



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, 20 March 2018

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TUESDAY, 20 MARCH 2018

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.



Mr Speaker (Hon. Curtis Pitt, Mulgrave) read prayers and took the chair.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I respectfully acknowledge that we are sitting today on the land of Aboriginal people and pay my respects to elders past and present. I thank them, as First Australians, for their careful custodianship of the land over countless generations. We are very fortunate in this country to have two of the world's oldest continuing living cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whose lands, winds and waters we all now share.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from His Excellency the Governor a letter in respect of assent to certain bills. The contents of the letter will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the letter for the information of members.

The Honourable C.W. Pitt MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on the date shown:

Date of Assent: 16 March 2018

A Bill for an Act to provide for the approval of schools to provide courses to overseas students and the approval of schools and not-for-profit organisations to provide international secondary student exchange programs, to repeal the Education (Overseas Students) Act 1996, and to amend this Act, the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, the Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Act 2014, the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990 and the Working with Child (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 for particular purposes

A Bill for an Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Liquor Act 1992, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Police Service Administration Act 1990, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994 for particular purposes

A Bill for an Act to amend the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, the State Penalties Enforcement Regulation 2014, the Tow Truck Act 1973, the Tow Truck Regulation 2009, the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 and the Youth Justice Act 1992 for particular purposes

These Bills are hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

Governor

16 March 2018

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 16 March 2018, from His Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to certain bills on 16 March 2018 [\[369\]](#).

REPORT

Auditor-General

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Auditor-General report to parliament No. 12 of 2017-18 titled *Investing for success*. I table the report for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Auditor-General of Queensland: Report to Parliament No. 12: 2017-18—Investing for Success [\[370\]](#).

PETITIONS

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

Tallebudgera Connection Road, Speed Limit

Mrs Stuckey, from 660 petitioners, requesting the House to decrease the speed limit on Tallebudgera Connection Road to 50 kph between 5 pm and 5 am and to 60 kph during all other times [374].

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

Negligent Driving, Penalties

Mr Bennett, from 8,188 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure harsher penalties apply for negligent driving causing death or grievous bodily harm [371] [372].

The Clerk presented the following e-petitions, sponsored by the honourable members indicated—

Logan City Council, Chief Executive Officer

From 280 petitioners, requesting the House to re-engage Ms Sharon Kelsey as Chief Executive Officer Logan City Council [373].

Motor Vehicles, Collisions, Burden of Proof

From 1,070 petitioners, requesting the House to enact legislation for the reversal of the burden of proof in collisions between motor vehicles and vulnerable road users [375].

Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Road Rules) Regulation 2009, Amendment

From 275 petitioners, requesting the House to amend the Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Road Rules), REG 154 bus lanes and REG 156 transit lanes to include all signed and regulated public passenger services, including booked hire [376].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received during the recess, were tabled on the dates indicated—

9 March 2018—

[309](#) Response from the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (Hon. Hinchliffe), to an e-petition (2784-17) sponsored by Mr Pegg, from 165 petitioners, requesting the House to recognise the efforts of Jeff Horn by naming a local park after him

[310](#) Response from the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (Hon. Dr Lynham), to an e-petition (2819-17) sponsored by Mr Boothman, from 224 petitioners, requesting the House to prioritise riverbank reinforcement works upstream of the John Muntz Bridge connection road before the next wet season or sooner

[311](#) Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis Select Committee: Report No. 4, 55th Parliament—Inquiry into occupational respirable dust issues, government response

[312](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 3, 56th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 6 September 2017 and 10 October 2017

[313](#) State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee: Report No. 1, 56th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 9 August 2017 and 10 October 2017

[314](#) Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee: Report No. 2, 56th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 23 August 2017 and 10 October 2017

[315](#) Wet Tropics Management Authority—Annual Report 2016-17

[316](#) Wet Tropics Management Authority—State of Wet Tropics Report 2016-2017

[317](#) Report on the administration of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 (reporting period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017)

13 March 2018—

[318](#) Response from the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services (Hon. Crawford), to an e-petition (2787-17) sponsored by Mr Dickson, from 41 petitioners, requesting the House to construct a second boat ramp at Victoria Point for the exclusive use of the Volunteer Marine Rescue Association and to upgrade plant and facilities

15 March 2018—

[319](#) Response from the Premier and Minister for Trade (Hon. Palaszczuk), to an e-petition (2773-17) sponsored by the Clerk, from 620 petitioners, requesting the House to initiate a State Referendum to allow the people of Queensland living north of the Latitude 26.000 South to vote on the creation of a new North Eastern State of Australia

[320](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 2, 56th Parliament—Queensland Competition Authority Amendment Bill 2018

[321](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 3, 56th Parliament—Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill 2018

[322](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 4, 56th Parliament—Crime and Corruption and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

[323](#) State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee: Report No. 2, 56th Parliament—Electricity and Other Legislation (Batteries and Premium Feed-in Tariff) Amendment Bill 2018

[324](#) Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee: Report No. 3, 56th Parliament—Hospital Foundations Bill 2018

16 March 2018—

[325](#) Response from the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (Hon. Trad), to an e-petition (2852-17) sponsored by Mr Dickson, from 696 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure that the \$5.4 billion forecast for the Cross River Rail project is instead used to benefit the entire state

[326](#) Response from the Premier and Minister for Trade (Hon. Palaszczuk), to an e-petition (2844-17) sponsored by the Clerk, from 11 petitioners, requesting the House to call on the Premier to end the current speculation and unambiguously notify the public of the date that she intends for the next election to be held

[327](#) Response from the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services (Hon. Ryan), to a paper petition (2869-18) presented by Mr Crandon and an e-petition (2826-17) sponsored by Mr Crandon, from 94 and 615 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to ensure planning and construction of a police station at Ormeau and the provision of 50 additional police officers

19 March 2018—

[328](#) Response from the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (Hon. Dr Lynham), to an e-petition (2756-17) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 82 petitioners, requesting the House to provide water security for the Atherton Tablelands/Cairns Basin by ensuring the Barron Hydro Corporation purchase all the Tinaroo Dam storage water it uses and to make the Queensland water market fully online transparent including corporation to corporation

[329](#) Response from the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning (Hon. Dick), to a paper petition (2863-18) presented by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(3), from 1,695 petitioners, requesting the House to request that Moreton Bay Regional Council re-engages in community consultation and includes Save Pine Rivers Incorporation as a critical stakeholder

[330](#) Response from the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning (Hon. Dick), to an e-petition (2807-17) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 391 petitioners, requesting the House to legislate to require all applications relating to 'places of worship' be Impact Assessable and that community consultation, safety risk screening and an independent Social Health Impact Assessment be required for all such applications

[331](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 5, 56th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 11 October 2017 and 10 January 2018

[332](#) Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Hon. D'Ath), to an e-petition (2785-17), sponsored by Hon. Pitt, from 43 petitioners, requesting the House to amend the limit placed on personal injury stipulated in the Limitations of Actions Act 1994 to ten years and allow an amnesty to victims whose rights have already been extinguished regardless of elapsed time frames

[333](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (Hon. Dr Miles), to a paper petition (2860-18), presented by Hon. Dick, from 4,679 petitioners, requesting the House to reinstate Mareeba Hospital to its full capacity and function

[334](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (Hon. Dr Miles), to a paper petition (2865-18) presented by Mr Crandon and an e-petition (2822-17) sponsored by Mr Crandon, from 47 and 77 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to ensure planning and construction of a hospital in the medical precinct adjacent to the Coomera Railway Station

[335](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 4, 56th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 11 October 2017 and 24 October 2017

[336](#) Response from the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations (Hon. Grace), to an e-petition (2843-17), sponsored by Mr Pyne, from 117 petitioners, requesting the House to address the inadequate building and infrastructure issues of the Cairns School of Distance Education

[337](#) Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal—Annual Report 2016-17

[338](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (Hon. Dr Miles), to an e-petition (2789-17) sponsored by Mr Dickson, from 136 petitioners, requesting the House to place construction of a Clinical Services Capability Framework Level 5 Regional Hospital in Bundaberg on the Queensland Health Forward Infrastructure Plan

[339](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (Hon. Dr Miles), to an e-petition (2809-17) sponsored by Mr Millar, from 419 petitioners, requesting the House to appoint a full-time resident doctor to Alpha with the utmost priority

[340](#) Response from the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport (Hon. De Brenni), to an e-petition (2842-17) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 159 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the Department of Housing and Public Works review sales contracts issued by Oxmar Properties and instruct Oxmar Properties to remove the clauses in breach of section 8A Provisions to support sustainable housing from the Building Act 1975 and to issue residents with a notice that roof installed photovoltaic arrays installed or to be installed no longer need Oxmar Properties' permission or approval

341 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an e-petition (2750-17) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 1,462 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure there is an exit ramp off the Mount Lindesay Highway to let residents easily access the shops and services at St Aldwyn Road

342 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an e-petition (2782-17) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 2,203 petitioners, requesting the House to exempt motorcycles and scooters from all road tolls in Queensland and allow motorcycle and scooter parking on footpaths

343 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an e-petition (2845-17) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 63 petitioners, requesting the House to undertake an updated evaluation of the need for additional car, motorcycle and secure bicycle parking spaces at Strathpine station

344 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an e-petition (2846-17) sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 55 petitioners, requesting the House to re-investigate the option for a bus park 'n' ride in the Warner, Brendale, Eatons Hill region

345 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an e-petition (2850-17) sponsored by Mrs Stuckey, from 273 petitioners, requesting the House to decrease the speed limit on Tallebudgera Connection Road to 50kph between 5pm and 5am and to 60kph during all other times to minimise the fatalities and injuries caused to road users, pedestrians and wildlife

346 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to a paper petition (2858-18) presented by Mr Power, from 1,540 petitioners, requesting the House to address vehicle congestion on Waterford-Tamborine Road, Logan Village

347 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to a paper petition (2859-18) presented by Mr Elmes, from 77 petitioners, requesting the House to provide to Noosa a six-month trial service of a daily direct bus service to and from the Sunshine Coast University Hospital

348 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to a paper petition (2861-18) presented by Mr Crandon, from 197 petitioners, requesting the House to provide a reliable bus service from Jacobs Well to transport hubs at Ormeau or Beenleigh

349 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to a paper petition (2862-18) presented by Mr Crandon, from 2 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the City of Gold Coast undertakes the essential and necessary roadworks to turn Yawalpah Road into two lanes for 250 metres, leading to the roundabout at Exit 49

350 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to a paper petition (2864-18) presented by Mr Crandon and an e-petition (2821-17) sponsored by Mr Crandon, from 93 and 129 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to undertake improvements to upgrade Exit 41 north bound and south bound interchanges

351 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to a paper petition (2866-18) presented by Mr Crandon and an e-petition (2823-17) sponsored by Mr Crandon, from 47 and 29 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to ensure Queensland Rail increase the car park size at the Ormeau Railway Station

352 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to a paper petition (2867-18) presented by Mr Crandon and an e-petition (2824-17) sponsored by Mr Crandon, from 13 and 161 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to ensure Queensland Rail upgrade and increase the car park size at the Coomera Railway Station

353 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to a paper petition (2868-18) presented by Mr Crandon and an e-petition (2825-17) sponsored by Mr Crandon, from 29 and 24 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to upgrade bus services between Ormeau Railway Station and Coomera Railway Station

354 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to a paper petition (2870-18) presented by Mr Crandon and an e-petition (2827-17) sponsored by Mr Crandon, from 100 and 301 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to undertake improvements to Exit 45 southbound interchange of the M1

355 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to a paper petition (2871-18) presented by Mr Crandon and an e-petition (2828-17) sponsored by Mr Crandon, from 20 and 15 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to upgrade bus services between Beenleigh Railway Station and Ormeau Railway Station

356 Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to a paper petition (2872-18) presented by Mr Crandon and an e-petition (2829-17) sponsored by Mr Crandon, from 38 and 275 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to undertake improvements to the northbound off-ramp Exit 49 interchange of the M1 at Pimpama

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Statutory instruments

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Health Act 1937—

357 Health (Drugs and Poisons) (Cannabis and Other Matters) Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 21

358 Health (Drugs and Poisons) (Cannabis and Other Matters) Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 21, explanatory notes

State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994—

359 Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation (Personalised Transport Reform) Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 22

360 Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation (Personalised Transport Reform) Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 22, explanatory notes

Vegetation Management Act 1999—

361 Vegetation Management (Regional Ecosystems) Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 23

362 Vegetation Management (Regional Ecosystems) Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 23, explanatory notes

Planning Act 2016, Vegetation Management Act 1999—

[363](#) Vegetation Management (Clearing Codes) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 24

[364](#) Vegetation Management (Clearing Codes) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 24, explanatory notes

Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003, Civil Partnerships Act 2011—

[365](#) Civil Partnerships and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 25

[366](#) Civil Partnerships and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 25, explanatory notes

Electricity Act 1994, National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Act 2014—

[367](#) Electricity and Other Legislation (Price Determinations) Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 26

[368](#) Electricity and Other Legislation (Price Determinations) Amendment Regulation 2018, No. 26, explanatory notes

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Waste

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.33 am): When I say I stand up for Queensland I mean it. Whether that means attracting new industries like Rheinmetall or the film industry—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members to my left! I do not believe the Premier is being provocative. I ask you to listen to the statement.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Whether that means attracting new industries like Rheinmetall or the film industry, my government stands up and fights for Queensland jobs and Queensland families. Today we stand up and say that Queensland will no longer be the dumping ground for New South Wales. We are going to stop the trucks.

Almost six years ago I stood in this place as the Newman government dismantled Queensland's comprehensive waste and recycling strategy and I warned that Queensland would become a dumping ground for New South Wales. Six years later it is abundantly clear that my prediction has been proven true. In the 2016-17 financial year more than 900,000 tonnes of interstate waste has been trucked across the border into Queensland. This is waste generated by big construction companies in Sydney and trucked to Queensland by unscrupulous operators in the waste industry. One of the biggest sources of this waste is development in Sydney. They got the treasure and we got the trash, and the LNP let them do it!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! We are off to a flyer.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Last year I asked former Supreme Court judge the honourable Peter Lyons QC to conduct an investigation into the long-distance transport of waste. The report was received during last year's election caretaker period. I tabled that report.

Tabled paper. Investigation into the transport of waste into Queensland, Final Report—17 November 2017 [\[377\]](#).

Today I announce that we will reintroduce a waste levy so no-one takes advantage of Queensland anymore. I think it is only fair that big companies pay to dispose of their waste—not Queensland residents.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Glass House, you have already made repeated interjections. I warn you under standing orders. Members to my left, you will have an opportunity during a period called question time to ask questions of the government related to some of the things that may be appearing in ministerial statements so I encourage you to listen.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have also made commitments that my government will not increase taxes on ordinary Queenslanders and I keep my commitments. Today I give this guarantee: Queensland families will not face the cost of this levy. Queensland has borne the brunt of Campbell Newman's stupidity. Those hardest hit are people living close to the dumps. I heard those concerns loud and clear last week as I governed from Ipswich. At our town hall meeting a gentleman named Darryl raised the issue of using waste to create energy. I heard you, Darryl. My government is encouraging it through our biofutures agenda and has attracted innovative companies such as Northern Oil to our state.

Over the past three years my government has worked to cut waste and boost recycling through a ban on single-use plastic bags, legislating for a container refund scheme and launching Operation Tora to crack down on noncompliance in the waste industry, but more needs to be done. What Darryl understands is that our waste industry can become modern and forward looking by increasing our recovery rates. Ten thousand tonnes of waste disposed of in landfill supports just 2.8 full-time jobs, but if the same 10,000 tonnes of waste was recycled then 9.2 jobs would be supported. The Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef has been consulting widely with affected stakeholders. My government will continue to consult as we finalise the design of our comprehensive waste strategy and a new waste levy.

I have heard our community and I have acted. We will stop the trucks. I say to New South Wales: you keep your rubbish. Queensland is not your dumping ground anymore.

North Queensland, Floods

 Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 am): Two Sundays ago I travelled to Ingham, which was in the grip of a once-in-a-generation flood. The Ingham mayor showed us the damage firsthand. Of the 11,000 homes affected, most had water through their properties and many were isolated for days. Supermarket supplies were held up by roads cut by flooding.

Uppermost in my mind were dozens of schoolchildren stranded at a camp near Tully. I pay tribute to each and every one of the 75 year 6 children from the Willows State School in Townsville. I pay tribute to the eight teachers and staff and the parents who bravely volunteered for school camp duty and got much more than they bargained for. I thank and congratulate the staff of Echo Creek Camp who cared for them so well. Last but certainly not least, I thank the Army pilots who ferried their supplies, the doctors and nurses airlifted in to treat them, the police and emergency services workers and the education department officials who did not take their eyes off those children for a single moment.

Here is yet another example of Queenslanders overcoming the elements and doing it with a smile. In North Queensland those elements include crocodiles and snakes. When the roads were blocked, the skies too dangerous to fly and the weather outlook grim, the call went out to summon the everyday heroes of Queensland and the call was answered by Tully's banana growers. Echo Creek Camp's neighbours banded together with the armed services to ferry our children to safety, cutting through the banana paddocks and nearby properties to get the children to the airport, onto planes to Townsville and back into the arms of their naturally nervous families. Boy, do they have a camp story to beat them all!

Following my visit to Ingham I announced the appointment of a state recovery coordinator to work with communities affected by flooding in North Queensland. Brendan Moon started work immediately to assist local councils and communities in the recovery effort following this flooding event. He has led QRA operations for Tropical Cyclone Oswald and severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie. Last week we saw Tropical Cyclone Linda briefly appear off the Queensland coast. Thankfully, she faded without causing anything more serious than big seas and beach erosion. We are not yet out of cyclone season and, no matter when the next one comes, Queenslanders such as the year 6s from the Willows school have shown that they are made of tougher stuff.

Land 400

 Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.41 am): My government is committed to delivering the jobs of the future for all Queenslanders: sustainable jobs, skilled jobs, rewarding jobs. That is why my government has invested so heavily in our Advance Queensland programs, with over half a billion dollars committed to date. Last week the Prime Minister announced that Land 400, the biggest contract ever awarded for the Australian Army, will be delivered in Queensland. Land 400 supplies the Australian Army with the Boxer, a new combat reconnaissance vehicle designed to get our troops where they need to go in a war zone and then safely home.

For three years my government has worked closely with Rheinmetall to forge a strong partnership that reaped rewards for Queensland last Wednesday and will continue to do so for many years to come. I thank the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning for his unwavering dedication in pursuing this project and also his predecessor the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy on a job well done. To secure this deal they went to Germany and Canberra, and last year on the Gold Coast I met with the German ambassador to ensure we had done everything possible to secure this contract.

Rheinmetall has been awarded the Land 400 project because the Boxer CRV was the best candidate for the job. Queensland is Rheinmetall's partner in that bid because we are the best location for the job. To quote Gary Stewart, Rheinmetall Australia's Managing Director and now the proud owner of a Queensland State of Origin jersey—

South-east Queensland, actually has a very strong and well-established design and manufacturing for heavy vehicle, if you look at Volvo, if you look at Penske, you look at Caterpillar.

Rheinmetall's Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence, the heart of the Land 400 program, will be built at Redbank in Ipswich. This will be a great boost for a city that has been built on a rich history of industrial manufacturing. However, the Boxer will mean so much more than that as small and medium businesses, from Cairns to the Gold Coast and many points in between, will supply parts and equipment for the Boxer, ensuring an ongoing demand for high-skilled engineering jobs. We are hopeful that Land 400 is just the start of the growth in defence industry jobs in this state, bringing jobs to Queensland for many years to come.

Gold Coast Commonwealth Games

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.43 am): It is 15 days until the opening ceremony of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games. From the day that cabinet decided to bid for the Commonwealth Games this event was about showcasing the Gold Coast to the world. It is a coming of age for Queensland's second largest city.

We want to make sure that the 600,000 visitors who come to Queensland for the games will return in years to come. A big part of that revolves around partnering with local businesses to make sure that athletes have a great experience while they are here and will share that with millions of people around the globe. That is why today I am proud to announce that Village Roadshow has agreed to give free access to their theme parks to all GC 2018 volunteers and athletes for the duration of the games. Any athlete or volunteer who, on a day off, wants to go to Sea World, Movie World, Wet'n'Wild or Paradise Country will get free entry. Today I am looking forward to meeting Wonder Woman and the whole Justice League team along with some of our most hardworking games volunteers to talk further about this announcement, which is about giving back to the people who have made the games possible.

The Commonwealth Games will deliver \$4 billion for Queensland and it is creating 16,000 jobs. It has also delivered key infrastructure. We built stage 2 of Gold Coast Light Rail and invested \$320 million in infrastructure, \$160 million in Gold Coast roads and another \$160 million in duplicating the heavy rail in the city's north. However, it is the exposure that the games generates for the Gold Coast that we know will have the most impact on the region in the long term. With only 15 days until the Commonwealth Games it is time to embrace the largest event in the state's history. As Superman once said, it is up, up and away.

Waste

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (9.45 am): Today the Palaszczuk government is drawing a line in the sand for waste in Queensland. Waste management is not just an essential service; it is also an important contributor to the economy. Nationally, the waste industry employs about 50,000 people across Australia and contributes about \$15 billion to our national economy. While certainly there are challenges facing both the industry and government when it comes to waste management in this state, I believe there are also great opportunities. However, without key drivers to recover resources, Queensland will miss out on the available job and market opportunities and continue to be a dumping ground for interstate waste.

Queensland is a major underperformer in waste recovery by both national and international standards. We are also the recipient of the largest quantities of waste from interstate, not to mention that putting so much of our waste into landfill creates avoidable environmental problems. Add to this the recent headlines about China tightening its rules on imported waste and one can see some of the challenges we face. However, I am confident that we can turn those challenges into opportunities for growth and investment.

As the Premier said earlier, to achieve this the Palaszczuk government will work closely with Queensland's waste sector, local government and stakeholders to develop a strong pathway forward. We will work to develop a strategy that will set a new direction for waste management in Queensland and provide clarity and certainty for investment and business planning. It will be a strategy that will allow us to build a diverse and sustainable waste management industry that delivers long-term value to our environment, new jobs for our communities and confidence to invest in Queensland.

We only have to look at the numbers to see that with the right strategy the waste industry has the potential to be a growing part of Queensland's economy. As the Premier said, we know that every 10,000 tonnes of waste in landfill supports only about 2.8 jobs, but if that same 10,000 tonnes of waste was recycled it would support approximately 9.2 jobs. To do that we need to understand and change how we as a community use our resources. The push to find new ways to avoid producing waste and to recycle material or use it to recover energy has never been more important. We need to think smarter and recognise that waste has a material value and that that value presents significant opportunities to grow our economy. We intend to explore the positive economic, social and environmental benefits a circular economy could have in Queensland. As the Premier said, we will continue to consult with industry and the community as we finalise the design of our waste strategy and our waste levy to ensure that families do not face increased costs.

There is a lot to be optimistic about in Queensland's resource recovery, recycling and waste arena. We have an opportunity to reposition Queensland on a path that improves our performance across the waste sectors and we are determined to make the most of it.

Waste

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.48 am): The Premier's announcement today that Labor will introduce a comprehensive waste strategy, including a waste levy, is an important economic and environmental moment for Queensland.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left, this morning I am finding that a number of interjections are designed to be merely disruptive. I cannot see that they are adding to any sort of discourse this morning. I ask that you think before you interject.

Ms TRAD: The Palaszczuk Labor government is saying very clearly: no more will Queensland be the dumping ground for interstate waste and no more will we maintain perverse economic signals that encourage more trucks on our roads and more waste in our communities. It is important that we get the facts on the table so that this issue can be the subject of real discussion and not an LNP scare campaign.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Deputy Premier, it would be helpful if we were not being too provocative.

Ms TRAD: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Speaker. Today Queensland is the only mainland state that does not impose a levy on waste disposal to landfill. The implications of this are simple. It is cheaper to dump interstate waste in Queensland than it is to dump it closer to where the waste is generated. Just a few years ago we saw waste from the construction of Barangaroo—all the way from Sydney—being carted up to Queensland.

This outcome was confirmed by the Lyons report, released today by the Premier and tabled in this place, which identifies the lower cost of disposal in Queensland compared to the higher cost of disposal in New South Wales as a significant incentive for interstate waste being transported here. The proof is in the numbers. More than 900,000 tonnes of interstate waste was received in Queensland in the 2016-17 financial year, up from 560,000 tonnes in 2015-16. For those opposite I point out that that is a 60 per cent increase in interstate dumping in one year.

It also means there are fewer incentives to recycle which means more waste to landfill. According to the *Australian National Waste Report 2016*, Queensland has the second lowest waste recovery rate in the country, at 48 per cent. In contrast, South Australia achieved 77 per cent and the national average is 61 per cent. Unlike New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria, Queensland still disposes the majority of waste to landfill.

This is not just an environmental argument, as important as this is; this is actually about jobs. Recycling creates more jobs than just dumping. As the Premier and the Minister for Environment have just informed the House, Deloitte Access Economics estimates that 10,000 tonnes of waste going to landfill supports fewer than three jobs. Ten thousand tonnes of recycled waste is estimated to create more than nine jobs.

The current policy settings are the height of economic madness. They result in fewer jobs, more interstate waste and more greenhouse gas emissions—a triple whammy that is bad for Queenslanders. The responsibility for all of this rests firmly at the feet of the former Newman LNP government.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order!

Ms TRAD: To refresh their memories and the recollections of those in the House, those opposite—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, I warn you under the standing orders. You have repeatedly interjected this morning. I have already cautioned you.

Ms TRAD: It was the Newman LNP government that repealed the waste levy in Queensland. At the time those opposite said that this was about cutting green tape, but actually it was a green light for thousands and thousands of B-double trucks loaded up with the trash from southern states to pour over our border from New South Wales to dump here in Queensland.

Mr BLEIJIE: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. Last sitting you made rulings with respect to ministerial statements. I respect the general warning you have issued to me, but the Deputy Premier, despite a previous warning, is provoking the opposition in terms of mentioning previous governments. Ministerial statements are not for political statements.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Manager of Opposition Business. I will be making my thoughts around how ministerial statements should be undertaken very clear. I am listening very carefully today. I think members to my right understand that if they are being provocative it may bring somewhat of a response from those to my left. However, I will be making very clear rulings around how ministerial statements will be made.

Mrs D'ATH: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. The information in the statement being made by the Deputy Premier is factual and not provocative. It is simply identifying the actions of the previous government in relation to this issue.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the House. I have been listening carefully. I think it is a very factual statement that has been prepared. However, I have also heard some provocative language. I am listening very carefully.

Ms TRAD: I acknowledge that facts and evidence may be provocative to those opposite. Let us be really clear. In contrast, Labor believes that polluters, not Queensland families, should pay a contribution for their pollution. That is why the Premier has been very clear that a clear principle for our waste strategy going forward is that not one cent of impact will be felt by Queensland households.

The government will now commence wide consultation on the final design of this levy. This consultation will include discussions around the rate for the waste levy, which will not be less than the \$35 per tonne that was charged in Queensland in 2011. On this point, though, I note that the rate charged in most other states is now between \$60 and \$70 per tonne. This government is determined to stop the trucks. Only a Palaszczuk Labor government will ensure Queensland stops being used as New South Wales's dumping ground.

Land 400

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.56 am): I am pleased to report to the House that in the battle for the Australian Army's next generation combat reconnaissance vehicle Queensland has emerged victorious. Last week, after a hard-fought three-year campaign, Rheinmetall Defence Australia was announced as the successful tenderer for the \$5.2 billion Land 400 phase 2 contract.

I am pleased to report to the House that the Boxer combat reconnaissance vehicle that will be built at the Redbank Motorway Estate will be proudly stamped 'Made in Queensland'. This project will create 200 construction jobs in the next three years and 450 long-term jobs in Ipswich from 2020. At the minimum we will expect this to deliver a \$1 billion boost to the Queensland economy in the first 10 years, but that is just the beginning. Once in service the Boxer will require maintenance and sustainment over 30 years.

We will also see opportunities for Queensland businesses to join Rheinmetall's global supply chain, delivering more jobs for Queenslanders. Already Rheinmetall has met with 211 local companies across Queensland. Queensland is also in a prime position for the upcoming Land 400 phase 3 contract, worth up to \$15 billion.

Let the parliamentary record show why Queensland has secured the hundreds of jobs that will result from this decision. As both the Prime Minister and the defence industry minister have said, this decision was based on the superior capability that Rheinmetall offers. As Minister Pyne told Melbourne's 3AW radio, if Rheinmetall had chosen the Northern Territory then the Northern Territory government would be celebrating, or, as the federal LNP member for Corangamite said on Twitter, if the Victorian government had secured a deal with Rheinmetall then Victoria would have won this contract. These LNP politicians are telling us that the critical date was not the Prime Minister's announcement on 14 March 2018; the critical date was actually 14 July 2017, when our Premier announced that Rheinmetall had chosen Queensland. From that point on we had the safest and best vehicle on our side. That is why we won.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you are skating on thin ice. I warn all members that interjections that are designed to be disruptive to a member on their feet will not be tolerated. There are many avenues to put your points across. Remember that standing order 62 talks about ministerial statements being an opportunity to make a statement relating to matters of government policy or public affairs. I am listening closely to the members to my right and they are making statements that I believe are in line with the standing order. I warn all members that your interjections are not going to be tolerated.

Mr DICK: It was no accident that Rheinmetall chose Queensland. Victoria and South Australia both sought Rheinmetall as a partner. Victoria offered incentives and were short-listed by Rheinmetall along with Queensland. Ultimately, it was the Palaszczuk Labor government which secured Rheinmetall for Queensland. We got Rheinmetall by providing the right support. We got Rheinmetall by sending Minister Lynham to Germany to show Rheinmetall—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I have only just given a ruling. The House is continuing to be unruly. I will start naming members and I will take action.

Mr DICK: Let me repeat: it was the Palaszczuk government which secured Rheinmetall for Queensland. We secured it by providing Rheinmetall with the right support and the right partnership agreement. Minister Lynham went to Germany to show Rheinmetall the commitment of our government to this project. We got Rheinmetall by showing them why Queensland has unrivalled automotive manufacturing capability. Now we have the Land 400 contract because the Palaszczuk government got Rheinmetall. That is the truth, as much as others want to deny it. Most importantly, the real winners out of this whole contract are the brave men and women of the Australian Defence Force who will get the best and safest vehicles to keep them protected and, just as importantly, the workers of Queensland who will get jobs for the future.

Gold Coast Commonwealth Games

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Cooper—ALP) (Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for the Commonwealth Games) (10.01 am): In some other news, today some of the most high profile athletes on the planet will land on the Gold Coast ahead of the 2018 Commonwealth Games. The Jamaican athletics team—including Olympic gold medallist sprinter Elaine Thompson, Olympic bronze medallist sprint hurdler Hansie Parchment and 400-metre runner and hurdler Janieve Russell—will arrive at Coolangatta today. They will join teammate superstar sprinter Yohan Blake, who arrived late on Sunday, and, excitingly, the fastest man on earth, Usain Bolt, will be coming to the coast to cheer his teammates on.

Over the next two weeks more and more Commonwealth Games teams will be arriving. I know some in this chamber will be keen to see the Kiwis arriving. Some might even be keen to see the Poms, the English team, arriving, given the member for Kawana's keen affection for the Queen! We are looking forward to this Sunday officially opening the athletes village, which will be home to more than 6,600 athletes and officials.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms JONES: I was here for his first speech. As the Premier said, with only 15 days to go—or, as I am counting, 14 sleeps—until the Commonwealth Games, momentum is building. I want to join with the Premier in acknowledging and thanking Village Roadshow for giving free entry to volunteers and athletes to their four theme parks during the Commonwealth Games. Free entry after events and competitions for athletes and volunteers will ensure that we make the most of the spotlight on the

Gold Coast during the games. We need to ensure that our athletes and visitors have a great time in Queensland and share their experiences when they get home to their family and friends. That is why today's announcement is so important for the tourism industry in Queensland. I cannot wait to welcome more of the world's best athletes to Queensland over the next week as we prepare to host the best Commonwealth Games ever.

North Queensland, Floods

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.03 am): Having spent the past week inspecting flood damage in the state's north and north-west, I now have an even greater appreciation of just how resilient Queenslanders really are. I have been speaking with impacted residents, local councils, government agencies, MPs and of course our hardworking Queensland Fire and Emergency Services personnel who helped out during these latest emergencies, stretching from Cairns south to Townsville and out to Mount Isa, Cloncurry, McKinlay and Winton. The overwhelming feedback I have relayed to the Premier is just how grateful everyone is for the prompt and coordinated support during this significant weather event and how it is now overwhelmingly 'business as usual' out there.

The floodwaters have been welcomed in most areas, but it caused many millions of dollars in damage to infrastructure like roads. Unlike the water levels, though, community spirits certainly have not dropped. Locals have expressed their relief about how fast the Queensland government was able to make assistance available to councils through the jointly funded Commonwealth-state NDRRA.

QFES continues to work closely with councils and local disaster management groups during the recovery phase. It is through this relationship that I have been able to update many MPs in this House, including from the opposition, the Katter party and the government whose areas have been affected, about what is been happening in their patch.

I was joined on my flood inspections last week by QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll. Like me, she is extremely proud of the response from local emergency services including fire and rescue staff, State Emergency Service volunteers, Rural Fire Service volunteers and many Emergency Management officers. The SES alone has responded to more than 560 call-outs for assistance, mainly in the northern region, since 5 March. A large number of those calls were made during the seven days to 12 March and were mainly for sandbagging and flood assistance, particularly around Ingham, Halifax and Innisfail.

On top of the SES calls, QFES crews turned out to more than 50 water related incidents, with our highly trained swiftwater rescue teams carrying out medical emergencies, evacuating and relocating residents and transferring much needed fuel supplies. Additional QFES crews were deployed to the affected areas to bolster the response capability, working shoulder to shoulder with many local teams to firstly deal with the emergency call-outs and then with the clean-up.

I would like to publicly thank our tireless QFES staff and volunteers, many of whom gave up their own time to help flood affected communities across north and north-west Queensland. They worked long hours in wet, muddy and often trying conditions and their efforts in response to this event have been exemplary. Their efforts have also been praised by the five mayors and one deputy mayor I met with last week in the wake of the floods.

Unfortunately this is the season for severe weather, and no doubt I will be travelling again very soon. When I do, I am confident QFES and other agencies will once again impress. QFES, as the key response agency, is fully prepared not only now but also into the future.

North Queensland, Floods

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors) (10.07 am): Communities across the Hinchinbrook and Cassowary Coast local government areas have been hit hard by the recent floods. Ingham and parts of Innisfail were particularly affected. One thing that struck me, though, when I visited these communities last week and spoke to local residents is just how resilient we continue to be, even during times that are really tough. I heard stories of humour and dedication despite the circumstances—with one woman's excitement at being able to catch a barramundi in her own front yard!

I also heard how in Ingham the butcher was impacted by floods but, despite this, still made sure that the local Meals on Wheels got their fresh meat delivered on time. This means that the volunteers at Meals on Wheels were able to cook for the people who needed it most. The recipients were surprised

to receive the meals on time, and I was so heartened to hear of the community looking after their most frail during a flood event like this one. This was just one of many stories that I heard while visiting and observing the community recovery work on the ground.

I would like to thank our hardworking Ready Reservists—who have been drawn from 21 government agencies—and everyone involved in the community recovery operation. All of these people have again stood up and helped Queenslanders in their time of need. As of 19 March we have received more than 3,150 applications for emergency hardship grants from residents in those affected communities. We have handed out around \$752,220 in grants for essential items like food, clothing and medications. Our Community Recovery Hotline has taken close to 2,800 calls since the grants were activated on Saturday, 10 March from people seeking information or support or wanting to apply for grants.

The Ingham Community Recovery Hub has had more than 1,614 people through its doors since it opened on Wednesday last week. The hub is continuing to operate between 8.30 am and 4.30 pm each day. In Innisfail, outreach teams with Ready Reserves and Australian Red Cross volunteers have been doorknocking homes in impacted areas to offer assistance, support and grant applications to locals. I am really proud of the Palaszczuk government's community recovery effort to support affected people and communities across North Queensland and Far North Queensland. However, I am just as proud of the people in these communities at how resilient they are in having been able to pull together to help each other out. They are well on their way to getting back on their feet.

North Queensland, Floods

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.10 am): In the aftermath of damaging floods in parts of Queensland, our first responders took swift action. Today I pay tribute to all our hardworking police and emergency service crews and members of other government agencies including the Department of Housing and Public Works and the department of communities for reaching out to flood stricken communities in their times of need.

I pay tribute to our police for being out and about in bad weather, sending out timely warnings to residents and motorists, directing traffic and responding to emergencies as the flood waters rose. Their job is not nine to five. Their job is often challenging and often dangerous, and for that we owe them a debt of gratitude.

I also pay tribute to low-security prisoners from the Innisfail work camp who lent some elbow grease to the massive clean-up operation in Innisfail. I visited their work site on the foreshore of the Johnstone River on the weekend, just before the Commonwealth Games baton went through with the Mayor of Cassowary Coast Regional Council and the work camp supervisor. The work camp shovelled mud from the esplanade on the banks of the Johnstone River and removed flood debris from the local cemetery.

Mr Speaker, as you may be aware, work camps have been helping out in our community long before Cyclone Larry struck the region with a vengeance in 2006. They were founded as part of the emergency response to help the people of Charleville after the devastating floods there in 1990. In a year, low-security prisoners in work camps have completed almost 180,000 hours of community service. That is a contribution of more than \$4 million in labour value to communities right across regional Queensland. It is a milestone that shows positive outcomes are being achieved by prisoners wanting to turn their lives around. It is one of the real success stories of Corrective Services, and it gives prisoners the opportunity to gain new skills and give something back to the community.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (10.12 am): I table Ethics Committee report No. 179 titled *Report on a right of reply No. 34*. I advise the House that the Ethics Committee has attached an extract of the minutes relevant to the committee's consideration of report No. 179 to the report to comply with the intent of standing order 211B as recommended by the House and by the CLA. I commend the report and the committee's recommendation to the House.

Tabled paper: Ethics Committee: Report No. 179—Report on a Right of Reply No. 34 [378].

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will conclude today at 11.12 am.

Algie, Mr M

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (10.12 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. The Premier said that she was very comfortable with the process for Mark Algie's appointment, telling media the normal process had been followed. Is the proper cabinet process for significant appointments that the appointee is nominated by his Facebook friend in the ETU via a secret, back-channel email two months after applications closed and four days later landing the job, having never actually applied for the job in the first place?

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There was clear imputation in that question and we ask that it be ruled out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Can the member identify what the imputations were? I was listening very carefully.

Mrs Frecklington: I was just stating facts.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I do not require any guidance and your preamble was rather long. Leader of the House, what is your point of order?

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, the imputation by the wording used around secrecy of these documents certainly leads to imputation and inferences in the way that the question has been framed.

Mr SPEAKER: I will allow the question. The Premier is able to answer the question as she sees fit.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said publicly, and I will state it again: I am very comfortable with the cabinet process that was followed in this appointment.

Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Emails

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My second question without notice is also to the Premier. The 'mangocube' affair has rubbish the Premier's claims of high standards, accountability and transparency. We now know the appointment process for the ETU's hand-picked director of Energy Queensland was a sham and the government is in paralysis and chaos trying to spin its way out of the mess. Enough is enough.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my right! Leader of the Opposition, I was listening to your question and I would ask you to rephrase your question.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: The email affair has rubbish the Premier's claims of high standards, accountability and transparency. We now know the appointment process for the ETU's hand-picked director of Energy Queensland was outlined by the Premier in her previous question. My question then is to the Premier. When will the Premier show some leadership and sack Minister Bailey and release the thousands of emails?

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the Premier, that was another lengthy preamble. I caution you to consider that with your future questions, and that goes for all questions that are asked this morning.

Ms PALASZCZUK: These matters have been thoroughly investigated by the CCC—

An honourable member: No, they haven't.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, they have. They have been thoroughly investigated by the CCC and I am comfortable with the CCC process. Yesterday I announced new guidelines. They are very clear guidelines. I have explained those to my ministers, I have released them publicly and the *Cabinet Handbook* has been updated.

Land 400

Mr MADDEN: My question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the benefits that the Land 400 contract won by Rheinmetall will bring to Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Ipswich West for that question. I can say from the outset that it was indeed a pleasure for my cabinet to be in Ipswich last week governing from Ipswich. We had our cabinet meeting, we had a town hall meeting and ministers were out and about. I had the

opportunity to visit a number of schools including my old school St Mary's. I also went to Bremer State High School and spoke with students there. I also had the opportunity to go to Ipswich Girls Grammar. It was lovely to be able to go to those schools and meet with those students.

In relation to Rheinmetall, I want to emphasise to the House and put on the public record my thanks to ministers who were involved in that decision. I do want to single out Minister Anthony Lynham, who flew to Germany at my request—

Mr Dick: You wouldn't give him a pair to go early.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will take that interjection.

Mr Dick: You contributed nothing.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister for State Development!

Ms PALASZCZUK: I want to put on the record that at the press conference Rheinmetall said publicly that if it were not for Dr Anthony Lynham flying to Germany to meet with the company, Queensland would not have secured that contract. That is a fact. That is from Rheinmetall. Let me also make it very clear that Rheinmetall had to choose between Victoria and Queensland, and Rheinmetall chose to partner with the Queensland government—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I am having a very difficult time hearing the Premier which means the House is too loud.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Rheinmetall chose to partner with the Queensland government. This is about a long-term defence industry in this state. We already have a strong defence industry, but we will grow even more jobs—high-skilled jobs, long-term jobs—in relation to this project. All of the Ipswich members should be very pleased with the fact that the headquarters for the Indo-Pacific region of Rheinmetall is now going to be based in Ipswich, in Queensland. This also means that there is the potential for further contracts with other countries, bringing more jobs and more experience here to Queensland. At the end of the day it is going to be local people in our local communities who will benefit. When I was meeting with the workers there, one person said to me, 'I can now buy a house in Ipswich. I now have long-term job security.' That is what it is all about: it is about jobs and delivering real jobs for the people of our great state.

Algie, Mr M

Mr MANDER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy. On 8 March 2018, the minister issued a press release about the appointment of Mark Algie to the board of Energy Queensland. It states—

He was subject to normal board-appointment selection processes including the endorsement of cabinet.

I ask: why was the minister not up-front with Queenslanders about the truth that Mark Algie did not actually apply for the job and that it was the ETU who put his CV forward by way of a secret back-channel email two months after the proper process closed?

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the minister, I have already talked about long preambles. Standing order 115(b) talks to that. That came very close, Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Dr LYNHAM: I respect the cabinet decision. I was not the responsible minister at the time, but I am now, hence the statement from my office.

Screen Industry

Mr POWER: My question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the upcoming productions for the Queensland screen industry and any alternative views of the importance of that industry to Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Logan for that important question. Of course we are talking here about diversifying the Queensland economy and creating even more jobs. The fact that the federal government has continually refused to increase the tax offset from 16½ per cent to 30 per cent has shocked me to no end. I can report that over the next two weeks there will be a delegation of people coming from Los Angeles to speak to the federal government about the importance of increasing that offset. Why is increasing that offset important? It is important because it guarantees long-term, secure jobs for people working in this industry around the state. This is not just about the cast and the crew.

This is about the people who provide the catering. It is about the carpenters that actually build the sets behind the scenes. It is about the local Bunnings store. It is about the people who work on the wardrobe, who make the costumes behind the scenes.

On Sunday, the Deputy Premier and I and the member for Gaven announced that we would put in some extra money to secure *Dora the Explorer* because the federal government had failed to come to the party. Once again, there were people crying because they were so concerned that they were going to lose their jobs and have to move interstate. Can honourable members remember a time when that used to happen under the former LNP government, when they sacked workers? I want to see this industry grow from strength to strength. We have already seen *Thor* being filmed. We have already seen *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Even the former premier Campbell Newman and the former cabinet supported films in this state. They went after *Pirates of the Caribbean*. I also noticed that members of the opposition attended that premiere. We also saw the member for Clayfield attend the premiere of *Thor*.

It is about time we had bipartisan support rather than the whingeing from the Leader of the Opposition about long-term security of jobs in this state. I am sick of those opposite not backing Queensland. I am sick and tired of people on that side being against Queensland—not with Queensland and not for Queensland. It is about time they understood that in Georgia this industry over 10 years went from \$270 million to a \$9.6 billion industry, and I want Queensland to do the same.

I will back our local talent. I will back our local jobs. I will back Queensland because at the end of the day this is about securing jobs—unlike those opposite.

Algie, Mr M

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to the Premier, and I table a media report from 10 March 2018 titled 'Energy boss ... said he didn't forward his CV'.

Tabled paper. Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 10 March 2018, titled 'Energy boss says he didn't forward his CV' [379].

I ask: will the Premier order an investigation into the process of Mr Algie's January 2016 government appointment and every other government appointment recommended by the member for Miller in the last government to ensure that there were no other irregular appointment processes influenced through his secret back-channel emails?

Ms PALASZCZUK: This process was endorsed by cabinet. There is a cabinet process that was followed. I am comfortable with this process. The matter has also been investigated by the CCC and the CCC concluded their investigation in relation to the emails. I have now issued new guidelines. All of the cabinet ministers are aware of those guidelines.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under standing orders.

Indigenous Queenslanders

Ms HOWARD: My question is of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. I ask: will the Deputy Premier outline what the Palaszczuk government is doing to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders, including in my electorate of Ipswich?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Ipswich for her question and for the crucial role that she played last week when we were governing from Ipswich. I know that I speak on behalf of all of my cabinet colleagues when I say that it was an incredibly enjoyable experience. Ipswich is a great community and the Ipswich members in this House should be very proud of the fact that they represent that great place in the South-East Queensland region.

Ipswich has a very deep connection to Australia's first nations people, and the traditional owners of the land continue to play an important role in the local community. I was very happy to be able to sit down and yarn with elders from the Jagera, the Yuggera and the Ugarapul traditional owner groups on a number of occasions during the week. I also had the chance to visit Five Bridges community justice group, who do important work assisting first nations people in the justice system. Can I say they really did applaud the Palaszczuk Labor government's initiatives around diversionary courts, particularly the Murri Court. That is something of which we on this side of the House are very proud.

As I have raised before, the issues that many of the first nations people are confronting are very well articulated through the Closing the Gap targets. We as a government and we as decision-makers are trying to ensure we are very attuned to those targets in the decisions we make. Unfortunately, those

opposite seem to be blind to the fact that we have a very real issue in this nation in relation to closing the gap on a whole range of issues affecting first nations people from education standards, life expectancy, health outcomes and morbidity rates. All of these are incredibly important issues on which we should all be focusing attention.

Unfortunately, I am unsure what those opposite are doing on this very issue. We know that on the critical issue of housing and housing in remote Indigenous communities those opposite are incredibly silent. Actually, they are not silent. I am actually mistaken. Let me correct the record. The LNP opposition spokesperson did put out a press release parroting exactly the press releases put out by Nigel Scullion. It must have happened after he visited Nigel Scullion's office. Unfortunately, I do not think he went inside—

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, are you tabling—

Ms TRAD: Mr Speaker, I would like to table that Facebook post for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 19 December 2017, from the Facebook page of the member for Moggill, Dr Christian Rowan MP, regarding public policy challenges [\[380\]](#).

There are no photos of him actually meeting with the federal minister. I give some advice to a new player: if he wants to raise Queensland concerns he actually has to talk to his Commonwealth counterpart as opposed to taking photos outside his office.

(Time expired)

Algie, Mr M

Mr BLEIJIE: My question without notice is to the Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development. When the minister was acting Treasurer and recommended the appointment of Mark Algie to cabinet, did the minister consult the member for Miller before she certified to cabinet that she was satisfied with the suitability of his appointment, as required under the *Cabinet Handbook*?

Ms JONES: As the Premier said, this was a cabinet decision. As the member is well aware—he served in cabinet—cabinet decisions are a collective decision-making body and it was a collective decision.

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister for State Development, I have warned you a couple of times this morning.

Land 400

Mrs MULLEN: My question is to the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning. I refer to the government's success in securing the Land 400 contract for Ipswich and Queensland. Will the minister advise the House on the key factors that were important in our success?

Mr SPEAKER: I asked that questions be heard in silence and I heard conversations to my left. I was not sure who that was. The questions will be heard in silence.

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Jordan for her question and her commitment and the commitment of the members for Ipswich, Ipswich West and Bundamba to manufacturing jobs in their region.

The battle for Land 400 is over and Queensland has prevailed. They say that truth is the first casualty in war, and the state LNP are going out of their way to prove that statement correct. We may be living in a world of fake news and alternative facts, but even Donald Trump would blush at the whopper put out by the LNP state president, Gary Spence, last week when he said, 'Deb'—meaning the Leader of the Opposition—'and the state team worked tirelessly to secure this deal for Queensland.' What exactly was the tireless work of the Leader of the Opposition? Perhaps it was the tireless way she tirelessly failed to make a single speech in this House supporting Queensland's bid. Not when she was the shadow minister for state development—but fair cop, Mr Speaker, no-one in Queensland ever knew that she was the shadow minister for state development—

Ms Palaszczuk: Was she?

Mr DICK: She was. I will take the interjection from the Premier. She actually was, but we never heard a word from her when she had that role: not when she was Deputy Leader of the Opposition nor when she was the leader. Even when I encouraged her to say something publicly, she did not. She did not even ask one question about this. The Leader of the Opposition claiming credit for Land 400 is like

Kim Jong Un claiming credit for world peace. They are silent now. They did not like it during ministerial statements when they heard the truth. I will tell honourable members what the Leader of the Opposition contributed to this: nil, nought, nada, nothing, zip, zilch, zero. Absolutely nothing at all. Now they turn up at one minute to midnight and want to cut the ribbon.

Ms Trad: A minute past midnight.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the Deputy Premier. It is about half past 12 and they turn up wanting to cut the ribbon. This is appalling cynicism from the state LNP. To hear the state president claim credit and say that the Leader of the Opposition worked tirelessly is an absolute fraud on Queensland. It is an absolute embarrassment, but what it says is that the LNP will say anything and do anything, but achieve nothing for Queensland.

The only person laughing about this whole enterprise is the member for Broadwater. During the last sitting week I told him not to be glum because he will be in the front seat soon enough. I say to the member for Broadwater that things are looking up. I say to all of those new members whose first speeches we have heard that you either stand for Queensland or you stand for nothing. If you stand for nothing, you are exactly like the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: As a general reminder to all members, please direct your comments through the chair. You will not refer to people as 'you'. Comments will be directed through the chair.

Algie, Mr M

Ms SIMPSON: My question without notice is to the Premier. I ask the Premier: when cabinet considered the appointment of Mark Algie to the board of Energy Queensland, did Minister Bailey disclose to cabinet that he had received Mark Algie's CV via a secret back-channel email in breach of the then *Ministerial Handbook* and did he leave the cabinet room for the decision to appoint Mark Algie to his plum taxpayer funded job?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. As I said—and I will say it again—the cabinet process was followed. I am very comfortable with the cabinet process being followed, and I have said that time and time again on the public record.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Krause interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Scenic Rim, I was calling the House to order. You were the only person speaking. I warn you under the standing orders. I call the member for Greenslopes.

Hospitals, State Funding

Mr KELLY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the comments made by the federal health minister in the *Courier-Mail* on Saturday where he alleged the state government has cut funding to Queensland hospitals, and I ask: will the minister please advise whether this comment is true?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Greenslopes for his question. As a former nurse he is a tireless advocate for health services in his electorate and throughout Queensland, which is demonstrated even further by his decision to 'shave for a cure' last week to raise money for the Leukaemia Foundation. I can advise the House that the member for Greenslopes was extra brave in not only having his head shaved but having his head shaved by me. I think I did an okay job. In the process the member for Greenslopes raised 2,000 very valuable dollars for the Leukaemia Foundation.

That is in stark contrast to the misleading claims made by Greg Hunt, the federal health minister, at the weekend. These claims were made as a smokescreen to cover up for the Queensland LNP's unwillingness to demand that our hospitals be paid for procedures that we performed as far back as 2014. As you well know, Mr Speaker, we are increasing funding for our hospital and health services by 20 per cent over two years, which is an increase of \$2.4 billion. To say otherwise is misleading Queenslanders, and when those opposite repeat those claims they are misleading Queenslanders too. They are doing it to cover for the fact that the federal government will not pay what they owe our hospitals. When those opposite parrot Malcolm Turnbull, when they just repeat Greg Hunt's words as if they are their own, they are letting our hospitals down. They are letting down our hardworking doctors, nurses and health professionals. Most of all, they are letting down our patients and every Queenslander who could one day find themselves at one of the hospitals being starved of funds by the LNP.

It is now nearly 12 months since the independent regulator determined what our hospitals should be paid by Malcolm Turnbull. It has been 12 months and there is still no payment for our hospitals. It is one thing for those opposite to dispute my figures. That is why we got KPMG to look at the figures. They found that it was not just \$1 billion but it is nearly \$1.2 billion that is owed to our hospitals.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mudgeeraba.

Dr MILES: We heard last sitting week that the member for Nanango could not be bothered to pick up the phone and ring Greg Hunt. She could not be bothered to pick up a pen and write a letter to Greg Hunt because she is far too loyal to Malcolm Turnbull and not loyal enough to Queenslanders.

Gold Coast Waterways Authority, Appointments

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. I refer the minister to his recommendation to cabinet for the appointment of board members to the Gold Coast Waterways Authority on 1 March 2018. Can the minister guarantee that he has not forwarded on the name of another hand-picked union choice nor acted in a way described by the Crime and Corruption Commission as foolish?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the honourable member for his question.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Broadwater, the microphone is on. Matters of the House and audio will be with me, not you.

Mr BAILEY: In relation to the recent appointment, we appointed to the Gold Coast Waterways Authority a very good businesswoman with a very strong corporate background. She was on the Gold Coast Light Rail project board. She is somebody with great corporate credentials who will make a very strong contribution to the Gold Coast Waterways Authority. She was appointed in the appropriate way under my ministerial responsibilities.

Electoral Commission

Ms LINARD: My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. Will the minister please update the House on a recent court decision awarding costs to the Electoral Commission?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for her question. I know that she believes in transparency and accountability. We have heard a lot from those on the other side about transparency and accountability. What we will not hear opposition members talk about when it comes to accountability and transparency is political donations. They will talk about anything else. In fact, when the decision came down—it backed in the Palaszczuk government's legislative changes around political donations—the Leader of the Opposition's press release started addressing completely unrelated matters that had nothing to do with political donations. Why? They will talk about anything but this issue. I can advise this House that we now know the court has decided to award costs—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mrs D'ATH: On 1 March the Supreme Court handed down a costs decision against the LNP and in favour of the Electoral Commission. The House may be interested to know—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under standing orders. You interjected immediately after I warned you.

Mr STEVENS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There is a bill before the House clearly defining all matters in relation to political donations. The Attorney-General and Leader of the House is now moving into territory of that bill.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Mermaid Beach, I am advised that the bill is for particular purposes and that is not a broad-ranging ban on speaking on these matters. I thank you for your point of order.

Mrs D'ATH: It might be of interest to the House to know that in arguing against the awarding of costs the LNP said that its contesting of these laws was for the benefit of the public and to advance a legitimate public interest. I think the public want to know where those donations went. They want to know who is donating, how much they are donating and to whom those donations are going in what electorates. They are fair questions for the people of Queensland to ask.

The new manager for stakeholder policy engagement and fundraising in the LNP might have their job cut out for them. As you would expect, the job of a fundraiser in a political party is to meet fundraising and donation targets as determined by the party's executive, to facilitate the interface between stakeholders and the party with respect to policy development and—this is the most important issue and why these laws are so important—to identify needs and issues of stakeholders and relate them to LNP policy to develop alignment with fundraising opportunities'. Let me repeat that so those opposite might actually listen: 'identify needs and issues of stakeholders and relate them to LNP policy to develop alignment with fundraising opportunities'.

Linking policy development directly with fundraising is why transparency in donations is so important. It is about time those on the other side woke up to this fact. The people of Queensland have a right to know.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Toowoomba South, I was not going to interrupt the Attorney-General during her answer to the question because that would have been doing exactly what you were intending to do—that is, disrupt the member. I warn you under standing orders. You have been persistent today with your interjections.

Rookwood Weir

Mr O'ROURKE: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Will the minister update the House on the status of the Rookwood Weir proposal?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister is not even on his feet and members are already interjecting.

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for Rockhampton for his question. The member has been in his position for only a matter of months but what an impact he has made in his local electorate. I was particularly impressed at a press conference in January, when we released the business case for the Rookwood Weir. He stood up with me and the member for Keppel at that press conference and said, 'I want to see politics taken out of Rookwood Weir because I want to see this developed for the people of my region.' They were strong words. I wish opposition members would take notice of those fine words from the member for Rockhampton: 'Get politics out of it'.

Rookwood Weir represents 42,000 megalitres of water for agriculture and industry in that vital area of Central Queensland. It also means water security for the fine towns represented by the members for Gladstone, Keppel and Rockhampton.

As I said, we released a business case in January. The business case stated that \$352 million was required. The Palaszczuk Labor government immediately put \$176 million on the table. Who else stumped up? The federal opposition leader, Bill Shorten, committed \$176 million for the people of Central Queensland to build this important piece of infrastructure. What do we hear from the farmers' friends on the other side of the House? They relied on a 10-year-old EIS. We always hear the mantra, 'We have \$130 million,' but they always knew it was never enough.

What about the member for Capricornia and her new boss, Michael McCormack? They said, 'The assessment is being held up because Infrastructure Australia cannot have the assessment done. That is why we are holding it up.' But from Infrastructure Australia: 'Lower Fitzroy River Infrastructure Project ... Underway'. I table that document.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Current Business Cases being evaluated by Infrastructure Australia as at 12/03/2018' [381].

There is no holdup at all. They should put the money on the table. Those opposite should talk to their federal counterparts—Malcolm Turnbull and Michael McCormack—and get them to stick the money on the table. They should put up the \$176 million. As the member for Rockhampton says, they should get the politics out of this and throw their money on the table. Let us build this infrastructure.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Sandgate, you are warned under standing orders.

Queensland Rail, Overtime

Mr MINNIKIN: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. While services have been slashed because of a driver shortage, union drivers are doing up to 20 hours of overtime every week of the year and trousering up to \$75,000 per year on top of their salary. Minister, is this not more proof that Labor runs this government only to benefit its union mates while the commuters of Queensland get fewer services and have to pick up the tab?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, before you answer the question, I remind the member for Chatsworth to ask the question through the chair, not directly to the minister.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Who was that?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Logan, you are warned under standing orders.

Mr BAILEY: I thank the honourable member for his question. There was a response to a question on notice yesterday that referred to the top five drivers—not the mean, not the average—so let us be very clear about what we are talking about here. We are talking about people who work around the clock—people who start often at 2 or 3 am so that they can service the public. They are the kinds of workers who have to work at night-time, on weekends and on public holidays and they naturally accrue a fair bit of overtime to ensure that the public can move around. It is a difficult job and it is usual to have that overtime as part of it.

However, we are seeing that the system is stabilising because on-time running for the first two quarters of 2017-18 was exceeding our target of 95 per cent. The system is stabilising. Why? It is because we are training train drivers. We are training more train drivers this year than over the entire three years of the Newman government. In fact, there was not a single train driver training commenced in the last year of the Newman government. I table for the benefit of the House a graph. This is its record when it comes to training train drivers. We can see it going up under the Labor government—

Mr SPEAKER: Please table that, Minister.

Mr BAILEY:—and we can see it going down under the Newman government because it stopped training train drivers, and that had a flow-on effect on the system.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Graph of Trainee Driver Schools 2011-2017' [\[382\]](#).

We are training drivers. Training time has reduced from 18 months now to 13 months, so they are going out into the system much more consistently. Currently, there are 69 drivers in the system and 168 guards all working additional to the system. There are 77 drivers currently being trained and 51 guards and we have selected 143 trainee drivers and 260 trainee guards, so we are well on track to deliver the Strachan review reforms of 200 extra drivers and 200 guards. We have additional tutors to ensure that they are getting trained as quickly as they can. That allows us to triple services to the Commonwealth Games. We will see 24-hour heavy rail to the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and 24-hour light rail as well because we are getting more drivers into the system. We have seen the system stabilise. We have met the on-time running now for the last two full quarters beyond the 95 per cent. The system is improving because of the reforms of this government.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

Mr RUSSO: My question is directed to the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development. Will the minister update the House about the success of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program and whether the minister is aware of other views that have been expressed about this program?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for Toohey for his question and his advocacy for this fantastic program, the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, which is getting people job ready, skilled, trained and into work. The Palaszczuk government's nation-leading jobs growth has been underpinned by our commitment to training and skills. Our Skilling Queenslanders for Work program has already gotten 14,100 Queenslanders jobs. They have been given the training they need to get that opportunity to get through the door and they are now in work.

Last week whilst we were governing from Ipswich I was really pleased to meet with some of these Queenslanders commencing their training journey at Ipswich's own Challenge Employment & Training. While I was there I met with 15 young Queenslanders working towards their certificate II in engineering and a forklift ticket as part of the engineering pathways program. The 15 young trainees that I met there have very good reason to be confident about securing a job and a career in engineering, because 100 per cent of the 15 participants in the last program were snatched up by the one employer, Austral Monsoon—a leading manufacturing company. Austral Monsoon has been so happy with these trainees that it has said that it wants to keep employing the trainees as they come through this pathways engineering program.

While I was there Michael Krafft, the General Manager, and Richard Lindner, the CEO, explained to me just what a fantastic program this was and the devastating impacts when the LNP cut the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program in 2012. They told me that they could not understand why any government would walk away from a program that was so successful in getting people into work. After the program was cut they told me that they had at least 20 phone calls a day from jobseekers needing assistance and there was nowhere to send them because those opposite cut the program. Given the damage that happened when this successful program was cut, do members think that LNP members opposite maybe learnt their lesson given the overwhelming feedback from people in the industry saying that this program needed to stay and welcomed Labor's commitment to reintroduce the program? They have not learnt anything. In their election costings they said they would scrap the program all over again. Despite the member for Nanango saying that they have learnt their lesson, at the first opportunity they could they slashed \$42 million from a program that is about training and skilling Queenslanders who need that break. It is time for those opposite to stand up for Queenslanders and stand up for Skilling Queenslanders for Work.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Warrego, I want to acknowledge that in the gallery today we have students from Star of the Sea Catholic School in the electorate of Hervey Bay. Welcome to the parliament.

Waste Levy

Ms LEAHY: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Environment. Will the minister guarantee that Labor's new waste tax will not add to the cost of Queensland families hiring a skip bin or dropping their rubbish off to the dump?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. The simple answer is yes. The Premier has made it clear that direct costs to households will be avoided in the design of the levy. However, I say this whilst I am on my feet, given that the shadow minister for environment failed to even ask a question about this: we are the second lowest performing state in the country in terms of waste recovery and recycling, and there is a reason for that. Nearly 5.5 million tonnes of waste is going to landfill in this state. Just over 900,000 tonnes of that is coming from New South Wales and other states of this country. This is unacceptable and happened because the LNP, with its lack of vision, repealed the waste levy in this state in 2012. Not only did it open the gates for other states to use Queensland as their dumping ground; it also robbed Queensland of the opportunity to build our capabilities to be able to redirect waste from landfill. Not only did it turn us into a dumping ground; it also robbed us of the opportunities to build industry and create jobs in this state. We know the LNP's attitude towards the growth of jobs in this state. Its attitude was about sacking. It was about—

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Toowoomba North, your interjections are not being taken. I find them to be disruptive.

Ms ENOCH: Unlike the LNP when it was in government when we saw a complete lack of vision for our state—no understanding of the need to diversify our economy, no understanding of the fact that removing a waste levy had an impact on our ability to grow jobs in this state in an industry that has been thriving in other parts of our country and in other parts of the world—this government has understood how important it is to invest in new industries and diversify our economy.

That is why, today, we have announced that we will be establishing a stakeholder reference group where organisations such as the CCIQ, the LGAQ and people from the industry will work together to co-design the strategy that will set Queensland on a new, strong path. That stakeholder reference group will design a levy, which, as we have said already, will have principles attached to it that will have no impact on households.

This government understands where the job opportunities are in this state and we are going for it. On the other side, we see an open opportunity for others to dump their waste in this state. We will not put up with it any longer.

Mr SPEAKER: I remind those who are on a warning, who I believe I have heard interjections from repeatedly. I warn the member for Glass House, the member for Kawana, the member for Everton, the member for Scenic Rim, the member for Nanango, the member for Sandgate and the member for Logan. It is a veritable shopping list today. Members, you are all warned under the standing orders. If you persist with your interjections, I will take the appropriate action.

Mrs D'ATH: I rise to a point of order. I understood that the member for Kawana was warned earlier today. Is that the second warning for the member?

Mr SPEAKER: No. Leader of the House, I was issuing a reminder to all members who had been warned under the standing orders.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I am speaking. I am sorry if there was any miscommunication.

Natural Disasters, Recovery Assistance

Mr HARPER: My question is to the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. Will the minister update the House on the role being played by the Palaszczuk government to make available disaster funding assistance to flood impacted communities?

Mr CRAWFORD: I thank the member for the question. I also want to thank all members representing the north and the north-west of this state for their assistance over the past couple of weeks with the flooding. As I said in a ministerial statement last week, I inspected a number of areas in the north and north-west and, in those areas, one of the main topics of conversation was about NDRRA funding, particularly among our mayors and councils. Floodwaters affected vast areas and took out a number of roads. They cut off townships and communities. NDRRA is important to our communities out west and up north so that they can get back on their feet as quickly as they can.

Coincidentally, the member for Nanango was also up north—in Ingham—and, I would imagine, she was having similar conversations. I am sure she would appreciate how important NDRRA is to Queenslanders and our local governments. I would like to know what she thinks about Canberra's plans to change our NDRRA arrangements. We are faced with the very real prospect of missing out on some crucial Commonwealth funding.

When natural disasters strike, such as we have experienced in the past couple of weeks, QFES has been able to process submissions through the QRA to claim back under NDRRA what we call eligible extraordinary costs for counterdisaster operations. That is when we stand up our state disaster coordination centre and our state operations centre to bring together all the key agencies to deal with emergencies. One of the benefits of bringing together those centres is we advise the federal government in respect to what is happening in our state. It is a very necessary and a very expensive undertaking to stand up our SDCC and our SOC.

For example, the 18-day activation for Cyclone Debbie cost more than \$1 million. Of that \$1 million, \$835,000 was eligible to be claimed from the federal government through NDRRA. Under changes made by the federal government in 2017, the federal government now states that those costs are no longer eligible, which means that Queensland will have to bear those costs. It is my understanding that, unless we provide proof of exhaustion of resources, QFES and assisting Queensland agencies will have to dig into their own pockets and their own budgets and make cuts elsewhere in their departments—just because we are a state that experiences a significant number of large-scale events.

I will put my concerns in writing to the Minister for Law Enforcement and Cyber Security in Canberra, stressing our state's dependence on operation centres. To date, I have not received a response, but my statement to the opposition leader is to please come on board. Does she stand for Queensland, or does she stand for Canberra?

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling for the next question, I acknowledge students from Cleveland District State High School from the electorate of Oodgeroo in the public gallery as well as the Helensvale Senior Citizens Club from the electorate of Theodore.

Waste Levy

Mr LAST: My question without notice is to the Minister for Environment. I ask: minister, why are North Queenslanders in Cairns, Townsville and Mackay being slugged more for Labor's waste tax to stop New South Wales dumping waste in Ipswich?

Mr SPEAKER: I ask you to repeat the question. Rephrase that question to have it asked through the chair. You have asked that question directly to the minister.

Mr LAST: My question is to the Minister for Environment. Can the minister explain why North Queenslanders in Cairns, Townsville and Mackay are being slugged more for Labor's waste tax to stop New South Wales dumping waste in Ipswich?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question, a little bit confused as it may be. Today, the announcement has been to establish a stakeholder advisory group to co-design the strategy for Queensland and the levy that will underpin that. Unless the member has some sort of crystal ball to see what comes from that consultation—that crystal ball would have been useful for the LNP in 2012 when it lacked all vision whatsoever and repealed the levy, opening the floodgates for other states to turn Queensland into their dumping ground and robbing our state, including regions in North Queensland, from being able to develop our own industry and capability to recycle and recover waste.

On top of that, we know that there have been some decisions from China that impact in particular the Cairns Regional Council in terms of mixed paper use. They used to be able to remove that from landfill and send it China and, in turn, receive a revenue stream. That has ceased. That puts more pressure on our state to deal with our own waste. In 2012, because there was no crystal ball for the LNP to peer into—it did not have any vision for the future—it robbed us of the opportunity of being able to build that industry itself and deal with market pressures.

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Toowoomba North, you are warned under the standing orders. You have been at it all day.

Ms ENOCH: Mr Speaker, thank you. I make it clear to the member that the levy is being co-designed with various stakeholders, which include representatives from the LGAQ, to ensure that we are able to build the right mechanisms to support Queensland's waste and recovery industry in this state and we make no apologies for that.

Remote Communities, Housing

Mr SPEAKER: I call the member for Cook.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mudgeeraba, you are warned under the standing orders. I asked that all questions be heard in silence and you spoke over the questioner.

Ms LUI: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport. Will the minister advise the House how the Palaszczuk government is addressing overcrowding in remote communities and whether the minister is aware of any alternative policy approaches?

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for Cook for the question. Last week, the Australian Bureau of Statistics released data from the 2016 census relating to homelessness in Queensland. It shows that, in the five years since 2011, we have seen an increase in the rate of homelessness across the country. That is why, under the Queensland Housing Strategy, we are constructing new homes in communities across the state. We are working on new partnerships with homelessness service providers to slow down and eventually reverse that trend in growing homelessness.

The most prevalent form of homelessness in Queensland is due to severe overcrowding. It is felt by 35 per cent of those Queenslanders experiencing homelessness. Overcrowding is a significant issue leading to homelessness, especially in remote Indigenous communities. An independent report commissioned by the Commonwealth has found that we have reduced overcrowding in those Indigenous communities by almost half. It is this report that found that we needed to construct another 1,400 homes in those remote Indigenous communities.

Unfortunately, the Prime Minister of this country has decided to cut funding to that program that has been delivering those homes. On this side of the House we all know that you cannot close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage if people in those communities are left homeless. We have been asking the Leader of the Opposition to get out onto the playing field on this issue. We in the government have our boots on and are out there on the playing field standing up for Queenslanders on this issue. Like its position on a waste levy, all we have seen from the opposition is a policy of denial on this issue. It has been 33 days since I asked the Leader of the Opposition to end her silence and stand up for Queensland.

The shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships issued a media release last week saying—

The Palaszczuk Government can't point to a single home it has built in remote indigenous communities with state money.

Let us spend a moment setting the record straight. Under the national partnership agreement with the Commonwealth there have been 1,144 homes constructed. In addition, this government has contributed \$652 million over 10 years to upgrading and maintaining those homes. In addition to that investment, in the communities of Cherbourg, the Torres shire and Yarrabah this state has built 116 homes entirely outside of the partnership program. For the benefit of the member for Moggill, the member for Nanango and the member for Burleigh, here I am pointing to one of those homes constructed outside that program. I table that.

Tabled paper: Photograph depicting the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport, Hon. Mick de Brenni, outside a newly constructed house [\[387\]](#).

Whilst those opposite were in government they built as few as 17 homes per year. On average the Palaszczuk government has constructed 271 homes per year with 600 new homes commencing this year. Those opposite are quick to criticise, but they are unable to bring themselves to end their policy of denial. It seems they are unable to stand up for Queenslanders and call on the Prime Minister to recommit to Closing the Gap.

Waste Levy

Mr HART: My question is to the Premier. The Housing Industry Association estimates that the government's proposed waste tax will add \$2,000 to the cost of a new home. What offsets will the Palaszczuk government make available to new home buyers to make sure they are not paying more because of Labor's new tax?

Mr SPEAKER: I call the Premier. You have one minute.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. With the demolition of Goprint, 97 per cent went to recycling. In this state we want to develop more recycling, which will mean more jobs. We will always support the housing industry in this state, as we have with our First Home Owners Grant of \$20,000 for people wanting to build their first home. I say very clearly to those opposite: you are either with Queensland or you are against Queensland; you are either standing up for Queensland or you are standing up for New South Wales. That is the clear choice when it comes to this waste levy. We are going to stop the trucks. We are going to stop the dumping of waste in this state. We are going to back Queensland and those opposite are going to back New South Wales.

Mr SPEAKER: Thankfully the time for question time has expired.

MINES LEGISLATION (RESOURCES SAFETY) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (11.13 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, the Coal Mining Safety and Health Regulation 2017, the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999 and

the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Regulation 2017 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Mines Legislation (Resources Safety) Amendment Bill 2018 [[383](#)].

Tabled paper: Mines Legislation (Resources Safety) Amendment Bill 2018, explanatory notes [[384](#)].

The priority initiatives in the Mines Legislation (Resources Safety) Amendment Bill were first presented to the House on 7 September 2017 but lapsed when parliament was dissolved prior to the last election. The intervening period has provided further opportunity for consultation with key stakeholders to add to the extensive and ongoing consultation to date for many of the initiatives.

The Mines Legislation (Resources Safety) Amendment Bill 2018 reintroduces key amendments and includes minor amendments to the provisions introduced in 2017 in light of the parliamentary committee and recent consultation. Queensland's mining safety and health legislation continues to be regarded as among the best in the world, but we must be vigilant and we should aim to continually improve Queensland's mining safety and health record.

To continue to improve Queensland's mining safety and health standards and outcomes for our mining workers, we must remedy any weaknesses in our mining safety and health laws. The Palaszczuk government is addressing key mining safety and health issues through the reintroduction of these priority reforms. The Palaszczuk government is committed to the safety and health of all workers across all industries. All workers have the right to expect that their safety and health will be protected whilst at work. We will continue to strengthen safety and health protections for workers so that workers do not fear that workplace risks or hazards will injure them, make them ill or worse.

Our coal and metals miners work in an industry that is a major part of Queensland's economy and prosperity, but we must not forget that mining is a hazardous industry with unique hazards and risks to our workers' safety and health. As part of the Palaszczuk government's overarching commitment to all workers, this bill will ensure Queensland's mining safety and health legislation will be more effective in protecting the safety and health of our coalmining workers and metal mining and quarrying workers.

Tripartite consultation with unions and industry has been instrumental in finalising the proposals and I thank all stakeholders for their contribution during the ongoing consultation processes. This tripartite consultation has been extensive and has continued over recent years for many of the initiatives in order to address stakeholder concerns and to refine the details. As well as consultation through the statutory advisory committees, consultation has also occurred more recently through tripartite reference groups.

Some of the minor changes in this reintroduced bill are based on stakeholder feedback during the parliamentary committee consultation processes in 2017. Collectively, the initiatives will provide greater transparency and accountability, improve compliance and enforcement of safety and health standards, or improve mine safety and health standards or systems. There will be greater transparency and accountability in the training and competency of ventilation officers. Underground coalmining ventilation officers are in safety-critical roles at underground coalmines. They are responsible for crucial tasks such as ensuring adequate air quality and ventilation of the mine, gas alarm level settings and monitoring methane, noxious and flammable gases and other contaminants. Underground coalmine ventilation officers will have a transitional period of three years within which to obtain a certificate of competency as an additional assurance of their competency. There will also be statutory competency requirements for ventilation officers in underground metals mines. Other reforms will enable the development of a scheme of continuing professional education for holders of certificates of competency, helping to ensure the competency standards of those in safety-critical roles at mines over time.

The bill strengthens and expands the range of compliance and enforcement options for serious safety and health breaches of the legislation by introducing the options of civil penalties or cancellation or suspension of a holder's statutory certificates of competency or other competencies. These new enforcement powers add to the broad range of current inspector powers, such as directives to reduce risk or to suspend mining operations, and are swifter options than the option to prosecute. Under these reforms, the chief executive will have the power to fine mine operators or contractor corporations for serious safety and health breaches through civil penalties of up to 1,000 penalty units, or \$126,000, and to suspend or cancel an individual's certificate of competency or other competencies.

The bill also increases maximum penalties for breaches of mining safety and health obligations to keep more in step with maximum penalties under general workplace safety and health legislation. The initiatives also clarify the entry powers of inspectors to off-mine-site workplaces, for example, machinery maintenance workshops that may affect the safety and health of workers at mines.

Other reforms in the bill strengthen the accountability of mine operators and contractor corporations by placing proactive due diligence mining safety and health obligations on officers of corporations and enable responsibility for the notification of reportable diseases to be placed on a broader range of individuals so that my department is notified when a worker is diagnosed with an occupational disease such as a mine lung dust disease.

Other reforms to provide greater transparency and accountability include the requirement for manufacturers and suppliers to mine sites to notify the chief inspectors of any hazardous or defective equipment or substances supplied to the site. The bill proposes to balance Mines Inspectorate representation on tripartite statutory advisory committees, to enable a public register of certificate of competency holders and to facilitate the earliest possible release of safety information after an incident for relevant safety learnings at other mines.

Initiatives to improve safety and health management systems include improving contractor management within a mine's single safety and health management system. This will help protect contractor workers who may be less familiar with hazards and risks at a mine. The amendments will ensure all workers, including contractors, at a mine are following safety critical procedures within the overarching, single safety and health management system.

Operators of small opal and gem mines with five to 10 workers will no longer be exempt from the requirement to have a safety and health management system for their mine to better manage the main hazards and risks to workers' safety and health. My department will work with those small opal and gem miners to assist them to develop a safety and health management system during the three-year transitional period and will continue to provide educational guidance about risk management for small opal and gem mines with four or fewer workers, which will continue to be exempt from the need to have a safety and health management system.

Health surveillance of current and former mining workers will be added to the objectives of the act and will reflect the importance of health surveillance as part of a mine's safety and health management system. This bill is a significant step forward in improving safety and health in Queensland's coal and metals mining industries through more effective legislation by introducing measures to better safeguard our coalmine and metal mine workers.

This bill does not include the introduction of industrial manslaughter to the resources safety legislation. Given the importance of this consideration and in order to appropriately progress this matter, I have asked my department to commence stakeholder engagement with key stakeholders, including industry and unions. Any changes to introduce this and related changes, including dispute resolution through the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission and the right of entry for union representatives, will be the subject of a future bill. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (11.22 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee.

DISABILITY SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION (WORKER SCREENING) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors) (11.23 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Disability Services Act 2006 and the Police Service Administration Act 1990 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Disability Services and Other Legislation (Worker Screening) Amendment Bill 2018 [[385](#)].

Tabled paper: Disability Services and Other Legislation (Worker Screening) Amendment Bill 2018, explanatory notes [[386](#)].

As the Minister for Disability Services, I am very pleased to be leading Queensland's transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The key reason I am pleased is that the NDIS means more choice and control for people with disability about how they receive reasonable and necessary supports. Each jurisdiction in Australia will transition to full scheme implementation of the NDIS in accordance with individual bilateral agreements and at different stages. Queensland has started this transition and it is imperative we ensure that a robust quality and safeguards system is in place, both during transition and once full scheme implementation commences in Queensland from 1 July 2019.

I am proud to say that Queensland has one of the strongest quality and safeguards systems for people with disability in Australia. This includes a robust worker-screening system for people working or volunteering with people with disability through the yellow card system provided for under the Disability Services Act 2006. Following full scheme implementation of the NDIS in Queensland, the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework will apply in Queensland. The national framework has been agreed by the Council of Australian Governments. It will provide strong protections for the rights of people with disability within the market based system of the NDIS.

As part of the framework, there is a new nationally consistent approach to worker screening under the NDIS. Under the framework, the Commonwealth will be responsible for the development of national policy settings for the screening of workers. The states and territories will remain responsible for operating worker-screening units under state based legislation. The intergovernmental agreement for nationally consistent worker screening for the NDIS has been developed to support the implementation of nationally consistent worker screening under the framework. The IGA will support nationally consistent worker-screening policies and principles to be adopted in each jurisdiction through appropriate legislation. As a member of the COAG Disability Reform Council, I have provided in-principle support for the IGA on Queensland's behalf.

The NDIS is a national scheme. The framework and the IGA provide for jurisdictions' worker-screening units to share a range of expanded criminal history information with other units across states and territories. The sharing of expanded criminal history information across jurisdictions under the IGA is similar to the existing Council of Australian Governments' IGA on National Exchange of Criminal History Information for People Working with Children. This agreement allows law enforcement agencies to share expanded criminal history information for the purposes of Working with Children Checks with screening units in each jurisdiction. This includes information such as spent convictions and non-conviction charge information, which would generally not be shared.

The bill amends the Police Service Administration Act 1990 to ensure Queensland can share the same range of expanded criminal history information with the NDIS screening units in other jurisdictions. Although full scheme operation of the NDIS does not commence in Queensland until 1 July 2019, these amendments are required during transition to enable Queensland to share information with worker-screening units in each state and territory, so they can carry out holistic and consistent NDIS worker-screening checks as their jurisdiction transitions to full scheme NDIS and commences the new NDIS worker-screening processes under the IGA. This could occur from as early as 1 July 2018 in New South Wales and South Australia.

The bill also includes amendments to confirm the safeguards that apply under the Disability Services Act 2006 during the transition period. Queensland's existing quality and safeguards system under the Disability Services Act 2006 applies to NDIS registered providers operating in Queensland to provide specialist disability support services during the transition to the NDIS. This means that workers and volunteers of NDIS registered providers who deliver prescribed disability services included in an NDIS participant's approved plan are required to undergo criminal history screening under the yellow card system.

During transition, the National Disability Insurance Agency has identified that nationally there has been an increase in service providers under the NDIS identifying as sole traders and requesting registration to deliver services as part of a participant's plan. Sole traders are individuals who are NDIS registered providers and who personally provide disability services to NDIS participants. While the provisions of the Disability Services Act 2006 require sole traders to be screened, the amendments proposed by this bill clarify the operation of the provisions under the act to ensure they clearly operate in relation to the particular circumstances of a sole trader. The bill clarifies that screening of sole traders is required under the Disability Services Act 2006. It also provides that, in making an application, a sole trader must have their identity verified by a prescribed person, such as a justice of the peace, commissioner for declarations, lawyer or police officer.

The bill also amends the disclosure requirements under the act to explicitly require a sole trader to disclose any changes in criminal history to the chief executive of the department. This approach to identity verification and disclosure requirements is necessary because a sole trader is operating independently and does not have the same employment relationship that other workers and volunteers have with a service provider organisation.

The bill also adopts a no-card, no-start approach for sole traders. This means that a sole trader will be required to have a yellow card before they can commence providing services under a NDIS participant's plan. A penalty of up to 250 penalty units will apply to a sole trader who breaches this requirement. This approach prioritises the safety of people with disability by recognising the importance of ensuring a check is completed before a sole trader begins operating independently to provide services.

There are two exceptions to this no-card, no-start approach which will enable a sole trader to work without having a yellow card or exemption notice. These exceptions are: if a person already has a current blue card, that is not suspended, and, on that basis, has applied for a yellow card exemption; or if a person has applied for renewal of their yellow card 30 days prior to its expiry and the application has not been decided at the time of expiry. This recognises that, if the sole trader has already been subject to a comprehensive check and continues to be subject to ongoing daily monitoring, a person with disability need not wait for the sole trader to start providing services to them until their yellow card application is finalised.

The bill also includes a transitional provision that will enable a sole trader who is currently operating in Queensland and has made an application prior to the commencement of the provisions in the bill to continue working for a period of four months. This will enable a reasonable opportunity for an application for a yellow card for a sole trader who is already providing services to a participant under their plan when the proposed amendments commence to be determined.

Finally, the bill clarifies how the yellow card related offence and penalty provisions under the Disability Services Act 2006 apply in relation to sole traders when worker-screening requirements are breached. The intent of the bill is to ensure that the offences and penalties that apply to sole traders are fair and consistent.

The Queensland government is committed to doing all we can to ensure Queenslanders with disability have the necessary safeguards in place to support them during the transition to the NDIS. The bill is another important step towards ensuring a robust quality and safeguards framework continues to apply during the transition period and once full scheme operation of the NDIS commences. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. CJ O'ROURKE (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors) (11.32 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

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

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION (VALIDATION OF RATES AND CHARGES) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 15 February (see p. 90).

Second Reading

 Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (11.33 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Queensland local governments and ratepayers expect and deserve to have clarity and certainty when it comes to delivery of essential services. Local governments must be financially sustainable in order to function effectively. The bill before the House addresses the potential financial exposure of Queensland councils. This follows a decision of the Supreme Court of Queensland in the case of Linville Holdings Pty Ltd v Fraser Coast Regional Council.

On 6 November 2017, the Supreme Court declared that, for each of the financial years ending 30 June 2015, 2016 and 2017, Fraser Coast Regional Council failed to validly make and levy rates and charges within its local government area. This was because Fraser Coast Regional Council did not decide, by resolution at its budget meeting for that year, what rates and charges were to be levied.

In levying rates and charges, the Local Government Act 2009 section 94(2) and the City of Brisbane Act 2010 section 96(2) require that a local government must decide, by resolution at the local government's budget meeting for a financial year, what rates and charges are to be levied for that financial year. The Local Government Act 2009 section 107A and the City of Brisbane Act 2010 section 104 require a resolution to adopt the budget.

Fraser Coast Regional Council, for the relevant financial years, resolved to adopt the budget for the financial year as presented in a number of attachments. The attachments included a schedule of rates and charges and a revenue statement which stated the rating categories and a description of each rating category. The Supreme Court found that 'a resolution to adopt a budget does not ... without more, satisfy the requirement for a resolution to decide what rates and charges are to be levied'.

Although the court's declaration applies to the Fraser Coast Regional Council, other local governments may have constructed their resolutions with similar deficiencies to those outlined in the court's decision. These local governments may therefore be similarly affected, if similar declarations are made in relation to those local governments' rates and charges.

The bill amends the Local Government Act 2009 and the City of Brisbane Act 2010. The amendments apply to a rate or charge levied or to be levied by a local government under the Local Government Act 2009, the repealed Local Government Act 1993, the repealed Local Government Act 1936, the City of Brisbane Act 2010 or the repealed City of Brisbane Act 1924.

As I stated when I introduced the bill, retrospective legislation is rarely put before this House. I draw to the attention of the House that these amendments apply in specific circumstances. They apply with respect to a financial year up to and including the financial year ending 30 June 2018. Further, they apply to a rate or charge that was not decided to be levied by resolution of the local government at its budget meeting for the financial year under the current or repealed local government legislation.

The bill declares that the rate or charge is taken to be, and to always have been, as validly levied by the local government as it would have been if the local government had decided to levy the rate or charge by resolution at its budget meeting for the financial year under the current or repealed local government legislation. The bill also declares that anything done or to be done in relation to the rate or charge is as valid as it would have been or would be if the local government had decided to levy the rate or charge by resolution at its budget meeting for the financial year under the current or repealed local government legislation.

The bill provides the following examples of 'things done or to be done in relation to the rate or charge': the bringing by the local government of proceedings against a person; the sale of land or the taking of steps preparatory to the sale of land by the local government; the acquisition of land or the taking of steps preparatory to the acquisition of land by the local government; and the charging of interest on the rate or charge.

As I have just outlined to the House, the bill applies to rates and charges levied in certain circumstances. Under the Local Government Act 2009 section 92(1) and the City of Brisbane Act 2010 section 94(1) there are four types of rates and charges. These are: general rates, including differential rates; special rates and charges; utility charges; and separate rates and charges. The bill captures each of the four types of rates and charges as appropriate.

When I introduced this bill in February I advised the House that there was a clear and compelling case for retrospective legislation. The bill was declared urgent under the provisions of standing order 137(1)(a) of the standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly. The bill was referred to the Economics and Governance Committee. I will now address the committee's report on the bill which was tabled on 15 March 2018. I thank the committee and the secretariat for its thorough consideration of the bill. My thanks also go to the Local Government Association of Queensland which made a submission as part of the committee's examination of the bill. I thank the LGAQ for its support for the policy objectives of the bill. After careful consideration of the committee's report, I am pleased to table the government's response.

Tabled paper: Economics and Governance Committee, Report No. 3, 56th Parliament—Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill 2018, government response [388].

In addition to the committee's first recommendation that the bill be passed, the committee made one further recommendation. The committee recommended that the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs monitors how local governments are levying their rates and charges over the next two financial years—2018-19 and 2019-20—to ensure local governments are aware of the proper processes and are complying with the statutory requirements. The government supports this recommendation.

When the bill was introduced, I informed the House that to assist local governments with making future resolutions in line with legislative requirements the government and the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs will continue to work in partnership with the LGAQ, and with councils, to provide advice through websites, bulletins and letters. May I reassure the House that this work is well underway, and I welcome the LGAQ's advice to the committee that it is preparing template best practice rating and budget resolutions to be made available to all councils. I note that the LGAQ informed the committee of its intention to hold a ratings masterclass at a date to be determined in April or May. I am advised that this has now been scheduled for 5 April 2018.

The amendments in the bill will operate retrospectively. The committee considered the fundamental legislative principle stated in section 4(2)(a) of the Legislative Standards Act 1992 that legislation is to have sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals. The committee noted that legislation should not adversely affect rights and liberties or impose obligations retrospectively and that strong argument is required to justify an adverse effect on rights and liberties or an imposition of obligations retrospectively.

The committee acknowledged the department's advice that the retrospective operation of the amendments is necessary to provide financial surety to local governments and ratepayers. The committee commented that, given the circumstances in which the need for the bill has arisen, and the consequent validating nature of the provisions, it considers the bill's retrospective effect is justified and the impact on the rights and liberties of individuals is appropriate in the circumstances.

Communities across Queensland deserve to have confidence in the financial sustainability of their councils. This bill addresses the potential financial exposure of councils with respect to rates and charges levied over the years up to and including the current financial year. This bill provides greater certainty to councils about their financial position as they commence their budget preparations for the 2018-19 financial year. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (11.41 am): I rise as the shadow minister for local government to address the Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill introduced into the parliament on 15 February this year by the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

This bill is retrospective legislation, and it is my belief that any such legislation should always be carefully considered. The bill retrospectively seeks to validate the rates and charges issued by the Fraser Coast Regional Council and all other local governments that may have made resolutions that do not meet the statutory requirements.

At least 25 local governments in Queensland have been identified through a departmental desktop audit to be in a situation whereby there could be potentially serious consequences for councils stemming from the judgement made by the Supreme Court. In the interests of transparency—and perhaps the very reason why we are debating this legislation today—the government might be able to advise which councils they identified in that desktop audit.

Local governments in Queensland provide a suite of essential services to our communities. In fact, almost every day of our lives involves the work of councils. The 77 Queensland councils employ almost 40,000 people. They manage \$108 billion in assets, including over 153,000 kilometres of roads, \$25 billion of water and sewerage infrastructure and day-to-day maintenance of parks, playgrounds and public libraries—just to name a few of their very broad responsibilities. The LNP not only recognises the work that approximately 557 elected representatives do on a daily basis for their communities but also understands the need to provide financial surety to local governments and their ratepayers. Because of this, I am pleased to advise that the LNP will not be opposing the bill.

In terms of its budget, a local government must do two things. Firstly, it must pass a resolution to levy rates and charges. Secondly, it must pass a resolution to adopt a budget. There are two resolutions involved. Unfortunately, in the case of the Fraser Coast Regional Council, they passed the budget resolution but did not pass a separate resolution dealing with how it levies rates and charges. It passed one resolution, not two. The decision of the Supreme Court in relation to that council—and, unfortunately, potentially others that I mentioned earlier—places the affected councils and their ratepayers at real risk of legal action for the recovery of rates and charges.

I now wish to turn to the work of the parliamentary Economics and Governance Committee which considered the bill. Their report was tabled on 15 March and they did recommend that the bill be passed. I wish to thank the committee members for their consideration of the bill. The committee also made that very important second recommendation in relation to the bill: that the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs monitor how local governments are levying the rates and charges over the next two financial years—2018-19 and 2019-20—to ensure local governments are fully aware of the proper processes and are complying with the statutory requirements.

It was troubling to note in the departmental advice to the committee that the department does not have a role in the ongoing monitoring of local government budgets to ensure compliance with those statutory requirements. The department's own desktop audit has indicated that about one-third of Queensland local governments could be in a situation where they have not met the statutory requirements. Understandably, mayors and councillors do not want to be found in that situation. In fact, I am sure that they would wish to avoid it.

I note the comments from the LGAQ's submission to the committee and their commitment to assisting councils to ensure that future council rating resolutions comply fully with the legislative provisions. The association advised the committee that they are in the process of preparing template best practice rating and budget resolutions which will be made available to all councils and will hold a ratings masterclass at a date to be determined in April or May.

I commend the LGAQ for their quick action to help councils, particularly their member councils. However, I would still like to hear from the minister on exactly how the department is going to assist councils in this area and whether the department is going to regularly monitor that legislative compliance. If we look at the situation that happened at Fraser Coast, it happened for three years running. There really needs to be some way that we can prevent a repeat of the situation that we are endeavouring to address today.

The objectives of the bill amend the current Local Government Act and City of Brisbane Act and apply the validating provisions to rates and charges made and levied under the repealed City of Brisbane Act 1924 and the repealed Local Government Act 1993 or the repealed Local Government Act 1936. The objectives of the bill make it very clear that the intent is to resolve this matter once and for all, thereby giving certainty to councils and their ratepayers.

It would be appreciated if the minister could advise whether he is confident that all outstanding budget, rates and charges issues are now resolved for all councils in Queensland as a result of the amendments today. In particular, has due diligence been done and can an assurance be given to the House that we will not have to come back again at a later date with further amendments to validate budgets, rates or charges of councils? I look forward to hearing whether the minister can give that assurance with confidence and whether the due diligence has been done for all councils in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr POWER (Logan—ALP) (11.48 am): Local government plays an important role in Queensland. To provide those services, the raising of funds through the levying of rates on residents and local businesses is vital. The Local Government Act 2009 seeks this to be done transparently and publicly and requires councillors to make an express resolution at the local government's budget meeting for the financial year.

Section 94(2) of the Local Government Act 2009 and section 96(2) of the City of Brisbane Act 2010 provide that a local government must decide, by resolution at the local government's budget meeting for the financial year, what rates and charges are to be levied for that financial year. However, it has come to the attention of the government through a court case that some local governments may not have followed the process as required by the act. On 6 November 2017, the Supreme Court found that in 2015, 2016 and 2017 the Fraser Coast Regional Council had failed to validly make and levy rates and charges because it did not have a separate resolution for the decision to impose rates and charges as required by section 94(2).

The council in question had passed a budget but that was ruled not to be sufficient to fulfil the relevant section of the act. At that time it was also possible that other local governments had similarly failed to make separate resolutions for both the budget and rates. This is an important part of the act as it makes it transparently clear for ratepayers the rates that they are to be charged in the coming year. An audit of councils identified 25 councils across Queensland that had failed to fulfil the requirement of the act, and this creates a wider problem for a number of councils. Without state government action to rectify this problem, local governments might be left with a difficult and extensive problem which would impact on the proper running of councils.

For this purpose, the government put forward the Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill 2018. The policy objectives set forward in the briefing were to amend the City of Brisbane Act 2010 and the Local Government Act 2009 to validate rates and charges made and levied or to be levied by a local government for a financial year up to and including the financial year ending 30 June 2018 without an express resolution at the local government's budget meeting for the financial year; to apply the validating provisions to rates and charges to repealed local government acts; and to declare that anything done, or to be done, in relation to the rate or charge is valid, as it would be if the local government had decided to levy the rate or charge by separate resolution at the local government's budget meeting.

The department informed us that it had engaged in consultation by consulting the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Brisbane City Council and that both organisations supported the policy objectives of the bill. The bill was referred to the committee on 15 February. During the period of examination of the bill, the committee invited the public, identified stakeholders and subscribers to make submissions. This invitation to make submissions was made to a wider group of stakeholders via the committee's website.

During this process only one stakeholder—the LGAQ—sought to make a submission and that submission was published on the committee's website. None of the 25 councils identified as having a legal problem made a submission. They instead relied on the submission of their peak organisation, the LGAQ. The Local Government Association of Queensland affirmed in their submission that they had been consulted and that they supported the bill. Their submission states—

The LGAQ is of the view that the proposed amendments are adequate and appropriate to reverse the possible impacts of the Supreme Court of Queensland decision, for Fraser Coast Regional Council and all other councils that have not passed rating resolutions in accordance with section 94(2) of the Local Government Act 2009.

Further, the committee asked for and received a public briefing from the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs on 5 March. A transcript of the public briefing is available on the Economics and Governance Committee's website. I thank the department for their hard work on these issues and the presentation they gave to the committee during the process of examining the bill. When it comes to bills like this that have wide acceptance, we can easily forget that for the public servants involved there is just as much work to ensure that the bill is properly constructed, covering all circumstances to ensure that the bill meets the objectives. The fact that this bill was so broadly accepted by the LGAQ and the councils of Queensland, including the 25 councils identified as potentially having a problem, is a credit to their hard work and diligence.

After this process of consultation, the committee met and made the recommendation that the bill be passed by the House. Further, there was no statement of reservations or dissenting report. I thank the members of the committee including the deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach, who is a fine deputy chair—

Mr Stevens: Hear, hear!

Mr POWER: Many do think that he should be Leader of the Opposition, but I will leave that for another time. I also thank the member for Ninderry, the member for Pine Rivers, the member for Bonney and the member for Redlands. Members on the committee had concerns that councils in the future might continue to not properly follow the Local Government Act. To this end, the committee recommended—

... that the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs monitor how local governments are levying their rates and charges over the next two financial years, 2018/19 and 2019/20, to ensure local governments are aware of the proper processes and are complying with the statutory requirements.

The member for Warrego may have missed a direct reference by the minister to that in his speech. There is no need to wait for the minister's reply, although he might restate it at that point for the benefit of those in the House who did not listen to what he said.

Committee members felt that, although we are passing the bill to ensure the financial stability of local government, it is not a catch-all or a signal for councils to not carefully follow the Local Government Act in its entirety. I note from the submission of the Local Government Association of Queensland that it wants to assist the department with this task. In the LGAQ submission Greg Hallam, the CEO, stated—

The LGAQ is assisting councils to ensure future council rating resolutions comply fully with said provision.

He further states—

The Association is in the process of preparing template best practice rating and budget resolutions which will be made available to all councils and will hold a Ratings Masterclass at a date to be determined in April or May.

I note that the minister has been following up on that process and mentioned that it is on 5 April.

The LGAQ knows how important following the Local Government Act is to the proper function of local government in our state, and I recognise its commitment to improving compliance with the act. I was somewhat disappointed that we received no submissions from any local government stating that they had renewed their commitment to compliance with the act through improved internal processes. I urge local governments to actively work with the department and the LGAQ to ensure better compliance so that we do not have to return to this place to ensure the stability of local government finances in Queensland. I note that they are a responsible level of government and that they wish to set high standards of compliance with the act and governance publicly, and we trust them to do that job. Therefore, we, with the department and LGAQ, will go forward in that manner. I note that the minister made mention of this and sees this as a very important part of compliance with the act.

Local governments have an important role in the provision of services and the planning of our state. It is vital that they fulfil their requirements as set out under the Local Government Act. The ratepayers of Queensland expect high standards of their local governments. They expect higher standards from this important level of government than the noncompliance we have seen with this section of the act. For the continued stability of budgets of local governments in Queensland, I urge members of the House to support this bill and commend it to the House.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (11.57 am): I rise to speak to the Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill 2018. This bill seeks to address the issues posed by a Queensland Supreme Court judgement made on 6 November 2017 which found that the Fraser Coast Regional Council, in the area of Hervey Bay represented greatly by the member for Hervey Bay in this House, Mr Ted Sorensen, had invalidly levied rates within its area for the financial years ending June 2015, June 2016 and June 2017 while the Palaszczuk government was governing Queensland and in charge of the department of local government.

Although the Fraser Coast Regional Council had met the legislative requirements for a resolution to adopt the budget, it did not fulfil a second legislative requirement to decide by resolution what rates and charges were to be levied. This failure resulted in the court's decision that the rates and charges made by the council during the period in question were invalid.

The bill was introduced into parliament by the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing—the wonderful racing industry—and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, who expressed concern at the potential for other councils across Queensland to be affected by the Supreme Court's decision on the Fraser Coast Regional Council.

Perhaps one of the most obvious points of concern with this bill is its retrospectivity. As Mr Hinchliffe, the member for Sandgate, mentioned in his introductory speech, retrospective legislation is rarely put to this parliament. Creating a law and then applying it to the past is inconsistent with one of the most fundamental principles of the rule of law. When such a bill presents itself, it is our responsibility to carefully assess the reasons for its retrospectivity under fundamental legislative principles.

The department has stated that the reason for retrospectivity in this case is to provide financial surety to councils and ratepayers as it is possible that other councils who have similarly erred in constructing their resolutions will be found to have invalidly levied rates or charges. It is also of concern that some of our remote councils may be affected in this manner. As we know, these days the mayor is responsible under the Local Government Act for the presentation of the budget. However, in most cases for practical purposes, it is the CEO of those councils who is the financially responsible person who presents it to the mayor for presentation to and then adoption by the council. Whatever assistance can be given to councils should be embraced by the department of local government wherever possible.

At a public briefing on the bill on 5 March information was requested from the department regarding other councils, apart from the Fraser Coast Regional Council, that might be affected in this way. The Economics and Governance Committee was informed that the department had completed a desktop audit—whatever that is—and found at least 25 local governments may have levied their rates in precisely the same way as the Fraser Coast Regional Council. It is concerning that such a high number of councils may not have met the requirements of the legislation. The purpose of a separate resolution for rates and charges is, as confirmed by the department, to make clear to ratepayers why the council is levying those rates and charges and to provide accountability and transparency.

The committee raised this during the briefing and discussed the obvious lack of clear methodology or mechanisms for compliance in this aspect of local government. The failure of at least 25 councils to complete these resolutions and the fact that they may be affected in the same way as the Fraser Coast Regional Council raises some serious questions. It is necessary to validate past rates and charges through this bill to ensure the continued effective operation of local government. However, it is imperative to consider what will be done to prevent such inappropriate and irresponsible errors in the future. I am very pleased that the minister has taken on board the erstwhile recommendation of the committee and has committed, in his opening remarks, to ensuring that his department delivers on an education process for local governments right across the state.

During a public briefing, departmental officers said they are working with the Local Government Association of Queensland, which has informed the committee that it supports the objectives of this bill, to ensure councils clearly understand that not one but two resolutions are required: one for the budget and one to levy rates and charges. Specifically, it was indicated that the department and the Local Government Association are working to develop template budgets and resolutions for councils as well as a ratings master class—the new reality TV show!—on a date to be confirmed in April or May in efforts to ensure clarity on best practice across local government. Stay tuned with viewer interest!

Though it is ultimately the responsibility of the mayor to present and sign off on the budget, as I mentioned earlier, it was agreed during the briefing that the CEO of the council is instrumental in providing the mayor with operational knowledge, assistance and guidance. It was, therefore, raised that particular focus needs to be devoted to educating chief executive officers of councils on the correct operational procedures under the state act.

Finally, in the briefing on 5 March the question was asked whether this bill covers all charges that may have been levied—I think it may have been by my good self if I remember correctly—specifically, special area rates. On the Gold Coast, for instance, which I am particularly familiar with, there are many beneficial area rates and charges for other matters that council levies. Concerns were raised that if legislation did not cover all of the charges, such as the tourism charges, CBD redevelopment charges and local area charges, there would be a risk of demands being made to councils for refunds due to those charges being invalid.

The committee was advised in later correspondence by the department that the bill applies to general rates, special rates and charges, utility charges and separate rates and charges. Although it does cover these areas, we understand the proposed legislation only validates charges to the extent that they would have been valid if a resolution had been completed by the council. In other words, the bill does not validate any other issues that may exist with a rate or charge; it only seeks to fix deficiencies in terms of inadequate completion of a resolution for rates and charges.

I am hoping that the minister will be able to confirm that all other charges such as the beneficial rates charges, fire services and tourism charges, all those redevelopment charges for CBD areas et cetera are covered by this retrospective resolution. Obviously I do not believe that somewhere like the Gold Coast would be one of those 25 councils, but those 25 councils do need to have those charges confirmed.

In conclusion, the issues raised with this bill relate first and foremost to its retrospectivity and whether the possible effects on other councils across Queensland justify applying legislation to the past, which is a practice that goes against fundamental principles of law. In this case, the department has indicated that at least 25 councils may be affected should their levied rates and charges be found invalid in the absence of adequate resolutions. In the interests of preserving efficiency and financial surety in local government, the committee acknowledges the need for this legislation to apply to past rates and charges.

It is imperative, however, that the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs puts procedures in place that ensure councils, particularly chiefs of staff or chief executives, are fully informed of best practice in terms of completing resolutions for the budget and for rates and charges. The plans in place for providing councils with template budgets and resolutions are a good start, as is the ratings master class planned for April or May. I am pleased that the minister has taken on board those commitments. I will certainly be pleased to support this bill in the House.

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (12.06 pm): It is a pleasure to rise today to speak in favour of the Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill 2018. Under the act all councils must pass two separate resolutions at the budget meeting: one to pass the budget and another resolution to levy rates and charges. There are four types of rates and charges: the general rates for services, facilities and activities supplied for the benefit of the community, which includes things like our local roads, library services and sporting grounds; special rates, which is special rates and charges for services, facilities and activities associated with particular land—things like maintaining a road in an industrial area—utility charges for services, facilities and activities for waste management, gas, sewage or water or other utilities prescribed; and, finally, separate rates and charges for any other service facility or activity. Before 1 August each year, a council needs to pass its budget via those two resolutions—the first to pass its budget in its entirety and a second resolution at the budget meeting to levy rates and charges.

This bill is before us today because we need to remedy the errors of some 25 local governments that have levied rates and charges for ratepayers in an incorrect manner. Our community has a base level of expectation from us in this place and from our counterparts in local and federal governments. A key component is that they instil the faith in us to get the fundamental procedural matters of governing right. They may not necessarily agree with a particular policy position, a piece of legislation before the House or the quantum of a rate increase or charge—or saving for that matter—but what they absolutely expect from us is that we get the process correct. They expect that in this place, in the council chambers across our state and in Parliament House in Canberra our legislative and procedural outcomes are robust, can uphold scrutiny and are fundamentally done correctly.

When it comes to this legislation I am most concerned that not only do we have the concerning process of the Supreme Court case of Linville Holdings Pty Ltd v Fraser Coast Regional Council—a case where it was determined that the Fraser Coast council was incorrectly levying and charging rates through the region—but our state department advised us during a briefing on the bill that a desktop audit has identified 25 local governments which have levied rates and charges in a similar incorrect manner as the Fraser Coast Regional Council.

There are 77 local governments in Queensland and 25 have levied charges incorrectly. It is a figure that is simply astounding. This bill is before the House because we need to remedy this error. In doing so I hope we can restore some of the confidence that has been breached and abused as a result of the errors and incorrect processes employed by 25 of our local governments in the state.

With regard to provisions concerning the validation of rates and charges, as stated in the committee report—

The provisions declare that a rate or charge levied, or to be levied, by a local government under the Acts that was not decided to be levied by an express resolution at the local government's budget meeting are taken to be, and to always have been, validly levied as if the rates or charges had been decided by resolution at the budget meeting in accordance with the statutory requirements.

The amendment that we make through this process will validate the rates and charges that have been levied in an incorrect manner up until 30 June 2018. The committee report continues—

The provisions in this bill also declare that anything done, or to be done, in relation to the rate or charge is as valid as if the rates and charges themselves had been validly levied by the appropriate resolution at the local government budget meeting for the financial year.

That is essentially the essence of the bill. This is how we are going to fix the inconsistent charging of fees, levies and charges of the local governments. Further to that our committee made a second recommendation in the report, which states—

The committee recommends that the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs monitor how local governments are levying their rates and charges over the next two financial years ... to ensure local governments are aware of the proper processes and are complying with the statutory requirements.

During the committee process we heard from the Local Government Association of Queensland, which told us that they were going to go forward and assist councils to ensure that future council resolutions fully comply with legislative requirements regarding the levying of rates and charges. They will prepare a template for best practice resolutions which will be made available to all councils, and they will also hold a ratings master class in relation to the process. I commend the department for the work they have done and the work that they will continue to do with the LGAQ in this space. This work will continue in an effort for local governments to develop an understanding of their obligations under the act, to get them to comply with these legislative requirements and to, very importantly, rebuild the confidence of our communities and constituents which has been eroded and sorely needs to be rebuilt.

I commend the minister and the department for the work they have done to address the issues in the bill which have been highlighted by the Supreme Court. There is much work that needs to be completed by our local councils. This bill fixes the errors that have already been made, but we need to educate local councils on the base legislative requirements of their fundamental obligations so we can restore faith in the system which has been eroded by these multiple errors. I also want to acknowledge the work done through the Economics and Governance Committee. I would like to acknowledge the work done by the chair, the member for Logan and the deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach. I too would like to see the deputy chair returned as the Manager of Opposition Business. He did such a sterling job.

An honourable member: Bring back Ray!

Ms BOYD: I will take that interjection. Bring back Ray! He did such a sterling job throughout the 55th Parliament. I would also like to commend the members for Bonney, Ninderry and Redlands and our committee secretariat and staff. This bill has been worked on in conjunction with a number of other bills currently before the committee, and I acknowledge the relatively short time frames with a month turnaround. Given the workload of the committee I want to particularly acknowledge the staff who support us and committee members for their work in engaging with the bill. I also thank the minister, the department and all of those stakeholders who made submissions and educated us in our decision-making process. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (12.16 pm): I rise to make a short contribution on the Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill 2018. I would also like to commend the committee for the excellent work they have done on this bill, and of course it is important.

Mr Stevens: Hear, hear!

Mr MILLAR: I take that interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach, who is a former mayor of a significant region when it comes to local councils. It is also an opportunity for us in this place to recognise the important role that councils play in our democracy to ensure that our regions are cared for. As the member for Gregory, I would say that I have the best councils in the state with the Central Highlands Regional Council and the RAPAD councils, which include Winton, Longreach, Barcoo, Blackall, Barcaldine, Diamantina and Boulia.

It is extremely important that we validate rates and charges. One of the big issues we have with councils in outback areas is that there is not a huge rate base. There is a very small rate base, and I am sure that former councillors in this chamber would recognise that, year on and year off, councils are being asked to do more and more all the time. Councils are no longer just roads, rates and rubbish. Where I come from in the seat of Gregory, councils play a significant role in economic development. With the outback and the drought we have had over the last five to seven years, councils have played a significant role in providing support services—whether it be mental health support or economic support—to try to help our regions and communities get through the drought.

In relation to this bill, validating rates and charges is extremely important and financial surety is paramount for every council. Certainly in regional and western areas councils do not have the capacity to put on a lot of staff. The mayor, CEO, councillors and staff all work very closely together to provide an excellent service, and I think what we are doing here today is extremely important to make sure that we give them the surety they need. We all value and support the role of councils in providing essential services to communities across the state. Furthermore, we are all committed to working in partnership with councils and the LGAQ to implement policies that ensure we can see these services continue for ratepayers. We must recognise and provide financial surety to local governments to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities. It is essential to meet statutory requirements, and that is why we need the assistance of the minister and his department to make sure they have that surety and advice.

We do have a department of local government, and they need to play a significant role in making sure that councils right across Queensland have the right information. As was mentioned previously, we are going to have a ratings master class later this year. I am sure that will be very exciting and it could make a great TV program. We also have a department that needs to play its role. They did a desktop audit and found that approximately 20 councils are affected by this.

Is the minister confident that all councils' rates and charges have been validated? What role is the minister's department playing to ensure this happens from today? What is the department doing to ensure this is happening today? Of course, mayors, councillors and CEOs are responsible for the budget, but we need to give them support and guidance. We must also remind ourselves that councils play a significant role in providing services right across the state. As I said, it is not just roads, rates and rubbish anymore; it is economic development, mental health, wellbeing, drought assistance and providing a lot of infrastructure for the community. They need our support and they certainly have it.

Finally, I congratulate the Central Highlands Regional Council. As an example that it does more than just roads, rates and rubbish, the Central Highlands Regional Council has just released its economic master plan. It is a significant document and is an audit of the Central Highlands Regional Council's capability to not only provide services for local people in the town but also try to attract agricultural investment. One example relates to the proposal for an inland port at Yamala and what it is trying to do with logistics in terms of moving grain, cotton and other produce, hopefully horticulture, to our ports. Mayor Kerry Hayes, CEO Scott Mason, the councillors and the staff of Central Highlands Regional Council, along with the Central Highlands Development Corporation, have done a fantastic job. We need to ensure we support them. I certainly support this bill.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (12.21 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the bill and to commend the bill to the House. Following the member for Gregory, I want to recognise the former councillors, especially those who sit on our side of the House. I acknowledge the member for Miller, who sat on the Brisbane City Council, and the member for Ipswich West, who sat on the Somerset council. I spent 12 years on the Caboolture and Moreton Bay regional councils.

An honourable member: Keep the whiting in the bay.

Mr WHITING: I take the interjection. 'Keep the whiting in the bay' still has currency.

I also commend the minister for this timely bill. It is very important that we act quickly and decisively on this matter. That is of importance throughout Queensland as well. What we must do is very clear within this bill. We need to validate any charges or rates made or levied by a local government without an express resolution at the local government's budget meeting. This bill will declare anything done in relation to those rates or charges as valid, as if the council had passed the appropriate resolution.

This legislation was triggered by the case involving Linville Holdings and the Fraser council. It was discovered in this process that other councils may well be in the same situation. Previous speakers have said that possibly 25 other councils—and there may well be others—are in the same position. It is very clear that we need local governments such as Fraser Coast Regional Council to pass the resolution outlined by section 94(2) of the 2009 Local Government Act concerning rates and charges to be levied. It must be explicit. It is spelled out. It is not sufficient to pass a resolution to levy whatever rates and charges are listed in the attachments. We need to remember what this act is telling us to do. In this case, it is very clear what local governments must do.

As a former councillor, I have struggled to grasp how we reached this situation. In our training to be councillors it was very clear that our primary duty was to ensure that the budget was passed and that rates and charges were levied accordingly. It is a very clear and basic duty that has been spelt out continuously. I recognise the department of local government and the LGAQ for helping to train, over many years, councillors in aspects such as financial responsibilities.

It may be that councillors do not know precisely under what sections the resolution must be passed, but I point out that they are surrounded by staff who will or should know which sections apply to the particular parts of the budget they are talking about. They are surrounded by staff who should have that prerequisite knowledge and who do have many years experience in setting budgets and in getting budgets passed. They can take on advice or guidance from the many talented officers of the LGAQ who deal with exactly these issues and the many talented officers in the department of local government who also have knowledge and experience in precisely these matters. I know that council CEOs have a network where they rely on each other for advice. They certainly can turn to their peers to get advice about what to do. In terms of what needs to be done or what should have been done, there is an extensive network throughout Queensland in local government of people who have the expertise and knowledge of what to do.

It is very clear why this bill needs to be passed. We need to ensure that expenditure for these projects by local government is not in doubt, that they are set in stone and secure for use in local communities. We have talked about roads and about economic development. The member for Gregory talked about the role of local government in economic development. The state needs to ensure that local governments ensure that the projects they fund are unassailable. I refer to the many projects in my local government area. My electorate entirely falls within the Moreton Bay Regional Council area. It is essential that those projects are unassailable and secure in terms of financial viability and surety. One such project is the University of the Sunshine Coast, which is now setting up in Petrie. I acknowledge the work of the members for Murrumba, Kurwongbah and Pine Rivers, who I know are particularly looking forward to this project.

In 2015 Moreton Bay Regional Council purchased 200 hectares at the old Petrie mill for \$50 million. Some 110 hectares will be preserved for the environment and wildlife corridors, and the rest will host the new University of Sunshine Coast campus to open in 2020, catering for 10,000 students over the next 20 years. That will be at the centre of a broader redevelopment area over the whole of the Petrie precinct. There will be a whole range of education, health, retail, residential, recreation, commercial and environmental uses. The point is that the money the council has expended will drive a whole redevelopment of that area and of the local higher education sector. There needs to be no doubt that this money has been expended in accordance with the law.

Another project in my area involving a large expenditure of local government money concerned the Moreton Bay Rail Link, now the Redcliffe peninsula rail line.

Mr HART: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think this bill is about something completely different from what the member is talking about. I ask the member to be relevant to the bill.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Pugh): While this is very interesting, I certainly ask that members stick to the long title of the bill.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. The member for Bancroft was addressing the issue of the importance that this bill will play in ensuring the financial sustainability and arrangements for councils and he was therefore reflecting on how important this was in relation to a number of important projects that are current in his community. I would suggest that this is something that is entirely associated with the matters that are before the House in relation to the bill and the security of financial stability for local government that it provides.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister.

Mr WHITING: The point I was making is that our local governments are now expending huge amounts of money on projects that are traditionally outside the scope of local government, and I will give some more examples of that later. It is essential that the expenditure that they make on these projects cannot be challenged by an organisation outside that may or may not have a beef against a particular project. I am outlining some of the key projects outside what councils usually do—projects like the Gold Coast Light Rail. In stage 1 the Gold Coast City Council spent \$120 million and I think \$55 million on stage 2. It was the Moreton Bay Rail Link that really set the pattern of local governments expending their money in areas of public transport and in areas they traditionally had not expended funds on before—that is, putting money down to build rail and buying up properties.

Councils in Queensland are now expending money outside those areas and are building the essential infrastructure of our state. I certainly want to commend the Gold Coast City Council and the Moreton Bay Regional Council for expending that money on public transport. I want to ensure that, through this bill, they are secure in the knowledge that they are not going to be challenged on that. We do not want a situation where that may be challenged in court and a court may find that they have not spent that money in a legal sense.

Much of this follows what the member for Gregory was talking about in terms of economic development. The expenditure of money in economic development areas is something new. It is more than just putting on an economic development officer. Councils in Queensland are now investing in real estate to drive more of this local economic development. I know that many western councils and councils throughout regional Queensland are looking to expend that money and ensure that they are secure in doing that. I want to wrap up by saying that this goes for everything. The state government expends a lot of money in partnership with local governments. We are investors in local community projects. We are co-investors with local government. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that the projects that we start and do with local governments are secure. That is why we need this bill. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (12.33 pm): I rise to speak on the Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill 2018. Essentially, the policy objectives of this bill set out to amend the relevant local government acts to validate rates and charges levied by local governments and to correct any discrepancy in the resolutions adopted by council in levying those charges.

As a former local government councillor and deputy mayor for 12 years, I have a working knowledge of these issues and am concerned as to why we now have to correct an oversight which should have been picked up by the department of local government. This legislation is because of some serious lapses in departmental oversight in not picking up a legal obligation required by councils.

Under the act, a local government must decide by resolution at its budget meeting for a financial year what rates and charges are to be levied for that particular year. Issues with the council just north of Gympie, the Fraser Coast Regional Council, are why we are debating this legislation. Although the Fraser Coast Regional Council made resolutions adopting the budget as presented at its meeting in accordance with the relevant sections of the act, it did not make an express resolution adopting those rates and charges. Despite an express resolution being required, it was not made for the past three years.

How is it that the department, which should be overseeing the operations of councils, did not pick this up? Where were the regional managers? What were they doing? No-one expects or wants the department to get involved in the intricacies of the day-to-day running of councils, but it has always been the role of the department of local government to ensure oversight of councils and to ensure that they are meeting their minimum requirements and obligations. It is understood that this same scenario could potentially apply to a further 25 councils across the state.

This discrepancy was only picked up when the legitimacy of the rates and charges was challenged by a local Fraser Coast council ratepayer in the Supreme Court. The court subsequently declared that the council failed to validly make and levy its rates and charges within its local government area for the end of the financial years in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

It is interesting to note that the council's resolutions—or lack of resolutions—occurred during the years when this Labor government was in charge of the department of local government. I ask again: what was the department doing to not pick up on the oversight? What advice was it receiving from its regional advisers? I could point out that the Fraser Coast regional manager is a great supporter of the current government, so much so that he ran for office in the last election.

Although the Supreme Court's ruling was applicable only to the Fraser Coast council, there have been doubts raised about the resolutions of another 25 councils. That is a statistic of 26 out of a total of 77 local governments in the state. We are talking about a third of them that have not correctly applied the required resolution, so a third of the local governments in Queensland are at real risk of legal action because of the deficiencies in the oversight of the department. Consequently, this legislation has to be backdated to clear up the mess and ensure that rates and charges levied by local government now comply.

To give ongoing certainty to Queensland ratepayers that their councils are meeting the minimum standard of requirements and to ensure that we are not revisiting the serious lapse in oversight by the department, the committee investigating this legislation recommended—

... that the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs monitor how local governments are levying their rates and charges over the next two financial years, 2018/19 and 2019/20, to ensure local governments are aware of the proper processes and are complying with the statutory requirements.

As past events have given rise to this situation, the proposed amendments will need to operate retrospectively. While I am extremely cautious about the government's increasing addiction to using the retrospectivity lever, it is necessary in this case to provide surety to local governments and certainty to

ratepayers. As a former councillor and deputy mayor I intimately know the role councils have in providing essential services to communities across the state. Councils are naturally close to the eye of the action and often they are the first point of call in times of disaster. In most cases, they are a much valued third tier of government.

Many members of the LNP have cut their teeth in local government politics. We understand why it is important to work in partnership with councils and the LGAQ to implement policies that ensure the continuity of these services for ratepayers. We also recognise the need to provide financial surety to local governments to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities.

The decision of the Supreme Court in relation to the Fraser Coast Regional Council—and potentially others—places the affected councils at real risk of legal action for the recovery of rates and charges. It is therefore imperative that the proposed amendments be progressed as soon as possible. I also note and welcome that the Local Government Association of Queensland supports the policy objectives of the bill. In view of the potentially serious consequences for councils stemming from the judgement made by the Supreme Court of Queensland, I do not oppose the bill.

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (12.38 pm): I am pleased to rise to speak in support of the Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill 2018. The objective of this bill is to amend the City of Brisbane Act 2010 and the Local Government Act 2009 to validate rates and charges made and levied or to be levied by a local government for a financial year up to and including the financial year ending 30 June 2018 without an express resolution of the local government's budget meetings for that financial year. The bill also applies these validating provisions under all the repealed local government acts as well.

We find ourselves in a curious situation, which was covered in the case of Linville Holdings Pty Ltd v Fraser Coast Regional Council. This case centred on whether the council had followed the proper process under the act to adopt its rates and charges for the 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 financial years. The case alluded to the point that, if the council had not followed the proper process, then what were the legal consequences of the council's failure.

The Local Government Act 2009 is clear: local governments are required to adopt rates and charges by resolution at the local government's budget meeting each year. In this situation it would seem that the council had adopted a budget each year at its budget meeting, which included the rates and charges to be levied each year within the budget documents. However, the council did not expressly adopt the rates and charges through a specific resolution; they were simply included as part of the general package of documents adopted by the council.

In considering the relevant requirements under the act, including section 94(2), the court found that it was not sufficient to include the rates and charges as part of the general budget documents and that the council should have expressly and separately adopted the rates and charges to be levied. The court also considered whether, therefore, this noncompliance invalidated the rates and charges. The court found that, as a result of noncompliance with the requirements under the act, the rates and charges were, indeed, invalid. I am talking about three financial years of rates and charges imposed by the Fraser Coast Regional Council that were found to be invalid. Clearly, that was a situation that needed to be addressed and it would have sent a shiver up the spine of many council mayors and CEOs across Queensland.

Rates and charges are a major source of funding for local governments. The court's decision has had significant implications for both the Fraser Coast Regional Council and any other local governments that may have made similar errors in the adoption of their rates and charges. It would seem that there are a number of local governments in Queensland that may have constructed their resolutions with deficiencies similar to those outlined in the court's decision and may be affected if similar cases are brought to courts.

For many councils, rates, levies, fees and charges are their primary source of revenue outside Queensland and Australian government grant funding. In 2015-16, Queensland's 77 councils generated in excess of \$5.9 billion in revenue in rates and levies, making up approximately 52 per cent of their total revenue. This is also an area where inequitable or insufficient rating practices can lead to community disharmony and financially unsustainable councils, which are overly reliant on unpredictable grant funding or inappropriate borrowings.

It is true that rates and charges are one of the few financial levers that councils can use to address financial sustainability. With the population in Queensland growing, particularly in the south-east corner, councils will continue to face the challenge of rising service demand and the resultant pressure to increase their reliance on own-source revenue such as rates.

Currently, the Queensland Audit Office is undertaking a performance audit on the management of local government rates and charges and is due to report in April-May. In its audit strategy, the Queensland Audit Office indicated that council rates are one of eight indicators in the nationally consistent local government financial sustainability framework. It indicates that rate setting is closely linked to a council's financial forecasting and budgeting processes and asset management strategies.

Previous reports by the Queensland Audit Office have presented case studies that illustrate the effect that poor asset data and inaccurate expenditure forecasting can have on setting rates. Given the importance that rates have on a council's financial sustainability, it is absolutely vital that we resolve the issue of the validity of rates and charges as quickly as possible to ensure that local governments can go forward with certainty in relation to their rating regime.

In a previous life I had the opportunity to work for two Queensland local government ministers and saw firsthand how own-source revenue such as rates and charges is becoming increasingly important. I remember one year in the early 2000s when the federal government—under then minister Wilson Tuckey, so we all know where this is heading—got into a nasty dispute with a number of states over a review of the methodology that was used to pay the federal government's financial assistance grants to councils. It was clear that the proposed methodology would be detrimental to Queensland and the state Labor government at the time was refusing to accept this, which is a bit of *déjà vu* given the recent GST debate.

This dispute ran for months. To apply additional pressure the federal government stopped paying grants to the councils until the issue was resolved. I remember receiving frantic calls from council mayors, particularly those in rural areas, effectively telling me that, without their financial assistance grants, they would not be able to continue paying salaries and would need to close the door on the council. As we know, for many rural and regional towns local government is the main employer in the area, so we were looking at whole towns facing crippling unemployment.

Thankfully, in the end sanity prevailed and an amicable agreement was reached with the federal government. In fact, Wilson Tuckey blinked and the federal grants flowed to the local governments. That made me realise how reliant some councils were on government grants. With some councils having lower rate bases, it would be difficult to see this situation changing. That is why it is imperative that the question about the validity of rates and charges be settled—to ensure that councils have certainty in relation to their revenue base.

The bill declares that anything done, or to be done, in relation to the rate or charge is valid as it would have been or would be if the local government had decided to levy the rate or charge by resolution at the local government's budget meeting for the financial year under the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the repealed City of Brisbane Act 1924, the Local Government Act 2009, the repealed Local Government Act 1993, or the repealed Local Government Act 1936.

The proposed amendments will operate retrospectively. I know that retrospectivity is not something that the Queensland parliament takes lightly but, without these amendments, local governments in Queensland, which may have constructed their resolutions in a way that have deficiencies similar to those outlined in the court's decision on the Fraser Coast Regional Council, face a real risk of legal action for the recovery of rates and charges that have been paid by ratepayers. This situation has the potential to have impacts on a council's financial liquidity and could require the use of ratepayers' funds to defend such cases. These amendments have been progressed as quickly as possible to provide financial surety to local governments and, importantly, certainty to ratepayers. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (12.46 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill 2018. This amendment bill seeks to provide retrospective rules to rates and charges issued over a number of financial years by the Fraser Coast Regional Council after a determination by the Supreme Court of Queensland on 6 November 2017 to uphold a decision in the case of Linville Holdings Pty Ltd v Fraser Coast Regional Council.

During the financial years 30 June 2015 to 30 June 2016 and 30 June 2016 and 30 June 2017, the Fraser Coast Regional Council failed to make valid levied rates and charges within its local government area through processes that should have been followed with correctly worded resolutions. Section 107A of the Local Government Act requires a resolution to adopt the council budget and for it to be adopted in accordance with section 91(2) of the Local Government Act 2009. That did not happen.

This amendment bill says that the Fraser Coast Regional Council can validate its rates, charges and levies for all financial years up to and including the financial year ending June 2018. In his introductory speech the Minister for Local Government said—

The bill also declares that anything done, or to be done, in relation to the rate or charge is as valid as it would have been or would be if the local government had decided to levy the rate or charge by resolution at the local government's budget meeting for the financial year.

...

The amendments are aimed at providing clarity to local governments and to the communities they serve so that local governments can continue to function effectively and with financial certainty in providing essential services.

Someone might think it is not rocket science, but I am not sure everyone is thinking like that. I ask the Minister for Local Government, Mr Stirling Hinchliffe, some really simple questions. Minister, where is the audit report? I know that most probably the answer you will give me will be—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Pugh): The member will direct all comments through the chair.

Mr SORENSEN: I know what the answer will be: the Auditor-General deals with the financial side; he does not have to worry about the legal side. The Fraser Coast Regional Council spends around \$240,000 to audit its books and to make sure that everything is in order. An awful lot of money is paid to the Auditor-General to do this job. For three years nothing happened. We have to look closely at that. Does the Minister for Local Government believe that this type of amendment bill, posturing as a cover-up, will actually work? The Fraser Coast Regional Council pays the LGAQ about \$400,000 a year for training and support of councillors. In its submission the LGAQ says it is—

... assisting councils to ensure future council rating resolutions comply fully with said provisions. The Association is in the process of preparing template best practice rating and budget resolutions which will be made available to all councils and will hold a Ratings Masterclass at a date to be determined in April or May.

Why has it not done that in the past? This legislation was in 2009. It is 2018 now. Why is the council paying them \$400,000 a year?

Mr Pegg: Because of the court case. Have you read it?

Mr SORENSEN: It was in 2009. Why have they not done it in the past?

Mr Pegg: It was 2017.

Mr SORENSEN: The Fraser Coast Regional Council is made up of the Labor Party six-pack and the conservative five-pack. The Labor Party six-pack is two solicitors plus a police prosecutor.

A government member: You've just got no-one.

Mr SORENSEN: That is right; we do not have anyone. They control the council. How is it that two lawyers on the council did not pick this up? This goes back three years. It is total incompetence. It is terribly embarrassing. At the end of the day we have the report of Mr Stephen Johnston that states that the previous council was in trouble. The key findings state—

Most staff wished to discuss broader organisational cultural issues. The common theme from these meetings was that there was a 'culture of control, favouritism, a lack of trust, a fear of reprisal, low morale and a toxic working environment.

It does not matter what the organisation is. It has to have good people, but the good people in this council were sacked.

Ms Grace: Who by?

Mr SORENSEN: The CEO at the time. There should have been warning bells ringing then. There have to be people with the ability and the credentials to carry out this work. The report by the government should have started alarm bells ringing.

Mr Saunders: It was done by the council.

Mr SORENSEN: The final report was done by Stephen Johnston. At the end of the day the warning bells were ringing. I could hear them. At the last election the council had \$200 million in the kitty. Where was that in the audit? It still has \$170 million and nobody can tell me what it is for. We have high unemployment in our area and the council has \$170 million. I will say it again: \$170 million in the kitty! Nobody heard the warning bells. This bill has been introduced to cover up total incompetence from the department down.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (12.55 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill 2018. Queensland's 77 local councils operate under the local government system, a system that is integral to the democratic system of government in Australia.

As a former councillor with the Somerset Regional Council, I acknowledge the important role councils play and the good works they do for our communities, particularly in my electorate of Ipswich West. As with other democratically elected governments, councils have powers to raise revenue, partly through council rates, to provide and maintain infrastructure and services to regulate activities such as building development and impose penalties if local regulations are breached.

The ability of councils to raise revenue and how they do so came under review in the recent decision of the Supreme Court of Queensland on 6 November 2017 in the case of Linville Holdings Pty Ltd v Fraser Coast Regional Council. In that case the court declared that, for each of the financial years ended 30 June 2015, 30 June 2016 and 30 June 2017, the Fraser Coast Regional Council failed to validly make and levy rates and charges within its local government area. At its budget meeting for that year it did not decide by resolution what rates and charges were to be levied as required by section 94(2) of the Local Government Act 2009.

While the Supreme Court ruling applied only to the Fraser Coast Regional Council, the provisions of the bill cover all local governments to ensure the validity of rates and charges made by all local governments that may have made resolutions that do not meet the regulatory requirements. During the public briefing for the bill, officers from the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs advised that a desktop audit had identified at least 25 local governments that levied rates and charges in a similar manner to that levied by the Fraser Coast Regional Council.

As the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, said in his introductory speech, this bill is required to ensure that rates and levies are properly levied by local government councils in Queensland and without these amendments as proposed by the bill the Fraser Coast Regional Council and other local governments which may have constructed their resolutions in a way that was similar, with similar deficiencies to those outlined in the court decision, may be at risk of legal action for the recovery of rates and charges made by taxpayers, impacting adversely on the financial liquidity of those local councils.

The Economics and Governance Committee made two recommendations in its report: firstly, that the bill be passed and, secondly, it also recommended that the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs monitor how local governments are levying their rates and charges over the next two financial years.

In its submissions to the committee, the LGAQ advised that they had been consulted and they had supported the policy objectives of the bill. They also supported the submission that the government should play a role in auditing and monitoring local government in Queensland with regard to proper governance in relation to their rates and charges. They supported a motion that the state government should play a role in ensuring that local governments follow the recommendations and the provisions of the relevant legislation to ensure that at all times rates and charges are levied appropriately.

In that regard I am pleased to support the recommendations of the committee. I thank the members of the Economics and Governance Committee, the committee secretariat and the submitters and I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Madden, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): There is nowhere like North Queensland. Last week I had another chance to see how amazing and resilient the people of North Queensland are, as well as the true larrikin North Queensland spirit that we all know and love. It was wonderful to visit Ingham with the member for Burdekin.

As we know, Ingham, Innisfail and Tully were flooded earlier this month. Once the waters started to go down, I headed to Hinchinbrook shire to see how the community was coping. I thank Mayor Ramon Jayo and Deputy Mayor Mary Brown for hosting both the member for Burdekin and me during

that visit. Mayor Ramon Jayo was working wonders to get Ingham and surrounds back on their feet. It was great to see Deputy Mayor Mary Brown still smiling after a tough few days at the disaster recovery centre. Ramon showed the member for Burdekin and I the worst of the damage, as well as the crocodile tracks that had been left across his own flooded property, leading into—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Pause the clock. There is a lot of audible conversations happening. Please listen in silence to the honourable member making the speech.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: We saw crocodile tracks that ran across Ramon's backyard and into his garage. That was an amazing sight to see. I also visited canegrowers at Herbert River to hear firsthand how the flooding has been impacting their vital industry. Before my visit, I wrote to all insurance companies, calling on them to rapidly process claims. Of course, I will be staying in touch with those flood affected communities. It is so important that we support our local communities whenever a disaster strikes. I pay special tribute to all the volunteers, the SES and other emergency services workers who helped those communities. I am pleased to hear that the towns of Ingham, Innisfail and Tully and surrounding districts are getting back on their feet. I wish them well and all the best on the road to recovery.

Whilst on my trip to North Queensland, I also visited the Women's Centre in Townsville. I was absolutely appalled that anyone, let alone women and children in crisis, must attend this centre, which in Townsville is the only choice for women in their time of need, because the Women's Centre is in the grip of its very own crisis. It is rat infested, it is mould infested and recently it was flooded. The floor is so rotten that you can see the level below through the holes. The member for Mundingburra should be ashamed of herself. Not only is the Townsville Women's Centre in her electorate; it helps the region's most vulnerable. Every single year, it helps up to 10,000 women and children. It is a disgrace.

The community of Townsville is so concerned about the member's lack of action that they have had to start raising funds themselves. I thank the Sky Foundation for its incredible work in raising around \$600,000 for the important Women's Centre. However, that is a long way off the estimated \$3 million to \$4 million required to re-home that vital service—a service that provides the only free support for sexual assault victims in Townsville, a city that has been labelled the domestic violence capital of Queensland. The centre is supposed to be a safe space for vulnerable women and children. If the member for Mundingburra and the Premier refuse to stand up for the people of Townsville, I will and so will the LNP. I call on the Premier to show some leadership and fund that vital centre now.

To make matters worse, when I was in Townsville I was also shocked, although not surprised, to learn that the Premier is now refusing to work with the Townsville City Council to get the city's new Haughton pipeline built. This is a joke and last year the LNP warned that it would happen. The LNP went to the election promising to fully fund the project. We told the people of Townsville that Labor had not set the money aside. At the time of the last election, they had not set aside the \$225 million needed for the project. They went up there with the shovels and they had the pictures taken, but guess what? The front page of the *Townsville Bulletin* tells the truth: there is no money! Their funding is not there. Guess who will have to pay? The bill will now be put on the ratepayers' credit card with the state's funding delayed for years.

This is another broken promise when the people of Townsville are already hurting. They have three elected representatives in this House, but not a single one of them is fighting for the Haughton pipeline to be built. Not a single one of them is standing up to the Premier and asking, 'Why did you mislead Queenslanders? Why isn't the money on the table?' What do the local members of parliament have to say to their local communities when their own Premier will not work with the local council and stump up for the Haughton pipeline?

We all know that Labor blames others and then claims credit for the hard work of others. We saw that when Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull flew into Brisbane to announce the coalition government's decision to build 211 new tanks in Queensland. Recently when I met with my federal counterparts, I pushed hard for those vehicles to be built here. When the news broke, the Premier and her ministers made a desperate attempt—a desperate attempt—to claim credit, which we again heard in the House this morning. It was a desperate attempt made with a jersey that is supposed to do it all, along with a three-hour trip to Germany.

When it comes to delivering and creating jobs in Queensland, naturally only the LNP delivers. We have the country's worst unemployment rate, so getting a project such as this is going to help. If the Palaszczuk government decided to spend less time Canberra bashing and more time consulting, we would get outcomes such as this more often.

I now turn to the email saga that is straight from a movie script. We have a minister who has been using his own personal emails for work related purposes, which he then tried to hide. When some of those emails did become public, we found out that it took only three days after the union had emailed the minister for their union buddy to get the job. This government moves fast only when it is giving out jobs to its union mates.

Last week we found out that another 600 work emails are still being kept secret. How can any Queenslander trust the Premier or the government? What are they hiding? I call on the Premier to do the right thing, to release the emails and finally to show some leadership and sack this minister. This minister was untruthful to the people of Queensland and the Premier must get rid of him.

While Labor makes sure that its union buddies have jobs, it taxes everyday Queenslanders through the roof. There is no greater example of that than what we saw here today. The truth has come out: Labor is going to slug each and every Queenslander with a waste levy.

The minister has stood up today and tried to say it is a levy and not a tax and that no-one at the end point is going to pay for it. It is a tax, is a tax, is a tax. No matter how they dress this up, it is a tax. It is one of the five new taxes that this government has put onto Queenslanders since the election. How many more taxes must Queenslanders bear? We have just heard a press conference from the Treasurer who flatly refused to rule out another tax. We are already up to five new taxes and we are only about 100 days into this government. They have done nothing else but tax, tax, tax, tax. There is another tax today.

Enough is enough. The people of Queensland, whether they are in the cape or Coolangatta or Bedourie or Boulia, should not have to pay just because this incompetent government cannot manage one superdump in Ipswich. Why should the people of Ipswich, Toowoomba, Townsville, Bundaberg, Kingaroy—each and every Queenslander across Queensland—have to pay because these people are too incompetent to enforce the rules in front of them and make sure they run their government properly. Unfortunately, there is no more evidence we need than three years of this government that has done nothing for Queenslanders. Now in their second term, the only thing they plan to do is tax, tax, tax.

Governing from the Regions

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.11 pm): I rise today to speak about the Governing from the Regions initiative which was held in Ipswich last week. Firstly, on behalf of my community I would like to thank Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk and all the ministers for coming to Ipswich and listening. It was a welcome opportunity for me and I am sure for all of my Ipswich parliamentary colleagues. I want to acknowledge the huge logistical feat it must have been. I sincerely thank all of those people who worked behind the scenes to make it such a successful event.

The Palaszczuk government works hard and fights hard for all Queenslanders. At the 2017 election Annastacia Palaszczuk and Labor promised to put Queenslanders first by delivering initiatives that will help grow jobs in our regions and provide vital funding for health, education and infrastructure. These are the things that the Leader of the Opposition and the LNP will never deliver for Queensland's regions. The Queensland LNP supported the cuts and asset sales of the Newman government and they support Malcolm Turnbull's cuts to Queensland health and education and reducing Queensland's share of GST.

Last week was a very exciting week for Ipswich. I want to mention just a few of those highlights. It began with the Minister for Sport, the Hon. Mick de Brenni, officially opening our state-of-the-art Ipswich Cycle Park. I can report that this facility, a bit over a week old, has already been embraced by thousands of Ipswich people, young and old.

We then welcomed the Premier and the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, Steven Miles, to Ipswich Hospital to meet our nurse navigators and interns and to deliver on our election commitment to provide \$124.4 million for the Ipswich Hospital redevelopment. West Moreton health represents the fastest growing hospital and health region in the state. Without vital funds for redevelopment, the Ipswich Hospital will struggle to cope with our rapidly growing population. Stage 1 of the West Moreton hospital and health master plan includes a new 50-bed mental health facility, an MRI for Ipswich Hospital, an integrated community healthcare centre and outpatient facility and a new car park.

The other big winners last week were Queensland schools. Some 827 state schools, including 10 in my electorate, will now go solar and reap energy savings with the \$97 million Advancing Clean Energy Schools program, announced last week by the Premier and the Minister for Education, Grace

Grace, at Bremer State High School. This initiative will help state schools across Queensland save 20 per cent on power bills, reduce their carbon footprint and help Queensland reach our target of 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030.

Announced the same day at Bremer State High School was the launch of the Creating Queensland's Future coding competition for 2018. I had the pleasure of meeting Bremer's winning team from last year. It was wonderful and encouraging to see this team of young women have so much enthusiasm and talent for coding.

Another huge win for Ipswich and Queensland last week was the announcement of Rheinmetall's successful tender for the Land 400 contract. While we hear from opposition leader Deb Frecklington and the LNP team that it was 'Team Queensland' that secured Rheinmetall for Queensland, we know that the \$5 billion project would never have come to Queensland without the long and hard campaigning done by our Premier and our current state development minister, Cameron Dick, and the former state development minister, Dr Anthony Lynham. They fought hard for Queensland to get this project. The benefits to the state and to my community will be enormous.

The project will create 450 jobs in advanced manufacturing and engineering and will spur high-tech innovation and growth in Queensland's advanced manufacturing and defence industries.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): One moment, member for Ipswich. Members, there is far too much conversation, particularly coming from my left. If you wish to continue your conversations take them outside the chamber. We need to listen to the member with the respect that she deserves.

Ms HOWARD: Rheinmetall will also base its Australia-New Zealand headquarters and Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence in the Ipswich suburb of Redbank. This greatly expands job opportunities for skilled professionals in Ipswich and provides supply chain opportunities for local businesses. For a town that struggled for many years battling higher than average unemployment and trying to stem the brain drain of young professionals leaving Ipswich for jobs elsewhere, the skilled jobs boost that the Rheinmetall contract provides will be very welcome.

Today's announcement that the Palaszczuk government is committed to introducing a waste recovery management strategy, underpinned by the reintroduction of a waste levy in Queensland, is yet another example of how this government listens and consults. We in this parliament should never forget the enormous privilege it is to be here representing our communities. I want to thank all of the stakeholders in Ipswich, including principals and other community leaders, for embracing the fantastic opportunity provided by having the Premier and her ministers in our community and for participating in some genuine and productive discussions about the future of Ipswich.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Everton, I would like to acknowledge visitors in the gallery today from Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School in the electorate of Hervey Bay. Welcome to parliament.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.16 pm): Today we have seen another broken promise from an incredibly untrustworthy government. As recently as 21 February this year when the Treasurer announced the details of the four new taxes that were announced just two days before the election in November last year, the Treasurer said the following—

We took our additional revenue measures to the people of Queensland at the November election just three months ago ...

We have no plans to introduce anything beyond that.

Today we have heard how hollow those words are. No plans equals yes. Any time we hear that side of the House talk about having no plans to introduce something in the future we know exactly what that means. Today's announcement confirms that.

This is how deceitful this government is. At least the member for Ipswich West had the honesty to come out a couple of months ago and say that that was what they were going to introduce. At least he had the integrity to tell people about this, unlike the Treasurer, who has hidden behind deceitful words and weasel words about having no plans when, in fact, all along they knew that they were going to introduce this new tax.

In today's press release where they talked about their new waste tax, what did they say? They said that this will not increase taxes for Queensland households. They said that this will not impact the everyday Queenslander. They said that Queensland residents have no reason to fear because this waste levy will have no impact on them. What a load of hogwash.

Today the Minister for Environment, the new minister for crystal balls, came in here and answered a question—all coy, all puzzled, talking about looking into the future. I wish we had a crystal ball to see what she would say in her press conference. She thoroughly and utterly embarrassed herself: 'We are going to introduce this new waste tax—oh, I mean levy—not a waste tax, a levy.' When questioned about whether this cost would be passed on to everyday residents, she said, 'No. It is not a direct cost; it is an indirect cost. We cannot help it if building companies pass on costs to the consumer.' If it were not so serious, it would be funny. This minister, this Treasurer and this Premier are deceiving the Queensland public. They need to come out now and tell us what other taxes they are going to introduce into the future.

It was like an episode of *The Hollowmen*. Can you imagine all the bureaucrats, all the advisers, sitting around saying, 'We've got to get this new tax. What are we going to call it? We cannot call it a tax. Let's call it a levy.' 'No, we cannot call it a levy. Let's call it an impost.' 'No, we cannot call it an impost. Let's call it an indirect cost.' 'That is what we are going to call it—an indirect cost.' An indirect cost, an impost, a levy is a tax and they are going to dip into the pockets of Queenslanders once more.

When Queenslanders buy a brand-new house, HIA have estimated that there will be \$2,000 added to the cost of construction of that house. Who do you think is going to pay for that? When you go and buy a set of tyres, who do you think is going to pay the extra price on the tyres because of the waste levy? When you get somebody to paint your house, who do you think is going to pay the extra cost because of the waste disposal costs that will be added to that? When you buy a packet of fried chips at the footy, who do you think is going to pay the extra cost because of the waste levy?

This government has no idea. As is the case with the other four taxes they have brought in—taxes they have tried to portray as being taxes for the rich—this tax will flow on to everyday Queenslanders at a time when the cost of living is at a rate that many everyday Queenslanders cannot afford, whether it be electricity costs or petrol costs. Here we have a government that has slugged them once again. We are the only side of parliament that will make sure we have a low-tax regime.

(Time expired)

Land 400

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.21 pm): It is always a pleasure to follow the member for Everton. Clearly he still has no idea. What a great contribution! What an absolute load of rubbish.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Members, we need to retain some respect for the speakers on their feet.

Mr HARPER: It was indeed very exciting news for our proud Queensland state in relation to last week's announcement of the Rheinmetall Defence Australia's Land 400 phase 2 deal. This defence deal is worth \$5 billion to our state's economy here in Queensland. Queensland will manufacture the next generation of combat reconnaissance vehicles, the Boxer CRV, direct to the Australian Army.

It is also outstanding news for our regions, with Townsville being a major benefactor in an economic sense with respect to this exciting announcement. Yes, Queensland won the day against what was a pretty aggressive Victorian bid where they spent some \$600,000 in full-page advertising to woo over the decision-makers to ensure that their state would be the recipient of this \$5 billion worth of defence infrastructure for our nation. Well, they were wrong. When will they ever learn? Queenslanders never give up. We are always up for a challenge.

Mr Costigan: You should.

Mr HARPER: In September last year at the Townsville RSL—I did not see the member for Whitsunday there—I was lucky enough to join 20 business leaders—

Mr Costigan: They're still looking for a refund.

Mr HARPER: I did not see you there, mate. We joined those local businesspeople and we were lucky enough to be given a presentation from the Rheinmetall representatives on the Boxer CRV and its capabilities and information on the Land 400 bid in relation to the exciting opportunities that lay ahead for our city's businesses. I thought it was a great machine. It might have come in handy for my 2017 campaign because it is strong, reliable and supports our troops!

Mr Deputy Speaker Stewart, on a more serious note, it is undoubtedly one impressive piece of kit. It was paraded down The Strand, as you know, where many of our garrison city families and ADF personnel present were able to inspect it as well. I noted at the time that it had maroon Queensland

numberplates and thought, 'We've got this.' These vehicles were publicly championed by Victoria Cross recipient Ben Roberts Smith—undoubtedly one of this nation's most highly respected veterans. The Boxer will provide the men and women of our ADF the most protection when they put themselves in harm's way.

The strength and safety aspect of these vehicles was one of the Commonwealth's key criteria during the tender process. Our Palaszczuk Labor government was always confident that the Rheinmetall Boxer was the best vehicle for our diggers and that Queensland was the best location for modern, military vehicle manufacturing projects. That is why we did not give up. Our Labor government did not give up on our three-year bid to land this deal for Queensland. We must acknowledge Minister Cameron Dick and former minister Dr Anthony Lynham for their work.

We know that winning this contract will drive high-tech innovation, boost investment and create global export opportunities for everyone along the extensive supply chain. It is an economic game changer. Townsville Enterprise agrees, stating that, whilst the vehicles will be built in Ipswich, a third of them will be based at Townsville, requiring additional infrastructure and services towards maintenance, creating jobs in our region.

It is great news for regional Queensland and Townsville in particular. The 3rd Brigade is based at Townsville's Lavarack Barracks. It is indeed home to this nation's 5,000 ADF personnel. It makes entire sense for our city to benefit from logistical support, maintenance and supply of the Boxer CRV, of which over 50 will be based in our city.

Just last Friday I spoke with Darren James, the local manager of Penske Power Systems in Bohle, Townsville. This local company currently supplies, installs and maintains service of the 45 Army's ASLAVs, Australian light armoured vehicles. They have a proud association with 3rd Brigade. I know that Penske has the capacity, local knowledge and expertise to be part of the opportunities that lie ahead for the Boxer CRV Land 400 project.

Importantly, we have many opportunities ahead of us. By landing this deal we have set ourselves on a known trajectory going forward in relation to the Singapore defence deal, worth some \$2 billion. There are 600 vehicles coming to Townsville. They will need maintenance, logistics and supply and we have industry ready to go. Well done to Queensland. We nailed it.

Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Emails

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (2.27 pm): Haven't we seen this week everyone flee from the member for Miller! He was sitting over there this morning under scrutiny by the opposition and he had no friends. Not even the ministers who sat around the cabinet table, such as Minister Kate Jones, would defend him. She handballed that to someone else—'Oh, it was a collective decision. I had nothing to do with it.' Her name was on the paper that put it to cabinet. Then the Premier said, 'It was a cabinet decision. We all made the decision—nothing to do with me.' The Premier is the chairperson of cabinet. If this individual's name were taken to cabinet in such a short period of time, such as four days after he applied for the job, the Premier would have signed off on the urgency of the matter. The Premier knew about the appointment of this man through the ETU's pick.

As I have said in this place before, former minister Hinchliffe, former minister Jo-Ann Miller and former minister Donaldson resigned for far fewer offences than the member for Miller has committed. The reality is that this man was given a lucrative job on a board through a back-channel, secret email account, mangocube. Although the government wants to distance itself, the Queensland public ought to see the rest of the emails. The government has only released 35 emails out of 600 emails. If the Premier stands up and talks about transparency one more time, she should in the same time breath release the 600 emails for full transparency so the public can see what other dodgy deals the minister, the member for Miller, undertook while he was a minister and still is a minister.

We know the government is a government of the unions, run by the unions, for the unions. That is the mantra of the Labor government. We have seen over four years the dodgy union deals that this government has given on the back end of receiving millions of dollars of campaign finances. We know the only reason the member for Miller is still the minister is that he is protected—not by the Premier but by his left-wing factional ally Deputy Premier Jackie Trad. That is why he is still the minister.

There was a disgraceful tweet this morning from the Minister for State Development. The Minister for State Development has tweeted a picture of a North Korean dictator with the honourable opposition leader's face on it.

Mr Mander: Imagine if we did that!

Mr BLEIJIE: If an LNP member of this chamber posted a picture of a female minister in the Labor government with a dictator in North Korea, the Minister for State Development would be the first one on level 5 colonnade asking for someone to be sacked. How disgraceful! What an attack on a woman! Not only that, he called the opposition leader #rocketwoman, somehow making a laughing matter of threats that a North Korean dictator has made to the rest of the world. I ask the minister to delete the tweet. Show the respect that he demands of so many others in this place.

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes, he does. If he does not, the next time he lectures anyone about any of these issues, they should take it with a grain of salt because the Minister for State Development is a bully. He is the biggest bully in this place. I suggest the Minister for State Development wear the wristband with the words, 'Everyone together tackles bullying'.

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I have hit a nerve with the Minister for State Development. Did he not tweet it? Did he not check it? Did he do the artwork?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Minister, I think you have had a fair go. I think we will leave it to the member for Kawana. Member for Kawana, you need to make sure that you are not provoking members of the government.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am dealing with facts. The fact is that the Minister for State Development has tweeted a photo in the last few hours with the opposition leader, the honourable Deb Frecklington, and the North Korean dictator. It is a disgrace and he, of all people, because he challenges everyone else on these subject matters, should delete it.

The other thing is that the Premier turns up on the Speaker's Green with a bunch of superheroes. Last week it was Dora the Explorer—'Look over here; don't look at Mark Bailey. Dora is over here.' I do not think Dora found missing-in-action Mark Bailey all week. Then the Premier stands with Wonder Woman, Superwoman, the Hulk and whomever else was here. I have to tell the Premier: they are actually people in costumes; they are not real superheroes. Every time she gets in trouble she calls for backup. Last week it was Thor; the week before that it was Dora. Today it is Wonder Woman, Superman, superheroes and supervillains. They are just people in costumes. If she wants to build the confidence of the people in Queensland, she needs to do her job as Premier of the state and stop the theatrics of these superheroes she is relying on.

(Time expired)

Cairns Convention Centre

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (2.32 pm): I rise to talk about the proposed expansion of Cairns Convention Centre that will be underway once we have completed the commitments we have for the Commonwealth Games. First and foremost, it is important to acknowledge that Mr Keith De Lacy—a member of this chamber, a very hardworking Labor treasurer, a man of integrity, honesty and hard work—was key and fundamental in securing this fantastic facility for the people of Cairns.

An important point that needs to be made about this facility is that it is an absolute jobs provider. This facility generates \$80 million for our economy. If we bear in mind that we are looking at about \$2.6 billion to \$2.8 billion from tourism alone, this is a key player and a masterpiece in that crown. The investment prior to the election by the Palaszczuk government is absolutely spectacular—\$176 million to expand this facility. This will enable not only more sporting events but also, more importantly, conventions. These conventions fill our hotels. They utilise our tourism assets, whether it be going to the reef on any one of the numerous vessels or the utilisation of Sky Rail or the other 300 tours that are operated by companies throughout Cairns and the region. It is a pretty important facility. An expansion of this facility will benefit the wider community.

The Cairns Convention Centre is owned by the state and is operated by the Department of Housing and Public Works under a very successful commercial agreement with AEG Ogden, which also runs a number of very successful and large facilities around Australia. I congratulate Ross Steele and his team for the way things have been running there, particularly over the last couple of years. More importantly, like everybody in this chamber and the people of Cairns, I wish them all the very best for the upcoming Commonwealth Games as they will be hosting the basketball. Good luck to Ross and his team there.

The executive government approved \$1 million to develop a business case to examine the opportunity to expand the Cairns Convention Centre. At the completion of that process the executive government set aside \$176 million, as I stated earlier, over a two-year period from 2018 to 2019 for the expansion and, just as importantly, the refurbishment of the Cairns Convention Centre to be held in contingency and released upon cabinet consideration of a satisfactory business case.

The Building Queensland Act 2015 requires that Building Queensland, which provides the Queensland government with independent expert advice on major infrastructure, lead the preparation of a business case for any infrastructure proposal with an estimated capital cost of \$100 million or more. Building Queensland is working with the department to progress the business case development for the Cairns Convention Centre. A business case consisting of two stages is being developed. Stage 1 is a preliminary business case that will include identification of service need, benefits, demand and potential options. This is expected to be completed in May of this year. Stage 2 is a detailed business case that will provide further analysis of the preferred option to support a proposed submission to the Building Queensland board in the second quarter of the 2018-19 financial year.

Subject to the success of the business case for expansion and refurbishment, land purchase and site preparation will then be undertaken in advance of construction. The enthusiasm for this project of not just the people involved in this process but also the people of Cairns is overwhelming. We follow the development of this very closely.

It is also important to recognise that attracting people to this project is a costly exercise. The well-resourced Tourism and Events Queensland has been working with Ross and his team to ensure that, at the completion of this project, we have those events, we fill our city and we ensure that we have strong and profitable jobs that are available for all.

There is a strong process of consultation with a number of stakeholders and that has been made available to everybody in the city of Cairns and people outside who are involved in our city. This includes people who are involved or who have an interest in the tropical north global tourism hub. Being so closely associated with the convention centre, we think it important that they be involved in this process. Without any doubt, the Palaszczuk government has invested significantly and astutely in this major asset that will benefit the people of Cairns and our region.

Queensland Rail

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (2.37 pm): Although it is 529 days since the large-scale disruptions and the drastic cut in train services back on 7 October 2016, it heralded the official start of rail fail. Train travel, sadly, remains a complete nightmare for people in South-East Queensland. Services are constantly delayed or cancelled due to ongoing track issues. If trains do turn up, they are usually so full that passengers are obliged to wait for another one.

Sadly, this is what we have come to expect under the watch of four different ministers. Rather than tackle the problems making train travel a complete nightmare for commuters, a succession of Labor government transport ministers have been playing musical chairs with this portfolio. First of all, we had Jackie Trad changing the design of the New Generation Rollingstock trains in response to demands from the unions for special cubbyholes so that guards could sit down on their shift instead of actively patrolling—

Mr MANDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. We have members continuously interjecting who are not sitting in their proper seats.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The interjections are not being taken and I have not heard any. I remind members that if you wish to interject you need to be in your rightful seat, otherwise warnings will be given.

Mr MINNIKIN: This retrofitting and protracted negotiation with the train builder Bombardier delayed the delivery of the new trains by many months and contributed to new problems relating to disabled access to carriages which, sadly, still require fixing today. The next to grab the chair was Stirling Hinchliffe, who oversaw the union maintaining its closed door driver recruitment approach. As the problems continued to mount, he pressed the ejector seat—or, rather, had it pushed for him by his colleagues. Then Jackie Trad came back. She was given another try, although there was little to show for her second attempt except lucrative overtime and meal breaks secured for the train drivers.

Minister Mark Bailey then took the chair. Despite the daily debacles, for whatever reason he is still there, dancing to the music of the RTBU. The two constants in this sorry saga have been the Palaszczuk Labor government and their puppetmasters, the RTBU. Is it any wonder that, with a lazy government and a dominating union determined to keep things the same, the problems that we are seeing with rail fail are persisting?

With the pressure of public discontent, Labor eventually adopted its default strategy and called for a review of Queensland Rail's train-crewing practices, resulting in the Strachan report. The Strachan report at page 30 states—

... a sustained reliance on overtime to meet service levels. In October 2016, this overreliance triggered record numbers of compulsory rest periods for train crew, which was the primary cause of the cancellations on 21 October 2016. The Commission considers that overtime should be used as a measure to address temporary increases in demand—such as special events—rather than to compensate for structural deficits in train crew.

Amongst other things, the Strachan report identified very specifically that the union's closed shop hiring rule for new train drivers was a contributing factor to the rail network meltdown and recommended an external hiring drive. At that time it was noted in the report that QR preferred to operate with a five to 10 per cent undersupply of train crew, which was driven largely by the union negotiated practice of providing overtime opportunities. Nothing has changed. We have had confirmation overnight through the question that the member for Everton submitted that, while train driver recruitment practices continue to drag out, train drivers are receiving anything up to \$79,000 in overtime payments.

In terms of the blame game, despite Labor entering its fourth year in government, it refuses to accept responsibility for addressing the remaining issues with the NGR trains and is, of course, happy to blame the LNP. Notwithstanding the assessment of the NGRs by two Labor appointed executives, the blame game continues today. Labor is still more focused on political points scoring than fixing the problems. It truly is a disgrace.

I have a suggestion for the minister: instead of checking 600 outstanding private emails, how about he concentrate on doing his job and provide the people of Queensland with a public transport system which is reliable, frequent and affordable? QR has a proud history, but under Minister Bailey's watch the reputation and the direction of this fine organisation is well and truly off the rails.

Governing from the Regions

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (2.43 pm): The Palaszczuk government is governing for all of Queensland, no matter where they live. It was an honour to welcome the Premier and the entire Queensland cabinet to one of my electorate's regions. The Governing from the Regions program came to Ipswich and I took full advantage of having our ministers in town. The city not only hosted last week's cabinet meeting but provided the chance for our Premier and ministers to meet directly with local residents and stakeholders to hear their concerns and issues. It was also a week-long opportunity to highlight some of the significant commitments that our government has made to jobs, infrastructure and services in the Ipswich region.

My electorate of Jordan has benefited from Governing from the Regions with several key events and opportunities being held. I was pleased to be able to invite some of our community and business leaders from Gailes, Camira and greater Springfield to the government reception last Sunday evening, affording them a fantastic opportunity to advocate on key issues directly with ministers. This was extended even further on Tuesday night with an open invitation to the general public to attend a town hall meeting and ask questions directly of the Premier and ministers. I was glad to see that questions relating to local employment, health, public transport, roads and school funding got an airing. Our Premier and ministers did not shy away from any issues raised. These are issues that are particularly important in my electorate of Jordan, which includes the fastest growing areas of Ipswich.

I was also pleased to be able to invite some of our ministers to join me in greater Springfield to meet with some of our local schools, businesses and organisations. The Minister for Education joined me for a cyber safety workshop with Year 10 students from Springfield Central State High School delivered by the Department of Education's Cybersafety and Reputation Management Unit. With the government's increased focus on the prevention of cyberbullying, educational workshops like this are vital in ensuring young people are being protected and also managing their online footprint and behaviour in this new digital age.

Speaking of encouraging good behaviour, I was also joined by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to chat to year 6 students at Springfield Central State School about the Queensland government's Step Up program, a program encouraging positive behaviour on buses that ensures the

safety of all students, other passengers and the driver. I was pleased to see how engaged the students were, peppering us with many questions about bus travel including, 'What happens if you don't have enough money on your go card?', and, 'Where do buses go at night?' I thought they were pretty good questions. I say thank you to both Leon Proud and Angela Gooley, the principals of the Springfield Central schools for inviting us to meet with their students.

One of the things that I enjoy the most is introducing members of our government to some of our fantastic small businesses in the Jordan electorate. It was a real pleasure to welcome the Minister for Small Business to meet Steve and Ken from Two Butchers, a local butcher shop, who were successful applicants in the Queensland government's Small Business Digital Grants. They spoke to us about how their grant has allowed them to really develop their online presence, reaching many more customers. The minister took the opportunity to not only open the latest round of Small Business Digital Grants that day but also fill an esky with some fantastic T-bones from Two Butchers. We truly do support small business; we do not just talk about it.

Later that same day, the police minister dropped in to the Orion shopping centre and met with local shoppers to discuss community safety, including with members of our wonderful Augustine Heights Neighbourhood Watch and volunteers in policing. The health minister joined me along with key health industry stakeholders for a lunch to discuss the exciting Health City initiatives in greater Springfield. Health will be a growth industry in our region. The minister was also provided with the opportunity to tour the Mater Private Hospital in Springfield Central, a truly impressive hospital operation that is already providing quality health care and treatments for our locals.

I was also pleased to see our government's continued commitment to the Ipswich Hospital, with \$124.4 million for the stage 1A redevelopment, which will include a new mental health unit, an MRI suite as well as an integrated community healthcare centre and outpatient facilities. The cherry on the top was, of course, the fantastic announcement of the Land 400 contract coming to Ipswich. I know, we know and the people of Ipswich know that without the Queensland government's intervention that contract would have gone to Victoria. Which of those Victorian companies would the member for Nanango be supporting? I think the people of Ipswich know that we have their back on this contract and the jobs that this will create.

It was certainly a busy week governing from the regions covering employment, small business, education, transport and health. This is not a short-term obligation; the Palaszczuk government has a long-term vision and commitment to this region that extends beyond just a week and highlights the importance that our government places in Ipswich and its people.

Far North Queensland, Flood Mitigation

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (2.48 pm): Last week, along with Minister Crawford, I met with flood affected residents in Innisfail. I know that his presence in the Far North was appreciated by the community. The damage bill to homes and industry is estimated to be in the millions, with agriculture and fisheries severely impacted. Residents are now fearful of another big flood. It is time that we start looking at long-term solutions to manage our wet seasons. We need to start appreciating the opportunities to harness a precious resource like water rather than let large volumes flow through our communities as a destructive force. This is always going to be a region that experiences extreme weather and consecutive governments have failed to apply themselves to providing our communities with long-term solutions.

Instead we have had politicians come up and promise that they will be the ones who will deliver on big infrastructure projects, which everyone from Canberra to Cape York knows are needed, yet after the election the major political parties and their promises disappear for another three years.

One project that would harness this resource, which requires little funding and has reasonably low environmental impacts, is the North Johnstone transfer. This scheme would have minimised flooding in Innisfail and lifted the Tinaroo Dam levels well above what they are now. The North Johnstone transfer is a project that provides a win-win for the whole region. A weir which is engineered to trigger only at flood levels will be constructed at the site identified in order to flood, harvest and maintain underground water supply. Harvesting floodwater to divert it to the Tinaroo Dam would not only protect against the heartbreak caused by the destruction of homes and businesses on the coast but, just as importantly, it will ensure long-term water security for irrigators on the Tablelands and a safe lake for recreational users and visitors when they come to our beautiful region.

This is not a new project. It was designed during the construction of the Tinaroo Dam because engineers acknowledged that Tinaroo's catchment was not large enough to maintain adequate dam levels. The North Johnstone project was designed to help supplement water supply during periods of low rainfall. This project provides a sensible approach to flood mitigation and harvesting to address both flooding and drought issues in the north, which severely impact our communities and the long-term viability of businesses. If done right it will not affect irrigators on the coast, as it would only harvest excess water that would have run out to the reef anyway.

Our extreme weather events are a huge cost to our region not just in damages but in lost opportunities. Because our resources are not managed with the appropriate infrastructure, we lose investment opportunities and tourist dollars as floods destroys industries and low rainfall creates uncertainty. This project is simple. After five consecutive years of low water levels in Tinaroo, which have resulted in restrictions on water usage and closure of the lake to recreational users, the time has never been better for this government to stand up and say that they are the ones to build something that will provide water security, boost the economy and minimise flood damage, particularly in the Innisfail area. I call on the state government to invest in the future of the Far North Queensland region and progress with the North Johnstone transfer as a matter of priority.

Townsville Electorate, Tourism

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (2.52 pm): When you talk about Townsville the average person thinks about industry, the North Queensland Cowboys and the new stadium that the Palaszczuk government is building, but the word tourism is gracing the lips of many as we welcome more cruise ships into our great city. There is no doubt that the tourism industry in Townsville struggles a bit because of the geographical disadvantage it suffers. To the north is the internationally recognised Cairns region, which boasts that it is 'where the reef meets the rainforest', and what a beautiful location it is. To the south are the glorious Whitsunday islands that sparkle in the blue waters of the Coral Sea. Is it any wonder that visitors to North Queensland are spoiled for choice when it comes to destinations? As a result, competition for the impressive tourism dollar is very difficult for Townsville.

Townsville is perhaps the best kept secret on the Queensland coastline. Many international backpackers come to Townsville. They specifically go to Magnetic Island to have downtime from the heavily commercialised tourism industry that operates to the north and south. This option too resonates with travellers from interstate. Many visitors to the region lead hectic and very busy lives and are looking for that relaxed holiday escape that they experience on Maggie, but there has been a lot of work behind the scenes to attract the white ships to our region.

Townsville is emerging as the powerhouse of Queensland's tourism boom. New figures show that the city is amongst the fastest growing cruise destinations in our country. In a recent press release Kate Jones, the Minister for Tourism Industry Development, said that Townsville is set to welcome 19 cruise ships in 2019, notching up an impressive 162 per cent growth in visits in just three years. When I look back at figures over that particular time, I see that in 2012-13 Townsville welcomed four cruise ships; the following year it welcomed nine; in 2014-15 there were four cruise ships; and the year after that there were three. We are starting to grow the industry and we are starting to make it happen in Townsville.

The minister went on to say, 'Townsville is one of the most sought after holiday destinations on the planet, so it is not surprising that we are seeing a spike in interest in the cruise industry.' To steal the minister's words, it is safe to say that in the next couple of years Townsville will play a leading role in the state's cruise boom, which was worth \$1.1 billion to the Queensland economy in 2016-17 and supported 4,330 jobs. Why would you not come and visit Townsville? Its leading role in the state's cruise boom was no accident, with the city taking a strategic approach to put the visitor first and plan for the future. Townsville Enterprise Ltd spent time with tourism operators developing a unique experience for visitors, which seems to be exactly what the market demands.

When it comes to tourism the Palaszczuk government has firmly set its agenda to be the best in Australia. Townsville is set to capitalise on its position as a leading cruise ship destination, with the Port of Townsville planning a \$520 million project to deepen and widen the port access channel over the next five years to attract even larger white cruise ships. The Palaszczuk government has committed \$75 million to this project, which will enable the city to welcome larger vessels that want to come to northern waters, but we cannot do this on our own. We need the Turnbull government to commit its fair share of \$75 million to deepen and widen the channel to allow these larger ships access to our port at berth 10, which is worth \$86 million to redevelop.

It does not stop there when visitors come to Townsville. The Townsville airport recently released its inbound travel figures and they show a dramatic improvement. In January passenger growth was up 8.9 per cent to 128,906 people, which is a new record for the airport with the fourth consecutive month of growth. At a recent meeting with Townsville Airport CEO Mr Kevin Gill I asked him what he attributed the growth to. I asked, 'Where are the people coming from?' He simply said, 'They are coming from Melbourne due to Tigerair.'

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): There being no other speakers, I call the Acting Leader of the House.

MOTION

Order of Business

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (2.57 pm), by leave without notice: I move—

That government business orders of the day Nos 1 to 3 be postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from 8 March (see p. 443).

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (2.57 pm), continuing: I rise to continue my contribution to the address-in-reply. I was at the point in my speech where I was turning from remarks about things in my local electorate to the work that lies ahead in my new portfolios.

Recent experiences have shown that there is indeed a need for improvement in standards in local government. It is often said that local government is the level of government closest to the community and it is politics at the most grassroots level. As such, I hope to work collaboratively with the member for Warrego and all the other members across the chamber in rebuilding the trust people have in their councils and councillors.

Without dwelling on them, I acknowledge very briefly the bills that I have recently presented to the House which are further steps on the path of local government reform aimed at restoring the community's faith in their local councils. Most councils and councillors across the state do the right thing, but more work needs to be done and will be done to restore the faith of the community in their local government and their councillors.

Furthermore, Labor values investment in regional Queensland in partnership with local councils. That will be a very large part of the work that I do as Minister for Local Government, working throughout the state with our very important 77 regional councils across the state. In relation to one of the key elements to which the Palaszczuk government has been strongly committed and has delivered right across regional Queensland, I have had nothing but very good reactions from mayors and councils across the state about our \$400 million extended Works for Queensland package. It is something that is delivering in communities across the length and breadth of the state. I acknowledge and thank those local members from both sides of the House who welcomed me into their communities when I attended the opening of Works for Queensland projects or indeed visited those projects to see how they are progressing. I also thank my colleagues who accepted the opportunity to represent me at the opening of those facilities right across the state.

Turning now to my portfolio as Minister for Racing, I look forward to learning more about the great racing industry here in this state. I am not from a racing background, I do not have a pedigree, pardon the pun—there are so many in this field—but I hope that I am a fast learner and can be trained well. There are certainly plenty of trainers out there wanting to do the training! I am enjoying that experience and that process. I know that there are a few enthusiastic punters and otherwise engaged members of this parliament who I am sure will continue to provide me with good counsel, if not necessarily good advice.

As I travel around the state, I particularly see the fantastic reception and support for the fruits of the Palaszczuk government's \$70 million country racing package. That is certainly delivering for the industry and for those country and community races that are so much a part of the heritage and community that makes Queensland the great, diverse, engaging and beautiful state that it is. These were matters that happened before I came to the portfolio, but this package has permitted the recommencement of the Deagon race day on 8 July. I encourage all members to be part of that experience of being part of a country-style race day but a bit closer to the city than otherwise people might be familiar. I welcome members from across the chamber to join me on that day.

In that role as Minister for Racing, I had the opportunity to meet with trainers, breeders, owners and representatives from the wagering industry to talk about their views on the industry and how it can go forward. I have been to thoroughbred race days in Thangool and Townsville and I have been to the Ipswich greyhound races. As well as visiting some of the major events in our great South-East Queensland facilities, I look forward to visiting the straight track at Capalaba with the member for Capalaba at some stage soon to ensure that the dogs are running straight and true.

Shortly, I will be with the member for Nanango at the races. In this regard, I have received invaluable advice from staff of Racing Queensland, from the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission and, indeed, the relevant staff within the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs. I thank all officers from those agencies for their generosity, their advice to me so far and their ongoing hard work.

Indeed, on the weekend I was on the Gold Coast at the commencement of the Magic Millions March sales that are focused on Queensland horses. I was there with the shadow minister, the member for Surfers Paradise and, in the same way that I mentioned working with the member for Warrego in relation to local government matters, I want to work with the shadow minister for racing, the member for Surfers Paradise, in this area and also in his role as shadow minister for multicultural affairs.

On this side of the House, as demonstrated by the Palaszczuk government's commitment to establishing the Multicultural Recognition Act and by the establishment of the Queensland Multicultural Charter, we have a great commitment to the multicultural and diverse nature of our state. That element of my portfolio is something for which I have a great passion. I know that we are genuinely strengthened as a community by the diversity of people who live right throughout the length and breadth of our state who come from a diversity of backgrounds. On the weekend we celebrated that with St Patrick's Day, but we have also celebrated it—

Mr Healy interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Cairns, who is a proud descendant of passengers on the *Erin*. I will not make references about calling people leprechauns. I think the shadow minister might have done that at a function on Friday night and it did not go down very well. I will highlight how important it is for us all to engage in and support the diversity of events. I know that members of this House have represented me at a range of events, but it has been wonderful to be at a range of events that celebrate so far the diversity of our state, including the Indian, Chinese, Sri Lankan, Vietnamese and many more communities, and there will be more to come. If my waistline survives that, it will be all the better for us all.

It truly is one of the measures of the nature of the modernised Queensland that we now enjoy, the modernised Queensland that is a result of successive Labor governments in this state that have embraced, welcomed and changed the nature of this state over the past not quite 30 years for the better. I see myself and the Australian Labor Party in this place as part of that great broad project of modernising this state and ensuring that we truly take our place in the 21st century and, in fact, truly took our place in the latter part of the 20th century. I look forward to the 56th Parliament being a continuation of that process.

I note that, when I was appointed Minister for Local Government and Minister for Racing, a number of people said that I had Russ Hinze's portfolio. At the time I said to them that I did not think that Russ would have quite been able to cope with the idea of a multicultural affairs element to the portfolio. I think that demonstrates the nature of the diversified, expanding and modernised Queensland of which we now are very proud.

I reach across the aisle and hope that more of those opposite join Labor in this project of modernising Queensland, of making sure that Queensland is the diversified, welcoming and expanded economic state. That is something that will certainly be very important to me. I will certainly be playing

my part in this 56th Parliament in acting in the best interests of our state and in continuing the progress of modernising the state for the benefit of all. I know that a big part of that will be implementing the election commitments of the Palaszczuk government. I trust that we will have the support of this House to do that.

At the conclusion of my contribution, Mr Speaker, it is great to see you in the chair. At the outset last week I did, via your deputy, congratulate you on your election to the high office. I welcome you and once again congratulate you on election to that high office.

In conclusion, I pay tribute to the Premier and her leadership and to the whole Labor team who are part of that process and progress of modernising Queensland. I look forward to working cooperatively with members across the chamber—from the opposition, from the crossbench—in being part of that process of modernising Queensland and ensuring that we govern for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the honourable member for Bundaberg, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the member for Bundaberg.

 **Mr BATT** (Bundaberg—LNP) (3.09 pm): Mr Speaker, congratulations on your election. I rise to speak for the first time in the 56th Queensland state parliament. I am the 15th member for Bundaberg and only the second member of a conservative political party to have held the seat since it was created in 1888. I am truly grateful and excited to have been given this opportunity to help build a better Bundaberg.

Five generations of my family have called Bundaberg home. I am the youngest of three boys—the Batt boys! We spent our early years living in the Mount Perry Road service station and shop in North Bundaberg that Mum and Dad ran. They made deliveries and worked around the clock. We later moved to Walkerville where Mum and Dad delivered newspapers. It was not uncommon to be woken in the early hours when the wrapping machine broke down or the delivery boys called in sick—bleary-eyed, out of bed and straight into it, all hands on deck to get the papers delivered on time.

Dad was knocked off his motor scooter one day, badly dislocating his hip. It put him out of action for months. It was a hard time for our family, but out of the pain and disappointment Mum and Dad bought 200 acres to run cattle as an income stream for the family. Dad was born on the land not far out of Bundy, so it was a natural fit for him to get back to a place he loved. I loved being there with him—just working beside him, clearing the paddock of basalt boulders by hand to plant pasture, buying and selling cattle and learning how to drive in the little two-man Suzuki ute.

We also spent a lot of time at Kendalls Flats junior cricket grounds where Dad was treasurer. He was instrumental in getting the grounds transformed from an old dump site to an eight-field cricket facility. Our weekends were spent helping maintain the grounds and he was awarded life membership of the Bundaberg Junior Cricket Association and field 8 is named after him—Rod Batt Oval. Despite having never fully recovered from his injuries, Dad has never let any hurdle get in his way. He is the toughest fellow I know. He was not the only positive role model in my life.

My mum, Lyn, made our three-bedroom weatherboard house a home. We lived within earshot of Walkerville State School where I was Walsh house captain. Mum had to contend with her three energetic sons and our mates after school. Ours was a happy childhood. There was never any doubt how much Mum loved us boys. Nothing was ever too much to ask. There was not a season where we did not play sport—Rugby League, cricket and soccer. Mum drove us to every game and cheered us on. My parents have been an unshakable team for more than 50 years. I think my brothers, Paul and Peter, will agree that we do not get warm and cuddly too often as a family, but we have always seen pride in our parents' smiles.

Paul and Peter have both dedicated over 30 years to teaching and the Queensland Ambulance Service. Every time someone asks me if I am related to either of them, I know there is a positive story to come. I will always be grateful to our parents for teaching us persistence, community spirit, loyalty and work ethic. It was not only my family that instilled in me the importance of public service. Like my Nan, Dad and brothers, I went to Bundaberg State High School where I was a prefect. As a proud Bundy High 'old boy', I still live by the school's motto 'per ardua ad astra', which means 'through hard work, the stars'.

As soon as I turned 15 and was old enough to get a job, I started working part-time at Woolies. I intended to become a PE teacher, but it was not to be. A chance meeting put my life on a different path. After speaking with Sergeant Bubb at a careers night, I applied to join the Queensland police force.

Each year there were hundreds of applicants for only 100 cadet positions, so I did not think I stood much of a chance, but I was wrong. I did not want to be a financial burden on my parents, so I deferred my human movements degree and decided to give the police force a go.

As a 17-year-old, the police academy saw some of the best—and worst—days of my life. The instructors constantly challenged the cadets and tried to break us. We depended on each other to get through each day and night with words of encouragement. For the majority of cadets who were so-called 'blue bloods' with family or friends in the job, it was more a rite of passage. For me it was an eye-opening experience. I made lifelong mates, many of whom are still protecting our state and keeping the thin blue line strong some 30 years on, and it is great to have several of them here today. Like me, others have moved on to serve the communities we love in other ways. My A-squad neighbour in 1989, Andrew Antoniolli, is now the mayor of Ipswich. I still remember his mum's homemade biscuits. 'Ant' brought us a tin of them each Sunday night to keep us going for another week.

After I graduated from the academy, I worked in uniform and plain clothes for five years in Gladstone and various Brisbane suburbs before moving back to Bundaberg. I became a detective and over 11 years I solved crimes like the Childers backpacker hostel fire and the murder of British backpacker Caroline Stuttle. Working in a major incident room every day for months at a time trying to identify a murderer, followed by protracted court proceedings and appeals, really took its toll.

Having spent many years as the Police Union secretary and a peer support officer, I was now the one needing a break from plain-clothes duties, so I took up the position of branch manager of the Bundaberg Police Citizens Youth Club. Liaising with the community showed me there were other ways to prevent crime rather than just locking up offenders and hoping they would be rehabilitated. I enjoyed bringing organisations together to break down barriers between coppers and kids, teach them some skills and build their self-confidence.

I met the now member for Burnett, Stephen Bennett, through the Sunrise Rotary club breakfast meetings that were held at the PCYC. In 2007 I joined other young professionals on a Rotary group study exchange to Nottingham, England. I was not prepared for how much this life-changing four weeks would open my eyes to the things we could do better in Bundaberg and across the state. Team leader Judith and my travel companions Tanya, Sharee and Peter have become lifelong friends.

I thought I would be a copper until I retired, but out of the study tour I developed a strong desire to see Bundaberg thrive. I stepped out of my comfort zone and nominated for the 2008 local government elections when the state Labor government had forced amalgamations on councils. To my surprise, I won the five-horse race for division 8. It would be remiss of me not to pay tribute to Bundaberg Regional Council's first mayor, Lorraine Pyefinch. Lorraine did an amazing job bringing the four councils together. In my opinion, there are not enough community leaders like Lorraine who are willing to make hard and unpopular decisions for the betterment and longevity of their regions.

In the summer of 2010-11 Bundaberg was hit by its biggest floods in 60 years. After the event I was awarded Rotary's Paul Harris Fellow for my leadership as acting chair of the local disaster management group. In only my second term of council, in 2012 my fellow councillors appointed me deputy mayor. Sadly, in January 2013, just two years after the floods, a collection of disaster events across the region rolled into what can only be described as a perfect storm.

The Burnett River burst its banks and Bundaberg was hit by the biggest flood ever recorded, causing massive destruction to over 2,000 homes, 600 businesses and major community infrastructure. On 29 January, North Bundaberg had the biggest mandatory evacuation in peacetime Australia. Some 7,500 residents were evacuated from their homes. Military and civilian helicopters winched hundreds of people to safety, and not a single life was lost. While the disaster, response and recovery was not without its issues, Bundaberg's response is still used as a case study in disaster management circles right across Australia. It is something everyone involved in should be very proud of.

There are many in my community who continue to struggle financially and emotionally. Some have chosen to rebuild their homes and businesses. Others have made the difficult decision to move on. There are two moments in particular for me as disaster recovery coordinator that will be forever etched in my mind. Breaking the news to hundreds of people that their homes and worldly possessions had been destroyed was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. Stranded north side residents gathered at the Moncrieff theatre, where I tried as best as I could to prepare them for what they were going back to. We told them they would be able to return home to begin the colossal clean-up that afternoon but, despite our best efforts to make the area safe, the damage was far worse than we expected. Army officers said it was worse than any war zone they had encountered. The situation was changing by the minute.

People were lined up at the Burnett traffic bridge waiting for us to open the bridge so that they could return home. I ran from the coordination centre to explain that, despite what we had said earlier, it still was not safe to go home. I worked my way through the crowd. Some people cried and most were understandably angry. I was willing to be in their line of fire if it let them get their frustrations off their chest. It was a difficult decision but one the disaster recovery team had to make to keep the community safe. There were craters three metres deep, broken sewerage pipes and fallen powerlines, houses collapsed into sink holes or completely washed away.

I am a firm believer that real leadership means being up-front and honest, no matter how hard it may be. You must be willing to change your mind as the situation calls for it. I have never been someone who tells people what they want to hear simply to make myself look good or to score political points.

That is why David Crisafulli's no-nonsense attitude during the recovery was a breath of fresh air. The now member for Broadwater, who was minister for local government at the time, changed my mind about what state government is capable of. I for one will never forget the commitment he showed to rebuilding Bundaberg well after the floodwaters had subsided and the television cameras had lost interest.

I have always been proud to call Bundaberg home, but it was the Bundy spirit that I saw in the days, weeks and months after the floods that cemented my genuine love for my community. I will never forget those who selflessly rolled up their sleeves to help people they had never met. They worked shoulder to shoulder in the heat, humidity, mud and filth. People from all backgrounds, ranks, levels of government; men, women and even children all just did what needed to be done.

The best way to describe Bundaberg is probably on a plate. Within a 50-kilometre radius of the CBD you will find all the ingredients for a vibrant, colourful and iconic Australian banquet. You start with a Thirsty Turtle beer, followed by a Dark and Stormy with a wedge of lime; sea scallops with a chilli and ginger dressing; eye fillet with a garlic prawn topper and roasted vegetable salad; and finish with a fresh fruit salad or chocolate coated macadamia nuts. People could walk into almost any cafe in the Bundaberg electorate and find locally grown produce on the menu: Alowishus Delicious, Oodies, Indulge, Rosie Blue, Water Street Kitchen, Eleven Acres and Penny Lane Gardens to name just a few.

But Bundaberg is much more than the country's premier food bowl; it is also home to value adding, innovation and entrepreneurship. Manufacturing is alive and well. The mechanical cane harvester and Jabiru aircraft were invented in Bundaberg. Bundaberg's favourite son, Bert Hinkler, built his first glider in Bundaberg. Bin chickens get a bad rap now, but few people know that it was the humble ibis that inspired our great aviator. We gave the world Bundaberg Rum and Bundaberg Ginger Beer. International medical IT companies such as Best Practice Software proudly base their head office where they first began—in Bundaberg. Auswide's head office stands proudly on Barolin Street as a reminder of what my community is capable of doing. Half a century ago Ron Hancock started Auswide as a building society and, today, it is Australia's 10th bank.

The Bundaberg electorate has an impressive story to tell, but it is not without its challenges. Although the cost of living in the Bundaberg electorate is comparatively low, so too are household incomes. The 2016 census shows Bundaberg's median rent is \$260 a week and the median personal weekly income is just \$490. Bundaberg has historically high unemployment and, like much of regional Queensland, has high levels of obesity, disability, substance abuse, domestic violence and crime. If we are to improve social outcomes in the Bundaberg community and prevent another generation being lost to welfare dependence, we need to support our young people.

Of late I have heard a lot from Queensland's political leaders about bullying and the damage it is doing to our youngsters and there is talk of national summits and smartphone bans in schools. But the truth is that it starts with us in this place. We should be setting an example and debating policies, not personalities. Let us keep our debates clean and respectful in this chamber and in the media.

In my electorate, air-conditioning Bundaberg classrooms would give local students a comfortable learning environment, improve their concentration on those hot humid summer afternoons and give them the best start in their education. We need more funding for alternative education programs such as Changemakers and a purpose-built drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre in the Wide Bay-Burnett region. Improving our footpaths and installing flashing lights in all school zones would enable more people to walk or ride to school or work. Bundaberg has the ideal topography and climate, but it needs the infrastructure that encourages active lifestyles. Whether it is running, walking, pushing a pram, riding a mobility scooter or using a wheelchair, people will be living healthier lives, taking pressure off the health system and easing traffic congestion.

My No. 1 priority for Bundaberg is the delivery of a new category 5 hospital. A hospital planning commission, as proposed by the LNP, would masterplan the new facility, but the current Palaszczuk government intends to carry out another study to determine whether the existing hospital can be renovated. That is simply not good enough! Bundaberg Base Hospital has had numerous facelifts, extensions and add-ons since it was opened in 1914—over 100 years ago. Back then, the people of Bundaberg raised the funds themselves to build the hospital and were so proud of their achievement that the day of the opening was declared a public holiday. The old girl has served the Wide Bay-Burnett region well, but our needs are greater now. Those people who have made the wise choice to retire to beautiful Bundaberg deserve access to quality health care.

Our health staff, who do a fantastic job, deserve a modern well-organised work environment. Patients should not have the stress of being evacuated away from their loved ones when the hospital floods. Whether in opposition or government, I will fight in parliament and in the LNP party room for these and many other important projects. I am not just focused on the current political cycle; I have a long-term vision for my region. Well-planned, significant infrastructure takes time and money. Regional Queensland is the engine room of the state's economy and it deserves its fair share of funding. All Queenslanders, no matter their residential address or social status, should have access to quality health care and education.

I have strong Christian and charitable values, but I firmly believe in giving people a hand up and not a handout. I believe that government policies should reward hard work and not hinder it. That is why in 2016, tired of seeing Bundaberg neglected by various state Labor governments, I decided to join the Liberal National Party. I would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the Bundaberg branch of the LNP who took a leap of faith in me.

I thank Keith Pitt and Paul Neville, the current and former federal members for Hinkler, and the member for Burnett, Stephen Bennett, for guiding me along this journey. I give special thanks to the Bundaberg LNP state electorate committee: Jane Corcoran, Peter Ahern, Kim Brown and Angela Nightingale, who helped me immensely in the lead-up to the campaign. I also thank volunteers Les, Rowan, Steve, Phil, Dean, Bradley, Ben, Rod and many others. Of course, Team Batt coordinator extraordinaire, Anne Howard. Peter O'Beirne, was my right-hand man from sun-up to sundown. Larine Statham, who took time away from her young family to lend her astute political judgement and media expertise.

We ignored repeated calls for us to attack our opponents and maintained our grassroots local campaign focused on building a better Bundaberg. It was a tactic that may not have worked in other parts of the state, but my team and I know our electorate. Bundy people wanted, and deserved, positivity. I was not prepared to change who I am or ignore my personal values to win an election.

Commentators said that One Nation would be kingmakers in the Bundaberg election, but I won the seat on first preferences. Many Bundy voters, including my dad, said that they voted LNP for the first time in their lives. People forget that Bundaberg is traditionally a Labor held seat. I am so very grateful to all of the people who have supported me before, during and since the campaign because they believed in me and wanted to see the LNP win Bundaberg. It is now my turn to work hard to show them that they backed the right candidate.

Most importantly, I thank my family who are here today: my wife, Sharyn, and daughters Taleigha and Maddy. I thank them for letting me follow my heart. While I was working in the Police Service and on the council I missed some special events. I can almost certainly guarantee I will miss a few more in this new role, but know that you mean the world to me. I would also like to thank Ed Sheeran who, by performing at Suncorp Stadium tonight, gave my girls some extra motivation to make the trip down to Brisbane today.

The last time I was in this parliament I was training to be a close personal protection officer for dignitaries and politicians. I have to pinch myself. It is strange to think that this Bundy boy is now on the other side of that fence. When I left local government to take up this seat in state parliament, a ratepayer sent me a heartfelt and greatly appreciated email that said that my authenticity would be missed in the council. I hope my Bundaberg constituents and colleagues will also come to see me as authentic. I understand that being here is a privilege, not a right, so I make this commitment: I will serve the people of Bundaberg with honesty, integrity and compassion for as long as they will have me represent them in state parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the honourable member for Gaven, I remind all honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the member for Gaven.

 **Ms SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (3.31 pm): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and can I add my congratulations on your election to the important role of Speaker of this House. I rise for the first time today honoured to represent the people and community that I grew up in and love, and conscious of the incredible responsibility that has been bestowed upon me. I know that my presence here is rather unlikely so I thank the constituents of Gaven for their trust in me.

My first acknowledgement is to the traditional owners of the land on which we gather here today, the Jagera and Turrbal peoples. I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the land that I represent, the Kombumerri and Wangerriburra people, and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

One of my earliest memories of becoming interested in politics was in primary school where I learnt about our country's cruel treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. I distinctly remember watching the *Rabbit-Proof Fence* in my year 7 social studies class and feeling a deep sense of shame. That shame heightened when I found out that our Prime Minister at the time, John Howard, was refusing to simply say sorry for the well-known and well-documented atrocities carried out against our First Australians. To sit in this House for the first time in the week of the 10th anniversary of Kevin Rudd's National Apology to the Stolen Generations was a timely reminder of how much more we need to achieve along the path to reconciliation.

The leadership shown on 13 February 2008 is one of the reasons I joined the Labor Party and one of the reasons I stand here today. Values of fairness, equality and justice are what I believe in and what I will fight for. Like many in this chamber I got involved in politics because I thought that I could change the world. Whilst I still think that, I acknowledge that reform is hard and it takes time. It is not easy to change people's minds and it is not easy to change institutions or laws. We saw how long and hard reform can be in the most recent marriage equality debate. I am proud to have played a small part in achieving equal rights for our LGBTIQ community. It is a process that we should never have had to undertake; however, through doorknocking, phone calling and enrolment drives on university campuses, the Gold Coast voted 60 per cent yes to marriage equality.

Whilst no LNP MP on the Gold Coast spoke out and actively campaigned for marriage equality, I am proud to have stood up for what I, and what evidently the majority of the Gold Coast, believe in. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr, our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. Equality matters to me. Closing the Gap matters to me. Making sure that every child receives a quality education matters to me. It matters to me when Barry, a constituent and pensioner in my electorate, comes in and tells me that he has to shop around for the cheapest place to get his hair cut because he is struggling to make ends meet. It matters to me that there is still a gender pay gap. It matters to me that my brother and his friends would love nothing more than to work but because he has a disability, and not through lack of ability, he cannot find a job. Our job is to stand up for the values that we believe in and create reform that unites Queenslanders.

I come from a long line of working people who have fought for these values. My mum grew up in Moe in Victoria and came from humble beginnings, living with her five brothers and sisters in a three-bedroom Housing Commission home. Her great-grandfather was a coalminer who tragically died of black lung. This consequently led my great-grandfather to become a lifelong member of the labour movement fighting for workplace conditions and rights.

My dad's life started from similar beginnings. At an early age his family moved from England to Australia for a better life. He too started off in a Housing Commission home in Inala while his family could save enough money to eventually buy a home. My grandfather was an electrician and involved in the infamous SEQEB dispute. I never had the opportunity to meet my grandfather as he died during the industrial dispute; however, his disdain for Joh Bjelke-Petersen's autocratic style of government certainly lives on in me today.

I come from a long line of union members who have fought hard for wages and conditions. I attended my first union meeting at the age of six months when my mum was a delegate in the Public Service. Amongst my family are nurses, paramedics and teachers who are fighting for a fair go. I am a proud United Voice member having worked in the outside school hours care sector. This sector, along with teacher aides and early childhood educators, is dominated by women and their pays reflect that. It is the unfortunate reality that female dominated industries are still grossly underpaid. It is not just these sectors that are struggling to make ends meet, though.

Having doorknocked a large proportion of my electorate it was clear that people are doing it tough with low wages growth. I heard from many people who are living pay cheque to pay cheque. The Gold Coast is often seen for its glitz and glamour; however, there are many people in my electorate who are

doing it tough. My electorate has some of the highest rates of workers affected by the decision to cut penalty rates and yet not a single LNP state or federal MP on the Gold Coast voiced their concern about the impact that this would have on local workers.

Inequality is becoming more entrenched and wealth and power is becoming more concentrated. People are worried about their jobs and their future. As the youngest MP sitting in the 56th Parliament, I come hoping that I can contribute a fresh perspective to support young Queenslanders and the challenges they face every day. I am part of a generation that has had to consistently adapt to new and emerging technological change. It is an exciting time; however, these rapid changes create uncertainty for many people. It is therefore critical that governments are forward thinking and train and skill young Queenslanders for the jobs of the future.

Whilst I value the wisdom that comes with age and experience, I believe that this parliament needs to reflect the diverse community of our state to ensure better representation. I do not profess to speak on behalf of my entire generation; however, I believe that this role allows me to talk about issues that for far too long have been dismissed or misunderstood. It is a simple fact that it is far more difficult for my generation to enter the housing market than it was for the generation of my parents. Many of us are burdened with HECS debts and deeply worried about climate change and the inevitable impacts.

We want and need a more inclusive nation. I am proud to be a member of a Labor Party that has the political will to reform many of these sectors and values the contribution of young people. This was most recently evidenced when I, a 24-year-old woman from the Gold Coast, was preselected for the marginal seat of Gaven.

I feel honoured to serve alongside so many incredible women. I am and always will be a proud feminist. I know that I stand on the shoulders of the great women who came before me. Irene Longman was the first woman elected to the Queensland parliament and, whilst we have different political persuasions, I admire her courage to enter this place during a time when her presence was not welcomed. Irene was not permitted to sit in the parliamentary dining room and was relegated to the verandah to eat. During her time as the only female member there were no female facilities, a situation that was not addressed until the next female member was elected 35 years later.

We have come a long way since then. We have won the right to vote, to participate in the workplace and we have had our first female prime minister and two female Queensland Labor premiers. We have made some big leaps; however, there is still a lot of work to be done. The gender pay gap is still unacceptably high. Women are still more likely to work in a narrow field of lower paying occupations. Women are vastly overrepresented as victims of sexual offences, stalking and domestic and family violence. Women are exceedingly underrepresented in leadership roles, particularly on boards of management, and until we decriminalise abortion here in Queensland we still do not have complete agency over our bodies. Globally, we know that a huge proportion of adult women lack basic literacy skills and that there is an unacceptable number of women who die each year from preventable complications during pregnancy and childbirth, the vast majority of them in developing countries.

I acknowledge how lucky I am to live in this state and country at a time when my presence here is welcomed. I am acutely aware that women have put their lives on the line for me to be afforded the right to stand in this chamber and I do not take lightly my responsibility to further the cause of equal rights. I am proud to be able to add another crack in the glass ceiling. I hope that my position here today inspires other young women to stand up and have their voices heard, so that we can address these issues and one day live in a world of parity.

I am a firm believer that one of the ways in which we can achieve parity is through education. Unlike my grandmother, I had the great privilege not only to complete primary and secondary school but also to go to university, where I obtained a Bachelor of Laws and a graduate diploma in legal practice. Education is what has allowed me to achieve a better standard of living. It was through educators such as my year 7 teacher, Mr Mick Beard, who is in the gallery today, that I learnt to critically think and question the status quo. I learnt about history, music and parliamentary process and I learnt to challenge ideas. It was teachers such as Mick Beard who made me realise the power of people and action.

My brother's experience in the education system was very different from mine. My dad battled with melanoma for many years and died when we were in early high school. That left my mum to juggle her workload and raise two children, one with an intellectual impairment. My mum is also a fierce believer in education. While she acknowledges that my brother will not reach the same level as his peers, he deserves the right to knowledge and to be afforded the dignity that education and work

provide. There were many occasions when she had to fight for that right and was made to feel as though she was a burden for simply asking for her child to be provided with the foundations to allow him to participate meaningfully in society.

Regardless of the fact that receiving a quality education should be a basic right, we know that it is economically more beneficial for our state. It should not matter if you have a disability and it should not matter what your postcode or background is; every child should receive a quality education. I am proud to be a member of a party that values inclusion in education; a party that knows that investing in training, teachers and schools is critical for future generations.

Our front-line service workers do an incredible job each day educating our future leaders, keeping our communities safe and helping Queenslanders to live happy and healthy lives. My dad was one of those front-line service workers, serving with the Queensland police, based in Surfers Paradise in his later years. My mum was also a public servant for over 30 years, although she did not wear a uniform. She took great pride in her job and worked hard.

Like many other Queenslanders, I will never forget when Campbell Newman and many of the residual members of parliament sitting on the other side of this chamber cut 14,000 Public Service jobs. The callous disregard for the contribution of committed public servants still haunts many people across the state today. It was the arrogance of the Newman government that saw a Palaszczuk government elected and it is what reminds me every day about the importance of listening to the community and good stable government.

It is a privilege to rise in this House today as the one and only Labor member elected to parliament from my region in almost eight years. It is unhealthy for a city to be dominated by one party. Under the Newman government, the LNP held every single Gold Coast seat. Despite their record majority, they failed to contribute a single new dollar to the M1, knowing full well that the Commonwealth Games was fast approaching. I am proud to be a member of a party that has invested in the Gold Coast. We have delivered stage 1 and 2 of the light rail, duplicated the heavy rail line between Helensvale and Coomera stations, built the Gold Coast hospital, the Cbus Super Stadium and, of course, in my electorate the Metricon Stadium, the home of the mighty Suns.

Thanks to Labor governments, my home town was transformed into a city that locals now feel proud of. It was the vision of a Labor government that landed the Commonwealth Games and brought that exciting opportunity to the Gold Coast in what we know will be a transformative event for our local economy and an historic event in our city's history. Over the past three years, the Palaszczuk government has invested around \$1 billion in infrastructure upgrades, leaving a long-lasting legacy for our community.

The electorate of Gaven is right in the middle of the action for the games, generating a huge buzz in our local community. Fearless riders will navigate the Nerang mountain bike trails in the Nerang State Forest. Sporting legends such as Usain Bolt will cheer on our athletics competitors at Carrara Stadium, as transfixed audiences tune in across the world. Carrara Stadium will be where the games begin and end, with a huge celebration of dance, colour and entertainment taking place for the opening and closing ceremonies. Just next door at the Carrara Sports and Leisure Centre, thousands will attend the badminton, para powerlifting, weightlifting and wrestling. We truly are spoilt for choice in the electorate of Gaven when it comes to attending events right in our backyard. However, what I am most excited about is the opportunity that those venues and pieces of infrastructure provide for future legacy projects. Having an event such as the Commonwealth Games allows us to showcase our electorate to a global audience and encourage more events, attractions and visitation to our region.

I am honoured to be given the responsibility of being Assistant Minister for Tourism Industry Development during such an important time for the Gold Coast and the tourism industry as a whole. Tourism is a huge job generator with complex facets that I hope I will be able to make a meaningful contribution towards. Mr Speaker, if you had not already noticed, I am a proud Gold Coaster. In the words of the Hon. Kate Jones, I am pumped for the Commonwealth Games and to help my region reach its full potential.

The electorate of Gaven and the surrounding electorates of the northern Gold Coast are home to some of the most rapidly growing populations in the country. The Gold Coast is Queensland's second largest city and Australia's sixth biggest city. One of our challenges is building infrastructure to keep up with our population growth. In future years, projects such as the light rail stage 3 will be needed. Widening the existing M1 to six lanes all the way to the New South Wales border is a Labor policy, with \$206 million currently on the table. It was Labor that revived planning on the interregional transport corridor after the previous LNP government stopped it being included in the SEQ Regional Plan and

the Gold Coast City Council's City Plan, with two gazettals of new sections in the first term of the Palaszczuk government. I will also do my best in advocating for better connectivity in areas that are not along the linear beach strip by investing in suburbs west of the M1.

The electorate that I represent includes the suburbs of Pacific Pines, Nerang, Gaven, Highland Park, Carrara and a small section of Worongary. Construction is our biggest employing industry and biggest small business industry. I would like to thank the Hon. Mick de Brenni for the work he has done in relation to the security of subcontractor payments. I know that that is a big issue for many subbies in my electorate and throughout the Gold Coast—ensuring that people get paid in full and on time. I reiterate the commitment that I have made to people in the industry that I will work hard to hold the federal government to account when it comes to enacting sensible reform in this space. Our second and third highest employing sectors are the food and beverage service industry and retail industry. Again, I promise to fight the federal government when they cut wages and water down workplace protections.

Whilst those sectors are big employers, we also need to look at the jobs of the future and diversify our local economy. That is why I was only too happy to support the Premier's push to grow our film and TV production industry. I am excited that the provisionally titled movie *Danger Close* is to be filmed in my electorate in the suburb of Nerang, which is the Gold Coast's first major township. I want young Gold Coasters to be able to find a job in our city and not have to travel to Brisbane, as I did, to pursue a career. It is important for the people of Gaven to know that every day over the term of the 56th Parliament I will be fighting to continue improving infrastructure outcomes, to deliver front-line services and to ensure jobs are created for locals in my community. I make no apology for taking on fights for my community and will endeavour to serve the best interests of the people of Gaven.

I want to thank a number of people who have made possible my presence in this parliament. I thank the many volunteers and supporters who came out after work to make phone calls, doorknock, hand out how-to-vote cards, stand in the blistering heat with corflutes, letterbox drop and the list goes on. Their drive to campaign for a Labor government kept me strong.

My sincerest gratitude also extends to the staff of the Australian Labor Party, particularly our previous state secretary, Evan Moorhead, and my organisers, Lucy Collier and Rosy Gilbert and Sharon Humphreys. I also say a big thank you to the field team who worked tirelessly to help me speak to as many residents as possible. A big thank you goes to Jules Campbell for helping me become the Labor candidate for Gaven and I extend huge congratulations to her on being the first woman elected to the role of Queensland Labor state secretary. The party is certainly in safe hands.

I extend my thanks to the Young Labor members from across the country who travelled to help get a progressive Labor voice on the Gold Coast. I also thank someone who has been a tremendous support to me and a man I greatly admire, Queensland Labor senator Murray Watt. His guidance and encouragement were instrumental and I look forward to continuing the fight with him for better representation on the Gold Coast.

I would like to thank the close members of my union family, United Voice, and in particular officials Sharron Caddie and Gary Bullock. I want to specifically thank Jeanette Temperley, who backed me from day dot. She has become part of my family and I will be forever grateful for her guidance, patience and support.

I give a big thank you to the QCU and all union members across the Gold Coast who assisted in the Gaven campaign. They reminded people what was at stake and helped form a majority Labor government. I give a big thank you to the Nerang-Gaven branch and the Pacific Pines branch for the contribution that they all made to the campaign operations. I want to acknowledge in particular two comrades and friends, Ali King and Rowan Holzberger, who regrettably have not joined me in the chamber at this time. However, I have no doubt that their commitment and passion for the Labor movement has not and will not be dampened.

I thank my brother, Callum, for his help on the campaign and for letting me be the centre of attention for a short period of time. I appreciate his patience during a disruptive six months and know the campaign team appreciated his coffees and positivity on the polling booth.

I would also like to say thank you to my extended family who travelled from Victoria to support me at the most recent election and also at the 2016 federal election. It would be remiss of me not to thank my biggest supporter, my mum, who is in the gallery today. I will forever be grateful for her constant support and will never be able to thank her enough for what she has sacrificed for me. In the words of my favourite childhood book, 'I love you to the moon and back.'

Last but certainly not least, I would like to thank the residents of Gaven for their trust and support to elect me as their representative. Be assured that I will always fight for my community and always listen to the needs of our locals.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, before calling the honourable member for Nicklin, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Mr HUNT** (Nicklin—LNP) (3.53 pm): Mr Speaker, may I add my congratulations to you on your appointment. I deeply honoured to be representing the people of Nicklin in this House. It is humbling to receive the support and trust of one's community to be their voice in parliament. I undertake to serve them to the best of my ability and to always respect the trust they placed in me.

I wanted to be here because I believe our community deserves strong representation. Nicklin has concerns it shares with the rest of the state and it has issues unique to our area. In my time in this place, I will seek to advocate on issues in a way that will represent the views and further the interests of our local community.

Beyond the matter of particular issues, I seek to represent our community in the manner in which they approach their lives—with optimism and hope, with a hardworking ethos, with a recognition that there are people who, through little fault of their own, are struggling and good communities do what they can do to help. These are the qualities that bind our community and rally them to support various community groups, advocacy groups and charities. These are the qualities that make our local businesses not just part of the local economy but the local community through supporting local events, community infrastructure and the general improvement of our area.

These are the qualities I see every weekend from people who run the local events, volunteer at local community groups, speak out at local forums and participate in planning and important discussions. These are the qualities I see in the people who give up their time to help our most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community. These are the qualities of mums and dads who get up every day and work hard in their small businesses, employing local people and making a go of it. These are the people who inspired me to run for parliament and to come here to represent their interests.

I would like to acknowledge the almost 20 years of parliamentary service of my retiring predecessor, the honourable Peter Wellington. Peter is well regarded in the Nicklin community for his commitment and dedication to our local area. Congratulations to Peter on his service and I hope that he and Jenny enjoy a long retirement.

I also want to acknowledge the late Hon. Neil Turner and his combined terms of over 20 years in the seats of Warrego and Nicklin. The honourable Howard Hobbs described Mr Turner as 'an extremely hardworking member of parliament and one of the finest Speakers the Queensland parliament has known in recent times'. This is a legacy that I hope in some way I can live up to.

I was born in Windsor, New South Wales. I grew up in the northern New South Wales town of Lismore after moving there at aged seven. I attended St Carthage's Catholic Primary School before moving across the road to Trinity Catholic College for high school. My mother, Jan, had Irish Catholic ancestry and Irish Catholic values and she passed these on to me. These Catholic values and beliefs I still hold and still practise to this day as best I can. I believe that this upbringing gave me, above all, an ethos of service and a sense of purpose above personal profit. You should treat others as you would have them treat you. It is important to help those who cannot help themselves and represent those who need an advocate.

It was these values that led me to a career in policing. I joined the Queensland Police Service in 1988, straight from high school, under the old cadet system. It was a steep learning curve for a young 18-year-old lad—out of school, thrust straight into day-to-day crisis and misery; people at their best and people at their worst. I initially served three years in general duties around the Inala area and then as a detective in the Criminal Investigation Branch in the Oxley district for six years before moving to the Sunshine Coast to work in the child abuse unit in 1998.

An opportunity arose to relieve as branch manager of the Nambour Police Citizens Youth Club, PCYC, in May 2000. I went on to apply for the position permanently after 12 months of relieving, during which time I grew to love that role in the community. Working as a police officer for such a great community organisation allowed me to work with young people and families to be the best they could be. I always felt a great sense of pride and achievement over the long term I spent in that role in the

great young people I was privileged to work with. PCYC work is a marathon, not a sprint. It requires relationship building over a long period of time and it is very hard to show the outcomes on graphs. The great police officers who work in that role will know what I mean.

Having served in the Queensland Police Service for almost 30 years, I have always had a keen interest in the work of the parliament. I spent those three decades upholding the laws passed in this place and working with the community to see the value in those laws and to abide by them. I could also see how from time to time the system failed people, and so I am used to problem solving with the communities in which I have served.

I have always been a conservative, and the values of the Liberal National Party have always resonated with me. It is an honour to have been selected by the party to run for the seat of Nicklin, just as it is an honour to have been chosen by the people of Nicklin to represent them. The values instilled in me as a child, my professional experiences and my life in the Nicklin community have paved the way to this place today. That path has also allowed me to see the wrongs that we in this place have the power to right and those areas where steady, capable governing can improve the everyday lives of Queenslanders.

A central pillar of our democracy is the rule of law, a system of justice that protects citizens and punishes those who seek to disrupt or otherwise corrupt our society. I have come from the constabulary into the legislature—two important parts of that system that, along with the courts, write, enforce and apply the laws of Queensland. The public must have trust and confidence in that system. While community trust and confidence is not at its worst, it is not at its best. With this in mind, and going back to that ethos of supporting those who through no fault of their own need supporting, we must always have as our priority the victims of criminal activity.

Too many times as a police officer I had personal experience with the devastation of victims of crime and trauma at the outcome of their matter through our courts. I understand the difficult role that our judicial officers undertake in carefully weighing up all the circumstances surrounding events. While sometimes sentences and punishment will never be enough for a victim, community expectations should be met consistently in our justice system, and this House has an important role to play in that endeavour. If an individual consistently or repeatedly disrupts the good order of society and causes harm to its citizens, they should no longer be a part of that society.

Of all the victims of crime, those who need supporting most are children. I worked in the child abuse unit and had involvement in the Sunshine Coast Child Protection Week Committee. Your average Queenslander would struggle to comprehend the evil that exists in some of our most broken families—a group of children at the margins of society and too often forgotten. We must do more and we must do better.

Child protection is a difficult area to work in and certainly the great police and child safety officers who work on the front line are faced with what can amount to life and death decisions in regard to children's wellbeing every day. This job is so important that specialised training is essential. Suitable legislative powers to protect children should be available, with our highest priority being the consideration of the safety of the child.

While the government should seek every reasonable avenue before they consider permanently removing a child from their parents, we must constantly examine the ethical questions about the boundaries of that reasonableness. At times in our history governments have taken children far too swiftly and at other times governments have allowed families unfathomable latitude despite repeated and consistent demonstrations that their chances of turning their lives around are negligible.

A leading cause of families breaking to this horrible point is drug use. Ice in particular has drastically escalated the consequences of drug use. Local police have recently expressed to me that children as young as 12 are using this insidious drug. It is cheap, it is easy to source and it has a devastating impact. Sadly, I feel that words like these are falling on desensitised ears. This contagion is completely overwhelming the meagre resistance we are putting up to it. We need a bipartisan commitment to work this one out and do whatever we can to rid our communities of this curse.

The impact of horrible crimes, particularly those against children and resulting from the scourge of drugs, takes its toll on those who are first to respond. Police officers and our colleagues in the ambulance and Fire and Rescue Services, as well as others like child safety officers, carry the mental scars of things that should not have happened and should not have been seen. I have a passion for the mental health of police officers and emergency service workers. In 30 years I lost far too many friends and colleagues who tragically took their own lives. Policing is a job where you put your brain through much more than a human is designed to cope with.

A professional athlete puts their body through more than it was designed to withstand and as a result they undergo regular training, rehabilitation and specialised care for injury. Injury is expected and managed as part of their profession—so should it be with policing. Their mental health should be managed individually and carefully right throughout their career. We need drastic improvements in this area right across Australia and I look forward to advocating for the health and wellbeing of our police officers in this place.

I said at the beginning I am passionate about serving the community in which I live, the community of Nicklin. Our geography determines our greatest need—infrastructure. We are at the northern tip of the great mass of population that is South-East Queensland. During my time in parliament I guarantee empty fields and vacant blocks between my house and the Brisbane CBD will continue to fill and the growth corridor will continue to grow.

We need to be better connected through improvements in public transport, and the railway to Brisbane is a priority for our area and the Sunshine Coast region. We need to make train travel between Nambour and Brisbane accessible, regular and fast to attract commuters to choose rail, relieve congestion on the Bruce Highway and make our region an attractive place for families to live and businesses to invest.

During my campaign for the seat of Nicklin, the LNP made over \$10 million worth of commitments to local projects. Nicklin people voted LNP and therefore voted for these projects as a priority for our area. I will not turn my back on these priorities, advocating for them as best I can in opposition or in government during my time in this place.

Whilst I have outlined problems that need solutions, I said earlier that the community has hope and optimism. The things that challenge us are also great opportunities. We have great people doing great things and we will not only survive but thrive due to our fantastic community spirit. We have young families moving to the area and great educational institutions. I have certainly worked with many inspiring young people through my PCYC work in the Nicklin electorate. The future can be bright and I look forward to being an advocate for Nicklin to help ensure that we reach our potential as a community.

Finally, I need to give thanks to the many people who are responsible for me standing here today. To my campaign team: Alex Blake, Lesley Cowan, Matt Trace, Susan Blake, Ron Bailey, Grant Cunning, Simon Verdouw, Michael Negerevich and special mention to Sepp Schembera, who was my political mentor and gave me confidence and encouragement right through the process from preselection to election. To all of the LNP state and federal MPs and senators who mentored, advised and assisted me in the campaign: it has been great to have the assistance of the Liberal National Party family that mirrors that of the Police Service in terms of support for each other. To the Queensland Police Service colleagues and mentors that I had the pleasure of serving with along the way: I thank you all too. The Police Service is like a family and I will never forget the camaraderie, discipline, loyalty, ethics and commitment to service that were instilled in me through the job.

To my parents, Bob and Jan, who gave me the values of service and love for community; to my siblings, Paul, Brenda, Jo and Matt ‘hashtag McNicol’—he made me do that—who keep me grounded, thanks for your support and love. To my parents-in-law, Bruce and Lyn Adams, thank you for always being there for Kelly, the girls and me. Holding true to my Christian values, I would also like to acknowledge that I am here by the grace of God. I pray that he will give me the required wisdom, courage and fortitude to get the job done.

Of all the words I say today I want to say these the most: thank you to my wife, Kelly, and children, Julia and Olivia. Thank you for going on this journey with me and thank you for your support right through my career in the police and now as I enter the parliament. There are many sacrifices that police families and parliamentary families make. I thank you for sticking with me through it all and for the tremendous support you have given me. Kelly worked extremely hard during the campaign, giving up nights and weekends, making sure the job got done. She was always picking up the slack wherever there were gaps and taking on the hardest jobs. Kelly’s unwavering support through the years has been the primary reason I am able to be where I am today. I could not have done any of this without her, so to Kelly, Julia and Olivia, I say thank you so much and I love you dearly.

In conclusion, I want to pay tribute to Sir Frank Nicklin, in whose memory the seat of Nicklin is named. Sir Frank was a member of this parliament for over 35 years and served as premier from 12 August 1957 to 17 January 1968. I was inspired to read Sir Frank’s first speech to this parliament. His conclusion echoed much of what I heard from everyday Queenslanders during my campaign and that

is their desire that all of us in this parliament work together for the good of Queensland. In tribute to Sir Frank, I will conclude with his words, which are still relevant today. He appealed—

... for the co-operation of all hon. members in assisting to restore Queensland once again to a proper state of prosperity. We in this Chamber are all Queenslanders, if not by birth, then by adoption; and it should be our endeavour to do everything possible to make and keep Queensland the premier State of the Commonwealth—

of Australia.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the honourable member for Aspley, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (4.14 pm): It is a tremendous honour to address the House today as the representative for the seat of Aspley. I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which this parliament meets. I pay my respects to their elders past, present and future. I take this opportunity to congratulate my fellow new MPs, some of whom I knew pre politics and many of whom I have briefly come to know since the election. I also congratulate re-elected MPs and those who have been appointed or elected to positions such as yours, Mr Speaker. I congratulate the Premier on her strong and smart leadership of the state throughout the last term and indeed the election campaign. Without her leadership I would surely not be standing here today and we would not be in a majority Labor government.

It is very much a great privilege to be able to represent my community of Aspley. I intend to advocate for them as hard as I can, making a difference in their lives through what I can do both in the community and here in parliament. Many people say that running a campaign to be an MP and being an MP are two vastly different things. In many ways I tend to disagree. There are so many aspects from our campaign that I want to carry over into this position such as a commitment to hard work, getting some great local projects across the line and an undertaking to continually listen to the community. I will do rather than say. I will try not to get bogged down in being reactive or in procedure and process but keep a focus on what is best for my community. I will make sure I am engaging with locals not just during campaigns but all the time.

The Palaszczuk government has a great agenda of health, education, jobs and transport election commitments to deliver on across the state and locally in Aspley. I intend to help make them happen in any way I can. I am proud that we ran a local campaign based around real issues in Aspley, and we managed to get some great transport, education and sporting commitments across the line. I am very keen to ensure they happen.

Aspley consists of the suburbs of Geebung, Zillmere, Carseldine, McDowall, Chermside West, Bridgeman Downs, Bald Hills, Aspley itself and a very small part of Albany Creek. Since I put my hand up to run and since being elected I have been blown away by the number of people in the electorate I have come across who, through their involvement in local organisations or on their own, are working selflessly to make their community a better place to live. These people do not want any grand accolades; they are not paid and, more often than not, they are fiercely bipartisan. I am immensely thankful to have the opportunity to be able to work with these people throughout this term and get some great local wins across the suburbs of the Aspley electorate.

Many of these suburbs are very different from one another, but most are linked through the thoroughfares of Gympie Road and the north coast railway line. There are different communities in Aspley, but they all have many things in common. They all want a good education for their children and better opportunities for those who follow them. They all want good health outcomes so that they can trust the public health system when they need to use it. They want to be able to commute to work and home again in as little time as possible to spend more time with their friends and loved ones. It is that last point which is so important to people in Aspley and so important to me.

There is no doubt that there is a longstanding, historical, strong commitment of Labor governments to major transport infrastructure in Queensland. With my private, departmental and political background in the transport industry, I will fight hard to make sure my area always gets its fair share. Public transport in particular has the possibility for massive step changes in the way people get around and in where they choose to live. New road infrastructure is always important to keep up with growth, but it is only through public transport investment that we can get ahead of demand. Light rail on the Gold Coast, Springfield rail, Redcliffe rail and the entire Brisbane busway network are recent examples of great state Labor investments in transport infrastructure. Cross River Rail and the European Train Control System are the next cabs off the rank. They are both projects which will benefit the Aspley electorate enormously. Enough about trains, and a bit about myself.

A lot of people ask me where the name ‘Mellish’ comes from. There is either the short answer or the slightly longer answer. The short answer says that the name originates from somewhere south of London, but the long answer goes some way to describing the background of my immediate family and why I believe what I believe.

My paternal grandfather, Fred Mellish, came to Australia as a young foster-child from the UK, very much starting from nothing. He battled his way through a variety of jobs and when World War II came to the Pacific, he joined the Army in his mid-30s. Like many who joined at the time, this did not go well for him. Upon being deployed to Singapore he was immediately captured and spent the next three years in the notorious hellhole of Changi Prison and building the Burma Railway.

Unlike so many of his fellow Australians at Changi, he was very fortunate to survive the war and return to Australia in 1945. Two more sons followed, including my father, before Fred’s death in a rail accident in 1958, whereupon my grandmother, Hazel, was left to raise her three sons on her own. In what is in hindsight a very sad coincidence, the local policeman at Redbank who had to deliver the news to my grandmother was actually future Labor leader Bill Hayden. It was only through Fred and Hazel’s perseverance through very different adversities that I am fortunate enough to be here today.

On the other side of my family, my mother’s upbringing was certainly no silver spoon affair either: growing up with five other siblings, the daughter of a train driver in a modest three-bedroom house in Ipswich. This thread of perseverance and hard work was instilled in my parents through theirs and in me through my parents. My parents have always worked hard to help their community: my mother in helping people get jobs and my father at TAFE helping people build their skills so they can get better jobs.

I think the best thing I have inherited from my father apart from my height is probably his highly tuned radar for bullcrap, if I can use that term, Mr Speaker. From my mother I would like to think I have inherited a strong sense of social justice and helping those less fortunate than yourself as well as a dose of diplomacy to balance out my father’s frankness, for lack of a better term. I thank my parents for being a great example of post-war Australians who wanted their children to have it better than they themselves had it growing up.

I still remember when my father graduated from university well into his adult life. He was the first generation of our family to do so. Our parents made sure that we did not take anything for granted. Growing up in Toowoomba my brothers and I were driven to secure academic scholarships to high school, and our parents made sure we had the grades to attend our university, USQ, over the back fence. I enjoyed USQ so much that I went back twice.

Despite much whingeing and occasional rebellions throughout our formative years, we were all very grateful to have parents who saw the value in pushing ourselves academically; however, it has not all been smooth sailing. I still recall moving to Brisbane from Toowoomba in my early twenties. I had no car, no job, one bag of clothes, less than \$100 to my name and only one week’s accommodation lined up. My family and friends probably thought I would last a couple of months in Brissie at best, but thankfully I am still here. I may move back to Toowoomba one day many, many years from now, but I am certainly not done yet.

I am very thankful for the opportunities I have been given in politics and the transport and environment sectors, both public and private—here, interstate and overseas—but I have had to work hard every step of the way for those opportunities. There are many people who have shown faith in me over my professional career, particularly within the Labor Party. I will come back to that a bit later. That is a little bit of my background and why I believe I have it in me to be a tireless advocate for the people of Aspley.

While I hold the view that politics is primarily about people, it is also about tangible policy issues at the end of the day. I have always been interested in politics, not as a means to its own end but as a way of implementing good policy which actually helps people. An essential part of implementing good policy is being able to communicate. Many people in the media and politics have commented in recent times about the ever-shortening political attention span of the public, political parties and media coverage in general. This is being driven by a range of factors including, obviously, technology. Political discourse has had to evolve from the printing press to radio to television and now to social media.

In 1985, well before his time, Neil Postman wrote about the corrosive effects of electronic media on a democratic society. Postman said—

... television is the paradigm for our conception of public information. As the printing press did in an earlier time, television has achieved the power to define the form in which news must come, and it has also defined how we shall respond to it.

In other words, the medium in which we consume political news defines what type of political news is covered. On the surface this conclusion does not bode well for nuanced policy discussion in the era of Facebook and Twitter; however, as parliamentarians we must all strive to still debate the big issues and not just reduce every political argument to its shortest, most readily digestible form. I genuinely believe there is still a place for serious public discussion of big issues at a state level because there has to be, so working out ways to achieve that in the current media landscape will be one of my goals in this place. For me that means two things: talking directly to people as often as I can and making sure that what I talk about matters. On this issue Paul Keating had it right when he recently said—

... when those big ideas are not in evidence and the momentum isn't there, the flux never materialises. Then the static takes over and the static is now writ large by social media and the vacuous news cycle.

He continues—

I still believe that the power of the big idea or the power of a guiding light will always take precedence over the static of the twittersphere or anything like it. It's more the pity that enough people in public life don't believe that.

Having used that quote about big ideas in my maiden speech, and because I believe that politics is actually about big ideas, I think it is important that I briefly talk about what I think will be one of the biggest issues in public policy that governments will face over the next 10 to 20 years, and that is the potentially devastating impact on the workforce of rapid advancements in technology if left unchecked. Due to the increasing speed of telecommunications, increases in computing ability and the growth of computer intelligence, we are currently in the midst of a substantial shift in the way society communicates with itself and how work is organised. Technology is impacting not only the types of jobs we have but on what the very nature of having a job means. I see one of the greatest risks to a fair society from this technological revolution coming from the so-called 'gig economy', or basically employment on demand.

This is a world where a job is created and ended with the click of a button on a smartphone. Examples of platforms for this work run the full gamut of services from Airbnb to Etsy to Deliveroo and tech giants such as Amazon. At its best, this model provides convenience, cheaper products and friendlier service, but at its worst it is effectively circumventing generations of hard-won employment rights such as penalty rates, workplace health and safety, superannuation and protection against unfair dismissal. If left to its own devices, massive shifts in how work is allocated and apportioned will result in further wealth concentration and lessening of opportunity—a 'cheery wave from stranded youngsters', as it has been described.

As Atlassian founder Mike Cannon-Brookes recently said to a federal Senate inquiry—

Software is eating every industry in the world. Tech disruption is a very real thing. It's happening all around us. It's happening faster than you think. And that's hard for governments.

That is the reality. If governments wait for someone else to take the running on this issue, it will be too late.

The International Monetary Fund—hardly a pack of rabid socialists—recently noted that the rise of the gig economy has the potential to challenge the very structure of social safety nets which have underpinned Western economies since World War II. There is no doubt it will be a real challenge for all parliaments as to how we harness this technological revolution to make the lives of everyday Australians better, not worse.

Broadly speaking, while we should always seek to create reforms that benefit the great majority of people through greater competition of services and a higher quality and range of goods, we must also consider how to manage the very real impact of these changes on the workers of the gig economy. My fear is that a failure to acknowledge and anticipate these technological changes will further entrench inequality, leading to a more divided society, and a highly unequal society leads to a fractured society for everyone. To steal a quote from an excellent recent publication by federal member of parliament Jim Chalmers and former CEO of NBN Co Mike Quigley—

Large numbers of people being left behind for an extended period is not conducive to social stability.

How do we respond to this change? We could do worse than looking into the history of our nation. When the French scholar and later Minister of Labour and Social Welfare Albert Metin visited Australia at the dawn of the 20th century he discovered a true oddity to his European eyes. Australia had established labour legislation founded on conciliation, arbitration, workers' protections and a minimum wage but without the baggage of radical ideology. He dubbed our land a 'workers' paradise' formed through 'socialism with no doctrine'.

We are all fortunate to be reminded that in Australia our world-leading social and economic reforms were built on the back of strong argument, persuasion and consensus. I do not need to go through the early history of workplace relations in Australia that led to labour leaders organising into a political movement and taking the fight for reform into the parliamentary realm, but it is in this vein of practical, common-sense responses to the changing nature of work that I believe we must face the current wave of technological changes sweeping across our society, because the alternative to this discussion being led by parliaments is that a void will be filled by major multinationals and consumers themselves in a race to the bottom.

Just as Australian parliaments of the 1800s and early 1900s adapted and changed as the understanding of work and industrial relations changed, so too do we need to adapt and change as the nature of work changes yet again. The primary beneficiaries of these waves of technological change must be Queensland workers and Queensland business owners, not tech billionaires from California. It is not just workers who have much to lose. Queensland's small, medium and large businesses have the potential to be washed away by large overseas operators who may or may not be playing by the same rules.

In Australia we have much to be proud of in our workplace conditions. We do not have the sheer numbers of working poor that America has, for example, where the lack of a decent minimum wage means that whole swathes of workers still need handouts to get by, but we cannot rest on our laurels. Unions clearly have a stake in this, and it is very pleasing to see many of them driving public discussion around on-demand employment in everything from trade services to warehousing to delivery services. To quote a recent report from the Australian Council of Trade Unions—

We are seeing a generation of workers growing up without access to sick leave, annual leave, minimum rates of pay, OHS protections and workers' compensation.

I do not proclaim to offer all the answers today, but these are important questions that this parliament can help answer. We cannot just ignore people being left behind by ever-increasing technology and pull the ladder up after ourselves. We cannot sit back and hope that the tech billionaires and start-ups from San Francisco driving these changes will have our community's best interests at heart. We as elected officials owe it to our constituents to make sure technological changes work for our communities, not against them.

There are obviously many other policy challenges facing Queensland, and I am incredibly proud to be part of a Labor government that will tackle many of them this term. The failure of the federal government to deal with climate change means, increasingly, states are having to play a greater role going forward. Queensland can obviously play a big role in this, as it has done before.

Sensible land clearing policy under previous state Labor governments was substantially responsible for Australia meeting its emissions reduction targets by 2020 under the Kyoto Protocol. I will have much more to say about this at the appropriate time but, both as a biologist and someone who has worked in resource management in regional and rural Queensland, I take a keen interest in this.

In a similar vein to the points I was making regarding the regulation of technology, it is very pleasing to see the Premier take a strong lead on cyberbullying, an issue that cannot be ignored. On this and on so many other issues, as technology changes and adapts, government policy often needs to change and adapt.

I take this opportunity to thank a range of people without whose help I surely would not be the member for Aspley today. My wife, Vivienne, I cannot thank enough. Vivienne has always supported me in everything I do, especially over the last year. She is probably the nicest, most talented and hardest working person I know, but I am biased! She has very much made me a better person since I met her. I thanked my parents earlier; my mother is here today. I also thank my brothers, Daniel and Joel, as well as my extended family who helped on the campaign.

Labor Party branch members in Geebung and Aspley were an incredible help, making sure we ran a tight ship and got our message out there to as many people as possible. My campaign team were a hastily assembled pack of legends, particularly Rosemary, Louen, Stella, Daniel, Dearne, Jon, Anika and Finn. My field organiser, Jack, and of course, Dean, were out there almost every day of the campaign with me rain, hail or shine. I also thank Georgia from my office. Evan Moorhead and Jon Persley from the party office ran a fantastic state campaign. Julie-Ann Campbell and Sarah Mawhinney have big shoes to fill, but I know both of them are well and truly up to the task. I thank Jon and also Josh Millroy, who as my organiser was always there to hear out my complaining and, importantly, filter out my bolder ideas.

It is also worth thanking those who helped my campaign with external advice, both good and bad, along the way, including Matt, Lachlan, Mark, Elliot, Izzy and Aaron. I particularly thank those politicians kind enough to allow me to work with them at some point in the past, namely, Paul Lucas who gave me my first job in politics and is still a great source of advice and friendship and still has a burning passion for public policy, as well as Anna Bligh, Senator Chris Ketter, yourself, Mr Speaker, and Senator Anthony Chisholm. Anthony in particular encouraged me to run and helped me in other innumerable ways. When running a campaign, it is handy to have one of the best campaign minds in the country willing to offer advice and provide support when needed. There is no point reinventing the wheel in politics, and everything is done under the sun, so I am thankful for their advice along the journey.

I thank the Premier and the Deputy Premier for their support for what we were doing in Aspley during the campaign, and I thank my neighbouring Labor MPs for not minding too much when we pinched or borrowed their volunteers. I particularly thank the member for Sandgate who, despite having to run his own race, was instrumental in helping our campaign throughout. I also thank the member for Lilley, Wayne Swan, and Councillor Jared Cassidy for their support. I sincerely thank the union movement, particularly Chris Gazenbeek and the SDA, Gary O'Halloran and the Plumbers Union, Peter Biagini and the Transport Workers Union, and Ben Swan and Steve Baker at the Australian Workers' Union, who all were very supportive of our campaign from day one.

I acknowledge former MP Tracy Davis for her nine years as the member for Aspley. I particularly thank the former member for Aspley, Bonny Barry, who is doing it a bit tough at the moment but is certainly not taking it lying down. I am sure many other members here would share in my best wishes being sent to Bonny.

Lastly, and most importantly, I thank everyone in the electorate of Aspley who took time out to talk to me during the campaign, whether it be on pre-poll, while doorknocking or just answering the phone while I was interrupting their dinner. Those many conversations that people were very gracious to have with me all helped in giving me a clearer picture of what needs to be done locally and what I should be pushing for going forward. I will stand up for the people in my electorate. I will work hard and continue to lobby to improve the lives of all members of my community. I am incredibly humbled to represent them here in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland—and I am up for it.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Bonney, I remind members that this will be the member's first speech and it should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (4.37 pm): I rise to speak today with the great honour of being the first member for Bonney in this House. A new electorate, Bonney covers the inner-northern Gold Coast, taking in Labrador, Biggera Waters and Chirn Park in the east and Arundel-Parkwood in the west.

We boast an outstanding university in Griffith, with the new industries of the health and knowledge precinct imminent, the Gold Coast's major hospital, seven fantastic schools, all the live music and food that NightQuarter has to offer, outlet shopping at Harbour Town, and two of the key sites in the upcoming Commonwealth Games with the games village and the hockey centre. Not only that, our Broadwater is one of the most stunning parts of the coast. Wavebreak Island protects our beaches, and our view of the city skyline is second to none. I am proud to represent the 50,000 people who call Bonney home. I will tell anyone who will listen how great my patch is, and I am glad to have that opportunity today.

I will start by talking about my own journey to this place and, given my age, this will be relatively short! Like most people on the Gold Coast, I was not born there. I chose to live there. I came to the city because of the lifestyle and opportunity it has to offer. I am a proud son of Ipswich where my family have made a profound contribution to that community. My own existence is actually owed in part to the presence of a Royal Australian Air Force base there. My father, an airframe fitter, was posted to it where he met my mother, I am informed, at a local disco.

I grew up around my family's business, RT Edwards & Sons—a Queensland icon. It was started by my great-grandfather Roy after he lost his job as an electrician at the railway workshops during the Great Depression. He borrowed a few pounds off his aunty and rode his bike around town making electrical repairs. He grew the business to the point of setting up a shop and then, after having the call to serve God as a pastor, my grandfather Tom took over while in his early 20s. There are not many people as determined and driven as my grandfather. He built the company up to over a dozen stores employing hundreds of Queenslanders. Some of my earliest memories are of following him around the sales floor. I learnt a lot from how he interacted with customers. He would always give them his time and make them feel genuinely valued.

My parents sacrificed a lot for my education. At high school I found my gift for academia and my distinct lack of talent in the sporting arena. Since then I have firmly found my place as a keen spectator and you will often see me at Gold Coast Suns games. I went on to the University of Queensland to study biomedical science and political science. Anyone who has undertaken an arts degree has copped jokes at its expense, so I hope that my presence in this parliament is proof it has some value.

I started work, as many university students do, in pubs and bars—an industry I would stay around for seven years at fine establishments, ending with the Labrador AFL Sports Club. In fact, my only job during the campaign was behind the bar at that local footy club and I am proud to have a bit of that here today with a few locals coming up in the courtesy bus that I used to drive!

Hospitality work can be unforgiving, with long shifts at unsociable hours which ruin your sleep patterns and cause you to miss many of your friends' celebrations. Regardless, I would not have traded the experience I gained there for anything. It is an industry that helps you hone your people skills and teaches you how to adapt to stressful situations and environments. I want to use my time in this place to advocate for other 'hospo' workers and to use my firsthand, ground-level experience with the laws and regulations governing the industry to make a contribution in how they are crafted.

After university I wanted to emulate my father by serving in the Australian Defence Force. However, I was hampered by an atrial fibrillation I had when I was 20—about 40 years too soon! This was the most difficult period of my life. It was not like a normal job knockback in that I could not study further and suddenly become eligible; I had to find somewhere else to channel my desire to serve and contribute. I should take a moment to assure you, Mr Speaker, that my heart has been beating normally ever since. It is structurally and functionally healthy and you should not be expecting a sudden by-election in the near future.

A friend of mine, Phil, the biggest political tragic I know, recommended that I apply for a role in the office of the former member for Waterford, Mr Mike Latter. I will be forever grateful for that opportunity and the skills I picked up there. Despite Mike's grounded style and community connections, it was always a difficult seat for us to hold, to say the least. It was through this role that I made my move to the Gold Coast.

I spent most of my childhood holidaying at Biggera Waters, so I knew it well. When I saw an opportunity come up to work in the federal member for Fadden's office, I jumped at it. In that office over a relatively short space of time I gained firsthand experience of the highs and lows of politics. I built my communications skills under Mr Robert's leadership and he showed me that politics is an outlet for a desire to serve. Office manager Helen Lewis gave me invaluable professional guidance and I am grateful to call her a friend.

Soon after I joined the Liberal National Party. Its values align with my own and I had a strong family connection to the cause as my great-uncle is Sir Llew Edwards, a former member for Ipswich and deputy premier. I and all of us in the LNP share his maiden speech sentiments where he spoke of the importance of the individual in that we must 'legislate to provide an equal opportunity for all' to 'acquire the knowledge to enable him or her to improve his or her station in life and as a result benefit the community in general'. I carry his extraordinary legacy of service to this state on my shoulders—from backing in Medibank to Expo 88 and South Bank and as chancellor of UQ.

That is where I will come to what I would like to achieve—my vision for our community. I want my area to remain a livable community with affordable housing in an incredible location. The people in my electorate are lucky to have everything so close, including schools, a university and job opportunities. I want to make sure they are all as easy to get to as possible, whether that is by road or public transport. Light rail has been transformative for the Gold Coast and we need it to maintain our lifestyle with the growth our city is experiencing. It must truly become the spine of our public transport system. I want to see it extend along Olsen Avenue to Harbour Town from the hospital. This essential connection could include stops at Southport Sharks and Central Street and would be a spur line of barely three kilometres in length. The Harbour Town area would be a hub and it would allow easier access to the tram network for people from Biggera Waters and further north. The data clearly shows that light rail works. People use it in huge numbers and it increases patronage on bus services as well. Quality public transport is important to making sure communities like mine are viable and livable.

Similarly, our local state roads are vital connections for our city. The industry along Brisbane Road in particular supports thousands of jobs and we need to make sure it is not a nightmare to get in and out of. I will be doing what I can and working with the City of Gold Coast to fix the intersections at Olsen Avenue, Captain Cook Drive and Hollywell Road and Brisbane Road itself. The M1 is a daily

nightmare for many people in Bonney. If there is a crash, there will be a blockage. It is clear we need an alternate route and I will advocate for the Intra-Regional Transport Corridor or Coomera Connector until it becomes a reality.

Community safety is a huge issue in my area, in particular around Labrador and Biggera Waters where the crime statistics are concerning. This not only impacts how people feel on their own streets and in their homes but goes to the reputation my community has more broadly. We need to change how we are perceived and we can all play a role in selling why we are so lucky to live where we do. From a government perspective, I would like to see more and better resourced police. I welcome the Queensland Police Service's purchase of a block of land in Arundel and the elite officers of the Rapid Action Patrol group who will soon call this facility home. Hopefully this means my community has some of the fastest police response times on the Gold Coast.

The Broadwater is one of our greatest assets and I think we could do a better job of enhancing it. I want to see what can be done through the Gold Coast Waterways Authority to allow it to undertake bigger projects than simply maintaining the navigation channels. Our side of politics has a great track record, having presided over the building of the world-leading sand bypass system. That was in the eighties and without it the Broadwater as we know it would not exist. It is a defining feature of the northern Gold Coast, which has unrivalled recreational usage. We should be driving the use of Doug Jennings Park, in particular getting more big events there. This will almost certainly involve access upgrades.

I am passionate to make sure that every child in our area has access to a world-class education system, so I will be making sure every promised project to my local schools is delivered, including the prep and special needs playground at Labrador State School, shade covers at Coombabah High, sorting out the hall at Arundel and upgrades at Musgrave Hill and Southport High. More broadly, I want to do what I can to engage young people in the process that determines so many aspects of their lives. Young people can often feel that the political sphere is out of their reach or, worse, that it is irrelevant. I want to engage them in politics so that their voices can be heard and they can feel empowered to make a difference. Being young myself gives me a unique opportunity to be part of this system with a relatively fresh set of eyes.

Bonney is named after one of the most remarkable women Queensland has produced—pioneering aviator Lores Bonney. Among other things, Lores was the first woman to fly from Australia to England and caught her passion for flying from Bert Hinkler. Funnily enough, Lores could not drive so she would hitch a ride with the milkman to the airport at Eagle Farm. Lores's other achievements include the longest one-day flight by an airwoman, being the first woman to circumnavigate Australia by air and completing the first flight from Australia to South Africa. She overcame her own disappointments in life to be a pioneer in aviation and in breaking barriers for women at the time. Her tenacity is one that I would like to adopt as I serve the good people of Bonney.

I am here because of the Liberal National Party—not just the organisation and its structures but especially because of the hardworking volunteers who give their time and effort. I will not be able to name everyone, but to everyone who has helped in any way, no matter how small, I very much appreciate it.

To those closest to me—Rod, Suzanne, Emily and Kathryn: it is hard to say just how lucky I am to have you in my life and I am grateful for the love and support you provided me during the campaign. My parents and sister in particular travelled down most weekends and they picked up a new fitness regime—letterboxing and doorknocking. Their work during the final two weeks, especially on pre-poll, was nothing short of extraordinary and the whole experience brought us closer together as a family.

My campaign manager, Pat Crotty, put in a huge effort and kept everything on track. I met Pat three years ago when he was my real estate agent while I was buying an apartment in Biggera Waters. When I was chosen by our local members, I knew I needed someone with experience to guide me and he was the natural choice with his no-nonsense approach and succinct feedback that is always appreciated.

The SEC chair, Kate Truelove, took over just as the campaign was firing up and did a fabulous job. For a new party unit, we can be proud of how well we are going and a large part of that is due to Kate's organisational skills. Rob Lumsden is the vice-chair, but he was really a jack-of-all-trades during the campaign. We had an impromptu campaign catch-up over a coffee or beer in almost every cafe or pub in Labrador more times than I can count and I truly value his friendship. The work that Rob and Ryan did with signage was phenomenal. It put my name recognition through the roof, painted the electorate a lovely shade of blue and also really complemented our issues campaign. Katrina and Ruth were also outstanding campaigners.

Nerida Smith is a fantastic secretary and the LNP is far better for having someone of her calibre as one of its members. I want to name a few others: Anne-Maree and Bill and, of course, my cousins Tommy and Issy; my uncle, Gary Edwards; Joan and Michael George; Simon Cowland-Cooper; Linda and Stuart Shave; Fran James; Jim and Cindy Sullivan; and Sarah and Bonnie, who travelled from interstate. They are all appreciated.

The Caldwell—Cameron, Warwick and Therese—are a family who were born to campaign and are extraordinary assets at a polling booth. My region is served well by Viv Grayson, with his calm and collected leadership style. There is rarely a meeting that he is not at, and I thank him for his guidance. Alec Pokarier and the YLNP provided many foot soldiers and I am grateful to have been around such a passionate and hardworking group of young people. Hopefully, I am still in this place by the time many of them begin their own parliamentary careers. My office is all set up and I have a fantastic team in Joe Wilkinson, Katie Omrod and Deb Rowles. We are all looking forward to serving our community.

I thank a few of my colleagues, especially my immediate northern neighbour, the member for Broadwater, for always being available for guidance and advice. I should also thank him because my best booth results were at his pre-poll. I do not know if that had anything to do with him. I also thank the member for Mudgeeraba for taking me under her wing and showing me some best practice campaigning and the member for Theodore for always checking in on how I was going. I am fortunate to sit with members who have decades of wisdom and experience. Mr Speaker, I will try my best to make sure I cause you less trouble than do two of them in particular, the member for Mermaid Beach and the member for Whitsunday.

I am sorry to say that for 21 of the 26 years that I have been alive we have seen Labor governments in Queensland. I have every confidence that our leadership team, guided by the member for Nanango, will have the best chance of bringing that to an end. I am humbled and proud to serve as Deb's shadow assistant minister and grateful to have her mentorship as I learn the ropes in this place.

Finally, I give my commitment to the people of Bonney. It is the greatest honour of my life to serve them in this parliament. I will remember that every day they allow me to stay here and be their voice. I am here because of them and that is what drives me. I will make myself as available as I can and encourage them to reach out to me. I will follow up their issues and advocate for their ideas. I will serve them with passion and do my best to make them proud.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the honourable member for Redlands, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and it should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (4.54 pm): Mr Speaker, thank you for your support during my campaign. It was wonderful to have you visit the Redlands. I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, the Turrbal and Jagera people, and, in doing so, pay my respects to elders of all cultures—those past and those whose wisdom guide us into the future. I would also like to acknowledge the first people of my home, the Quandamooka people—one of the world's oldest living cultures—who have for over 20,000 years cared for the lands and seas of Redlands.

It is a great privilege to be in this place. I would like to express my deepest gratitude and thanks to the people of Redlands for allowing me the opportunity to represent their community. It is also an honour to be the first woman elected to represent the Redlands in the Queensland parliament. I am a proud Redlands woman and I am proud to be part of the Labor Palaszczuk team, with its abundance of strong and capable women.

I have had the great fortune to work with and learn from many amazing women, many inspiring women, on my journey so far—women like Elizabeth Watson-Brown, Caroline Stalker and the many women of the Australian Labor Party movement—all pioneers in their fields of expertise, cracking large at the glass ceiling in the pursuit of fairness and equality. We know that on our side of the House—and we only need to take a look around this chamber—our record in diversity is undeniable. I would like to acknowledge the incredible achievements of our Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, and Deputy Premier, Jackie Trad, and thank them for placing their trust in me. I will not let them or the people of Redlands down.

From the outset, to the people of Redlands—those who voted for me and those who did not—I reconfirm my commitment and my promise to them that I will be the strong voice our community deserves. I will listen, engage, work hard and fight for the needs of this growing region in this place and

in my electorate. The people of Redlands have put their faith, hope and trust in me and the Labor team to continue to deliver for Queensland. I want them to know that I will always represent them in the best interests of our collective community. Those interests will be at the centre of my thoughts and in the heart of all of my activities and representation in this role as their member.

I believe a measure of one's success in this place is the legacy that is ultimately left behind. Whether I am here for this short term of two years and 10 months or if I am honoured to be here longer, the legacy that I will be working towards is one that I can be proud of, one that my family can be proud of, and, most importantly, one that my community can be proud of.

Five years ago, if people had asked me if I would be standing in this place as a member of parliament I would have said, 'Not likely,' and possibly thought they were a little crazy, because I have enjoyed a wonderful career in the architecture and design industry. It is an industry that, through good design, has the power to transform our cities and regions, creating better, stronger and more resilient communities. This week we are in the midst of the Asia Pacific Architecture Forum in Queensland and I am looking forward to attending some of those events that are focused on how architecture and design will continue to contribute positively to shaping our future, both in Queensland and across the Asia Pacific. We have in Queensland incredible expertise in subtropical design that is ready for export now.

Over the past two decades, I have enjoyed working for two large architectural practices driving business operations that have delivered locally, nationally and internationally award-winning projects, such as the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre; Townsville's Museum of Tropical Queensland; Winton's Australian Age of Dinosaurs museum; the Kurilpa and Goodwill bridges; Singapore's Helix Bridge and its exhibition centre; the Brisbane Magistrates Court; the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art; the Sunshine Coast University Hospital; the Gold Coast Aquatic Centre and the Anna Meares Velodrome for the Commonwealth Games to name just a few.

When I finished up at the end of last year, projects underway included the rebuild of the Waltzing Matilda Museum in Winton that burnt down in a fire, the National Maritime Museum of China in Tianjin and the Townsville stadium that will be home to your favourite team, Mr Speaker, the North Queensland Cowboys—all transformative projects for their regions, projects and planning that promote, connect and deliver on economic development for their communities.

I have been asked why I would want to put myself forward, why would I want to be a politician. For me the era of the Newman LNP government delivered that answer. For me it was a government that lacked transparency and accountability and was not a government for the people. It was the experience of that government that made it apparent to me, and apparent to many Queenslanders, that if you want to see good government then you have to get involved, you have to be part of the conversation, you have to be part of the debate; you cannot just sit back and lament the unjust.

Not only was there an appalling level of public and front-line service personnel let go during that period but there was also an absolutely chaotic approach to decisions surrounding the drivers of Queensland business and our economy. It was extraordinary. I witnessed major projects, including for the regions, simply stop—put on the shelf. I recall one project in particular where investment from all three levels of government had been secured, and we in this place know how difficult that is. It involved significant dollars and with the stroke of a pen it was shelved, pushing the flush button on millions in taxpayer and ratepayer dollars that had already been expended.

It was this experience, experiencing what bad government was, that motivated me to stand up and ensure that I played my part in seeing good government prevail. That is the why, that is my motivation: to ensure that good, fair government prevails. I feel honoured to have been given the opportunity by the people of Redland to be part of what has been good, stable government under the Labor Palaszczuk team.

Redlands has the most vibrant community heart. My community is a collective of generous and kind-hearted people. I speak for them when I say that we are optimistic about our future and the potential that we offer. Before the campaign, during the campaign and since the election I have been blessed with the opportunity to engage with so many fabulous and dedicated people and organisations.

Redlands is home to generous community groups, service groups, sporting clubs and volunteer organisations. We have a thriving and thumping heart. Our environment is spectacular. We are a hidden gem that has for some time flown under the radar. We have pristine wetlands, beaches and a stunning natural environment. Our region has the largest coastal fringe of any Queensland local government area and it is a region that is in part remote and complex but in whole unique and beautiful.

Redlands, once referred to as the salad bowl of South-East Queensland with its fertile red soil, today is a region that is rapidly urbanising. The suburbs of Thornlands, Victoria Point and Redland Bay fringe the Moreton Bay coastline and are the gateway to the Southern Moreton Bay Islands of Macleay, Russell, Lamb, Karragarra and Coochiemudlo. Like other regions, and as spectacular as we are, we are not without our challenges.

Our mainland has continued to grapple with change from rural farmlands and shire thinking to a region that is urbanising and has become more city in its thinking. It is fair to say that over the past decade we have been challenged in planning well and managing our growth. That is why it is disappointing that Malcolm Turnbull and the federal government continues to let Queenslanders down. Not supporting key infrastructure projects such as Cross River Rail just means there is less money in the pot for regions like the Redlands. Traffic congestion and transport are key challenges in the Redlands, as is road infrastructure keeping pace with new developments and about 70 per cent of our employed community leaving the city bounds daily for work. Our rate of growth over the past 10 years has been greater than the Queensland average of 1.9 per cent at 2.6 per cent. It really speaks to our growing pains.

The Redlands Hospital services my community well, but it too is feeling the pressure of growth. When Malcolm Turnbull and the federal government are preparing to cut massive amounts of dollars and Queensland's share of the GST and do not want to pay their outstanding health debts, I know it will be hospitals like the Redlands that will suffer. I would implore our fifth-term federal MP, Andrew Laming, to work harder in securing our fair share for Queensland. Perhaps he could work a little harder than he did when photoshopping my head on top of Kim Jong-Un's body.

Our Redlands environment is our most significant asset and opportunity. As I said, with a coastline larger than any other local government area in Queensland, it offers opportunity but currently it suffers from a lack of community infrastructure and waterfront activation. When we look up and down the coast, we see that Cairns has its Esplanade, Townsville has its Strand, Yeppoon has its new foreshore underway, and Redcliffe, Wynnum, Manly and the Broadwater Parklands are all exemplars of celebrating their waterfront environments. Redlands needs more community infrastructure and Weinam Creek in Redland Bay certainly offers that potential. What could be a spectacular gateway to our Redlands coast and its island gems currently looks a little bit like a used car parking lot. We can and we must do better to ensure that Redlands is a destination on everybody's list.

Island living is a dream but it too has its challenges. Our islands are only accessible by traversing the magnificent Moreton Bay. This remoteness and complexity in connection creates a number of challenges to residential island living for our 10,000 locals living on the islands and to their tourism potential. Ferries, barges, boat ramps, entry and exit points and access to services are all challenges in an island context.

Last week I had the chance to check out the new autonomous vehicles being trialled in Cleveland. These are currently being used in cities around the world like Singapore, at Marina Bay. These shifts in technologies are opportunities for the Redlands. They provide remote locations with the chance to think differently about how transport and service problems can be solved with technological advancement.

Without wanting to sound too repetitive, I want to make sure my message is clear: Redlands presents an enormous opportunity to broader South-East Queensland, particularly with our state's focus on tourism as a key pillar of the economy. Moreton Bay and its islands are the heart of Quandamooka country comprised of offshore reefs, internationally significant wetlands, seagrass meadows and sandy beaches. These make our region a haven for wildlife and a haven for people. Our bay and its islands hold significant importance in Queensland's history and we love our annual celebration of Matthew Flinders' landing on Coochie.

We present Queensland's most significant cultural and ecotourism potential. We are less than 30 minutes from Brisbane's airport and the Port of Brisbane. We are an authentic Queensland tourism potential. We can play our part in servicing the additional 1.4 million tourists that Brisbane is expecting by 2022 with the completion of Queen's Wharf, which we know is set to transform the Brisbane CBD, and those arriving on the back of the success of the Commonwealth Games, which we know is only 11 short sleeps away.

Our local economy is currently underpinned by construction, teachers, retailers and hospitality as the top four industries of employment. We need to grow our local economy and local jobs. Naturally fitting industries like tourism, film, creative industries, education, health and environment all offer genuine potential in the Redlands. We are any investor or business's dream with the ability to deliver

on a coastal lifestyle where you can work, live and play. We are experiencing some of these opportunities now, but we must be vigilant in continuing to position ourselves. We have emerging industries like the film industry and it was fantastic to meet last week with the local Cleveland Film Company that is just starting up out in the Redlands.

My region and its stunning coastal environment is in the top five Queensland locations for filming. Again, this time I want to be clear on the repetition: it is disappointing that Malcolm Turnbull and the federal government did not support *Dora the Explorer* and our efforts to grow the film industry here in Queensland which we know is a vital area of jobs growth both here in Queensland and for the Redlands. Our shores have been host to international blockbusters that include *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales*; DC Comics *Aquaman*; *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*; Angelina Jolie's *Unbroken*; and we are just about ready for Netflix's *Tidelands* series, which will be filmed in various locations across the Redlands.

As members have heard, there is an awful lot to be excited about in the Redlands. My very wise friend now passed, Peter Hale, who I had the joy of working with for many years, would constantly remind me that challenges were only an opportunity to think better, create better and deliver better. I know that I will be working hard day in, day out to find solutions to the complex challenges we face. Redlands is a distinctive thread in the fabric of South-East Queensland. We have a magnificent environment and an enviable lifestyle and we offer huge potential waiting to be harnessed.

As we all in this place know, it is the incredible team behind each of us that sees us here today. To my team, and there are many of them here in the gallery today, thank you for your support, enthusiasm, for rallying when needed and cheering loudly and proudly. Without your ongoing support and friendship I could not have achieved this result. We talked, we sang, we stood, we sat, we were rained on, we were sunburnt, we bowled, we doorknocked, we waved, we had early mornings and late evenings, copious cups of coffee, numerous ferry rides, we played trivia with various degrees of success and we listened, but most importantly we connected with our Redlands community.

There are so many people to thank. An army of 150 volunteers helped on pre-poll and election days at 11 booths. If I have forgotten anybody, I apologise now and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. It was the Redlands Labor branch at its finest. Special thanks go to Gael and Mike Ewer, who are stalwarts of the Labor Party movement. I pay special tribute to Mike's dad, Harold, who sadly passed away two weeks ago at the age of 100. Late last year I got to share his 100th birthday with him. What a fabulous life he led.

To Tony, Alex and Pat Newman: seriously, I do not know where to start. For sharing your wife and mum with me and for digging deep across the campaign, thank you again, from the bottom of my heart. To Stephanie and Mike Morris: you are simply incredible. We had very unattractive 3 am starts to nab pole position on the roadside. It is lucky that we love the early mornings as much as Andrew Laming did, although he was not the candidate. Stephanie, I am indeed lucky to have you on my team.

I thank our Young Labor team. Jasper Every stepped up as my field organiser. Jasper, you are an inspiration and one to watch out for in the future. Thanks also go to Kathryn for sharing her son with me and for her help. Jasper, I am grateful for your ongoing support, passion and enthusiasm to grow our Labor movement in the Redlands and the important values that we stand for.

To MacGregor Cross and Col Hubbard, you both have an incredible depth of talent and phone manners that would be the envy of many. I thank Andrew and Jill Aitkin. Jill, we have managed to let loose an unknown passion for roadside campaigning. Thank you to you both. To Trevor Surplice and Pat and Irvine Sommerville: thank you for your support. Pat, your fundraising efforts were fantastic.

To Sheena and Lance Hewlett, my deep and sincere thanks for your support and friendship. To Linda White and Di Thompson: your extraordinary and deep passion for making our community great is second to none. A special thanks goes to Doreen Awabdy. To Mike Williamson, Shiannon and Mark Corcoran, Sylvia and Laurie Vella, Yvonne, Linda, Lindsay, Ellie, Paula, Dee and Shirley: thank you for your ongoing support, care and friendship.

I am continually thankful for the ongoing friendship, support and island knowledge of Tanja and Brad Gooj and David Cross from Macleay Island. I take this moment to also acknowledge David's wife, Anne Cross, who was a tremendous Labor stalwart of the islands and who sadly passed away over Christmas. To David I offer my most sincere condolences. Anne will be sadly missed by our Labor Party.

To Yvonne Beckett, Margaret Kemp, Rose Doyle, Evelyn Dowling, Keith Mills and Ian Larkman of Russell Island: your passion is incredible and I thank you for your support. To Tony Gilson: you are the Lamb Island Lone Ranger, single-handedly managing the booth and I thank you. I thank the wonderful Keith Stebbins, Margaret Giles, Anne Wright and Marg Anderson from Coochie: you guys are legends.

A huge thank you goes to my neighbours Don Brown—I would not be here today without his support—and Mick de Brenni, as well as to Evan Moorhead, Sharon Humphreys, Adam Obeid, Jules Campbell and senators Claire Moore, Murray Watt and Anthony Chisholm. Their wisdom, advice and guidance continue to be invaluable.

Our campaign was honest and grassroots. It was wonderful to see members from the entire Bowman branch come together. I think what sets Labor apart, not only here in Queensland but also across Australia—we are a party that is united. Thank you to those who also took time out from the other campaigns. I was pinching them a little bit, at times. Thank you nonetheless to Irene Henley, Jesse and Kim McNamara, Alex Smock, Tony Sweet, Merv and Hang King, Richard Andrews, Alan Roache, Mark and Tracey Huges, Anne-Maree, Kathryn and James Allan. Thank you all so much.

The amazing team at United Voice have been incredible supporters. I thank Gary Bulloch, Sharon Caddie, Sheila Hunter, Hannah, Samarah, Jane, Liz, Kelly, Ray, Lucas, Chris, Isaac and, of course, the amazing Jeanette Temperley. Jeanette, we really did not know the journey that lay ahead of us in 2015 over that cup of coffee. I hope you are proud of what you have unleashed. I know that I am proud to be part of a union that day in, day out is working for Queenslanders to create better lives through better employment conditions and wages, which we sometimes take for granted. Thanks also to the FSU for their support.

To my former colleagues—some here in the chamber today, Richard, Brendan, Tim, Philip and Patrick: thank you for your patience, your flexibility and your support. I could not have done this without you, either. The year of 2017 was very big for us all. Thank you to my dear friends and unwavering supporters, Sandy and Rob Box, Penny, Mark and the whole Lindsay family, Christina, Rei and Mrs Cho, Desi, Alice, Tanya, Karen and Casey Vallance, and a special shout out to Eskimo the samoyed, our office dog. He was indeed a big hit wherever he went in his big bright red T-shirt.

As everyone in this House knows, the support and love of your family is essential. Therefore, to my mum, Lynne, watching from home, my son, Luke, and partner, Shayne: words do not express how thankful I am for your love and support as I continue to take you all on this sometimes crazy but nonetheless exciting journey with me. To my son, Luke: I know you are watching this on Parliament.TV in Sydney. You are my proudest achievement. For a young man, your kindness, your lens of fairness and caring for others inspires me and will be how I continue to approach every day as the member for Redlands.

To Mum and Shayne: you both have the patience of saints, for which I am eternally grateful. The three of you know that I could not have achieved this result without you behind me, supporting me, barracking for me and working with me. You are my rocks.

I thank my sister, Rachael, and nieces, Jessica and Jodie in Cairns. Your support was great. Like me, my sister loves to have a chat and was great on the phones. I thank her. Thanks also to my extended family in Melbourne for their long-distance cheering. My dad, who was my best friend, instilled in me the importance of a strong work ethic and a spirit of generosity. Dad, I know that you would be proud and that you are smiling down from the stars.

Last and by no means least, my most heartfelt and deepest thanks go to my friend and mentor, my campaign manager, Meredith Newman. Meredith is in the gallery, with me in the chamber today. It is rare to find someone so special, someone who cares so deeply and someone who selflessly invests in getting the best for others. Meredith, you and your family hold a special place in my heart. Meredith took three months long service leave to manage my campaign. I thank her for her sheer dedication and belief in me. Meredith was there with me every step of the way. She was there lifting me up when I was low, guiding me when I was unsure and celebrating with me on the highs. All my love, Meredith, and thank you.

Finally, and to finish where I started, thank you again to the people of Redlands for your faith and trust in me. I promise I will not let you down. Together we are going to continue to forge a strong community and work together to leave an amazing legacy for our children and future generations in Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the honourable member for Hinchinbrook, I remind members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (5.19 pm): I am greatly humbled to be able to deliver my first speech having been elected by the people of Hinchinbrook to represent them in the Legislative Assembly of the 56th Parliament. Where I come from we consider it God's country—from the cane fields that stretch along the mighty Herbert River to the grandness of Hinchinbrook Island, Australia's largest island national park. This place is special in so many ways. Our region captures dry cattle country and extends from the Wet Tropics to the Great Barrier Reef. You will not find a more diverse landscape. I believe this makes the electorate arguably the best place in the world to live.

As a born and bred North Queenslander, I might be a little biased: I know from my travels that I would not want to call any other place home. We live in Hinchinbrook because we love the North Queensland lifestyle. We ride motorbikes, we go four-wheel driving, we enjoy fishing and camping and we like to hunt and shoot rifles. North Queenslanders love their footy and we choose to spend our days in the outdoors. Unfortunately, our way of life has been under fire for too long. I will fight to ensure our way of life is protected and, in some cases, reinstated.

Hinchinbrook has recently experienced a boundary change due to the electoral redistribution which has seen the dynamics of the electorate change significantly. For the first time the seat takes Hinchinbrook—and the Katter's Australian Party—into dense metropolitan Queensland. The electorate includes the Hinchinbrook Shire Council and the Cassowary Coast Regional Council to the north and Townsville City Council to the south. From Lower Tully to the Bohle River, the electorate spans 205 kilometre from top to bottom, with 33,000 people calling Hinchinbrook home.

More than 50 years ago Australian author Donald Horne wrote a book called *The Lucky Country*. That phrase has become such a part of Aussie vernacular that it is hard to believe it has not been around forever. In the 1960s, my nonno—that is Italian for grandfather—was making his way to Australia, escaping the ruins of war-torn Italy in the hope of a better life in the Lucky Country. My nonno talked to me a lot about the Lucky Country—the place he migrated to and prospered in, unlike the book. His version was incredibly different from the country Horne was thinking about when he wrote his book. The original term, the 'Lucky Country', was not a compliment. In his book, Horne wrote—

Australia is a lucky country run mainly by second rate people who share its luck. It lives on other people's ideas, and, although it's ordinary people are adaptable, most of its leaders (in all fields) so lack curiosity about the events that surround them that they are often taken by surprise.

It was a major dis of Australia, its people, and especially its leaders. In typical Aussie fashion, we took Horne's phrase as a compliment.

My nonno taught me that we lived in a place where if you worked hard, you would get ahead. As the years rolled on, Australia began to change and so did my nonno's belief in the Lucky Country. As he would often say, 'God help Australia.' I am determined to hold on to my nonno's original version and see to doing my part to restore the ideal of the Lucky Country, but I am concerned, as Horne suggested, that our leaders are not leading us in the right direction. That is why I stood with Katter's Australian Party to fight to become the member for Hinchinbrook. I am worried that, unless we implement real change, our proud version of the Lucky Country will be a story my great-grandchildren will barely believe.

I remember not so long ago a time when you could get ahead on hard work alone. Those days are becoming a distant memory. Now, mums and dads work 50 hours each a week just to pay the mortgage, while daycare centres raise their kids. In some cases the system is so broken that some mothers and fathers are forced to give up work because the daycare costs outweigh their wages. A family working this hard should be living like kings. Instead, they are trying to pick up extra shifts just to pay the power bill. Farmers work seven days a week only to be ripped off at the farm gate by multinationals.

The other day I attended a jobs seminar where a drop in unemployment was being celebrated by those on both sides of the fence. As I analysed the data presented to me I could not help noticing what jobs were on the increase and what jobs were on the steep decline. We are seeing a large drop in mining, construction and manufacturing roles, which historically netted families a \$100,000-per-year income, with a trending increase in more government based and hospital positions with an average income of \$60,000 per year gross. It might make the bean counters feel all warm and fuzzy inside watching the unemployment statistics drop, but it is no wonder we are still seeing a struggling economy. Families no longer have an expendable income, which hurts small business.

I see no problem in bringing down wages if we are going to also find ways to bring down the cost of living. The jump in the price of the goods and services we all need to survive is crippling average Queenslanders as multinationals, banks and insurance companies get rich off our suffering. Many people in my patch are paying off homes they bought during the mining boom on heavily deflated incomes. Maybe Horne was right—maybe we are just a bunch of idiots and the only lucky thing about this place is that we have got away with this for so long. I am desperate to prove Horne wrong, and so should other members.

The 'tiger in my tank' as KAP's federal leader, Bob Katter, would say, has been with me since I was young. I grew up at Hawkins Creek near Ingham on a cane farm owned by the Dametto family. This was a time where common sense reigned true and the waterways were a safe place for kids to swim and wade in knee-deep water fishing until dark along the Herbert River and a child learnt how to shoot and respect a firearm.

My beautiful mother, Lois Elizabeth Dametto, raised me. She was a hardworking single mum who did all she could to provide the very best she could for her children, even if that meant she often missed out. I was brought up on good Christian morals and dragged to church on Sunday at the Church of St Peter, Halifax. I was taught that manners were free, and that they would open more doors than golden keys. I learned from a young age that we were not well off. We did not drive a new car and sometimes we wore clothes from St Vincent de Paul. If I wanted to have anything extra in life, then I knew I was going to have to work hard for it. More than ever, I am so glad to have the upbringing I had.

I believe a lot of politicians are born with silver spoons in their mouths and do not know what it is like to wait for the next pay cheque to be able to afford groceries. I am proud that nothing in life has been handed to me. From the age of 15 I worked every afternoon after school at the local Repco spare parts shop and later Friday nights at the local bakery. I also did Saturdays at Chandlers electrical and whitegoods store. Hard work—this is how my nonno taught me to get ahead in the Lucky Country.

My dad was not always around, but when he was I tried my best to learn what I could from him. His charisma and drive gave me the inspiration to try anything. His willingness to have a go gave me a real world education in charter boats, house renovations, banana farming and life. He taught me how to shake a man's hand and look him in the eye when you speak and to keep your word because, let us be honest, your word is all you really have. There are two types of people in this world—doers and gunna doers.

Those lessons and those from my mum and Nonno have got me through many situations, including a major curve ball in my late teens. Alicia Maree Garutti, now Dametto, and I fell in love in high school. We got the shock of our young lives when we became parents at the age of 18. I am very proud to call Alicia my wife. We are relatively new to politics, but I am already aware of what a difference it makes to have a supportive partner. Alicia, thank you for everything.

Our son, Deekin, is nearly 17. Mate, there is no denying you were a surprise, but you are the best thing that ever happened to us and you have grown up to be a great young man. You make us proud every day. You are your own person and all I wish is that you learn from me the lessons I have had to teach myself. This, I believe, will halve your time in finding success in life. Being a young parent comes with enormous struggles. I am sure anyone who has been through this will understand. For it to work you have to grow up quite fast. With hard work and support from both our families, we have made it work.

I completed my schooling at Gilroy Santa Maria College in Ingham in 2000 and recently had an opportunity to attend their year 12 induction mass. I reflected with an old schoolteacher. I said if I had one message to give to the students it would be, 'You don't need to do well at school to be successful in life, but to be successful in life you're going to have to learn the content you should have learnt while at school, but in your own time. Let me tell you, you're best off learning it while you have a teacher there to teach it to you.'

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DAMETTO: We all learned the hard way, didn't we? I was blessed to be given the opportunity in 2001 to start an apprenticeship with CSR Victoria Sugar Mill as a mechanical fitter and fabricator. On completion of my apprenticeship in 2005, I decided to move to Townsville and chase the holy dollar into the depths of the mining industry. I spent 10 years working in the mining and construction industry. Mining took me from two kilometres underground in the north-west Queensland minerals province to 50-plus degree heat and the sweeping red dirt plains of the Pilbara region in Western Australia. Both environments were as harsh as each other, but I kept my eye on the financial prize. My nonno's words stuck with me: 'This is the Lucky Country where hard work pays off.'

As the mining boom bubble burst, the crash was just around the corner, and those who did not see it coming were left on struggle street as overinflated housing prices crippled families, as I can assure you that wages dropped but monthly repayments did not. What I was seeing around me worried me, but I did not give up. That was not the answer. In 2016, my passion for my local area and creating change saw me start a new business venture. I have always loved the ocean and considered the magnificent waterways that surround Townsville to be a world-beating attraction. With the closure of prominent mine sites and refineries that fuelled the Townsville economy, I saw an opportunity for our city to redefine itself and reinvent itself as a tourism destination.

One day when I was walking along the Townsville Strand I noticed an older gentleman who seemed a little lost. I asked, 'Can I help you, sir?' He responded in the strongest American accent, 'Where are all the people, man? This place is prettier than Hawaii. This place should be buzzing.' I could not agree more. I decided to start Townsville WaterSports, which specialised in guided jet ski tours. It was lucky that I was raised on a diet of hard work because anyone who has been in the trenches of running a small business knows that it is not easy. Yes, it was hard going, but I loved it. I was doing what inspired me—being out on the water, promoting my region and meeting people from all walks of life. I was sharing an experience with people that they would remember for the rest of their lives.

I had traded the long pants and hi-vis orange shirts of my construction days for suncream and smiles—but more and more I was becoming distressed with what I was seeing around me in the wider community. I was seeing a state being sold off to foreigners, farmers on their knees and hardworking families struggling to pay the bills. What I was seeing around me was looking more and more like Donald Horne's version of the Lucky Country and less like my nonno's version. This is when I decided that I wanted do more for my community, so I decided to run for Katter's Australian Party for the seat of Hinchinbrook.

I intend to lead and not take my fellow countrymen for a fool and I will no longer ride this Lucky Country wave with my eyes closed because the inevitable crash of misfortune is just around the corner, ladies and gentlemen. If we as leaders do not take charge and steer this state in the right direction, unfortunately we all prove Donald Horne right while the world mocks the Lucky Country. How do we fix it? Well, we can start by putting politics aside. We can start working together to do what is best for our communities, for this state and, inevitably, for this country. You might laugh at the idea and say, 'This guy is a bit naive, and he doesn't know how it works down here.' What I do know is that the way it has been operating has not been working, especially for North Queensland. It most definitely has not turned this place into the Lucky Country that it could be.

Actually I have been quite naive when it comes to politics. It infuriates me to learn that in the last parliament, when my Katter's Australian Party colleagues, Robbie Katter and Shane Knuth, introduced bills that would be good for regional Queensland, the major parties voted them down, more or less because they did not want to see KAP put runs on the board. They were worried about losing a few votes to KAP at the next election. Guess what? Here I am. Is it a testament to our hard work in the north or a lack of support from both sides in this place for North Queensland's fair share? If anyone in this parliament puts forward good ideas and good legislation that will bring us closer to being the lucky country, I will support it because then we all win. We have less than three years here. If we put all of our time and energy into doing positive things for our communities, for this state and for this country, we will all be better off.

To every KAP supporter and member, booth worker, pamphlet deliverer and person who erected a corflute sign: thank you. I will not let you down. I would like to give a special mention to Sarah Mennie, who helped us along the way. I give a special thanks to Yolanda DeLuca, my sister and my campaign manager. I think we might have broken the record on this one. The night I called on you to run a 3½-week campaign on a shoestring budget I knew we must have been insane to take on such a monumental task. I know that we have both found great joy in silencing the critics and got it done when they said we could not. How did we do it? With good old-fashioned hard work and things we both picked up from running small businesses.

For all those who have helped me because you could see that the way things were being done was not getting us anywhere, I will not give up. I would like to give a special thank you to my mother, my mother-in-law, Mandy Garutti, and my sister-in-law, Cassandra Lenzo, for manning the pre-polling booths at Ingham. I believe that with your help we got this over the line. As is the Katter's Australian Party way, I will always vote in the best interests of my electorate. I believe that before anyone in this place is allowed to vote on something that affects people's way of life or their livelihood they should at least take the time to walk a day in their shoes.

To Bob Katter, thank you for fighting the good fight for the Lucky Country for now 45 years. Thank you for never giving up and for giving me a chance, for tapping me on the shoulder and asking me to stand up. You have changed my life. To my colleagues Robbie Katter and Shane Knuth, thank you for your support, for getting me this far and for teaching me that it should not be about politics; instead it should be about the people we represent. Most of all, thank you to my mum and my nonno for giving me hope for the Lucky Country and for teaching me right from wrong and that you fight until the end.

Debate, on motion of Mr Dametto, adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION (VALIDATION OF RATES AND CHARGES) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 493, on motion of Mr Hinchliffe—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (5.38 pm): In speaking to the Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill 2018, we have to acknowledge that this legislation is to fix up a bungle. It is retrospective legislation. Retrospective legislation is an anathema. It is not something that we want to see go unmentioned when it comes before the House because the very nature of retrospective legislation is really an acknowledgement that something has gone wrong which should not have gone wrong.

While we are supporting this legislation before the House, it is not because we believe that retrospective legislation is a good idea but because the mistakes that have been made could cause greater harm if left unaddressed. The legislation is before the House because of the shemozzle that has occurred. A number of local governments have failed in their duties. This state government now has to bring in retrospective legislation to ensure that where rates and charges have been levied by councils without the appropriate motions being passed, those rates and charges will be legal. Without this legislation they would have been illegal.

Local government is not above the law, and no government should be. This legislation seeks to fix a debacle in which many councils have failed to properly pass these resolutions to levy the rates and charges. It is not just a technicality. This issue is about transparency. It is about a transparency measure that is required by law to help enhance the scrutiny of councils' finances. While most councils have done the right thing professionally to ensure compliance, I think this debacle in which at least 25 councils have not complied is just the canary in a cage; it is a warning that simple compliance measures with regard to legal requirements have not been met by many local governments. This raises further concerns about what other issues of compliance exist—significant issues of compliance.

The legislation we are talking about that required the councils to appropriately pass resolutions allowing for levies and charges in a particular format was not an onerous regulatory requirement. It was not an onerous requirement at all. We have to ask: if there are highly paid staff in a number of councils—and councillors are also not absolved of their responsibility—if there is a number of highly paid chief financial officers, CEOs and compliance officers in those councils who failed to pick up on this basic compliance measure, what other issues of compliance are there? We have to ask that question.

Putting it in context, the majority of councils have done the right thing. However, as a result of a local government being taken to court because they failed to meet these legal requirements, it was found in a desktop audit by government that 25 other councils have also failed in their legal responsibilities to appropriately pass not just their budgets but the rates and charges regime via the appropriate resolution.

This is a canary in a cage that has flagged that the state government and the department of local government have failed in terms of monitoring that compliance. That is a question we have to ask: what other compliance issues are there? I put to the minister that the legislative requirement that asks that there be a separate resolution for rates and charges is really a measure to provide ratepayers—and councillors—the opportunity of greater scrutiny of their councils. We have a right in this parliament now to ask: which are the other 25 councils that have failed to meet their legislative requirements?

A government member interjected.

Ms SIMPSON: Thank you, Minister. I appreciate that indication from across the floor that that advice will be provided.

I also acknowledge the work of the committee in identifying the need for greater education of the compliance regime with respect to councils. That has been put to government and government has indicated they will be following that up. I also come back to the other question that has to be asked: how many other people may be caught midway through legal action now that this retrospective legislation is going through this House? I put that question to the minister as well. As I said, we do not like to see retrospective legislation brought before this House where there has been a shemozzle, but it has been acknowledged that there is the potential for greater harm for the ratepayers of those councils. If this is not fixed, they could face quite a significant financial impact.

Going forward, we acknowledge the importance of local governments in our community. However, they have to comply with the law and ensure that their staff and their councillors understand their legal and fiduciary duties and responsibilities and that those requirements are appropriately met. I believe this legislation is an unfortunate mechanism to make up for the shemozzle that has occurred.

The greater question of why these issues of compliance were not picked up earlier still has to be addressed. Therefore, potentially there are other areas of compliance in which some councils may still be failing. This should not have been that hard. That concerns me because we want to make sure that whatever level of government is involved—in this case local government—it obeys the law. Not only does that set an example to the community over which they have control but they should do the right thing and be transparent in all of their actions in ensuring they provide good public service for the people who pay their wage.

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (5.45 pm): Firstly, I am absolutely honoured to participate in this enthusiastic and very important debate. I acknowledge the fine points made by my learned colleague on the other side of the chamber. I stand in support of the Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill 2018. I will run through a few points, and I think they are important. Having sat here for a number of hours and listened to a number of previous speakers I do feel there may be some repetitive points, but I do not feel I am labouring the point.

On 6 November 2017, the Supreme Court of Queensland delivered its judgement in the matter of Linville Holdings Pty Ltd v Fraser Coast Regional Council. The court declared that for each of the financial years ending 30 June 2015 to 30 June 2017 the Fraser Coast Regional Council failed to validly make and levy rates and charges within its local government area because it did not decide by resolution at its budget meeting for that year what rates and charges were to be levied, as required by section 94 of the Local Government Act.

I have sat on a number of boards for statutory government organisations and also not-for-profit organisations. Particularly when it comes to budgets, resolutions are fundamental. Like the majority of people in this chamber, I share the concerns about the gross inefficiency in this area but I also recognise the importance of this legislation which seeks to tidy up those areas. I do not go looking for blame, but I think it is important that we acknowledge the gross inefficiencies here. The purpose of this amendment is to ensure we outlaw them and make sure they do not occur again.

It is also important to note that the court's declaration applies to the Fraser Coast Regional Council. Other local governments that may have constructed their resolutions with similar deficiencies to those outlined in the court's decision may be affected if similar declarations are made in relation to those local governments' rates and charges.

The bill also declares that anything done, or to be done, in relation to a rate or charge is as valid as it would have been, or would be, if the local government had decided to levy the rate or charge by resolution at the local government's budget meeting for the financial year under the City of Brisbane Act 2010. The proposed amendments will operate retrospectively. Section 4(2)(a) of the Legislative Standards Act 1992 requires legislation to have sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals. Section 4(3)(g) of the same act provides that whether the legislation has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals depends on whether, for example, the legislation does not adversely affect the rights and liberties or impose obligations retrospectively.

Without the amendments, the Fraser Coast Regional Council and other local governments which may have constructed their resolutions in a way that has similar deficiencies to those outlined in the court's decision may be at risk of legal action for the recovery of rates and charges paid by ratepayers, impacting adversely on the financial liquidity of these local government organisations.

Accordingly, in these circumstances the amendments have sufficient regard to the fundamental legislative principles stated in section 4(2)(a) of the Legislative Standards Act because of the need to provide financial surety to local governments, which I am sure everybody would clearly understand.

The Local Government Association of Queensland and Brisbane City Council have been consulted and support the policy objectives of the bill. Consultation on drafting issues is continuing prior to the proposed introduction of the bill. I would like to state from the outset that, as has been stated by the member for Pine Rivers, 25 councils have levied rates and charges that have not been in accordance with the guidelines. We in this chamber have the responsibility to ensure that those guidelines and processes are followed and that they are appropriate.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the work of members on both sides of the chamber who contributed to the committee. It was no doubt a very arduous task. From my learned colleague, the member for Logan who chaired that group, the contribution was terrific. I would also like to acknowledge that this is sensible legislation. This is what the people of Queensland expect us to do in this chamber, so I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (5.50 pm): I also rise to make a very short contribution and speak in favour of the Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill 2018. I do not intend to cover the bill in detail. Others before me have done it and done it well. The member for Cairns just made a good contribution. Whilst philosophically I do not like any retrospectivity in legislation, I will accept it when it is to effectively state what was always the intent. Clearly the intent when a council tables its rates for the year is to levy what it sees as a reasonable contribution for its residents to pay. I am sure the Fraser Coast Council did so in good faith, as would the other couple of dozen councils we have spoken about.

My contribution today concerns local government in general. Whilst it is important to change legislation when needed, I will not stand here and say that local government in this state is broken. As I look around this chamber I see that we are in good hands. There are over a dozen people with experience in local councils from both sides of politics, from the crossbench and people who have represented the largest council in the nation, including the member for Clayfield, to smaller country councils, mayors, deputy mayors, councillors and aldermen. We are well served.

What I do not want to see is somehow the autonomy of local government eroded piece by piece. I will not stand by and allow things like that and the behaviour of a handful of bad individuals to be used as a stalking horse for this place to claw back power from our councils. We should never stand for that. Faced with the choice of people being able to pass judgement on mayors and councillors who they can elect and hold accountable every four years and a minister living in Brisbane, albeit well intentioned, I will always choose the mayor and councillor. That was my view even when I was in that role and I will always defend it.

How much do people believe in councils? I will tell you how much they believe in them. Around this state when there were forced amalgamations we saw communities rise up in anger. How angry were they? Years after they were prepared to reach into their pockets and pay for de-amalgamation even when they knew it was going to cost them some money up-front, so they are passionate about it. I do not for one moment suggest that everyone in this place is perfect or that everybody in councils is perfect, but I will say that fundamentally the people who take up those very highly regarded positions as mayors and councillors do so with the best of intentions, and I am sure the dozen or more people from this place did the same.

In closing, I fully support this bill. An error was made and the minister is doing the right thing in tidying it up to ensure that there is not pandemonium on the rates front. It is retrospective, but it does restore the intent that was always there in the first place. Long may the autonomy of local government continue in this great state!

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLiffe** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.54 pm), in reply: I thank all members who contributed to the debate on the Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill 2018. In my opening remarks I emphasised that Queensland local governments must be financially sustainable in order to function effectively. This bill addresses the potentially serious financial exposure of Queensland councils following the Supreme Court of Queensland's decision in Linville Holdings Pty Ltd v Fraser Coast Regional Council. The case for retrospective legislation is clear, and I do think the member for Maroochydore made that point during her contribution. It has also clearly been supported by the Economics and Governance Committee in its report on the bill. I again thank the committee for its thorough consideration of the bill. In partnership with the LGAQ the government also looks forward to continuing its valuable work assisting councils across the state to make resolutions in line with the legislation.

Many members spoke about the desktop audit that was undertaken by my department. That desktop audit identified 25 councils that we believe did not levy rates and charges in accordance with section 94 of the Local Government Act. I do want to address these remarks in response to queries from the member for Warrego and others, but the ultimate arbiter of a rating resolution's validity is the court. I wish to stress that the courts have not been asked to consider the validity of all councils identified in the desktop audit: only the Fraser Coast Regional Council. In the interests of transparency and accountability that I wish to be the watchword not only of local government throughout state but of our government, I table a list of the 26 councils identified by the desktop audit, including the Fraser Coast Regional Council.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Councils Identified by Desktop Audit' [389].

I can further advise and confirm to the House—because it was raised by a couple of members who may have missed it in my earlier contribution—that the ratings master class that has been developed by the LGAQ will be held on 5 April.

A number of members raised the issue of the bill's retrospectivity and whether this bill should or could have provided retrospective validation for other deficit resolutions. In particular I note the contribution from the member for Mermaid Beach. Again I would say that the bill in its current form is deliberately narrow. It is designed to address the very specific concerns of the Linville case. It is important to keep this scope narrow given the retrospectivity of the legislation. I think that addresses a concern or a plea—I am not sure which it was—that was raised by the member for Maroochydore. This bill respects the longstanding practices of the parliament to only legislate retrospectively in very specific circumstances. This bill is about ensuring the financial sustainability of local governments, not fixing every rating error.

My department is always available to assist councils. Councils seek legal and procedural advice on an hourly basis before making resolutions, and I encourage councils to continue to do so if they are unsure about their legal obligations. There is no evidence of a lack of supervision and a lack of support from the department in this matter.

In response to the member for Mermaid Beach I can advise, for instance, that on 13 November 2017, the director-general of the former DILGIP wrote to the CEOs of all councils reminding them of the requirement for a clear and specific resolution to adopt rates and charges separate from the budget resolution. There should be no doubt held by any council as to the current legislative requirements; nonetheless, advice to councils will continue. My department will work in partnership with the LGAQ to provide ongoing advice to councils about the correct levying of rates and charges. The department will also provide advice to councils through its website, bulletins and letters on rating resolutions to ensure that future resolutions comply with the Local Government Act 2009 and the City of Brisbane Act 2010.

The members for Warrego and Mermaid Beach queried whether this bill will rectify all possible deficiencies in council resolutions, and I addressed that earlier. The member for Mermaid Beach also specifically asked that all charges levied by all councils over many years be covered by the bill. As I said, the bill remains deliberately narrow so it does not unintentionally capture resolutions or practices that may otherwise be inappropriate.

In response to the member for Maroochydore's question, potentially a couple of legal matters arise which are out there in relation to rates or charges that have been raised by councils. They do not relate to this narrow issue of the Linville case. I am advised that there are no legal actions that the department is aware of that relate to the Linville matter and its principles.

The member for Pine Rivers spoke of the need to restore confidence in local government. I wholeheartedly agree with that sentiment. In reflection of the member for Broadwater's comments at the end of the debate in relation to making sure that the independence of local government is upheld, that is very important. We need confidence in that level of government to ensure that we retain the highest levels of independence and self-reliance for that level of government.

I note the comments of the member for Gregory and wholeheartedly agree with him in regards to his reflections on the fact that local government is about more than rates, roads and rubbish. The scope of issues of local governments is broad and in the cases of many council they deal with a relatively small staffing base. It is important that we acknowledge and celebrate that. It is equally important that we acknowledge the point raised by the member for Bancroft about the long-term financial sustainability and security of local governments across Queensland. I assure all members of the House that this is something of which the Palaszczuk government is acutely aware and we always work with local governments to address these issues, which is also why this bill is so important to give stability to councils.

I also take this opportunity to address the member for Gympie's comments. For the member to come into this chamber and attack the integrity of public servants and point the finger at specific people as he did shows, frankly, that the LNP has not learnt anything from its time in opposition. In response to the member for Gympie, it is not the role of the state to double-check resolutions of councils before they are made. Given the sheer number in any one month, this would be an impossible task.

As we heard from the member for Broadwater, councils are separate legal entities and it is their role and responsibility to pass resolutions, particularly for something as important as rates and charges. Further, the member for Hervey Bay raised a number of issues. I remind those opposite that, under the Local Government Act, ultimately the mayor is responsible for the preparation and delivery of the budget, and that was a result of changes brought into this House by the member for Broadwater when he was the local government minister. The mayor takes responsibility, not the councillors.

As I said when I introduced the bill, the Palaszczuk government values and supports the role of councillors in our community. That is why the bill provides clarity to local governments and to the communities that they serve. It allows councils to plan for the future with greater confidence in their financial security which in turn will benefit Queensland ratepayers. I acknowledge and appreciate the comments of the committee chair, the member for Logan, with regard to departmental staff. Indeed, they are very hardworking, always available to ministers and councils right across the state, either in person or on the end of the phone, and have a true commitment to local government, be it big or small.

I conclude by acknowledging the members of this place who have a background in local government—the members for Broadwater, Gympie, Bancroft, Ipswich West, Bundaberg, Noosa, Miller, Burdekin, Lockyer, Hervey Bay, Southport, Clayfield and Mermaid Beach. All those members know the great work that local government does throughout our communities, as do the rest of the members of this chamber, and they will continue to do well into the future. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—

 **Ms LEAHY** (6.05 pm): In regard to this clause, I did ask for a clarification. Has the government done its due diligence? Will the minister advise if he is now confident that all outstanding budget rates and charges issues for councils have been resolved by this legislation and that the parliament will not have to come back again to retrospectively amend rates and charges legislation? Will the minister give us that confidence and assurance?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for Warrego for her question. I cannot give any guarantees, because I do not know every single thing that has happened in every single council on every single resolution across the state or indeed predict—

Mr Ryan interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I take that interjection from the police minister: or could I predict what might occur into the future. What I have clarified, in response to questions from across the chamber or matters raised during the second reading debate, is that these amendments do not apply to things beyond the impact of the Linville case. Indeed, there are a couple of matters before the courts in relation to a couple of different councils that could have been subjected to and brought into this but, considering the retrospective nature of this legislation and considering the very clear matter of risk to a broad range of councils and their rates base this was the decision the government took to resolve this matter. I am pleased that we do have the support of the Local Government Association of Queensland.

While there might be some individual councils that have other matters where there are some concerns, they are matters to be dealt with further and they would maybe prefer to have these matters rolled into this matter. They are not things that the government is seeking to resolve. In those instances, the poor management does not have a broader implication. They are matters that the councils have to live with.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (6.08 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (6.08 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Order of Business

Hon. SM FENTIMAN (Waterford—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (6.09 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That government business orders of the day Nos 2 and 3 be postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from p. 532.

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (6.09 pm): It is a great honour to return here to be a part of the re-elected Palaszczuk majority Labor government. I want to start by thanking the people of Murrumba for placing their trust in me as their new local MP.

I owe a huge thanks to everyone who supported me in my campaign. Lots of people worked very hard to win the new seat of Murrumba for Labor and, while I am grateful to them all, I want to make special mention of a few key people: Rachel Smith, my campaign manager and now electorate officer, who kept our madcap show together; Linda and Gary McNair and Antonius Reynierse who worked tirelessly and filled in every gap—they never said no; my dad, Bruce, and father-in-law, Ross—the dads did every early morning and late night setting up stalls and signs and everything else; Hamish Fullerton and Martin Kelly, our star doorknockers; Gursharan Sandhu, the Uber driver who was so impressed by Labor values that he joined the campaign team after driving some of the campaign team home from our campaign launch; our first-time volunteer Elizabeth Pickworth, who wrote to me to say she was so impressed that the Labor Party recognises the important contribution working mothers make both within the community and the economy as a whole—thank you, Elizabeth, for all your help; all the members of the Kallangur and Murrumba branches who welcomed me back and worked so hard; and the now members for Kurwongbah and Bancroft who were enormously supportive, and I thank them. Along with the members for Redcliffe, Pine Rivers and Morayfield, I look forward to the things we can achieve together as Moreton Bay's own Team Red.

I continue to be grateful for the support I received from a range of Queensland unions. I am especially thankful to Sharron Caddie, Gary Bullock and the team from United Voice. Evan Moorhead and the ALP state office team developed a winning strategy and made us all stick to it, and it turns out they were right. There were some other good people who helped out whenever I needed something: Bernard and Mark Power, Roy Wilson, Tim Rose, David Thomas, Nick Heath, Corrine Mulholland, Mayor Allan Sutherland, Jesse Richardson, Phil Murphy, Jim Soorley, Andrew Fraser, James Stewart and Troy Burton.

The seat I served in the last term no longer exists. That means that I am the last-ever member for Mount Coot-tha. It was an honour to serve that community and I want to thank everyone who worked with me, especially the local Labor Party branch members and those school communities. Of course there are still times my family and I miss the inner-city community we lived in for nearly a decade. However, we are all now well settled in our new home in Mango Hill. I grew up nearby in Petrie—my dad still lives there in our family home—and now I get to raise my children in the same area. When I say ‘the same area’, there is a lot that has changed since I was there. It seems the secret is out that Moreton Bay is one of the greatest places to live and raise a family. The region is booming, and with that comes the need for more services and infrastructure. Ultimately that is why the people of Murrumba voted Labor, because they know that Labor builds infrastructure, employs front-line staff and delivers services to our communities while the LNP cuts vital programs and sells assets.

As the member for Murrumba I will work to deliver the projects our community needs: a new \$60 million high school at Mango Hill that was opposed by the LNP; a vital \$30 million upgrade to Dakabin train station; new bike lockers along the Redcliffe train line; a new \$4.1 million community centre for the people of Kallangur and a new car park for Kallangur State School; and a new barge to replace the much missed *Combie Trader* to Moreton Island, a pet project of the member for Redcliffe. Of course the project I am especially proud to support is the new university at the Petrie mill site. To think that there could be a university at the end of the street that I grew up on is incredible. It will make a huge difference to the lives of kids in the Moreton Bay region not having to travel an hour or an hour and a half to go to uni and being able to work and study closer to home.

The federal government has finally conceded to community pressure and agreed to fund student places at the new university. In the recent budget statement, Peter Dutton stood quietly by while Malcolm Turnbull froze uni places and that threatened to jeopardise this vital project. It seemed that he could not care less about giving the kids in our region a chance at a tertiary education and the opportunities that brings. He did bow though under immense public pressure and the very convincing arguments of Mayor Sutherland, so thank you to everyone who stood and fought for certainty for the Petrie uni. But I now need that same support to make sure that Peter Dutton takes a stand again against his colleagues in Canberra who are withholding a billion dollars of taxpayers’ money for operations performed in Queensland’s hospitals, including at the Redcliffe and Caboolture hospitals.

Before I move on to talk more about Health, I want to take a moment to thank the people who helped me and my team achieve so much in the Environment portfolio last term. When the Palaszczuk government was elected in 2015, it was with a mandate to protect our Great Barrier Reef and I am proud to say that we invested a record amount—\$246 million last budget—to make the water flowing to the reef clearer and cleaner. Our climate transition strategy focused on creating more jobs in the industries of the future and making sure we can go on enjoying our incredible natural environment with clean air, soil and water. That is why we committed to achieving zero net emissions by 2050 and why we will invest in a \$500 million land restoration fund to plant more trees while creating the jobs of the future here in Queensland.

We introduced tough new environmental laws to prevent Queensland taxpayers picking up multimillion dollar environmental clean-up bills and reformed the financial assurance and mine rehabilitation rules for new and existing mines. This is good for the environment and great for regional Queensland, where there is close to \$8 billion of rehabilitation to do and where local towns are well placed to provide the best people and skills to do it. We legislated to transform North Stradbroke Island—Minjerribah—from a sand mine into a global ecotourism destination. When Queenslanders told us that they wanted a container refund scheme and a plastic bag ban, we delivered. I know the new environment minister, the member for Algester, will do an excellent job continuing the Palaszczuk government’s proud record of protecting Queensland’s precious environment as she has done today, moving to implement policies to stop Queensland from being the nation’s dumping ground.

I am honoured now to take on the role of Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Health is a priority for the Palaszczuk government. I know because it was on the side of the bus. We believe Queenslanders deserve good jobs, a world-class education and the very best health care, and that is what Labor does best. We will continue to make sure our health services care for Queenslanders no matter who they are, what they do or what part of the state they live in because every Queenslander will need the health system at some point in their lives, and it is our wonderful health professionals who make all the difference.

As health minister I want to be a champion for them, making sure they have what they need to provide the best possible care for Queenslanders whether they are in hospitals, allied health services or working in our Ambulance Service. I think our ambos in particular do the most amazing job—sometimes difficult, sometimes dangerous but an amazing job—so I was proud to sign off on a well-deserved pay rise that will bring them in line with the rest of Australia for the invaluable work that they do.

Our government's first term has been one of delivery and achievement—a fact nowhere more evident than in the health system. We have repaired the system from the Newman cuts by recruiting more than 4,160 nurses, more than 1,600 doctors and almost an additional 1,200 allied health professionals across the state. Now in our second term, we will continue to deliver our commitments. Our Specialist Outpatient Strategy will be extended by \$154 million to ensure patients will continue to have access to safe, quality health care when and where they need it. We will continue to fund additional specialist appointments to deal with increasing demand, which is rising by over 10 per cent a year.

We are investing in more appointments so Queenslanders get the right care at the right time. Queensland is a big state with a vastly dispersed population, but we will not let that interfere with people accessing world-class health care. We are delivering new hospitals in Roma, Kingaroy and Blackall and rolling out big redevelopments of the Logan, Caboolture and Ipswich hospitals.

Of course, the quality of our health care is a reflection of the quality of our amazing staff, which is why we have committed to employing 3,500 additional nurses and midwives to care for our growing population. Those are just the big-ticket items. There is so much more that we will achieve this term.

Finally, I could not have survived the last term without my amazing electorate and ministerial staff, both past and present. I thank them all for their hard work. For staffers, elections are often times to move on and that was the case for my long-suffering office manager, Bec, and driver, Mike. We miss them both. I am even more grateful, though, for those who opted to stay, even after finding out that we would be in the Health portfolio. I thank Danielle, Katharine, Benton, Naomi, Mel, Peter and Ellie.

Most importantly, I want to thank my wonderful wife, Kim, for her unwavering support. Everyone in this place has probably reflected on how hard this job can be on families, but last year was especially hard on my family—moving house and changing school on top of a busy ministerial load, holding one electorate and trying to win another. I would like to thank Kim for being there and for loving me and for all that she does in raising our three beautiful children, Sam, Aidan and Bridie. I am so proud of them. I could not do any of this without them. I commend the motion to the House.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (6.20 pm): I rise in the 56th Parliament to again thank the voters of the Mermaid Beach electorate for putting their faith in me to represent their interests over the next almost three years. At the outset, I congratulate Mr Speaker on his rise to the best seat in the House—a position that I know he will carry out with dignity, fairness and the appropriate diligence for the wellbeing of Parliament House. As someone who shared this House with Pitt the elder, whom I respected through my local government and business career, it is pleasing to me to be under the considered watch of Pitt the younger, the member for Mulgrave.

I congratulate all members on their election to this House for being the privileged few—93 members—representing the interests of Queenslanders, particularly the new members of the House. I advise them that their destiny and longevity in this House is in their own hands and will be measured by Queenslanders in October 2020 by their efforts in their own electorate and by outcomes perceived by Queenslanders as being the direct result of their participation in this House.

Again, the people of the Gold Coast gave a ringing endorsement of their preference as to who best represents their interests, with 10 LNP members being re-elected to represent the Gold Coast community in state parliament. With over 10 per cent of the seats in parliament, that gives testament to the importance to the Gold Coast region of LNP policies and direction. I am already looking forward to the 57th Parliament when the rest of Queensland can get in step with the world-famous Gold Coast, where 90 per cent of the seats are held by LNP members.

I give hearty congratulations to our newest and youngest dynamo to join the LNP representative ranks in parliament from the Gold Coast, Mr Sam O'Connor—‘Slamming’ Sam O'Connor—the member for Bonney. Against a massively overconfident, big-budget Labor onslaught to try to win the new seat of Bonney, ‘Slamming’ Sam showed the people of Bonney what a hardworking, well-principled candidate can bring to the table. I am sure the member for Bonney has a long and fruitful career ahead of him fighting the dreadful left-wing union organised Labor hordes as they destroy the economic and lawful future of Queenslanders.

I also congratulate Deb Frecklington, the member for Nanango, and Tim Mander, the member for Everton, as our new dynamic duo leadership team who can and will provide a real and genuine alternative to the incompetent, do-nothing union-beholden leadership that the state government will suffer for the next 2½ years until the next election. The LNP will not need a gerrymander to win the next election; it will win with a 'Frecklemander'.

Again, under the Palaszczuk Labor government, we see the rise to power of the union movement, with the unhealthy propaganda programs foisted on our youth through the school system by the propagation of socialist thoughts by the CFMEU union around rebellion and uprising. In the past, schoolchildren were off limits to political persuasion and interference but, under the Palaszczuk Labor government, it is no holds barred in its attempt to influence the mindsets of our young people through the incursion of union thuggery into our school system.

Already on the Gold Coast we have seen this Labor government's shameful treatment of the enormously successful and well-received community program of Neighbourhood Watch. Thousands of hours of voluntary, well-meaning service by community members involved in Neighbourhood Watch has been snubbed by the Palaszczuk government's slashing of the Neighbourhood Watch budget from \$500,000 per year to \$75,000—slash, slash, slash. The effectiveness and awareness created by Neighbourhood Watch in communities has been spat upon by a Palaszczuk Labor government under the direction of police minister Ryan, who coincidentally shares the surname of the last guy who was hanged in Australia.

The Palaszczuk Labor government should hang its head in shame over this penny-pinching slap in the face for the many Neighbourhood Watch community members across the Gold Coast. Again, that underlines the Palaszczuk government's undeniable soft-on-crime mantra, which ignores the sentiments of the people of the Gold Coast and, in particular, the constituents of the Mermaid Beach electorate.

I have always abided by the philosophy that self-praise is no recommendation. However, as Mr Speaker would be aware, as leader of the House in the 54th Parliament I did some heavy lobbying to him and another member of his very small team—a Tarago springs to mind—to see the four-year parliamentary term come to fruition. I continued that lobbying in the 56th Parliament in opposition, with the result that we now face a four-year term at the next election. Queensland is the big winner in that outcome and I look forward to joining Mr Speaker in the 57th Parliament.

In the 54th Parliament, under my oversight as leader of the House—and I notice the apprentice, the Manager of Opposition Business, is paying attention—we introduced a new voting system for members that we enjoy today, saving time and confusion. As leader of the House, I also introduced a 12-month sitting calendar, which was very important, and which I am pleased to observe has continued under successive governments. That calendar provides proper planning and regimen to members and particularly staff.

Of great pride to me was the passing, under my urging, of the party house legislation to make life more bearable for residents in my electorate who are affected by the debauched and unreasonable behaviour of people behaving badly in otherwise quiet residential suburbs. I am told that, in several instances, the Gold Coast City Council has wavered in its insistence on this law being enforced. I shall make further comment on that disappointment at a later time in this parliament.

That brings me to the point of this trumpet-blowing exercise. I have witnessed the installation of the so-called family-friendly sitting hours to the parliament, which I started lobbying for through the CLA in the 55th Parliament. Although I may not agree with the final outcome of those sessional orders, I am chuffed that the Queensland parliament has finally been dragged into the 21st century with meaningful sitting hours to hopefully produce meaningful outcomes in a respectful and drivellless forum. The moral of this dialogue is that we must always look for change for the better in this parliament and relentlessly pursue the betterment of the parliament in the interests of better government for Queensland.

While I am on the subject of better government for Queensland, I believe it is time for Queenslanders to have the conversation about compulsory voting in Queensland's state elections. In the last triennium, the Labor government changed the long-held practice of optional preferential voting to compulsory preferential voting for obvious political gain. Despite the change not delivering the great electoral advantage—and I thank the member for Sandgate for that change—that the Labor Party was hoping for, it delivered an undesirable outcome in the Mermaid Beach electorate of a seven per cent informal vote. Whether that was due to confusion, laziness in filling out ballot papers, or just a plain rejection of this new, time-consuming exercise, we will never know—

An honourable member: Nothing to do with the candidate.

Mr STEVENS: I am here, am I not? This unacceptably high number of informal votes reinforces my opinion that it is time to adopt a true democratic process and let the people decide whether they want to vote or not.

Queenslanders should not be told by their governments that they have to vote or they will be financially punished. The right to vote is an undeniable right of Queenslanders to exercise at their own discretion and if they choose not to vote that should be their decision which should go unpunished. When one stands at a polling booth one cannot help but feel embarrassed for those voters who turn up without any idea of who to vote for, any idea of what the candidates of all parties represent and are only there to avoid the fine. That does not deliver a worthwhile vote, a meaningful outcome or, indeed, represent the views and direction of the electorate at large.

The vast majority of developed countries—87 per cent—enjoy non-compulsory voting. Even our much beloved Kiwi neighbours, who we borrow much parliamentary standard from, enjoy true democracy through non-compulsory voting. I urge the government to have the conversation with Queenslanders this triennium so any possible changes may be introduced to coincide with our new four-year term starting in 2020.

Which brings me to the hot issues facing Mermaid Beach constituents and the Gold Coast at large. The number one issue for Gold Coasters is, without a doubt, the disaster that is becoming the car commute from the Goldie to Brisbane. The M1 is chock-a-block now and there are no plans by this Palaszczuk Labor government to do anything constructive about it. I hark back to the Goss Labor government of 1995, which had a parking lot situation as well on the old four-lane highway between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. It tried to solve it by promising a koala highway alternative and did a \$2 million study on whether an alternative was needed or not. That just shows that in 23 years Labor has not changed with its do-nothing-but-have-a-study modus operandi. I remember 'Big Bill' Ludwig of AWU infamy telling me what a waste of money a study was. There are some AWU members here I hope. He said, 'As any mother with two kids in the back of the car could tell you, we needed a new highway.'

As we all know, Goss got knocked off his perch from that election and the Borbidge LNP government committed to an eight-lane highway costing around \$1 billion to be opened in 1998 with a vehicle capacity lifespan of 20 years. Guess what? That 20 years and the 160,000 cars per day is up this year. What has Labor done about it for most of the 20 years since? Nothing! The interregional transport corridor is reserved now for implementation and whether it is a toll road like the Ipswich Motorway or a government funded project as promised by the LNP, it needs to be prosecuted right away.

Failure to act will bring tourism and industry on the Gold Coast to a grinding halt. Promoting public transport is not the effective and all-encompassing panacea to the connectivity problem between Brisbane and the Gold Coast that this Palaszczuk government hides behind. No more studies, no more alternatives, no more excuses, no more hidden emails; in the words of Nike, 'just do it'.

Another local issue that really is a bee in my bonnet because of the lack of action by the Department of Transport to what is really a relatively small problem is the disgraceful state of the dividing fence on the Gold Coast Highway from Broadbeach to Burleigh in my electorate. It really is an eyesore that has been a failure since its controversial installation. I have had recent discussions with officers from the department who agree that it is in unacceptable condition. I respectfully request that Minister Bailey look into the problem and perhaps find the funding that will be needed for, as his own departmental officers suggest, a staged program to fix a glaringly obvious eye-sore.

Finally, I would like to say a very special thank you to my lovely wife, Ruth—she is here tonight and joining me in the Strangers' Dining Room—my kids, Jessie and Louis, and their partners and families for their unmitigated support and understanding for the job that I do. I have loved my public life job for many, many years through my local government and state parliament careers. As members would know, it is not always easy on family and friends to put up with some of the negativity that is unfortunately associated with a political career.

Speaking of friends, they say if you want a friend in politics buy yourself a dog. I did better than that, I got myself a duck—a Plucka Duck, to be precise. I did have a special friend in this parliament who came with me to this House in 2006. I would like to pay tribute and say thank to you my special friend Glen Elmes, the former member for Noosa, who will be a friend of mine to my dying day. Glen

contributed greatly to this House over his tenure as the member for Noosa and I am sure members from all sides of politics will agree that his fairness and gentlemanly behaviour was a hallmark of his respect for his privileged position. I wish him and his wife, Lesleigh, happy travelling on the journey post politics.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr STEVENS: I reiterate my enthusiasm for the 56th Parliament by quoting from my maiden speech in 2006 with deference to Banjo Paterson—

And the stockhorse snuffs the battle with delight.

 **Hon. CJ O'ROURKE** (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors) (6.35 pm): I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which this House gathers, the Jagera and Turrbal peoples, and respectfully acknowledge their elders past, present and emerging. I would also like to acknowledge the traditional owners of my electorate of Mundingburra, the Bindal and Wulguru Kaba peoples, and their elders past, present and emerging and thank them for their custodianship.

I am honoured to have again been re-elected and to have the opportunity to be a minister in this government. When people ask me about my new portfolio I respond by saying that I could not be more excited and honoured. To me this portfolio is about changing lives. A meal delivered by a volunteer for Meals on Wheels within Community Care is more than sustenance for someone living on their own, it is a visitor to someone who may be lonely. A seniors yoga class is more than just exercise, it is a chance to come together socially in a group and learn new things. A neighbourhood centre is not just a place to spend some time, it is a place where you can be linked with services you never knew existed and your life and the lives of the people who depend on you can be changed through this process.

Each and every person whom we transition into the NDIS may for the first time in their lives have choice and control. They will get to call the shots about how they live their life. This is very different from the system that we are transitioning from, where you had to just take what you got because more than likely there would be nothing else.

This is the year that most Queenslanders will enter the scheme. It will be a year where we will see how the NDIS will become one of the larger job generators of the nation. An article published in the *Australian* on 31 January suggested that the NDIS was responsible for as many as 52,000 of the 400,000 new jobs created in Australia in 2017. In Queensland we are expecting up to approximately 35,000 new jobs in the disability sector as the NDIS rolls out across the state.

Last term the government delivered *All Abilities Queensland: Opportunities for all—State Disability Plan 2017-2020* and this term will see it come to life. This plan is supported by a dedicated website, 'Everybody Has a Role to Play', and all government agencies have their own disability plan to identify how they will achieve the goals of an All Abilities Queensland.

Our goal is to increase the number of people with disability working within the Queensland Public Service. Work has already started on this with a whole-of-government workshop held in February this year. Also the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is reviewing the application and appointment processes for Queensland government boards, steering committees and advisory bodies to make them more accessible to people with disability. This term the direction is clear: continue to work with the federal government for a smooth transition to the NDIS and deliver initiatives that will make Queensland an inclusive all-abilities community.

I am also pleased to be responsible for community recovery. Just last week I went to Innisfail and Ingham to be there as the community recovery rolled out. What an inspiring process it was to witness. Everywhere I went I heard about local councils, state government agencies and non-government services that were cooperating and getting the job done for locals. The stories I heard were of resilience: 'We'll be okay. We know what to do and we've got the right people here making the right decisions at the right times.'

Today I acknowledge the work of the staff in my agency and all those from councils, other state agencies and non-government partners. You have all made a difference to the people in those communities and I know, because I have heard the stories: stories of children being escorted through floodwaters with the help of police, so that they could go and visit their dad in hospital; stories of people getting in and cleaning up before the mud could set. They know what to do up in the north, because they have been through it before. To be part of helping communities get back on their feet is a natural extension of the rest of my portfolio. It is all about investing money wisely, so that people live better lives in thriving communities.

In 2017-18, the Queensland government has provided \$16 million for 124 neighbourhood centres and \$6.5 million for the Financial Literacy and Resilience program to support Queenslanders to have better responses to financial stresses, personal issues and cost-of-living pressures. Our two Good Money stores also provide Queenslanders in Cairns and on the Gold Coast with real alternatives to unscrupulous payday lenders and rent-to-buy schemes that can lead some of our most vulnerable people into spiralling debt. We are also looking after our seniors who can experience difficulties with the cost of living, with \$290 million worth of concessions for electricity, rates, water and gas to help more than half a million eligible Queensland households in 2017-18.

Excitingly for the term ahead, I have 11 commitments to deliver in this portfolio. These include providing \$4 million per annum for disability advocates, for two years after full transition, to make sure that people with disability can continue to access vital advocacy support once the NDIS transition has occurred. During the election campaign we heard people with disability and their carers say that they need advocacy to continue and we were proud to make this commitment. There will be \$4.1 million over four years for a new community centre in the Kallangur area and the \$3 million Moranbah Community Youth Hub.

We will ensure that Foodbank Queensland and its partners can expand their School Breakfast Program to an additional 62 schools and 8,080 kids across the state. This will involve an extra \$1 million over four years. The government will renegotiate bilateral arrangements for the full scheme in the interests of achieving the best possible outcomes for people with disability through the NDIS. We will be fierce and forensic in our negotiations and Queenslanders will get the support that they need and deserve after full transition. For people with disability, seniors and the community we have done a lot, but we have a lot more to do in this term and we will deliver.

Ultimately, the reason for being re-elected is the faith that the people of Mundingburra have put in me and the vision that the government has for our local community as a thriving and inclusive community. To achieve this, Townsvillians need secure jobs with good conditions, which I will fight for each and every day. Investment in key areas such as health, education and our defence sector will support growth and jobs for the people of Mundingburra and for Townsville as a whole, which is a major priority for the Palaszczuk government.

I acknowledge the large defence contingent that works and lives in Townsville. Understanding that the defence sector is a very important part of our community, the Palaszczuk government committed to supporting and developing the defence sector to create local jobs and assist in the transition from defence to civilian life for those who choose to stay and work in our beautiful city.

The health sector is one of the top employers of local residents. Apart from the obvious and desirable outcomes for all of us, a healthy community results in better productivity and growth in the economy. I am pleased that this financial year we have prioritised an investment of \$935.9 million for health services in Townsville, which is an increase of \$71.6 million on last financial year's budget.

We are delivering on our commitment to invest in health infrastructure for the Townsville Hospital and health services through \$18.8 million in growth funding to meet projected increases in activity, including our emergency department presentations, outpatients and elective surgery; \$7.3 million of state funding to support infrastructure needed to reduce specialist outpatient long waits; \$6.7 million to support the opening of the remaining nine beds within the Secure Mental Health Rehabilitation Unit; and \$6.6 million to complete the expansion of the Townsville Hospital paediatric ward, which started operating in December last year. Prioritising investment in health will continue to be the foundation for economic growth in the health sector whilst enabling other sectors to thrive.

Another opportunity for our local economy to diversify is through international education. In our quest to diversify and strengthen economic growth, this sector is one that I believe will be a cornerstone into the future. Through Trade and Investment Queensland, the Palaszczuk government is partnering with Study Queensland, universities, councils and schools to promote and strengthen Queensland as a leading destination for international students. As part of our International Education and Training Strategy, we are investing \$25 million to promote Queensland internationally, enhance the student experience, grow our regions and connect better with industry. More students are choosing to experience Queensland as part of their studies, with eight per cent growth in international student visitations to our state experienced last year.

Townsville is at the forefront of supporting the international student experience. More than 1,800 international students are based in Townsville, contributing to our regional economy and supporting more than 228 full-time jobs. Under the Palaszczuk government's International Education and Training

Partnership Fund, we are supporting the Study Townsville International Education Growth Strategy. This is a key investment that will further capitalise on Townsville's potential as a destination for international students by supporting targeted market research and the development of a marketing plan.

While the focus on international education is one certain to build a diversified economy, the defence sector provides another key opportunity that we need to maximise for Townsville to reach its potential as a thriving community. In his address, the Governor noted that the government would establish a North Queensland defence personnel support hub in Townsville. This is an important recognition that in Townsville one of our strongest resources is our defence community, including ex-ADF personnel who continue to live and work in Townsville after they leave the defence forces.

Unfortunately, many ex-ADF personnel have struggled to find employment and have struggled to transition into civilian life. I feel extremely strongly that those members of our community need to be a priority for government investment, for both social and economic reasons. I must say that retired Lieutenant General John Caligari inspired me with his vision for our defence community and for Townsville, as well as for developing a true understanding of not just the defence force but also defence industries as a whole. My department is leading the Oasis Townsville project, working with stakeholders from government and non-government sectors and the local defence community to ensure that the hub is delivered successfully and meets local needs.

In addition to the above commitments that we have made to support locals and to grow our economy, there are many smaller local issues that are equally important to the people of Mundingburra and that I will continue to fight for. I will continue to fight for noise barrier improvements along University Drive. I am constantly in touch with the schools in the electorate and will pursue their needs passionately. Often those are practical things such as car parking improvements and fencing. I am keen to achieve improvements for current sporting facilities, such as for the Aitkenvale Sporting Association's Centrals Rugby League Club. I am also assisting the Townsville Intercultural Centre find a location to ensure the security of future multicultural events and support within the community.

Finally, I want to thank some really important people who have supported me and helped me to get re-elected. A massive thanks go to Shari Fabbro. Shari, you are so much more than just my campaign manager and electorate officer. You are my friend and, honestly, you have no idea just how amazing you are. To Kyle Walker, my field organiser: seriously, I have no idea where you get all your energy from, but I love it. I thank my United Voice family. To Garry Bullock, Sharron Caddie and Jeanette Temperley: I thank you for your ongoing support. In particular, I thank Steven Smith, Darryl Holbrook, Cheryl Mills and Chad Maxwell. Their support during the campaign was endless, full of laughs and absolutely unforgettable. To our volunteers Breanna Murakami, Michelle Dale, Keith Blanchard, Greg Fuchs, Eva Foster, Dave and Gail Pearson, Les and Kaylene Walker, Zac Murphy and the Naunton family: your commitment meant so much. The army of volunteers who helped on the phones, at the booths and in countless other ways all went above and beyond the call of duty.

Finally, to some of the most important people in my life—my wonderful husband, Lewis, and my amazing children, Hannah and Riley—who not only helped me on the campaign but gave me so much love and support throughout, I say that I would not have been able to do it without you and I love you dearly. To Hannah's partner, Nathan, I say thank you for your support. To my beautiful grandson, Noah—my youngest supporter—to have you out on election day at the age of six months brought such a smile to my face and such joy to my heart. Also, all my love goes to my mum and dad who provided so much love and personal support and understanding from afar. You are in my thoughts every day.

I finish by saying that I am honoured to again have the opportunity to represent the people of Mundingburra. I will always pursue a better life for our families while I serve in this place.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (6.50 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the address-in-reply tonight. Mr Deputy Speaker, could you pass on my congratulations to the Speaker of the House on his elevation to the very important role of Speaker in this House. I think he will do a fantastic job as Speaker of the Queensland parliament.

My thoughts and best wishes are tonight with the people of North Queensland who are recovering from the terrible floods they experienced. My thoughts are also with the people of New South Wales and Victoria who have been through terrible fires.

Many members in this place may not realise that I was born in Bega which is southern New South Wales. This is where the fires were. My initial involvement in surf lifesaving was as a nipper at Tathra Beach in 1966-67. I know that is a long time ago. That is where I was involved with Nippers. Southern New South Wales, especially the area around Tathra, is pristine. It is a beautiful area. This is a terrible

tragedy. I have some very close family friends who still live there. I actually have relatives who live there. Tonight they do not know whether or not their houses are still there. They are going to have to get by for the next few weeks.

It is a real privilege to stand in this place for the third time and say that the people of Burleigh have elected me as their member. There are 50,000 people who live in the Burleigh electorate. There are 35,000 voters whom I represent and I will represent them to the best of my ability.

Burleigh has certainly changed since I was first elected. When I was first elected I think the electorate was about 34 or 35 square kilometres. Some of the regional members are going to say, 'Wow.' I can see the members for Burdekin and Gregory saying, 'It is only 35 square kilometres?'. The electorate has now shrunk to 20 square kilometres. While some members on both sides of the House have to fly across their electorates or drive, which takes them days, I can actually walk across my electorate in two or three hours. I am very privileged. It is hard to get into some of the high-rise buildings that are in my electorate.

Members of parliament cannot get elected without the people who assisted them in the election campaign. There are quite a few people who assisted me. I apologise in advance to the people whom I do not mention tonight in the short time I have before we automatically adjourn.

I would like to mention a few people. The people who really assist us are our family members, and I think all members in this House would agree with that. As far as my family goes, my main person is my wife, Sally. She has been my rock for 37 years. I also mention my children, Tim, Jessica and Hayden, and their respective partners, Aimie, Simon and Anna, and our wonderful grandchildren, Josh, Isla and Cam. We have another one on the way.

My wife has been nagging me for a while now saying that she needs to get rid of her Golf and wants a people mover because we are now going to have a fourth grandchild to carry around. That is something I am seriously considering. Without our family members there is no way we can do the job we do in this place and represent the 50,000 people who live in our electorates. People do not understand that there are actually more people who live in our electorates than can vote.

We have some vital people on our campaign teams. My campaign manager, David Pourre, did a fantastic job. I could not have done it without my treasurer, Gordon Galt, and my SEC secretary, Anthony Lind. I also had wonderful support from the Young LNP and the Bond University Liberal Club, led by Alec Pokarier. They were out there on weekends rain, hail and shine supporting me and helping me get elected. There is wonderful support from the Young LNP on the Gold Coast. I cannot thank them enough for the work they did in supporting me.

I especially wanted to mention Matt Taylor who worked in my electorate office and was a great help during this campaign. He was out at night putting out signs and doing all sorts of work that I really could not expect him to do. He was fantastic.

It would be remiss of me not to congratulate all members on being re-elected and all new members on being elected for the first time. I was listening to the speeches today and can say that most of them were fantastic. We cannot do this job without our wonderful staff. Out of the 93 members in this House, I have the best staff because they do things in—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr HART: I take the interjections from members saying that that is not correct. I have the best staff. Renee and Anna do a wonderful job in my electorate office. I can be wandering down the street in my electorate and people will come up to me and thank me for fixing something and I do not even know what they are talking about. These girls do such a wonderful job in my electorate office. They fix things. They communicate with ministers. They do the right thing by the people in my electorate. I am getting the praise off their backs. They are doing the work and I am the face of it. I really appreciate the work that these girls do.

On polling day I had over 100 workers out at polling booths. It was amazing to see the blue sea out there to get us elected. They did a wonderful job on the Gold Coast to the stage that we won every seat on the Gold Coast, except for one—and I really wish we had won that one as well. Unfortunately, we did not, but we will get it back at the next election.

We had over 8,800 people who voted before election day. It was amazing. Thirty per cent of the electorate voted before election day. I stood there for two weeks and I shook hands with every one of those 8,800 people. That is why I got 49.8 per cent of the primary vote in my electorate.

The staff at the ECQ did a wonderful job, led by Karen and her team. They were amazing with the amount of work that they did. In fact, on the last Thursday of the election 2,700 people came through the pre-poll. That is just amazing for pre-poll. I am sure that things are changing in the world of voting: people are not going out to vote on a Saturday. They were pre-polling for the whole two weeks before the election. The ECQ did a wonderful job. I have a great relationship with those people and they do a wonderful job.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hart, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Isolated Children's Parents' Association

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (7.00 pm): During the last parliamentary sittings I had the pleasure of meeting with Kim Hughes, Louise Martin and Tammie Irons from the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, or ICPA as it is commonly known throughout rural Queensland. The ICPA is the parent body representing rural and remote families all over Queensland. With over 1,200 members and interests across all aspects of rural and remote education from early childhood to tertiary education, the ICPA has for many years worked tirelessly with the education department to ensure students in rural and remote areas receive equity in education wherever they live.

The ICPA has called on the Premier to reconsider the inclusion of an ICPA representative on the recently formed Anti-bullying Taskforce. ICPA Queensland is the leading voice on the unique needs of rural and remote children who include approximately 1,400 students who must attend a boarding school due to geographical isolation. Given that the trigger for this task force was largely as a result of the tragic events of a geographically isolated boarding school student in the Northern Territory, targeted rural and remote representation is of the utmost importance. This group of students deserve nothing less.

With year 7 now the first year of secondary school, our rural and remote children are often attending boarding school from the age of 11. The move to boarding school, often thousands of kilometres away, is without doubt one of the biggest and challenging transitions these children will ever make.

The majority have either come from a very small school or a distance education background where they have been taught in a home schoolroom by their mother or a governess. The adjustments to everyday life and culture are enormous—from dormitories full of strangers to attending day school with peers, new timetables, new teachers and rules, and a new city, all while coping with homesickness and the reality that mum and dad will not be there to pick them up in the afternoon.

The transition is compounded by the relatively limited social exposure these students have in comparison to their metropolitan counterparts. The challenge these vulnerable children encounter increases the potential risk of cyberbullying. The connection parents have with their children once they go to boarding school is severely diminished at a time when the level of support required is the greatest. These children in a very short time frame come to rely on the pastoral care from the school community and their peers.

It is imperative that they are set up for success from the very beginning, with tools and strategies to help them deal with the challenges borne out of a world where social media is at the forefront of their lives. I want to add my voice to ICPA Queensland and call on the Premier to reconsider adding an ICPA representative to the Anti-bullying Taskforce or, alternatively, a representative from the Australian Boarding Schools Association. We owe it to these children.

Nudgee Electorate

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (7.03 pm): It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to rise and update the House about a number of recent and upcoming events in the Nudgee electorate. Last week I had the pleasure of attending the opening and blessing of four new buildings at St Pius Catholic Primary School, Banyo, both as the local member and on behalf of my good friend Grace Grace, the Minister for Education.

Over the past four years, St Pius have invested significant time and funds to expand and update their school facilities both to enhance the learning environment for current students and to support a rapid increase in student numbers in recent years. These \$6 million facilities—including new

classrooms, a multipurpose hall, learning support, administration, PE storeroom and tuckshop, outdoor learning areas and additional toilet facilities—represent a rebuild of much of the school campus. Brisbane Catholic Education and the St Pius' school community raised more than \$1.2 million.

The federal government contributed \$1.2 million, but it was the state government that provided more than half of the project costs—over \$3 million—to make these improvements a reality for St Pius and their school community because we will always support Queensland schools and Queensland families' right to choice across the education spectrum.

From education to the Commonwealth Games, the Queen's Baton Relay will be making its way through our local community shortly in the lead-up to the 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast. On 30 March, 20 baton bearers will travel from Sandgate Hawks Football Club in Taigum, down Handford Road through Zillmere and Geebung and on to Chermside. Included in this lucky group will be local legends Rod Chiapello and Bronwyn Sheehan, although I know that they would both bristle to hear themselves described as such. Rod is a long-term and well-known business owner who lives in my electorate and works tirelessly for the community.

Similarly, Bronwyn Sheehan, who lives locally at Virginia, dedicates countless hours to her amazing organisation Pyjama Angels, making such a daily difference to children in care. Both Rod and Bronwyn will be joined by fellow locals Maxwell Brock and Gemma Etheridge both of Nundah, Julie Hall of Zillmere and John Stackpoole of Nudgee to carry the baton for our local community. I take this opportunity to wish them well for this special honour. We will be lining the streets to cheer them on.

Yesterday, round 95 of the Gambling Community Benefit Fund was released with over 600 community organisations across Queensland sharing in \$13.7 million. My sincere congratulations to Kurbingui Youth Development, the Nundah Activity Centre, Boondall Figure Ice Skating Club and the Aspley Orchid Society who were all successful in this round.

Everyone in this House knows what a difference these grants make to hardworking clubs who would otherwise find it extremely difficult, or indeed impossible, to afford facility upgrades, new equipment or to run events. I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank not only those clubs I mentioned but all clubs in my electorate for the wonderful work they do making our community a better place to live, work and play.

Regional Freight Services Contract

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (7.06 pm): I rise tonight to speak about the regional freight services contract and how I believe the Labor Party have failed the bush yet again. Last week the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission released a statement of issues on the proposed sale of Aurizon to consortium Linfox and Pacific National—a statement which has cast doubt over the future of regional services in Western Queensland.

Aurizon has made it clear that if this sale does not go ahead they may choose to close the Queensland intermodal business. They have sustained losses and it seems they have no intention of providing a regional freight service beyond 2018. The closure of this business would have a significant impact on regional freight services in Western Queensland. There are many businesses in the electorate of Gregory whose freight deliveries depend solely on Aurizon's intermodal business—to name a few, the general stores at Jericho and Alpha. These small supermarkets service a small community hundreds of kilometres away and without regional freight services their shelves will run dry.

Not only that—and this is important—350 Aurizon workers across the state could lose their jobs, including six workers in the electorate of Gregory. Maybe Labor does not think that is a big deal, but I will tell you something: in that area that has been ravaged by drought for the better part of seven years it is a huge deal. It will have a devastating impact on those communities right across the electorate of Gregory. It does not stop at the loss of jobs. We have to think about the indirect jobs in the Longreach region alone that will be lost. Businesses like PJ Ballard Town Carriers in Longreach are subcontractors to Aurizon. What happens to these businesses if the sale of Aurizon does not go ahead? We cannot afford to lose any more people in these communities.

They deserve certainty, they deserve a quality and reliable freight service and they deserve answers from the Labor government. I have continued to write to the Labor government, to the Minister for Transport, last term and this term about the intermodal service. I have written to the minister on numerous occasions seeking answers about the future of regional freight services to Western Queensland. My questions have been met with nothing but lacklustre responses, proving what we already know—that this government is a government for Brisbane, not a government for Queensland.

It was the Queensland Labor Party who sold Queensland Rail following the 2009 election, and Western Queensland continues to pay the price. You sold the asset and now we are going to pay the price. You have no solution—no solution whatsoever—to fix this. You have no solution whatsoever. You just want to ignore it.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Gregory, I ask you to please direct your comments through the chair, not refer to members across the chamber as 'you'.

Mr MILLAR: I am calling on the Labor Party to come up with a solution. I am calling on the Palaszczuk Labor government to give Western Queensland a fair go.

Clayton, Miss S; Stroke

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (7.09 pm): I rise this evening to speak about an extraordinary young woman in my electorate, Sophie Clayton. I met Sophie when I was doorknocking last year in my electorate one Sunday morning. I knew immediately that I would be hearing from her again. She was a young woman determined to make a difference in the world. I was delighted to be proven right when I reached out to her earlier this year to catch up. Sophie attends the wonderful school St Aidan's in my electorate, in the suburb of Corinda. It is just one of the amazing schools in my electorate leading the charge against cyberbullying.

Sophie sits on her school's antibullying task force. During the last sitting of parliament she visited the Minister for Women's event in the Premier's Hall, and I thank the minister for organising that wonderful event. Being the assertive young lady that she is, Sophie made a beeline straight for the Premier to discuss the initiatives her school committee is undertaking. The Premier requested that Sophie write to her about the initiatives her team is working on. Sophie was quick to agree and I know that this wonderful young lady will be eagerly following the progress of our work in this space. It was clear that the Premier was as impressed by Sophie as I was—and with good reason.

Why is this young woman so very remarkable? Sophie had a stroke when she was just four years old. Since this time she has been passionate about raising awareness of stroke. Sophie's message to the community has always been simple: stroke can happen to anyone at any time and it can happen to kids, too. Each of us should remember that when it comes to stroke and stroke awareness, there is one hard and FAST rule, that is: face, arm and speech time. Is someone's face drooping? Can they lift their arms? Is their speech slow or slurred? As Sophie says so often, knowing these signs and the FAST rule can save time and save lives. I encourage everyone in the House today to ensure they know for themselves and their loved ones the signs of stroke.

Sophie is instrumental in coordinating a fantastic Facebook page, 'Stroke Kids'. Please go and give it a like. It is a wonderful page that features fun and innovative recovery techniques for kids. Its very existence is a tribute to Sophie's tenacity and drive to ensure people know the signs of stroke.

It would be remiss of me not to pay tribute at this time to Sophie's family, particularly her amazing mum, Amanda. Amanda has been very careful to ensure Sophie's story was told by Sophie in Sophie's words when she was ready. It was clear to me when Sophie met the Premier that she was ready, and I know her advocacy will only grow as she does. Sophie, I stand ready to assist you in whatever way I can and I am proud to be your local member. Maybe one day you will be mine.

Little Haven Palliative Care

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (7.13 pm): It is not unusual for regional communities to come together and plug the gaps in government services. Little Haven Palliative Care is one such organisation. Little Haven does the sort of valuable work that typifies regional communities across Queensland. Little Haven is an integral part of the Gympie community. Under the guidance of the president, Brandy Murley, and the business manager, Sue Manton, they helped more than 200 patients and their families in the region during the last financial year.

On Saturday, my wife, Michele, and I attended the Gympie Rotary Club's St Patrick's Day fundraiser for Little Haven and the Gympie community bus. Currently, Little Haven receives only 35 per cent of its funding from Queensland Health for the valuable work it does in providing support to the terminally ill and their families. With a 14 per cent increase in admissions, it now has a \$500,000 funding shortfall hanging over its head. It needs to be supported.

Unfortunately, the previous minister for health showed little interest in supporting them with approaches for help hitting a brick wall, even to the point of telling the *Gympie Times* that there was no more palliative funding available for community care and that there were no plans to redirect funding

allocated elsewhere. Focusing on the numbers and not the patients, they told Little Haven to reduce the size of the area that it services, cap the number of patients or only accept patients in the last three months of their life. Given that without Little Haven these patients would then be a burden on Queensland's health system, this advice is a false economy. With an ageing population and increasing rates of complex chronic illness, palliative care services should not be told to cut their services or cap numbers.

During last year's election campaign I secured a \$300,000 commitment from an LNP government and an immediate commitment to review Little Haven's annual allocation with the view to tailor it to meet rising community demand. Our support for the valuable work that Little Haven does is the reason we delivered the commitment that Lawrence Springborg made as health minister in January 2015. After making representations to the new minister, I welcome the one-off \$100,000 grant from the department for a management system and that Little Haven's service agreement would be renewed in July. However, this is obviously nowhere near enough to allow it to continue its service with any degree of certainty.

The minister has also advised me that the department will be undertaking a system-wide review of palliative care services in Queensland this year. With a new minister, let's hope Little Haven receives a more receptive and sympathetic hearing of the valuable work it does in looking after sick and vulnerable members of our local community.

Rockhampton Electorate, Schools

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (7.16 pm): I have had the great pleasure of attending a couple of school events over the past couple of months. It is such a privilege to be able to present leadership badges to our future school leavers. I attended Emmaus College's opening school prayer for 2018 and the leadership badge presentations. Emmaus College is a coeducational secondary Catholic college in Rockhampton with a student population of approximately 1,300 children. It has two campuses: one for middle school, for years 7, 8 and 9, and a secondary school campus for years 10, 11 and 12. While attending this function I met an old school friend from my secondary school days, Eamon Hannan, who is the school principal there. It was great to have a yarn to him and talk about our old school days and how things have improved significantly. Gone are the days of getting the strap for not getting your spelling correct or talking in class.

I also visited Glenmore State School and met principal Mark Dunlop. Glenmore State School is located next to Glenmore State High School, just a couple of kilometres along the highway from Central Queensland University. Glenmore State School is ideally situated within an educational precinct with families able to receive education for their children from prep through to university. The school has approximately 440 children enrolled and it is staffed by 17 dedicated teachers and admin support staff. After presenting the leadership badges I also attended the school leadership creed. This was followed by a great morning tea with future student leaders. We are so fortunate in Central Queensland and Rockhampton to have a university at our doorstep.

Next was Depot Hill State School with principal Elizabeth Jacobson. Depot Hill State School has been servicing the Depot Hill area in Rockhampton since 1920. The school caters for students from prep to year 6. Depot Hill State School also provides a warm, supportive environment where all students are given the best opportunities to reach their potential. The school is also set in a rural environment.

I would like to acknowledge the great teaching staff and admin staff we have in Rockhampton. They do an excellent job.

Coomera Electorate, Infrastructure

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (7.19 pm): Unfortunately, bad news came today for the state seat of Coomera by way of responses to about 20 petitions I lodged on the first sitting day of this new parliament. I have provided all sorts of information, including 12 emails from disgruntled constituents. These petitions are calls from constituents for badly needed infrastructure. We have seen massive growth over the past 12 months, and the most recent example of that growth comes as a result of the redistribution.

Over an 18-month period we saw the number of voters grow from 30,722—that was the second-lowest number of the 93 seats—to 36,618, which is seventh from the top of those 93 seats. That is massive growth of 6,000 voters in just an 18-month period. The petitions relate to all sorts of

things, and you have heard it all before: 41, 45 and 49, which are exits off the M1; and park-and-rides at Ormeau and Coomera railway stations. I have some photos here that I will table as further evidence of the car parks at Coomera Railway Station.

Tabled paper: Bundle of photographs depicting train station car parks [\[390\]](#).

They are completely overflowing. There are about 90 additional cars at that particular station and it is the same thing at Ormeau. The petitions also relate to bus services and additional police officers. We have been hit with road congestion, overflowing park-and-rides, spiralling crime rates due to police being vastly under-resourced and poor bus services. Interestingly, one of the responses refers to bus services that could be used by my constituents who cannot park in the car parks. This letter only talks about the Coomera Railway Station, but it talks about bus services TX7, 721, 722, 723, 725, 726 and 727. I will table these for the minister's benefit.

Tabled paper: Documents, undated, showing timetables for bus services in the Coomera electorate [\[391\]](#).

The problem is that the minister is being misled by his staff because the reality is that most of those bus services will not get people from their home to the railway station so they can catch the train to Brisbane, get back in the afternoon and catch the bus home. It does not work. Even though his advisers have provided him with that information, it is quite erroneous. With that in mind, I am going to invite the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to come for a tour of the Coomera electorate so that he fully understands what we are up against. This is not politics; this is about the people needing this infrastructure. I am going to write to you formally, Minister, and ask you—sometime after the Commonwealth Games, I assure you—to come to the electorate of Coomera to take a drive around and let me show you exactly what the issues are in the state seat of Coomera.

Gtec

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (7.22 pm): This evening I want to share with the House my observations of a unique group of people who run a local training and development company called Gtec in Townsville. From the outset I was immediately impressed with the way this company has delivered real jobs in Thuringowa. In 2015 I met up with Mr Richard Roe, director of Gtec, at the Upper Ross Community Centre where a training program called the Community Garden was being delivered, which included instruction and training for 20 young people of both Indigenous and Torres Strait descent.

At the end of that program 16 of the 20 had picked up employment in our area with local companies, which was an outstanding result. From that interaction I knew that Richard was personally invested, and after finding out that his background was as a nurse for many years it reaffirmed my observation that this fellow was caring and compassionate about making real change in the community.

In my role as the local member for Thuringowa I continue to be impressed with very special people who are true community champions, and I commend Richard and the team at Gtec for their determination and passion to deliver more jobs by teeing up the Townsville City Council with another 20 trainees to deliver a horticulture and land management course late last year. We know that when you partner up with major employers like the Townsville City Council there is an increased opportunity for ongoing employment.

Gtec's core practice is to work with people who have limited ability or no access to traditional learning. Their clientele ranges from those aged 15 to 65 years of age. In their eight years of operation, 87 per cent of trainees have gained employment in Townsville. They deliver courses in construction, hospitality, trade, retail and health care. Gtec also works closely with TAFE Queensland. I am proud to support Gtec, who have recently expanded their capacity to assist members of the community by establishing a not-for-profit affiliate company called Connecting 2 Community Circles Limited. Through this company Gtec seeks to provide a space that will instil a greater sense of pride and ownership in our great city by delivering a range of real employment opportunities such as the proposal to have 40 people working on the Riverway Drive beautification project, which will complement the \$35 million road project currently underway in Thuringowa.

Mitchell Stephenson was nominated for the Equity VET Student of the Year at the 2017 Queensland Training Awards. He says that he walked into Gtec nothing more than a broken, depressed and defeated person, but he knew that by teaming up with Mylestones and Gtec he had made the right decision. After completing his training course at Gtec, he writes that he walked out the door into an interview at OfficeWorks and gained employment with a confidence that he never had before. I commend Gtec and continue to support them to this day.

Oodgeroo Electorate, Road Infrastructure

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (7.25 pm): The Green Camp Road corridor project is important to the motorists of Wellington Point, Birkdale, Ormiston and northern Redland City in general, so the update late last week from the Brisbane City Council and the Commonwealth Government regarding the upgrade was well received by local Redland City residents. The final designs have now been released for this much needed \$30 million upgrade to road infrastructure. The Green Camp Road corridor was a major election commitment by the federal LNP government to the thousands of residents of the suburbs of Redland City who use this route to go about their business on a daily basis.

For many years my constituents have voiced deep concerns about ongoing heavy traffic congestion and safety aspects with this stretch of road, so this upgrade will not only ease traffic congestion but it will also help support the future population growth of Redland City. Further benefits in terms of productivity will ensue for commuters, employers and the economy. It is a big win for all. It is estimated that the project will cut travel times for motorists substantially, leaving more time to spend with family or enjoying additional leisure time.

There will be an upgrade of the Tilley Road intersection along with major improvements to the Green Camp Road and Rickertt Road intersection. The intersection upgrade will improve traffic flows at the western end of Rickertt Road. Heading north, the road section between Rickertt Road and Manly Road will be widened to two lanes heading in both directions with plans for three lanes for the Tilley Road intersection. Safety concerns will be alleviated by the upgrade.

There have been 57 crashes within the space of seven years along these roads, with over 80 per cent of those resulting in injury to persons that required some form of medical treatment. Native wildlife groups will be happy with the design, as it includes fauna exclusion fencing, rope crossing, gliding poles and dedicated underpasses. Construction is expected to commence in the middle of this year with an estimated completion date of mid-2019.

This shows what can be achieved when two levels of government work cooperatively together to upgrade important infrastructure for the benefit of local communities. I take this opportunity to commend LNP federal members Ross Vasta and Andrew Laming and the Liberal National Party Brisbane City Council deputy mayor Adrian Schrinner and Doboy ward councillor Ryan Murphy for their tireless efforts and dedication in seeing this project come to fruition. The LNP at all levels is moving road projects forward, unlike state Labor which is stalled in our region. This state government does have other opportunities with roads in our region with the Shore and Wellington streets intersection, Cleveland Redland Bay Road and other road infrastructure.

Metro South Health

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (7.28 pm): Tonight I intend to speak about how health care at the QEII is under threat from the federal government. Metro South Health is the most populated health service in Queensland and is the major provider of public health services, health education and research in Brisbane south. The services that are provided by Metro South Health are being put under pressure by the lack of commitment by the federal government to do two basic things: firstly, to pay Queensland what Queensland is due; and, secondly, to ensure that Queensland gets its fair share of the GST.

The opposition has been deathly silent on this issue, but it is not too late for the opposition to call on the federal government to pay Queensland what we are owed for past services and ensure that we get our fair share of the GST which is rightfully Queensland's. Malcolm Turnbull is cutting services to Queensland that are equal to the Newman cuts in 2012 and the Abbott cuts in 2014.

Malcolm Turnbull is cutting services to our health funding by not paying Queensland its fair share of GST. The Leader of the Opposition needs to choose whether Queensland will be put first or will the Leader of the Opposition put Malcolm Turnbull and her LNP mates before Queensland's interest? These cuts will hurt Queensland and cost jobs. The LNP only has one plan: cuts to services and cuts to jobs.

The Metro South health district is one of the most culturally diverse areas of Queensland, which is acknowledged and celebrated. It is estimated that more than a quarter of residents come from a different cultural or language group; the community has a rich diversity of ideas, skills, traditions and customs. All this diversity is put at risk because the federal government is intent on not ensuring that Queensland gets its fair share of GST.

The Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, Steven Miles, has stated that the QEII could lose \$16.6 million in health services following the federal government's decision to refuse funding it owes to Queensland hospitals. The minister has further stated that the \$16.6 million translated into 5,000 fewer medical procedures and other hospital admissions for patients of QEII. Do we hear a whimper, or for that matter any sound, from the opposition calling on the federal government to do the right thing for Queenslanders? The Minister for Heath and Minister for Ambulance Services has advised that the independent health funding umpire has ruled that the Commonwealth owes Queensland hundreds of millions of dollars for health care that has been provided to Queenslanders as far back as 2014.

The House adjourned at 7.31 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Batt, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyce, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Costigan, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Janetzki, Jones, Katter, Kelly, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lister, Lui, Lynham, Madden, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke B, O'Rourke C, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pegg, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Watts, Weir, Whiting, Wilson