by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, results in the employment of over 100 people in administration and land management.

In relation to your question, I am happy to advise the committee that the program exceeded its 2016-17 target by 273,609 hectares through the handback of Sandstone West, Shelbourne and Bromley. In fact, as the new Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships I was in Cairns for the handback of Bromley.

In the past Bromley was an area that was designated for a space station by the previous Bjelke-Petersen government and it was an amazing opportunity to be present with respect to that hand-back—a momentous occasion that I will never forget. I have done some amazing things in my life, but that will stick with me forever. It was a privilege to be involved in that particular hand-back. Some 20,220 hectares of Aboriginal freehold land were handed back in Sandstone West in October 2016 as well as 16,490 hectares of new jointly managed national park Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land, and in Shelburne 80,000 hectares and over 37,000 hectares of new jointly managed national park in December 2016.

As I have indicated, the hand-back of Bromley in May involved 109,700 hectares of Aboriginal freehold land and 51,030 hectares of new jointly managed national park and 46,200 hectares. Like, I am sure, the member for Barron River, I have had the privilege of driving through the Daintree, through Wujal Wujal and up through to Cooktown. You see the benefit of those hand-backs. I am always proud to see the outcome of that delivery in handing back to our Indigenous people as I drive along that path on the way up to Cooktown.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Time has gone on this one. I welcome Commissioner Glasgow to the table. Did you have an opening statement at all? There is no requirement for you to do so.

Mr Glasgow: No, Mr Chairman. I am delighted to be here and meet you all again and I do bring greetings from those wonderful people you met in Aurukun and elsewhere.

CHAIR: I appreciate you being able to make it. I have a couple of questions for you, Commissioner. Is the budget that the FRC receives appropriate for the services that the FRC delivers?

Mr Glasgow: Yes, it is adequate, Mr Chairman, and I can tell you that my estimate surplus is around \$230,000 for this year. We have kept in surplus for most years—an operating surplus. In actual terms, some of that money is committed and the real surplus after accounts are paid will be about \$160,000 for this year.

CHAIR: You are doing a good job there. Are there any impediments to how the FRC can carry out its responsibilities and obligations?

Mr Glasgow: Not really, Mr Chairman. Like all organisations which operate in remote areas, the cost of travel and so forth is the only inhibiting factor. We get immense support from the department in relation to matters that are required from time to time and, as you know, we have bipartisan support in relation to the conduct of this business. There are from time to time those immediate matters that occur within communities. As you know, the history of Aurukun has been a rather unhappy one since 2015, but those matters are local and from the operation of the commission we deal with each community as a separate entity with their own problems and their own concerns. We have all the support we really need.

CHAIR: I understand that you are retiring some time later this year.

Mr Glasgow: That was so when I met you in Aurukun, but there is a lady on my left who has persuaded me to stay beyond 30 June next year.

Mr MINNIKIN: Minister, I am referring obviously to the Family Responsibilities Commission and the SDS at page 7 and also the Family Responsibilities Commission quarterly report. Minister, I note reading quarterly report No. 35 that school attendance notices increased from 720 in the previous quarterly report No. 34 to 3,319 in report No. 35 which the FRCQ put down to a change in reporting practice. Minister, have you raised issues with school attendance notice processes with the education minister? If you have referred it to her, what action was taken?

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for Chatsworth for your question. In short, no, I have not raised this with the Minister for Education. I can—

Mr MINNIKIN: Are you intending to, given that it has gone up from 720 in quarterly report No. 34 to 3,319 in this latest quarterly report?

Mr FURNER: I understand that the department has raised that, so it is a measure that certainly is on our forecast for a response from the education minister's office.

Mr MINNIKIN: Minister, when was that communication held with the minister, or at least her department, through your officials—just approximately?

Ms O'Connor: I will just get the date of the last board meeting because it came up on examination of the report. The Deputy Director-General (Policy), Tammy Williams, undertook to discuss it with the assistant director-general of education. They are still working on that and the reporting arrangements.

Mr MINNIKIN: If you could come back to us, that would be great.

Ms O'Connor: We will give you the date.

Mr MINNIKIN: I appreciate that. Thank you very much.

Mr FURNER: I want to respond to the member for Chatsworth's earlier questions with respect to what we took on notice with regard to Indigenous performance on page 73 of Budget Paper No. 4, and I believe this is what he was looking at. The result is that the additional funding of \$2.1 million in the 2017-18 budget was to implement a dedicated arts incubator space for start-up Indigenous performance companies and to invest in new dance commissions performed at the Cairns Centre of Contemporary Arts and within Indigenous communities.

Mr MINNIKIN: Which, Minister, I read myself in Budget Paper No. 4. I was looking for more information, but if that is all you have then I am happy to accept that and move on.

Mr FURNER: That is most likely a Department of the Premier and Cabinet submission and budget measure.

Mr MINNIKIN: Sure. Minister, I go back to the Family Responsibilities Commission and specifically quarterly report No. 35. Due to the way notices were previously reported, do you know how many children were absent from school for three days but were not reported?

Mr FURNER: It probably would be appropriate for Commissioner Glasgow to respond to that, but during our visit not that long ago to Mossman Gorge it was interesting to hear comments back from the commissioners who were present about those measures, and certainly there were distinct changes in respect of the enrolment. I think the model that Mossman Gorge has is a great model, but it is probably appropriate that the commissioner responds specifically to your direct question.

Mr MINNIKIN: Thank you, Minister. Good evening, Commissioner.

Mr Glasgow: Good evening. I just want to put those notices in perspective. Previous to this year, what happened was that we would get a notice when a child missed three days of school. Subsequent to the changeover to OneSchool, we get a notice every time a child misses three days of school. In 2016 term 1 we received in, say, for instance, Aurukun 214 notices and this year we received 1,425. That does not mean a huge blowout. It caused us great inconvenience, but every time a child missed three days of school we would get another notice. We set in place a program so we would get the repeat notice notifications. They all related to, say, about 200 children, so we knew in 2016 most children missed three days of school. If we got a notice, for instance, towards the end of term 1 in 2016, we would know that that was the first notice we got that this child missed three days. What we now do is we get notices every time a child misses three days.

For instance, in Doomadgee in 2016 term 1 we received 222 notices and this year we received 1,906 notices. That does not mean there was a great increase in children missing school; it just meant we got those notices repeatedly. I have asked the department not to do this but to just give us one notice and then give us the information as to how the children go. I have had a meeting again today with Assistant Director-General Selwyn Button and we are trying to get back to the situation we had before the OneSchool system came into place, and we are hopefully able to do that because we got a lot of roll tools and information which was more what the commission wanted—not that a young child missed three days but how did he go subsequently, how did he go before, why did he miss it, was it to do with a parental problem and so forth but really to get day-to-day information about school attendance. I hope that explains that issue. I think we have a real opportunity now in the next couple of months to revert to an older system which was far more of assistance to the commissioners in their day-to-day management of conferences.

Mr MINNIKIN: Thank you, Mr Glasgow. Commissioner, what triggered the changes in reporting that is claimed to have led to the jump? I heard what you just said then and I read through page 14 of quarterly report No. 35. What were the main changes, the drivers, the change in the methodology? To a casual reader I know there is that maxim from Disraeli about 'lies, lies and damn statistics' that everyone in this chamber knows of, but if it is not misleading it at least draws one's eyes when you read in quarterly report No. 34 that there were 720 reported cases whereas, as I have previously said—twice now in this hearing—in quarterly report No. 35 there were 3,319. It does tend to alarm the casual reader.

Mr Glasgow: Again in answer to that, in 2016 we were using the academy model and then in 2017 we went on to the OneSchool model, so that is why it happened. We did not get much notice of the change, so it overwhelmed us until we were able to identify each notice and how repetitive it was.

Mr MINNIKIN: You received no notice, I believe, reading this report?

Mr Glasgow: That is right.

Mr MINNIKIN: Yes; no notice from the department of education?

Mr Glasgow: No.

CHAIR: I go now to the member for Dalrymple.

Mr KNUTH: My question is to the minister and it relates to the Indigenous performance in Budget Paper No. 4 at page 73. I do not know if the minister is aware, but at Waroona Station, which is based in a national park, the traditional owners are trying to source money for Indigenous programs in that park, particularly in training and self-esteem, yet National Parks have made the decision to shoot all of the cattle and horses in that park and there are three or four generations—

CHAIR: Member for Dalrymple, the question is not relevant to the FRC. It is not relevant to the portfolio.

Mr KNUTH: It is whether the commissioner has an understanding of that issue.

Mr Glasgow: No, I have no knowledge of that. My jurisdiction is limited to five communities and not outside that area at all.

CHAIR: We will go to the member for Barron River.

Mr CRAWFORD: Welcome back, David. It is great to hear that your tenure might be extended and thank you for the opportunity for this committee to travel up to Aurukun and some other parts as well. My question is around the youth justice triggers and the reporting to the commission. I can remember some discussions that we had with you in Cairns about that and some concerns about the Youth Justice Act and whether that reporting would come over to the FRC due to some limitations. Has anything changed there? Can you elaborate a bit more on that so we have it on the record?

Mr Glasgow: Thank you very much for the question. In 2014, there was an amendment to the legislation that allowed notifications of youth justice convictions to be sent to the commission. Subsequently, some amending legislation came into force on 1 July 2016, which prohibited the publication of events in that court. Consequently, it caught our requirement under the act and prevented the courts from giving us notices. We no longer get notices of any convictions in the Childrens Court.

We approached the director-general to see whether we could have any change in policy about that. The government indicated that it was an election commitment to change that legislation and, unfortunately, it caught up the FRC and prevented us from receiving those notices. I had some discussions with Sean Harvey, the deputy director-general of the Department of Justice and the Attorney-General, and we worked on a system to try to get around that. We do not get those notifications but, as you know from the communities—and as I explained to you—it is community knowledge of who did what to whom. We try to use other triggers such as Child Safety triggers to bring in the parents and the children or young people with those notices so that we can try to get the families to work together and work with youth justice. We lost the capacity to deal with those notices—or we never get them—but we have not walked away from that. If any of the notices involve young people, then we will try to get them in. As you probably know in your own areas, 12-, 13- and 14-year-old young people will choose themselves whether they visit us, but quite a number come in at the appropriate time. Whether we can assist them and assist their families is what we are there for.

Mr FURNER: Can I complement the commissioner's response? I understand that the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, along with the FRC, are investigating and exploring additional policy responses and enhancements to the existing arrangements to enable the FRC to play an active role in the rehabilitation of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from the welfare reform communities who come in contact with the youth justice system. That exploring of the opportunities is ongoing. I am encouraged to see that opportunity to look at ways to explore different responses.

Mrs LAUGA: Commissioner, it is lovely to see you again. Thank you for being here today. One of the most important parts of the commission's work is the ability to receive and interpret school attendance data. I note in the FRC's quarterly report No. 35 at page 11 that the FRC notes the provision of school attendance data and, in particular, the changes in the way the Department of Education and Training reports school absences and that the changes to the way in which DET is reporting school absences has resulted in the commission receiving a notification each time the three-day unexplained abscess threshold is reached and that these additional notifications have resulted in a significant increase in workload. Could you explain the difficulties and also if you envisage a way to resolve this issue?

Mr Glasgow: Once I receive a notice, my obligation is to check that the notice is within jurisdiction—that the person is a welfare recipient and has had the appropriate residency qualifications. We worked out that, roughly, it takes 15 minutes a notice. If I had to do all of those notices, that is the additional work. We looked at a group of notices that came in. If a second set of notices came in that related to the same child, we had a computer system that noted those notices as 'R'—as a repeat—so that we did not have to duplicate. Effectively, we very quickly got back to a system where we had the exact number of notices for the children. It gave us a little bit more information, in a sense, that a child may have received five notices. We knew on the face of it that that meant 15 days of school.

Because matters were in some sort of flux, we then went to the principals of the school and got day-to-day information about how children were attending. I think subsequent to your visit I had further meetings with the principal and got far more detail. We are getting access to the data from the principal, which is a fairly onerous job. In my discussion with Selwyn Button today, we are going to try to devolve that from the principals and get them from head office. That can be done. It actually comes from Brisbane. We look as though we will be able to relieve Mike Ennis and those principals in the various communities from that responsibility. I think we will shortly get back to that position where we were before of having as much information as practical for the commissioners to decide.

Having said all of that, as you know, the commission has a fair knowledge of who is who in the community. If we bring people in, they have a fair idea. As you saw on the day, many of the commissioners would be around the school, and at the school, and know which child has missed school—not officially, or to the percentage that they were moving, but they know that they are perhaps not going regularly. There is a lot of local information that the commissioners have. We really need the statistical data of whether children are sent home because of behavioural problems. We are now getting that from the principals. Selwyn Button has suggested that he might get that directly from the regional office rather than worry the principals about that data.

Mrs LAUGA: You mentioned that you have been convinced to stay until June next year. Could you elaborate on your decision to stay and what arrangements are in place with respect to your position and also with respect to succession planning for you and the commissioners?

Mr Glasgow: I had a very frank discussion with the director-general and we worked out a transition plan, but that is a matter really for the government. It was very presumptuous of me to assume that the government would appoint me. I was asked whether I would be interested in taking the position and I prevailed upon my wife to agree that we would stay until the end of July next year. I discussed with the director-general a process but, really, I think it is more appropriate that perhaps she should respond to that.

Mr FURNER: As you would appreciate, any appointments or extension such as that would be through the Governor in Council. That will be a matter that will be coming on the agenda at the appropriate time.

Mr MINNIKIN: I refer again to the FRC quarterly report No. 35. I will quote the following passage from page 14—

Having not received any prior advice of anticipated changes to DET reporting, the Commission was left in the position of having to complete administrative processes for all notifications within the timeframes determined by the conference sittings calendar.

Specifically, Minister, for the record, have you raised this with Minister Jones?

Mr FURNER: No, I have not raised that with the Minister for Education.

Mr MINNIKIN: I will cut to the chase. Is it acceptable that the education department is shirking its responsibility and pushing this on to your portfolio?

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for Chatsworth for that question. It is not my role to answer for the responsibility of the education minister. Certainly, in the interests of the people whom I represent, our First Nation people, I will be taking this up. As indicated earlier by the response from my director-general, this is a matter that has been raised with them. We will continue our cooperative approach on this particular matter with the education department.

CHAIR: We are out of time.

Mr FURNER: Sorry, there is one matter that I would like to bring to your attention and that is a correction that is being sought by the director-general of DILGP. If I may be able to ask him to present himself to cover that off, I would appreciate that liberty.

CHAIR: Are you making a closing statement?

Mr FURNER: Yes. It is only a very short closing statement.

CHAIR: I will take one more question.

Mr MINNIKIN: My question is to the minister, and you may defer to the commissioner. Of course, it is your prerogative. Given that many of the people in community have moved to Cairns or Townsville and we are seeing issues of crime, domestic violence and school nonattendance in these centres, should the FRC shift its focus to also these regional centres? It appears as though the problem is now lying elsewhere as well.

Mr FURNER: Can I get you to qualify what you refer to as 'in community'? Is it any specific community?

Mr MINNIKIN: The five specific communities under the purview of the commissioner.

Mr FURNER: As you would know, the FRC for those five particular communities is set up under the Cape York Welfare Reform. At this time we are looking at where we go from there. We are not wedded to making any changes, but, certainly, it is my focus as the minister and the department to have a look at that.

Mr MINNIKIN: You are open to it in the future, potentially?

Mr FURNER: We are open to consider where this may go. At this point in time, we are not making any immediate responses, or making any changes to the composition that exists under the FRC at present. There was a request to seek a correction by the director-general of DILGP.

CHAIR: My apologies. I missed that.

Mr Carroll: In relation to a question asked by the member for Gympie in relation to actual versus budget, I quoted accounting standard 1055, which was the accounting standard that is applicable. It has come to my attention that the accounting standard does not apply to local governments as yet. The Accounting Standards Board noted that it could in future address the budget requirements and broaden the range of public sector entities reporting under this standard, such as local governments. It is recommendation 8 in the report, which you mentioned. We will continue to work with councils. The implementation of that may take a bit longer than this financial year.

Mr PERRETT: Thank you.

CHAIR: That was a clarification?

Mr Carroll: It was a correction.

Mr FURNER: Thank you, chair. I have one final matter. In response to the member for Chatsworth in respect of the date of the board meeting that director-general Clare O'Connor chaired, the last board meeting where that occurred was 28 April this year. Thank you.

CHAIR: The time allocated for the consideration of the estimates of the expenditure in the portfolio areas of Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships has expired. Do you have a closing statement?

Mr FURNER: Thank you, chair. I would like to thank the following people for their contribution to the estimates process: firstly, the committee and, in particular, the chair. I thank you for the time allocated to be present and the preparation that you put into this hearing today. I know that it has been a long day. You and the other committee members have done a sterling job. I thank the research director and Hansard for their work, especially at this late time of the evening. I would also like to put on record my appreciation of the directors-general, Frankie Carroll and Clare O'Connor, their departmental deputy directors-general and, most importantly, the staff behind them, for their expertise and commitment through this process, along with the representatives of the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, who have worked very hard over the past number of months in readiness for tonight's hearing. I thank them. It is much appreciated. Thank you, chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. There are two questions on notice, I believe. If you would have them to the secretariat by 5 pm on Friday, 21 July, that would be much appreciated.

Mr FURNER: Sorry, chair, I believe that we have covered off those two matters. One was asked by the member for Chatsworth and the other one was asked by the member for Bundamba. We will have to examine that.

CHAIR: I will leave it with the secretariat. If they think that you are one short, they will get back to you. The transcript of this session of the hearing will be available on the Hansard page of the parliament's website within three hours. I thank you, Minister, and departmental officers for your attendance here today. I thank the honourable members of the committee and those members who sat with the committee at different times of the day. I want to thank the secretariat, who absolutely worked their butts off to make sure that everything is in order. I cannot say how much I appreciate it and I know that the other members of the committee appreciate it, too. Thank you very much. I thank Hansard. Without Hansard, we cannot keep a record. As always, Hansard did a great job. Thank you very much. I declare the hearing closed.

Committee adjourned at 9.30 pm