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## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

### Wednesday, 16 May 2018

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## WEDNESDAY, 16 MAY 2018

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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.

### PRIVILEGE

#### Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by Members



**Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.31 am): I rise on a matter of privilege. Yesterday during question time the opposition made allegations that as local government minister I received 326 complaints about corruption at Ipswich City Council. This claim arises from a right to information request lodged by the opposition seeking access to complaints about corruption at Ipswich City Council.

I have sought advice from the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs, and I can advise the House that these claims made by the opposition are incorrect and misleading.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Kawana, I am calling the House to order. The House will listen to the matter of privilege.

**Ms TRAD:** I am advised that a search of documents undertaken by the department in accordance with normal right to information processes resulted in 326 pages of material being identified. The opposition was advised of the results of this search in a charges estimates notice 30 minutes prior to the commencement of parliament yesterday. This notice clearly stated that there were 326 pages of material located as being within scope. It did not state that there were 326 complaints, as was claimed by the opposition. I am advised by the department that all of the material in question is made up of three separate complaints in total from one single applicant.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members! I wish to hear the matter of privilege being raised by the Deputy Premier. I ask that you listen.

**Mr Saunders** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Maryborough, you are warned under the standing orders. I am giving a ruling. You will not speak while I am giving a ruling.

**Ms TRAD:** Further to this I can advise of the following. In relation to these three complaints, the material provided had also been provided to the Crime and Corruption Commission. The Crime and Corruption Commission had access to all of the material for assessment and investigation if warranted. The first complaint was made on 15 August 2016. I am advised that the material involved had been provided to the CCC by the complainant on 14 August 2016.

In addition to the material being received by the CCC, the department referred this complaint of alleged misconduct to the independent Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal. On 15 November 2017 the Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal decided the complaint, comprising two allegations, was not sustained.

The second complaint was received on 22 October 2016. I am advised that copies of this material had also been sent again directly to the CCC. Given that all of the material that had been forwarded to me had also been provided to the CCC, as the appropriate corruption watchdog, there was no need to forward it again to the CCC.

A third complaint was received when I was no longer the local government minister, and this was referred to the then minister. Notwithstanding this, I am advised that the department referred the matter to the CCC. Mr Speaker, I believe that the comments made by members on this matter in the House yesterday were deliberately misleading. I will be writing to you on this issue.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Members, let me be very clear that my expectation is that when I call the House to order it will come to order. I will not tolerate a disorderly House.

## PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petitions, lodged by the honourable members indicated—

### Ayr, Crime

**Mr Last**, from 291 petitioners, requesting the House to take steps to action proper solutions to the crime wave in Ayr [\[670\]](#).

### Six Mile Creek Bridge

**Ms Bolton**, from 1,488 petitioners, requesting the House to widen and raise the Six Mile Creek Bridge located on Pomona-Kin Kin Road [\[671\]](#).

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

### Demand Responsive Transport Trial

**Mr Krause**, from 562 petitioners, requesting the House to introduce a Demand Responsive Transport trial that would connect residents from Tamborine Mountain to the major public transport precinct at Helensvale Transport Interchange; and upon successful completion of the trial, introduce the program as a permanent transport option for residents of Tamborine Mountain [\[672, 673\]](#).

Petitions received.

## TABLED PAPERS

### TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

#### MINISTERIAL PAPER

The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors (Hon O'Rourke)—

[674](#). Director of Forensic Disability—Annual Report 2016-17

## REPORT

### Auditor-General



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that I have received the Auditor-General's report to parliament No. 15 of 2017-18 titled *Education: 2016-17 results of financial audits*. I table the report for the information of members.

*Tabled paper:* Auditor-General of Queensland: Report to Parliament No. 15: 2017-18—Education: 2016-17 results of financial audits [\[675\]](#).

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Population Growth



**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.37 am): I have great news for Queensland. We are now five million strong. We passed the magic milestone overnight, very close to the moment Natasha and James Mackenzie headed for the birthing suite at the Royal Brisbane

and Women's Hospital. They went in a family of three but came out a family of four, with Elizabeth Lynne a little sister for two-year-old Angus. You do not know it yet, Elizabeth, but you are part of a big family of Queenslanders. We are not the mushy, oversentimental type; we are more like the take-on-one, take-on-all-of-us kind.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Members to my left, the Premier is not being provocative.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Elizabeth, one day you will know why a Queensland smile is a little bit wider and why we walk a little taller. You will know why people who do not even like football cheer for the maroons and why we have a big gold statue for a man named Wally. You will know why we have ports, not bags, and togs, not bathers. It is because you are a Queenslander, dear Elizabeth. We are pretty special.

Everything we have we are giving to you: our optimism, our sense of fairness, our unshakeable belief in the value of hard work and this beautiful place we live in and share. You will collect lots of name tags in what I hope will be a long and happy life, but there is one that will make you feel part of something really special. You will know why we cheer 'Queenslander'.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Logan, you are warned under the standing orders. Members, I will not give further warnings today about disorder in the House. I am listening to the Premier's ministerial statement. I encourage all members to do so. Member for Kawana, you are cautioned. Be very careful.

### Rugby League; Smith, Mr C



**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 am): Speaking of Queenslanders, I want to talk now about another great one. It has been suggested to me that today we wear black armbands. There are some who say the flag should fly at half-mast, all because Cameron Smith has played his last Origin. For the first time in 15 years we face our old enemy without him. Plenty has been said about Cameron's talent, but there can hardly be a greater tribute than to win the respect of the one-eyed Sydney *Telegraph*. They wrote how the blues have never found another Andrew Johns and how Australia has never found another Bradman and there will never be another Cameron Smith.

I am sure sports minister Mick de Brenni will proudly tell you that Cameron started his Rugby League career at Logan Brothers. Greatness beckoned early and, after scoring 188 points for the Norths Devils, he found a new home with the Melbourne Storm. But it is Origin that counts—42 matches for Queensland and captain for 21. Cameron was part of 26 victories—the record for any player in Origin history.

This is a blow for us but if Origin has taught us anything it is that just when all looks lost there is always another Queenslander to step into the gap and take the ball up to the try line. True, we will never again see Cameron Smith set up the series-winning 22-6 of his last game as a Queenslander and we will not see him settle behind the ball before sending it through the posts.

Perhaps it is time we saw some additions to those immortalised bronze statues outside Suncorp Stadium. Cameron Smith and Johnathan Thurston played there in a testimonial match on 23 February. Perhaps the time has come for Cameron, JT and, let us not forget, Alfie—Allan Langer—to join our Rugby League hall of fame outside Suncorp Stadium in the popular avenue of Queensland Greats.

I want to hear from the fans. What do they think? Who should be next? Should it be Cameron, JT or Alfie? Perhaps it should be all three. What about all three, members? Tell us what you think and we will get the ball rolling. On behalf of our state and this House, all the fans and the families who love their Rugby League, let me say: well done, Cameron Smith. You did us proud.

It is a pity the Leader of the Opposition is interrupting when I am talking about a Queensland great. It is very, very disappointing.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Glass House, I hope that I did not hear you disrespecting the chair earlier in terms of whether the House was orderly or not. Being disorderly is deliberately attempting to bring disorder to the House. I will tolerate robust debate and I will listen to the mood of the House. I will not take guidance from any member.

### Energy Efficient Appliance Rebate



**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.42 am): The best governments make life that little bit easier and there has never been a government more determined to do just that. Who delivered more competition to the energy market? We did. Who helped deliver 28 per cent discounts on energy usage? We did. Who gave a \$50 rebate to each and every household energy bill? That is right; we did.

We are not stopping there. The energy efficient appliance rebate offers \$200 off the price of washing machines, \$250 off the price of fridges and \$300 off the price of air conditioners. At last count, more than 50,000 people had taken advantage of the offer, with almost \$10 million worth of discounts paid directly back into customers' pockets. There is a bit over \$7 million left in the fund, so people need to act quickly. We are expecting more than 1,200 applications a day. This is up from the average of 800 applications a day, paying out \$855,000 in rebates a week.

The scheme will close shortly. Time is running out for smart shoppers to take advantage of this scheme. If you are in the market for a fridge, a washing machine or an air conditioner, now is the time to buy. It is also good for the environment, because the scheme promotes the use of four-star energy efficient appliances or higher. Our plan is always to put more money in Queenslanders' pockets, and this scheme proves it.

### Infrastructure, City Deals



**Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.44 am): Yesterday Queensland reached an historic milestone in the development of our state—our five millionth Queenslander. It is no surprise that we are a growing state. People want to be here because we have strong jobs growth, a great lifestyle and comparatively affordable housing.

Under the Palaszczuk Labor government jobs are up, with Queensland recording the highest jobs growth in the country for the past 12 months to March. Business conditions are up, with the NAB quarterly business survey showing trend business conditions in Queensland rising 11 points over the year to the March quarter 2018. It is the highest of the states. Consumer confidence is up—the second highest of all of the states as measured by the Westpac-Melbourne Institute Index.

Of course, with more and more people calling Queensland home, it is absolutely essential that we match infrastructure to growth. That is why we are fighting so hard for our fair share for Queensland from the Commonwealth government. It is why the Queensland government is investing more than \$40 billion in infrastructure to deliver critical projects—projects like Cross River Rail, the North Queensland Stadium, the Cairns Convention Centre expansion and the Mackay Ring Road, to mention a few.

To help us leverage as much benefit from our infrastructure investment as possible, the Queensland government has been working to deliver City Deals. City Deals is a platform to bring together the three levels of government with the community and industry to drive prosperity and livability. We already have Australia's first City Deal in Townsville, struck in 2016, which is delivering for Townsville and its residents. Now the time is right for a South-East Queensland City Deal, to deliver the greatest possible economic and social benefits from infrastructure investments. The Lord Mayor and I recently met with federal minister Paul Fletcher. We made the case for a South-East Queensland City Deal, and he has indicated that he is looking closely at our proposal.

Today I am pleased to table in the House two reports which will help inform the development of a future South-East Queensland City Deal.

*Tabled paper:* Report titled 'Benchmarking SEQ in a Global Context, Final, the Business of Cities', Dr Tim Moonen, Mr Jake Nunley and Prof. Greg Clark CBE, October 2017 [\[676\]](#).


*Tabled paper:* Queensland Government report titled 'South East Queensland Economic foundations Paper' March 2018 [\[677\]](#).

The first of these reports, *Benchmarking SEQ in a global context*, compares South-East Queensland with Vancouver, Barcelona and six other regions across the globe. This work was led by international cities expert Professor Greg Clark, and it highlights the excellence of our universities and the livability of our region as world beating. The study also focuses on infrastructure to attract the jobs and deliver the transport projects to meet growth—projects like Cross River Rail which are critical. It tells that we have opportunities to further develop our innovation economy—which is why we are investing so heavily in Advance Queensland.



The second report is the *South East Queensland economic foundations paper*, which identifies the industries that have the greatest potential to lift the region's productive economic output in the future. A South-East Queensland City Deal can unlock the future productivity and livability of our region. I look forward to working with mayors from across the region and the Commonwealth government to do just that.

### Health System


 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.47 am): Yesterday a Queensland Health doctor assisted by Queensland Health midwives in a Queensland Health public hospital delivered little Elizabeth Lynne Mackenzie, also known as our five millionth Queenslander. Her parents, Natasha and James, are stoked, but her two-year-old brother, Angus, was especially excited to meet his little sister yesterday. As Elizabeth grows up in our great state, she will get to experience the world-class health system we have here in Queensland. From important milestones like the birth of her own children to possibly some of the hardest times in her life if she ever gets sick or injured, our health service will be there for her.

The Palaszczuk government has made health a priority, investing in our hospitals and our front-line staff across the state to ensure that every Queenslander has access to world-class health care no matter where they live. We have increased funding to \$16.5 billion for more doctors, more nurses and more patient services. It is one of the reasons Queensland is such a great place to live, work and raise a family. It is why so many people move here every year, just like Elizabeth's parents, Natasha and James, who I understand moved here from New South Wales. I believe that Queensland will stay that way over the lifetime of our five millionth Queenslander and well beyond that.

We are a state of innovators, and science and technology is evolving rapidly, especially in the area of health. While this makes it difficult to know exactly what the future holds, I think it points to Queenslanders becoming much healthier. In fact, little Elizabeth could well live well into the 22nd century. She will likely experience wearable monitoring devices and medicines designed especially for her based on her genetic profile, not to mention everything we can use 3D printers for like creating tissue.

In Elizabeth's lifetime we may not even be treating the same diseases we are today. Vaccine preventable diseases in Queensland have reduced significantly over the past 30 years due to the uptake of the National Immunisation Program. In Queensland today most outbreaks of measles start from a case acquired overseas, and numbers of secondary cases in Queensland are very low. On 14 March 2014 the World Health Organization declared that we had effectively eliminated measles. Thanks to the Queensland invented Gardasil vaccine, we are close to eliminating cervical cancer. Given these advancements and given life expectancy in Queensland has continued to rise, our five millionth Queenslander, Elizabeth, might live well into her hundreds. There is no better place to live 100 years than here in Queensland.

### Gold Coast Spit, Master Plan

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.50 am): Queensland is Australia's growth state. Over the past 25 years Queensland has had the strongest population growth of any state in Australia. Yesterday Queensland's population reached five million. It is forecast to reach six million in 2029 and seven million 10 years after that. It is essential that a growing state plans for the future, because good planning leads to economic development, jobs and the creation of communities in which people want to live.

That is why proper planning is a priority of the Palaszczuk government. An example of this is the master plan for the Southport Spit on the Gold Coast. Recently I joined community members and key stakeholders on the Gold Coast for a workshop to shape the future of The Spit. The two-day workshop was part of the process of developing a master plan for The Spit to hear about the key themes, community values, desired attributes and future ideas for this iconic part of Queensland.

With more workshops to be held over three weekends in mid-July, late November and early 2019, I am confident the government's consultative approach will deliver the best outcomes for the Gold Coast and the broader South-East Queensland community—outcomes that tick all the boxes on environmental, social and economic issues; outcomes that are borne from the aspirations of the community.

I note a story in today's *Gold Coast Bulletin* regarding the City of Gold Coast's feasibility study into its proposed cruise ship terminal. The state is not the proponent but we will consider the planning implications of the cruise ship terminal as part of the master plan. The progress of the cruise ship terminal is a matter for the council, but like any major project it has to stack up environmentally, economically and for the community.

There are important changes coming to the cruise ship terminal market. The Palaszczuk government is facilitating the construction of an international cruise ship terminal for mega cruise ships at the Port of Brisbane through the market-led proposal program within my portfolio. The construction of that facility will obviously have an impact on the cruise ship market in Australia, and no doubt that will be considered by the Gold Coast City Council in the context of their proposal. I know that my colleague the Minister for Tourism Industry Development is conscious of ensuring that tourists disembarking at the Brisbane terminal can visit not only the Gold Coast but also other parts of our great state.

In relation to The Spit master plan, as promised by the Premier, we have certainly brought the public along on this visionary journey, starting with our initial consultations in February and March when more than 2,800 pieces of community feedback were received through a range of community activities. The feedback provided has helped us understand the community's appreciation of the current conditions, opportunities and challenges and, importantly, their aspirations for the future of The Spit. I look forward to updating the House as we continue to plan the best outcomes for The Spit.

### International Conference on Robotics and Automation



**Hon. KJ JONES** (Cooper—ALP) (Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for the Commonwealth Games) (9.53 am): Next week the world's largest robotics conference will be held here in Brisbane. It is the first time that the International Conference on Robotics and Automation—now in its 20th year—is being held in Australia. This is a real coup for Queensland. We will welcome more than 2½ thousand international delegates to the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre from 21 to 25 May.

We are bringing the greatest minds in robotics and automation here to Queensland to work with our start-ups and mentor our innovators. Keynote speakers are global leaders in their field including Margarita Chli, the director of the Vision for Robotics Lab in Switzerland. Ms Chli contributed to the first vision based autonomous flight of a small helicopter.

As part of this conference we will also give our local start-ups an opportunity to compete in the robot launch start-up competition. The top 10 start-ups will pitch to a panel of mentors and investors for a chance to win \$3,000 from QUT Bluebox. Through this competition they have the chance to go global with all Brisbane robot launch start-up entries placed in the worldwide competition with rounds in Europe and the US. This conference follows immediately after Myriad 2018, which I will be officially opening tonight. It is all part of our Advance Queensland program that is about creating jobs here in Queensland.

### Transport and Tourism Connections, Funding




**Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.55 am): Last year the Palaszczuk government announced almost \$6 million in state funding to 18 projects across Western Queensland under round 1 of the \$10 million Transport and Tourism Connections program to boost outback tourism and jobs. This program improves access to significant tourism sites by partnering with local councils to upgrade the surrounding road and transport infrastructure. We have unique sites across Western Queensland that are drawcards for tourists such as the dinosaur trail at Winton and the scenic Hell Hole Gorge National Park at Quilpie.

With drive tourism increasing in popularity for domestic and international tourists, it is essential that we make sure our incredible sites are easy and safe to visit. A number of projects have already been completed. Longreach Regional Council's project to pave and seal River Farms Road; the Barcaldine Regional Council's parking improvements on the Capricorn Highway between Alpha and Barcaldine at Oak Street; and the Blackall-Tambo Regional Council's upgrade to the Blackall Aquatic Centre car park. Weather permitting, we expect the delivery of the remaining round 1 projects to be completed by the middle of this year.

In building on the success of round 1, I am very proud to announce today that the Palaszczuk government, via the transport and main roads department, will soon be seeking nominations from relevant local governments for round 2 of the program, with around \$4 million in state funding available for priority projects. Round 2 will be extended beyond Western Queensland to cover rural and regional

Queensland outside of South-East Queensland to maximise the benefits of this funding. Funding for upgrades will be capped at \$500,000 to deliver a wide spread of projects across regional Queensland. This \$10 million program allows the Palaszczuk government to work with local governments and the private sector to upgrade infrastructure to improve access to Queensland's most significant tourism experiences. It is another example of how the Palaszczuk government is delivering for all Queenslanders no matter where they live in our state.

### **Skilling Queenslanders for Work**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (9.57 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring Queenslanders have the skills required to get a job. Today it gives me great pleasure to announce a significant milestone. As at the end of April, over 15,000 Queenslanders had got a job thanks to our highly successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. A further 3,737 have undertaken further training, and the Minister for Education will be particularly pleased that another 562 young people returned to school thanks to this program.


Queensland's nation-leading jobs growth has been underpinned by our commitment to training and skills. The Skilling Queenslanders for Work program has assisted people throughout our state. In the electorate of Cook, volunteer tutors were awarded \$260,000 to assist 122 disadvantaged jobseekers, the majority of whom were women wanting to return to the workforce after having children. The project was a huge success, with 92 women gaining employment—people like Lenice, who wanted to do more for her local community and who spent a majority of her time helping out on the family farm. Upon completion of the program she secured a job as the Indigenous liaison officer at the local primary school.

In Brisbane, Patricia undertook a project through Career Employment Australia for construction works at the Camp Hill Bowls Club. Patricia gained hands-on experience including landscaping, construction and painting. Patricia struggled to find an employer who would take on a mature age worker. With her previous experience as a painter, Patricia was a valuable source of knowledge for the other trainees and gained full-time employment as a painter upon completion of the course.

Throughout Queensland I meet people with remarkable stories. Many say that without the support of Skilling Queenslanders for Work they would not have got a job. Many community organisations stress to me the importance of the program and explain the devastating impact of the LNP's decision to cut the program. They could not understand why any government would walk away from a program that was so successful in getting people jobs, with every dollar spent returning \$8 back to the community.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work has been so successful that the Palaszczuk government has committed an extra \$180 million over the next three years, due to the huge demand from the community—\$80 million will now be invested every year, creating more job opportunities for Queenslanders. It is important that we continue to invest in this vital support as our state goes from strength to strength. We can only imagine what the career path will be for little Elizabeth, our five millionth Queenslanders, but we can be sure that the Labor government will invest in the skills and training she needs to follow her dreams. Like many on this side of the House, I look forward to the Skilling Queenslanders for Work graduations and seeing the very proud smiles on the families, friends and, most particularly, the graduates who have now gained a qualification and, in most cases, a job.

### **Task Force Argos**

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.00 am): Whether you are our youngest five millionth Queenslanders or our oldest Queenslanders, our government is building safer communities by supporting our police. Our government is committed to making sure our police have the resources and laws they need to keep our most innocent, our children, safe. We have invested \$39 million over four years to target all forms of serious and organised crime, including crimes against children.

Following the commission of inquiry into organised crime, our government announced the allocation of over \$3 million to enhance the capabilities of investigators working tirelessly to target those who commit atrocious sexually based crimes against children. New organised crime legislation also allows police to further crack down on online child sex offending and exploitation. The new offence covers child exploitation and related crimes. Since February this year, 59 charges have been laid.

Our famous Task Force Argos's reputation continues to grow internationally. I am very pleased to announce that just a few weeks ago the head of Task Force Argos, Detective Inspector Jon Rouse, received an international award for his dedication to fighting and investigating crimes against children for more than 20 years. Detective Inspector Jon Rouse was presented with the international Champion for Children Award at the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children's 2018 Gala for Child Protection. This is an outstanding recognition and a well-deserved honour for a very humble man who has truly transformed Queensland and saved the lives of many Queensland children, our most vulnerable citizens. I know Queenslanders everywhere are very grateful for the outstanding work of not only Jon but his entire team at Task Force Argos. On behalf of all Queenslanders, I thank Jon and Task Force Argos for everything they do to help keep Queenslanders safe.

### Regional Investment, Barcaldine and Jericho



**Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.02 am): Barcaldine has a special place in Queensland and Australian history. The site of the great shearers' strike camp and the birthplace of the Australian Labor Party in 1891, this iconic outback town has helped shape this nation. Earlier this month, I visited Barcaldine and I am pleased to inform the House that the town is still making history. Barcaldine is now home to the first turf racetrack in Western Queensland, which I was proud to officially open at the Tree of Knowledge Cup meeting on 5 May. This new turf track, replacing a previous sand track, is a massive step forward for the race club—enriching its already proud history which started in 1892. The new turf track at Barcaldine will be a game-changer for racing in Western Queensland, giving owners and trainers the chance to compete on turf without travelling vast distances towards the coast to race.

Racing Queensland has agreed in principle to support an application from the club to access infrastructure funding for a contribution for this near \$600,000 project. This contribution will be made through our four-year, \$70 million country racing package, which will help secure the future of country racing for years to come. This initiative in racing has been more popular than any other in the history of the state, I believe. During my visit, I also attended the Tree of Knowledge Festival, which brought together locals and holiday-makers—including some of those travelling on the roads that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads was referring to earlier—to enjoy everything from good music to the traditional goat races.

During my visit to the Barcaldine region, I also officially opened the Jericho swimming pool complex, representing almost \$1.8 million in new investment. The Palaszczuk government partly funded this great new outback oasis with a \$780,000 contribution in yet another sign of our commitment to regional Queensland. Make no mistake, this is a government that delivers for all Queenslanders. We understand that small towns like Barcaldine and Jericho rely on state investment to support local jobs, infrastructure and economic development. As local government minister, I will continue to work with the state's councils to drive local economies, generate jobs and make towns like Barcaldine and Jericho better places to live.

### Biofuels



**Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (10.05 am): The Palaszczuk government's biofuels mandate is a crucial step towards growing our biofuel and biomanufacturing industries. The purpose of the mandate is to provide certainty to allow industry to invest, innovate and create jobs as part of a cleaner, greener future for this state and a flourishing biomanufacturing industry. The mandate requires the fuel industry to meet targets for the sale of biobased fuels—of three per cent ethanol for regular unleaded petrol and half a per cent biodiesel for all diesel fuel.


I am pleased to report that the biobased petrol mandate is working well, with the trajectory heading upwards and significant growth in ethanol sales. Reportable volumes of E10—the most popular ethanol blended petrol grade—have increased by more than 76 per cent. Based on reported sales volumes for the last quarter of 2017, liable fuel retailers achieved an average of 2.5 per cent ethanol sales. This is up from 2.35 per cent for the previous quarter and up from 1.5 per cent ethanol sales before the mandate commenced.

To put these figures into perspective, currently one in five passenger vehicles—that is about 450,000 vehicles—are always using E10. These vehicles consumed nearly 150 million litres of E10, of which 15 million litres is ethanol. This equates to approximately 2.5 million average passenger vehicle tank fills. Getting to three per cent will mean an extra 80,000 passenger vehicles swapping to E10.

Getting to four per cent is another 175,000 vehicles. We need just over 1½ Suncorp Stadiums of car owners to convert to E10 to get to three per cent and another 3.5 stadiums of car owners to convert to E10 to get to four per cent.

The government recognises we have a lot of work to do, but we are committed to the biofuel mandate and we are working closely with industry as the mandate increases to four per cent shortly on 1 July 2018. Biodiesel entered the market in the December quarter, with volumes expected to increase in coming months. While the biodiesel industry is in its infancy, the Palaszczuk government is working very closely with both the biodiesel and the broader liquid fuels industries to overcome challenges associated with growing the sector. Importantly, further investment is currently underway to improve the supply chain to enable biodiesel blending, storage and transport here in Queensland. There can be no doubt that the Queensland biofuels mandate is providing certainty for our biofuels industry and encouraging investment, innovation and jobs towards a clean, green energy future for this wonderful state.

### **Growing Queensland's Food Exports Program**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (10.08 am): The Palaszczuk government is supporting Queensland jobs by helping export-ready food businesses conquer international markets with grants awarded under a new \$1.3 million program. In the first round of funding, six food companies are being supported through the Growing Queensland's Food Exports Program. The producers selected for grants are either already exporting or ready to export and seeking access to overseas markets.


The successful projects for round 1 of the Growing Queensland's Food Exports Program include the following. Bundaberg's Macadamias Australia is developing exports for retail-ready macadamia products. Manbulloo is wanting to capitalise on new opportunities to expand its mango exports from North Queensland to Japan, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Singapore. The Lockyer's Mulgowie Fresh is looking to capitalise on packaged sweet corn consumer traceability. A&E Coco and Sons, based at Elimbah near Caboolture, hopes to capitalise on market access to export Queensland strawberries to Hong Kong and Indonesia.

They have also been collaborating with other Sunshine Coast strawberry businesses such as Ashbern Farms and Berry Patch as well as the Queensland Strawberry Growers Association. SunPork Fresh Foods is developing pork products at its Kingaroy and Murarrie plants for the high-end Asian market. Burdekin's vf+ is developing exports of high-quality melons out of North Queensland to Japan and Singapore. On the subject of melons, I thank the Premier and my ministerial colleagues for getting behind the industry in times of need.

By providing funding of up to \$100,000, we are assisting these food companies to build their business capability and grow exports. These companies are targeting the export priorities of their sector which will benefit the entire industry through increased knowledge of target export market destinations. An improved understanding of competitors, product specifications, supply chain handling and export business practices will also help the local industry. The Growing Queensland's Food Exports Program focuses primarily on horticulture as Queensland is Australia's largest producer of vegetables and the second largest producer of fruit and nuts. Matched funding of up to \$100,000 is available over two years for eligible projects. There will be a second funding round in July this year.

This is a clear demonstration of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to increasing our state's exports to 22 per cent of the national total, while at the same time delivering more jobs and strong economic growth in regional areas. I encourage export-ready food producers who would like to know more about the program to contact the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

### **Single-Use Plastic Bags**

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algerie—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (10.11 am): In fewer than 50 days the Palaszczuk government's ban on single-use lightweight plastic shopping bags will commence in Queensland. I am proud to say that on Sunday, 1 July our state will take this important step forward to protect the environment. No-one can deny that we need to rethink the number of single-use plastic items we use in our everyday lives. It is easy to see the devastation that plastic pollution is causing. Plastic items made up around 38 per cent of the rubbish collected at last year's Clean Up Australia Day event and, alarmingly, around 75 per cent of the marine debris which is collected along Queensland's coastline is plastic waste.


Together, we can tackle plastic pollution and protect Queensland's environment, waterways and wildlife. It starts with this ban on single-use plastic shopping bags. Queenslanders use around one billion of these plastic shopping bags each year. If we laid these out end to end they would stretch from Coolangatta to the top of Cape York over 160 times. As members know, when the ban was introduced into parliament last September it was met with bipartisan support. It was also welcomed with great enthusiasm by environmental groups, local governments, and of course the broader community. Retailers have also embraced the ban and there are many exciting initiatives underway as they consider alternatives to single-use bags. Queensland is ready for this change.

I congratulate the many retailers, both small and large, across the state who have already moved away from plastic shopping bags. Whenever I buy my groceries, I take my reusable bags with me and I am pleased to see many others doing the same as we prepare for 1 July. The plastic bag ban will be followed later this year by another plastic litter reduction initiative, the container refund scheme. Our industry run scheme will be fit for purpose for Queensland and will deliver community, environmental and recycling benefits. Together, these two initiatives will have a positive impact on litter and plastic pollution right across our state.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to protecting our environment for future generations, and our work to reduce plastic pollution is helping us do just that.

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

### Report


 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (10.13 am): I lay upon the table of the House paper No. 1 of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee titled *Framework for the oversight of the Health Ombudsman*.

*Tabled paper:* Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee: Information Paper No. 1, 56th Parliament—Framework for the oversight of the Health Ombudsman [678].

This paper describes the committee's oversight responsibilities and functions that are specified in schedule 6 of the standing orders and sections 19 and 179 of the Health Ombudsman Act 2013. In addition to the Health Ombudsman, the committee's oversight responsibilities extend to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and the national boards that are responsible for the registration of over 132,000 health practitioners providing health services in Queensland. The paper also explains the committee's approach to meeting its oversight responsibilities. I commend the paper to the House.

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Water Prices


 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (10.14 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to rule out the Queensland Competition Authority's recommendation to charge more for water.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before commencing question time I want to acknowledge that today we have in the gallery representatives from the National Seniors Forest Lake, which is in the electorate of Inala. Question time will conclude today at 11.15 am.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Ipswich City Council, Complaints

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (10.15 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. The Labor Party's scandal in Ipswich has damaged reputations of the city's businesses, created uncertainty around local government and caused widespread concerns about the Labor Party's handling of ratepayers' money. Will the Premier apologise to the people of Ipswich for the government's failure to swiftly act on the multiple warnings it has received?

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. In relation to the preamble, there were definitely imputations in that preamble. I ask you to rule it out of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Leader of the House, I would suggest that the references were to a political party, not to members of the House. I will allow the question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. At the outset can I also acknowledge the Forest Lake National Seniors, who are in the gallery today. Welcome to parliament. It is wonderful to have them here observing proceedings.

In relation to the Ipswich matter, let me say this very clearly and put it on the public record: that is why we have laws before this House. As soon as the CCC handed down its recommendations my government acted swiftly. Let me make it very clear to those opposite, to everyone in this chamber and to the public at home across this state: these laws will be passed this week. We will pass these laws this week. They will pass through this parliament because that is what the public expects.

As I said from day one, we feel for the people of Ipswich. We are on the side of the people of Ipswich. That is why the local government minister acted swiftly with the powers that he had. That is why the legislation is before this parliament, and it will pass.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. By the Premier saying 'the legislation will pass' she is clearly anticipating how the debate will unfold this week. I say that the Premier is very much anticipating debate of two bills before the House. There is no guarantee they will pass this week.

**Ms Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, Premier! I am listening carefully to the contribution being made by the Premier. I believe that, whilst the Premier referenced that there are bills before the House, I do not suggest that she is referencing the content or the substance of those bills. I am listening very carefully. It would be appreciated if the Premier could avoid discussion of the bills.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I do not want those opposite to question my resolve that these bills will pass. They will pass because the public expects nothing less. I have made it very clear, as I did with the vegetation management laws. The vegetation management laws passed through this parliament. A whole week was devoted to debating those laws. If we have to devote all week to debating these bills, they will pass this week. Before the House rises on Thursday at 6.30 pm those bills will become law in Queensland because the Queensland public expects it.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members. Premier, I gave some guidance earlier. Just as I am listening very carefully to the questions being asked by the opposition in relation to the bills, I have also cautioned you about referring to the bills, but you have made a couple of references to them. I ask you to move forward from that point. Have you finished your contribution? Thanks, Premier.

### **Ipswich City Council, Complaints**

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My second question without notice is to the Premier. Last night the member for Bundamba explained the human toll of Labor's disgrace in Ipswich. She said—

... we have had one ... suicide. Many have been hospitalised due to stress, anxiety and depression ... Many have been sacked. Many others have been paid out and forced to sign confidentiality agreements and pressured into not going to the CCC ...

When will the Premier apologise to the people of Ipswich?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, I warn you about lengthy preambles. I believe that was quite a lengthy introduction. Obviously the statements were made in the House and are available for people to read in *Hansard*.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. As I said in my previous answer, I am not moving away from my resolve to act swiftly on the legislation that is before the House. As I said, we will pass that legislation. Let me say this: we resolve to put in place an administrator who will deal with those issues at the Ipswich City Council. As I said very clearly—

**An opposition member:** Jim Soorley?

**Ms Trad:** It won't be Scott Driscoll.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take that interjection. I will come to that in a moment. I made it very clear that when we were governing from Ipswich it was at the forefront of my mind and the cabinet's decision-making in terms of resolving this issue in the best interests of the people of Ipswich. As we know, the CCC is also investigating other councils. We look forward to receiving any further recommendations about those councils as time progresses, and we will act just as swiftly in relation to those other councils. We will implement any recommendations that are made by the CCC because that

is what the people of Queensland expect. I take the interjection from the Deputy Premier. Those opposite sat around when we were raising issues about Scott Driscoll and buried their heads in the sand—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Where were those opposite when the Redcliffe Community Association was constantly raising issues concerning the member for Redcliffe? We were told by those opposite that it was an Easter egg hunt.

**A government member:** We were making it all up.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That's it: we were making it all up.

**Mr Molhoek** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Southport!

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Kawana, I have already cautioned you today. You are warned under standing orders. Members, when I call the House to order it is not an excuse to stay silent for a brief moment and then continue as you were. Please heed the warnings. I will use standing orders today.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Those opposite, the LNP, took the money and have not paid it back in connection with Scott Driscoll. They kept the money—I understand about \$50,000. I want to know what the Leader of the Opposition is doing about that.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms TRAD** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Let me recap to make it very clear: we will continue to look at any issues that the CCC raises—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr Molhoek** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Southport!

### **Jackson, Mr AJR**

**Mr RUSSO:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier outline any actions undertaken by the state government to assist my constituent, 99-year-old war veteran Mr Bob Jackson, who lost his home and invaluable belongings in a fire last month?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. I know that the member for Toohey is very concerned about Mr Jackson, as we all are in this House. I think I can say on behalf of all members of this House that we value his service. We were all shocked when we saw that fire engulf his house. He lost his two Maltese dogs in the fire. He also lost his medals, including the Legion of Honour, which were awarded for his service. Whilst the President of France was in Australia I took the opportunity to contact the French Honorary Consulate and the federal high commission to see whether or not we could replace the lost medal. I know that the member for Sunnybank would have felt the same way, because Mr Jackson is a man who provided so much. Thankfully his life was saved, but he was devastated to lose so much. I want to thank President Macron, the Honorary Consulate and the high commission for acting so swiftly to replace Mr Jackson's medal. I also know that the member is working very closely with the RSL and Housing to try to find him alternative accommodation when he is ready to leave hospital.

It was a great honour to speak with Mr Jackson recently at the Greenslopes Private Hospital. He told me that times were tough when he was fighting: when he went on his first air raid there was a 60 per cent chance of people returning, but by the time he went on his last flight there was an 11 per cent chance, so we are very lucky that he survived. The member for Toohey is doing a great job. I know that there is a GoFundMe campaign for Bob Jackson, and the neighbours and the local community have already raised some \$32,500. I also know that a committee which is part of the local community is organising a fundraiser for Mr Jackson at the Salisbury Bowls Club on Saturday, 26 May. I would urge all members to think about donating or paying tribute to Bob, who turns 100 next month. He is 99 at the moment. The other day I had the honour of signing his certificate, and I know that the member



for Toohey would like to present him with that certificate when he turns 100 next month. On behalf of the House I wish him all the very best. He has been through a lot. We honour his service. We extend our gratitude for the work he has done. We wish him a speedy recovery and all the best with that fundraising campaign. Thank you, member for Toohey, for your great advocacy.

### **Ipswich City Council, Complaints**

**Mr MANDER:** My question is to the Premier. Last night the Labor member for Bundamba said that the Premier was warned 'that the former mayor of Ipswich was allegedly corrupt'. The Premier denies this. Someone is lying: who is it?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I have received advice from the table. This does come close to potentially being sub judice. I will allow the question, but I caution the Premier in terms of her response. I will listen very carefully. Yes, I think it does go to the content of that particular discussion.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. I answered this question yesterday. I said very clearly that the member had previously gone to the CCC. She knew where the CCC was. She was a member of the parliamentary committee in relation to the Crime and Corruption Commission. She also held the position of police minister in this state. If she had any evidence she knew exactly where the Crime and Corruption Commission was, and she could have provided any evidence to the CCC as she saw fit.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Deputy Leader of the Opposition, as I was listening very carefully on the issue of sub judice I missed the fact that you used some unparliamentary language. I ask you to withdraw.

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Cooper, I do not need your assistance.

**Mr MANDER:** I withdraw.

### **Rockhampton, Art Gallery**

**Mr O'ROURKE:** My question without notice is of the Premier. Will the Premier outline to the House any future plans for a new art gallery in Rockhampton?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Rockhampton for such a great question. He is a man who is passionate about his community, who knows the value of tourism in his local community and who knows the importance of the significant art collection held in the Rockhampton community. I had the great privilege recently to go to the opening of the Waltzing Matilda Centre, where I was joined by the minister for agriculture. My apologies, the minister was not there. I was thinking of the federal minister.

**Mr Dick:** He wanted to be there, though.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** He wanted to be there. He was there in spirit. As I toured the Waltzing Matilda Centre I was pleased to see a display from the Rockhampton regional art gallery displayed at Winton. Members may not be aware that perhaps some of the greatest collections of Australian art are housed in Rockhampton. It all goes back to former mayor Rex Pilbeam. He went travelling across Australia with the local archbishop of the time. It is a great story; someone should write a book about it. They collected some outstanding artwork. They have Drysdales and Olleys. It is absolutely incredible.

The member has written to me about this. We have already provided \$2 million for the business case. I can advise the member that the business case has now been received by me. In our budget deliberations we will be looking to see how we can support the concept and the member's passionate views about construction of that art gallery. We are looking at partnering with the council. It would be great if the federal government could also partner with us.

I know that tourists from all around Australia will be very pleased to travel to Rockhampton to view this extraordinary art collection. I thank the member for raising the issue. We will do everything we can to see the dream of the member for Rockhampton come true. This collection is Queensland's treasure. At the moment it is being stored behind closed doors. Very rarely is it being displayed. It needs an art gallery so that everyone can see it.

### **Queensland Rail, Train Crew**

**Mr POWELL:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. I table this report to the minister from the Citytrain Response Unit, set up as a recommendation from the Strachan inquiry.

*Tabled paper:* City Train Response Unit report, dated January 2018, titled 'Fixing the trains, Monthly report' [\[679\]](#).

The report says that QR driver productivity has dropped to 29.6 per cent, meaning that over 70 per cent of the time QR drivers are being paid they are not driving a train with passengers. Will the minister explain to the House what exactly these train drivers are being paid to do when they are not driving trains?

**Mr BAILEY:** I thank the honourable member for his question. This government has been left to clean up the mess we inherited from the previous government when it comes to the rail network.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BAILEY:** I would interject, too, if I were an opposition member. They did not start the training of a single driver in their last 12 months in government. They cut the train driver training school. They cut 1,700 staff from Queensland Rail as part of their sacking of 14,000 people. Their record in terms of trains is absolutely disgraceful.

Since the Strachan report we have seen a process of steady recovery. There were very clear signs that this was occurring at the Commonwealth Games, where we saw 600,000 trips on the heavy rail network. It ran like clockwork. It was a fantastic performance from Queensland Rail. We are seeing a steady path to recovery.

We have reduced the amount of time for train drivers to be trained from 18 months to 13 months. Some 17 of the 36 recommendations of the Strachan inquiry have been fully implemented and we are working our way through the others.

I can confirm that, when it comes to additional train drivers into the system, we have a net increase of 36 fully qualified drivers. On a gross basis we have trained 77 drivers. That is 77 more drivers than were trained in the last year of the Newman government. We have also trained 196 guards to become fully qualified. We have selected 140 trainee drivers and 255 trainee guards. Currently in training we have 70 drivers and 21 guards.

We are seeing a gradual, steady recovery. There is no other way of doing that. The LNP knew that the Commonwealth Games were coming and that the Moreton Bay Rail Link was coming, but what did they do? They cut the driver training school. They did not commence the training of a single train driver in their last 12 months in government. That is their record. We are recovering from that. We will continue to recover from that. The performance at the Commonwealth Games was a very solid performance from Queensland Rail. We will continue to see improvements.

### Cross River Rail

**Mr POWER:** My question is to the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the progress of the Cross River Rail project?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for Logan for the question. As the member for Logan and most people on this side of the House know, it is the Palaszczuk Labor government that is committed to building the infrastructure that is critical to meeting the growth demands in the South-East Queensland region and right across the state.

Cross River Rail is critical. It is critical to double the capacity of heavy rail right across the South-East Queensland region. For an area like Logan—a high-growth area that the member for Logan and many members on this side of the House represent—Cross River Rail is critical. It will mean that people living in Logan, on the Gold Coast and in the outer suburbs can get to work faster and can get home to their families sooner.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Coomera, I can hear you above all others. You are cautioned.

**Ms TRAD:** I advise the member for Coomera that it is this government that went on to improve exit 54. His government did nothing about it. There was not one single dollar spent on the M1 by those opposite—no light rail on the Gold Coast and no Cross River Rail. They gave zero dollars to infrastructure, apart from their ‘tower of power’, 1 William Street. I am pleased to advise the House—

**Ms Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** I take the interjection from the Premier. We should table the Auditor-General’s report into 1 William Street—that single piece of infrastructure that those opposite commissioned.

Very recently we announced that the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority would take responsibility for the feasibility study and business case process for the Brisbane Live development. AEG Ogden has put a lot of work into how we can develop a new entertainment venue for our city of Brisbane. I am pleased to report to the House that preliminary work is underway. The benefits to our city and our state

in terms of jobs and tourism are huge. It is really obvious that those opposite do not like ideas, projects, infrastructure or workers. They cannot sit through a question time about critical issues such as infrastructure, jobs and how we meet the demands of a growing population. We are now at five million people. I think the antics and the contributions from those opposite ought to be clear to the people of Queensland. They are simply not up to the job.

*(Time expired)*

### **Queensland Rail, Overtime**

**Mr HART:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Last year QR train crews were paid tens of thousands of dollars in overtime but at the same time productivity plummeted. With falling productivity and increasing overtime payments, I ask the minister to tell the House: are commuters any closer to the end of Labor's passenger rail fail which is causing massive congestion on Queensland roads?

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Deputy Premier, you are warned under the standing orders. Member, I caution you about lengthy preambles and also lengthy questions which seemingly have possible multiple parts.

**Mr BAILEY:** Do members remember the opposition's prediction of the Commonwealth Games? It was going to be gridlocked. It was going to be an international failure.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BAILEY:** Those opposite predicted that we would be an international embarrassment, but what did we deliver? We delivered 600,000 heavy rail trips in 12 days. That is what we delivered. Anybody who understands—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, resume your seat. Members, the interjections are getting increasingly loud and I am having difficulty hearing the minister. I ask that you keep your interjections to a minimum. I will be utilising standing orders.

**Mr BAILEY:** What we saw was an extremely solid performance from Queensland Rail with the international spotlight upon us. For three months beforehand the opposition said it would be doomsday and was fearmongering, but we saw an outstanding performance from Queensland Rail. Let us be very clear: train drivers work all kinds of hours. They attract overtime because they are taking the train out at 4 am or they are bringing back the train at midnight or at 11.30. That is all time that they do not spend with their families, so of course they should be appropriately remunerated when they are working such extreme hours.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Southport, I have warned you already today or cautioned you. You are warned under the standing orders. Member for Theodore, you have just been at it all morning. You are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr BAILEY:** This government commissioned the Strachan report and has implemented 17 of the 36 recommendations. We are methodically working through the others to ensure that there is reform in this sector. We are investing in heavy rail. The duplication from Helensvale to Coomera has been an incredible success in terms of not only the Commonwealth Games being able to get eight trains per hour into the Gold Coast for the very first time on the night of the opening ceremony but also a legacy for the whole rail system as we go forward for those who live on the Gold Coast.

Cross River Rail is a commitment that is fully funded by this government after the opposition's colleagues at a federal level refused to engage with us in Queensland. With regard to the key rail infrastructure project that this state needs, the opposition has undermined it and stopped it at every measure. Let us not hear some lecture on rail when those opposite refused to build Cross River Rail and when they did not duplicate the line from Helensvale to Coomera when they were in government. In fact, when it comes to infrastructure, the only infrastructure that they built when they were in government was 1 William Street. That was the only piece of infrastructure they built. No wonder they lost after only three years with a record majority, because they did not start train driver training for a single driver in the last year they were in government. They knew Moreton Bay rail was coming. They knew the Commonwealth Games were coming, yet they cut the train driver training school. That is their record on rail. They hate Cross River Rail. They still hate Cross River Rail. This government will deliver when it comes to the rail sector.

### Public Hospitals, Service Delivery

**Mr BUTCHER:** My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister update the House today on any impact on public hospitals due to fewer bulk-billing GPs in my electorate and across the state?

**Dr MILES:** I thank the member for Gladstone for his question; it is an important one. General practitioners are best placed to deliver many healthcare services, but due to the failed policies of the LNP Turnbull federal government a visit to the doctor for many Queenslanders is now unaffordable or inaccessible.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Dr MILES:** Those opposite might not care, but in the member for Gladstone's seat the only bulk-billing doctor is available after-hours. In the member for Mackay's seat there is not a single general bulk-billing doctor. Last week the budget delivered more regional medical places everywhere from Wagga Wagga to Mildura but none for regional Queensland. What we saw yesterday from the member for Nanango and the member for Everton—in fact, the entire LNP front bench—was a conga line of suckholes sucking up to Malcolm Turnbull and Queenslanders—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I rise to a point of order. I believe the minister is using unparliamentary language. He should withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, I ask you to withdraw.

**Dr MILES:** I withdraw. Queenslanders have had enough of their hero worship of Malcolm Turnbull. The Galaxy poll at the weekend told us that. The question now is: will they let the member for Nanango lose 32 in a row like her hero Malcolm Turnbull or will they move sooner? I suspect the member for Broadwater intends to move sooner. We know he has been getting around town talking about that poll, talking about his leadership credentials. He has had a very busy week. We know the LNP loves to replace a woman with a man, and nobody loves doing that more than the member for Broadwater—let us not forget how he got back into this place—but now the question is not if but when.

How many bad polls will be the trigger for the member for Broadwater's run on the leadership? Will it be two, three, eight, 32? Maybe when the member for Nanango comes in here later today and apologises to the Deputy Premier that will be the trigger. Who knows? When we next sit in this place and the Deputy Premier delivers the state budget, who will be doing the reply on behalf of the opposition? Will it be the member for Nanango? Will it be the member for Broadwater? Will the member for Everton make a run up the centre? Which man over there will knock her off, just like the LNP does to its women?

*(Time expired)*

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Broadwater, I was going to say I appreciate there was some provocation, but that is no excuse for not putting your comments through the chair and for the repeated interjections, particularly after the contribution was finished and I was trying to call a questioner on your side. You are warned under the standing orders. Before calling the next questioner, the students in the gallery today are from Acacia Ridge State School and the Murri School, both in the Algester electorate, and Browns Plains State School in the electorate of Woodridge.

### Queensland Rail, Train Crew

**Mr MINNIKIN:** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. The CRU report says that since October 2016 Queensland Rail has actually recruited only five additional drivers to its roster while in the same time period Labor has had three transport ministers. Does the minister accept responsibility for the failure to meet the government's goal of recruiting 200 new drivers in achieving only five?

**Mr BAILEY:** I thank the honourable member for his question and I certainly do not accept the premise of the question. The figures that I outlined before are accurate and I do not accept the depiction and the spin being offered by the opposition. I have in front of me—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, resume your seat. Member for Chatsworth, you will refer to people by their correct titles in the House. The House will come to order.

**Mr Purdie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Ninderry, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr BAILEY:** The document referred to by the member has some very interesting statistics that he did not mention. It says that in December 2017 customer satisfaction was up—in fact, to 70.3 per cent. Reliability was up to 99.8 per cent. On-time running for Citytrain was up to 98.5 per cent. We have had very strong on-time running for the last three quarters in a row. In terms of the number of drivers, the figures that I outlined before were accurate.

The opposition members have quite a hide. They did not start the training for a single train driver in the last year of their government. They left a massive hole in the pipeline of drivers that we are still recovering from. They knew that the Moreton Bay Rail Link was coming, they knew that the Commonwealth Games was coming, yet they cut the drivers. That is their record.

We will train more drivers this year than were trained in the entire three years of the LNP government. Why is that? We have put in the resources and the focus. We have cut the time for train drivers to be trained from 18 months—under the LNP it was taking 18 months to train a train driver—down to 13 months. We are keen to get that down further. We are seeing the system recover.

**Mr Powell:** How long does it take to train a transport minister?

**Mr BAILEY:** It takes a particular talent to lose a record majority in three years. I love the lectures that I get from the opposition members. Theirs was the most embarrassing performance by a first-term government in Australian history and they have the temerity to lecture us on rail. They had the best deal in history on Cross River Rail from the federal Rudd government and they said, 'No.' They did not build Cross River Rail. They said, 'No', to the best deal in history. They did not start the train driver training for a single driver in the last year of their government, yet they have the temerity to lecture us.

**Mr MINNIKIN:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It relates to relevance, specifically irrelevance. I would like the minister to answer the question.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my right. I want to hear the point of order. I could not hear the point of order over your interjections.

**Mr MINNIKIN:** Mr Speaker, my point of order is on relevance, specifically a lack thereof. Would you please direct the minister to answer the question?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member, prior to you rising to your feet I was going to warn you for your repeated interjections. You are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr BAILEY:** The document that the opposition refers to is from the Citytrain Response Unit. They are an important part of the Strachan reforms. They are doing an excellent job. We are seeing a steady recovery. After the incompetence of the Newman government, we are seeing more drivers come in quicker and we will see the system recover.

### Federal Budget

**Mr BROWN:** My question is to the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning. Will the minister advise the House of the particular issues for Birkdale that have been raised in the federal budget and how the budget has been described?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the member for Capalaba for his question. When we think of the federal budget, a number of words come to mind. Immediately, two words are 'sloppy' and 'clumsy'. I do not want to mislead the House: they are not my words, they are not the words of any members on this side of the House, they are not the words of any member of the Australian Labor Party anywhere in the Commonwealth; they are the words of the federal assistant treasurer. You know your budget is a dog when the federal assistant treasurer describes it as 'sloppy' and 'clumsy', as he was reported as saying yesterday in an article in the *Redland City Bulletin*. I table the article for the benefit of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Redland City Bulletin*, dated 15 May 2018, titled 'Federal Government and Redland City Council talks over Birkdale bushland' [680].

We know that the budget was a hoax for infrastructure, health, education and disaster funding, but the budget is a real disaster for the people of the Redlands. Within those budget papers is the Turnbull government's plan to sell the Australian Communications and Media Authority site at Birkdale. The federal government not only wants to sell it but also wants to sell it to develop 400 houses.

As I said earlier in the House, good planning leads to good outcomes for Queensland. Never mind that there is no infrastructure to support this development. Never mind the impact that this development would have on the koala population and remnant vegetation. Never mind that the council has been in good faith trying to buy the site for higher education purposes. This land is outside the urban growth area as defined in the South East Queensland Regional Plan. The reason it is outside the urban growth area as defined by the plan is the good work of the member for Capalaba, who championed to keep this area outside the plan for residential development in the last parliament. He ran a petition. The government responded and, of course, we kept the land outside the urban growth boundary, because it is good public policy to preserve it. I thank the member for Capalaba for his good work in standing up for his community.

I am putting all developers on notice, including the developers who donate to the LNP. We will not be facilitating—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There is a bill before the House that we will debate today and were debating yesterday about developer donations. The minister is anticipating debate.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member, I listened to the contribution. At this stage the minister has made reference to developers and donations, but not necessarily the bill, but I will listen closely. Thank you for your point of order.

**Mr DICK:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I put on notice all developers, including those donating to the LNP, that we will not facilitate and will stop any residential development on this site. As the planning minister in Queensland, I will use all of my powers to do so.

The assistant minister also said that ‘clumsy’ was a very polite way to describe the budget papers. That is how bad the federal budget is. Where is the Leader of the Opposition in standing up for Queensland and the people of Birkdale and the Redlands? Nowhere. We know that the member for Broadwater is dining with members of the gallery in the parliamentary Strangers’ Dining Room. He is happy about the polls. Maybe he is willing to stand up for Queensland, because we know that the Leader of the Opposition is not. We know that the Leader of the Opposition will not stand up for Queensland. How long will it take? I will put money on two polls before the bantam from Broadwater again takes aim at another female member of the LNP and makes sure that she loses her job.

*(Time expired)*

### **Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital, Security**

**Ms BATES:** My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister commit to publicly releasing the findings of an internal investigation about a fake ‘Dr Love’ at the Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital? Can the minister outline what immediate steps he has taken to improve security checks while this investigation is underway?

**Dr MILES:** I thank the member for her question. This matter was dealt with by the courts, as was appropriate. As I understand, the hospital has reviewed its security arrangements and reviewed what led to this particular incident and has made any changes that it thought appropriate.

Just like the member for Nanango, we see the member for Mudgeeraba come into this place and criticise our public hospitals, criticise the hard work of our hospital managers—

**Ms BATES:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. I asked very specifically about what security checks are now in place.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, I am listening to your contribution. I caution you about remaining relevant. I will listen to your contribution. Do you have something further to add?

**Dr MILES:** No.

### **Whitsundays, Tourism**

**Mrs GILBERT:** My question is to the Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for the Commonwealth Games. Will the minister update the House on how the government is supporting tourism in the Whitsundays?

**Ms JONES:** I thank the honourable member for Mackay for her question. I am very much looking forward to joining the Premier and my cabinet colleagues in the Mackay-Whitsunday region next week where we will be governing from that local community. What a great community it is and what a great advocate they have in the member for Mackay. More people visit the Great Barrier Reef in Queensland through the Whitsundays than any other region. It is a paramount part of our tourism offering. It was hit

very hard after the cyclone and that is why we worked very closely with the federal government to deliver infrastructure on the ground. That was a great example of the state government working closely with the federal government. It can be done. It is a shame that Elizabeth is going to be getting her prep uniform before we see any decent money for the M1.

When it comes to delivering infrastructure we did a very good job. One of the projects I am most proud of is the \$1 million for the dam in Proserpine. When I first became the minister 3½ years ago one of the local businessmen in the community said to me, 'Do you know what Proserpine needs, Minister? It needs an upgrade to the dam so that we can go fishing there and it needs camping facilities.' I am very pleased that as part of the rebuilding package we are delivering that.

It is not just me who wants to be tourism minister. Yesterday the honourable member for Whitsunday put out a tweet. You needed a little sad face, member for Whitsunday.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Address your comments through the chair, please, Minister.

**Ms JONES:** I felt a bit sorry for him. I wanted to reply with a little sad face because he was bemoaning the fact that he was not the LNP's tourism minister. There has been a lot of talk about the ambitions of the member for Broadwater, but he better watch his back because the member for Whitsunday is coming for him. Maybe he is the frontrunner after all. All this speculation about the member for Broadwater is completely off the mark; it is the member for Whitsundays. We know that there is a lot of infighting happening within the LNP at the moment, which is not good for stability.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms JONES:** I take that interjection. If it is rubbish then why is there a former National Party member of this House going around telling us exactly what the member for Everton is saying about the Leader of the Opposition. Beef week was not all their way.

Of course, there are more concerning issues around the outcome of what has happened in my local patch here in Ryan. Yesterday Councillor Julian Simmonds, who is the Brisbane City Council planning chair, refused to say under questioning that he will not take developer donations. He is the current planning chair of the Brisbane City Council and he would not rule out taking developer donations for his federal campaign. He should stand down from the chair immediately.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, as in a previous contribution, I caution all ministers regarding a bill before the House. I am very concerned that we are skating close to anticipating debate on that bill.

### **Rookwood Weir**

**Mr ANDREW:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Now that the federal budget has been handed down and the funds for the Rookwood Weir available for the Mirani electorate, will the minister please advise when the Queensland government will draw down on those funds and get the Rookwood Weir project underway?

**Dr LYNHAM:** I thank the member for Mirani for an excellent question about Rookwood Weir. It is a weir dear to the heart of many members of parliament, including the member for Rockhampton and the member for Keppel, who, like the member for Mirani, have been advocates for this infrastructure for the farmers and the communities of Central Queensland.

We have put our money on the table. The federal government has said it will match our funds. You cannot trust the federal government. I want it in writing. We do not have that in writing from the federal government. Where are you? Pick up the phone. Talk to Malcolm Turnbull. Talk to your people.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister!

**Dr LYNHAM:** Talk to the Deputy Prime Minister.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, I would appreciate it if you could respond when I am calling your attention. Again, please address your comments through the chair and not direct them at those opposite.

**Dr LYNHAM:** I apologise, Mr Speaker. I suggest the members opposite might like to pick up the phone, get a pen, write to the federal government, suggest that they commit in writing to Rookwood Weir because we have heard it so many times. I am absolutely sick of the politics about Rookwood Weir. We have always stumped up for this weir. We have always said we were going to build Rookwood Weir. With those opposite nothing has happened. I say to the member for Mirani, we have to work together to get the federal government to commit to this very important project for your electorate and for the people of Central Queensland.

## M1 Upgrade

**Mrs McMAHON:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Will the minister please update the House on progress surrounding the state and federal funding split for the M1 upgrades?

**Mr BAILEY:** I thank the honourable member for Macalister for her question. She is a member who stands up for the Gold Coast, Logan and the M1. Unfortunately, those opposite did not spend a single new dollar on the M1 in the three years they were in government. The M1 is part of the National Land Transport Network. That is clear from the determination in 2014 and under the federal government's own policies. Let me quote from the federal government's own website—

The Australian government has reintroduced the traditional 80-20 funding split for new road and rail projects on the national network outside of metropolitan areas.

Under its own rules it should be 80-20. What does it do? It offers Queensland a cut price deal: 50 per cent for the M1. In the same budget the federal government is giving the M1, the same road, at Coffs Harbour 80 per cent funding. Why do they hate Queensland in Canberra? It is hard to work out. Those opposite support Canberra and not Queensland when it comes to the issue of the M1. We would do a lot better in Queensland if the opposition locked in with the Palaszczuk government and demanded a fair share of funding for the M1, instead of selling out Queensland and backing their colleagues in Canberra.

No wonder the Leader of the Opposition is going backwards in the polls. There has been a nine per cent drop in terms of her leadership. The member for Broadwater must be licking his lips with glee. I understand the member for Broadwater has been going to a lot of fundraisers in the LNP. He has been out to Toowoomba. He has been out to Chatsworth. He is quietly networking out there—the shark from Broadwater. I would be concerned.

We have seen two M1 upgrades happen under the Palaszczuk government, none under the previous LNP government. We want to see a third and a fourth. Sadly, we do not receive equal treatment. The Turnbull government also says it gives 50 per cent for urban roads.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Leader of the Opposition and Premier, I would appreciate you not having a conversation across the chamber.

**Mr BAILEY:** The federal government says 50 per cent for urban roads but 80 per cent for regional infrastructure but then it offers 50 per cent for the Beerburum-Nambour rail upgrade. That is not urban. It offers 50 per cent for the Cunningham Highway. There is not much that is urban about the Cunningham Highway from Yamanto to Ebenezer.

There is always an excuse and strings attached to funding offers from the federal government. It does not treat Queensland equal to New South Wales. It does not treat us equal to Victoria where it offers \$5 billion for a rail link to an airport without a business case yet we have \$5.2 billion for the whole state. It does not add up. We need action from the Turnbull government.

## Queensland Heart Valve Bank

**Dr ROWAN:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. I refer the minister to the alleged closure of the vitally important Queensland Heart Valve Bank at the Princess Alexandra Hospital which has been reportedly closed since January this year and I ask: will the minister explain why he has allowed this vital public health facility to remain closed for nearly six months jeopardising patient care and tissue donation in Queensland?

**Dr MILES:** I thank the member for his question. I can advise the House that the Queensland Heart Valve Bank is temporarily suspended pending an external investigation and internal review by Metro South Hospital and Health Service. It is not permanently closed. During this time, the supply of tissue to Queensland's cardiac surgical services will continue from interstate tissue banks. There is no impact on patients or patient care. All tissue banks in Australia work collaboratively depending on need and it is common to source tissue from interstate, as the member would be aware.

The increase in the use of artificial valves and tissues means the hospital and health service only uses minimal human tissue during surgery in Queensland. On average, it is only one to two pieces of tissue per week. As the matter is under investigation, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further on the matters under investigation. This is yet another example of the LNP coming in here



seeking to undermine public confidence in our public hospitals. We have world-class public hospitals, staffed by some of the best clinicians, best nurses and best health practitioners in the world, as the member for Moggill well knows.

**Dr ROWAN:** I rise to a point of order. It is on relevance. Mr Speaker, I ask you to bring him back to the question.

**Mr SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The minister has been relevant. I have been listening very carefully to the answer. I caution you about frivolous points of order made to disrupt the contribution of a minister who has had a question asked of them.

**Dr MILES:** The member for Moggill knows well how hardworking our doctors and nurses are. Yesterday he subjected this House to a bizarre rant about his time as AMAQ president, demonstrating just how in touch he continues to be with the medical profession here in Queensland. He should know better than to talk them down. He should know better than to criticise them. For a time, he was their representative.

**Dr ROWAN:** I rise to a point of order. I find the comments by the minister offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, Minister! There is no need for that contribution. I have this in hand. Minister, will you withdraw?

**Dr MILES:** I withdraw. The LNP front bench cannot help themselves. All they want to do is talk down our hospitals. They want to convince the Queensland public that we have bad hospitals and that is not true. We have world-class public hospitals. The Palaszczuk government is investing in them. We will continue to invest in them. We employ more doctors and nurses, while those opposite sacked doctors and nurses. We will continue to invest in our public hospitals. We will not talk them down, like those opposite do. We will not spend every waking moment, like the member for Mudgeeraba does, talking our hospitals down. We will not spend our days, like the member for Nanango and now, sadly, the member for Moggill, talking our hospitals down. It is vitally important that Queenslanders—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, resume your seat. Member for Nicklin, just because you are at the back of the chamber does not mean that I cannot hear you. You are warned under standing orders.

**Dr MILES:** It is vitally important that Queenslanders know that when they have a sick kid they can have confidence in their public hospital. They should ignore the claims of those opposite.

### Electricity Prices

**Mr KELLY:** My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Will the minister inform the House of the real facts surrounding electricity prices and what the government is doing to place downward pressure on prices for the benefit of all Queenslanders?

**Dr LYNHAM:** I thank the member for Greenslopes for his question. I understand why energy prices are very concerning for people in his electorate, as they are for people all over Queensland. I will start my answer with a bit of history about the LNP's years in office. We all know the figure: there was a 43 per cent increase in electricity prices under the LNP. I compare that to the first three years of the Palaszczuk government Labor government. In the first three years of the Palaszczuk Labor government, there was a 1.9 per cent increase. There was a 43 per cent increase under them; in our three years, there was a 1.9 per cent increase.

Let us compare that to the states that privatised their networks over the three years that we had a 1.9 per cent increase. They had increases of 10 to 20 per cent. If the LNP had sold off our networks, we would have had the 43 per cent increase and then a further 20 per cent increase, but instead we had a 1.9 per cent increase. In the last quarter, in states that sold their networks electricity prices were up by two to five per cent and in Queensland there has been a 4.89 per cent drop in electricity prices.

Before I came to the chamber today, I had a look at a snapshot of wholesale electricity prices from around the nation: New South Wales, \$285 a megawatt hour; Victoria, \$290 a megawatt hour; South Australia, \$316 a megawatt hour, but in Queensland it is \$59, because we own our assets and we put downward pressure on electricity prices. Our Affordable Energy Plan is worth \$2 billion. There has been no rise above inflation. Concession card holders and pensioners get a \$340 rebate per year plus the \$50 rebate just given to all Queensland consumers, so pensioners can save \$390 per year.

If they had sold our networks, what would have happened to our uniform tariff policy, which is a community service obligation? It would have gone. The member for Burdekin might like to explain how prices would have risen in his electorate by \$673 per consumer per year if they owned the assets. In finishing, I repeat: 43 per cent up under those opposite; 4.8 per cent down in this quarter.

**Mr SPEAKER:** As it is 11.15, the time for question time has expired.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL (IMPLEMENTING STAGE 1 OF BELCARRA) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

#### **Second Reading (Cognate Debate)**

Resumed from 15 May (see p.1170), on motion of Mr Hinchliffe—

That the bills be now read a second time.



**Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (11.16 am), continuing: Before the adjournment I had expressed my sincere appreciation and respect for the Lockyer Valley Regional Council and the Somerset Regional Council and their service to our community. The LNP has always been a strong supporter of the work that councils, mayors and councillors do for the betterment of Queensland. In fact, local government share many of the same goals of the LNP—that is, to create jobs, provide safe and livable communities and build the roads, bridges and recreational facilities needed for the future.

At the centre of this bill is establishing the position of the Independent Assessor and the Office of the Independent Assessor to investigate complaints and information about councillor conduct and provide sufficient powers to undertake investigations. In supporting the establishment of this office and position, I recognise that in no way do I cast aspersions on the ability of CEOs of local government. In my area, Mr Bob Bain of Somerset and Mr Ian Church of Lockyer do a wonderful job, professionally and independently. However, this change will help in dealing with concerns over the potentially conflicted roles of chief executive officers in assessing complaints against their own councillors.

I turn now to the specifics of the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As I said earlier, the community expects the highest levels of public accountability. It is very disappointing for the good, hardworking people of Queensland that this Labor government is ignoring the Crime and Corruption Commission advice and recommendations regarding open inquiry and transparency into political donations at the state level. It is also very disappointing for the people of Queensland that this Labor government is ignoring their leader, the Premier, and her own promise in 2015 to undertake an inquiry into political donations. The Premier has had three years to hold the inquiry. Why didn't it happen? This bill is being rushed through by the government to avoid such an open inquiry and avoid the banning of union donations, which are the lifeblood of the campaign of some local governments and most of the state electoral campaigns of this government.

I believe, as do my colleagues, that the people of Queensland are smart. They are smart enough to realise that this government is rushing through legislation to avoid a ban on union donations. The government is looking after their next campaign and their union mates.

We do not have to look far to see some of the negative influence of the unions and the control of their government. Labor reintroduced the union engagement policy, selling out privacy rights of public sector workers. They scrapped right of entry protections against militants unions like the CFMEU. They created Energy Queensland so that the ETU can compete against mum-and-dad electrical contractors and the unions can expand their membership base. They introduced the Teachers' Union veto for independent public schools. Labor withdrew from the federal police task force looking at union corruption despite the fact that the task force was funded by the LNP federal government.

When the Premier introduced the bill on 12 October 2017, the next local government election was over three years away. What happened just a few weeks later? We had a state election. This is why the government needed to rush the bill—to give them an unfair advantage. It gets worse. The government did not rush through the recommendations of the Crime and Corruption Commission regarding local government. They added a few additional amendments that affected only their


competitors in the state election. It was sneaky. The government deliberately created an unfair playing field—something the people of Queensland hate. At every contest, sporting or political, the people of Queensland want to see a fair go and a level playing field so the best team wins.

I believe the people of Queensland are smart enough to realise that this is a government rushing through legislation that is disregarding the advice of the Crime and Corruption Commission to look after their union mates and not the people of Queensland. I call on members to reinforce integrity, to provide for increased transparency, to increase accountability, to establish a level and fair playing field and to support the amendments to be moved by the shadow Attorney-General.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms McMillan): Before I call the member for Everton, I warn the following members under the standing orders: the members for Maryborough, Logan, Kawana, the Deputy Premier, Southport, Theodore, Broadwater, Ninderry, Chatsworth and Nicklin.

**Mr BLEIJIE**: I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Thank you for your ruling. I assume you mean you are giving an indication of those who have been previously warned?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Sorry, my apologies. I remind members that that will continue until the lunch break.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.22 am): Thank you for clarifying that, Madam Deputy Speaker. You would be a very tough Deputy Speaker if that was not the case.

I rise to speak on the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. Local government is an incredibly important level of government in our state and it is very important that the community has full confidence in it.

My electorate actually falls into two local government areas. I have at the north of my electorate the Moreton Bay Regional Council and at the south of my electorate the Brisbane City Council. It is basically an even split. I have a very good relationship with the two Brisbane City councillors who cover my area and also the two Moreton Bay regional councillors as well. We have a close relationship and work well together. I have full confidence in the way they go about their business. It is important that the public has the same confidence as I have.

As has already been mentioned in this House by numerous speakers, by far the overwhelming majority of councillors do the right thing. They are men and women of integrity. They normally have some background of community service and it is a natural progression for them to serve on their local councils. I pay my respect to those people. For those law-abiding councillors who do the right thing, these laws are about protecting their reputations.

We will support laws that give the local government minister more power to act. We have legitimate questions about the breadth of that power. We need to remember that these people are elected representatives of their community and are not public servants in the traditional definition of public servants. They are there at the whim and at the pleasure of those people in their wards and divisions around the state.

It is important that the minister has an ability to act, as he has already in this state. He does have the ability to intervene. That is why the shadow minister will quite reasonably move amendments to put in a review period for these laws. I have no doubt that the current minister would act appropriately, but we have to make sure that these laws apply to whoever is in the position of minister. A minister may have ulterior motives to move people out of positions simply for political reasons or for whatever reason they see fit. It is important that we have that review. That is why the shadow minister has proposed those appropriate amendments.

I will move to the Belcarra aspects of the legislation and the recommendations around developer donations. We understand the CCC's recommendations around the perception, at the very least, of local councillors being influenced by political donations. What we cannot accept in this legislation is the broadening of the CCC's recommendation around developer donations to councillors to include state government MPs. There has been zero evidence of that and zero investigation in relation to that.

I have heard a number of members of the government say—and I think the member for Capalaba was one—that the amendments we will move and our opposition to certain aspects of this bill are politically motivated. For someone from the government to say that our opposition and our amendments are politically motivated is laughable. That is the motivation of the government. They are bringing in these laws because they believe they will nobble this side of politics.

To bring these laws in and with a straight face say that they are not going to extend them to trade unions is laughable. There has been no evidence of developers unduly influencing state government MPs.

**Mr Janetzki** interjected.

**Mr MANDER:** I will take the interjection from the member for Toowoomba South, the shadow Attorney-General. There has been plenty of evidence that the trade unions have undue influence on state Labor government ministers. I will go through some of that evidence off the top of my head. I am sure there are many other examples. We have the influence of the ETU on the former energy minister and now Minister for Transport and Main Roads. The head of the ETU was emailing the minister of the day via private emails making recommendations—or was it giving instructions—on who should go onto the Energy Queensland board.

We have the same ETU head advising—or is it instructing?—the energy minister of the day about their involvement in huge superannuation mergers. These are serious issues. This has been done through back channels, not even through official communication channels. Again, we are seeing this influence on a minister of the crown, a Labor minister.

I think it is more than a coincidence that the same minister, in his new role as Minister for Transport and Main Roads, is heavily influenced, if not controlled, by the Rail, Tram and Bus Union in terms of the closed shop with regard to train drivers and signal men and women. What is their title? You know what I mean—the people at the end of the train.

**Mr McDonald:** The guards.

**Mr MANDER:** The guards—that is what they are. I take that interjection. Thank you for that. The closed shop arrangement here is simply unbelievable. We have seen the result of that—record amounts of overtime. I think it is something on average of three hours of overtime per day for each one of those employees. A train driver is earning close to \$190,000 per year.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. This member is now talking about train issues and other matters far outside this bill and the proposed amendment of the opposition.


**Mr MANDER:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I am talking about the influence of trade unions.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms McMillan): Please stay on the bill, thank you, member.

**Mr MANDER:** I can understand why the Leader of the House is very defensive about these types of issues, but this is an example of the influence that the trade unions have. They are not included in this bill but we have included them in our amendment because, if you want to do this for one section of the community, you need to do it for other sections of the community that have a direct influence.

I have not mentioned the QUT's influence on the education minister with regard to independent public schools. Slowly but surely they will erode one of the most successful policies introduced by the LNP government—one that is embraced by all school principals and the community as well. I will give another example of union influence, and that is the Together union with the Minister for Housing and Public Works on the Logan Renewal Initiative—a contract signed, sealed and delivered and a year and a half later ripped up because the Together union were worried about losing union members who were in housing service centres.

These are examples of the influence that trade unions have on state Labor ministers, yet they will still be able to donate to the Labor Party when other sections of the community—where there is zero evidence of influence on state government MPs—will not be able to donate. This goes beyond the CCC's recommendation. That is why we cannot support this aspect of the bill. That is why we are proposing our amendments. This is simply unfair. It is politically motivated. It is all about nobbling the opposition. That is why we will not support it.

 **Mr HUNT** (Nicklin—LNP) (11.33 am): I rise to speak about my concerns with the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Firstly, may I say to those councillors across Queensland: understand that we in this place certainly do admire the important work that you do. Being new to the political arena, I am fast learning that so many of the local issues that affect people are council issues. Councillors are always trying to find a balance between keeping their community serviced, operating within a budget and ensuring that development is able to happen in a sustainable way whilst retaining the community expectation of the area's character—a difficult balance indeed.

I can only imagine how difficult it might be for our councillors around the state right now listening to us debate this legislation and how a few bad eggs have tainted their reputations and led to the state having to legislate to attempt to prevent corruption at local government level. My own local councillors within the Nicklin electorate—Councillor Greg Rogerson and Councillor Jenny McKay—work extremely hard to ensure community services are delivered. Indeed, during my 30 years of policing there were times when police officers let the rest of us down by their misconduct or even criminal conduct. It affects the reputation of all and is bitterly disappointing when it occurs. When instances do occur, it is right that we examine ways to ensure that it does not recur and try to find a balance between legislative restrictions and overreach that unfairly hinders those to which it is aimed.

I imagine that property developers watching this debate would also feel somewhat aggrieved by being singled out by this government as a group of people who cannot be trusted in their dealings in the political arena. These are the people who create our communities and invest in our communities. Once again the conduct of a few bad eggs has tainted their reputation. Indeed, we on this side of the House appreciate that there is potential for conflict of interest with property developers dealing with local council and involving donations and gifts when local councils are often faced with decisions relating to developments. This, however, does not extend to a danger of this conflict of interest in the state realm.

It is right therefore that, after the local government elections on 19 March 2016, the Crime and Corruption Commission, having received numerous complaints about the conduct of candidates for those councils—as mentioned previously, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Moreton Bay and Logan—commenced Operation Belcarra. After that investigation, 31 recommendations were made. These recommendations are consistent with the CCC's responsibilities to prevent corruption.

One of the key recommendations was recommendation 20, to prohibit candidates from receiving gifts, including donations, from property developers. This related to councillors, not state government or indeed federal government candidates. We agree that the CCC recommendations in this regard should be followed. However, the CCC made it clear that it was not their intention to include the state government candidates and members. In their submission, they made it clear that this bill goes beyond what the CCC recommends and that if the government were considering banning certain donations from state elections a proper review or inquiry would be appropriate. They stated in part—

The Inquiry terms of reference did not include state elections. Consequently the Belcarra Report recommendations did not involve any detailed specific consideration of corruption risks in state elections and decision-making. Accordingly, the reforms depart from the scope of the Belcarra Report recommendations ... the CCC did not contemplate that the proposed reforms would be introduced without preliminary review to identify and mitigate corruption risks in state elections and decision-making. A proper public consultation process is highly desirable. It appears that the current timelines provide little opportunity for the Committee to engage in a comprehensive consideration of these matters properly informed by experts and other stakeholders.

I sat in the House yesterday morning and this morning and listened to the government bang on about integrity and listening to the CCC. They accused our side of the House of all sorts of activities to hinder the CCC when the LNP was in government. They sat on their high horse about how important the CCC is in ensuring government accountability and integrity—and here we are debating with them as ironically they completely disregard the recommendations of the CCC around this legislation. We know why. Everybody knows why. They can sit over there and continue to pretend that this is about a danger of corruption at a state level, but this is clearly about political advantage and complete abuse of power.

Their arrogance in rushing this bill through, backdated prior to the last election for their own electoral advantage, is clear. They clearly wanted to make fundraising for the election difficult for the LNP whilst they pocketed thousands of dollars in union funds for their own electoral campaign.

**Honourable members** interjected.


**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms McMillan): Order! There is a lot of cross-banter. Can we focus on the member's contribution?

**Mr HUNT:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. What did the unions get for their cash? They got control of this government. They control who gets into cabinet, they control which portfolio ministers get, along with emails to ministers' private accounts regarding government policy and board appointments.

All parties fundraise for elections. It is an important part of people being able to support those who represent their values. People donate and people involved in property and development donate, not to influence those elected but to support those who share their values. If we are going to go down the path of banning donations, it needs to be done in an evidence based way. There should be a proper inquiry, as suggested by the CCC. The government is willing to listen to the CCC when it suits but not when it does not. The government forgot to listen to that recommendation, didn't it? That particular recommendation did not suit Labor's agenda so they just ignored it, because an inquiry might find what is obviously to every fair-thinking person: that this is a politically motivated move by an arrogant government. If we are going down the path of banning donations, let us include donations from unions.

The other concern—something that is glaringly obvious and that makes this legislation stand out as rushed and politically motivated—is the scant regard given to the definitions in both of these amendment bills I am speaking to. The definition of property developer, for example, is so ambiguous. It was thrown together quickly. It is deliberately vague to scare everyone off donating, attending functions or even buying raffle tickets just in case they fall within the scope of this vague definition. The use of the term 'regular' when referring to the definition of a property developer is not defined under the legislation and will therefore require an interpretation of its usual meaning which is so open to interpretation that it would take a seriously brave person to be the first test case. That is exactly what Labor want. They want it to be vague. They want to scare people from donating money and participating in the democratic process while Labor swim in their union cash.

The vagueness of these laws is open to wide interpretation, including those definitions I mentioned. It is one of two things: it is either sloppy attention to detail in rushing the laws through the House or it is deliberate vagueness to create uncertainty and leave the government with incredible powers to define them as they see fit over time. The public rightly demand accountability, transparency and a corrupt-free government. The government needs to practise what they preach and listen to the recommendations of the CCC, base legislation on evidence based inquiries and not rush these laws through to include state members and candidates for their own political advantage.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (11.43 am): In making some comments on the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I will reflect on the local governments in my area—that is, the Scenic Rim Regional Council, one division of Ipswich city and parts of two divisions of Logan City. As many other members have said, we all strive to have a good relationship with local government, particularly local councillors. They are the closest level of government to the people, and in my area they are very close in people's hearts.

I turn first to the amendments that will be moved by the Minister for Local Government. Councillors will be automatically stood down if charged with certain integrity offences. There are also amendments that will empower the minister to suspend or dismiss councillors or dissolve a local government where the minister believes this is in the public interest. These amendments have no doubt arisen due to events at Logan City Council and Ipswich City Council, both of which have part of their area within the Scenic Rim electorate.

The inability to have the mayor of Logan stood down when charges were laid against him and the uncertainty for the community and perceived reputational damage to the city, the council itself and other councillors has been a cause for concern by many in the Logan City part of my electorate, not least for other Logan City councillors. I note that the provisions of the bill will see Mayor Smith stood down upon enactment of the bill and I believe one other councillor who is also facing charges before the court in relation to stealing. Similarly, although Mayor Antonioli of Ipswich has voluntarily stood aside, this bill will affect him and ensure that under the Local Government Act he is formally and lawfully stood down from his role as mayor as a result of the charges brought against him.

I offer cautious support for this stand-down provision, but I note that it will apply to all local governments upon enactment. It has not been the subject of any scrutiny by a committee, by the LGAQ, councils, any other stakeholders or the community. There is no reason why the government could not have acted in this bill to deal with immediate issues facing Ipswich and Logan and submitted a further bill to parliament for scrutiny through the committee process. That would have been a measured and sensible approach to take, because as history has shown, in the last parliament in particular, legislation that is rushed in here will come back for consideration in the future to fix unintended errors that a committee would have picked up on.

As an MP representing part of the Ipswich City Council area, I call on the minister and implore him to do what he can to ensure that Ipswich residents can have confidence in their council and in their city. The stand-down powers are important in that regard, but equally as important in my view and in the views that have been reflected to me by some residents of Ipswich city is that the minister give those councillors unaffected by the corruption scandal at Ipswich City Council a fair go.

Since the show-cause notice was issued about two weeks ago, there has been a significant amount of angst in the community over the fact that that show-cause notice could see all 11 councillors in the city lose their role as local representatives. It is a very blunt instrument, but at the time it was issued it is my understanding that there was no other option. It was all or nothing for the government, and the opposition supported that action at the time and the action taken so far. However, I believe the passage of this bill changes that. The mayor of Ipswich, facing charges as he is, will be stood down under the act. Other councillors would face similar consequences if any charges were laid upon them.

Ipswich residents do not want to lose all of their representatives, and they certainly do not want Jim Soorley as the administrator of their council, as has been rumoured to be the case. This should not be a takeover of Ipswich by Brisbane based bureaucrats. I implore the minister to find a way to do the right thing for those councillors who have gone about their actions diligently in the best interests of their community. As we have all reflected on in this debate, the vast majority of councillors act in that way. Do the best for them. Those councillors who have acted without scandal or corruption do not deserve to be sacked. As representatives of the community, the community does not expect them to be sacked if they have done nothing wrong. On the other hand, the minister has to take the steps required to change what is obviously a dire cultural issue at Ipswich City Council when it comes to dealing with matters of probity. I implore the minister to act to keep people's confidence in the council and to keep local representatives on foot in that city.

I also have concerns about the other significant amendment to be moved by the minister. Having the ability to sack local governments, mayors and councillors all in the undefined term of 'public interest' is a very broad power. As other members have reflected on, it raises the risk that the Queensland government will run over the top of local government when that local government is acting in a manner when to dismiss them could be seen to be in the public interest as determined by the minister.

From time to time, I do have disagreements about what local government does in Scenic Rim, Ipswich or Logan. That is the nature of local politics. Local government should be empowered to act in line with local wishes, as they are the closest to the ground, as we have all noted, and that localness should be enhanced, not eroded. Local issues should be, as far as possible, resolved through local political means, not through state intervention—at least not state intervention on an ad hoc basis without any changes to the underlying roles and responsibilities of local government.


I have concerns that any minister—not just the present minister—of whichever government is in power at the time could use this power ruthlessly to dismiss a council or councillor due to political disagreements, dressing up the term 'public interest' to justify a thoroughly politically partisan sacking. Other members have expressed that concern as well. Think about what happened a few years back when there were serious protests across Queensland about amalgamation of local government—something that affected my electorate significantly, something that people 10 years on are still extremely upset about, and I would use another term except for where I am standing. Think about the changes to water utilities that took place and the upheaval that caused in local government. Think about the removal of state subsidies for capital works.

If a local representative, vigorously defending the rights of their community, is considered by the minister to not be 'acting reasonably'—which is one of the categories that could be deemed to be a public interest factor in the explanatory memorandum—would he face the sack in the public interest? Again, when we look at what constitutes a public interest, community confidence is one of the factors as well. The member for Broadwater pointed this out yesterday. It is one of the things the minister might consider. That is an extremely subjective category for the minister to consider. We are all going to have different views about whether a council is acting in the community interests or not, or whether the community has confidence in a council or councillor or not. I cannot help but express my concern about the power being given to the minister and the impact it might have on the freedom of local governments and local representatives to determine their direction and to speak out on behalf of their residents.

I think both of these provisions should have been referred to the committee for proper investigation. As I said earlier, the government had the ability to deal with these issues through legislation if they chose. The government could deal with the present issues at Logan and Ipswich by

legislating specifically for those areas. That would allow a thorough review of both the stand-down power and the public interest amendments on a broader scale through the committee process. As it is, the amendments will be rushed in here in consideration in detail. I know there has been some talk in the past couple of weeks about what the provisions will look like, but they have been rushed in here. They have been tacked on to an unrelated bill when they will have far-ranging and potentially very dramatic implications for local government. They should be referred to the committee for a general inquiry because no doubt they will have unintended consequences or omissions. As other members have alluded to, that is the position that should have been taken in respect of those powers.

With respect to the amendment to be moved in relation to the review of these powers after two years, that is a good idea. If we cannot have a review of the legislation to start with, there needs to be a review after some time of operation to consider whether they should remain in the legislation or not.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (11.53 am): I am pleased to rise in support of these bills. Operation Belcarra exposed allegations of failings and potential misconduct across several Queensland councils. Local councils are important institutions in our community, responsible for transforming cities and supporting regional towns. I have always said that there is so much to love about my own community of Logan. We are a growing, thriving community. There are many important projects that we are working on across levels of government, such as social housing renewal, providing the very best start for our kids with Logan Together and delivering the vital transport infrastructure and community services that our growing community needs. These projects and others like them in councils right across Queensland deserve the full attention of the elected officials tasked with delivering them.

The Palaszczuk government has always made integrity, transparency and accountability core to its values. We expect it of ourselves and we expect it of all other levels of government. We are the government which introduced real-time disclosures and returned the disclosure threshold to a reasonable level—something those opposite are still fighting. These bills continue that work with the ban on developer donations. The amendments reinforce integrity and reduce the risk of corruption potentially caused by political donations from property developers at a state and local government level. We have seen many concerns raised in this area and it is time we just took away the risk.

Members opposite have questioned why the donation ban has not been extended to unions. It is simple—it is because the CCC chair, Mr MacSporran, advised that the same risk is just not present. It is not just the LNP that has form when it comes to political donations; the Greens have also shown some breathtaking hypocrisy on this matter. Yesterday we heard from the member for Toohey about how the Greens have hidden corporate donations by using the federal disclosure laws for corporate donations between \$1,000 and \$13,000, but I see the member for Maiwar calling for a ban on all corporate donations. They are happy to take donations though from wealthy gamblers like Duncan Turpie. A look at the Australian Greens website shows that, even though they say they do not like taking gambling donations, they are happy to take a donation from Clinton Lollback, whose LinkedIn profile says he is the chief risk officer for Tabcorp.

I think everyone in this House can acknowledge the important responsibility that comes with public service and representing your community as an elected representative, which is why these amendments introduce an automatic suspension of mayors or councillors charged with one of a series of corruption or integrity offences and expand the range of intervention options available to the local government minister to dismiss or suspend members of council and appoint an administrator where appropriate.

Many of my constituents have contacted me with concerns about the charges brought against Mayor Luke Smith. These are serious charges that understandably are troubling to many members of the community. They are troubling because they want to know that their elected representatives and council officials are working for them. Members of my community have already experienced the drama and insecurity surrounding criminal charges laid against another councillor, Councillor Stacey McIntosh, and those charges are still ongoing. The latest charges against the mayor further erode their confidence.

As a former lawyer, I absolutely believe that people are innocent until proven guilty and that everyone deserves the right to natural justice. However, while serious allegations are before the courts, there is a community expectation that elected representatives will stand aside until the matters have been finalised. These amendments put the community interests above the interests of any one person,



group or party—because the community, when faced with continued disappointment from their elected council or council officials, have turned to the Queensland government and they expect us to act, and we have. We have acted within the powers that are clearly able to be exercised.


These bills in combination clarify and importantly strengthen those powers and the responsibility of the state to step in and put an end to behaviour that not only damages confidence in council but threatens growth and economic development in these vital regions. The success of the community is being held back by the actions of a few. If the Minister for Local Government is of the view that local government principles are being breached or councillors or council are incapable of performing their duties, we will intervene in the public interest. We cannot let uncertainty hold our communities back. Families, ratepayers, small businesses and industry need to know that their local government representatives and staff are relentlessly pursuing growth and success for their region and their communities and that they are doing that with integrity and honesty.

Again, in my own community business is also feeling the impact of the uncertainty. Whether the allegations are proven or not, the reputation of our region has been impacted. The Logan Chamber of Commerce secretary, Stewart Fleming, has expressed concern on behalf of businesses in our region. He said—

There's quite a bit of unrest in the community and disappointment in the council ... certainly the businesses are concerned.

He went on to say that it was 'a matter of stability and strong leadership'.

The Palaszczuk government went to the election promising to strengthen and improve integrity and confidence in local government and establish a simplified and independent process for properly investigating complaints and concerns. I think all of us have been shocked by the allegations of criminal behaviour by multiple elected officials across our state, and this legislation is an important step in rebuilding confidence in our councils. Our communities have had enough; they expect us to act. I commend these bills to the House.

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (11.59 am): I rise to make a contribution to the cognate debate of the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. May I start by congratulating the member for Bundamba for standing up here last night and making that contribution. I think it took a lot of guts and a lot of backbone to get up and say what she said last night. I have to agree with some of the things she said.

I can relate to the things the member for Bundamba said especially when she talked about suicide. When someone receives a phone call at night from a friend about a person who is going to commit suicide, can they sleep that night? No, they do not. That is the reality of some of this. I can understand what the member said. I really can. She talked about people being hospitalised due to stress, anxiety and depression. I had a lady in my office trembling because she could not go into the chamber because she had thrown up beforehand. That should not happen in a workplace. She sat there in front of me and she was actually trembling. I can relate to what the member said last night. I really can.

The member talked about people resigning over the disgusting behaviour of some of the staff from above and many others were sacked. The member said that. A group of ladies wrote to the CCC about the bullying. What did the CCC do? They actually gave one of the people they were complaining about the job to investigate themselves. What was the outcome? Those staff colluded against the complainant.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** That's what we're changing.

**Mr SORENSEN:** It is about time. I can understand what the member for Bundamba said. Those staff members were also forced to sign confidential agreements and then they were pressured to not go to the CCC. When people have that experience with the CCC they do not trust the CCC. That is one of the things that has come out. This is what the people of the community tell me. This is not me talking; this is the community talking to me and saying that they do not trust the CCC. It is a pretty big indictment on an organisation that should be out there following up on some of these things.

I wrote to the Attorney-General on 12 February. In that letter I asked the Attorney-General—

Does the CCC have the powers to overturn the rules of silence, of the redundancies and payouts of ex-staff of the Fraser Coast Regional council.

There are ex-staff that wish to tell their story of what happened to them at the Fraser Coast Regional council, particularly now that the Mayor has been dismissed and they have asked for my urgent representations.

I do thank the Attorney-General for writing back to me on 21 February. I would like to table these documents so that the people out there who are going through this can read what the Attorney-General wrote back to me.

*Tabled paper:* Email, dated 21 February 2018, from the member for Hervey Bay, Mr Ted Sorensen MP, to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Hon. Yvette D'Ath, regarding powers of the Crime and Corruption Commission, and the response, dated 9 March 2018, from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Hon. Yvette D'Ath [\[681\]](#).

I think that is very important because people out there are scared. They have been paid out and they have signed an agreement to say that they will not disclose anything about the council, and I think that is wrong. I really do think that is wrong. I thank the Attorney-General for getting back to me as quickly as she did.

The staff of the Fraser Coast Regional Council have had a gutful. They have been—I will not say what I think because I would most probably be kicked out of here.

**Mr Krause:** Raked over the coals.

**Mr SORENSEN:** They have been raked over the coals; I take that interjection. This has got to stop.

**Mr Madden** interjected.

**Mr SORENSEN:** This is not going to stop it, believe you me. I take that interjection. I spoke to a woman last Sunday who said that her husband works at the council and nothing has changed. He wants to get out of there as soon as he can get another job. Members opposite should not try to tell me that this is going to solve the problem. It is time to close the door on this sort of behaviour and the culture that goes with it.

I think we should go back a few years and look at what happened. Councils have been a pretty good punching bag for politics for a long time. If we go back to Beattie's days we will remember that Andrew Fraser amalgamated councils. I think some of this goes back to that time because of the disharmony between communities, and it just flows on and on. Amalgamation was one thing. It was Beattie who said that local government was only the breeding ground for the National Party, and then they brought in the laws so that a councillor—

**Ms Leahy:**—couldn't stand for parliament.

**Mr SORENSEN:**—could not stand for parliament unless they resigned from the council. I thought that was the most ridiculous thing in the world. Personally I thought it was ridiculous that a councillor had to resign if he wanted to run for state parliament—whether or not he got in.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Member for Hervey Bay, I counsel you to come back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr SORENSEN:** I am talking about councils here. I will return to the bills. What is the meaning of a 'developer'? One of the two biggest developments we have had in Hervey Bay is the Ozcare 150-bed high-care nursing home. Is that a developer? Is it really? The other one is a private development, a nursing home—primary care—with about 146 beds. Is he a developer?

**Mr Hinchliffe:** Yes, he is.

**Mr SORENSEN:** What about the council that puts in an application to build the sporting fields? What about the Labor government? Are they developers if they submit an application to build a new fire station and an ambulance station, which Hervey Bay needs, and also to upgrade the police station? Are they developers?

**Mr Hinchliffe:** If they make political donations to councils or to the state parliamentary candidates then you should raise that. I reckon you should.

**Mr SORENSEN:** What about the Labor Party property trusts? Are they developers?

**A government member:** Yes.

**Mr SORENSEN:** How can they donate to the Labor Party? Ask yourselves. You only have to look at one of the trusts in Hervey Bay. Are they allowed to donate to the Labor Party under this bill?

**A government member:** You don't even know who you're talking about anymore.

**Mr SORENSEN:** I do know what I am talking about.


**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Hervey Bay, through the chair please.

**Mr SORENSEN:** Those are some of the things we would like to have explained to us. In relation to another recommendation, I think this is one of the better ones that has been changed a little bit. Recommendation 10.2 states—

... giving the RCRPs and tribunal power to refuse to allow a person to be represented by a legal practitioner be amended to read:

Where it considers it desirable to do so in the interests of justice, may allow a person to be attended by a legal practitioner.

(Time expired)

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (12.09 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, this is a very personal matter for me. I rise today to speak about the two bills before the House which have been joined in cognate. I am very concerned, because in 2004 when I was elected as a councillor to the Gold Coast City Council that council was subjected to a Labor inspired inquiry into alleged corruption. I have to say that the process was, if nothing, quite insulting. It was a terrible slur on one of the great cities of Australia—the sixth largest city in Australia—and a terrible slur on the development industry. I see that Labor has not changed. It saddens me that after some 12 years Labor is still out there developer bashing the biggest industry in our state—the construction industry—which accounts for about 18 per cent of all jobs. What do we see? The same government, which is quite happy to take money from the CFMEU to live off the fat of the unions, now wants to bite the hand that feeds it.

In 2005 there was a report tabled in this House which contained the findings of the CMC inquiry the Labor government of the day initiated in relation to the Gold Coast City Council. I am happy to re-table it, but it has already been tabled. At the outset I want to talk about how offensive the title of that report was—*The Gold Coast: Queensland or a foreign land?* What is clear to me today is that those on the other side of the House still do not fully understand what a powerhouse and engine room the Gold Coast is to the Queensland economy, because right back then in 2004 the Gold Coast was being bashed and kicked around like a football by the then Labor government, which did not appreciate the value—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** I am not taking those interjections, Mr Speaker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Order!

**Mr MOLHOEK:** Nothing has changed. This is just another piece of legislation about developer bashing. Back in 2005-06 we saw the then local government minister, Desley Boyle, rise in this House to introduce the Local Government Amendment Act in response to the CMC inquiry. What came out of that was some discussion around improving councillor conduct, some discussion around greater accountability, and a new code of practice introduced. What has happened? That has been kicked around again for another 10 years, and here we are again with another bill from the Labor government saying, 'We're going to fix it.' This is your third attempt. Frankly, so much of this legislation is nothing but council bashing. It shows an incredible lack of disregard for grassroots councillors who work hard for their local communities across this state. Frankly, I am fed up with the bashing that the Gold Coast and some of developers receive. Those on the other side of the House were more than happy to take millions of dollars from the development industry on the Gold Coast back in the day, and they have continued to do so right up until recent times.

I want to put this on the record, because these are the findings of that 2004 inquiry. I spent the first two days of a six-week inquiry in the witness box. It cost the state some \$12 million at the time. It was a complete waste of money; a complete witch-hunt. What did it find? Commentary surrounding the report states—

The CMC report on the inquiry into the 2004 Gold Coast City Council election, released today, had cleared all involved of any offences under the Local Government Act in relation to misleading voters and electoral bribery.

It further states—

The report also clears the Gold Coast City Council and its councillors of any official misconduct or other criminal offence in relation to council decisions made since the 2004 elections.

It goes on to say—

... no evidence of any breaches of the Local Government Act, or of any other law for that matter, by the Gold Coast councillors or the council as a whole, since the conclusion of the 2004 elections.

This is the important bit, because we have been talking about these new conflict-of-interest provisions, the safeguards that we need and councillors getting to vote on whether somebody has a conflict of interest or not. The arbiter of whether a council is doing the right thing is called an election.

If the community are not happy with their councillors, every four years they have the opportunity to decide whether that councillor remains as a councillor and a representative of their community. I was proud to be a councillor for four years. I was sad to miss out on the mayoralty by a few thousands votes, but I was proud to be a councillor for those four years and I am incredibly proud of the Gold Coast. I want to return to the commentary on the report—

The evidence before the inquiry was that the Gold Coast Council has, since the 2004 elections, made thousands of decisions aimed at benefiting the residents of the Gold Coast. The inquiry itself examined a number of those decisions and failed to uncover any wrongdoing.

In relation to those decisions which the inquiry did examine, Mr Needham—

who was the commissioner at the time—

stated: ‘... in none of these cases could the actions of councillors involved amount to offences under the LGA,’ ...

I suspect that this latest witch-hunt—this new set of rules, these new transparent standards that those on the other side of the House want to keep spruiking—will again find no wrongdoing. Interestingly, the only person about whom there has been any serious suggestion of wrongdoing is Penny Toland, who failed to disclose her connection to the unions and in the early stages was not open about the donations she received from a number of unions. That is the only person, and where is she from? Labor. She is a Labor person. In 2008 when I ran for—

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Ms D’Ath** interjected.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** I am not taking those interjections.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister! Attorney-General! Order!


**Mr MOLHOEK:** In 2008 when I ran for mayor I set the benchmark. I was the first candidate in any local government election to simultaneously declare and disclose donations as they came in online within 24 hours of receipt. I am absolutely passionate about transparency, but not the sort of nonsense we are hearing on the other side of the House.

In 1972 a new building went up on the foreshore at Surfers Paradise. It was one of the first high-rises. It was called the Shore Motor Inn and it is still there today. As a young 12-year-old my father walked me up the stairs—you probably could not do it these days because of work health and safety issues—to the top of the unfinished building. After the war my dad migrated to Australia, spent a couple of years in Melbourne and then moved to the Gold Coast in 1956. My dad, a tradesman and someone who passionately loved the Gold Coast, said to me, ‘Son, look at this place. It is incredible. This is going to be one of the most amazing cities in the world one day. You mark my words. You wait and see.’

What have we seen in the last 30 or 40 years? We have seen the Gold Coast become one of the most stellar tourist and holiday destinations in the world. We have seen people like Keith Williams develop some of the most incredible theme parks and lay the foundations for an incredible world-class city. We have seen people like Soheil Abedian and Jim Raptis—I know they are colourful, controversial figures—whose companies have led the renaissance of Surfers Paradise with some stellar projects. I remember only too well Anna Bligh proudly strutting around with Sunland at the opening of Q1 talking about how wonderful they were. I remember as a councillor attending events at Hope Island when members on the other side of the House were more than happy to skite about what a great job John Fish was doing and take money in donations from the development industry. The hypocrisy from that side of the House is breathtaking.

The reality is that there will always be the odd developer who does the wrong thing, there will always be the odd Labor member who does the wrong thing—there is a list of Labor members who have gone to jail or been charged with corruption—and there is the odd person on our side of the House who has had to be dealt with, but the reality is that this legislation is nothing but a witch-hunt. It is aimed at trying to marginalise the LNP and other parties and their ability to work with business across the state—not just the development industry but all business—because we are the party that is pro business. We are pro farming, pro industry and pro economic growth. This bill is an absolute disgrace. It is nothing but a witch-hunt. It is such a shame that those opposite are not targeting the union leaders—

*(Time expired)*

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (12.20 pm): I rise to speak to the important local government reforms that are before us. For decades there has been debate, deliberation and on many occasions disgust at what some see as the sorry state of political life in this country. The sentiment, which is often expressed in utter frustration, about how politicians are seen to behave has been applied to all levels of government at one time or another and sometimes even all at once. This frustration is in some ways about the politics people see on television—the cut and thrust, the occasional barbs and the one-liners that are sometimes witty and at other times fall a long way short of that mark.

The frustration of many people has been brought about by a significant erosion of trust. That is the trust that their representatives are actually working hard to represent them and fighting for their interests. There have been plenty of reasons for that trust to be eroded. We have seen at the federal level a government that came to office promising no cuts to health, to education or to the ABC or SBS but which turned around very quickly and made the very cuts it pledged not to make. In this very parliament just a few years ago we had a government that came to power with the pledge that no public servant had anything to fear. How very wrong that was. Once again the public's trust was eroded.

Local government is the level of government at which trust between the people and the elected representatives is perhaps needed the most. Local government has a massive impact on the daily lives of Queenslanders in their communities. Are their roads safe? Are their streets clean? Is their town or suburb inclusive? Are local community organisations supported? People rely on their local governments and need them to be above reproach. We cannot have local government areas in which people are more likely to wonder of their local councillors 'What's in it for them?' than 'Can you help me to make this community better?'


Under the reforms proposed, elected councillors and mayors will face a tougher test—a higher standard that they will need to live up to. Importantly, they will ensure that councillors who have been charged with certain specific offences relating to their roles in local government will be automatically suspended. These offences include those that would disqualify the councillor from their role if they were convicted or those that carry a sentence of imprisonment of more than seven years.

The local government minister will be empowered to dismiss a council if he or she has a reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do so. This will give the local government minister the ability to act immediately in the interests of the community. Importantly, the local government minister will also have the power to ask a council to show cause as to why it should not be suspended. Under current legislation, as we know, the minister can only ask a council to show cause as to why it should not be dismissed.

This legislation is a vital step in restoring the trust of local communities in their local governments. The people of Queensland need to know not only that their councils and councillors are expected to deliver on local promises and priorities but also that they are being held to the higher standard we should expect from our representatives. This legislation should leave no local government or councillor in any doubt that a high standard is not only desirable but also expected by all Queenslanders. The majority who work to those high standards have nothing to fear from this legislation.

Where it is necessary to uphold these standards on behalf of Queenslanders the state government will act. I simply cannot understand how LNP members could explain that they do not expect those high standards—how they can explain to any of their constituents that they do not expect that of themselves.

I am proud to be part of a government that is willing to stand up for Queenslanders and to do what needs to be done to restore trust. I commend the previous ministers for local government and the current minister for local government, the member for Sandgate, for their courage in bringing this legislation forward and restoring the trust of Queenslanders.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (12.25 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the cognate debate of the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In relation to the Belcarra bill, at the outset I advise that I am opposed to the prohibited donor laws at the state level for all the reasons that have been articulated during the debate. I support the CCC's recommendations in relation to local government electoral reform. All of us on this side of the House understand how important that is.

I will support amendments to be moved to expand the ban to union donations for local and state government elections. I know that this legislation is controversial, but we cannot support legislation that effectively bans one group in our community but not another, especially when that ban is being used to nobble a political opponent and especially when one group will lose more than another group in terms of fundraising.

We know from recent ReachTEL polling that the public thinks the government's solution is incomplete and unjust and excludes good people and organisations from full participation in the political process while it leaves some people and organisations free to improperly influence elected officials. This clearly creates a cynical political position. Why are we not having conversations about improper influence from donations across-the-board? Why are we not discussing things such as full public funding, which would remove any perception of undue influence?

I know that Queenslanders want this government to accept the advice of the independent CCC chair and undertake an inquiry into state political donations before introducing bans at the state level. Clearly, there is strong support from Queenslanders for a broader discussion on political donations. I know that many would prefer to see corporate entities, such as companies and unions, that commit significant illegal acts banned from donating to political parties. This is the best solution, not what is being proposed in this legislation. With the inference that property development is the one industry that wields so much influence, would we not be better to target organisations that regularly break the law and are allowed to donate to political parties—for example the CFMEU, which has incurred court fines of nearly \$15 million in recent years, has been described by a Federal Court judge as the most recidivist corporate offender in Australian history and was found by the trade union royal commission to have committed a wide range of abuses?

We know that support for banning donations from lawless organisations is extremely high across-the-board. This is an area that needs to be investigated more thoroughly. It appears obvious from responses to the questions posed in recent community engagement surveys that some sort of fit-and-proper person test should be applied to corporations and perhaps even individuals who donate to political parties and candidates. It should be noted that, under the government's proposed legislation, someone with a criminal conviction of less than three years would be able to donate to a political party but a property developer with not so much as a traffic fine to their name would not be able to.

We know from recent industry community engagement that many agree the best way to deal with corruption is effective policing, not blanket bans over whole industries. This is a common-sense point of view and it is in line with what most would regard as the principles of justice. We do not punish groups for individual crimes, only individual criminals. I thought even those opposite would be appalled if members of a whole community were punished because of the misdeeds of one or two people. The chairman of the Crime and Corruption Commission has warned the state government that its legislation to ban property industry donations could be successfully challenged in the High Court if it does not conduct public consultation on it.

I will outline some of the conclusions from the recent ReachTEL polling. If the government believes that the notion that public perception that donations from an industry sector could be tainted is a proper basis for banning donations from that industry, then anti-corruption legislation should include other industries. The responses show that the public perception is that some donations from the following industries are corrupt: gambling, 76 per cent; the property industry, 73 per cent; unions, 63 per cent; the alcohol industry, 60 per cent; and law firms, 51 per cent. It is likely that similar perceptions of other industries would result if they were tested.

The public overwhelmingly—60 per cent in favour and only 15 per cent against—believes that it would be better for offenders to be identified and charged rather than banning entire members of an industry from donating. This indicates dissatisfaction with the government's approach and possibly with the enforcement provided by the CCC and the police. Any donation legislation should include an objective test that would outlaw donations from organisations like the CFMEU that commit significant illegal acts. A massive 87 per cent of respondents supported this position compared to only 2.7 per cent opposed.

The Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill that we are discussing is as a result of a flawed process and was opportunistically introduced in the run-up to the last election. It is retrospective legislation that prevented members of the property industry from supporting candidates of their choice while giving members of the industry free

rein. Unless the commission has information that is not publicly available to date, no property developer has been charged with corrupting an elected official in Queensland since George Herscu in 1990. Operation Belcarra itself did not uncover any wrongdoing by property developers, so why the heavy hand? Why the overreach in banning property developer donations in state elections? The CCC made it clear in its written submissions that the bill goes beyond the CCC's recommendations and, if the government were to consider banning certain donations to state elections, a proper review or inquiry would be the best way to go.

Debate, on motion of Mr Bennett, adjourned.


## DEPUTY SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

### School Group Tour

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): I acknowledge teachers and students from Livingstone Christian College in the electorate of Coomera who are joining us here today.

## ELECTORAL LEGISLATION (POLITICAL DONATIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (12.30 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Electoral Act 1992 and the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Economics and Governance Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Electoral Legislation (Political Donations) Amendment Bill 2018 [\[682\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Electoral Legislation (Political Donations) Amendment Bill 2018, explanatory notes [\[683\]](#).

Today I am introducing a bill that will ban political donations from for-profit corporations, the first of many steps I will propose to restore Queenslanders' faith in our democracy. This bill delivers on a key commitment made by the Queensland Greens in the 2017 state election campaign and I am proud to be standing up for the people of Maiwar, the people of Queensland and, most fundamentally, for the integrity of our political system.

Recent developments and revelations at the local government level have laid bare the undeniable potential for corruption as a consequence of political donations. The recent work of the Crime and Corruption Commission and its report on Operation Belcarra speak for themselves and highlight how political donations increase both the actual and perceived risk of corruption. However, there was a fundamental limit to the CCC's recent work. For all its valuable insight, Operation Belcarra only considered corruption complaints at the local government level where corporate interests relate predominantly to planning and development decisions. Quoting the Crime and Corruption Commission directly, the Belcarra report stated—

The general nature of these allegations is consistent with one of the key concerns about political donations generally—that they increase the risk of corruption. Often donations are seen as being motivated by a desire to purchase influence in government decision-making. There is a real risk of corruption when donations are made with the expectation that the recipient will, in return, make decisions that deliver material benefits to the donor. This risk is heightened when donors have business interests that are affected by government decisions.

The CCC goes on—

Another major concern about political donations is that, rather than being motivated by a desire to purchase direct influence in government decision-making, they are motivated by a desire to purchase access to the decision-makers. That is, there is a belief that donations can lead to donors getting special opportunities to put their cases forward. This too can be seen as a form of corruption in that some stakeholders are illegitimately gaining an advantage over others who should be but are not afforded the same level of access. There is a further risk of corruption when these 'rights of access morph ... into the adoption of policies designed to materially benefit those to whom access has been given, rather than to advance the broader public interest' ...

It would be foolhardy to think that the real or perceived risk of corruption begins and ends with donations from developers to local governments. Indeed, the Palaszczuk government appears to accept that the risks are broader, having extended the developer donations ban to the state government. If we take this reasoning to its logical conclusion, why has the government just stopped with developers? State government decisions affect the interests and profit margins of all businesses operating in Queensland and there is a broad perception in the community that government decisions are made in the interests of corporate profit, not people. We do not have to look far for examples.

The resource industry is a powerful and vocal lobby, making massive profits, large donations and gaining enormous concessions. Let us consider the right to take unlimited amounts of groundwater in the course of mining and CSG operations while farmers are required to hold the necessary authorities and licences before they can access their groundwater, and those licences may be suspended during times of drought, but these same rules do not apply to miners. The gambling lobby is another example which has had great success in keeping pokies in pubs and clubs across the state—

**Mr POWELL:** I rise to a point of order. I am seeking some guidance. I appreciate that this is an opportunity for a member to introduce a private member's bill, but the speech that we are hearing goes straight to the heart of the legislation that we have just adjourned to have this introduction. Can I please have a ruling on that?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Members, I will seek counsel from the Deputy Clerk. The advice that I have received is that during the introduction of a bill it is pertinent to speak about that particular bill, as members can imagine. We are in that particular time.

**Mr BERKMAN:** The gambling lobby is another example which has had great success in keeping pokies in pubs and clubs across the state under laws that are exceptionally lax by international standards and despite all that we know about the harm wrought on communities by the prolific and casual gambling that they facilitate. The Star Entertainment Group is charging ahead with the development of one of Queensland's new casinos, having been provided prime CBD land—nearly one-tenth of Brisbane's CBD, 10 blocks along George and William streets—in a deal that is still shrouded in secrecy. Queensland's casinos are also exempted from the late-night trading laws that have seen bars and live music venues closing all across our city. Exemptions to these laws were also provided to other businesses within days of donating to the Palaszczuk government in the last term.

We have seen waste contractors contributing to the election of the most recently charged of Ipswich's former mayors and one cannot help but wonder how the big-donating big four banks managed to evade the scrutiny of a royal commission for so long. People are right to be cynical about the motives of corporate political donors and it is fair enough for people to feel like governments do not represent them but instead represent their corporate backers. Companies driven by profit do not do altruism or philanthropy and they do not even do public interest, and in real terms they cannot. Directors of publicly listed companies are duty bound to get the best returns for their shareholders by maximising profits within the bounds of the law, yet our law in Queensland currently allows them to donate unlimited amounts to us lawmakers. It allows the practice of quite literally buying access to politicians.

While the Queensland Greens remain the only party in our state that does not take corporate donations, people's cynicism can only be expected to grow. If we are to restore Queenslanders' faith in our system, we must demonstrate that we stand here for Queenslanders—not for our own self-interests and not for the interests of those that profit off our state's natural and human resources. The bill I am introducing today signals the first step of many required to achieve this.

A fortnight ago in this House I asked the Premier what plans she had for her government to further prevent the perceived and actual risk of corruption associated with political donations. The Premier indicated that Queensland Labor had no further plans to restore democracy and that the steps her government had taken and was taking were sufficient, but the people of Queensland disagree and so this bill seeks to remedy that—picking up where the government's bill leaves off. The bill effectively adopts the form of the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, which is currently being debated in the House, but with two key differences relating to the amendments proposed for both the Electoral Act and the Local Government Electoral Act.

The first of these key differences is the inclusion of a definition for corporate political donor, which includes all companies registered under the federal Corporations Act and their industry representative bodies with a small number of exceptions. Secondly, the bill creates a prohibition on the making or receipt of political donations by or on behalf of political corporate donors in a provision that mirrors the prohibitions related to developer donations in the Belcarra bill.

Prohibited corporate donors do not include charities, not-for-profit organisations, or employee and employer organisations under state or federal industrial relations legislation. Offence provisions in relation to prohibited donations and schemes to prevent circumvention of this prohibition mirror the Belcarra bill, as do the provisions for the recovery of payments and proceedings for indictable offences.



The proposed ban on developer donations is a start, but the government has no apparent plans to move beyond this. Enough is enough. This bill proposes the next vital step in the necessary task of cleaning up Queensland politics and restoring faith in our democracy. There is still a need for the imposition of caps on all donations across-the-board, not just those from profit driven corporations. We should reinstate a cap on the amount that is spent on elections and put a stop to the endless barrage of negative advertising, smear campaigns, pushy political operatives and the plastic paraphernalia that is strewn around polling booths on election day.

We would not be alone in taking these steps. Victorian Labor is in the process of implementing a universal donation cap. New South Wales already imposes electoral spending caps and has sectoral bans on donations from certain types of companies. Tasmania restricts how-to-vote cards and advertising material on polling day and has polities toying with the idea of restricting donations, too. We all saw the effect of the pokies lobby on the last election in Tasmania.

Public sentiment is clear and we need to urgently lay the groundwork for further reform. We must ensure that Queenslanders have faith in us and in our system. We cannot profess to stand for them when we are here on salaries more than twice that of the average Australian, when we are hosting \$500-a-head lunches under the guise of discussing social justice, when the everyday punter has not met their MP, but the heads of big business see them weekly. We should all take heed of the corruption commissioner's opinion that, in an ideal world, all donations should be banned.

This parliament can pretend that it is somehow immune from the kind of corruption that we see in local government, but we know it is not. There is just more bureaucracy surrounding it. If we fail to take further action, we do so at the expense of Queenslanders, their faith in our system and the integrity of our democracy. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (12.41 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to Economics and Governance Committee

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Economics and Governance Committee.


## LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL (IMPLEMENTING STAGE 1 OF BELCARRA) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from p. 1211, on motion of Mr Hinchliffe—

That the bills be now read a second time.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (12.42 pm), continuing: I was talking about the overreach of influence into state elections. In its written submission the CCC made it clear that, in terms of the government banning certain types of donations during state elections, the bill goes beyond what the CCC recommended. The CCC commissioner argued that there was no evidence of trade unions improperly influencing the process. During the public hearing into the bill the commissioner stated—

The unions have been forever, as you know, public supporters of the Labor Party openly. Their funds are routinely disclosed. We found, as part of our investigation, no evidence that they were improperly influencing the process. What they did was transparent, part of the democratic process and not potentially corrupt in the sense that we are talking about, as opposed to the perception that is routinely recognised from developers in that same sector over a long period of time.

For me, this statement stands out in that it limits the proof of union corruption to this particular investigation, but this particular investigation found no proof of corruption by developers either. This is not the basis for distinguishing between the two. It is evident in this statement that the commission relied on claims that there is a perception that developers corrupt the election process. The commissioner has a different standard of proof for developer donations than he has for union donations.

As the recent ReachTEL poll demonstrates, the public perceives unions as corrupting the process. Some of that perception may derive from information other than that coming from the Belcarra inquiry, such as the trade union royal commission, or a news report from the *Courier-Mail* with the headline 'Unions hoping to cash in on poll pledges'. The article states—

Union bosses are warning Annastacia Palaszczuk to honour commitments Labor made to them, issuing blatant reminders of how they helped the party secure an unlikely win on January 31.

One high-profile figure boasts about how his union 'supported' seven successful Labor candidates and the fact that two of them now sit in Cabinet with the Premier.

Gary Bullock, who heads left-wing union United Voice, even went so far as to refer to the members and ministers as 'United Voice MPs'.

There is more to be said about union influence. Unions have control over who gets into cabinet. Retail trading hours were changed to support the shoppies. On it goes. It has been suggested that the commission has unfairly used different standards to judge different donors.

I want to address the debacle that is the definition of 'property developer', or the lack of. We know from the public hearings into this bill that no-one was able to outline the guidelines by which a property developer would be defined. Instead, references were made to the interpretation by the ECQ. It has been reported that the ECQ was unable to be questioned at the public hearings held by the committee. That is exactly what Labor wanted. It wanted complete chaos and disruption throughout this whole process. We now hear that a corporation is an engaged business that is regularly involved in making relevant planning applications.

During the committee process members raised concerns about the ability of the ECQ to make these determinations about prohibited donors. I raise this issue because, as a registered builder, from time to time I dabble in construction activities, mainly the construction of residential units, and I may well be captured as a prohibited donor. As someone who predominantly funds their own campaign, I find this legislation, which has expanded on the recommendations to include state elections—expanded on them to capture me—offensive.

I will move on to councillor complaints. The LNP does not oppose this part of the legislation. Of course, everyone in this House has expressed their regret at the recent disappointing events involving the conduct of certain councillors. Although there were a very small number of councillors involved, their conduct has contributed to the situation where the community's confidence in local government and their local government representatives has been eroded.

The LNP members are completely committed to working closely with the LGAQ and liaising with the councils in their areas. We want to encourage a smooth adoption of the new councillor complaints system and monitor progress on how well it is meeting its stated objectives and the new legislative framework. I know and acknowledge that the local governments in my area share many of the same goals of the LNP: to create jobs, provide safe and livable communities and build the roads and bridges that we need.

In closing, I want to assure my region that I give my strong support to the local councils in my area, the Gladstone Regional Council and the Bundaberg Regional Council. I support the work they do and the values they hold. The councillors do a terrific job in my community and I want to give a shout-out to them all. I want to continue to work with them for the benefit of our region. That is why the LNP supports this part of that legislation.



**Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (12.47 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on these two bills. It is a pity that these bills have been brought together in a cognate debate. We have not been able to discuss that motion to debate them in cognate, which was passed yesterday morning. That is a pity, because the bill deals with two different matters—related but different matters. Often these matters are conflated. The process of dealing with councillor complaints and simplifying that process together with the remuneration and the behaviour of CEOs and councillors and how that can be monitored and their obligations is now being conflated with the Belcarra recommendations in relation to corrupt

conduct. One matter is predominantly about process and the obligations on councillors and the other one is in relation to corrupt conduct, whether that is, as we have seen in the media reports, allegations of inappropriate conduct by councillors or by senior officers of councils or, indeed, any officer of a council.

It is a pity that these bills have been brought together for debate, because they are both deserving of separate consideration. Although the shadow minister has indicated clearly the LNP's support in relation to the councillor complaints and other legislation amendment bill, there are still a number of significant issues in that bill that are worthy of consideration and debate, particularly given the minister's statements about amendments to the bill that we will be debating and also a further review of the operation of the legislation—important issues relating to the remuneration of councillors and the obligations on councillors to report inappropriate behaviour, or conflicts of interest.

Then we have the Belcarra recommendations, which stem from the PCCC's recommendations and the government's attempt to, in effect, nobble its political opponents by banning donations from one sector of the community in the absence of evidence, as the chair of the PCCC has said. When that bill was first introduced last year, it was effective in determining that people would be frightened from making donations—from exercising what is, after all, their democratic right: the implied freedom to make a contribution to political debate in this country.

The High Court decision in relation to that is that that right should only be restricted where there is clear evidence of the democratic principles of our system being in peril as a result of those donations being made. We have no evidence of that at a state level. There is a complete absence of evidence, but a complete singling out of one particular sector of the community, a sector that the minister knows well. He was an employee of the Property Council of Australia which, he presumably knows, makes an enormously positive contribution to this state. Where would we live? Whose houses would we live in? What buildings would we occupy? Who would pay the land taxes? Who would pay the registration fees that go through the titles office every time there is a subdivision underway? That hugely important sector of our community is now being effectively slandered by a government that says it does not want it to exercise its democratic rights.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** Most are saying thank God you will not be bothering them anymore.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Order! Minister, you will have your turn.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Not as much as they are saying thank God we are not employing the minister anymore, which was a very happy thing to do.

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** He can dish it out but he cannot take it. That is always the case with the Labor Party.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Clayfield, back to the long title of the bill, please.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, one cannot help but respond to provocation like that, surely. I remember the member for Sandgate, the minister, ran for the council ward of Hamilton back in the day.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** I did.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** And was soundly trounced by Graham Clay, my predecessor. He obviously has a longstanding dislike of local council. I think you worked for the council for a while. Were you up there working for Jim Soorley?

**Mr Hinchliffe:** Yes.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Indeed, he was.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** While this is lovely, let us get back to the bill and speak through the chair, please.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Indeed. Despite the minister's long-held grudge against council and the property industry, there is also a deeper philosophical and political issue. We have to go back a little further. What we are seeing gradually over time is a weakening of trust and faith in institutions that we had grown to believe in. We are seeing a weakening of trust and faith in institutions like religious organisations, churches and others. We are seeing a weakening of trust and faith in organisations like banking institutions and financial institutions.

**Mr Dick:** For good reason.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** That may be for good reason. Like others in this place I am horrified to read and hear about what is going on. Many of us probably grew up in a time where we were told to have faith in those institutions. That faith has been shaken. Faith has also been shaken in the fundamental political and democratic institutions of our governance—in the local, state and federal sphere. Whether it is fair or unfair, we all get wrapped up into it.

We have a deeper problem than this legislation is going to cure. I do not think this legislation will cure it. When one considers the recommendations that came out of Belcarra, this legislation will provide and prescribe penalties in relation to improper or illegal conduct, as it ought; it will correct some anomalies, as it ought; but fundamentally will it cure the problem that we are beset with and that is a loss of faith in institutions by people? Will it go down the path to doing that or will it just be another piece of paper that eventually gets passed through this place and put on the statute books and people will disregard it?

People already know what is right and what is wrong. Surely in this day and age they do not need to be told that accepting money from someone to deliver an outcome that that person wants is wrong.

**Mr Dick:** Why would you have any laws? Let us delete the Criminal Code then.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I am talking about the fundamental issue of the loss of faith in institutions and the behaviour of people. It is not that there should not be a penalty. Of course there should be a penalty. There should be a prosecution for it and there should be severe consequences, but this bill will not cure the problem. Fundamentally that is the issue that this parliament needs to grapple with.

As has been indicated by the shadow minister, we will be supporting the vast majority of this legislation. There is a real issue around the prohibition on donations by developers at the state level in the absence of evidence. I take into account the Unions NSW case. I heard yesterday in this place members opposite asking, 'Why is the LNP appealing a decision?' One might well ask, 'Why did Unions NSW appeal the decision all the way to the High Court if they were going to comply with the decision?' The right that accrues to the union to go to the High Court is not a right that applies to the LNP, according to the comrades opposite—the comrade from Redcliffe, who knows that is the case.


**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Clayfield, you will refer to members of the House by their correct title.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** My apologies. The member for Redcliffe, the Attorney-General, as the first law officer of the state says you should not be able to exercise your rights to appeal a decision to the highest court in the land. That is effectively what was said yesterday. It was also said by the member for Woodridge who was the attorney for Tuvalu. I think there were two people, the public defender and the attorney for Tuvalu.

**Mr Dick:** I was a better attorney than you could ever dream about.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! That is enough beating of the chests.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I remember the member for Woodridge when he was the member for Greenslopes proudly telling us he marched ashore at Tuvalu to become the attorney-general there. I remember those days. The reality is that property developer donations being banned at a state level is designed as nothing more than political opportunism against the LNP by the Labor Party and for that reason it should be rejected. There has been significant water under the bridge since the Unions NSW case. There have been findings by the federal court against the union movement in relation to their corrupt behaviour and their illegal activities. We have seen many instances of influence being peddled. I would submit that that matter has not yet finalised and there is more to happen in that case. For that reason I am supporting the amendments moved by the shadow minister.

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (12.57 pm): I rise to speak in the cognate debate on these two bills. I am left with little option, unfortunately, but to start by responding to the member for Toohey's contribution yesterday. I will agree with the member for Toowoomba South that it was a bizarre contribution, but I do not think that description quite does it justice. The member is speaking in a debate on his own government's legislation and the best he can come up with is baseless smear and inconsequential historical nonsense. It was a bit pathetic, to be honest.

Now we have the member for Waterford chiming in as well. These incisive questions from the member for Toohey were about as hard hitting as wet lettuce, but I thank him for the opportunity to respond and set the record straight once and for all in terms of the issues he has raised. We can only assume that that will not be the end of it. The Deputy Premier will continue to trot out each of her loyal backbenchers to defend her honour against the rising green tide in South Brisbane to protect her job.

Before we adjourn for lunch I want to ask why it is that the member for Toohey was so fixated on a few donations that took place nearly two years ago. Let us put it in context. Queensland Labor received more than \$7.23 million in donations during the previous reporting year. The LNP received more than \$11.2 million in the same term, as I understand it. Let us put the amount of money that the member for Toohey is concerned about in context. The Deputy Premier herself contributed a similar amount to her own campaign. These are not big sums of money. I can confirm on the record for the member for Toohey that for almost two years now, since the last federal election in 2016, the Queensland Greens have not accepted any corporate donations. Since the start of the state election campaign we have had a formal policy of not accepting corporate donations.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr BERKMAN:** If the member for Logan wants to keep his pants on I will get there in time.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Maiwar!

**Mr BERKMAN:** I withdraw that. I am proud to stand here as the only representative of a party with a policy to ban corporate donations. I am proud to stand here as the only representative of a party that took no corporate donations in the state election campaign.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** We have reached the lunchbreak. I will ask you to resume your seat. Members we will break until two o'clock when we will continue on with this debate.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.



**Mr BERKMAN:** As I was saying before the break, I am proud to be here representing the only party that, in policy and in practice, refuses corporate donations. My campaign in Maiwar was run without a single dollar from corporate donations; it was run on donations from real people who believe in Greens values and share our ambition and vision for a better future for everyone in Queensland.

Attempts from either side of the House to attack the Greens on this issue, and in particular the contribution of the member for Toohey, give the clearest possible indication we could have that they understand community sentiment on this issue. Otherwise, why would they bother? They understand that the community wants to see big corporate money out of politics. They understand that their cover is blown and that people will continue to demand that government puts people over profits. However, instead of focusing on the issues and seeking to fix the problem comprehensively, the member for Toohey is trying to throw sand in everyone's eyes and look everywhere but at his own party. He conspicuously averts his attention from the two Labor mayors of Ipswich who are now up on corruption charges.

The member for Toohey's ridiculous smear about the so-called laundering of donations through federal party bodies is just laughable. If he really does require an explanation, here it is and it is pretty simple: the Australian Greens raise money for Queensland based on state issues or campaigns. They do this through a national mailing list, taking donations from individuals. Those donations are then transferred to the state party, but the ECQ requires it to be recorded as a contribution from the Australian Greens. I will put this on the record, too: this morning, the national party confirmed that all of the donations sent to Queensland were from individuals. Every donation from the federal party since the last federal election was from individuals. I am not going to table those identities.

I am not going to disclose the identity of each and every individual donor to the Australian Greens. As a party, we are operating in accordance with the ECQ's directions and those small donors have a right to their privacy. The way that the member for Waterford is smearing individual donors and trying to shame them for what she thinks she knows about how they are employed or how they have made their money is ample justification to refuse to take that step. If there are concerns about so-called laundering, why does the government not legislate to deal with it? After all, we are here looking at its legislation.

Members should make no mistake that I believe this legislation goes nowhere near far enough. People want to see a cap on the amount spent on elections and less rubbish in their mailboxes and at the polling booths on election day. People want to see a meaningful cap on all donations from businesses, unions, individuals—everyone.

Going back to the member for Toohey's interrogation, it is clear to everyone that donations from individuals are different from corporate donations. People have actual values and political preferences. They have ethical drivers to engage with and support one party over the other. The same might be said

of unions, but companies do not. They cannot. They only value profit. As I said a moment ago in my introduction, directors of listed companies are compelled by law—they are duty bound—to maximise profits for their shareholders over all else. They cannot give this kind of money unless it is going to improve returns for shareholders.

In the context of the millions and millions of donations given to Labor and the LNP, personal donations to the Greens are the least of anyone's concerns. However, to the extent that anyone is concerned about donations from individuals to the Greens, our policy is that they should all be capped to improve public confidence in the system. I intend to bring further legislation to this effect. I would welcome the support of the government, and the member for Toohey, to improve the integrity of Queensland's political system.

I wish to consider just a couple of excerpts from the Belcarra report. It states that donations are motivated by a desire to purchase direct influence in government decision-making. They are motivated by a desire to purchase access to decision-makers. Further on, it states that there is a risk of corruption where these rights of access morph into the adoption of policies designed to materially benefit those to whom access has been given, rather than to advance the broader public interest. That is logical, rational and essentially undeniable reasoning from the CCC. Those concerns are not relevant only to donations from developers. The state government clearly has control over policies that can materially benefit or disadvantage all corporate actors in Queensland.

For all the chatter about the absence of actual corruption risks, the CCC makes it clear that risks do not relate just to actual corruption but also to the perceived risk of corruption. If the community perceives that there is a risk that any donations are influencing government decision-making, and in my experience a huge portion of the population feels that way, then that perception requires a response. The community has to have confidence in the system and they will not until corporate influence is removed from politics.

I agree with members of the opposition that the decision to confine this donation ban to developers is a deliberate and unjustifiably targeted approach to donation reform that is ultimately designed to give Labor an advantage over the LNP. The result is that we are making only small steps towards genuine reform in the interests of accountability and integrity.

A number of members, including the Leader of the Opposition, have mentioned the failure of this government to follow through on its commitment to the former member for Nicklin that it would conduct an inquiry into all political donations. It was only in the last sitting week in this House that I called on the government and the opposition to kickstart precisely that kind of inquiry. The government has done nothing over its entire last term and in the two weeks since that point we have heard not a peep from the government or the opposition. Again, I call on both the government and the opposition to use the powers that they clearly have to instigate an investigation on this.


A bipartisan request from government and opposition members of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee could compel the CCC to look at the influence of all political donations in Queensland. If the government and the opposition continue to refuse to take that step, what does that leave the people of Queensland to assume? Why is it that they are so concerned about shining a light on these political donations that they will not put the corruption watchdog on to it? What are they hiding?

Throughout the debate on this bill, government members have been banging on about how great the bill is for accountability and public confidence in our system, and it is a good bill. It is good legislation. It is an important start. However, all the cynical self-congratulations should be put aside. They should put their focus other than on me and the Greens, because the community is sick of the rot. It is unfortunate that I have used almost my entire contribution with these comments, because I broadly support the legislation. I am glad to support it because, by and large, although in a limited way, it improves accountability and should restore some community faith in our system.

I turn specifically to the councillor complaints legislation. The need for reform in this space could hardly be more apparent. Each week it seems there is another reason splashed across the front pages of our newspapers. I support the bill and commend the government and the committee for the work that they have done in bringing on this debate. The creation of the Independent Assessor and the Councillor Conduct Tribunal are welcome developments. I implore the minister to ensure that those bodies are adequately resourced to perform their functions at full capacity. The additional guidance proposed to be given to councils and councillors in the form of a code of conduct and model meeting procedures are also important developments. I am sure that councils, particularly those smaller councils that constantly struggle with resourcing, will appreciate those developments.

The minister has proposed amendments to introduce a ministerial power to dismiss or suspend a councillor in the public interest. I understand that the purpose, or at least the effect, of that provision is to put beyond doubt the minister's discretionary power to suspend or dismiss councillors, but I note it is a very broad discretion and power. I take it no further, other than to put on the record my strong preference for a provision such as this to come to the House with the benefit of—

(Time expired)

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (2.08 pm): It gives me great pleasure to speak in the cognate debate of these two bills. The first of the two bills implements the government's response to the independent Councillor Complaints Review Panel's report, *Councillor complaints review: a fair, effective and efficient framework*. It establishes a whole new process for the investigation of complaints against councillors and local governments, whether they be allegations of inappropriate conduct, misconduct or corrupt conduct.

This new process for dealing with councillor complaints will bring a whole new degree of accountability, integrity and transparency to local government in Queensland. Other speakers have already dealt with and will deal with that bill in more detail. I would like to concentrate more specifically on the second bill—the bill that implements reforms associated with the CCC's Belcarra report. Importantly, this bill bans donations from property developers at both a local and state level.

On announcing these important reforms I made it very clear that I would not impose restrictions on council candidates that I was not prepared to impose on the state government. Members opposite have made a real song and dance about this. They are not prepared to put transparency and confidence in government ahead of brazen politic interest. We have already seen that the LNP is very reluctant to disclose its donors. They are fighting that tooth and nail in the courts. As the Attorney-General told this House just yesterday, they have received over \$6 million since we returned the donation disclosure threshold to \$1,000 in this state.

There is no doubt that the ban must apply to local government. Much has been said about the attitude of the CCC Chairperson, Alan MacSporran QC, about the extension of the ban to the state government. The Belcarra report certainly envisaged that it would be necessary to legislate anticircumvention measures such as banning donations from property developers to political parties or candidates at other levels of government from being used for local government purposes.

The CCC did not specifically consider the issue of whether donations from property developers should be banned at a state level because that was not the subject of the investigation. The chair of the CCC also made it clear in the Belcarra report that the Queensland government may consider it appropriate to also adopt these recommendations at the state level. The very issue of whether the ban should apply to state governments has been considered by the High Court, which found sufficient basis for the ban to be constitutionally valid in New South Wales.

I have noted with interest that the amendments to be considered during consideration in detail, that were circulated by the shadow Attorney-General yesterday, attempt to apply the donation ban to employee organisations and employees. The chair of the CCC has addressed that very issue already. In the Belcarra report he said—

... the CCC's view is that until such time as unions and other types of donors demonstrate the same risk of actual or perceived corruption in Queensland local government as property developers, a more encompassing ban is not appropriate.

It is not appropriate. It could not be clearer.

One thing that I particularly note about the opposition's amendments is that they want them to apply to employee organisations but not to employer organisations. Does that sound familiar? Remember when the Newman government drafted industrial laws requiring employee organisations, trade unions, to post online details of their credit card spending. Those same laws did not apply to employer organisations. This shows that they have not learnt the lessons of the Newman years and are committed to repeating that arrogance.

**Mr Molhoek:** Fifty thousand dollar caps and the unions could do whatever they wanted to do.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The member has a right to get up in this House and say what he wants at some later stage. Unlike those members opposite, the amendments to be moved by the local government minister will enhance accountability and integrity in local government. The first set of amendments will provide for the automatic suspension of councillors and mayors charged with certain integrity offences.

The other amendments to be made relate to the ability of the minister to remove a council or councillor when it is in the public interest to do so. The show cause process that currently exists to allow the removal of a councillor is very limited. Sometimes when the conduct is so egregious or so common that the confidence of the local community in their local council is diminished there needs to be greater power in the minister to take the necessary action to restore that confidence.


My government was elected on a platform of transparency and accountability. The people of Queensland expect that we will take the necessary action to restore their confidence in their local government. They expect us to do it now.

I noticed that yesterday and again today the speaking list has been growing with new opposition speakers being added to the list in an attempt to drag out this debate. Let me make it very clear that I encourage as many members of this House to speak to this bill. I want to people to have their say. One wonders why they are doing this. What are they trying to hide? Who are they trying to protect? I want to give opposition members ample warning that they cannot diminish my resolve to restore integrity, accountability, transparency and community confidence in local government in this state.

I want to reassure the people of Ipswich, the people of Logan and all the people of Queensland that my government considers these laws vitally important to cleaning up the local government sector. We will pass them this week regardless of the political games being played by the Leader of the Opposition.

Everyone in Queensland must feel disappointed and dismayed at the allegations that continue to surface about councils and councillors. I am concerned that we have not yet seen the end of this. The responsibility of my government is to ensure that the structures are in place so that when matters arise there are the appropriate resources to deal appropriately with them.

That is why I was so pleased to announce yesterday that considerable resources of \$7.4 million have been allocated to the CCC over four years to ensure they have the resources to deal with whatever they uncover. My government will not decimate the CCC like the Newman government did. We will resource it properly so it can do its job. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (2.14 pm): It is amazing that the Premier comes in here and says that she is all for transparency and accountability and then basically tells us that these bills will pass this week. As members of parliament we are entitled to give our views on bills. We see once again with this cognate debate that our rights as members of parliament are being cut back.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stevens): Order! Those on my right, the member will be heard.

**Mr HART:** For these two very important bills we get only five minutes to address each bill. While they may be connected in that they are both about local government, they are on completely different subjects. One would think that if the government is to be transparent and accountable then it would want members of parliament to express their views.

The Premier comes in here and tells us that, regardless of how we feel, what we say and the debate that goes on here, she will have her way in the end. Is it not the height of arrogance for the Premier to come in here and tell us that? We are the parliament of Queensland. We have a right to be heard. We have a right to our opinion. I will not stand for anything else, I can tell members opposite that.

This seems to be a habit that this government has got into recently. We saw only last sitting week that the debate on the vegetation management bill was guillotined.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member will be heard.

**Mr HART:** They do not like it when they hear the truth. They just do not like it. They guillotined the debate. They are attempting to shorten this debate. From the tone of the Premier's comments on these bills, it may be that she intends to guillotine this debate. Let us see what happens.

This is not a new issue. We heard today that 326 pages of complaints were made to the Deputy Premier when she was the minister for local government.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr HART:** For the benefit of those up the back in the cheap seats, I point out that we heard this morning that there were 326 pages of complaints. We do not know how many complaints there were. We have not seen the RTI because the government wants to charge a lot of money for it. There may



well be 326 individual complaints there. We do not know what they are. This is the open and transparent government that will not give out this information. We heard from the member for Bundamba that she made verbal complaints to the Deputy Premier and other ministers over the last few years. We do not know what has happened to those either.

As I said, this government has a habit of bringing in legislation and not giving members of parliament the appropriate time to go through it. In 18 minutes they changed the electoral laws, for example. Now we see some amendments to this legislation that are apparently urgent. We were given those to look at only yesterday. They will make a significant change to the way in which the minister in particular can deal with council officers.

As everybody in the House knows, I come from the Gold Coast and we have our issues there. There have been rumours about what has been happening with the council there. I have some very good friends on the Gold Coast City Council and I am sure that they have been doing the right thing. There will be a proper inquiry, so we will wait and see. I still do not see why the minister needs to move amendments that will give him these sorts of powers and flexibility.

What concerns me is the public interest amendments that the minister intends to move. Again, we seem to have a lot of issues with the government making determinations on all sorts of different things but without defining exactly what they mean. On the public interest amendments, the minister's explanatory notes state, 'Relevant factors in determining "public interest" may include but are not limited to the following factors'—and the first dot point is 'complying with applicable law (both its letter and spirit)'. I agree with that—tick. I am happy with that.

The next dot point is 'carrying out functions fairly and impartially'. Who is going to be the judge of that? Will it be the minister alone? That is a real concern to me. The next one is 'complying with the principles of procedural fairness/natural justice'. I will tick that one off as well. I am happy with that, even if it is only the minister who is making that decision. The next one is 'acting reasonably'. I think there is a hole in that one that you could drive a truck through. I think the minister is a good minister and I have faith in his decision-making process, but there are whole lot of other ministers over there who I have no faith in to make determinations.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stevens): Order! The House will come to order.

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Sandgate, you are interrupting when the chair is speaking. It will not be tolerated.

**Mr HART:** A prime example of that was yesterday when we listened to the member for Maryborough. The member for Maryborough talked about previous personnel on the Fraser Coast council—and I will be careful about what I say here—whom he did not like. That person is no longer there. There is now someone there he does like apparently. You have to wonder whether, at the end of the day—

**Mr SAUNDERS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I would like the member for withdraw. His comments are offensive and I would like him to withdraw. He is misleading the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Burleigh, withdraw, please.

**Mr HART:** I withdraw, Mr Deputy Speaker. Of course, there is a place where the member could raise this if he thinks I have misled the House. If he bothers to go back and look at the *Hansard* from yesterday—

**Mr SAUNDERS:** Mr Deputy Speaker—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member was not misleading the House.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I rise to a point of order. I did not refer to the other individual. I said that it was good to have a man of integrity—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That is not a point of order, member for Maryborough.

**Mr HART:** In proving my point, in terms of acting reasonably as a public interest check, I do not think those on the other side can be relied upon to have that sort of power, so I do not accept that.

The next dot point is 'ensuring accountability and transparency'. Quite frankly, I do not think this government understands what accountability and transparency is. That has been proven over and over again by some of the statements of premiers and various ministers, especially those responsible for

energy in this government and the last government. In terms of transparency and accountability, we need look no further than mangocube6—I had to get that in there somewhere. In terms of ‘ensuring accountability and transparency’, I cannot tick that one off.

The next dot point is ‘exposing corrupt conduct or serious maladministration’. I can tick that one off, absolutely. The next one is ‘avoiding or properly managing private interests conflicting with official duties’. Again, I agree with that. I think there are some things that are perfectly acceptable.


The last dot point is ‘community confidence in a local government and/or its councillors’. That goes to my point. I am really concerned that there may come a time when a member of parliament takes exception to something that has been done by a member of a local government and therefore says that they have lost community confidence and that we should throw them out—that we should sack them or take whatever punishment the minister at the time thinks is appropriate. I just do not see that as being appropriate at all.

For those of us in politics, perception is everything. There is a perception that political donations from developers is a problem in local government. There is no perception out there that that is a problem at the state level. It has not been proven, so this is a complete overreach by this government. The reason the government is doing this is to change the balance here as far as political donations are concerned. It knows that like-minded developers may be inclined to donate to the LNP rather than the Labor Party. The figures that were made available by the ReachTEL survey the other day tell us exactly that. It is an issue in a local government area. It is not an issue at the state level. This is purely about changing the balance and taking unfair advantage of one party over the other. This is not reasonable. We should not be going there.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hart, adjourned.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Correction of Answer to Question, Rookwood Weir

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (2.26 pm): For the record, in my answer to a question without notice from the member for Mirani earlier today I referred to funding for Rookwood Weir. For clarity, the funding I was referring to was operational funding.


## LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL (IMPLEMENTING STAGE 1 OF BELCARRA) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed, on motion of Mr Hinchliffe—

That the bills be now read a second time.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.26 pm): I rise to contribute to the cognate debate on the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. As a former councillor and deputy mayor of Townsville City Council, I have experienced firsthand the issues that surround the complaints process involving councillors. I certainly support an overhaul of the existing legislation and policy framework.

Certainly, as the level of government closest to the people, local government has an integral role in the provision of local government services to our communities. I want to pay tribute to the overwhelming majority of councillors and mayors across our state who work so hard for their communities. Unfortunately, recent events across Queensland involving councillors and mayors being charged with criminal offences is regrettable and, apart from tarnishing the good work undertaken by the majority of our councils across the state, highlights how broken the current system is regarding the way complaints against councillors in particular are handled. I note that the committee has

recommended dealing with the decision-making powers for the Councillor Conduct Tribunal and the Local Government Remuneration Commission and I certainly hope the government will adopt this recommendation.

There is no question that a simpler, more streamlined system for making, investigating and determining complaints about councillor conduct in Queensland is required. I support the practical and common-sense amendment to be moved by our shadow minister for local government during consideration in detail.

I note the key components of the bill involve establishing the position of an Independent Assessor and the Office of the Independent Assessor to investigate all complaints and information about councillor conduct and provide sufficient powers to undertake those investigations. I stress the importance of ensuring that appointments to those offices are merit based and that appointees are well qualified for the role.

Other key components include strengthening offences to support the new councillor complaints system, such as providing protection from reprisal for local government employees who make complaints against councillors; and providing for the minister to make a uniform code of conduct to set appropriate standards of behaviour for councillors. It is important to set the ground rules of what is acceptable and appropriate conduct for all councillors immediately post election and to make sure that they are communicated and understood by all of our elected officials at the local government level. In a day and age when the community has high expectations around the behaviour of elected officials, I think it is imperative that a clear and concise code of conduct is implemented that leaves no room for error.

Another key component of the bill is reallocating the functions of the current Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal and the regional conduct review panels by establishing a new Councillor Conduct Tribunal to hear and determine complaints of councillor misconduct. Remuneration for elected officials is always a vexed issue with each local government setting remuneration levels for their councillors. Of course, this leaves councils open to criticism and allegations of impropriety and is often accompanied by vicious local media campaigns.

This bill will also help in dealing with concerns over the potentially conflicted role of chief executive officers in assessing complaints against their own councillors—one of their employees. Councils are generally well respected by their local communities and any conduct by councillors that diminishes that trust must be addressed to the fullest extent possible in order to maintain the reputation and confidence that has been built over many years. To this end, we should all look forward to working closely with councils and the LGAQ on the proposed reforms to ensure transparency and accountability remain the foundation upon which public confidence is built. While supporting the proposed amendments, the LNP recognises it is highly likely that the new arrangements will still require further refinement following their introduction and therefore we will seek to monitor progress to gauge the effectiveness of the changes.

I will move on to the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which is much more contentious. I say at the outset that, whilst I support the CCC Belcarra recommendations for local government electoral reform, I am opposed to the prohibited donor laws at a state level. I note the practical and common-sense amendments proposed by the member for Toowoomba South regarding expanding this legislation to incorporate union donations for local and state government elections.

The test for the Premier now is: will she accept the advice of the independent CCC chair and undertake an inquiry—first promised in 2015—into state political donations before introducing bans at a state level? The Palaszczuk Labor government, in ignoring the CCC, shows that this bill as it applies to the state is purely politically motivated. The inquiry process for the bill has been a farce with the ECQ not answering questions publicly. There is no question in my mind that the general public should be outraged at their failure to do so.

It is nothing short of blatant hypocrisy for those opposite to ban developer donations and in the same breath continue to receive union donations with relative impunity. To hide beneath the union umbrella and have third parties wage campaigns is a disgrace. One may well ask—and plenty of people are asking this very question—how is receiving donations from property developers any different from donations received from unions? We have all seen in this place on numerous occasions those opposite meeting with union officials in this precinct during parliamentary sittings, and yet they have the hide to sit here and allege that property developers who donate to the LNP are being given unfettered access to our members with a view to influencing decisions.

We have heard time and time again—and ministerial diaries unequivocally show—that union officials are meeting regularly with ministers and yet those opposite have the audacity to come into this place and impose one set of rules on the LNP and a different set of rules on themselves. This bill should be seen for what it is—a blatant attempt to impose restrictions on the LNP whilst at the same time providing protection for the Labor Party in Queensland.

The fact that the Electoral Commission of Queensland received an invite to appear at the public hearing but chose not to attend raises serious questions. This is concerning to the LNP, as the agency charged with delivering such a far-reaching change to Queensland's electoral system should be prepared to answer questions about the policy implementation in public. Importantly, neither the CCC nor the Queensland Law Society were consulted on the drafting of this bill.

The CCC made it clear in its written submission that this bill goes beyond its recommendations and if the government were to consider banning certain donations from state elections a proper review or inquiry would be ideal. Let me repeat that: a proper review or inquiry would be ideal. The CCC stated in its submission—

The Inquiry terms of reference did not include state elections. Consequently the Belcarra Report recommendations did not involve any detailed specific consideration of corruption risks in state elections and decision-making. Accordingly, the reforms depart from the scope of the Belcarra Report recommendations ...

It further stated—

The Belcarra Report observed that the Queensland Government may consider it appropriate to also adopt these recommendations at the state government level. However, in saying this, the CCC did not contemplate that the proposed reforms would be introduced without preliminary review to identify and mitigate corruption risks in state elections and decision-making. A proper public consultation process is highly desirable. It appears that the current timelines provide little opportunity for the Committee to engage in a comprehensive consideration of these matters properly informed by experts and other stakeholders.

The chair of the CCC, Mr Alan MacSporran QC, expanded on this issue in the committee's public hearing and raised concerns about the constitutionality of these laws at a state level when he stated—


In an ideal world, and my personal view would be, you would ban all donations, but the High Court has said, and the law is, that there needs to be an evidence based response which is proportional to the threat identified.

...

... we said in one line in the early part of our report that the government may wish to consider translating or expanding it to the state sector. We did not mean by that that it is an automatic translation, what we meant is that it needs to be considered in that sector, which should be an evidence gathering exercise, public consultation, sufficient to get a sense of what is really happening in that area.

We have heard from a number of speakers during this debate about the difficulties in determining what constitutes a property developer. One may well ask whether this is a deliberate strategy by this government to make this a grey area in order to confuse the public. I have fielded calls from architects, engineers and accountants expressing concern that they too may be caught up by the definition of what constitutes a close associate.

There is a stink emanating from this bill that will waft around this state and in the course of time become intolerable. Queenslanders will ultimately see this bill for what it is—a blatant attempt by this government to use legislation to cement their position in power. They have shown here today that they will do whatever it takes to hold government, and this is a dark day for Queensland.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (2.36 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate of the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The first point I would like to make is that this legislation, like many others pieces of legislation, is done with the best intention, but I have a reservation about how it will be applied and its impact in the long term.

Councils are very different animals. Councils in remote, discrete communities such as Indigenous communities are very different animals from megacouncils such as the Brisbane City Council and others. I cannot think of a really good analogy offhand, but it concerns me that this bill will give more power to the state and I am worried how that will impact on local governments. We have seen adverse effects from that before. It certainly raises my antenna to think that something like that could be happening again.

I want to talk about the automatic suspension of councillors for integrity related offences. The crossbench had a briefing from the government, and I appreciate where the minister is coming from. I think the intention to tidy things up is good and I see merit in that. I turn to the additional powers being

given to the local government minister to dismiss a council. Again, I can see where the government is coming from and I see the merits in it, but I have an issue with the public interest amendments to be moved by the minister. I think in the wrong hands that could be used as a tool that would not serve local communities but serve the interests of the government of the day.

I was serving in the Mount Isa council when a controversial statement was made by the mayor at the time. If you did not like the mayor and if he was not of the right political persuasion at the time, it would have been easy to build an argument that we should get rid of him. That might be despite his capacity to carry out the civic duties of mayor. There was a protest outside the civic centre and I was a councillor at the time. It was all over the news and it would have been easy to say that we need to dismiss the council. If political prejudice were involved, this would now give the power to the minister to move in there. I think that is a realistic scenario for anyone who lives in the political world. That is something I am not comfortable with in that respect.

I have had interactions with smaller local councils. In some cases, if the facts were presented to the minister of the day or the government representatives, they might feel that that council should be sacked, but they might think differently if they dug deeper and engaged properly with the local community. I know we all say that that would always be done, but often it is not done and then things would not be done in the best interests of that community and an arbitrary decision would be made from a long way away that could impact heavily on local councils. Basically, I am not comfortable with placing more power in the state government to make that decision, even though it might be done with the best intent and with good reason due to some of those failings recently.

With the Belcarra legislation relating to the developer donations, we can see where the impetus has come from. I acknowledge that there have been recommendations around the question of electoral funding. We will see an amendment from the opposition on the unions. We would not be supportive of those intentions from either side because I think that is a much broader question about political support and donations and it should be addressed in a much broader spectrum than what is proposed with both the government amendments and the opposition amendments. The general public would love to see less impact, but I think it is oversimplifying the issue. Narrowing that down to just one group is unfair. The definition of developers was also discussed. Some people who might engage in that some of the time could be pulled into that and that might not be fair in some instances.

The amendment that deals with councillors having the ability to make a determination on a fellow councillor excluding themselves from a vote on a conflict of interest is an interesting one. I again draw on my own personal experience with four years on the Mount Isa City Council. There have been propositions put that a council would just want to ram through a vote and get the numbers and could use that maliciously. The minister did explain that can be measured because it would be an offence to do that maliciously, and I acknowledge that. I think there have been efforts made there, but I raise it as a concern with what is trying to be achieved.

I am appreciative of what the government is trying to do to tidy this up around local government. I have a great aversion to more involvement of the state government as it pertains to local government. I am a much stronger believer in more autonomy at that local level than less. What can sometimes be seen from afar as a big issue may not be as big an issue to people on the ground.

I like the idea of setting up the body separate from the CEO. I think that can work both ways. It can work so that the CEO is not the centre of those issues when they arise with a council and they are not put in a compromising position. I also find it can be an issue the other way, where in some of the smaller communities the CEO has an unhealthy influence on the rest of the councillors and the councillors want some sort of autonomy away from the influence of the CEO. It could be to the benefit of the CEO or the disbenefit in some ways. All in all, I think there is a lot of merit in that initiative.

We definitely support the impetus to do something here and support the general intent of what the government is trying to do. We do not agree with some of those parts I have just gone through, particularly with the donations. We hope that the minister is very mindful of those concerns and remembers that there are very different animals here. Once this legislation rolls out, we will be watching very closely the impact it has on those smaller councils. In closing, we support some parts of this bill but do not support others.



**Mr BATT** (Bundaberg—LNP) (2.44 pm): I rise to speak on the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 which is being debated in cognate with the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill

2018. I want to firstly say that I am really disappointed that the Premier walked in here and had her five or six minutes of debating the bill and then walked out, after having a go at this side of the House saying that we were here just to fill in time.

**Mrs LAUGA:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I understand that it is in the standing orders that a member should not reflect on a member leaving the chamber or not being present in the chamber.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stevens): The point of order is correct. Member for Bundaberg, please do not refer to matters of absence or otherwise of members in the House.

**Mr BATT:** I am here to try to have my say for the people of Bundaberg. I am not here as a seat filler. I think that is what I was elected for and that is why I will stand up now and have my time on this bill.

As a former deputy mayor and local government councillor of almost 10 years with the Bundaberg Regional Council, I think I can provide some firsthand knowledge of what these elected representatives work through as the government closest to the people. I would like to acknowledge the work that occurs every day across the 77 local governments throughout Queensland and all the elected representatives—mayors, deputy mayors and councillors, many of whom I have met and worked with over my time in local government. These elected local government members work every day to improve their communities and the livability of their communities.

I also want to acknowledge all local government employees across Queensland but, most importantly, the over 800 who work in the Bundaberg Regional Council who made it a pleasure to go to work every day over the last 10 years. These staff make sure that the essential services of our communities that we all come to expect will work do in fact work when we need them to—that our rubbish gets collected, our taps run and our toilets flush. These are things that we all take for granted, but if they suddenly did not work we would all be up in arms.

It is important to stress that the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill has not arisen because of a large number of complaints. The Councillor Complaints Review Panel found that only 30 of a total of 245 complaints received by the then department of infrastructure, local government and planning over two years were ultimately upheld. Although this legislation will affect all elected members in local government, it is not because of a high number of complaints. In fact, the opposite is true, as the number of upheld complaints is small in percentage. The LGAQ submitted that they believe the introduction of an independent assessor into the system and the removal of the role of the council CEO in undertaking preliminary assessment of complaints will lead to a better system for all involved, and I agree with their submission.

The Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 is to implement the government's response to the independent Councillor Complaints Review Panel's report, *Councillor complaints review: a fair, effective and efficient framework*, to provide for a simpler, more streamlined system for making, investigating and determining complaints about councillor conduct in Queensland. The review was initiated in response to concerns raised by the Local Government Managers Australia Queensland, the LGMA, and the Local Government Association of Queensland, the LGAQ, about the effectiveness of the current framework. Concerns included the role of local government chief executive officers in assessing complaints, the inability to seek a review of decisions and the need to better ensure natural justice for all parties.

The review was undertaken with the best interests of local government and with a view to finding good workable outcomes for local government, noting that not all local governments are the same in population, area or demographics. The bill establishes the position of the Independent Assessor and the Office of the Independent Assessor to investigate all complaints and information about councillor conduct and provide sufficient powers to undertake investigations.

It removes the role of the council CEO in undertaking the preliminary assessment of councillor complaints. The assessor would do the preliminary assessment and not the CEO. This does seem to be a more transparent way of handling complaints given that the CEO is subject to performance reviews by the mayor and councillors whom the complaint may be about.

The objectives of the terms of reference for the Operation Belcarra inquiry included examining issues and practices associated with a number of related matters including the management of councillor conflicts of interest. The LGAQ remains strongly opposed to empowering councils to force councillors to leave a meeting over a conflict of interest that they may not even have. It is certainly worth


noting that this power used to be in the Local Government Act 2009 but was removed by the previous Labor government in 2011 upon advice from the then Crime and Misconduct Commission, the Ombudsman and the Integrity Commissioner because it was proven not to work. Unfortunately, it was used by some councillors to gag minority councillors.

The LGAQ also questioned the merit of proposed section 175G, which reintroduces the requirement for a councillor to inform the person presiding at a meeting if the councillor reasonably believes that another councillor has a material personal interest or a conflict of interest which they have failed to declare. Contravention of this provision will be an act of misconduct. Again, this is a return to a provision which was removed in 2011.

Both these sections have been proven in the past to have failed and were removed by a previous Labor government and are now being brought back for a second attempt. I was a councillor both with and without these provisions that are now being brought back. I have to support the LGAQ in their submission that this type of legislation does not work. The only person who has the full knowledge of whether a councillor has a conflict of interest or a material personal interest is the councillor themselves. How can a group of councillors decide whether or not another councillor has a conflict of interest on only the information that that councillor has provided them in the first place?

The previous laws gave sufficient bite so that if a councillor decided to try to evade the laws by not declaring that conflict, they could be investigated and charged accordingly. What happens under this new legislation if a complaint is made against a councillor for an alleged breach or conflict of interest? Will every councillor in the room be interviewed as to why they did or did not decide that another councillor had a conflict of interest? It sounds great, but it is simply unworkable. The time taken in council meetings to decide every time a councillor advises that they may have a conflict of interest can often double the length of the meetings. In smaller councils it is not uncommon for numerous councillors to report a conflict or a perceived conflict of interest on a majority of the items before the meeting. It works well now and I do not see these changes making any positive contribution to local government's meeting processes in the future.

In saying this, I know the LNP will continue to work closely with the LGAQ, liaise with councils to encourage the smooth adoption of the councillor complaints system and monitor progress on how well it is meeting the stated objectives of the new legislative framework.


 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (2.52 pm): I would like to speak very briefly as the debate has been comprehensive. The intent of both the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is admirable. Given the background and discussions in the chamber today and yesterday, it is clear that action is needed. However, I am concerned that the opinions of local government and the LGAQ regarding aspects of the Belcarra bill are not being taken into consideration.

One of the main issues, as detailed by the member for Broadwater, regards provisions in proposed new sections 175E, 175G, 177E and 177D, which includes that councillors can determine whether or not another councillor has a real or perceived conflict of interest and whether that councillor can remain in the meeting. As a former councillor, I can appreciate the concerns raised around these provisions, which can be open to abuse by those councils that have voting blocs or groups. A councillor could be excluded from a vote without an avenue for speedy review, recourse or appeal in the chamber, leaving ratepayers who voted for them without representation on the item being voted on.

Councillor induction training and the code of conduct clearly articulate that the onus and responsibility for declaring a conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest lies, as it should, with the individual councillor. Those who do not honour the communities that voted them in by being deceptive should be appropriately held accountable and dealt with accordingly. Putting the onus on other councillors to decide can create unnecessary friction and sends a confusing message to communities that elected members may not have the capability to manage their responsibilities. This is unfair to the hundreds of councillors across Queensland who are honest, hardworking and diligent representatives.

An alternative to these provisions would be to tighten the definition of a real conflict of interest and identify the circumstances that require the councillor to declare that real conflict and leave the meeting. In addition, there should be an improvement in methodologies to capture offenders and increase the penalties for those who abuse the trust that is bestowed upon them by their communities.

In closing, I support in the majority the content of these bills and look forward to much better outcomes for the communities across Queensland that have had their trust broken.

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (2.55 pm): I rise to speak on the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I oppose prohibited donations at a state level, and I support the CCC's Belcarra recommendations for local government and electoral reform as well as the amendments to be moved that will expand the provisions to union donations for local and state government elections.

The bill seeks to prohibit donations from property developers for both local government and state government elections and allow councillors to vote on whether another councillor's conflict of interest or material personal interest should preclude them from participating in council discussions and voting on the matter. Penalties are severe, with unlawful acts and omissions attracting fines of up to \$50,000, or two years imprisonment. Knowing acts to circumvent the law will attract fines of up to \$190,000, or 10 years imprisonment.

I have some personal experience in local government as do many of my colleagues. I was a councillor on a local government some years ago, being a small rural council pre council amalgamations. Incidentally, it was supposed to have resulted in more efficient and better service delivery. However, where I come from, the council amalgamations have delivered absolutely the opposite. Nonetheless, all of the councillors that I have come into contact with are diligent people who have a desire to achieve the best outcomes for their communities.

In my electorate of Callide I have to deal with five local government areas on an ongoing basis, those being Bundaberg Regional Council, Gladstone Regional Council, North Burnett Regional Council, Western Downs Regional Council and Banana Shire Council. It is not fair that all of these diligent councillors in these councils are paraded around as being people who are open to misconduct and so forth. By and large they represent their communities in the best possible way.

The large city councils have become politicised and open to influence from outsiders, which we have seen recently. The honourable member for Bundamba also spoke passionately about the effect of this on her community. I would exercise caution in allowing councillors the power to vote one another out of a discussion; I believe it is fraught with danger. It would allow one political influence to dominate another, which in my view is unacceptable. It should be the responsibility of the democratically elected councillor to declare their conflicts of interest and take full responsibility for them.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stevens): Member for Callide, one moment please. Members in the House, there is far too much audible conversation and it is carrying right across the room. You might think it is quiet only in your area, but it is coming right across the room. Please desist or move outside.

**Mr BOYCE:** With regard to the banning of property developer donations at state elections, there are issues. The CCC has made it clear in their written submissions that this bill goes beyond the CCC recommendations. If the government would consider banning certain donations from state elections a proper review or inquiry would be ideal.

It seems to me that this particular issue has become politically motivated. If you removed a political donation income stream from a particular candidate or a particular political party then you would have a political advantage, so banning donations from one section of the community—in particular, property developers—seems to be grossly unfair. Are we to conclude that all property developers are corrupt? That, in my opinion, is not so. The Premier should accept the advice of the independent chair of the CCC and undertake an inquiry into state political donations before introducing bans at a state level.

The amendment suggests that we should expand the banning of property developer donations to include union donations for local and state government elections. It is clear to me that union influence is rife in the current government. If this were not so then the honourable minister, Mr Bailey, would have no problem allowing scrutiny of his mangocube email account.

I will tell members how union influence works in the real world through personal experience. As many members may know, I am a welder by trade and I have spent many years working on big construction jobs throughout Australia. I have also worked in the mining industry. What happens there is people buy a union ticket whether they like it or not, and the reality is that they risk losing their job if they do not. The law states that it is not compulsory to have a union ticket; however, that is not the case in practice. If they do not have financial membership in a union, their workplace becomes untenable and then the company gets rid of them. That is the reality.




To put that into context with what happens in the political system, if unions applied the same methodology to those on my left who hold significant positions in the government, they would be under constant scrutiny from the union movement. If they do not toe the union line do they risk losing their positions? I am quite sure that unions that donate large amounts of money would want political influence and a political say. The chair of the CCC, Mr Alan MacSporran QC, raised concerns about these laws. He said—

In an ideal world, and my personal view would be, you would ban all donations, but the High Court has said, and the law is, that there needs to be an evidence based response which is proportional to the threat identified.

...

... we said in one line in the early part of our report that the government may wish to consider translating or expanding it to the state sector. We did not mean by that that it is an automatic translation, what we meant is that it needs to be considered in that sector, which should be an evidence gathering exercise, public consultation, sufficient to get a sense of what is really happening in that area. There is no reason in principle why the measures should not translate to the state, but that needs to be considered because absent consideration of it there is a potential successful challenge to the constitutional validity of the measure. That is the concern we simply had, that you cannot simply automatically translate it without giving it due consideration.

We should have the inquiry into state political donations that was recommended by the independent chair of the CCC and promised in a previous parliament by the current Premier. This course of action will allow the government to be as transparent and accountable as they continually profess to be.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (3.03 pm): I too rise to make a reasonably short contribution to the cognate debate on the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Firstly, I would like to thank committee members and committee staff for all the work they have done in putting this bill together. I also thank all those individuals who participated.

When I was the member for Albert for close to six years my electorate covered two local council areas: Logan City and the Gold Coast. Whilst my new boundaries are solely confined to the Gold Coast region, I must say that it is as beautiful as the Logan region and a lovely place to live. Being an elected representative is a great honour; our constituents place a lot of trust in us. Of the councillors that I have had to deal with over the years, I must say that the vast majority do the right thing. They look out for the interests of their local communities and they look out for what is best for their local areas.

I have always been a strong believer in the natural course of justice, which is served by our courts. I understand the community's expectation that those who have been charged with an offence while in office would step aside. There are a lot of individuals in our community who are very passionate about this. I suppose this has all come about as a result of what happened in Logan City and Ipswich. I was with one of my local councillors—against whom there are no allegations of any wrongdoing—while attending a community event recently when a resident came up to him and said, 'Why aren't you in jail?'

The problem is that what has happened in Logan and Ipswich has marred local councillors throughout Queensland, including all of the decent ones. I would like to reiterate the comments of the member for Clayfield. Unfortunately, certain individuals in our society ruin it for everyone else. If we lived in a perfect society we would not need laws like this. I also agree with the comments of my colleague the member for Scenic Rim. I have deep concerns about the powers in this bill that could be used to potentially dismiss a council or councillors due to a political disagreement with the government of the day. I understand that a councillor could be very passionate about an issue, but the minister may feel he or she is acting unreasonably and therefore they could possibly face the sack in the public interest. My main concerns lie with the part of the bill which deals with matters of public interest because they can be very, very broad. Is community confidence in a council or a councillor classed as public interest? This bill gives an enormous amount of power to one individual who may disagree with a councillor and their point of view.

Sometimes I disagree with what the local councillors in my area are doing, but when it comes down to it we are all pulling in the same direction for a better outcome for our local communities. We all want to see jobs in our local areas, we all want to see better roads and bridges et cetera, and we all want to see safer communities where we can live, but how we do this will differ because of different personalities.

I have some great councillors in my local area being tarred with the same brush. I do feel for them. They are trying to do the right thing for their communities. There was recently an issue in my local area to do with solar panels at exit 57. I know that my local councillor copped a bit of grief over it, but it

had nothing to do with him. A lot of people complaining about councils do not understand the different tiers of government and do not understand that other tiers of government may affect the role of council, for example through state planning laws. Councils may cop an enormous amount of anger because of state legislation and people simply do not understand what is going on.

I thank my local councillors. They do a great job. Most of the councillors I have worked with over the years are still elected. They do a great job in their local areas. They are key community leaders. They are cornerstones of our local community. I ask the general public to understand that the vast majority of councillors do the right thing. As in every sector of society, there are only a few people who ruin it for everybody else.



**Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (3.11 pm): As the former minister for local government I concur with the central tenet of the submission by the member for Theodore on these bills; that is, by and large, people who come to a calling in public life—in the local, state or federal jurisdiction—do so with the intent of making their community a better place. In my time as local government minister I met many local government representatives who were there for the express purpose of representing their communities to the best of their ability and doing their best to leave their communities a better place after they had made their contribution to public life.

It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak in support of the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. These bills seek to improve the integrity and transparency of the functioning of local government and implement some of the key recommendations of the Belcarra report of the Crime and Corruption Commission.

At the outset, I go to the issues around the councillor complaints system, because I think this is a critical issue. I acknowledge my cabinet colleagues—Ministers Furner and Hinchliffe—for the work they have done in this space particularly. The councillor complaints system proposed in this legislation was under investigation when I was local government minister. I place on the record my thanks to the committee that was formed to look at the councillor complaints system. I particularly acknowledge David Solomon, a respected integrity figure in Queensland, for leading that review and for making recommendations to government that would see these laws brought into the Queensland parliament to introduce a higher level of rigour and robustness to the system of dealing with councillor complaints. I commend my cabinet colleagues for seeing this to completion. When we vote on these bills I believe that we will give the community a great deal more confidence in making complaints around the functioning of councillors and local government because there is a much more rigorous, robust and independent process for handling and dealing with those complaints.

I turn to the issue of the recommendations that have been brought to this parliament through the bill to implement stage 1 of Belcarra. The CCC made a very compelling case for why developer donations should be prohibited in the state of Queensland. This was based on not only the experience of the matters brought before the Belcarra investigation in terms of substance and content but also what was seen in other jurisdictions in Australia—namely, New South Wales—and how Queensland could learn from a system in which developer donations were outlawed.

The case put by those opposite over the past two days really does smack of desperation. Those opposite are incredibly desperate. They are desperate to hide donations. They are desperate to try to appeal our laws to the highest court. When they ran out of their own money to do it they called on Malcolm Turnbull, the LNP Prime Minister of this nation, to come to the party to appeal our laws to prohibit donations from developers in Queensland for all political candidates, based on the recommendations and the compelling case put forward by the CCC based on the Belcarra investigation.

This smacks of incredible desperation from those opposite, but that is what we have come to expect from those opposite, whether they are in opposition or in government. What did we see when they were in government? Let me play that old record for those in the chamber because it is quite an incredible story, considering the little time they actually occupied the government benches. Let us be clear about what they did. They increased the threshold for the disclosure of any political donation from \$1,000—the Australian Labor Party at the national and state level has maintained it for more than 20 years now—to the federal level, which today would be 13½ thousand dollars. That meant that anyone—any developer, any donor—could walk into an electorate office and hand over \$10,000 or \$12,000 and no-one need know. I am incredibly proud of the fact that it is the Palaszczuk Labor government that has

stopped this from happening. We have brought back the \$1,000 donation disclosure threshold. Not only did we bring it back; we also made it retrospective. We were taken to court by those opposite because they did not want to disclose more than \$100,000 worth of donations that came in—

**Mrs D'Ath:** One year.

**Ms TRAD:** For just one year. I take that interjection from the Attorney-General, who lived this issue for quite some time. What else did those opposite do when they were in government? They cut funds to the CCC. I am very pleased that only this week we have increased funding to the CCC. Those opposite put in place a completely compromised chair of the CCC. We saw the outcome of that in quite spectacular fashion. When those opposite did not like the work the bipartisan Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee did in exposing exactly how compromised that chair was, what did the member for Kawana and his colleagues do? They came into this place at 11 o'clock at night and sacked the entire committee—even their own LNP members.

That is what those opposite do. Since the days of the Criminal Justice Commission and then the Crime and Misconduct Commission and now the Crime and Corruption Commission, every time they have been in government they have tried to nobble the Crime and Corruption Commission—the standing royal commission into corruption and misconduct in this state. The reason we are here today moving on some incredibly important recommendations to improve transparency and accountability in terms of local government in this state is because we have a standing royal commission into corruption and misconduct.

For those people who claim that there have been many allegations and much evidence that has not been investigated, let me say this: I know that the CCC, as a standing royal commission, acquits its job amazingly. It does a great service for this state and for good governance in this state. As long as Labor is on this side of the House, we will continue to make sure the CCC has the powers and the resources it needs to do exactly the job that we are seeing it do in Belcarra and rooting out corruption and misconduct in local council. I commend the bills to the House.



**Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (3.20 pm): I love it when the Deputy Premier comes in here and gives us a history lesson. Let us take a walk down memory lane for the Deputy Premier. Let us talk about section 57 of the Criminal Code. It was a very important part of the Criminal Code. It was about corruption and it was particularly about members of parliament who misled parliamentary committees and it attracted a jail term. If a member were to breach it and be found guilty of such offence, they would be serving a term in prison. There was one particular former minister of this House who was found wanting under section 57.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjections: what was his name? I will get to his name in a second. I am just giving a history lesson. The Deputy Premier loves history. That was Gordon Nuttall. Gordon Nuttall was a Labor minister. Instead of Gordon Nuttall going through the appropriate legal channels of being charged and then prosecuted, what did Peter Beattie and the Labor government do? They recalled parliament and got members of parliament to deal with section 57 of the Criminal Code to protect Gordon Nuttall. How did they deal with it? They deleted the provision from the Criminal Code and, therefore, Gordon Nuttall could not be prosecuted for committing a criminal offence against section 57 because it was no longer in the code.

Guess what the Liberal National Party did? In one of the first bills that we introduced when we came to power in 2012 we reintroduced section 57 to the Criminal Code. We reintroduced it into the Criminal Code because we believed that, if one were corrupt, that was a provision that should be in the Criminal Code. The Deputy Premier talked for 10 minutes but did not mention when she was the state secretary of the Labor Party accepting \$5,000 cheques from Mr Eddie Obeid. Where is Mr Eddie Obeid now?

**An opposition member:** He's in jail.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I hear it has some bars on the door. Where was Gordon Nuttall?

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** He was behind bars as well. The Deputy Premier should not come in here and lecture the LNP about accountability and integrity when some of their members are either behind bars or have been behind bars for corruption in this state. When the Premier comes in here and talks about integrity and accountability, she was part of the government that deleted section 57 from the Criminal Code. That is how the Labor Party treats integrity.

When talking about history, let us take another walk down memory lane with regard to the current Attorney-General. When the polling was not going their way before the last election—oh no, do not face the people under the current electoral laws—what did those opposites do? They came in here without notice and changed the electoral system from voluntary preferential voting to compulsory preferential voting. With 18 minutes notice, they changed the voting system in Queensland. The Labor Party deletes a section of the Criminal Code so that its minister could not be prosecuted, the Deputy Premier accepts cheques from Eddie Obeid as state secretary of the Labor Party and the current Attorney-General changed the electoral system—ups the electoral system in the air—for their political advantage in terms of compulsory preferential voting.

This bill, particularly the provisions with respect to banning developer donations, is an extension of the corrupt activities from the Labor Party in trying to nobble the LNP. It is targeting one particular section of our community, and that is the development industry. Those opposites have always misused the CCC in that they have always used the CCC for political purposes. There was one sentence in Alan MacSporran's report in which the CCC said that the state may in the future like to look to include the state with regard to developer donations but only after a comprehensive review or based on evidence. They grabbed that one sentence and ran in here. They grabbed it and they ran in here to put it in their bill and hide it under the guise of integrity and accountability for councils.

The CCC then clarified its statement and said that if the state were to do it in the future it would need a comprehensive review and evidence. There is no evidence and yet when we put it to the Labor Party as to why it does not include the trade union movement, it says, 'Because there's no evidence.' That is what we are saying about property developers in the state: there is no evidence. Those opposites do not include trade unions because there is no evidence, but they include banning developer contributions without basis and without evidence. They have a different political view depending on what fixes their electoral chances and benefits their electoral success in the state of Queensland. That is the Labor way.

The Deputy Premier talks about the CCC. Do not forget that the CCC was subjected to a comprehensive review by a former High Court judge under the LNP government and they made damning findings as to how the CMC was being run at the time. Earlier the Deputy Premier said in here, 'I was on the PCCC and I was sacked in the middle of the night.' What the Deputy Premier does not tell new members in the House is that she had tweeted and put on Facebook that the one person they were investigating was guilty of the offences before the committee had the chance to decide the matter. She had prejudged the outcome of the committee. They do not tell anyone that. They do not tell anyone about that when they give a history lesson. That is basically the Labor way—that is, what is in its political interests and for expediency. That is what it will do and it will ram it through this House.

What came out of the Premier's mouth in opposition shows that she is a completely different person when in government. In fact, Labor members have told me that the Premier is only Premier by name and that she runs her caucus more like a royal court. It is more like a royal court. In fact, one member of the Labor Party said that it is more 'Princess' Palaszczuk than Premier. That is how she runs the cabinet and that is how she runs the caucus. As I said last year, she flies in the government jet to Western Queensland and expects a little boy or girl to wait down the bottom of the stairs with a flower bouquet because 'Her Majesty Princess' Palaszczuk has arrived in Western Queensland. That is the reality.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Member for Kawana, that is unparliamentary. Please withdraw.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw. We have seen the arrogance of the Premier now that she has a majority in this House, especially this morning when she said, 'This bill will pass this week.' When she was the opposition leader and I was a minister my office inadvertently sent out a press release five minutes before the conclusion of consideration in detail. They were a bit eager to press 'send' on the press release saying that the bill had passed the parliament. My God! The now Premier stood up and accused me of corruption. She said that I was deliberately misleading the House and called for my resignation because a press release had gone out. However, she can stand in here this morning and demand the bill be passed come hell or high water. The arrogance that the Premier displays in government shows that she is a completely different person to the person she was in opposition. This morning the member for Woodridge attacked an outstanding member of the media gallery for having dinner with a shadow minister. My goodness! God forbid: a shadow minister has dinner with a journalist!

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There is no relevance at all to the bill that is being debated. The member should be brought back to the bill.


**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Thank you, Leader of the House. I have granted a degree of latitude, but I would like you to come back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I make the point that the Deputy Premier, in her contribution, talked of matters that occurred 20 or 30 years ago and were not contained in the bill. I understand why the Leader of the House does not want to hear what I am saying, because the members opposite do not like their history and their lack of accountability and integrity repeated to them.

This morning, the member for Woodridge, the Minister for State Development, made a terrible attack on a member of the media gallery. He did not say that the Labor Party members only knew that the shadow minister had dinner with a journalist because Labor Party members had dinner with journalists at the same restaurant. The member for Woodridge will not say that, because the Labor members do not care. It is their way or the highway.

This bill, which bans donations from property developers, is simply to nobble the LNP's chances of success at an election. That is why it is important to put a reference to unions in the bill. Do the members opposite really think that when a Queenslanders is asked, 'Do you think that trade unions have an undue influence over the Labor government in Queensland?' the average Queenslanders would say, 'No, the unions don't have a negative influence over the Labor Party'? I ask members to look at the legislation. They cannot tell me that the Labor Party has not been bought off and influenced by the trade union movement in Queensland. That is why it is so important that, if we are going to ban donations from developers, we should also ban donations from trade unions. If not, the CCC should have an inquiry into the relationship between the trade union movement and the Queensland Labor Party under this Premier.

*(Time expired)*

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (3.31 pm), in reply: I thank all members who have contributed to this cognate debate. Lifting transparency and accountability in both levels of government is at the heart of these bills and at the heart of everything that the Palaszczuk government strives for. These bills are a critical element of our strong and enduring commitment to the revitalisation of local government in Queensland. We are utterly determined to restore public confidence in our elected officials. I thank those members on both sides of the House who have expressed a commitment to that same aim.

I acknowledge the excellent work of the independent review panel. Its recommendations have underpinned the development of the new councillor complaints legislation. The review panel invited public submissions, conducted its own research and sought input from all Queensland local governments, the LGMA, the LGAQ, the CCC, the Auditor-General, the Queensland Ombudsman and the Integrity Commissioner. I also thank the CCC, the Queensland Ombudsman and the Economics and Governance Committee, submitters and witnesses.

I turn now to some of the issues that were raised during the debate. At the outset, I want to correct the repeated assertions made by those opposite in this debate, including the Leader of the Opposition, that this legislation is somehow being rammed through. That is an absolutely preposterous claim, particularly in relation to the key issues that those members claimed were being rammed through—that is, the ban on property developer donations. Those assertions do not stand up to even the slightest bit of scrutiny. We have introduced these bills twice. They have undergone scrutiny by two parliamentary committees and have been subjected to two sets of public and private hearings. The bills have even been considered by everyone of voting age in Queensland via a state election, no less. Some would argue that that is the ultimate scrutiny. Once again, these bills are being subjected to extensive scrutiny in this place.

I also want to respond to the notion argued by some of those opposite that the government is driven by political motivation in bringing these bills before the House. We have acted on the advice of the CCC—a standing royal commission. The members opposite cannot have it both ways. Either they support the CCC and its recommendations, as we do, or they do not. If the Leader of the Opposition believes that this full process represents the government ramming through legislation, then I have to say that, if the Leader of the Opposition were ever to form a government, her government would get nothing done.

The member for Warrego and a number of other speakers, including the members for Broadwater, Bundaberg and Noosa, raised concerns about how councils will handle the situation of councillors voting on other councillors' conflicts of interests improperly, including by voting in blocs. As councillors must perform their responsibilities in accordance with local government principles and a proposed mandatory councillor code of conduct, to do otherwise may constitute misconduct, or even corrupt conduct in certain circumstances. Councillors seeking to use those provisions corruptly themselves will find themselves referred to the CCC. The bill requires the decision and the reasons for the decision of other councillors about a councillor's conflict of interest to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and on the council website. This will aid transparency in local government decision-making.

How and when the new code of conduct of councillors will be prepared was also raised by the member for Warrego. The mandatory code will be developed by my department in consultation with the Local Government Liaison Group. It will take effect when it is approved by a regulation. It is my intention that this work and all the other preparatory steps will be done well ahead of a December 2018 start date.

This brings me to the contribution of the member for Maryborough, who spoke of his concerns about the very poor participation in candidate training provided by my department. I want to advise the House that I share his concerns and I am giving full consideration to further reform in relation to compulsory candidate training for all of those contemplating the role of councillor. It is a further measure that is aimed at boosting accountability and transparency by ensuring that councils are well equipped to carry out their responsibilities in a responsible, ethical and legal way.

Currently, councils must pay the cost of regional conduct review panels and the Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal. Under the new regime, councils will be liable for some costs imposed by the Councillor Conduct Tribunal. This will be a matter for the Independent Assessor. The state government will cover the costs associated with the establishment of the Office of the Independent Assessor. It is extremely difficult for approximate costs to be provided to councils ahead of the investigation, or the hearing of a complaint.

I say to the member for Warrego that she is correct in saying that the bill inserts provisions similar to those omitted in 2011. Although the CCC did not support requiring councillors to leave the room and abstain from voting for all conflicts of interest, it considered that there is value in other aspects of the original provisions. The CCC stated—

Requiring other councillors to decide whether a councillor has a conflict of interest and whether they should stay in the room to vote on a matter ensures that alternative and more independent perspectives are taken into consideration.

It stated further—

... the other councillors can give voice to other perspectives, and may be better able to reflect on the perception of a conflict than the councillor in question.

The following was the view of the CCC—

... relying on the local government principles alone does not reflect the seriousness of undeclared conflicts of interest.

It stated further—

Re-introducing a specific obligation on councillors to report another councillor's conflict of interest would increase councillors' accountability and reinforce the importance of dealing with conflicts of interest in transparent and accountable ways.

In relation to the LGAQ recommendation regarding the treatment of gifts in excess of \$500 and the declaration of conflicts of interest and material personal interests, the government will consider those matters when it implements the remaining Belcarra recommendations. Some other members questioned why the ban on developer donations to candidates does not apply to unions or why it stops at property developers. According to the CCC—

... until such time as unions and other types of donors demonstrate the same risk of actual or perceived corruption in Queensland local government as property developers, a more encompassing ban is not appropriate.

I turn now to the adoption of the New South Wales model and the New South Wales definition. These provisions have been operational in New South Wales for a number of years. They have been tested in the High Court and found to be constitutional. People have asked, 'Why should they apply at a state level?' The CCC has said that the government may consider it appropriate to adopt a developer donor ban at the state level. In Queensland, the state has a significant role in the state's planning framework. It is absolutely the right thing to do to apply these recommendations at the state level. We

on this side of the House have never shied away from doing the right thing. The people of Queensland elected us to make decisions. Indeed, they elected us in November to make this decision. This was a commitment that we took to the people of Queensland and we are following through on our commitment.

Some members have asked, 'Who is a property developer?' For the purposes of the bill, a prohibited donor means a property developer or an industry representative organisation of which the majority of its members are property developers. The term 'industry representative organisation' is not defined in the legislation and is to be given its ordinary meaning. As the bill does not include a definition of 'regularly' it, too, is to be given its ordinary meaning. It is appropriate that the nature of guidance material provided regarding provisions is a matter for the Electoral Commission of Queensland.

One of the more nonsensical contributions that was made during the debate was made by the member for Broadwater—a former minister for local government no less. He says he fears that the Palaszczuk government's move to provide the minister with the power to dissolve or suspend a council in the public interest runs the risk of local government becoming nothing more than a creature of the state. I have news for the member for Broadwater: local government is already a creature of the state. It does not exist without our legislation, without our edict. That is why we need to act to protect the system of local government throughout our state. We have a responsibility to improve the system, to enhance the system and to support it to best serve the people of Queensland.

As for questions on time frames on the handling of complaints, the simple answer is that every complaint is different and setting time frames is problematic given some investigations are far more complex than others. However, minor matters such as unsuitable meeting conduct and inappropriate conduct can be handled locally and swiftly by councils themselves, leaving the Independent Assessor and the Councillor Conduct Tribunal with greater capacity to handle misconduct swiftly.

As to the term 'public interest', there have been a number of members make remarks around this. Recent events have put beyond doubt the need for the state government to be able to act in the public interest. Further, the term 'public interest' is a term with which the courts are very familiar. It is used widely across the statute books—177 acts in all, including the Local Government Act, the Judicial Review Act, the Information Privacy Act, the Crime and Corruption Act and the Criminal Code. I do not deny that this is a broad term and I accept that there are some concerns about its use. That is why I have committed to a review of this provision within the next two years.

I now turn to the claims of those opposite that any move to ban developer donations, notwithstanding what was a clear recommendation of the CCC, is an attack on one side, that it is somehow politically motivated. This is just not true. I may not be alone in that belief. In his contribution the member for Mermaid Beach told us that developers donate to both sides. Surprise, surprise! 'The fact is they donated to the Labor Party as well', he claims. 'I can name them if you want', he stated. I can name them too because I have been the beneficiary of political donations from the property industry.

This is not an attack on one side. This is setting the standard that we need. Those opposite cannot have it both ways. Which way will it be? Is it an attack on one side or is it as the member for Mermaid Beach claims? Time and time again yesterday and again today some in this House have questioned the application of the developer donation ban on the state government. It has been a constant LNP refrain. Not only do we say that what is good for the goose is good for the gander, but it is naive in the extreme for those opposite to perpetuate this belief that the state government does not have a significant role to play when it comes to planning. As the Attorney-General said yesterday, it is a very convenient argument from people who time and time again call into question the government's approach on a range of planning matters.

There was one particularly curious contribution from the member for Toowoomba North in this debate when he said—I might add in an incredulous tone—

... imagine if there was a piece of retrospective legislation brought in here that said any union donations that are received will attract a penalty of \$190,000 and 10 years imprisonment and we made it retrospective to just before the election. Imagine what people would say.

We do not have to imagine; someone has. The member for Toowoomba South has proposed that very thing in an amendment circulated in his name.

I conclude by acknowledging that many members in this place have a background in local government. Many have worked hard in the service of their community in those roles. Indeed, as we know, the vast majority of councillors are honest, hardworking and dedicated individuals. These measures are not about catching out honest councillors or those who make genuine mistakes, they are

about those councillors who do not live up to community expectations and who intentionally flout the laws of Queensland. The passage of these bills will clearly show the commitment of this parliament to a system of local government for Queensland that is robust, that is independent, that is transparent and that is accountable. I thank all the members for their contributions and I commend the bills to the House.

Question put—That the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Question put—That the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

#### Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—



**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (3.46 pm): I move the following amendment—

**1 Clause 4 (Amendment of s 5 (Relationship with City of Brisbane Act 2010))**

Page 10, lines 16 and 17—

*omit, insert—*

- (c) the way in which the conduct of councillors of the Brisbane City Council in meetings of the council and its committees is to be dealt with; and
- (d) the way complaints about councillors of the Brisbane City Council are to be dealt with.

I tabled the explanatory notes to my amendments.

*Tabled paper:* Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, explanatory notes to Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe's amendments [\[684\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—



**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (3.47 pm): I move the following amendments—

**2 Clause 12 (Insertion of new ch 5A)**

Page 19, line 29, 'involves or'—

*omit.*

**3 Clause 12 (Insertion of new ch 5A)**

Page 20, line 24, 'taking action'—

*omit, insert—*

deciding to take action under section 150AG

**4 Clause 12 (Insertion of new ch 5A)**

Page 22, lines 28 to 30—

*omit, insert—*

- (4) As soon as practicable after receiving the complaint, the assessor must, if the assessor has the contact details of the person who made the complaint, give the person a notice that states—

**5 Clause 12 (Insertion of new ch 5A)**

Page 23, lines 3 to 6—

*omit, insert—*

- (b) a councillor;
- (c) the chief executive officer of a local government.



**6 Clause 12 (Insertion of new ch 5A)**

Page 23, line 14, 'conduct.'—

*omit, insert—*

conduct; and

(c) the assessor has the contact details of the person who made the complaint.

**7 Clause 12 (Insertion of new ch 5A)**

Page 24, lines 17 to 22—

*omit, insert—***local government official** means—

(a) a councillor; or

(b) the chief executive officer of a local government.

**8 Clause 12 (Insertion of new ch 5A)**

Page 24, lines 27 and 28, 'takes action under section 150AG'—

*omit, insert—*

decides under section 150AG to take action

**9 Clause 12 (Insertion of new ch 5A)**

Page 37, lines 21 to 23—

*omit, insert—*

(a) for hearing a matter about the conduct of a councillor—at least 2, but not more than 3, members of the conduct tribunal chosen by the president; or

(b) for dealing with an administrative or procedural matter related to hearing a matter about the conduct of a councillor—

(i) the president; or

(ii) not more than 3 members of the conduct tribunal chosen by the president.

**10 Clause 12 (Insertion of new ch 5A)**

Page 42, line 5, after 'a complaint'—

*insert—*

and the conduct tribunal has the contact details of the person who made the complaint

**11 Clause 12 (Insertion of new ch 5A)**

Page 85, line 2, after 'about'—

*insert—*

or investigation of

**12 Clause 12 (Insertion of new ch 5A)**

Page 92, line 6, after 'disclose'—

*insert—*

the identity of a person who made a complaint about the conduct of a councillor or

**Ms LEAHY:** Clause 12 deals with the code of conduct. I would like to thank the minister for the outline that he gave in relation to the future consultation that will be undertaken in relation to that. Not all local governments across Queensland are the same. They vary greatly in geography. What happens in Cape York or somewhere like Doomadgee is quite different to what happens at the Moreton Bay Regional Council. There has been a great spirit of cooperation from the Local Government Managers of Australia and also the LGAQ in relation to not only the bill but also working on the code of conduct. I appreciate we will have that back by 18 December.

This is quite a large clause. It deals with a number of other matters in relation to the Councillor Conduct Tribunal and the people who can be qualified for membership of that tribunal. It also deals with those people who are not qualified to be a member. It outlines those as a councillor or nominee for election as a councillor, an employee of local government, a contractor of local government, a member of an Australian parliament, a nominee for election as a member of an Australian parliament, a member of a political party, a person who has a conviction for an indictable offence, is an insolvent under administration or is a person prescribed by regulation for this subsection.

The one that drew my attention was 'member of a political party'. Those people who are not able to be on the tribunal are members of political parties. However, it says nothing about members of unions. Unions have a lot of involvement with the local government workforce, which consists of some 40,000 people. Unions negotiate their EBAs.

Under this clause there is no disqualification for, say, Peter Simpson to be a member of the Councillor Conduct Tribunal. It is an interesting point to note that a member of any union can be on the tribunal but a mum-and-dad member of a political party cannot. It is quite interesting that members of political parties are excluded or disqualified, but members of unions are not. It is quite important, given the influence and the interaction that a number of unions have on the 40,000 workers who do such a good job in local government right across Queensland. That is particularly important. I would be very interested to know why members of unions were not included in the clause that outlines which people are not qualified to be a member of the tribunal.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I acknowledge the query of the member for Warrego. My response would be that that is a very large class of people and it would exclude a significant proportion of the community. In fact, it would exclude a far greater proportion of the community than has been alluded to in other parts of the debate over the past couple of days, with no real justified reason. I do not believe that the reasons that the member has identified would disqualify such individuals from being a part of these processes.

The legislation outlines the management of conflicts of members of those bodies and how they must be handled. Let us take a situation involving an office holder of a trade union—which I think is what the member is alluding to, rather than just a member—who had been appointed to one of those roles. To be blunt, I do not foresee that happening, but if it were to happen their conflicts could be managed in the same way as with other people in the broader community such as consultants, former councillors or something like that.

**Mrs D'Ath:** Maybe a community group that gets funding.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Indeed, I take the interjection from the Attorney-General about a member of a community organisation that may attract some funding through a council process and so on. There are a range of ways in which conflicts are dealt with and are required to be dealt with. I think that would be the appropriate way to deal with the concern that the member is raising, rather than not availing ourselves of the opportunity to use a whole class of people in our community.

**Mr JANETZKI:** The opposition will be supporting the provision, but I want to make a few comments on it. Clause 12 comprises over 80 pages of the legislation, so I think it warrants some discussion. I note that the overview of the chapter talks about setting appropriate standards for the behaviour of councillors and dealing with the conduct of councillors. In particular, I reflect on the now mandatory requirement for the minister to prepare a code of conduct. At the Ipswich City Council, for instance, the code of conduct lapsed in 2012 when the mandatory nature of codes of conduct was removed by a previous Labor government under the Local Government Act.

One of the most important considerations is that a one-size-fits-all code of conduct may not be appropriate in certain circumstances. Earlier this afternoon the member for Traeger mentioned the diversity of councils, from the largest in Brisbane to those in the farthest reaches of the state. Different councils have needs that it will be necessary to include to cover the particular peculiarities of regions and the composition of councils will need to be factored in when the minister is preparing the code of conduct. I think that needs to be carefully monitored.

I have been an independent chair of an audit and risk committee for a local government. Sadly, I can say that the provisions relating to unsuitable meeting conduct are much needed in my experience. I think they have merit, because on many occasions there can be unsuitable meeting conduct going on. It is important that local governments be given the tools they need to manage difficult meetings and to manage difficult councillors within those meetings. These provisions cater for that need. The local government governance model is a very complicated one, because normally management has day-to-day operational responsibilities for activities and the board has responsibility for the oversight and strategic view of the company. However, in a local government context, there is also the political. Therefore, I think it important that there be requirements for the conduct of meetings. These provisions meet that need.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I acknowledge the matters raised by the member for Toowoomba South. In clarification, I will reiterate some of the matters that I raised in my reply speech as part of the second reading debate. Firstly, there will be just one code of conduct. That is the standard that we need to set across the state. I take into account and acknowledge, as I have on every occasion that I have spoken to councillors, mayors and CEOs from across the length and breadth of Queensland, that I am cognisant of the great diversity within local governments in this state. That is one of the great challenges that we have in maintaining and managing a system of local government. I am cognisant of that in this process.

However, the amendments seek to establish one code of conduct to raise the bar across-the-board and have one single standard that everyone can understand. The code will be developed and drafted in consultation and in keen engagement with the Local Government Liaison Group, which will be made up of a range of interested parties including the Integrity Commissioner, the Auditor-General, the Ombudsman and the CCC, and managed by the department. That will be done in consultation with other interested and key parties, such as the LGAQ and the LGMA.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** I rise to speak in support of the proposed amendment. I want to raise a few matters of concern in regard to the code of conduct. In 2005, the former local government minister, the Hon. Desley Boyle, presented an amendment bill that sought to address code of conduct issues at that time. She made comments that I think are pertinent. She said that the purpose of the bill was to introduce—

... a requirement for councils to adopt a code of conduct for councillors. The code of conduct provisions in the bill include several important features which have been well outlined ... For the first time councils will have a statutory basis for taking disciplinary action against councillors who have committed minor acts of misconduct or inappropriate behaviour.

Further on she says—

Some complaints, even the majority, may well be found to be misunderstandings as a result of poor communication and clarifying matters may well lead to the complaint being withdrawn.

I am concerned that often complaints can be frivolous, which is why we need to have very robust guidelines and expectations around what is proposed in this legislation for the handling of council complaints. In my experience from my time in council and my observations of subsequent councils, particularly on the Gold Coast, it seems that often the complainants or those who complain the most are not necessarily sincere members of the community with a genuine gripe or concern; more often than not, they are minority councillors who simply cannot get their way. One of the strategies they employ is to gather the same group of full-time protestors to rally around certain issues, a little like what we see from those in government and the gang that they bring here on a regular basis to protest over all sorts of issues at the front of the Botanic Gardens.

The issue here is integrity. We have heard so much from those on the other side about integrity. My concern is that we need to have robust legislation that actually protects the rights, as we heard from the minister earlier, of the majority of councillors who actually do the right thing and often have mud stuck to them. Members know the saying, 'If you throw enough mud, some of it is going to stick and oftentimes somewhat unfairly.'

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I acknowledge the member for Southport's questions and concerns. I draw to his attention section 150X—the power to dismiss vexatious complaints. I draw to his attention that the legislation provides very significant capabilities to deal with those matters for the Independent Assessor.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 12, as amended, agreed to.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Weir): I note that the minister's amendment No. 13 proposes to omit clause 13. Therefore, the appropriate procedure is to vote against the clause.

Clause 13, as read, negated.

Clauses 14 to 17, as read, agreed to.

Clause 18—



**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (4.01 pm): I move the following amendment—

**14 Clause 18 (Replacement of ch 6, pts 3 and 4)**

Page 94, lines 22 to 25—

*omit, insert—*

- (a) for performing a function of the remuneration commission—at least 2, but not more than 3, commissioners of the remuneration commission chosen by the chairperson; or
- (b) for dealing with an administrative or procedural matter related to performing a function of the remuneration commission—
  - (i) the chairperson; or
  - (ii) not more than 3 commissioners of the remuneration commission chosen by the chairperson.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 18, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 19 to 29, as read, agreed to.

Clause 30—



**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (4.02 pm): I move the following amendment—

**15 Clause 30 (Insertion of new ss 260A and 260B)**

Page 103, after line 30—

*insert—*

- (4) The Minister must ensure the notice is destroyed as soon as practicable after it is no longer needed for the purpose for which it was given.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 30, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 31 and 32, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (4.03 pm): I move the following amendment—

**16 After clause 32**

Page 109, after line 32—

*insert—*

**32A Amendment of sch 1 (Serious integrity offences and integrity offences)**

Schedule 1, part 2, entry for This Act—

*insert—*

150 AW(1) Protection from reprisal

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 33 to 36, as read, agreed to.

## Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—



**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (4.04 pm): I move the following amendment—

**1 Clause 2 (Commencement)**

Page 6, line 8, after 'and 5'—

*insert—*

, and part 4, division 3,

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

*Tabled paper:* Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, explanatory notes to Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe's amendments [\[685\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (4.05 pm): I move the following amendment—

**2 After clause 3**

Page 6, after line 12—

*insert—*

**3A Amendment of s 6 (Definitions)**

Section 6, 'schedule 1'—

*omit, insert—*

schedule 2

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4—



**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (4.05 pm): I move the following amendment—

3

**Clause 4 (Amendment of s 153 (Disqualification for certain offences))**

Page 6, lines 15 to 17—

*omit, insert—*

- (1) Section 153(1)(c), 'bribery'—  
*omit, insert—*  
serious integrity
- (2) Section 153(4) and (5)—  
*omit, insert—*
- (4) A **serious integrity offence** is an offence against—
  - (a) a provision of a law mentioned in schedule 1, part 1 if, for a circumstance stated for the offence (if any), the stated circumstance applies to the offence; or
  - (b) a provision of a law of another State or the Commonwealth that corresponds to a provision mentioned in paragraph (a).
- (5) An **integrity offence** is an offence against a provision of a law mentioned in schedule 1, part 2 if, for a circumstance stated for the offence (if any), the stated circumstance applies to the offence.
- (3) Section 153(6), after 'convicted of'—  
*insert—*  
any of the following offences (each a **disqualifying offence**)
- (4) Section 153(6)(c)—  
*omit, insert—*
  - (c) a serious integrity offence; or

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (4.06 pm): I move the following amendment—

4

**After clause 4**

Page 6, after line 17—

*insert—*

**4A Amendment of s 158 (Acting as councillor without authority)**

Section 158—

*insert—*

- (c) the person is suspended as a councillor.

**4B Insertion of new s 158A**

Chapter 6, part 2, division 1—

*insert—*


**158A Councillor must give notice of disqualification**

- (1) This section applies if a councillor becomes aware the councillor is not qualified to be a councillor under this division.
- (2) The councillor must immediately give a written notice that complies with subsection (3) to each of the following, unless the councillor has a reasonable excuse—
  - (a) the Minister;
  - (b) if the councillor is not the mayor—the mayor;
  - (c) the chief executive officer.

Maximum penalty—100 penalty units.
- (3) For subsection (2), the notice must state—
  - (a) details about why the councillor is not qualified to be a councillor under this division; and
  - (b) the day the councillor became disqualified.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 7—

 **Mr JANETZKI** (4.06 pm): I want to make a contribution to clause 6. I want to make a few comments on conflicts of interest as they relate to the Brisbane City Council. This particular provision relates to conflicts of interest and material personal interests. They are also replicated later in the bill in relation to the Local Government Act. I wanted to make a couple of comments on conflicts of interest generally.

The purpose of the division talks about community expectations. Community expectations and the law sometimes run on separate tracks. I think it is important that community expectation is constantly reviewed to make sure it is keeping pace with the law as it stands.

I note the distinction between material personal interests and a conflict of interest under the act. It is an appropriate distinction to maintain. The material conflict of interest generally goes towards whether a party will receive a benefit or will suffer a loss. That is appropriate.


I make the comment that the conflict of interest definition is constantly framed in the negative. I accept that conflicts of interest sometimes have to be worded in that way. It would have been good drafting, I think, to frame the public interest in the positive to remind councillors of their positive obligation to always act in the public interest rather than frame it the other way in terms of being contrary to the public interest.

It is good that some of the frivolous conflicts have been raised in that particular provision, whether it be with sporting or community groups because these overlap; however, in terms of developing a culture of true conflict management I do think councillors should be extremely cautious. Notwithstanding that they are small conflicts of interest and they are discarded or excluded under the bill, I think it is important in terms of building a culture where councillors put their hands up and walk out of meetings if a conflict arises. I think that is another area to observe.

I also note that under the conflict of interest definition there is talk of a real conflict of interest and a perceived conflict of interest. I think there is a third limb to that conflict of interest test and that is a potential conflict of interest. I have read many conflict of interest policies and I think a future forward-looking conflict of interest would have been worth considering in the preparation of these provisions.

Clauses 5 to 7, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clauses—

 **Mr HINCHLIFFE** (4.10 pm): I move the following amendment—

**5 After clause 7**

Page 17, after line 2—

*insert—*

**7A Insertion of new ch 6, pt 2, divs 8 and 9**

Chapter 6, part 2—

*insert—*

**Division 8 Automatic suspension of councillors**

**186B Automatic suspension for certain offences**

- (1) A person is automatically suspended as a councillor when the person is charged with a disqualifying offence.
- (2) Subsection (3) applies if, when a person is appointed or elected as a councillor, a proceeding for a disqualifying offence against the person has been started but has not ended.
- (3) The person is automatically suspended as a councillor when the person's term as councillor starts.

**186C When a person is charged with disqualifying offence and proceeding is started**

For this division and division 9—

- (a) a person is charged with a disqualifying offence when—
  - (i) a police officer arrests and charges the person for the offence; or
  - (ii) the person is served with a notice to appear for the offence; or
  - (iii) the person is served with a complaint for the offence under the *Justices Act 1886*; or

- (iv) a charge for the offence is made against the person in a proceeding without a complaint under the *Justices Act 1886*; or
- (v) an ex officio indictment against the person for the offence is presented to the Supreme Court or the District Court; and
- (b) a proceeding for a disqualifying offence is started against a person when the person is charged with the offence.

**186D Obligation to give notice if charged with disqualifying offence**

- (1) This section applies if—
  - (a) a councillor is charged with a disqualifying offence; or
  - (b) a proceeding for a disqualifying offence has been started, but has not ended, against a councillor when the councillor is appointed or elected.
- (2) The councillor must immediately give a written notice that complies with subsection (3) to each of the following, unless the councillor has a reasonable excuse—
  - (a) the Minister;
  - (b) if the councillor is not the mayor—the mayor;
  - (c) the chief executive officer.

Maximum penalty—100 penalty units.
- (3) For subsection (2), the notice must state—
  - (a) the provision of the law against which the councillor is charged; and
  - (b) the day the councillor was charged.

**186E Effect of councillor's suspension**

- (1) This section applies while a councillor is suspended as a councillor.
- (2) The councillor must not act as a councillor.
- (3) If the councillor is the mayor or deputy mayor, the councillor is also suspended as mayor or deputy mayor.
- (4) The councillor's obligations under division 5 are not affected.
- (5) The councillor is entitled to be paid remuneration as a councillor.
- (6) In this section—
 

**remuneration**, as a councillor, does not include an amount payable to a councillor for performing a particular responsibility, including, for example, attending a meeting of the local government or any of its committees.

**186F When suspension of councillor ends**

If a councillor is suspended under section 186B, the suspension ends when the earliest of the following happens—

- (a) for each disqualifying offence to which the suspension relates—
  - (i) if the councillor is convicted of the offence and appeals the conviction—the conviction is set aside or quashed on appeal; or
  - (ii) if the councillor is convicted of the offence and does not appeal the conviction—the time within which an appeal must by law be started ends; or
  - (iii) the proceeding for the offence otherwise ends;

*Note—*

If the councillor is convicted of a disqualifying offence, the councillor's office becomes vacant. See section 162.

- (b) the councillor's term ends under section 160;
- (c) the councillor's office becomes vacant under section 162.

**Division 9 Criminal history information****186G Criminal history report**

- (1) This section applies if the Minister—
  - (a) receives a notice from a councillor—
    - (i) under section 158A in relation to the conviction of the councillor for a disqualifying offence; or
    - (ii) under section 186D; or
  - (b) reasonably suspects a councillor has been charged with, or convicted of, a disqualifying offence.

- (2) The Minister may ask the police commissioner for a written report about the criminal history of the councillor that includes a brief description of the circumstances of a conviction or charge mentioned in the criminal history.
- (3) The police commissioner must comply with the request.
- (4) However, the duty to comply applies only to information in the police commissioner's possession or to which the police commissioner has access.
- (5) In this section—  
**criminal history**, of a councillor, includes—
  - (a) spent convictions; and
  - (b) every charge made against the councillor for an offence, in Queensland or elsewhere.

**186H Confidentiality of criminal history information**

- (1) This section applies to a person who possesses criminal history information because the person—
  - (a) is or was an officer, employee or agent of the department; or
  - (b) is or was a councillor, officer, employee or agent of the council.
- (2) The person must not, directly or indirectly, disclose criminal history information to any other person unless the disclosure is permitted under subsection (3).  
Maximum penalty—100 penalty units.
- (3) The person is permitted to disclose the criminal history information to another person—
  - (a) to the extent necessary to perform the person's functions under this Act; or
  - (b) if the disclosure is authorised under an Act; or
  - (c) if the disclosure is otherwise required or permitted by law; or
  - (d) if the person to whom the information relates consents to the disclosure; or
  - (e) if the disclosure is in a form that does not identify the person to whom the information relates; or
  - (f) if the information is, or has been, lawfully accessible to the public.
- (4) The person must ensure a document containing criminal history information is destroyed as soon as practicable after it is no longer needed for the purpose for which it is given.
- (5) In this section—  
**criminal history information** means the information contained in—
  - (a) a report given to the Minister under section 186G; or
  - (b) a notice given to the Minister, a councillor or the chief executive officer—
    - (i) under section 158A in relation to the conviction of a councillor for a disqualifying offence; or
    - (ii) under section 186D.

**7B Insertion of new ch 8, pt 9**

Chapter 8—  
*insert—*

**Part 9 Transitional provisions for Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2018**

**277 Disqualifying offence committed before commencement**

Chapter 6, part 2, as in force after the commencement, applies in relation to a disqualifying offence, whether the act or omission constituting the offence was committed before or after the commencement.

**278 Existing charge for disqualifying offence**

- (1) This section applies if a proceeding for a disqualifying offence against a councillor had started before the commencement but has not ended.
- (2) The councillor is automatically suspended as a councillor on the commencement.
- (3) Chapter 6, part 2, division 8 applies in relation to the councillor as if the councillor was suspended under section 186B.
- (4) Immediately after the commencement, the councillor must give a written notice that complies with subsection (5) to each of the following, unless the councillor has a reasonable excuse—
  - (a) the Minister;
  - (b) if the councillor is not the mayor—the mayor;
  - (c) the chief executive officer.

Maximum penalty—100 penalty units.



- (5) For subsection (4), the notice must state—
  - (a) the provision of the law against which the councillor was charged; and
  - (b) the day the councillor was charged.
- (6) The information contained in the notice is taken to be criminal history information for section 186H.

#### 279 Existing conviction for new disqualifying offence

- (1) This section applies if—
  - (a) before the commencement, a councillor was convicted of an offence that is a new disqualifying offence; and
  - (b) on the commencement, the disqualifying period for the offence would not have ended.
- (2) The councillor automatically stops being a councillor on the commencement.
- (3) Immediately after the commencement, the councillor must give a written notice that complies with subsection (4) to each of the following, unless the councillor has a reasonable excuse—
  - (a) the Minister;
  - (b) if the councillor is not the mayor—the mayor;
  - (c) the chief executive officer.

Maximum penalty—100 penalty units.
- (4) For subsection (3), the notice must state—
  - (a) the provision of the law against which the councillor was convicted; and
  - (b) the day the councillor was convicted.
- (5) Section 153(7) applies in relation to the offence.
- (6) The information contained in the notice is taken to be criminal history information for section 186H.
- (7) In this section—
 

**conviction** includes a spent conviction.

**disqualifying period**, for a new disqualifying offence, means the period stated in section 153(1) during which a person convicted of the offence can not be a councillor.

**new disqualifying offence** means an offence that, under section 153—

  - (a) is a disqualifying offence after the commencement; but
  - (b) was not a disqualifying offence before the commencement.

**Ms LEAHY:** It is quite disappointing that the government's amendments have not been scrutinised by the parliamentary committee. They are quite extensive amendments that give considerable powers to the minister. I think there is a valid question that the people of Ipswich would be interested in. As we know, there is currently in place a show-cause notice to the Ipswich City Council. I think the people of Ipswich would be particularly interested in what the process will be once these amendments are through and what will happen with that show-cause notice in relation to the Ipswich City Council. They are looking for certainty. They are obviously disappointed in relation to what has happened at Ipswich. It is of great interest to them as to how these automatic suspensions will now apply, given that there is an existing show-cause notice to that council.

The other matter that is of interest to the people of Ipswich is in relation to those mayors and councillors who are subject to an automatic suspension. Will they be able to contest the next quadrennial election? I am sure the minister will clarify this. In relation to the current show-cause notice, those mayors and councillors would not have been able to contest the next quadrennial election. Under this legislation and the automatic suspension provisions, provided their matters are resolved and there are no issues that they have had to answer which are in the negative, they will be able to contest the next quadrennial election.

I think the people of Ipswich would appreciate it if the minister could give some clarification as to what will happen with the show-cause notice going forward given that that show-cause notice will be dealt with in a particular manner and what will happen with the automatic suspensions so that it is quite clear. Obviously there is great concern for them and there is great uncertainty amongst that community. People are looking for integrity but also leadership in their community. There are people who are wondering whether the council will continue to function. It would be greatly appreciated if the minister could give some clarification to the people of Ipswich.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** In relation to the matters before the House at the moment, I will refer to the processes that these amendments are contemplating and how they set themselves against the processes that are available to the minister under the current legislation. I will not make particular reference to any circumstances that might be the subject of that process and the role that the minister is playing in relation to a show-cause notice that might be out there at the moment. I can abstract myself from that and talk about these amendments. I think that is the appropriate thing to. To that end, because there are no laws in place yet in relation to the processes that are before the House at the moment, I am not in a position to project how a minister might act once those laws are available to them in those particular circumstances that you refer to in relation to Ipswich. What I can talk to is these processes in terms of the show-cause notice that exists at the moment.

I want to clarify some of those matters that the member was asking about in terms of the consequences of things such as the suspension. The automatic suspension, as it applies as proposed in the amendments, does result in the situation where a councillor is suspended in the way that is described in the legislation already which does follow the presumption of innocence. It does not deny them their salary. It does not deny them the rights that they might enjoy otherwise, including the right to stand as a candidate should a quadrennial election occur or if there is any other vacancy or activity or position that they may seek to nominate for. It does not suspend them from any of those opportunities. What it does suspend them from is their day-to-day activities as a councillor or a mayor.

In relation to the broader powers of dismissal or suspension, my advice is that, unless there is some other determination such as the disqualifying outcome, neither of those things would disqualify someone from being a candidate at the next quadrennial election. In the case of dismissal, they would potentially disqualify a dismissed councillor from being a candidate at a by-election during the life of the current quadrennial. To be clear, none of these provisions other than those that are broader disqualifying provisions would have an impact on someone being a candidate at the next quadrennial election.

**Mr KRAUSE:** My comments in relation to this amendment go to the proposed new clause 7B and, in particular, proposed new section 279, which is about an existing conviction for a new disqualifying offence. The impact of this clause appears to be that it will retrospectively make offences that have been committed by councillors in office disqualifying offences, not just in Ipswich but across all of the 77 local government areas in Queensland. That represents a shifting of the goalposts when it comes to eligibility to be in local government. I made some comments earlier about the fact that there is a lot of detail in these provisions and the desirability for some of them to go through the committee process. It would be appreciated if the minister could tell us whether he has any idea how many councillors across Queensland may be affected by this provision in terms of being disqualified from local government as a result of past convictions and the retrospective nature of proposed new section 279.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** The answer is six.

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

Resolved in the affirmative under standing order 106(10).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 8—



**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (4.24 pm): I move the following amendments—

**6 Clause 8 (Amendment of sch 1 (Dictionary))**

Page 17, line 3, after 'Amendment'—

*insert—*

**and renumbering**

**7 Clause 8 (Amendment of sch 1 (Dictionary))**

Page 17, after line 5—

*insert—*

**disqualifying offence** see section 153(6).

**8 Clause 8 (Amendment of sch 1 (Dictionary))**

Page 17, after line 15—

*insert—*

(4) Schedule 1, as amended by this section—

*renumber* as schedule 2.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (4.24 pm): I move the following amendment—

9

**After clause 8**

Page 17, before line 16—

*insert—*

**8A Insertion of new sch 1**

After section 279, as inserted by this Act—

*insert—*

**Schedule 1 Serious integrity offences and integrity offences**

section 153

**Part 1 Serious integrity offences**

**Criminal Code**

54A(1)	Demands with menaces upon agencies of government
57(1)	False evidence before Parliament
60(1)	Bribery of member of Parliament
87(1) or (1A)	Official corruption
92A(1) or (2)	Misconduct in relation to public office
98B(1)	False or misleading information
98C(1) or (2)	Bribery
98D(1) or (2)	Forging or uttering electoral or referendum paper
110	Stuffing ballot boxes
112(1)	False or misleading information
119B(1)	Retaliation against or intimidation of judicial officer, juror, witness etc.
122(1)	Corruption of jurors
123(1)	Perjury
126(1)	Fabricating evidence
127(1)	Corruption of witnesses
129	Damaging evidence with intent
131(1)	Conspiracy to bring false accusation
132(1)	Conspiring to defeat justice
133(1)	Compounding an indictable offence circumstance—the penalty in subsection (2) applies to the offence
140(1)	Attempting to pervert justice
193(1)	False verified statements
398(1)	Punishment of stealing circumstance—a circumstance of aggravation with a maximum penalty of 7 years or more imprisonment applies to the offence
399	Fraudulent concealment of particular documents circumstance—paragraph (b) of the penalty applies to the offence
408C(1)	Fraud circumstance—a circumstance of aggravation mentioned in subsection (2), (2A) or (2B) applies to the offence
408E(1)	Computer hacking and misuse circumstance—a circumstance of aggravation mentioned in subsection (3) applies to the offence

1248	Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill; Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill	16 May 2018
415(1)	Extortion	
430	Fraudulent falsification of records	
433(1)	Receiving tainted property	
442B	Receipt or solicitation of secret commission by an agent	
442BA	Gift or offer of secret commission to an agent	
442D	False or misleading receipt or account	
442E	Secret commission for advice given	
442EA	Offer or solicitation of secret commission in return for advice given or to be given	
442F	Secret commission to trustee in return for substituted appointment	
442G	Liability of director etc. acting without authority	
488(1)	Forgery and uttering circumstance—paragraph (a) or (b) of the penalty applies to the offence	
541(1)	Conspiracy to commit crime circumstance—a maximum penalty of 7 years imprisonment or more applies to the offence	
<b>Crime and Corruption Act</b>		
198(1)	Contempt of person conducting commission hearing	
<b>Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Act 2002</b>		
250(1)	Money laundering	
<b>Electoral Act</b>		
307B(1)	Schemes to circumvent prohibition on particular political donations	
<b>Local Government Electoral Act</b>		
169(1)	False or misleading information	
170(1) or (2)	Bribery	
175(1) or (2)	Forged electoral papers	
194B(1)	Schemes to circumvent prohibition on particular political donations	
<b>Part 2 Integrity offences</b>		
<b>This Act</b>		
173(1)	Use of information by councillors	
173A(2) or (3)	Prohibited conduct by councillor in possession of inside information	
173B(2)	Obligation of councillor to correct register of interests circumstance—paragraph (a) of the penalty applies to the offence	
177C(2)	Councillor's material personal interest at a meeting	
177E(2) or (5)	Councillor's conflict of interest at a meeting	
177H	Offence to take retaliatory action	
177I(2) or (3)	Offence for councillor with material personal interest or conflict of interest to influence others	
215(1)	False or misleading information	
<b>Criminal Code</b>		
54(1)	Interference with Governor or Ministers	
55(1)	Interference with the Legislature	
58(1)	Witness refusing to attend, answer question or produce a thing before Legislative Assembly or authorised committee	
78(1) or (2)	Interfering with political liberty	
85	Disclosure of official secrets	

98E(1)	Influencing voting
98F	Providing money for illegal payments
98G	Voting if not entitled
99(1), (2), (3), (4) or (5)	Voting if not entitled
100(1) or (2)	Hindering or interfering with voting conduct
101(1) or (2)	Bribery
102	Publishing false information about a candidate
113(2), (3), (4) or (5)	Interfering with secrecy at elections
128	Deceiving witnesses
130	Preventing witnesses from attending
133(1)	Compounding an indictable offence circumstance—the penalty in subsection (3) applies to the offence
194(1)	False declarations
204(1)	Disobedience to statute law
398(1)	Punishment of stealing circumstance—no circumstance of aggravation applies to the offence
399	Fraudulent concealment of particular documents circumstance—paragraph (a) of the penalty applies to the offence
408C	Fraud circumstance—the circumstance of aggravation mentioned in subsection (2), (2A) or (2B) does not apply to the offence
408D(1) or (1A)	Obtaining or dealing with identification information
408E	Computer hacking and misuse circumstance—no circumstance of aggravation, or the circumstance of aggravation mentioned in subsection (2), applies to the offence
414	Demanding property with menaces with intent to steal
488(1)	Forgery and uttering circumstance—paragraph (c) of the penalty applies to the offence
541(1)	Conspiracy to commit crime circumstance—the maximum penalty for the crime in question is less than 7 years imprisonment

**Electoral Act**

307A(1)	Offence about prohibited donations
307C(1)	False or misleading information relating to determinations
427(2)	Obligation to repay particular political donations

**Local Government Electoral Act**

171	Assisting illegal payments
186	Influencing voting by violence or intimidation
189	Voting if not entitled
194A(1)	Offence about prohibited donations
194C(1)	False or misleading information relating to determinations
212(2)	Obligation to repay particular political donations

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 12, as read, agreed to.

Clause 13—



**Mr JANETZKI** (4.25 pm): I move the following amendments—

**1 Clause 13 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 8, sdiv 4)**

Page 19, line 9, 'but'—

omit, insert

or

(iii) an employee organisation under the *Industrial Relations Act 2016*; or

(iv) an association of employees that is registered as an organisation under the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009* (Cwlth); but

**2 Clause 13 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 8, sdiv 4)**

Page 25, lines 29 and 30, 'or (ii)'—

omit, insert—

, (ii), (iii) or (iv)

**3 Clause 13 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 8, sdiv 4)**

Page 26, line 3, 'or (ii)'—

omit, insert—

, (ii), (iii) or (iv)

**4 Clause 13 (Insertion of new pt 11, div 8, sdiv 4)**

Page 26, line 16, 'or (ii)'—

omit, insert—

, (ii), (iii) or (iv)

I table the explanatory notes to the amendments.

*Tabled paper:* Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, explanatory notes to Mr David Janetzki's amendments [\[686\]](#).

The union movement in Queensland has enjoyed more power and control and, the opposition will argue, undue influence over Labor and this Premier in Queensland than they have ever had in Queensland's history. Throughout the second reading debate there have been many contributions about the High Court process and the implied constitutional freedom of political communication. No-one can deny the dirty water that has flowed under the Labor bridge since the High Court considered Unions New South Wales and the McCloy case. That was in 2013 and 2015. Since then we have had a royal commission. Since then we have repeated judicial denouncements of trade union activities in Queensland and across the nation, and I believe that the evidence is in and the evidence is clear. Let me start by tabling this article from the *Courier-Mail* titled 'Labor's secret money trails' where millions of dollars of union donations went undeclared.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 3 October 2015, titled 'Labor's secret money trails' [\[687\]](#).

But it goes far beyond that. Unions run the railways to the detriment of commuters telling government who they are allowed to hire. Unions have unfettered access to government departments and public servants' personal information under the union encouragement policy. It is unions which determine who sits where over there. Unions, particularly the most militant union of all, prop up this Labor Party across the nation with millions and millions of dollars of donations to it and they have serious questions to answer. They relate to intimidation on work sites, shredding documents and even loading up a horse float to dump paperwork that a royal commission required. For the first time in Australia's history the same militant union has copped over \$10 million in fines simply for its complete failure to comply with the rule of law in this nation.

This is just the tip of the iceberg and I anticipate my colleagues will continue to outline the evidence that has accrued over the last few years as to undue union influence on the Labor Party in Queensland and across the nation. The evidence is clear as to the undue influence being exerted by the trade union movement on the Labor Party and on this government, and it is time for those opposite to support these amendments today.

**Mr MANDER:** I rise to support the amendments put forward by the shadow Attorney-General. If this government is fair dinkum about trying to make sure that interest groups do not influence state MPs, they would agree with these amendments and agree that the union movement should also be banned from making donations to the Australian Labor Party. We can give example after example of

the union having an undue influence on state government ministers and on backbenchers as well. They dictate who will be preselected in each of the Labor electorates. They dictate who will be in cabinet. The Premier has no power whatsoever when it comes to selecting who is in her cabinet, because there are backbenchers here who should be in cabinet who are far more competent than some cabinet members, but unfortunately they are in the wrong faction.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Minister for State Development!

**Mr MANDER:** How the member for Townsville is not the education minister I will never know.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Resume your seat. Members, let us take it down a notch. I am sitting very close to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and I can hardly hear him. Hansard would also be having difficulty hearing him.

**Mr MANDER:** How the member for Townsville, as a former school principal, is not in the cabinet as the education minister is beyond me and most of the people on this side of the House.

**Mr Bleijie:** He's not in the left.

**Mr MANDER:** I will take that interjection from the Manager of Opposition Business; it is because he is not in the left faction. That is why he is not in cabinet. How is the member for Nudgee not in the cabinet? She is one of the few intelligent people in the backbench. How the member for Nudgee is not in the ministry is beyond us as well.

To suggest that the union movement does not have influence on this Labor government is an absolute joke. If this government were fair dinkum about being transparent, honest and fair-minded, they would include unions in the ban on donations to their members. We could go on, and members on this side of the House will give example after example in each portfolio of how they have had an influence—we would say it was a negative influence and I think the people of Queensland would say that as well. That is why these amendments should be supported.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I follow on from the honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition's comments with respect to the members for Townsville and Nudgee. As I looked across the House when the member for Everton was speaking, I wondered how the member for Ferny Grove sits at the cabinet table. He is a failed senator from Canberra but he sits around the cabinet table. I get that. We know what happened to the poor member for Gladstone. He was in a particular union and then he thought his chances were better if he swapped factions, but just as he swapped factions the faction that he just left got the opportunity to put a cabinet minister in. I feel sorry for him because he went the wrong way. He tried to get back into the union but he lost the opportunity, and now he still sits on the backbench. We know the union influence. On a serious note—

**Mr Mander:** That is serious.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Well, it is serious. When the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that the preselections are chosen by the union movement, they were all laughing over there. I can remember the former member for Hinchinbrook, Mr Cripps, and I always sitting here when the education minister, Grace Grace, was sitting up the back and we thought she deserved to be on the front bench—

**Mr Mander:** We were wrong.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I have to say that now I have my doubts, but I was a big backer back then. I was a backer for the former member for Brisbane Central being on the front bench. It was not until one of the other members got sent to the backbench that the union freed up a position for her faction on the front bench.

We know the member for Bundamba lost the chance to be the Deputy Premier of Queensland by only a vote. The member for Bundamba was about to be the Deputy Premier of the state but lost by one vote in caucus. We would have backed you, Jo. We would have backed you more than your other mob.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member, please use the appropriate titles.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The undue influence of the union movement over the Labor Party is a serious matter in the state. We only have to look at when all the private information of public servants was given to the union for the encouragement clauses. We saw the plumbers get a deal. We saw the withdrawal from the federal task force looking at union corruption. Everything the Labor government does is to benefit the union movement and the trade union movement of Queensland. Do not let anyone ever say that

they do not get bought off by the union movement, because the ministers know that if they do not do what the union movement wants they will not be sitting in this place. That is why all honourable members should include the trade union movement to ban them from political donations.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr DICK:** Can I say to the members for Townsville and Nudgee that, so long as they are being praised by the member for Everton and the member for Kawana, it will be a tough road for them to get into the cabinet. That is the sort of praise that members do not need. This side of the House is so full of talent that there is a whole backbench that could be ministers in this government.

I say to the member for Everton that he should not worry about our side; he should worry about what the LNP did to their backbench. Where is the member for Caloundra? He was a good frontbencher, and I enjoyed my interactions with him when he was the shadow health minister. Sadly for the member for Caloundra, it looks like he will not be progressing with my praise. There he is on the backbench. As soon as the leadership change came, they put him up there.

Can I put some late breaking news to the members of the opposition? Trade unions have been part of and have supported the Australian Labor Party for 127 years. We are proud that, for every one of those years, trade unions have been part of our party—democratically elected trade unions, democratically elected to the floor of our conference. Yes, they support us and we are proud of that each and every day.

The problem with the LNP is their pathological hatred of workers and the organisations that represent them. It is the Australian trade union movement that has done more to progress the rights of workers in this country than any other organisation—safety at work, good pay and conditions, and organised workplaces. We stand up and stand with our friends and colleagues in the trade union movement. This is a dead-end path the LNP is going down. The people of Australia want trade unions in their workplace. We see growing inequality, with inequality at a 70-year high. It is trade unions that are shaping our nation. They have shaped it and they work in partnership with us to get political outcomes for our nation.

I oppose these amendments. They are infected by the LNP's ideology which is completely disconnected to the people of Australia and the people of Queensland. These amendments should be opposed. These are good reforms, the sort of modernising reforms that our party is known for. I urge all members of the House, firstly, to support trade unions and, secondly, to oppose these amendments.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members, I appreciate the nature of this debate and it is mildly entertaining, but it is very difficult to hear the speaker and some members are coming very close to receiving warnings. If you wish to speak, seek the call, just as our next speaker, the member for Burleigh, has done.

**Mr HART:** I rise to support the shadow minister's very sensible amendments. We have heard today during the debate members on the other side saying that this point has not been proven. At the end of the day, I think the election result in 2012 will tell us about the unions' influence over this government. We just heard that the unions have been involved in the Labor Party for 127 years, but in 2012 the unions abandoned the Labor Party. They voted against the Labor Party and they elected 78 members of the LNP.

We saw that change in 2015 when the union exerted their power again and it swung back behind the Labor Party. What did they get in return? They got to choose just about everything that those on the other side do. I think it is very, very clear how much influence the union movement has on that side of the chamber and so we need this very sensible amendment to pass.

There has been absolutely no proof that developers have influenced any member of the state parliament in Queensland. There has been no proof of that. However, there has been plenty of proof that the union movement does. If honourable members want to look at talent on that side of the House, as has been discussed, we only have to look at the front bench. How is the member for Mundingburra a minister in this government? Seriously, how is that the case when there are such talented members on the backbench? They do not get elected into ministerial letter because they are not in a certain faction and they do not have the numbers.

In the area of energy a member of the ETU was appointed as the minister for energy and he interfered in the \$3 billion merger of a superannuation company in Melbourne at the behest of Peter Simpson, the head of the ETU. There are emails that show that the ETU basically directed the member to interfere in that process. There are emails that show that a person was recommended for a board



position on Energy Queensland, and that came to fruition a month after applications closed. It cannot be any clearer, even to those opposite, that the union influence is far too great in this government. We need to deal with that right here and right now.

**Mr STEVENS:** Mr Speaker, you would know more than most that hell hath no fury like the Labor Party for a person who is not in one particular faction or another or decides to change faction. Unfortunately, this amendment will address the influence that the union has by way of its donations to the Labor Party.

We see obviously that the banning of property developers is all about property. Quite clearly, in terms of the union interests and particularly with the state, which has been included in this particular bill at the last minute by the government, the bottom line is that it cannot be denied that the unions have effect—and maybe even corrupt effect—on the legislation that comes into this House by their influence, by their coercion, by their ability to pick where the members sit and even the members who do not get to sit in this House. The fact of the matter is unions have influence.

It does not have to be about property development; it has to be about their influence on these members in the House and, in some cases, undue influence to coerce. I would hate to use the word 'corrupt' in terms of the union influence, but the outcome may well be corrupt in serving areas of the government, the employees of the government or even the business of the government that may benefit from that union donation to the Labor Party.

This is what this amendment is all about. It is making it reasonable that no particular body or persons have influence over the outcomes or the deliberations of this parliament. That is why the shadow minister has moved this amendment: to make sure that there is objectivity and a fair and reasonable outcome determined by the parliament that is not influenced unduly by one particular sector—in this particular case, the union sector over the Labor government.

Mr Speaker, you would realise that there is a considerable influence delivered by the union movement and you would understand why there are concerns about the outcomes of the deliberations in this parliament and about all legislation that affects that. It does not mean that it is all about a property developer getting money; it is about delivering a fair, equitable outcome for the deliberations of the legislation in this House. I commend the shadow minister for bringing forward this amendment to this House.

**Mr POWER:** I wish to contribute to this debate as the chair of the committee that actually heard the evidence—the facts that we should rely on in this place. I will not make any disparaging comments about either the front bench or the backbench, although many members know I am a supporter of the 'Bring back Ray campaign'. It is so good of the Manager of Opposition Business to take a brief break from his preparations for the royal wedding to make this contribution, but this is a serious matter. We should turn directly to the evidence that Mr MacSporran gave to the hearing. I did quote them during my earlier contribution, but some honourable members were not present and I was interrupted by the lunch break, so maybe they missed it. Mr MacSporran said about union influence—

The union had done nothing wrong other than to—and this is not wrong; it had donated and disclosed it.

He further commented generally on the unions. He said—

The unions have been forever, as you know, public supporters of the Labor Party openly. Their funds are routinely disclosed. We found, as part of our investigation, no evidence that they were improperly influencing the process.

I repeat: no evidence. It is important that when we look at this amendment we treat it on the facts that we heard during the hearings.

**Mr WATTS:** I want to speak just briefly about the potential for undue influence. This amendment would not stop a union running a third-party campaign. It would not stop a union advocating for the things it wants. What it would stop is a direct, undue influence on members in this House—on their preselections, on their ability to be a minister, on their ability to serve the people of their electorate without fear or favour and without being in the pocket of any organisation.

In my electorate I have a former member of this House who happens to be a property developer, and this legislation moves to gag him. He has done nothing wrong. He has, in fact, donated tens of millions—\$50 million in fact—to cancer research. He has donated countless other millions of dollars to the community of Toowoomba and the community of Queensland. He has been a member of this House, a mayor of Toowoomba and a significant philanthropist in the community. However, he is now going to be denied the opportunity to have a political voice while at the same time unions, who have to pay tens of millions of dollars in fines for breaching legislation in this nation, have direct and, in my opinion, undue influence over members of this House.

We can dull all the blunder and bluster we like, but the reality is that this House should have the power and the control to govern Queensland in the best interests of the people of Queensland. If someone has undue influence over them, that then becomes more difficult. If they know that their preselection is dependent on something or their ability to run a campaign is dependent on the nod and a wink from a union official, I think that starts to weaken the power of this parliament and its ability to manage the affairs of Queensland fairly and justly for the people of Queensland.

To suggest that Clive Berghofer should not be able to express his political will after donating tens of millions of dollars to the community for the betterment of the community, to hospitals, children and individuals—honourable members cannot imagine the level of his philanthropy. Yet this legislation is going to deny him the ability to even come to a breakfast and listen to a member of parliament speak—

**Mr Hinchliffe:** How? Just don't pay.

**Mr WATTS:** Because he is a developer and he cannot buy a ticket.

**Mr WEIR:** I rise to support the amendment moved by the member for Toowoomba South. It is a very common-sense amendment. I do not think anyone can argue that unions do not have a direct influence over the Labor Party—it is absurd to even debate that point—at both state and federal levels. Let's remember a bloke by the name of Kevin Rudd. When he was stabbed in the back by one of his colleagues they amended their constitution so that unions get a vote on who is the leader of the party, so do not say they do not have influence.

Those opposite pillory one section of society, when developers are way above what we have seen of the CFMEU and many other union campaigns. Members opposite may shake their heads if they like. Since this government was elected we have seen union encouragement awards, the overriding, the welcoming and everything that can possibly be done to encourage union membership and union participation. Members only need to walk the corridors of this place and they will bump into union reps one after the other.

**A government member:** What is wrong with that?

**Mr WEIR:** What is wrong with that? The effort that is going into excluding one section, like property developers, when their unions—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Please continue, member for Condamine.

**Mr WEIR:** There is no comparison. The member for Toowoomba North talked about parallel campaigns: we see that at every election and it is only growing. It is not just direct donations they are giving to the party; it is also the parallel campaigns that are being run. To see one side—like property developers—pilloried and the union movement excluded is very unfair to property developers. They cannot deny that it is targeted at one side of the parliament. The government will continue to rake in union funds. As we have heard, one of our major contributors contributes to both sides—but probably a little bit more to this side—and to exclude them is extremely unfair. I fully support the member for Toowoomba South's amendment and I condemn those opposite for their hypocrisy in opposing it.

**Mr KRAUSE:** I would like to support the amendment moved by the member for Toowoomba South. It is a very fair and reasonable amendment. If this bill is going to pass, then it really does in all reasonableness have to include a ban on union donations as well, because there is no doubt at all that the union movement exerts more influence on this Labor government than any developer or group of developers ever could because of the way they have wrapped up their influence in the Labor Party. That influence is used to fleece the taxpayers of Queensland and Australia day in and day out every day that those members opposite in the Australian Labor Party are in government. They use their government positions to push the antibusiness, antijobs—except Public Service jobs—antidevelopment agenda that the unions push.

Let us look at some examples. We have heard about union encouragement clauses where members of the Public Service are sold out to the unions. We have seen the retail trading hour changes which are good for big unions and big business. We have seen the industrial manslaughter laws that came into this parliament last year at the behest of the union movement. We have seen the registration of labour hire contractors, which is terrible for small business and the agricultural sector, but the union movement wants it. We have seen Public Service wage agreements that go way beyond private sector wage agreements. We have seen the attack on independent public schools at the behest of the QTU.

We have seen the ability of unions to usurp workplace health and safety officers at our workplaces to disrupt the efficient running of businesses. The business of unions is to take Australians for as much as they can, and the CFMEU is the chief culprit. It is estimated they add 20 per cent to the cost of a new apartment for every Australian.

**Mr Nicholls:** Thirty per cent.

**Mr KRAUSE:** Is it 30 per cent? Thirty per cent is added to the cost of every new apartment in Australia. Every young person who wants to buy an apartment pays 30 per cent more because of the union movement and the CFMEU. Honourable members know who legislates for all of these things to happen: the Australian Labor Party! They grease the wheels of the dirty union movement. It is the Labor Party that greases the wheels, and it is donations from the union movement that makes that happen. The influence of the union movement on the Australian Labor Party, as I said at the beginning, is far greater than any developer will ever have on the other side of politics or even any group of developers. This bill should be amended to include a ban on union donations if it is going to be passed here tonight.

**Mr MICKELBERG:** I rise to speak in support of the amendment moved by the member for Toowoomba South, which seeks to extend the donation ban to include those from trade union employee organisations. It is a common-sense provision which seeks to address the corrosive influence that trade unions have on the political process here in Queensland. Those opposite will jump up and down. They will say that trade unions are different to property developers because they do not operate for profit, but this conveniently ignores the fact that what is at issue here is those who seek to unduly influence the political process.

Sixty-three per cent of Queenslanders polled last week thought that donations from unions were likely to corrupt the political process and should be banned. Those opposite have presented no evidence that property developers present an actual threat to corruption at the state level. The minister has relied on the fact that Queenslanders need confidence so that the perception of undue influence is avoided, and I agree. But if that is the case then surely unions should also be banned, because Queenslanders think they have undue influence over the political process.

We see examples like the substantially CFMEU controlled CBUS, which develops property and invests in property in the pursuit of profit. Surely, Minister, regardless of whether or not you support the amendment proposed by the member for Toowoomba South, you must accept that the same standards should be applied to entities such as CBUS and those entities and individuals that have a substantial or controlling interest in those entities. Those opposite will say they are not beholden to unions, but the evidence says otherwise.

Unions have unfettered access to government and special access to ministers. They even get to choose which Labor members sit around the cabinet table, as evidenced by heavy hitters like the member for Ferny Grove becoming the minister for agriculture. Unions choose Labor Party leaders and they even use grubby factional deals to influence local preselection for Labor candidates. In this government we have seen a minister take direction on who to appoint to a government board via his personal email accounts. I think any reasonable person would accept that is undue influence.

Put simply, the logic that only property developers are able to exercise undue political influence is flawed. Unions exercise undue political influence every time we enter this House, and for that reason I support the amendments brought by the member for Toowoomba South. I urge those opposite and those on the crossbench to do likewise.

**Dr ROWAN:** I rise to support—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock. Order! Everyone has had a pretty good go. The House will come to order. I call the member for Moggill.

**Dr ROWAN:** I rise to support the amendments moved by the shadow Attorney, the member for Toowoomba South. These are very fair amendments. We all know that this government is beholden to a corrupted form of unionism. I heard the member for Woodridge talk about the last 127 years of unionism in this state, but it has evolved from what it was.

Debate, on motion of Dr Rowan, adjourned.

## MINISTERIAL PAPER

### State Archives



**Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport) (4.58 pm): I table the Queensland State Archives annual report 2016-17 for the financial year ending 30 June 2017 in accordance with section 56 of the Public Records Act 2002.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland State Archives, Annual Report, 2016-17 [688].

## MOTION

### Water Prices



**Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (4.58 pm): I move—

That this House calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to rule out the Queensland Competition Authority's recommendation to charge more for water.

The LNP is listening to the people of South-East Queensland. We have heard loud and clear that Queenslanders are sick and tired of the cost-of-living increases, especially those imposed on them by government owned and controlled utilities. Residents in the South-East Queensland corner are again facing massive increases in bulk water prices under this Labor government. That is right: over the past 10 years successive Labor governments have delivered a more than 400 per cent increase in bulk water prices directly on to the bills of Queenslanders.


The latest blow to household budgets, however, came in the form of the Queensland Competition Authority which has recommended further price increases over the next three successive years, including over a five per cent increase for residents in Brisbane, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Logan, Moreton Bay, Scenic Rim and Somerset, an increase of \$47 over three years; over eight per cent on the Sunshine Coast and Noosa, an increase of \$79 over three years; and over nine per cent in Redlands, an increase of \$88 over three years. Over the next three years residents of South-East Queensland will be paying an average of \$50 to \$90 more. These increases are three to five times the rate of inflation and by any measure are totally unacceptable. This failure in addressing unfettered bulk water prices must not be able to continue unchecked. That is why the LNP is calling on the Premier to reject these higher water prices and not accept the determination of the Queensland Competition Authority. We are asking the Premier and her government to step up to the plate and deliver price relief for South-East Queenslanders.

Queenslanders are struggling to make ends meet. They are faced with skyrocketing electricity, water, fuel and rego costs and it has to stop. These water price increases affecting South-East Queensland consumers are a direct result of Labor's failure to plan for the future. These price increases are a result of the Beattie and Bligh Labor government's legacy that wasted billions of taxpayers' dollars on a problem that did not eventuate. How could we forget Labor's multibillion dollar water grid failures that delivered pipes without dams and dams without pipes? Labor's \$9 billion water grid waste has locked the state into a water price path spiral based on paying back large amounts of debt for projects that never materialised or just sit idle. This water waste has condemned South-East Queensland residents to higher water prices year after year after year.

Let us go through Labor's greatest hits: \$2.6 billion for the western corridor recycled water pipeline that is costing \$10 million a year to maintain; the \$1.2 billion Tugun desalination plant, now in hot stand-by mode and costing \$15 million a year to maintain; \$373 million for the Wyaralong Dam near Boonah that was never connected to the water grid because the water in the dam is so mineralised it is cheaper to produce desalinated water than to treat it; and the failed Traveston Dam experiment, a project that cost \$715 million and never started but destroyed communities and livelihoods of generational farmers in the Mary Valley. The desalination plant and the recycled water scheme continue to cost Queenslanders \$152 million a year in interest payments alone, and that is a disgrace.

Let us contrast that with what the LNP did during its time in government to address the water price spiral, delivering every household in South-East Queensland an \$80 water bill rebate and reducing bureaucratic waste by merging the three state owned water businesses—the SEQ Water Grid Manager, LinkWater and the former Seqwater—estimated to save \$822 million by 2028. We had a plan for the future with WaterQ—a 30-year plan for water security in this state. The LNP had a plan, we acted on it and we delivered for Queenslanders because that is what the LNP does: we fix up Labor's mess.

It is time to draw the line on this chapter of unchecked bulk water price increase in South-East Queensland. It is not sustainable and it is hurting residents, especially those who can least afford it. Queenslanders should no longer have to foot the bill for this and previous Labor governments' reckless spending and mismanagement of taxpayers' money. I call on the House to support the motion and put an end to unsustainable bulk water prices in Queensland.

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (5.04 pm): I rise to speak against the motion. Here we go again with those opposite! Only this morning I was able to advise the House of the woeful record of those opposite in relation to delivering reasonably priced electricity in our state. I thought that they would have had enough after this morning's debate, but here we go again. They are back looking for more. The problem is that this time, as we have heard, they think they have a solution. Mr Speaker, if you would momentarily indulge me, I would be grateful. Let me remind those opposite that under them during the three years of the failed Newman government electricity prices went up by 43 per cent and under us they went down by 4.8 per cent. Now they are telling us that they are going to reduce water prices. This should be good.

Let us look at what those opposite did when they were in government. The Newman government's contract with Queensland made many promises. It was a work of fiction that included that water prices would be lower under the LNP government. This statement was of course right up there with no Queensland public servant needs to fear for their jobs—not one but 14,000 in the end—but of course many of the Newman government's promises were quickly abandoned and quietly swept under the rug in the hope that they would be forgotten. We all know now that the Newman government promised large but delivered very little, except for bills—bills and scandals.


It delivered well on bills and scandals. From an original pledge to reduce water bills for householders, the failed Newman government experiment only increased water bill costs in its term. Under the LNP government, Brisbane's bulk water charge went from \$1.78 per kilolitre to a whopping \$2.54 per kilolitre—an increase of 43 per cent. There it is again—43 per cent not only with electricity but with water; that pesky 43 per cent! Here we go again: bookends—43 per cent, 43 per cent. However, it gets worse. It gets worse for water customers in Redlands. Under the LNP, they did not see a 43 per cent increase; they saw a 63 per cent increase in water prices in Redlands in just three years.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Buderim, that is quite unruly and far too loud for your interjections. Please refrain from doing so.

**Dr LYNHAM:** We have heard it from the member for Burdekin: despite this, those opposite come back in here this afternoon offering more help, peddling their failed policies, optimistically portraying themselves as a concerned opposition where they have no answers and they have no policy. They say, 'Please vote for us and we'll make sure water prices stay low. Vote for us and no public servant will fear for their job.' What nonsense! They seem to think that people will forget even though they recycle the old ideas over and over again like selling our power assets and selling this and selling that. There is nothing new from those opposite—there is nothing improved—and their perspective is that they have learnt nothing. It is the sort of help—the sort of advice—that we could well and truly do without. It is the sort of advice that the people of Queensland could well and truly do without.

It is little wonder they are going backwards in the polls with rhetoric such as we are hearing, with no answers, with a record of high water prices and high utility prices, especially for the people of Redlands. People see through this cheap populism. We deliver on our election commitments. We deliver by keeping prices low with downward pressure on electricity prices. This is a government that delivers. This is an opposition—if you can call it that—of cheap populism. The people of Queensland continue to judge this LNP opposition that is poorly led—temporarily—by the member for Nanango.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (5.09 pm): I support the motion moved by the member for Burdekin. The one thing that we have learned about the members opposite in their time in government is that their legacy is a 400 per cent increase in bulk water prices since 2008. All the assets and all the spending that was put in place by the Labor Party has caused a 400 per cent increase in bulk water prices. That is why we are calling on the government to rule out further increases in water prices. Over the past 10 years, South-East Queenslanders have copped it because of all the wasteful spending that the Labor Party has engaged in. I represent the Scenic Rim. If the government does not rule out these price hikes, the people of my area are going to see increases of five per cent a year over the next three years. Already, over the past 10 years these people have had big hikes in their water bills and it is more than they can take.

The LNP's record in government is quite different. We trimmed the expenses of Seqwater. By doing that, we reduced the increases in bulk water prices that accrue to people's household bills by between two per cent and 12 per cent. The water grid and the spending that was undertaken 10 years ago by the government must amount to the second biggest economic failure of Labor in the past two decades. Its first would have to be the Health payroll system, or maybe it is the carnage that Labor inflicted on the electricity network. I ask members to remember that that is all as a result of the spending that was undertaken by Andrew Fraser and the gold plating that went on in the five years up to 2012. Andrew Fraser, in his letter to the federal regulator, asked for permission for the state owned entities to charge more for power. When it comes to utilities and the management of utilities by the ALP, including water, we have seen debacle after debacle.

Despite the high prices that South-East Queenslanders are paying for their water right now and the proposed increase, Seqwater is still not making enough money to pay the interest on the debt that the Labor Party gave it. Now, there is a proposal to increase prices even more. I tell members that not only do residents need relief from increased water prices but also it makes perfect economic sense for the government to give them that relief. If the price goes up even more, people's water consumption is expected to go down. As it is, that consumption is pretty low. Seqwater and Queensland Urban Utilities have launched campaigns to try to encourage people to use more water because they cannot pay the interest on their debt. If the price of water goes up, the situation is going to get even worse for Seqwater.


There has been a litany of failures by the Labor Party: the \$2.6 billion wasted on the western corridor recycled water pipeline and the \$1.2 billion pumped into the Tugun desalination plant. In my electorate, \$373 million was spent on a dam that is now used for fishing and rowing. It was a dam that the Labor Party should not have built. It was a dam that the locals there told Labor not to build, but it proceeded anyway because it was hell-bent on being seen to do something when it had done nothing for the previous 20 years. This dam is not connected to the grid. It is not connected to the pipeline. It is not going to be connected for a few more years at least. The water in that dam is considered to be unsuitable for drinking anyway.

To add insult to injury, the locals cannot even use their motorboats on it. There is a ban on any motorboats using the dam—even the low-power ones. That is a travesty, because the people of Scenic Rim have a great affinity with their dams. I table a letter from a constituent whom I know very well requesting permission from Seqwater to use low-power motorboats on Wyaralong Dam.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, undated, to Seqwater [689].

My constituent has a great connection to the place. He wrote that letter a couple of months ago, but he still has not received a response from Seqwater. I do not know what Seqwater is doing, but it has not been able to respond to that letter.

Every member in this House should support this motion not only to give cost relief to South-East Queenslanders after they have had 10 years of record water price increases and a 400 per cent increase in the bulk water price given by the predecessors of all of those members opposite—although there are probably a couple who were around during that time—but also because it makes sense economically. If we drive up the price, consumption is going to go down, Seqwater's revenue will decrease and everyone will end up with more debt. Seqwater and our future generations will be saddled with more debt. We should be supporting this motion.

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (5.14 pm): I rise to oppose the motion and the rubbish from those opposite who oppose investment in any form of infrastructure unless it is over four years away in the forward estimates—in the world of hopes and dreams. I will not talk about the carnage that was wrought large by the Newman government when it was in power.

It is essential that South-East Queensland households and businesses have a safe, secure and reliable water supply. We have seen how critical water supply and security is in cities such as Cape Town. Earlier this year, when Cape Town revealed that it was fast hurtling towards the moment it would become the first city on earth to run out of water, it caught the world's attention. Cape Town Deputy Mayor Ian Neilson admitted that the city was taken by surprise by the three-year drought that led to dire warnings. He also said—

You must start putting things into place before this disaster happens so you already have this resilience built in.

Cape Town is now driving projects relating to groundwater and desalination plants. We on this side of the House deliver for our community. We deliver key infrastructure that protects and ensures that we are on the front foot building resilience into our communities. This grid is an important asset for South-East Queensland that allows for an operational response to drought, thereby slowing the


drawdown of storages and providing more time to capture replenishing rainfall. In addition to responding to a drought, the grid also assists with undertaking maintenance work and minimises the risk of short-term supply interruptions. Seqwater is tasked to balance a number of factors in the operation of the grid, including efficient operation, maintaining a safe and reliable water supply to meet the day-to-day needs of Queenslanders as well as operating a system to manage drought conditions as they arise over extended periods. We must protect South-East Queensland against drought—droughts that will only become more severe and harsher owing to climate change. We cannot ignore the future need for water in South-East Queensland. That would indeed be a folly.

With this investment in our grid, we now have important assets such as the Gold Coast desalination plant that helps to ensure that South-East Queensland has safe and secure bulk water. The plant is in hot stand-by mode and is called upon regularly to supply water into the Seqwater grid, including when conventional water treatment plants are being repaired or damaged, as was the case during Tropical Cyclone Debbie in 2017. In hot stand-by mode, Seqwater operates the plant three times a fortnight and produces a small volume of drinking water that is added to our supply. While in hot stand-by mode, if required, the desalination plant can reach 100 per cent capacity in 72 hours. In recent times the grid has been pumping water to the Sunshine Coast owing to significant water shortages, which is another example of flexibility that this infrastructure will provide into the future for areas such as those represented by the member for Buderim. This government builds water infrastructure. We ensure that communities in South-East Queensland have safe, secure and reliable water.

Redland City Council residents benefit from the water grid. In the event of drought or an emergency, the water grid ensures water security for Queenslanders. For example, in 2014, when fires cut power to North Stradbroke Island, the water treatment plant kicked in. Since 2008, Seqwater has been subsidising water for customers by providing water at below or at cost. When there was a substantial investment in drought proofing our communities, a decision was made not to raise prices for the people of South-East Queensland.

The cost of providing water to some areas is cheaper than it is to others. The price path is designed to ensure that all Seqwater customers equitably pay the same in sharing the benefits of South-East Queensland's water. The people of Redlands have been blessed to benefit from both access to the grid and some of Queensland's cheapest water prices. The Redlands is an absolutely spectacular place to live. In fact, I believe there is nowhere better in the world.

We need the water grid. Every Queensland, every Queensland family, every Queensland business needs it. Unlike those on the other side of the House, the Palaszczuk government will always fight for what is best for Queenslanders. We will ensure that Queenslanders have access to reliable, safe and secure water sources.

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (5.19 pm): I contend that Labor's water pricing policies are a form of water torture for the residents and small businesses of Redland City and South-East Queensland. Tonight I call on the three Redland City Labor MPs, the members for Capalaba, Redlands and Springwood, to vote for our motion—to vote for cheaper water for their electorates and not for more expensive water. It has been interesting following the contribution of the member for Redlands, who said nothing in representing the people of Redlands apart from agreeing to higher prices for the people of the Redlands but put forward some general argument for the whole of the south-east.

I support the motion moved by the LNP opposition that this House calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to rule out the QCA's recommendation to charge more for water. Redland City residents are deeply concerned about Labor's pending water price hike. I continue to hear from local residents, consumers and businesses that they are worried about the cost blowouts under Labor, whether for power, water, petrol, car registration, boat registration, public transport and many other areas. For many, the cost of living and the cost of doing business is becoming unsustainable. Under Labor, the South-East Queensland bulk water price will increase by nine per cent, or \$88, for Redlands residents. This price hike makes our water increases the largest in South-East Queensland.

Our water used to be cheap. The former Redland shire council had the foresight to plan, secure and construct the necessary water infrastructure and valuable water resources and to keep water price increases low. As I have said in this House a number of times, the once cheap local Redlands water is now very expensive. The water now does a circuit around Labor's South-East Queensland water network and comes back dramatically more expensive as state bulk water. When Labor seized control of Redlands water it failed to tell local residents and businesses how very expensive that decision would be. Today local businesses and residents are worried.

I recently told the story of one local Cleveland business as representative of the grim situation facing all businesses in Redlands. Pierre's cafe is a local Cleveland business in Middle Street owned and operated by Sharon Milne. Sharon was so angry about the water price rises and the impacts of Labor policy on her business that she was prepared to speak out about it on ABC TV news. As I have mentioned previously in the House, after seeing the story on the news I met with Sharon for the first time and she told me that the water price rise will impact her business negatively and it will be placed under unnecessary pressure.

She was concerned about increased costs to run the cafe, increased power costs and now increased water bills. She was concerned about some of her customers who are already feeling the pressure of increased costs of living. She went on to say that these costs have to be paid for in some way and asked what small businesses like hers are supposed to do to make ends meet. Sharon suggested that Labor's water price rises would put pressure on the cost of their goods and services and upon staffing levels. Would she pass costs on to customers if at all possible though not desirable and/or would she be able to keep her staff in the same levels of employment? Unlike Labor, small businesses have to balance the books and live within their means. The local businesses of Redland City and South-East Queensland cannot afford the next two years of this Labor government and certainly cannot afford a federal Shorten Labor government.

Under the LNP government the costs of living and doing business were lower, small business growth and job creation were up and unnecessary compliance measures, red tape and green tape were reduced. The LNP reduced pressure on state taxes, levies, charges and fees, unlike Labor, which is imposing five announced taxes and we know that there will be more to come.

Then there is the issue of not only the expense of the water but also the dangerous practice around the downgrading of the local Leslie Harrison Dam and also overdrawing on the aquifer of North Stradbroke Island, which could have impacts on the ecology of the island and the environment. The LNP protected the island with its water policies.

Labor's higher water prices mean my local residents and small businesses are out of pocket. The costs of goods and services will be under pressure to rise and jobs will be put at risk. It is time for this Labor government to stop torturing the residents and small businesses of Redland City and treating them as cash cows. I support the original motion.



**Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (5.24 pm): I rise to speak against this motion. What exactly is the LNP saying in this motion? They are saying that our solution to the question of water prices in South-East Queensland is to overturn the QCA's recommendation—in the name of political expediency let us just throw it away. 'We are the experts,' say those opposite. Any government has a right to choose a different outcome from one recommended by a body such as the Queensland Competition Authority, but that decision to choose a different pathway needs to be a balanced decision. It needs to be carefully considered. This is an area where politicians and elected representatives need to tread very carefully.

I know from my time in local government, when we did own the water and sewerage assets, that councillors kept themselves at a partial distance from budget decisions about the water and sewerage business. When deciding the budget the easiest thing to say is, 'Do we have to fund this water project this year? Can't we make the water connection fee a bit cheaper if we drop some water projects? Can't we put the replacement of that rising main back one year? I need that money for a parks project', or, 'Can we cut back on the pipe lining program as well? I need to finish a footpath program.' That is easy because no-one sees the water and sewerage assets. They are mostly underground or out of sight.

I take the point of the previous speaker that we have the cheapest rates. I know of a South-East Queensland council that used to pride itself on having low water and sewerage rates and when it was amalgamated the greater entity that inherited it had to spend an enormous amount of money getting their pipes and stations up to scratch.

There is no doubt bulk water assets are expensive. There is a lot of technology and concrete involved, as well as a lot of excavation. The process is expensive. People have said, 'Why is it so expensive? Water falls down from the sky. It is for free.' The truth is that that water has to be collected through huge engineering projects. It has to be treated in the best possible way to make it safe and that cannot be wrong. Then the water has to be transported. A water engineer once told me he was in the transport business. A cubic metre of water weighs a tonne and we are shifting countless tonnes of product all throughout our communities and that takes a huge amount of energy and dollars. We have to get it right every time we do it.




This comes at a time when the revenues of water entities are static because we are very careful users of water. If the revenue is not going up that affects the value of the assets. Plus, the bulk water companies need to replace or construct new assets to cater for our booming population. These are businesses with high levels of debt because of the incredibly expensive nature of the assets that they do hold. Asset replacement and price setting is complex and many experts carefully construct an assets program and a pricing pathway.

Why is the LNP wanting to trample over this like a demented elephant? I imagine this morning there were two minutes of detailed consideration where those opposite scrambled around asking what they were going to do for their motion today: 'What is on the front page of the *Courier-Mail*? No, we can't use that. Is there anything in the paper? No. Well, let us do this one.' Considered decision-making has never really been a hallmark of the LNP. The decisions the LNP made last time it was in government cost it its record majority in just one term. Opportunism is the badge of the LNP government under the member for Nanango. That is why those opposite are where they are and why they are going backwards.

The process whereby politicians seek and respect the advice of expert bodies is important in the age we live in. Their advice needs to be considered carefully and not tossed out all in the name of a brief debate. This motion by the LNP is wilfully ignorant of the positive work the QCA is doing. The QCA and Seqwater have identified hundreds of millions of dollars in savings and efficiencies and this has helped put downward pressure on our water bills. Anyone who knows the functions of the QCA will appreciate that the government will consider the QCA's recommendation and reach a decision accordingly. We will not be railroaded by this silliness this afternoon that is driven by sheer optimism from the opposition. It is interesting to hear those opposite talk down the Tugun desalination plant. As the member for Southport has said, it was one of the great programs—

(Time expired).

 **Mrs WILSON** (Pumicestone—LNP) (5.29 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by my colleague the member for Burdekin. There is a saying: smile in the face of adversity. Since coming to government in 2015, that is what the Palaszczuk government has expected every Queensland family, every Queensland pensioner and every Queensland small business to do. What an adverse Labor government we have here in Queensland. Each year we have been slugged with price increases on necessities such as car registration and electricity and a further slug on water prices. Since 2015, Queenslanders have had to figure out whether their budgets will allow them to turn on the water they need to cook with, to clean with and to shower with. Queenslanders are saying, 'Can I afford to use water today?' Under this Labor government, the reality is that Queenslanders literally have to watch every drop of water and ration what they use it for to try to avoid more bill shock.

When this motion was moved, I immediately recalled reading an opinion piece in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* last year. The author, Mr Tony Riddle, was then the chair of the Sunshine Coast branch of Regional Development Australia. I table a copy of the article for the benefit of those opposite.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Sunshine Coast Daily*, dated 19 February 2017, titled 'Opinion: Utility providers are killing small business' [\[690\]](#).

Tony's views struck a chord with me. His opening comment said it all. He stated—

Sometimes I think the world would be a very different, and better, place if bureaucrats had even the foggiest idea of what life was like in the real world.

Tony talked about how difficult it is for small business to prosper in Queensland, particularly under a Labor government. He rightly pointed out—

The reality is that the continuous rising costs of essential services is making many of our businesses non-competitive, and leading to their ruin. It's the death of a thousand cuts.

Small businesses are the bread and butter of my local economy and my electorate. They try hard to make a profit and earn a modest income. They try hard to engage people in employment. They pay their taxes. However, what do they face, year after year? Higher costs to manage at the hands of the Palaszczuk Labor government.


The reality is that increases in the cost of living place pressures on those who feel it most, that is, those with fixed incomes such as seniors and pensioners. The member for Bancroft should have pointed that out, because that is also experienced in his electorate. In my electorate of Pumicestone, more than half the people are aged 55 years or older. Under this Labor government, how can anyone adequately prepare for or enjoy their retirement when the cost of living continues to skyrocket? Recently, the Sandstone Point Community Association discussed the results of a survey they did to

gauge the issues that most concern our community. What generated the most conversation? The answer was that cost-of-living pressures are getting out of hand, particularly the ever-increasing costs of water. Just last week I spoke with a woman in her late 70s who was questioning her latest water bill. She thought genuinely that her bill had an error or a typo in it, but that was not the case.

Just last month, Peter, who is in his early 70s, contacted my office. Not long ago, Peter and his wife moved from Cairns to Bribie Island to make the most of their retirement. Peter was completely shocked when his first quarter water bill was \$700. The next one was over \$570, even after Peter had watched every drop that came out of their taps, sometimes reading the water meter on the hour every hour, just to try to limit their water consumption and avoid higher bills. Peter and his wife are now reconsidering whether their move to the south-east corner was in their best interests. They are contemplating a shift to somewhere else in the state that has cheaper water.

I ask members to think about that. This is forcing our Queensland seniors to uproot their lives and living situations because of the poor planning decisions in the past and a failure to plan for the future. Sadly, that is life under this Labor government. Queenslanders should not have to smile in the face of this adverse—

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (5.34 pm): Tonight I rise to speak against the motion moved by the member for Burdekin. A decade ago, South-East Queensland was facing one of the worst droughts on record and members opposite should remember that drought. We hear constantly about water supply issues, particularly in regional and Western Queensland. It is important that people in all of our communities have a clean and reliable supply of water. If anyone should be able to comment on that, it should be those opposite who know how important it is to have water delivered in a clean and reliable way.


The South-East Queensland drought affected a lot of people. The government of the day invested in infrastructure and assets and put in place structural reform and processes to guard against that drought. The South-East Queensland water grid and other measures implemented over the past decade have continued to ensure that South-East Queensland households and businesses have a safe, secure and reliable water supply going forward. Those things are not cheap to provide and were not at that time, but they are now set in stone for the long-term viability of water supply to communities in South-East Queensland. Having the independent economic regulator, the QCA, assess Seqwater's costs and recommend prices to the government is a responsible way for the government to ensure that prices are fair and reasonable. It is essential that South-East Queensland households and businesses have a safe, secure and reliable water supply.

Tonight we have heard members talk about what families and pensioners are after. Pensioners and families want a reliable source of water into the future, particularly as we have needed to bring on those services at 100 per cent to get through recent weather events in South-East Queensland. To ensure this, Seqwater, the bulk water service provider, needs to undertake necessary operating and maintenance activities, and capital upgrades are needed to ensure water is not only available but also safe to drink. The prices charged for that essential service should be based on a prudent and efficient cost for the supply of that water. That is why the government directed the independent economic regulator, the Queensland Competition Authority, to assess Seqwater's proposed costs and recommend prices for the next three years, from 2018-19 through to 2020-21. The QCA has provided two possible pricing options to consider. The government is analysing and reviewing the QCA's final report before deciding on the prices to apply for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021.

Let us consider what the LNP is proposing. If we write down the assets, we could potentially charge less for water, but we are still left with debt. The LNP is the party that claims that they are more responsible when it comes to managing debt in Queensland. Theirs is the party that claims that they believe in a user-pays system, that people who use a public service should pay for it. However, any proposal to write down assets simply leaves us with a debt to service in a different way. The government would only have to pay off that debt later.

The LNP are hypocrites of the highest order. They decry the water grid as a waste of money, which I have heard several times from across the chamber, even though it is working to move water around South-East Queensland to avoid water shortages across different regions, particularly across the Redlands area as we have heard. The QCA has recommended that prices be set for bulk water for the 11 council areas in South-East Queensland. To arrive at their recommendations, the QCA has reviewed Seqwater's costs to ensure people living in South-East Queensland pay a fair and a reasonable rate for their drinking water and that it is safe and reliable.

As part of this program, the QCA identified efficiencies in Seqwater's costs over the period 2018 to 2028. The QCA cut \$139 million from Seqwater's proposed operating expenditure and \$359 million of proposed capital expenditure. Therefore, it is doing its job. It has cut the costs associated with that infrastructure and is getting on with the job of giving us a good and secure supply of water in South-East Queensland.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (5.39 pm): It is just bizarre. Those opposite reinvent history to suit their own argument. Mr Speaker, on 8 August 2017, when you were treasurer of this state, you said—

I wish to state clearly that the Palaszczuk government will be making decisions that ensure no avoidable or unnecessary costs are passed on to SEQ water bills. There are options open to the government to ensure that water bills do not rise, including extending the 20-year price path for repaying the cost of the water grid. We will need to assess those issues when we receive the QCA recommendations.

Those recommendations have come through now. The government should be assessing what they can do about this.

I will address a couple of things that previous members have said. The member for Bancroft said that the LNP was being wilfully ignorant. I think the member for Bancroft needs to have a look at his statement where we said that we should not be overturning the QCA's decision because they are the right authority to make the decision as to what is to happen in the future.

That is exactly what the government did with the QCA's decision on the last lot of electricity prices. They injected \$770 million to pay for the Solar Bonus Scheme for the next three years and then sent it back to the QCA and said, 'Redo all your numbers.' They artificially lowered the figure and they can do exactly the same thing here if they choose to do it. It sounds to me as though the minister has already ruled that out. He is going to let this increase flow through to the people of Queensland.

There is only one reason water bills cost so much. That is because of the amount of debt Seqwater has. According to the Auditor-General's report of 2016-17 into water costs in 2015-16, Seqwater has \$11.1 billion worth of assets and \$9.4 billion worth debt.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr HART:** I will take that interjection. They are capitalising on the interest on that. I say to the member for Gladstone and the member for Bancroft that no-one is paying down this debt. They are just paying the interest on it. In fact, they are adding to the issue by drawing dividends out of these companies which cannot afford them. It is all borrowed money. It is all on the credit card.

Let us look at a couple of things they did. Some members in here might remember Peter Beattie rushing off to an election in 2006 because Brisbane city was facing a shortage of water and they were moving on to level 4 water restrictions. Peter Beattie rushed off to that election. He then stuck his head up, had a look around and said, 'We need some water, don't we? What will we do?'

The Gold Coast City Council had actually planned to build a \$300 million desalination plant. The government got the plans and studied them. They sent them back to the original planners and said, 'Double the size of the thing and build it quickly. Don't worry about a business case because we don't need one of those. We will just go out and do it and borrow the money.' That \$300 million turned into \$1.2 billion. It was all borrowed. It went straight on to the credit card.

Peter Beattie flew in a helicopter up to Gympie. He flew over the Mary River and said, 'There's a good site for a dam. That is a great area for a dam. Let's build a dam here.'


**Mr Last:** How much?

**Mr HART:** Some \$715 million was wasted. Some \$550 million went in land resumptions alone and then the government had to go and sell those.

**An opposition member:** And destroyed the community.

**Mr HART:** It destroyed the community that the member for Gympie represents. Then we had the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme. We were running short of water so they thought it was a great idea to take recycled water and put it through a few treatment plants—some of them had never been turned on, never been tested and they did not know whether they would work. They threw a couple of billion dollars at that. It was all borrowed money.

Now water bills have to go up. People cannot afford the water so they are using less, but even though they are using less they are paying more. This is ludicrous. Those opposite should be supporting this very sensible motion.

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (5.44 pm): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the member for Burdekin. Those opposite pretend to be the friend of the average Queensland family, but Queenslanders remember. They remember the impact of those opposite when they were in government. It was not that long ago. It was for a short time. Some 14,000 jobs were lost under the LNP. Over 600 Department of Agriculture and Fisheries staff were lost under their regime.

It is my department that is there to assist primary producers for whom water is the lifeblood of their businesses. It is my department that responds to the impact of climate change on our farmers. The threat of climate change is one of the biggest costs to producers into the future. Those opposite do not accept the science on climate change.

Earlier this year I was in Toowoomba launching the Drought and Climate Adaptation Program—a \$17.5 million program funded by the Palaszczuk government, Meat and Livestock Australia and the University of Southern Queensland. Those people believe in the need to address climate change. We will address that with the assistance of those groups.

Last night I was surprised to hear the member for Callide speak about ice. He said, 'Ice, not global warming, is the big killer and this recurring calamity often strikes quickly.' I can confidently inform the House that there is no farmer in the regions I tour who has approached me and expressed concern about increasing snow or ice causing an impact on their property. However, in my extensive travels across the state drought has been raised with me on a regular basis.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Ferny Grove, I am listening to your contribution. I would like to draw you back to the motion before the House. I think you may be straying.

**Mr FURNER:** I thank you for your guidance, Mr Speaker. Water and climate change go hand in hand. No doubt people would clearly understand the basics behind that. That is why we are addressing climate change and its impact on agriculture as well.

One of the costs for producers is emergency water in times of drought. My department supports primary producers through the emergency water infrastructure rebate as part of the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme. The rebate provides up to 50 per cent of the cost of purchasing and installing water infrastructure needed for emergent animal welfare requirements. The Commonwealth has made the decision to end the EWIR top-up. What is the Queensland government doing? We have written to the federal minister requesting a reinstatement of the federal government's top-up to the rebate, but they have declined that request.

Another project the LNP continue to ignore is the Wamuran irrigation scheme. I am sure the member for Glass House would be supportive of this scheme. I am sure he will come across and support us in defending this motion.

This proposal by Unitywater would supply a new source of secure irrigation water to support agricultural expansion in the Caboolture region. The proposal was to build a pipeline to pump treated water from South Caboolture north as well as an irrigation pipeline network across the region north of Wamuran. The estimated total project cost is \$55.7 million.

The Palaszczuk government, on behalf of Unitywater, applied for \$18.6 million from the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund to co-fund the capital component of the project. Unitywater will provide the balance of those funds. There are numerous economic and environmental benefits to this project: a secure water supply even in times of drought; easy freight access for growers to get crops to market; the ability for growers to have profitable crops; improved export potential for fresh crops; and up to \$150 million per annum in economic growth for local growers.

The project has been rejected by the federal government. It is really disappointing to know that the Turnbull government has again refused capital funding for this project. The Palaszczuk government is more committed to providing water security for all Queenslanders. That is why we need our fair share of funding from the federal government. If those opposite really cared about water, if they really cared about farmers and if they really cared about Queenslanders, they would get on to their fax machines and contact the federal government to make sure they reinstate the top-up, to make sure they bring it home.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr FURNER:** Plug in your fax machine. Get your faxes down there to Turnbull and the government.

**Opposition members** interjected.


**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr FURNER:** Get some support behind you. Stand up and have some intestinal fortitude.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Members, I repeatedly called the House to order. I will not have instructions ignored by the House. Minister, I remind you to make sure your comments in future are through the chair.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (5.50 pm): From listening to Labor MPs across the chamber in this debate, it is clear they have learnt nothing and, when it comes to the water system, they are not sorry for the greatest financial bungle in Queensland's history that happened under a Labor government—a bungle that this Labor government today is expecting to foist on to Queenslanders. They are not sorry that they have no solutions. They have no apologies for the price hikes that are coming.

Listening to Labor MPs opposite, it is clear that Labor members have washed their hands of their responsibility over water price hikes. They are in denial that there are better ways to take the pressure off everyday Queenslanders' financial budgets. That is about, firstly, listening and, secondly, taking some responsibility for the cost blowouts that this Labor administration has continued to be in denial about that occurred under their watch. This pack of incompetent Labor hacks opposite could not run a chook raffle, let alone plan water infrastructure and plan a better way to take the pressure off vulnerable Queenslanders.


As has been mentioned, we saw the debacle of Traveston Dam—more than \$700 million and a community ripped asunder. As part of the \$9 billion water grid, do you think that the Labor government of the day had a plan? Do you think that they had a business plan for the \$9 billion water grid? There was no business plan. They are still not sorry and they have still not learnt. There are better ways to take the pressure off Queenslanders than being in denial and foisting on them these price increases which are proposed in the report. That is why we brought this motion to the House.

We are calling on this government to do more. More can be done. This House calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to rule out accepting the Queensland Competition Authority's recommendation for an increase in water prices. As the member for Burleigh mentioned before, there are ways to address that and he quoted the former treasurer, yet we hear from Labor members opposite, 'No. It is about security. Don't ask about the price.'

We have seen dams without pipes and pipes without dams. Boonah and Beaudesert residents are paying for infrastructure that they are not even hooked into, yet they have had water price increases. On the Sunshine Coast they are talking about another hike in water prices of eight per cent—\$79 more over three years. Water prices will be five per cent more for the residents of Brisbane, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Logan, Moreton Bay, the Scenic Rim and Somerset. Redlands will have a nine per cent hike. These increases are three to five times the rate of inflation. They are because Labor badly designed the water system. They badly designed a water grid, and it was quite common knowledge at the time that it was about invoice tendering and that there was no plan to contain the costs. Water security comes through planning and by doing it properly, not the way Labor did. From what we have seen, they still have not learnt and they still have no plans to lessen the impact on people.

Queenslanders are hurting and South-East Queenslanders who are hooked into this water grid have paid a weighty price for the incompetence of Labor administrations. When I talk to people in my constituency about every dollar extra they will have to pay out of their pockets, many pensioners who are self-funded retirees and residents who are low-income earners ask how they are going to pay for these continued price increases. They are disheartened to hear the excuses from those opposite who do not understand that, if you build a \$9 billion water grid and then have all of this administration and hocus-pocus and a lack of commitment to ensuring that there is a price pathway that does not foist unreasonable costs on to people long term, there is no hope that this government will ever learn.

A 400 per cent increase in bulk water prices over 10 years is Labor's legacy. That legacy is about extra dollars being ripped out of the pockets of my constituents and those of my colleagues here in South-East Queensland, as well as Labor members opposite who still have not understood that this is not the way to plan and deliver water infrastructure and that they should listen to their constituents who have been left all the poorer because of their poor administration.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (5.55 pm): I rise to speak against this motion. It is a bit rich to be lectured by those opposite about the cost of living when we saw electricity prices go up 43 per cent under their watch. They said cost of living would drop. They promised

that. What did we see? We saw a 43 per cent increase in only three years. They have no credibility when it comes to the cost of living whatsoever. That is their record. Compare that to the Labor record on electricity—not 43 per cent but 1.9 per cent. We have actually seen a fall this year. We have seen increased competition. We have seen Alinta go out there and snaffle a large part of the market with a 25 per cent reduction in prices. Compare that cost-of-living record on this side to those opposite. It is Labor that delivers and the LNP never does.

The topic of tonight's motion is water prices. What about water consumers in Redlands? It was an interesting seat in the last election. It was an LNP seat that fell—like quite a few others—to the government. Now we have a very effective and passionate member of Redlands who is delivering for her patch.

**Dr Robinson** interjected.

**Mr BAILEY:** What did we see under the previous LNP when it came to water? We saw an increase in bulk water charges of 63 per cent under the previous LNP government—not 43 per cent but a 63 per cent increase in bulk water prices.

**Mr Hart** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Burleigh, you have just made a contribution. You have had an opportunity to speak. It is now the member for Miller's turn to speak. The same goes for you, member for Oodgeroo. The minister is not taking interjections.

**Mr BAILEY:** What is Labor's record? A key legacy of former Labor governments in South-East Queensland is the water grid—one of the most secure water grids in the country in terms of water security. It is a significant achievement when we consider that Wivenhoe was down to 15 per cent in the depths of the drought back in 2007.

The Australian-first South-East Queensland water grid connects water sources across South-East Queensland. In fact, they move water to where it is needed. We have very different seasonal impacts in terms of rainfall within the South-East Queensland catchment.

**Mr Minnikin:** Weatherman Mark!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Chatsworth, this is the third time today I have had to remind you about using members' appropriate titles. You are warned under standing orders.

**Mr BAILEY:** The Australian-first South-East Queensland water grid deals with the different rainfall right across South-East Queensland. The Sunshine Coast, which includes the electorate of the member for Maroochydore, has been a beneficiary in recent times. We have been able to move water into the Sunshine Coast. We have gone through quite a dry spell around Baroon Pocket Dam and some of the other dams up there. We have actually been sending water north to give them assistance. That is the joy of the water grid: we can move water around to where we need it. Some parts of South-East Queensland grid get very good rainfall and others less so. That is what the water grid is designed for.

It has more than 600 kilometres of bulk water supply pipelines, enabling treated water to be moved right around. An important part of that is the Gold Coast Desalination Plant and the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme. Mr Speaker, you would think that the members on the Gold Coast would actually stand up for the Gold Coast—but, no, we certainly do not get that from the member for Burleigh. Because of the population growth there, the desalination plant is a critical part of water security on the Gold Coast into the future.

We have used that in recent years. Without the desal plant we would not have been able to supply water post Cyclone Debbie. We had four water treatment plants out so the desal plant kicked in and kept water supply going during an extreme weather event—something those opposite would never acknowledge but it was due to the foresight of the Labor government. Let me talk about the irresponsibility of this motion. The motion states—

That this House calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to rule out the Queensland Competition Authority's recommendation to charge more for water.

Just 'more'—how lazy is that! There is no issue of CPI or inflation. It is a base political stunt. On the rare occasions that those opposite win government, the cost of living goes through the roof. Bulk water prices went up by 63 per cent and electricity by 43 per cent. The LNP cannot be trusted when it comes to the cost of living. Their record was appalling. That is why they are in opposition after one term. They did not even make three years. They have learnt absolutely nothing from two election losses. This motion is another example of it. It does not deserve support and I urge the House to vote it down.

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

**AYES, 43:**

**LNP, 38**—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Costigan, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stuckey, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

**Grn, 1**—Berkman.

**KAP, 2**—Dametto, Knuth.

**PHON, 1**—Andrew.

**Ind, 1**—Bolton.

**NOES, 47:**

**ALP, 47**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Lynham, Madden, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Miller, Mullen, B. O'Rourke, C. O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pegg, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Stewart, Trad, Whiting.

Resolved in the negative.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL (IMPLEMENTING STAGE 1 OF BELCARRA) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

#### **Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

#### **Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 1 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill**

Resumed from p. 1255.

Resumed on clause 13, to which Mr Janetzki had moved amendments.



**Dr ROWAN** (6.06 pm), continuing: I rise to speak in support of the amendments moved by the shadow Attorney-General, the member for Toowoomba South. These are very fair amendments and they are ones that the government should adopt. We know that this government is beholden to a corrupted form of unionism. Unions are now not what they were intended to be or originally seen to be if we go back to the early 1890s. I heard the member for Woodridge talk about 127 years ago. We know that the Labor Party has a deep-seated hatred of farmers and it comes from the 1890s and the shearers strikes.

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

**Dr ROWAN:** That is why they continue to hate farmers. I take that interjection from the member for Clayfield. They continue to hate farmers and they continue to penalise those who live in rural and regional Queensland.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Order! There are a number of members standing in the chamber. I ask you to either resume your seats or move outside. We are in consideration and if someone needs the jump I will get confused as to who is calling me.

**Dr ROWAN:** They do not like hearing the truth about that. I heard the Minister for Local Government's ministerial statement today in which he said that he travelled to Barcaldine for ministerial business. He would have seen the Tree of Knowledge, which is dead. We know why it is dead. It died of shame—shame because of the Labor Party and the unions here. The modern union movement—

**Mr POWER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Nothing that has been said here after the motion has any relevance to the long title of the bill.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The debate we are having here now is not about the long title; it is about the amendments moved by the member for Toowoomba South about unions.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Kawana, that is not a point of order. Members, we are considering amendments Nos 1 to 4 from the opposition. I will ask you to make sure that you are speaking to those amendments.

**Dr ROWAN:** Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am talking about unions. We only have to look at the findings of the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption headed up by former High Court justice Dyson Heydon, a well-respected commissioner, which found harassment, bullying and intimidation in the actions of the CFMEU. We only have to look at what they were doing at the Oaky North Mine—intimidation and threats of rape. There are findings of the Federal Court that it encouraged workers to walk off the job at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital.

What about the conduct of Bill Shorten in relation to AWU workers and the fact that he sold them out? The hypocrisy of the Labor government in targeting one group without evidence beyond the recommendations of the Crime and Corruption Commission is only being done for political and electoral purposes. By not including the unions Labor is trying to stack the deck electorally—just like they did when they introduced compulsory preferential voting before the last election with only 18 minutes notice. They talk about transparency and accountability, but it is an absolute farce when they come into this place with only 18 minutes notice and introduce a major change to our electoral system.

We know that this government is beholden to unions. There are many decisions they have made which are in the interests of the unions. The Premier promised to have a wideranging inquiry in this state on political donations. Where is that inquiry? The Premier has failed to deliver. On this side of the House we have 39 members who are islands of excellence, but we are floating in a sea of mediocrity when it comes to this Labor government.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr PURDIE:** I also rise to make a short contribution in support of this sensible amendment put forward by the member for Toowoomba South to include union donation bans in this bill. We have heard a lot of talk this week about the CCC's Belcarra report, and those opposite seem to be selectively ignoring some of the advice provided by the CCC chairman, Mr Alan MacSporran. When asked about the developer donation ban being extended to the state government, Mr MacSporran said—

... the CCC did not contemplate that the proposed reforms would be introduced without preliminary review to identify and mitigate corruption risks in state elections and decision-making. A proper public consultation process is highly desirable.

He also flagged that the High Court could have constitutional validity concerns, saying that—

... there needs to be an evidence based response which is proportional to the threat identified.

There is no evidence before this House of corruption surrounding developer donations at the state level, but I submit there is an evidence based response proportional to the threat to ban donations from the unions. There are mountains of evidence of the unions influence over the Labor Party and its decision-making in return for its multimillion dollar cash donations. Unions like the CFMEU, which has a long history of lawlessness, have direct access to ministers, even via back channel communications. They influence preselections, choose Labor Party leaders through factional deals and recommend senior appointments on government boards.

There is also a long list of benefits the unions have received in return for the donations they provide to the Labor Party—like withdrawing police from the task force established to investigate union corruption and scrapping right-of-entry protections against militant unions like the CFMEU, to mention just a few. The Premier earlier this afternoon promised all Queenslanders that this legislation will be passed this week, but the *Courier-Mail* only yesterday reported that the majority of Queenslanders overwhelmingly do not support this legislation in its current form and want the donation ban extended to unions.

**Mrs D'Ath** interjected.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Attorney and member for Kawana, do not have conversations across the chamber please.

**Mr PURDIE:** Queenslanders do not support this legislation in its current form and want the donation ban extended to unions. There is no evidence before this House of undue influence from property developers at the state level but the same cannot be said about the unions. If those opposite want to pretend they are a government for all Queensland, they need to start listening to Queenslanders and amend this bill accordingly.



**Ms SIMPSON:** I rise to support the opposition's amendment. It is a reasonable amendment that is based on common sense. As my colleagues have outlined, there is a need for this. We understand that there is resistance from the Labor government because of the highly factionalised and union based system that they have. They do not want to see union donations banned. I would say to the House that there has been evidence where undue and inappropriate influence has come from some union quarters.

I do believe there is a place, obviously, for the operation of unions in a free and democratic society, but there have to be checks and balances on how those powers and duties are fulfilled. That is where there has been quite disturbing evidence of not only an abuse of law but an abuse of that relationship and power with Labor governments, particularly at the state level. These governments are increasingly beholden to the unions behind closed doors, out of the scrutiny of the public. The decisions that are made are not based on what their electorates want but based on what their factional war lords and the unions want.

We have already seen the disgraceful situation with the member for Miller, the Minister for Transport, and the mangocube scandal where there was backdoor lobbying going on via private email accounts. Those accounts were then wiped but they had to be restored because of that thing called the archive and the legal requirements that they cannot be wiped. It was inappropriate and it was wrong. It was not just naive; it was illegal. It is that kind of backdoor approach of using means to lobby Labor government ministers that is of concern.

This provision that we are supporting is about integrity and ensuring that a genuine concern is addressed. We hear the Labor Party trying to defend banning donations from another industry—in this case, the development industry—despite the fact that there has not been a clear and unconditional endorsement by the CCC for the amendments to include state governments, yet the Labor government does not want to be held to account for the genuine concerns about the abuse of power of the union movement.

As I said, we need a good union movement to represent workers—a union movement that is responsive democratically to its membership—but that is not happening in this state. That abuse of power is flowing right through to the highest level of government. We need these appropriate checks and balances that are in this very reasonable amendment that we have put before the House today.

**Ms LEAHY:** I rise to support the amendment moved by the member for Toowoomba South. We should look very carefully at what we have here. It was only last sitting that the member for Bundamba had a conversation outside this chamber where she said that some of these things had been going on in Ipswich since 2004. We know that the CCC's Operation Belcarra uncovered undeclared union donations to a Gold Coast mayoral candidate.

**Ms Bates:** Penny Toland.

**Ms LEAHY:** I will take that interjection—Penny Toland. There were undeclared union donations, and that was found by the CCC. Throughout the tenure of the Palaszczuk Labor government—and it goes back even further than that, and we have heard about these things from the member for Bundamba—there have been many examples of union influence over government. We know that. We know that influence that actually comes from the unions and it raises that particular concern. Even the CCC found that at the Gold Coast. These amendments address that level of concern.

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Ms LEAHY:** They address that level of concern. They ban those union donations.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** No.

**Ms LEAHY:** Yes, it does. That is what it does. The amendments address the concern. The community knows that the unions are arm in arm with this government—absolutely arm in arm with them. What is good for the goose is good for the gander. That is an old saying but it could not be more true in this case. If the Labor Party want to ban the property developers, they need to ban the unions as well. The community looks at this and says, 'Why are they doing those guys but not these ones over here?' They see the members opposite at the rallies and they know what is going on. They are not that blind to it and they understand it.

I really do urge members to support the amendment moved by the member for Toowoomba South. It is a good amendment. It goes to the heart of some of the problems that we see that are feeding some of that corruption we have heard about and that we know is going on but is not actually being investigated.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** What's the example of that?

**Ms LEAHY:** Talk to the member for Bundamba. She had that conversation. She was quite adamant about the fact that it had been going on for a long time. She was quite adamant about it.

**Mr Bleijie:** She said a lot about you and the Labor Party.

**Ms LEAHY:** I will take that interjection from the member for Kawana. Yes, she does say a lot about people and about the Labor Party as well. We know that the unions are involved in that; we know that they are there. We know that the Palaszczuk government is highly influenced.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr LISTER:** There are few things that would move me to stand in this place and speak right now when I have a cold as I do and this amendment is one. It is an excellent amendment. I fully support it. I have listened closely to what the member for Ninderry and my other colleagues have said.

What is the purpose of the bill that we have been debating? It is supposedly to eliminate undue influence and corruption on the part of donors in our political landscape. There has been no evidence presented to us which would lead to the view that banning political donations at the state level will improve things. It certainly would not have made any difference to the alarming revelations we have heard in recent times regarding local government, and I will leave it at that. There is a lot of evidence of malpractice and undue union influence on this government.

We have heard about the mangocube saga. That is one that we know about. What else might be going on underneath there? We have trade unions that are the paymasters and the controllers of a political party in this state and they are able to monopolise the political landscape by securing a source of funding for the government taken from union members, frequently without full knowledge of what they are doing with it, to prop up a government. Members of that government are beholden to the trade unions, whose preselection depends upon them toeing the line and whose decisions around the cabinet table have been revealed to be controlled by unions, which are not elected by the people of Queensland.

What are Labor's motives here? Do we really think that the Labor government has embarked on this process as an assurance of probity and good government in Queensland? I think that is a nonsense. This is a naked attempt to strike at the funding base of other parties so that the Labor Party can be the only properly funded alternative in this state.

During the last term, with a few minutes notice, Labor changed the electoral law with a few minutes notice from optional preferential voting to compulsory preferential voting. There is a track record of them acting purely in the political interests of the Labor Party and against the interests of their opponents and the wider community. I would say that the government's opposition to this amendment is in the same vein.

I urge all members of this House to support the amendment. I certainly will be. As I have said before, the world is watching. There is a greater stage than just this chamber. People do know what is going on. I think they will condemn the Labor Party for their actions in this matter.

**Mr McARDLE:** I rise to support the amendment proposed by the shadow Attorney-General, an amendment that makes common sense when we consider the argument posed by the government as to why donations made by developers to members of this House or any state election campaign should be banned.

I always enjoy following the member for Logan in debates. He made the comment that MacSporran had said in his report that there was no evidence of corruption by unions. MacSporran also made the comment that there was no evidence of corruption by developers. He made it very clear in his submission to the committee that there should be a full assessment undertaken if the government wanted to go down this line. It was a clear warning from the man they rely upon to, in essence, ban developer donations in state campaigns.

The government tends to rely upon the High Court decision of *McCloy v New South Wales* as being the panacea. As I said last night, that decision laid down the principles, but we have to have the facts. The court made it very clear that only by combining the principles and the facts do we get to the answer, and that is what happened in *McCloy*. There has been no analysis in this state of what the government's role is as occurred in that decision. There has been no negative report, as there were eight reports by ICAC in New South Wales, that says there is a risk. There is no evidence to warrant this particular clause proposed by the government regarding developers being pushed through this House. However, there is some evidence about the unions.

In the *Australian* on 24 April the Federal Court fined my old mates the CFMEU \$500,000. In that court Justice Collier made a comment in relation to the actions of the CFMEU. He said that they conducted a 'deliberate, premeditated and sustained campaign of unlawful industrial behaviour orchestrated by the CFMEU, including elements of intimidation, threat and coercion'. This is the same union that the member for Woodridge referred to when he said in this House tonight, 'They support us and we are proud of that.' Intimidation, threat and coercion! The court ruled that that body was so bad that they used such negative language that can only be used to define the worst culprit, and this is the mob that the ALP are tying their shirt tails to. We are saying to the ALP that they need to stand up for the people of Queensland. This CFMEU mob are a mob of crooks and they need to be banned from making donations.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr HUNT:** I rise to support the amendments moved by the member for Toowoomba South. There is a place for unions. Yes, there is. There are good unions. I myself was a member of the police union, which supports police wages and conditions. Then there is the other extreme—like the CFMEU with their poor behaviour in threatening to rape children and things like that. It is not about the behaviour of the unions; this amendment is about cash for access, cash that this Labor government relies on for electoral success, and what they get in return for that cash.

We have seen plenty of evidence, and the member for Logan was pointing out the CCC's comments about evidence. I am glad he did because he talked about a comment from the CCC that there is no evidence of union corruption or union influence in this government. However, he also neglected to mention that they found no evidence of property developer influence in the government or in the LNP. There is no evidence. Members on that side of the House will quote the CCC ad nauseam. I have sat here during question time over the last couple of days and I have heard them sing their own praises about how they listen to the CCC all the time, but then they completely ignore the recommendations of the CCC in relation to property developer donations.

**Mr Bleijie:** They listen when it suits them.

**Mr HUNT:** I take that interjection. When it suits them to use the CCC, they will quote them every day. The CCC recommended that if the government is going to ban property developer donations in the state a full inquiry should be held. What should happen—and what the Labor government is scared of—is an inquiry and an open discussion about union influence. They do not want that because they know what it will show. It will show what 63 per cent of Queenslanders already know and have said in the surveys. If the Queensland public had a say in this it is quite obvious that they would vote for this amendment. It is quite obvious that the people of Queensland, whom this government purport to listen to and represent, would support this amendment, but Labor do not want to know about that. They do not want to know about evidence. They do not want to hear. They do not want to put themselves in a forum that might expose the things that are happening in relation to that union influence for which they receive cash that they rely on.

We saw the mangocube account. What a disgrace! Access to ministers—this is the sort of thing they are receiving for the cash they are providing to this Labor government. This government cannot survive without the cash from the unions, so they do not want to hear the evidence.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I have been listening intently to the debate and discussion on the amendment moved by the member for Toowoomba South. I have been quite intrigued by the last two contributors in particular, who I thought spoke very eloquently against the amendment. They spoke against it in the same way that they would therefore also be speaking against the provisions in the bill in relation to developer donations. They spoke against the member for Toowoomba South's amendment. I will also speak against the member for Toowoomba South's amendment. You cannot be distracted from the truth and you cannot deny the words of Alan MacSporran in relation to the issue in this amendment—that is, the addition of unions being part of the donation ban—when he said, 'The union had done nothing wrong ...' He went on further to say—

The unions have been forever, as you know, public supporters of the Labor Party openly. Their funds are routinely disclosed. We found, as part of our investigation, no evidence that they were improperly influencing the process.

That is what Alan MacSporran said about trade unions in relation to the issue of a ban. There seems to be an awful confluence amongst the contributors to this debate between the issue of the amendment seeking to ban unions and the element contained within the legislation about the ban on property developer donations, and I want to address those. We heard the contribution from the member for Toowoomba North, who made reference to a person who is well known in this state and has

contributed to this state over a long period of time. The member for Toowoomba North said that he no longer has a voice, as though the only political voice that any person in the state can have involves cash—dollars, money. Money is the only thing they think talks.

I think it is absolutely ridiculous to say that people will not have a voice. They of course have a political voice, and I invite people to activate and use their political voice in any way they can by getting out there and being involved in the political process, but it does not involve cash donations to political campaigns. That is what we have identified, and the CCC's recommendations have informed what we have done to support the ban proposed by the CCC. We have taken it to its logical conclusion to include all those elements where property developers might wish to seek to unduly influence decision-making in relation to their businesses.

The final thing I want to say in relation to this amendment is that there has been a massive blow-up about conspiracies. All sorts of extraordinary accusations have been made about the trade union movement in this state and this country and the role that it plays. As we heard the member for Woodridge say, there is no secret. As we heard in the quotation from the chair of the CCC, it is no secret that the union movement is an integral part of the Australian Labor Party. There is no secret: all of those donations are disclosed. That is what we have heard in the contributions tonight. I have heard the suggestion that there has been a terrible slight on the property industry and property developers across this state. You have not heard anyone denigrating the property industry from this side—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister, address your comments through the chair.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:**—but I have heard speaker after speaker denigrate people and individuals involved in the trade union movement, and I think that is pretty disgraceful. I have an update for those who want to keep banging on about the CFMEU: blackmail charges against CFMEU figures were dropped today in a massive embarrassment for the coalition's royal commission on trade unions.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** We have just heard from the member for Sandgate, and I was going to refer to this entire piece of legislation as 'The Sandgate Conspiracy' because this has more twists and turns than a good Bourne series. I table three electoral returns.

*Tabled paper:* Extract from electoral disclosure return by Penny Toland for period 4 October 2015 to 19 April 2016 [692].

*Tabled paper:* Extract from electoral disclosure return by Susan Gallagher for period 28 May 2012 to 18 April 2016 [693].

*Tabled paper:* Extract from electoral disclosure return by Tom Tate for period 14 May 2012 to 18 April 2016 [691].

One is for former mayoral candidate Penny Toland. This is straight from the Electoral Commission's website. Maybe members on the other House can assist me, but it has Together Queensland, United Voice, the CFMEU and then there is something about an electrical group. Thousands of dollars have been donated.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** I have seen the addendum notes as well. Then there is the return from Susan Gallagher, who ran as a councillor in one of the other divisions, and there we see a donation from the CFMEU. I want to refer to Mayor Tom Tate's return. What do we have here? There was about \$1,300 worth of sandwiches donated by the Parkwood International Golf Course for a community function. A mate who owns the Original Decking Company loaned him a ute for a few weeks, so he has declared the value of that. Then it has 'Tate Family Holdings', and there is no surprise there because you would expect Tate to support his own campaign, and there is another declaration from Tate Family Holdings. Then it has 'East Coast Car Rentals', and I know the owner of East Coast Car Rentals is a good friend of Tom. They contributed a car at a cost of about \$434.

The concern I have heard from people down the Gold Coast in the last few weeks is that the only people who are going to be able to afford to run in council elections across the state, particularly for mayor, will either be union backed candidates like Penny Toland for whom the unions truck money in—we are talking about greater transparency in councils—or people who are independently wealthy like Tom Tate.

I am very concerned about this, because the cautious side of me wonders if this is not some conspiracy by the union movement to control our cabinet and decide who sits in the cabinet room and who our Premier is. Are they going to start funding mayors across the state so they can control all of the councils across the state as well? We saw 'The Bligh Ultimatum' back in 2012 with \$50,000 caps, and we won that election; then we saw 'The Boyle Identity', where she introduced legislation that said 'if it feels like a conflict, it might be a conflict'. This is just another piece of legislation that is taking us around and around—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr BENNETT:** I rise to make a contribution to the debate on this important amendment. All throughout the debate a couple of things have really stuck. Regardless of what has been said about corruption, I do not want to go there. What we need to address in this parliament is the public's perception around political donations. In my contribution earlier I talked about excluding one particular industry from donating to candidates. Across-the-board there is plenty of evidence that the public is concerned about unions, property developers and the gambling industry—

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Mr BENNETT:** I am saying there is a perception here. We have quoted Alan MacSporran, who has clearly articulated there should be a broader investigation into property donations across-the-board. Yes, he did say there were no issues with unions. He said a lot of things, but let's put all of those comments into context and be realistic about the real perception out there of who it is that is influencing governments. When we reflect on the vote and return to our electorates, the Labor government will stand up and claim the moral high ground whilst clearly not listening to the people of Queensland and their perception of the influence unions have on the Labor Party.

The perception is real. It is something that is tangible. Tonight many examples have been given and some of them have been disputed, but let us be fair dinkum about the perception of who influences governments and what that means and get on with it. Alan MacSporran's report and the committee reports have articulated that there is no evidence that property developers are corrupt or are having influence, yet we persist with this archaic, terrible law at the risk of not including others where there is clear evidence that they do have influence over governments. We must be able to deal with cash for access in our electorates with our constituents and we must be above this issue.

I strongly support these amendments to ban property developers for local government—and we all support that—but if we are going to take that extra step above Mr MacSporran's recommendation to introduce this measure into the Legislative Assembly for all MPs we must include unions in this debate. As I stated, the perception in the broader electorate is that the unions do have influence. Earlier I referenced a ReachTEL poll that was done this week. Some 63 per cent of the population who were canvassed clearly said that unions do influence. I am not sure whether the Labor government and those opposite do not want to acknowledge the expectations of the broader electorate with this vote tonight, but I strongly urge everyone to consider that we should put unions into the mix to ensure that Queenslanders get better legislation as a result.

**Mr MILLAR:** I rise to support the member for Toowoomba South's amendments. Why are we banning property developers, people who are good people? The majority of property developers are good people. They provide an opportunity for business to thrive. They play an important role in our economic opportunity right throughout the state. If we are going to ban property developers, why are we not banning the unions? Picking up on the comments by the member for Condamine, in 2010 there was a young bloke by the name of Paul Howes who was the national secretary of the Australian Workers' Union who went on 7.30 and said, 'We're going to change the Prime Minister,' and that is when Kevin Rudd lost the prime ministership and Julia Gillard became the prime minister.

It seems to me that the unions do have influence over the Labor Party. They have a lot of influence over the Labor Party. One only has to remember that in recent times Bill Shorten went for the leadership of the Labor Party, but he had to delay his ascendancy to the leadership by a couple of months because Mr Albanese and Bill Shorten were fighting it out for the leadership. That is influenced by the unions because the unions had a say in who the leader was going to be. They have influence over the Labor Party. Why are we banning property developers, who do not choose leaders and who do not choose premiers, but not the unions when the unions have influence over who is going to lead the Labor Party?

It is wrong that we have to ban a certain section of the community that provides opportunities for the economy when I am pretty sure that the majority of them are law-abiding people. Why are they singled out? Why do we need to single out property developers and not single out a union movement that does have influence over the Labor Party? It does have a huge influence over the Labor Party. If you decide to change your leader—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Address your comments through the chair please, member for Gregory.

**Mr MILLAR:** If the Labor Party has to change its leader, it has to go through a ballot and it would not just be a ballot of the people sitting in this chamber; it would be a ballot of the Labor membership. It would be a ballot of the union membership, which has influence over the Labor membership. I want to pick up on previous statements with regard to influence over cabinet. We have some pretty good people in this chamber—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr BATT:** I rise to speak in favour of the amendments moved by the shadow Attorney-General to extend the donation ban to those from trade union employee organisations. While the LNP supports the CCC's recommendations that stem from the Belcarra report relating to local government corruption, the Palaszczuk Labor government has gone well beyond the CCC's recommendations for pure political gain. Labor is using local government corruption to mount a politically motivated attack. Why should one section of our community be targeted by the Palaszczuk government while the incredible influence the unions have over this Labor Party is absolutely ignored by these proposed laws? Our democracy should be a level playing field for all candidates and parties free from vested interests.

The largest and oldest vested interest is that between Labor and the trade union movement, as we have already heard from members on the other side here tonight, and they are very proud of that. The Queensland government has very little influence or involvement over individual property developments whereas it does play a key role in many of the policy issues promoted by the unions. The unions get special treatment and unfettered access, even choosing, as we have heard, which Labor ministers will sit around the cabinet table.

In return, here are a few examples of what Labor does for the unions: it reintroduced the union encouragement policy, selling out privacy rights of public sector workers; it scrapped right-of-entry protections against militant unions like the CFMEU; and it has created Energy Queensland so the ETU can compete against mum-and-dad electrical contractors and expand its membership base. Labor withdrew from the Federal Police task force looking at union corruption, despite the fact that the task force was funded by the federal government. Then of course there are the millions of dollars in cash donations. Again, I have nothing against unions. I have been a member of the Queensland Police Union for 23 years. It is about that cash for access. As we have said, if we are going to do it for one we should do it for all. That is why I support these amendments and urge all other members to do so as well.

**Mr BOYCE:** I too at one time in my life had a union ticket, and there is nothing wrong with being in the union. I spent my lifetime working in the construction industry and working all around Australia building the big jobs. However, I can assure members that the union movement is a corrupt group of organisations. If workers do not have a union ticket on those jobs, they lose their jobs. That is what happens. That is the reality of being in that industry with a union that is absolutely militant.

We have a government that is heavily backed financially by the union movement and by different union organisations such as the CFMEU and the ETU. They do not contribute large amounts of money for nothing. They do it because they want political control and influence on the government's decisions. That is the truth of the matter. There is no getting around that. The reason for these amendments, which I support, that have been moved by the member for Toowoomba South seems to me to be politically motivated in that if you remove the political donation income stream from a particular candidate or a political party then you have a political advantage, and that is exactly what those opposite want to do. That is exactly what this is all about.

We want to try to make this whole process fair, transparent and reasonable for everybody across-the-board. The original Belcarra recommendation was to ban property developers, so if we do that we are banning one small section of the community. That to me leads people to draw the conclusion that all property developers are corrupt, and that is not so. There is no evidence whatsoever that suggests that, so why would we do that? The most reasonable thing to do would be to support these amendments and include the union movement and include the political donations that they make.

The Premier should also accept the advice of the independent chair and undertake an inquiry into state political donations before introducing all of these bans at a state level. That is the reality of it. Mr Alan MacSporran raised concerns about these laws when he said—

In an ideal world, and my personal view would be, you would ban all donations, but the High Court has said, and the law is, that there needs to be an evidence based response which is proportional to the threat identified.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I rise to make a contribution in support of the amendment moved by the member for Toowoomba South, because I believe that it goes to the heart of what we as a society believe in and respect and what both sides of politics pride themselves on, and that is a fair go. There is a reason

two boxers in a similar weight category go up against each other: people want to see a fair fight. The amendment that has been proposed by the member for Toowoomba South would ensure that that fair fight occurs.

I understand the decision to ban property developers from donating to those in local governments. Some people will agree. Some people will not agree. There is no question that local government is the body that makes decisions about developments proposed by the development industry. I spent a lot of time as a member of a council. Not once did someone who donated to me attempt to change my mind because of that donation, but I understand the logic behind the proposal. To somehow correlate that logic to another arena—to parliament—that does not exercise those powers on a day-to-day basis, when there has been no investigation, where there, in fact, has been commentary that such a law should not be imposed on that arena, is nothing more than an attempt to undermine that fair go.

Surely, a group of people have the right to make a financial contribution and have it declared in an open and transparent way. That is what free speech is all about. To show that this clause is politically motivated, we do not even have the definition of what that developer is yet. Somehow we have just—

**An opposition member:** Deliberately vague.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Absolutely. I will take that interjection. The clause is so broad and so absurd that someone who makes a regular application might even be somebody who does not own property. That person may be a planner. That person may be an engineer—a young person who has gone out on his or her own and makes regular applications. I do not know what the term ‘regular’ means but, with the greatest respect, neither does the minister.

Somehow, under the guise of seeking to be transparent, we have had this recommendation relating to councils rolled to another arena. That is not transparency; that is attempted political one-upmanship. It is not fair. If the minister were fair dinkum and if he did believe in a fair go, he would support the amendment moved by the member for Toowoomba South.

**Mr POWELL:** I want to pick up where the member for Broadwater left off, because we have here a very clear case of those opposite in the Palaszczuk Labor government yet again trying to change the laws that relate to elections in this state for their political advantage. We should not be surprised by this at all. It happens far too frequently for anyone in their right mind to not believe that it could happen. It is no accident. It is a well-thought-through and well-oiled machine opposite that keeps producing legislative changes that so skew electoral outcomes that it is not funny.

We only need to recall what the members did, with 18 minutes notice, to bring back compulsory preferential voting in this state. We all know that compulsory preferential voting played a significant part in a dodgy, do-nothing government being returned to power in this state. The members opposite manipulated the legislation without consulting the broader population of Queensland to change the electoral outcome. They are doing it again. Without consulting with Queensland, the members opposite are changing legislation to benefit themselves as a political party and skewer just about every other party that exists in this state.

The member for Callide pointed out that the chair of the CCC, Alan MacSporran QC, said that there might be some opportunity for this kind of legislation to be applied to the state but that we need to test it. We need to do what this Labor government is too lazy to do—or, let us face it, too politically motivated not to do—and go out and consult with the people of Queensland. Alan MacSporran said that we have to have a conversation with Queensland about whether we extend legislation that is focused specifically on local government to the state government.

If the government members did that, the answer they would receive is not the one they want to hear. We all saw the poll that was in the media yesterday. The people of Queensland do not think that there is a potential corruption risk when it comes to just property developer donations; they also consider that there are risks from gambling, from alcohol and, heaven forbid, from trade unions. Again, we see a Labor government changing the laws in this state to politically benefit itself and pulling the wool over the eyes of the people of Queensland.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr ANDREW:** I have been sitting in the House today and I know that I work for the people of the Mirani electorate. As the only One Nation member in this House, all I have heard about from the two sides of this House is political donations. I spoke to Mr Shorten in Mackay. I met him at Souths Leagues Club. He said to me, ‘There are only two parties that can be in government, state or federal.’ There are other parties and they do not always receive political donations.

In the spirit of democracy and in working for the people, it would really be better if we had no political donations. I know that the mums and dads of the Mirani electorate and all the people who put me in parliament would say the same thing. We are working for the people. In that spirit of democracy, it does not matter what the party is: there should be no disadvantage.

I will tell members right now that I do not get political donations. From my way of looking at it—and this is a small contribution that I make on behalf of my party—if it is going to be a back-and-forward situation, if we have to waste taxpayers' money on the CCC and all the other checks and balances that are in place to stop corruption, it would be better for the taxpayers to not have political donations that create an advantage for any side.

**Mr MINNIKIN:** I have been very privileged to be in this chamber for seven years. There have been occasions, when debating bills that are before the House, that I have had to make this comment. In the spirit of what we are talking about, I will repeat it, because I support the amendment proposed by the member for Toowoomba South. Fundamentally, it is the right of every working class man and woman to join a union of their choice. I declare—and many members of this chamber know this—that I am a property developer.

As a free-spirited individual, if this legislation is passed unamended what will my personal position be? Will I ever be able to donate to my own campaign? If I were a butcher, a baker or a candlestick maker, in accordance with the spirit of what may become the law, I may be able to contribute to my own campaign. Moreover, why would I do that? There may be a reason. Some of us at certain stages of our life want to give something back to the community and forgo the almighty dollar.


I happen to be an individual who has studied hard and put myself through university by working part-time jobs. I have worked very hard to now find myself in a position where my chosen profession and craft is one that needs to be defended and that is the noble profession of property development. Without it the basket-weaving left would not have anywhere that they could go home to at night. They would not be going down to their local Coles or Woolworths. They would not be enjoying a coffee at a Starbucks. Those buildings simply would not be built.

I again go back to my central tenet: why is it that, despite what has been said tonight, we are singling out one particular profession in society? It is manifestly unfair. It was explained eloquently by the shadow Attorney-General and member for Toowoomba South what the machinations were behind what happened with the appeal to the High Court in New South Wales.

Debate, on motion of Mr Minnikin, adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT

### Funeral Industry

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (7.01 pm): Tonight I rise to draw attention to the state of the funeral industry across Queensland. The funeral industry was cast into the national spotlight at the start of this year when in Rockhampton Mrs Valigura, deceased, was removed from an expensive coffin purchased by her family into a pine box on the way to the crematorium. That unleashed a raft of people complaining directly to my office and directly to the department. Moreover, it has been revealed that there is a significant gap in the way that unethical behaviour is managed and dealt with in the funeral industry in Queensland. That also led to a raft of other complaints. These complaints have been well ventilated in the public arena, but they relate to coffin swapping, backyard embalmments and reports of mass cremations. At the moment the position of the department and the Attorney-General has been to ignore these problems and to limit their scope and influence throughout Queensland.

It is no longer good enough to ignore these complaints. There are three very good reasons why it is not good enough: firstly, the funeral operators of Queensland want an industry where there is integrity, consistency and where their good reputation will not be besmirched by the activities of a few dodgy operators. I have met funeral operators from all over Queensland—from Townsville to the Gold Coast and Gympie and everywhere in between. I am very fortunate in my own electorate to have extraordinary funeral operators who do an amazing job, families like the Burstows. They are honest, hardworking people who want to see an industry full of integrity. It is not just funeral operators who want to see an industry full of integrity, it is the industry bodies.

**Mrs D'Ath** interjected.




**Mr JANETZKI:** I will take the interjection from the Attorney-General. I understand the Attorney-General is meeting with the QFDA and the AFDA to thrash out a way forward on this particular issue. The industry needs assistance. It is crying out for regulation. I will let them discuss that with the Attorney-General. It needs to be a mandatory code.

**Mrs D'Ath** interjected.

**Mr JANETZKI:** A voluntary code is not good enough when we are talking about people's livelihoods. More than anything else, it is about the consumers of Queensland: grieving families like the Valiguras—it was a real pleasure to meet Karen and Mick and their families—who want certainty that in their most vulnerable state, when they are burying and saying goodbye to their loved ones, they can rely on a funeral industry that is well managed and well governed.


### Redcliffe Electorate

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (7.04 pm): There is much to talk about in my wonderful electorate of Redcliffe. As many members have, I want to acknowledge the wonderful work on Anzac Day of my local Redcliffe RSL. It was an incredible day, with the dawn service and the main service at the Woody Point Memorial Hall. On the Sunday before Anzac Day the RSL holds a poppy service at the local cemetery. We put a flag on every grave of a service man or woman who is buried at the cemetery and then we go around and place on each of those graves a crepe poppy which has been handmade by the ladies from the Legacy Laurel Club. I acknowledge their fantastic efforts and the people who came out that day.

I also want to mention Meals on Wheels. We all have incredible Meals on Wheels in our electorates. My local Redcliffe Meals on Wheels premises recently had a major problem with electricity constraints because of the local grid and they lost power. They had to throw out a lot of food. They contacted my office and my office jumped on the phone to Energex and asked what they could do. Energex are upgrading the unit outside the Meals on Wheels premises. Energex is not only doing that, it is donating \$3,000 towards the internal upgrade as well because they understand the important work that Meals on Wheels do. I acknowledge the area manager for Energex, Chris Graham, and Martin Carolan, president of Meals on Wheels at Redcliffe, and all the incredible volunteers. It was wonderful to have two Energex representatives tour the facility and meet the volunteers and see the effort that goes in to running a Meals on Wheels organisation.

I also acknowledge and thank the Minister for Employment and Small Business for the great event she put on in Parliament House last night. It was a small business event. Six of my locals came along. They run great businesses in my local community. I want to make a special mention of Sam Jockel, who runs a new start-up. Sam is the founder of ParentTV, a membership based website where parents can go and find all the information they need as a parent. There are experts in many fields, including paediatricians and psychologists. The parent can put their child's age and gender into the website, along with things that are important to them, and it brings all the information together. Congratulations to Sam for her tremendous effort. I know her business is only going to grow from here.

### Sunshine Coast, Infrastructure

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (7.07 pm): I am calling on the Premier to keep her election promise to be a Premier for all of Queensland by giving the Sunshine Coast its fair share of infrastructure funding. I ask the Premier to work with the LNP state MPs who are the elected representatives of this community and deliver the infrastructure the Sunshine Coast needs. Our rapidly growing Sunshine Coast region needs transport infrastructure. This morning we saw the state government boasting about population growth. Under the population targets that it has set for planning on the Sunshine Coast there is a deficit in infrastructure, particularly transport. That is why I want to hold the Premier to her promise and to give her the opportunity to work with us. She is a Premier who has said she would deliver for all of Queensland. This is her opportunity.


I thank my federal colleagues, Ted O'Brien, Llew O'Brien and Andrew Wallace, who have, with their federal colleagues, delivered \$2 billion in funding in the budget going forward for the Sunshine Coast. They have delivered \$390 million for the upgrade and duplication of the rail line from Beerburrum to Nambour. That is the best news that I have heard in a long time. This is state infrastructure with a commitment of federal funding. It will unlock the transport network of the Sunshine Coast. We need an integrated transport network. This rail upgrade is a vital part of that. The business case shows that it is needed now, ahead of any upgrades further down the line in Brisbane.

The Sunshine Coast also needs fixed the dangerous and congested section of the Sunshine Motorway at the Mooloolah River interchange, with a new road linked to the hospital at Kawana and Sunshine Motorway upgrades, as well. I would like to ask the Premier to provide funding for a Sunshine Coast entertainment, convention and exhibition facility in Maroochydore. I fully support the Sunshine Coast Council's application under the Maturing the Infrastructure Pipeline Program for the development of a business case for that facility. A business case is vitally important and needs to be funded. I note that just this morning the Premier talked about giving \$2 million in state government grants to Rockhampton to develop a business case for what I believe is a new \$30 million gallery. Therefore, I ask the Premier to provide the funding to our council and work with our community and the state members to see that infrastructure brought online, as we are the only region of such a size that does not have such a facility.

**An opposition member:** Mackay has one.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Yes, that is right. Mackay has one and the Sunshine Coast, with 340,000 people, needs assistance from the state government.

### Logan Electorate

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (7.10 pm): While it is great to hear recognition for the member for Rockhampton and the great work that is happening in Rocky, I want to talk about some of the great things that are happening in Logan. Firstly, I recognise my wonderful wife, Jacki, son, Jack, and daughters, Caitlin and Lucy, who are in the gallery tonight.


The growing communities of Logan need services and support, and I am determined to keep delivering them. Recently, Councillor Laurie Koranski, Yarrabilba State School principal Lee Harrex and I turned the sod for the new \$3.6 million Yarrabilba Family, Children and Community Hub. It will create 12 jobs during construction and be co-located with the new Yarrabilba State School, which was opened in January of this year. With more young families coming to Yarrabilba, projects such as the community hub will be key to supporting the health and learning needs of local families. During the development of the hub, local residents will have access to a wide range of services for families and children, including health, early learning and a broader range of community support activities and consultation services from visiting specialists. Queensland's community sector workforce in Yarrabilba will create a great facility. The hub will be a great base for expanding local services into Yarrabilba and will provide links to training and other employment services.

We know southern Logan is growing, with young families moving to new housing in the area. That is not new. The last LNP government knew there was a growing need, but did the then minister and current member for Surfers Paradise respond to the need? No! During 2012 to 2015, no new classrooms were delivered in Logan and none were provided for in the budget for future years. That is no new classrooms. When I was elected in 2015, I made a promise that I would fight for better education for families. That is why, after highlighting the growth around Logan Village—and here I want to thank the previous education minister—we were able to announce a new two-storey block with six new classrooms and an undercover play area at Logan Village State School. The score is 6-0.

We worked with the P&C at Flagstone State Community College and identified the need for a better special education area. With a \$4.5 million investment, we are now awarding the tender for five special education classrooms and five classrooms for general education. Now the score is the Palaszczuk Labor government 16, the Newman government 0. We need to recognise Yarrabilba State School, which was announced in 2016 and opened in 2018. It has 24 classrooms, so in total the score is 40-0. We can say that the Palaszczuk Labor government is delivering 40 times the LNP's commitment to education and services in Logan.

I will keep fighting for education services, especially the new Yarrabilba high school that during the election we announced would be delivered in 2020. As a former teacher, my commitment to the people of Logan is that I will keep doing my best to deliver the services that I know growing families need.

### Scenic Rim Electorate

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (7.13 pm): This morning in parliament a petition was tabled, signed by over 560 residents of Tamborine Mountain, calling on the government to invest in a demand responsive transport trial on Tamborine Mountain. I table another 74 nonconforming copies of that petition, taking the total number of people who have supported the petition to well over 600 residents of Tamborine Mountain.

*Tabled paper:* Nonconforming petition regarding public transport on Tamborine Mountain [\[694\]](#).

The Tamborine Mountain community consists of over 7,000 residents, but the public transport options are virtually non-existent. For a community of that size, it is quite unusual that there is almost no public transport. A taxi service leaves at 6 am and returns at 6.30 at night, but apart from that there is nothing. I ask the government to invest further in the demand responsive transport trial that at present is being trialled in the Logan area. It should be rolled out, on a trial basis, on Tamborine Mountain as well, to look at transport options and how they would work to connect Tamborine Mountain residents, young and old, with other transport facilities, such as at Helensvale or elsewhere on the coast where so many people commute to every day of the week. I thank all the members of the community who got behind our petition.


I also table a nonconforming petition signed by 308 residents from around the Kalbar area, asking the Department of Transport and Main Roads to install a pedestrian crossing near the doctor's surgery and the other small shops in Kalbar.

*Tabled paper:* Nonconforming petition regarding installation of a pedestrian crossing in Kalbar [695].

The petition has been very well supported. I know that the local community is very keen to see a safer crossing option on that part of the main road in Kalbar. Kalbar is a small community on the western side of the Scenic Rim, so for 308 people to sign that petition shows the enthusiasm that they have for the cause. I ask the Department of Transport and Main Roads to please consider that request and work with the council to make that section of the road safer for all the residents in Kalbar.

Eat Local Week is coming up in Scenic Rim. It is a great exhibition, showcasing all that our region has to offer from farmers, as well as our terrific restaurants, wineries and cheese makers. I encourage all members of the House, government and non-government, to visit the Scenic Rim and see what we have to offer. We have beautiful scenery and terrific farmers who create some of the best produce in the world. Certainly, it is better than that in the electorate of Glass House when it comes to these things. I encourage members to visit us during Eat Local Week. It is an event that we got behind when in government and I know that the present government is continuing that support. We need to support our local farmers. Buy local, eat local.

### The Cure Starts Now

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (7.16 pm): Each year in the parliament I support a local charity, which of course has seen me wearing a bright pink floral jacket and who can forget last year when I wore a gold suit for the Townsville Hospital Foundation and the Golden October Foundation, which are both good charities. This year, I am proudly supporting The Cure Starts Now. In 2009 local Townsville father Ren Pederson and his family lost Amy, their nine-year-old daughter, to an aggressive brain cancer called diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma or DIPG, as it is commonly known. Since then, the determined and passionate father has started the Australian branch of The Cure Starts Now.

The Cure Starts Now is gaining massive recognition, both here and overseas. It was established by parents experiencing the depth of human suffering, losing their child to brain cancer. The registered charity has raised over \$3 million towards research to help find a cure for brain cancer. All funds, every cent, donated to The Cure Starts Now is used to promote and advance Australian research into the elimination of cancer as a whole. Ren promised his daughter Amy that he would never give up and nor should we. Australian scientists are making real inroads through research into tissue samples that are analysed and shared on an international registry.

Sunday, 20 May will be a good day as it is my birthday—even though I am in denial after turning 50—and I want to do something entirely good for the community. Therefore, I will take the Harper truck to the Townsville Convey for the Cure to help raise money for research into brain cancer. The Cure Starts Now mission is one that knows no boundaries and stops at no borders. Its aim is to cure cancer, one child at time. This is not just a Townsville charity. From our own electorates it is likely that we all know someone who has endured this horrible disease, which impacts children and families in the most devastating way. Therefore, I ask all members of the parliament to please support the charity by making a donation to The Cure Starts Now or the Convoy for the Cure.

The Cure Starts Now is also Kirwan State High School's main charity. Mr Speaker, as you know, they lost John Livingstone to brain cancer a few years ago. I thank them for their support. I also thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker Stewart, Minister Coralee O'Rourke, Minister Fentiman, Minister Dick, Barry O'Rourke and the other members who have already donated or made a pledge to support this great charity. Townsville locals, businesses and community leaders would all agree that Ren Pedersen is an absolute inspiration. I commend his work and dedication to helping save lives through this important and vital research: The Cure Starts Now.

### Traditional Shotokan Karate-do Federation



**Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (7.19 pm): I would like to highlight a terrific organisation led by amazing people, the karate family that is TSKF, the Traditional Shotokan Karate-do Federation. With traditional dojos all over Australia, New Zealand and worldwide, their contribution to our communities is immense and significant.

Having the great honour and privilege to be honorary president for TSKF Australia, I am consistently inspired and overwhelmed by what simply building a karate family based on friendship, dedication and discipline can achieve. I am particularly impressed by the youth, whose dedication and hard work produce a culture of respect, lifelong commitment and especially respect for authority.

That mutual respect stems from early traditions of chief instructor, Takahashi Shihan OAM, 9th Dan. Mr Takahashi has dedicated the last 46 years visiting our country twice yearly, visiting each and every dojo for grading and training. In 2003 Takahashi Shihan's commitment was acknowledged by the Australian government when he was awarded an Order of Australia Medal by John Howard for services to sport and culture. This was a proud moment for not only Shihan but also his devoted family and the entire TSKF association. Mr Takahashi needs to be acknowledged. The lives he has forged, and the legacy of sport and fitness of mind and body of thousands of Australians is truly remarkable.

I recently attended the eight annual national championships to again witness the excitement and intense competition and also to meet the remarkable and talented Japanese students from Aoyama University who bring their respectful way, their Japanese culture and their dedication to enhance the training and development of students right across Australia. As TSKF Australia moves into another exciting phase of development, we welcome highly respected assistant instructors who will continue the Japanese tradition of visiting every dojo twice yearly.

The nationals this year saw success for both the Childers and Bundaberg clubs. We could not be prouder of their efforts. To tournament director, chairman of TSKF Australia and Childers sensei, John Russo, thank you for your commitment and years of service and to his lovely wife, Debbie Russo, his tireless partner and secretary who gives so much, please accept our gratitude. We meet wonderful people in life and a nicer couple I could not hope to meet is Sensei Alex and Rhonda Fedotow from the Bundaberg dojo. Congratulations on your ongoing success with the youth of our community.

Finally, a special mention to all the participants and winners of the finals: Brooke Fitzgibbon from Childers who won both the black belt for girls 16 to 18 years kata and kumite; and Mitchell Parnell from Bundaberg who won the black belt boys 16 to 18 years kata and kumite. We thank the TSKF family for all they do in our community. We want to make sure that we continue to support these great sporting organisations as they give so much to our communities.

### Jajumbora Community Hub



**Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (7.22 pm): I rise to acknowledge some incredible news from the Waterford community that the Palaszczuk government has reinstated our community maternity hubs in Logan. Last month I joined Minister Miles, the chair of the Metro South Health and Hospital Board, Janine Walker, and the members for Logan and Macalister to celebrate the opening of the Jajumbora community hub in Waterford West.

Jajumbora, run in partnership with the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service, is one of three community hubs across the Logan community. This is something that the member for Logan and I rallied for as candidates for our respective seats. It was humbling to see what the passionate community of Logan can achieve when we work together to push for change.

These hubs provide much needed support to vulnerable women, with maternity based services for mums with newborns who find it hard to link up with help through traditional avenues, such as mothers groups, antenatal follow-ups or GP visits. Indigenous women, Maori and Pacific islanders, refugees, women who do not speak English, young women, single mums or women living with mental health—it is the children of these women that this investment ensures have the best start to life.


We know that on average health outcomes for mothers and children in Logan are lower than the state average, which is why services such as Jajumbora are crucial to close this gap. All aspects of these hubs have been designed to break down the barriers which stop women from not accessing adequate antenatal care and create a welcoming space.

Walking around Jajumbora it was fantastic to see the incredible welcoming space they have created. It was wonderful to meet one of the first Jajumbora babies Isaiah and his mum, Lyn Gilpin, and listen to the experience they have had so far at the hub. Women like Lyn, who walk through the door of one of our mum and bub hubs, will find themselves in a safe environment, where they can get the helping hand they need and access professional advice. Lyn, who recently moved up from Sydney, said that she had found the help of her midwife absolutely invaluable and she could call her at any time of the day or night.

The need for these services to be in the communities and easily accessible is vital to making sure we have healthy bubs, mums and families. Tragically, these services were cut under the previous LNP government. It is fantastic to see that that midwifery services are returning to the community and to those women most in need.

As well as investing \$3 million in the Logan maternity community hubs, Labor announced at the last election \$12.6 million for a new maternity ward at Logan Hospital. The Palaszczuk government is absolutely dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders. It has been a long time coming, but I can finally say that midwifery services are returning to the community and to those most in need.

### **Traeger Electorate**

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (7.25 pm): It is with regret that I rise to speak about a dark and negative issue affecting my electorate. I speak of the increase in criminal activity. There was an horrific assault a couple of weeks ago. A young male was accosted by two blokes from the Northern Territory. He is now in ICU. That was the third bashing we have seen in about three weeks.

It is unfortunately symptomatic of a growing problem in Mount Isa at the moment. We have been the sink hole for a lot of social problems in the Northern Territory, north-west and gulf areas. It is becoming very serious. There has been an influx of more people than normal coming in from the Northern Territory causing overcrowding and social problems.


The latest youth unemployment figures are 67 per cent. Our domestic violence rates are six times the state average. Our crime statistics are worse than that of Townsville and Cairns, which are very much publicised. It really pains me to say this. I do not like bringing this up publicly because it is the place where I live and love. There needs to be some action.

We have heard so much about Townsville having problems. We have heard a lot about the Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group. That is an effective measure which has seen an increase in police activity and resources. We also have Major General Stuart Smith's task force. There is all this attention in Townsville, but we seem to be forgotten out west where the problems are much more acute. Unfortunately, the incidents are becoming more violent which is a big problem.

We seem to be the pointy end of the alcohol bans in places like Mornington Island and the Northern Territory. We seem to be the sink hole for these problems and the first port of call. It makes it very hard. Townsville is getting all this attention and Cairns is too, which is good, but we need some attention out west. We need a response from the government. There must be resources provided. At least in the short term there needs to be an uplift in activity to try to stem the acute problem there right now.

We need something different or additional to what we have now to deal with these problems. Long-term problems can be dealt with with relocation sentencing. In the short term these problems need to be dealt with. Joel Pate from the Smoking Gun Cafe is a great young Mount Isa citizen who is trying to do his bit, but he is being continually targeted by criminals and young kids in the Pioneer area. It is a sad reflection of where we are. We are crying out for help from the government.

### **Central Queensland University, Companion of the University**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (7.28 pm): It gives me great pleasure tonight to be able to share with the House two very valued members of the Mackay wider community. Last Friday I joined with the parents and friends of graduates from the Central Queensland University Mackay campus. Congratulations to all students for your hard work. It has finally paid off for you.

There were two special recipients of the honorary award of Companion of the University. Both recipients contributed not only to the academic life of Mackay but also to the economy, social and welfare of our community. Dr Victor Mason is well known in our community for his work, particularly in the West Mackay Rotary Club. He is not shy to roll up his sleeves and support the club's large popular Christmas fairs.

Vic has had a distinguished career in the Australian sugar industry—over 26 years. He has worked in the Sugar Research Institute from 1976, holding positions including chief research engineer, manager of the Engineering Research Unit and research manager. In the 1990s Victor played a significant role in transforming the institution into a modern commercial research model.

Vic has interacted with technical staff at sugar mills across Queensland and New South Wales. Vic's research has also extended to international sugar through the International Society of Sugar Cane Technologists. He has also had over 10 years of involvement with CQUniversity, assisting in driving the strategic direction of the university.

The other recipient was Brian O'Neill. He has had over 30 years of experience as an educator and for the past 18 years has been the principal of Calen District State College—and this is how I got to know Brian and his family. Calen District State College punches well above its weight in the education arena. It is one of the smallest schools in the state but it has the biggest results.

Brian forged a relationship between the school and CQUniversity through its promotion of the Start Uni Now program—SUN. The SUN program is a CQUniversity initiative that allows students in years 10, 11 and 12 to study units while still being at school. Brian also works as a casual lecturer at the university to ensure quality training for beginning teachers.

Brian, as President of the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia, has hosted the 32nd prestigious annual conference. He attracted speakers from Norway, Finland, Mexico, New Zealand, the USA, Canada and Argentina. In my experience as a QTU organiser, Brian is the only principal I have ever come across where the regional executive director has had to direct him to stop working so hard. Congratulations to both Dr Victor Mason and Brian O'Neill on their well-deserved awards—Companion of the University.

*(Time expired)*

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, Palaszcuk, 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