



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

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## TUESDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2019

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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.

### ASSENT TO BILLS



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

The Honourable C.W. Pitt MP

#### Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Parliament House

George Street

BRISBANE QLD 4000

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

Date of Assent: 26 September 2019

A Bill for an Act to regulate activities in relation to particular substances, to repeal the Health Act 1937 and the Pest Management Act 2001, and to amend this Act, the Drugs Misuse Act 1986, and the Acts mentioned in schedule 2 for particular purposes

A Bill for an Act to apply the Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 (Cwlth) and related Commonwealth laws in Queensland

A Bill for an Act to amend the Biodiscovery Act 2004, the Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Fisheries Act 1994, the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the Vegetation Management Act 1999 for particular purposes

A Bill for an Act to amend the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012, the Motor Dealers and Chattel Auctioneers Act 2014, the National Environment Protection Council (Queensland) Act 1994, the Rail Safety National Law (Queensland) Act 2017 and the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 for particular purposes

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

Yours sincerely

Governor

27 September 2019

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 27 September 2019, from His Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to certain bills on 26 September 2019 [\[1771\]](#).

### SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

#### Absence of Member



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, today I have received correspondence from the member for Currumbin advising of her absence from the House this sitting week and the next sitting week. The member's notification complies with standing order 263A.

## PRIVILEGE

### Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of a Committee



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 11 June 2019 the member for Maiwar wrote to me alleging that the chief executive officer of Adani, Mr Lucas Dow, misled the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee during a public hearing on 4 March 2019 on the Mineral Resources (Galilee Basin) Amendment Bill 2018.

On the evidence before me I consider that Mr Dow has made an adequate explanation for the basis of his statements under standing order 269(4). I have therefore decided that this matter does not warrant the further attention of the House by the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter.

I table the correspondence in relation to this matter, the commercial-in-confidence material provided by Mr Dow redacted.

*Tabled paper:* Bundle of correspondence in relation to allegation by the member for Maiwar, Mr Michael Berkman MP, that the Chief Executive Officer, Adani, Mr Lucas Gow, misled the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee [\[1824\]](#).

I seek leave to incorporate my full ruling in the matter.

Leave granted.

#### WITNESS ALLEGED TO HAVE DELIBERATELY MISLED A COMMITTEE

On 11 June 2019, the Member for Maiwar wrote to me alleging that the chief executive officer of Adani, Mr Lucas Dow, misled the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee during a public hearing on 4 March 2019 on the Mineral Resources (Galilee Basin) Amendment Bill 2018.

The matter relates to statements made about the number of jobs likely to be generated by Adani's Carmichael Coal Mine and Rail Project.

In his letter to me, the Member for Maiwar contended that Mr Dow's statements were misleading because his job estimates were contradictory to figures reported in The Australian on 3 June 2019 by an Adani spokesperson and those provided by an Adani expert witness in earlier Land Court proceedings.

The Member for Maiwar also alleged that Mr Dow misled the committee by omission when he answered a question about operational jobs by reference to existing operations with similar volumes, rather than Adani's own internal analysis of employment forecasts for the project.

Mr Dow proactively wrote to me regarding this matter, after it was first raised in the House by the Member. I sought further information from Mr Dow about the allegations made against him, in accordance with Standing Order 269(5).

Mr Dow provided me with the information on which his statements about job estimates were based, including commercial in confidence material that was not provided at the public hearing.

Mr Dow also stated that he relied upon information from the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and the Queensland Resources Council and explained the differences between his estimates and those of the Adani spokesperson and expert witness.

On the evidence before me, I consider that Mr Dow has made an adequate explanation for the basis of his statements under Standing Order 269(4).

I have therefore decided that this matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter.

I table the correspondence in relation to this matter, with the commercial in confidence material provided by Mr Dow redacted.

I take this opportunity to emphasise to members that where matters of privilege arise from committee proceedings, it is far better for members to raise those matters with the relevant committee in the first instance, rather than through the House or myself. The relevant committee is far better placed to assess those matters. The matters should be raised early and raised with the relevant committee.

## SPEAKER'S RULINGS

### Requirements of Constitution of Queensland Act 2001, Section 4A




**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill proposes to amend the Electoral Act to provide discretion for the Speaker of the House or the Governor not to fill a vacancy in the Legislative Assembly in the last three months before the next normal dissolution day which from 2020 will be predetermined in accordance with the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Referendum Act 2015.

As the bill proposes to amend the Constitution of Queensland 2001 insofar as it affects the constitution, powers or procedure of the parliament, section 4A of the Constitution of Queensland 2001 is invoked. Under section 4A of the Constitution of Queensland 2001, in order for the bill to be passed and presented to the Governor for assent, it must be passed by an absolute majority. Section 4A specifies that an absolute majority is a majority of the number of members set out in section 11 of the Constitution. Accordingly, an absolute majority requires the votes of 47 members of the Legislative Assembly.

Under our standing orders, a bill is passed after its third reading—with or without amendment—has been agreed to and the long title—with or without amendment—has also been agreed to under standing orders 161 and 162. The Clerk can only certify a bill once the long title is agreed to under standing order 163; thus it is the last act of passing. Accordingly, in order to establish certainty for the record as to whether an absolute majority is achieved, when the questions on the third reading and the long title of the bill are put I will call for a division. If there is no intervening debate between the questions on the third reading and the long title, the bells will ring for one minute when the long title question is put. The results of the divisions will be published in the *Record of Proceedings*.

### Notice of Motion of Disallowance

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 11 October 2019 the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services wrote to me seeking a ruling on the member for Gregory's notice of motion to disallow the Fire and Emergency Services (Levy Groups) Amendment Regulation 2019, subordinate legislation No. 130 of 2019, given the amendment of the regulation.

The notice of motion seeks to disallow the whole regulation, not just those parts now amended. Accordingly, the member for Gregory's notice of motion to disallow subordinate legislation No. 130 of 2019 can proceed. However, it is open for the member for Gregory to withdraw his notice of motion if the mischief the disallowance motion seeks to remedy has already been dealt with by the amendment.

I remind all members that debate on the motion is limited to the current operative provisions of the regulation as amended by subordinate legislation No. 191 of 2019. This means that debate on any repealed provisions will be out of order. I table the minister's correspondence for the information of the House and I seek leave to incorporate my complete ruling into the *Record of Proceedings*.

Leave granted.

#### SPEAKER'S RULING—NOTICE OF MOTION OF DISALLOWANCE

Section 49 of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992 ("the SI Act") provides that subordinate legislation must be tabled in the Legislative Assembly within 14 sitting days after it is notified. If subordinate legislation is not tabled in accordance with the section, it ceases to have effect.

Section 50 of the SI Act provides that the Legislative Assembly may pass a resolution disallowing subordinate legislation if notice of a disallowance motion is given by a member within 14 sitting days after the legislation is tabled in the Legislative Assembly. If the disallowance motion is not moved on the day for its consideration, the motion lapses. If the motion is passed, the subordinate legislation ceases to have effect. Section 50 also provides that, if the motion has not been disposed of at the end of 14 sitting days after notice is given (whether by withdrawal or lapsing of the disallowance motion or in another way), the subordinate legislation ceases to have effect.

Standing Order 59 complements the provisions in the SI Act by providing that, when notice of a motion to disallow a statutory instrument or guideline pursuant to the Act has been given, such motion shall be considered within seven sitting days after notice has been given. The notice of motion is set down to be considered during the time set aside for the debate of Private Members' Bills or other General Business, and such motions take precedence during that time until disposed of. When the motion is called on, it is moved, debated and decided and, if not moved, lapses. Under current Sessional Orders, disallowance motions take precedence every Tuesday evening from 5.30 pm.

The time limit of seven sitting days in SO 59 can be extended by the Assembly agreeing to suspend Standing Orders. However, the time limit in the SI Act of 14 sitting days cannot be extended by the Assembly.

The Fire and Emergency Services (Levy Groups) Amendment Regulation 2019 (Subordinate Legislation No. 130 of 2019) was notified on the Queensland legislation website on 28 June 2019 and tabled in the House on 20 August 2019. Subordinate Legislation No. 130 of 2019, made under the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990, commenced on 1 July 2019 and amended the Fire and Emergency Services Regulation 2011 to introduce two new levy group categories for breweries and distilleries (refer s.4(1) and (2)), categories 7.01 and 7.02, to ensure that craft breweries and distilleries were not determined as a brewery under levy category 12.01 or as a distillery under 12.03. Additionally, s.4(3) and (4) of Subordinate Legislation No. 130 of 2019 further amended items 12.01 and 12.03 of Schedule 2 of the Fire and Emergency Services Regulation 2011 to specify the gross floor area for commercial breweries and distilleries and for craft breweries and distilleries.

On 22 August 2019 the Member for Gregory gave notice of a motion to disallow Subordinate Legislation No. 130 in accordance with s.50 of the SI Act and Standing Order 59. The Member's notice of motion conforms to the requirements set out in the Standing Orders. In the normal course of events, the Member or Gregory will be called on to move his motion of disallowance during the time specified in the Sessional Orders for Debate of Disallowance Motions between 5.30pm and 7pm on Tuesday, 15 October 2019.

The Fire and Emergency Services (Levy Groups) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2019, Subordinate Legislation No. 191 of 2019 (Subordinate Legislation No. 191 of 2019), was notified on the Queensland legislation website on 20 September 2019 and, I am advised by the Clerk, will be tabled in the House today. Subordinate Legislation No. 191 of 2019, made under the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990, commenced on 20 September 2019, repeals levy group categories 7.01 and 7.02 inserted by Subordinate Legislation No. 130 of 2019.

On 11 October 2019, the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services wrote to me advising of the amendments to introduce the new Levy Group 7 categories in SL 130 of 2019, and the subsequent community feedback which led to further amendments in SL 191 of 2019 repealing the Levy Group 7 categories inserted by SL 130. The Minister notes in the correspondence that the provisions excluding craft breweries and distilleries from levy group 12 have been retained.

Given the community concerns around the Levy Group 7 were addressed by Subordinate Legislation No. 191 of 2019, the Minister sought a ruling on the Member for Gregory's disallowance motion.

The Member for Gregory's notice of disallowance motion seeks to disallow the Fire and Emergency Services (Levy Groups) Amendment Regulation 2019 in its entirety. It is possible that the mischief the Member for Gregory is seeking to remedy in his motion to disallow the Fire and Emergency Services (Levy Groups) Amendment Regulation 2019 has already been dealt with by the Fire and Emergency Services (Levy Groups) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2019 repealing the two new Levy Group 7 categories. If this is the case, then the Member for Gregory may no longer wish to move his disallowance motion and may, with the leave of the House, withdraw the notice pursuant to Standing Order 68. However, this is a matter for the Member for Gregory to determine.

I refer to my earlier ruling of 20 August 2019 (Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2019, at page 2328), in which I ruled a notice of motion out of order as it purported to discuss a statutory instrument which was no longer in force. In that matter, the regulation subject to the disallowance motion had no operative provisions. However, Subordinate Legislation No. 130 of 2019 still has operative provisions in s.4(3) and (4) which distinguishes this matter from the matter the subject of my earlier ruling.

Additionally, there is nothing before the House that purports to limit the Member for Gregory's disallowance motion to s.4(1) and (2) of Subordinate Legislation No. 130 of 2019.

Accordingly, I rule that the notice of motion for disallowance can proceed. I remind all members however, that any debate on the disallowance motion must be relevant to the status of the operative provisions of Subordinate Legislation No. 130 of 2019 as it currently stands and should not include debate on the matters that have been repealed by Subordinate Legislation No. 191 of 2019. This means that debate on the now repealed levy group categories 7.01 and 7.02 will be out of order.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 11 October 2019, from the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, Hon. Craig Crawford, to the Speaker, Hon. Curtis Pitt, regarding a notice of motion to disallow the Fire and Emergency Services (Levy Groups) Amendment Regulation 2019, subordinate legislation No. 130 of 2019 [\[1825\]](#).

## SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

### School Group Tours



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to advise members that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from Croydon State School in the electorate of Traeger and Northern Peninsula Area State College in the electorate of Cook.

## APPOINTMENTS



**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 am): I lay upon the table of the House the *Extraordinary* Queensland Government Gazette of 20 September 2019, which outlines the appointment of the member for Cooper as Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for Cross River Rail.

I congratulate the minister on her appointment. I know the minister will continue to do a good job for Queensland across her portfolio, including now also taking on ministerial responsibility for Cross River Rail. The portfolio title of Commonwealth Games has been taken out of the minister's title. She completed a very successful Commonwealth Games.

*Tabled paper:* Extraordinary Queensland Government Gazette Vol. 382 No. 23, dated 20 September 2019, regarding the appointment of the member for Cooper, Hon. Kate Jones, as the Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for Cross River Rail [\[1826\]](#).

## PETITIONS

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

### Atherton, Skate Park

From 930 petitioners, requesting the House to maintain the existing skate park in Vernon Street, Atherton [\[1815, 1816\]](#).

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

### Warner Investigation Area, Zoning

**Mr Mander**, from 2,214 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the Warner Investigation Area remains rural residential and not change the material change of use to higher density residential [\[1817\]](#).

### **Carseldine Railway Station, Park-and-Ride**

**Mr Mander**, from 644 petitioners, requesting the House to expand the existing Park n Ride facility or provide an additional space for commuters to park and access the Carseldine Train Station [\[1818\]](#).

### **Child Safety, Inquiry**

**Mr Bennett**, from 630 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure an enquiry into Child Safety is convened as a matter of urgency [\[1819\]](#).

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

### **Sexually Inappropriate Advertising**

From 866 petitioners, requesting the House to include sexually inappropriate advertising in their advertising ban in line with existing guidelines for children [\[1820\]](#).

### **Voluntary Assisted Dying Legislation**

From 6,665 petitioners, requesting the House to place Voluntary Assisted Dying on the legislative agenda for the parliament in 2020 and dealt with prior to the state election 2020 [\[1821\]](#).

### **Cassowary Coast Regional Council, Dismissal**

From 573 petitioners, requesting the House to immediately dismiss the Cassowary Coast Regional Council and appoint an administrator with the powers to initiate proceedings to recover ratepayers monies used to date on the civil proceedings [\[1822\]](#).

### **Sunshine Coast Regional Council, Release of Ponded Water**

From 4,855 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the Sunshine Coast Regional Council immediately ceases releasing ponded water contained on the Sunshine Coast Airport Expansion Project Site to the Maroochy River and to stop the release of ponded water to the ocean via the new pipeline [\[1823\]](#).

Petitions received.

## **TABLED PAPERS**

### **PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS (SO 31)**

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

20 September 2019—

- [1576](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 26, 56th Parliament, June 2019—Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019—Interim government response
- [1577](#) Queensland Police Service—Surveillance Device Warrants Annual Report 2018-19
- [1578](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 46, 56th Parliament, September 2019—Subordinate legislation tabled between 12 June 2019 and 20 August 2019
- [1579](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 47, 56th Parliament, September 2019—Examination of Queensland Audit Office Report 2: 2017-18—Managing the mental health of Queensland Police employees
- [1580](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 48, 56th Parliament, September 2019—Examination of Queensland Audit Office Report 3: 2018-19—Delivering shared corporate services in Queensland
- [1581](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 49, 56th Parliament, September 2019—Examination of Queensland Audit Office Report 5: 2018-19—Follow-up of Bushfire prevention and preparedness
- [1582](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 50, 56th Parliament, September 2019—Examination of Queensland Audit Office Report 6: 2018-19—Delivering coronial services
- [1583](#) Brisbane Port Holdings Pty Ltd—Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2019
- [1584](#) DBCT Holdings Pty Ltd—Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2019
- [1585](#) Queensland Lottery Corporation Pty Ltd—Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2019
- [1586](#) Queensland Treasury Holdings Pty Ltd—Consolidated Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2019
- [1587](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 33, 56th Parliament, September 2019—Annual Report 2018-19
- [1588](#) State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee: Report No. 36, 56th Parliament, September 2019—Annual Report 2018-19

23 September 2019—

- [1589](#) Fisheries Act 1994, Biosecurity Act 2014, Marine Parks Act 2004, Planning Act 2016, Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999: Fisheries (General) Regulation 2019, No. 179, explanatory notes: Erratum
- [1590](#) 2018 Better Regulation Taskforce report: Regulatory review project, December 2018
- [1591](#) 2018 Better Regulation Taskforce report: Regulatory review project, December 2018, Queensland government response and action plan, September 2019



25 September 2019—

- [1592](#) Auditor-General of Queensland: Report to Parliament No. 2: 2019-20—Managing the sustainability of local government services

26 September 2019—

- [1593](#) Department of Transport and Main Roads—Annual Report 2018-19
- [1594](#) Queensland Rail—Annual and Financial Report 2018-19
- [1595](#) Gladstone Ports Corporation—Annual Report 2018-19
- [1596](#) Gladstone Ports Corporation—Statement of Corporate Intent 2018-19
- [1597](#) Ports North—Annual Report 2018-19
- [1598](#) Ports North—Statement of Corporate Intent 2018-19
- [1599](#) North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation—Annual Report 2018-19
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[1740](#) Queensland Family and Child Commission—Annual Report 2018-19

[1741](#) Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority—Annual Report 2018-19

1 October 2019—

[1742](#) Auditor-General of Queensland: Report to Parliament No. 3: 2019-20—Managing cyber security risks

[1743](#) Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges—Annual Report 2018-19

2 October 2019—

[1744](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (Hon. Dr Lynham) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Electricity Regulation 2006, Energy and Water Ombudsman Regulation 2007 and Gas Supply Regulation 2007

[1745](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (Hon. Dr Lynham) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Stock Route Management Regulation 2003

4 October 2019—

[1746](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services (Hon. Crawford) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008

[1747](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (Hon. Dr Miles) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996, Health Regulation 1996 and Pest Management Regulation 2003

[1748](#) Professional Standards Councils—Annual Report 2018-19

[1749](#) Professional Standards Councils—Professional Standards Council of Queensland, Financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2019

8 October 2019—

[1750](#) Response from the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services (Hon. Ryan), to a paper petition (3195-19) presented by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(3) and an ePetition (3167-19) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 114 and 1,364 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to provide a permanent police beat stationed at Stocklands, North Rockhampton

[1751](#) State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee: Report No. 37, 56th Parliament, October 2019—Agriculture and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

[1752](#) State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee: Report No. 38, 56th Parliament, October 2019—Subordinate legislation tabled between 15 May 2019 and 11 June 2019

[1753](#) Education, Employment and Small Business Committee: Report No. 21, 56th Parliament, October 2019—Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

[1754](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 51, 56th Parliament, October 2019—Community Based Sentences (Interstate Transfer) Bill 2019

[1755](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (Hon. Dr Miles), to a paper petition (3190-19) presented by the member for Nanango, Mrs Frecklington, from 1,830 petitioners, requesting the House to look at providing a full time paediatric doctor within the South Burnett to ensure all children's health needs are met and families are not disadvantaged by having to wait and travel out of their rural home towns

9 October 2019—

[1756](#) Response from the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries (Hon. Furner), to an ePetition (3163-19) sponsored by the member for Coomera, Mr Crandon, from 309 petitioners, requesting the House to do everything in its power to ensure that the clear and present danger of fire ants on our coastal plains that are marching south, is dealt with by a campaign working from the south and moving north, in other words using a similar strategy to that being rolled out in the west, moving east

[1757](#) Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee: Report No. 26, 56th Parliament, October 2019—Subordinate legislation tabled between 1 May and 14 June 2019

[1758](#) Response from the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (Hon. Hinchliffe), to an ePetition (3164-19) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 147 petitioners, requesting the House to change the electoral process for the Sunshine Coast Council elections

10 October 2019—

[1759](#) Chief Psychiatrist—Annual Report 2018-19

[1760](#) Mental Health Court—Annual Report 2018-19

[1761](#) Mental Health Review Tribunal—Annual Report 2018-19

[1762](#) Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator—Annual Report 2018-19

11 October 2019—

[1763](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Hon. D'Ath) pursuant to section 56A of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Regulation 2008, Associations Incorporation Regulation 1999, Body Corporate and Community Management (Accommodation Module) Regulation 2008, Body Corporate and Community Management (Commercial Module) Regulation 2008, Body Corporate and Community Management Regulation 2008, Body Corporate and Community Management (Small Schemes Module) Regulation 2008, Body Corporate and Community Management (Standard Module) Regulation 2008, Building Units and Group Titles Regulation 2008, Casino Control Regulation 1999, Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Regulation 1999, Collections Regulation 2008, Fair Trading (Code of Practice-Fitness Industry) Regulation 2003, Gaming Machine Regulation 2002, Information Privacy Regulation 2009, Interactive Gambling (Player Protection) Regulation 1998, Keno Regulation 2007, Liquor (Approval of Adult Entertainment Code) Regulation 2002, Liquor Regulation 2002, Lotteries Regulation 2007, Right to Information Regulation 2009, Second-hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Regulation 2004, Security Providers (Crowd Controller Code of Practice) Regulation 2008, Security Providers Regulation 2008, Security Providers (Security Firm Code of Practice) Regulation 2008, Security Providers (Security Officer—Licensed Premises—Code of Practice) Regulation 2008, Tourism Services (Code of Conduct for Inbound Tour Operators) Regulation 2003, Tourism Services Regulation 2003, Trust Accounts Regulation 1999, Wagering Regulation 1999 and Wine Industry Regulation 2009

[1764](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts (Hon. Enoch) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006 and the Nature Conservation (Wildlife Management) Regulation 2006

[1765](#) Overseas travel report: Report on an official visit to Switzerland by the Premier and Minister for Trade (Hon. Palaszczuk), 7-12 September 2019

14 October 2019—

[1766](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries (Hon. Furner) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Regulation 1998

[1767](#) State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee: Report No. 39, 56th Parliament, October 2019—Subordinate legislation tabled between 12 June 2019 and 20 August 2019

[1768](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport (Hon. de Brenni) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Building Regulation 2006

[1769](#) Education, Employment and Small Business Committee: Report No. 23, 56th Parliament, October 2019—Subordinate legislation tabled between 1 May and 20 August 2019

[1770](#) Jobs Queensland—Annual Report 2018-19

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#### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994:

[1773](#) Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2019, No. 186

[1774](#) Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2019, No. 186, explanatory notes

Environmental Protection Act 1994:

[1775](#) Environmental Protection (Financial Provisioning) (Transitional) Regulation 2019, No. 187

[1776](#) Environmental Protection (Financial Provisioning) (Transitional) Regulation 2019, No. 187, explanatory notes

Nature Conservation Act 1992:

[1777](#) Nature Conservation (Wildlife) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 188

[1778](#) Nature Conservation (Wildlife) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 188, explanatory notes

Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011:

[1779](#) Waste Reduction and Recycling (Container Refund Scheme—Material Recovery Agreements) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 189

[1780](#) Waste Reduction and Recycling (Container Refund Scheme—Material Recovery Agreements) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 189, explanatory notes

Work Health and Safety Act 2011:

[1781](#) Work Health and Safety (Codes of Practice) (Stone Benchtop Industry) Amendment Notice 2019, No. 190

[1782](#) Work Health and Safety (Codes of Practice) (Stone Benchtop Industry) Amendment Notice 2019, No. 190, explanatory notes

## Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990:

- [1783](#) Fire and Emergency Services (Levy Groups) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2019, No. 191  
[1784](#) Fire and Emergency Services (Levy Groups) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2019, No. 191, explanatory notes

## Electrical Safety Act 2002, Work Health and Safety Act 2011:

- [1785](#) Electrical Safety (Codes of Practice) and Other Legislation (Solar Farms) Amendment Notice (No. 2) 2019, No. 192  
[1786](#) Electrical Safety (Codes of Practice) and Other Legislation (Solar Farms) Amendment Notice (No. 2) 2019, No. 192, explanatory notes

## Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990:

- [1787](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2019, No. 193  
[1788](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2019, No. 193, explanatory notes

## Public Trustee Act 1978:

- [1789](#) Public Trustee (Interest Rate) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 194  
[1790](#) Public Trustee (Interest Rate) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 194, explanatory notes

## Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994:

- [1791](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Household Waste Payment Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 195  
[1792](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Household Waste Payment Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 195, explanatory notes

## Planning Act 2016:

- [1793](#) Planning (Infrastructure Charges Register and Other Matters) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 196  
[1794](#) Planning (Infrastructure Charges Register and Other Matters) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 196, explanatory notes

## Recreation Areas Management Act 2006:

- [1795](#) Recreation Areas Management (Fees) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 197  
[1796](#) Recreation Areas Management (Fees) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 197, explanatory notes

## Environmental Protection Act 1994:

- [1797](#) Environmental Protection (Rehabilitation Reform) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 198  
[1798](#) Environmental Protection (Rehabilitation Reform) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 198, explanatory notes

## Professional Standards Act 2004:

- [1799](#) Professional Standards (Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2019, No. 199  
[1800](#) Professional Standards (Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2019, No. 199, explanatory notes

## Liquor Act 1992:

- [1801](#) Liquor (Prescribed Quantity for Palm Island) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 200  
[1802](#) Liquor (Prescribed Quantity for Palm Island) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 200, explanatory notes

## Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995:

- [1803](#) Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Vehicle Registration) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 201  
[1804](#) Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Vehicle Registration) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 201, explanatory notes

## Land, Explosives and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019:

- [1805](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 202  
[1806](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 202, explanatory notes

## Explosives Act 1999:

- [1807](#) Explosives Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2019, No. 203  
[1808](#) Explosives Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2019, No. 203, explanatory notes

## Mineral Resources Act 1989, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Water Act 2000:

- [1809](#) Mineral Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 204  
[1810](#) Mineral Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 204, explanatory notes



Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019:

[1811](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 205

[1812](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 205, explanatory notes

Nature Conservation Act 1992:

[1813](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) (Tully Gorge National Park) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 206

[1814](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) (Tully Gorge National Park) Amendment Regulation 2019, No. 206, explanatory notes

#### MINISTERIAL PAPER


The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (Hon. Trad)—

[1772](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (Hon. Trad) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Petroleum and Gas (Royalty) Regulation 2004

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Floods and Bushfires, Recovery Assistance and Fundraising Events


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 am): It does not matter whether it is a cyclone, a monsoonal trough, a drought, a flood or a bushfire, this government will always stand by people in their hour of need. Government assistance to North Queensland flood victims has now topped \$260 million. A sum of \$100 million has been paid to 1,719 farmers, 655 small business owners and 89 non-profit organisations. Those grants were up to \$75,000 for primary producers and \$50,000 for small business owners and not-for-profit groups. In addition, 46 disaster assistance loans were approved for 14 primary producers and 32 small businesses, totalling \$9 million. We could not have done that without the support of the Prime Minister, the federal government and the rest of Australia. I acknowledge that support humbly and with gratitude.

A sum of \$1.474 million has been paid to victims of the bushfires, benefiting more than 7,842 people, and 230 licenced tradespeople have registered to rebuild after the bushfires. To help the Scenic Rim's tourism industry recover, the government is providing a \$1.2 million partnership with the O'Reilly family to redevelop the Green Mountains campground. We are also providing \$1.4 million to assist Binna Burra develop Australia's first cliff climbing course. A task force is assisting Binna Burra to rebuild and helping its 60 staff find work.

That does not include the many local events staged as thank-you and fundraising events. Recently, I visited the Coolum auxiliary fire station, the members of which were the first to respond to the Peregian fires. I send a shout-out to Don Knopke and the Coolum Lions. They took the \$2,000 they won in a local footy tipping competition at the Coolum Beach Hotel and turned it into a big thank-you event for the fireys. That is community spirit for you!

Next Thursday, parliament will host our own bushfire fundraiser. I thank you, Mr Speaker, and the Leader of the Opposition. I hope that all members of parliament attend this very worthy cause, at which we can show our support for the people who have been impacted by the bushfires.

### Jobs

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.41 am): Despite challenging national economic conditions, my government is committed to stimulating the economy and creating jobs across Queensland. We are doing this through investing in job-creating infrastructure projects and also through initiatives for businesses and programs that help skill Queenslanders not just for the jobs of today but for the future as well. We are doing what Labor governments do: we are backing Queensland communities and building schools, roads and hospitals, especially for our families. Since being elected, we have helped create 216,000 jobs.

We have a record \$49.5 billion four-year infrastructure budget and a range of initiatives designed to help businesses to continue to support job creation. I am pleased to say that our solid pipeline of public infrastructure projects is contributing positively to the state's strong economic outlook according to the latest Deloitte Access Economics Business Outlook released yesterday.

We have a range of other initiatives driving jobs, particularly in our regions. Our Back to Work and Skilling Queenslanders for Work programs have helped nearly 8,700 people get a job in the past financial year alone.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am sorry to interrupt you, Premier. Members, please take your conversations outside or reduce the amount of chatter in the chamber.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I saw this firsthand when I visited Kynaston Engineering in Mackay, where Robbie and Steve Young, through Back to Work, have been able to hire four young people. We have also invested more than \$1 billion in Queensland's training and employment programs, including launching our successful free TAFE for year 12 graduates initiative. We are also providing free apprenticeships to 60,000 young people aged under 21 years. In August when I launched that initiative at Marsden State High School, I met Principal Andrew Peach, who explained how popular trades are among his students and how valuable this initiative will be.

In addition, our \$600 million Works for Queensland program will support more than 21,000 jobs in regional towns, while helping councils to build critical infrastructure such as the new grandstand at the aquatic centre in Dalby or the refurbished council administration building and library in Wondai. Another example is the Kingaroy Town Hall precinct. Mayors from across the state have told the government how wonderful that program is. In fact, South Burnett Mayor, Keith Campbell, described the program as 'magical' and said that the renovation 'could not have been done without the help of the Queensland government'. In the coming weeks, we will be writing to all—


**Mrs Frecklington:** What else has he said?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Lots of positive things, Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Comments will come through the chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** In the coming weeks, I will be writing to all the mayors to ask them what they want to see out of our Works for Queensland program in the future. So far the program has supported 16,400 jobs and, with future iterations of the program, it could support even more. I know that the Minister for Local Government has announced that at the LGA conference this morning. We are looking at enhancing the program and making sure that we continue to respond to the needs of regional communities, especially job needs in regional communities.

### INAS Global Games


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.44 am): I am sure that every member of this House will join me in welcoming from around the world visitors who are here this week for the INAS Global Games. The games for athletes with an intellectual impairment were first held in Sweden three decades ago. Since then, the games have grown into a significant international sporting event and they are being held in Australia for the first time.

On Saturday, I had the honour of launching the games at the opening ceremony held at City Hall. Around 1,000 athletes and their supporters proudly marched into City Hall. They come from 48 countries and are in South-East Queensland for athletics, swimming, rowing, cricket, basketball and other sports competitions, to be held at eight venues. This is an extra special year for the games, with athletes from China making their competition debut in our state. It is also a preview of what we might expect at next year's Paralympic Games, with some INAS athletes set to compete at the Tokyo 2020 event.

This week's games are accessible and affordable, with 40 per cent of tickets to the schedule free and tickets to other events costing only \$10 per sport, per day. My government is providing more than \$1 million in cash and in-kind support.

We wish all of our athletes well, with extra good wishes for Team Australia, including 43 Queensland athletes. I am quite sure all members of the House will wish every one of those 43 Queensland athletes the very best. For example, locals Jack Ireland and Liam Schluter have already broken INAS records in the pool. We hope everyone finishes the week well, with fond memories of their time in our state and that they get to see a little more of Queensland.

### Jobs

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.46 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government is backing Queensland jobs by backing Queensland businesses and backing Queensland workers. Our ambitious



economic development agenda has seen more than 200,000 new jobs created since 2015, supporting growth in traditional areas of our economy and growth in new and innovative industries. That is the equivalent of almost 4,000 new jobs every month. Our record stands in contrast to that of the LNP, which oversaw a decline of more than 8,000 full-time jobs in Queensland when they were in government.

Under the Palaszczuk government, jobs growth has also encouraged more people to return to the labour market. Queensland's trend participation rate has increased by almost two percentage points since late 2016, reaching 66 per cent in August 2019. That has all occurred against the backdrop of a softening global and national economy.

That is why it is more important than ever that the Palaszczuk Labor government is backing Queensland jobs by backing Queensland businesses. It is why we have slashed payroll tax by \$885 million, to help small and medium businesses and regional businesses employ more Queenslanders. It is why we have brought back Skilling Queenslanders for Work after the LNP axed it. It is why we are investing in industry attraction through our Jobs and Regional Growth Fund and Advance Queensland Industry Attraction Fund. It is why we have made TAFE free for school leavers, even after reductions in funding under the Prime Minister and former treasurer, Scott Morrison. It is why we are rebuilding QBuild to provide secure jobs for regional Queenslanders and address declining apprenticeship rates. It is why we have brought in free apprenticeships, making it easier for employers to get skilled workers and for employees to get the skills that bosses need.

The latest jobs figures also show labour markets across several regional Queensland areas are continuing to strengthen, with strong jobs growth and lower unemployment rates in several key regions. In 2018-19 in tropical North Queensland, booming tourism numbers have helped Cairns record the strongest annual increase in employment over the year to August, with 12,500 new jobs created. Strong jobs growth has also been recorded across other regions, including the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast, the outback, Central Queensland and Brisbane. The regional labour markets of Cairns, the Darling Downs and Mackay have unemployment rates below the state's average. In fact, Cairns has the equal lowest unemployment rate in the state at 4.5 per cent. The member for Cairns must be doing something right.

It is also true that in some regions of Queensland conditions are still challenging. Despite remaining above the state average, Townsville and Wide Bay have seen their respective unemployment rates fall around two percentage points over the past year. In Central Queensland, employment grew by 3.7 per cent in the past year, despite challenges including the drought.

Our economic plan is working to create jobs and grow our economy. Against softening global economic conditions the Palaszczuk Labor government will continue to invest in programs, industry and infrastructure so that Queenslanders can have the jobs they need.

### Major Events



**Hon. KJ JONES** (Cooper—ALP) (Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for Cross River Rail) (9.49 am): I have great news for Queensland's major events industry. As members know, our government has already grown the events industry here in Queensland from \$380 million per year to more than \$800 million this year. This means jobs right across our state.

Today I am proud to announce extra funding for 20 events throughout Queensland. The events include: in Ipswich, \$10,000 for the Ipswich Festival; in Bundaberg, \$25,000 for the UCI Cycle Fest International; in Gladstone, \$10,000 for the Agnes Blues, Roots and Rock Festival and \$20,000 for the Boyne Tannum HookUp; hundreds of thousands of dollars for seven events on the Gold Coast, including the hugely successful Bleach festival; more than \$60,000 for five Sunshine Coast events; in Townsville—the honourable member for Townsville will be very pleased to know this—\$18,000 for the Townsville North Queensland Games; and \$300,000 over three years for the Julia Creek Dirt n Dust Festival in the outback.

It is great to see that five of these events will receive funding for the first time, including the Gold Coast Running Festival, the Big Pineapple Music Festival and the Ipswich Festival. Today's announcement ensures that we will continue to see major events across Queensland grow. Already we have delivered more than \$10 million to grow more than 302 events across our state.

We invest in major events because we know that it generate millions of dollars for Queensland's economy and creates tourism jobs. It was an election commitment made by the Palaszczuk Labor government in 2017 and today's announcement is proof that we are delivering on our election commitment. It is because we invest in events like these that we are able to grow tourism jobs.

### Gold Coast University Hospital, Surgical Ward



**Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.51 am): On Friday I officially opened a brand-new surgical ward for the people of the Gold Coast. This new ward will help meet increasing—

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Everton, I am not going to remind you anymore about your interjections. I have already cautioned you. Leader of the Opposition, you will cease your interjections.

**Dr MILES:** This new ward will help meet increasing demand for emergency surgery. The demand for emergency surgery services continues to increase on the Gold Coast. Last financial year the team there performed 8,514 emergency surgeries—an increase of 809 on the previous financial year. This new ward delivers 20 more beds now and will grow to 28 beds next year, to allow the Gold Coast University Hospital to treat more patients than ever before—patients like Allan, whom I met. The fantastic team at GCUH is taking care of him after a tractor accident on his property.

The new ward on level 6 allows for trauma and acute general surgery patients to be cared for by specialist staff in the one ward, improving the surgical journey for the most sick and injured patients. The neighbouring orthopaedic ward on level 6 of C block will co-locate orthopaedic trauma patients like Allan. Co-location improves the patient experience with shorter hospital stays and efficient access to specialist medical, nursing and allied health staff.

The acute surgical unit includes a new senior surgeon, daily acute surgical operating lists and eight new beds in the theatre area where patients are prepared for surgery. This has resulted in higher patient satisfaction and better patient flow from the emergency department to theatres and wards.

I always enjoy visiting the team at the Gold Coast and can say with confidence that Gold Coast Health is consistently innovating to ensure the right patient is treated in the right place by the right highly skilled clinical and support staff. I would like to also congratulate them for their elevation to level 1 trauma status by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons earlier this year. This reflects the Palaszczuk government's commitment to providing the best quality health care on the Gold Coast.

Recently we announced 60 new treatment spaces across the Gold Coast HHS. This includes 40 beds at the Gold Coast University Hospital and Robina Hospital, plus 20 new treatment spaces in a dedicated stabilisation facility to assist people experiencing a mental health crisis. The Palaszczuk government has invested a record \$1.5 billion in health care on the Gold Coast in the last state budget—\$81 million more than the year before. We continue to create jobs for doctors, nurses and paramedics right across the Gold Coast—employing 322 more staff locally this year alone.

### Advancing Clean Energy Schools



**Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.54 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to a clean energy future for Queensland. That is why we have set a range of energy targets to increase the uptake of renewable energy sources and mitigate the effects of climate change. This includes a goal of one million Queensland rooftops with solar or 3,000 megawatts of total solar by 2020, as well as a 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030.

The Palaszczuk government's \$97 million Advancing Clean Energy Schools, ACES, program is a key part of our plan for a clean energy future. Queensland's state schools are one of our largest energy users—each year spending around \$70 million on electricity. ACES will help to reduce energy costs across more than 800 state schools through solar and energy efficiency measures. The ACES program will reduce energy costs and improve energy efficiency across Queensland state schools, contributing approximately 35 megawatts of solar towards the Palaszczuk government's goal.


This program is not just about generating clean energy. It is also about generating jobs for Queenslanders, with up to 320 jobs created over the life of the ACES program, including in our regional communities. When fully implemented we expect the energy cost savings through this program to be approximately \$10 million per year.

The ACES program is being delivered in three phases. Phase 1 is well underway. By the end of this financial year the ACES program will be rolled out in at least 210 schools. So far, we have completed more than half of the required school energy audits at more than 150 schools. These 150 audits include the development of detailed plans for tailored solar panel solutions and other identified

energy efficiency needs for each individual school. I am pleased to advise that the bulk of the installation work for these 150 schools is scheduled to take place over the summer holidays to avoid disruption to classes. Teachers, students, parents and staff—and even local members—will see their brand-new rooftop solar panels on day 1 of the 2020 school year.

We have already installed around 2,400 solar panels on the rooftops of 30 schools and we are on target to see almost 34,000 panels installed by the end of June 2020 at over 210 schools. Phases 2 and 3 of the ACES program will roll out over the next three years. This is an outstanding Palaszczuk government initiative which is showing Queensland state school students and their communities our strong commitment to a cleaner, greener energy future and contributing to reaching our 50 per cent renewable target by 2030.

### Sexual Violence Prevention Framework


 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (9.57 am): Today I am pleased to announce the release of Queensland's first-ever sexual violence prevention framework—reaffirming the Palaszczuk Labor government's zero tolerance to all forms of sexual violence against all Queenslanders. The framework titled *Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's framework to address sexual violence* brings together our efforts to date to address sexual violence, our priorities for the future and a clear vision—that all people in Queensland live free of the fear, threat or experience of sexual violence.

We consulted extensively to develop this framework, with more than 370 Queenslanders attending community forums, focus groups and victim/survivor sessions and more than 350 submissions received. I attended many of the community forums myself and I want to again thank everyone who came forward to share their stories, some for the first time ever. The stories we heard were absolutely heartbreaking, and everyone who heard them was deeply affected. These stories are the reason this framework is so important, both to help those who have been affected to heal and, importantly, to prevent it happening to others. The framework highlights the broad range of targeted responses that are already underway and planned to support all Queenslanders because, while we know that women and girls are disproportionately impacted by sexual violence, we acknowledge that men and boys are affected too.

I am pleased to say that this framework includes several significant new actions that we will start working on right away. They include making respectful relationships education compulsory in all state schools via implementation of the Australian curriculum; ensuring the quality of respectful relationships programs delivered in schools and supporting teachers with implementation by providing professional development; continuing to improve police responses to victims of sexual violence by conducting a pilot of a dedicated sexual violence liaison officer in Townsville and strengthening a victim-centric focus across the police force; strengthening sexual violence prevention initiatives and responses at key events and locations involving young people, including schoolies; establishing a sexual violence champions group to guide cultural change; and raising the profile of Sexual Violence Awareness Month, including the delivery of an annual Sexual Violence Awareness Grants Program.

This government is committed to tackling sexual violence in all its guises. The new framework reflects this by covering sexual assault and rape, child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, youth sexual violence and abuse, technology-facilitated sexual violence and intimate partner sexual violence. However, we cannot do this alone. We also need the community to commit to changing the way we deal with sexual assault in all its forms. Everyone can do one thing. The first and most important thing we want everyone in the community to do is to start by believing. That is the theme of Sexual Violence Awareness Month. Together we can continue to send a clear message that sexual violence will not be tolerated, that help is available for people who experience this form of violence and that perpetrators will be held accountable for their actions.

### M1 Upgrade

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.00 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government is building a better M1. The amount of \$2.3 billion in joint funding is locked in for four major upgrades. The 150,000 people who travel between Brisbane and the Gold Coast every day are seeing daily progress on those upgrades. At the Gateway merge, they can see the new bridge built over the highway at Underwood Road and new southbound lanes now in service. At the Mudgeeraba to Varsity Lakes upgrade, work is almost done on the new Stapley Drive bridge. We are making good progress upgrading exit 57 at the Oxenford interchange, and there is much more to come.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BAILEY:** There is much more to come, unlike those opposite who did nothing when in government.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Mr BAILEY:** Earlier this month, motorists were given a first glimpse of plans for the \$749 million upgrade from Eight Mile Plains to Daisy Hill. That project will start as soon as we finish the Gateway merge project next year. That project will be nearly four times the size of the current Gateway merge project. This much larger upgrade will add more lanes and capacity on the M1 through Springwood. It will deliver more public transport and bike-riding benefits as well. The busway will be extended to Springwood, expanding public transport options for people in the Logan area. A bikeway will also be built to Paradise Road, connecting with other bike paths in the Springwood and Slacks Creek area that will be constructed later this year.

Gold Coast residents will soon receive an update on the \$1 billion M1 upgrade between Varsity Lakes and Tugun that will start next year. Again, that project will be five times the size of the current M1 upgrade from Mudgeeraba to Varsity Lakes. That project will widen 10 kilometres of the M1, giving a minimum of three lanes in each direction. Interchanges between exit 85 and exit 95 will be given significant upgrades and bridges will be widened over Tallegbudgera Creek and Currumbin Creek. The Palaszczuk government has also committed its full share of funding to upgrade exit 41 and exit 49 interchanges—


**Mr Crandon:** When, Minister? When? What year?

**Mr BAILEY:** Those who interject should get on to the federal government for our fair share.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Minister, please resume your seat. Member for Coomera, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr BAILEY:** The Palaszczuk government has also committed its full share of funding to upgrade exit 41 and exit 49 interchanges, and we are planning upgrades at exits 38 and 45 too. These projects will make sure that people spend less time in traffic and that they get home sooner. The next two M1 upgrades to start next year will create more than 1,000 jobs, adding to 216,000-plus created under the Palaszczuk government since 2015. History will show that it was the Palaszczuk government that backed Brisbane and the Gold Coast with a multibillion dollar investment to build a better M1, after not one single new dollar was invested in it by those opposite under the Newman government.

### **Paradise Dam; Rookwood Weir**

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (10.04 am): Community safety is always this government's priority, and safety is behind our recent decisions around the operation of Paradise Dam near Bundaberg. SunWater is currently reducing the storage level of Paradise Dam to 42 per cent ahead of the 2019-20 wet season.

**Mr Millar** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Gregory.

**Dr LYNHAM:** This will allow works to improve the dam's stability during extreme rain events. This is also generating up to 80,000 megalitres of free water for irrigators and other users.

**Mr Krause** interjected.

**Mr Millar** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Gregory, you are warned under the standing orders. The member for Scenic Rim will cease his interjections.

**Dr LYNHAM:** Let me make this clear: this government took this decision on the expert advice of our dam owner-operator, SunWater, in the interests of public safety—first and foremost.

This government is well aware of the impact of the long-running drought on our regional communities and on our food and fibre producers. That is why we have instructed SunWater to do its utmost to ensure that the water that is being released for safety reasons is used as productively as possible. The water is free. Two standpipes have been installed to make the water more accessible, and a third is being investigated with the Bundaberg Regional Council.

Water is being released into four watercourses not normally supplied by the dam. That means that irrigators with water access rights already on Elliott River, Mahogany Creek, the Gregory River and Logging Creek will also have access to free water from the dam. I am advised by SunWater that drought-affected farmers are already taking advantage of the free water for irrigation and storage.

The Inspector-General Emergency Management's independent review is underway, and members are being invited this week to join a community reference group which will have an independent chair. Meanwhile in Central Queensland we are getting on with the job of building Rookwood Weir. This weir is underway, and the Palaszczuk government's Buy Queensland policy will ensure an emphasis on contracts for Central Queensland businesses. About 100 Central Queensland businesses have already registered their interest on the project's dedicated web registry. This is a \$352 million project that offers millions of dollars in opportunities for local businesses.

**Mr Hart** interjected.

**Dr LYNHAM:** It will provide 100 jobs during construction, and it will expand irrigated agricultural production in the Lower Fitzroy. I join the member for Rockhampton and the member for Keppel in encouraging local businesses to get along to this month's information sessions to find out how they can be part of this fantastic project.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Burleigh, you are warned under the standing orders. Comments will be directed through the chair.

### **Queensland Academy of Sport; INAS Global Games**



**Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport) (10.07 am): Last week the member for Toohey and I visited the home of the Queensland Academy of Sport in Nathan to meet the scientists and coaches training our elite athletes. I can announce a package of support that the Palaszczuk government is delivering to ensure that elite Queensland athletes have the best chance of success. The amount of \$10 million will be invested in upgrading part of the Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre. This investment will create the No. 1 high-performance gym in the nation and develop sport science facilities to be the envy of other states.

Offices will be set up to house multiple state and national sporting organisations in fit-for-purpose spaces—a targeted investment to bring more jobs to Queensland. I congratulate the member for Toohey for his advocacy for his constituents. This is truly an outstanding outcome for all Queensland athletes and their fans. The package will also include a strengthening of the organisation itself. I can announce that we will appoint an athlete ambassador to support our athletes' journeys to competition, and a global search for a new executive director to take over from the retiring leader position will ensure that, with Tokyo 2020 less than 10 months away, we are putting in place the structures to get Queenslanders ready to achieve elite sporting success.

As the Premier indicated earlier, the INAS Global Games are on right now, with competition underway at a number of venues across South-East Queensland including the Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre, the Anna Meares Velodrome and the Mount Cotton Driver Training Centre located in the community that I represent. It is a truly inclusive competition, supported by the Palaszczuk government with over \$1 million of investment. The games celebrate diversity and give athletes living with intellectual impairment a platform to chase athletic success.

The Premier and I proudly cheered on our Queensland athletes at the opening ceremony on Saturday. We have already seen many of them on the podium. I want to mention some individual successes and team successes—in particular, local to the electorate of Woodridge, Andre Rivett, scoring silver in discus overnight, and Paige Leonhardt and her 50-metre freestyle team, setting a new world record. These Queenslanders truly do us proud. We know that many of our INAS athletes are where they are today because of the training and support received from the Queensland Academy of Sport. This package of upgrades for the Queensland Academy of Sport is more than just an investment in our top athletes; it is an investment in the future of Queensland.

### **Shark Control Program, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park**



**Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (10.10 am): I rise to update the House on the status of the shark control program in the Great Barrier Reef marine park. As it stands right now, 27 beaches that used to be protected by shark control measures in the Great Barrier Reef marine park are no longer protected. This situation is not acceptable to the Queensland government. If it was possible under the new federal permit conditions then we would have the drum lines back in today. The reality is this is not possible.

The conditions of the federal permit, including releasing large dangerous sharks close to some of our famous swimming beaches, cannot be carried out without putting our staff and contractors at serious risk of injury or worse. A few members from the federal government and those opposite have called for us to just meet the federal permit conditions, but this ignores our responsibility to keep our staff and contractors safe. Currently, contractors do not have the equipment or vessels to do this safely. Furthermore, there is a requirement that sharks be tagged. I am advised that would require a vet to be on the vessel to undertake tagging.

Let me be absolutely clear: we do not support a catch-and-release program for dangerous sharks near our most popular swimming beaches. I am also disappointed that the New South Wales Environmental Defenders Office, which received New South Wales government funding, led the action against Queensland. The Queensland government has always put the safety of human life first, and for 57 years there was bipartisan support for that position. It is disappointing that the Leader of the Opposition, who has previously backed the Palaszczuk government's position that people's lives are more important than sharks, now supports the federal government's requirement to ensure man-eating sharks are released live. Only the Palaszczuk government remains resolute in support of the shark control program to protect our reputation as a safe tourist destination.

The solution to this is very clear. The shark control program operates under a permit from a federal authority issued under federal legislation. The federal government can fix this today by introducing legislation to allow our existing program back into the Great Barrier Reef marine park. I call on those opposite to get behind our shark control program and strongly urge their federal colleagues to do so as well.

### Indigenous Business Month



**Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.12 am): Queensland is home to more than 3,000 Indigenous owned small businesses across the state, making up more than one quarter of the nation's Indigenous small businesses. Indigenous Business Month is the time to celebrate our state's rapidly growing and innovative Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander small business sector. We are leading the nation when it comes to growth in Indigenous businesses, which is a fantastic achievement. Research shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses are more likely to collaborate with other Indigenous businesses and are up to 100 times more likely to employ an Indigenous person.

Supporting growth in Indigenous businesses is not only good for our state's economy but it is great for local communities. Through our successful small business grants program we have now helped well over 100 Indigenous businesses such as Primal Sport, cofounded by Rugby League legend Preston Campbell. They received a digital grant that will enable the business to expand their website and improve the customer experience. Through our Advancing Indigenous Business strategy we are also providing crucial mentoring and networking to increase the number of Indigenous businesses in Queensland and improve their business success rate.

Last month, in the lead-up to Indigenous Business Month, I had the pleasure of opening a two-day construction symposium, organised through my department. It provided over 80 Indigenous businesses in the construction sector the opportunity to learn and collaborate with each other while accessing knowledge from industry experts about how to position their business. As part of Indigenous Business Month there are more than 10 department sponsored events and workshops occurring right across Queensland. These events will encourage conversation and foster support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business and innovation, focusing on the 2019 theme Indigenous Ingenuity. The workshops cover topics such as media training and pitching. As well, there are business capability workshops for Indigenous women in business that are held in partnership with Griffith University. We want to continue our support for Indigenous businesses to grow and help them create more local jobs for Queenslanders.

### ABSENCE OF MINISTERS



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.14 am): I wish to advise the House that the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing Infrastructure and Planning will be absent from the House today. I also wish to advise that the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs will be absent from the House for question time today. The Premier and Minister for Trade will take questions for those ministers during question time.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL (IMPLEMENTING STAGE 2 OF BELCARRA) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### ELECTORAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

#### Cognate Debate



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.14 am), by leave, without notice, I move—

1. That, in accordance with standing order 172, the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be treated as cognate bills for their remaining stages, with—
  - (a) separate questions being put in regard to the second readings;
  - (b) the consideration of the bills in detail together; and
  - (c) separate questions being put for the third readings and long titles.
2. That, notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders, the maximum second reading debate timeframes set out below apply:
  - (a) Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Leader of the Opposition's nominee—30 minutes each
  - (b) Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Leader of the Opposition's nominee—30 minutes each
  - (c) other members—10 minutes
  - (d) Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Attorney-General and Minister for Justice—20 minutes in reply each

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

#### *Courier-Mail Article*



**Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (10.16 am): I rise to make a personal explanation. I refer to an article appearing in the *Courier-Mail* on Thursday, 22 August 2019. This article alleged I breached the Palaszczuk government's strong developer donation ban laws. Yesterday I received a letter from the Electoral Commissioner of Queensland concerning a complaint made to the ECQ by the opposition. The letter relevantly states—

I refer to Ms Melanie Mundy's letter of 27 August 2019 advising of a preliminary assessment by the Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ) in relation to a complaint lodged by the Liberal National Party of Queensland. I write to advise that the ECQ has now concluded its assessment and found no evidence that you accepted a political donation from a prohibited donor.

The ECQ wishes to thank you for your assistance in this matter and considers the matter now closed.

I table a copy of the letter dated 14 October 2019 under the hand of the Electoral Commissioner of Queensland that clears me of any wrongdoing. I call on the Leader of the Opposition to apologise.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 14 October 2019, from the Queensland Electoral Commissioner, Mr Pat Vidgen PSM, to the member for Keppel, Mrs Brittany Lauga MP, in relation to a complaint lodged by the Liberal National Party of Queensland [\[1827\]](#).

#### *Courier-Mail Article*



**Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (10.17 am): I rise to make a personal explanation regarding reports about me in the *Courier-Mail* today. The article is factually incorrect when it states that I oversee state funding for Legal Aid Queensland. I do not. The committee that I chair has no role in determining the budget for Legal Aid Queensland nor any decisions that they make. Legal Aid Queensland is an independent statutory body. Budget decisions are made by the executive arm of the government, and I am not part of the executive. Russo Lawyers' website contains the following information—

... we take pride in conducting work through Legal Aid Queensland to those who are eligible.

That information is available to the public.

Whilst I have performed Legal Aid work in the past, I have not represented any clients who qualify for Legal Aid funding since I became a member of parliament. I have met all requirements under the standing orders regarding my register of pecuniary interests, and I table written advice from the Clerk which I received yesterday.

*Tabled paper:* Email, dated 14 October 2019, from the Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie, to the member for Toohey, Mr Peter Russo MP, regarding potential conflicts of interest and his declarations on his register of interest [1828].

In this letter the Clerk states—

I do not see how you are conflicted by being a Chair of the Parliamentary Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and also being a legal practitioner per se. Indeed, some may see this as advantageous to the committee and the Legislative Assembly.

There may be individual items of legislation that come before the committee that raises issues of conflict. When this occurs you should make the ad hoc declarations as required under SO 261:

**261. Conflict of interest in committee proceedings**

A member of a committee shall disclose to the committee any conflict of interest the member may have in relation to a matter before the committee.

I have reviewed your register of interest and it appears that you have made fulsome declarations about your practice and associated companies and the source of your income from the practice and the companies.


Finally, I note that I have suggested that you seek your own independent legal advice about the application of s.70(1)(b) and s.71 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to ensure you do not transgress those provisions.

Further, I have received verbal advice today regarding sections 70 and 71 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 that I have not breached sections 70 and 71. I am waiting for the written advice.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

**Mr SPEAKER:** Question time will conclude today at 11.20 am

### Russo Lawyers

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (10.20 am): My first question is to the Premier. When was the Premier first advised that Russo Lawyers, a firm owned—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am sorry, Leader of the Opposition. Members to my right! I will give one warning today to all members of the House but particularly for interrupting during a question being asked. I have asked that questions be heard in silence. Leader of the Opposition, please repeat your question.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My first question is to the Premier. When was the Premier first advised that Russo Lawyers, a firm owned by the Labor chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, was doing paid legal work for Legal Aid Queensland?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I thought her first question would have been, 'How are you feeling? How's your foot?' but anyway. In relation to—

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No sympathy, but that is all right. No humanity, no caring. In all seriousness, in relation to the Leader of the Opposition's question, the matter was raised through my office yesterday when questions from the *Courier-Mail* came in. If the Leader of the Opposition had been listening just now—this is how they cannot change their tactics—she would have heard that Peter Russo, the member for Toohey, made a very comprehensive personal explanation about the fact that, as a member of parliament, he has not been undertaking any Legal Aid work whilst he has been the chair of the committee.

Secondly, as the member for Toohey said very clearly, it is the executive that makes decisions in relation to Legal Aid funding through the Attorney-General and Legal Aid as an independent statutory body. If those opposite had listened carefully, the member has made a very clear personal explanation. Finally, he has tabled the Clerk's advice. The Clerk has said very clearly in that advice—and I have looked at that advice—that he needed some further clarification in relation to the Parliament of Queensland Act, which the member has done. He has received verbal advice and he will be presenting to me that legal advice when it comes.

I would like to also point out to the House today that the Leader of the Opposition has some of her own explaining to do. It has been revealed today in the *Australian* that \$3 million worth of secret donations has finally come out.



**Government members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Sorry, \$3 million of secret donations has finally come out. Well, I am looking forward to seeing that list—the list that was secret that now is being made public by the Electoral Commission.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. We know they do not like disclosure. We know they want to keep fighting things to keep their donors secret. Today the \$3 million in secret donations is finally made public.

### **Member for Toohey**

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My second question is also to the Premier. I refer the Premier to her responsibility for the government's integrity standards and the Deputy Premier's failure to declare her investment property purchase and the Minister for Employment's failure to properly declare a gift of luxury ski accommodation in Whistler. Will the Premier tell the House: is it acceptable for the member for Toohey to fail to declare receiving payments from a government agency—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Members to my right, I can pick anyone at random for interrupting during that question. Allow the member to complete the question. If you have a point of order, rise to your feet at that time. Apologies for the interruption, Leader of the Opposition.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier tell the House: is it acceptable for the member for Toohey to fail to declare receiving payments from a government agency while he is responsible for scrutinising?

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. First, under standing order 115, this is an extremely lengthy question with a lengthy preamble. In addition, it is seeking an opinion.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will deal with this point of order. Regarding the length of the question, I think it is bordering on being a lengthy preamble. However, I will allow the question in terms of its length. I will seek some advice from the Clerk, however.

As I have said, I will allow the question in terms of its length. The question does not seek an opinion. That was the way I heard it. I have sought advice from the table and I concur with that advice. The Premier will answer the question, but I will give the Premier some latitude in terms of how this question is answered.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I say to the Leader of the Opposition that all members have an obligation to abide by their pecuniary interests register. That is a matter for the House. If the member does not think someone has complied, they can write to the Clerk for clarification on whether or not the member's responsibilities have been discharged. Secondly, let me say this very clearly to the House. The member for Toohey has made a very full statement to the House clarifying his position in detail. If the Leader of the Opposition had listened, she would have heard that in detail.

### **Drought**

**Mr MADDEN:** My question is to the Premier and Minister for Trade. Not long ago, the city of Ipswich was drought declared. Will the Premier update the House on measures to address the impact of the seemingly endless drought?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Ipswich West for that question. As we know, 66 per cent of Queensland is drought declared. I know a lot of attention is being given to New South Wales, but it is Queensland that is experiencing its seventh year of drought and we are absolutely focused on doing everything we can to make sure that our farmers can get through it as well as they can.

We have supported that with more than \$740 million since we came to office. We are also thinking outside the square and looking at other things we can do to support especially those in drought impacted communities. That includes things like the Year of Outback Tourism, where \$10 million in infrastructure funds has gone out right across our state. We are encouraging people to actually go out there and spend money locally. We have seen 40,000 spectators go to the iconic Mount Isa rodeo, with a record \$12 million being put into that. Last weekend the \$600,000 Cobbold Gorge glass bottom bridge was also opened. I know that is in a remote part of the state, but it will encourage visitors to go there and see something unique and spectacular.

Whilst the Queensland government is doing its bit and making sure we are doing everything we can for drought affected communities, what we are not seeing from those opposite and what we are not seeing from the federal government is a release of \$5 billion from the drought fund. The way we can help our farmers is to get that money out the door. That is why I am really disappointed that the \$5 billion is not being released. In fact, on reading the letter from the Prime Minister—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:**—the \$5 billion is a 10-year program. What have we seen? The letter back from the Prime Minister said that they have delivered \$110 million through the Drought Communities Programme—\$110 million out of the \$5 billion—

**Ms Trad:** Shame!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:**—and that is shameful. We need to make sure that this money is getting out and they need to do that as quickly as possible.

There used to be a tourism slogan in Queensland: where else but Queensland? The Morrison government is definitely following that path: anywhere else but Queensland.

**Ms Jones:** Where the bloody hell are you Scott Morrison?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take that interjection, but I will not repeat it for the benefit of this House. There is \$5 billion sitting there. If the federal government cared about these communities they would release the funds and make sure that our farmers get the help that they need.

*(Time expired)*

### **Russo Lawyers**

**Mr MANDER:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier tell the House how much taxpayers' money has been paid to Russo Lawyers by Legal Aid Queensland since the member for Toohey was elected in 2015?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** In response to the member for Everton, they are questions for Legal Aid Queensland as a statutory body.

**Mrs D'Ath** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Leader of the House, cease your interjections.

### **Office for Rural and Regional Queensland**

**Mr O'ROURKE:** My question is of the Premier and Minister for Trade. Will the Premier consider locating the new Office for Rural and Regional Queensland in Rockhampton?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I would like to thank the member for Rockhampton for that question, considering the member for Rockhampton wrote to me on 27 September talking about the Office for Rural and Regional Queensland. He asked me if I would respectfully consider Rockhampton as a location for the Office for Rural and Regional Queensland. He is a very proud advocate for his local communities. As we look to ensuring that we have offices spread across our state servicing Queenslanders—

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I think I heard the member for Everton criticising public servants just then. That is nothing new.

**Mr MANDER:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. That is a total fabrication. I take offence to it and I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier, the member has taken offence. Will you withdraw?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I withdraw. Let me talk about the Office for Rural and Regional Queensland. A number of officers have been appointed in rural and regional communities across the state. We have two in Townsville, one in Cairns, one in Mackay, one in Longreach, one in Maryborough and one in Toowoomba. I am pleased to announce today that the headquarters will be in Rockhampton with four staff.

**An opposition member:** Shock!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They do not like regional Queensland. That is what you get. This is a government that listens to Queenslanders across the state. They will support the implementation of the regional community forums, the first of which will be held on the last Monday of this month, across regional Queensland. If those opposite want to attend their local forum, I am more than happy for them to attend because we are an inclusive government as well as a listening government.

I would like to thank the members of the public who have put forward their nominations to be part of these forums. I know that the chairs are looking forward to chairing that first regional forum in their local communities. The aim, of course, is for these forums to spread out across regional Queensland and go to towns that perhaps have not had their voices heard through government. It is a very important forum—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my left will cease their interjections. Member for Kawana, you are warned under the standing orders. Members will be referred to by their correct titles.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** This is added to our long list of commitments to Rockhampton, including our funding on the table for Rookwood Weir, \$15 million towards the Rockhampton Art Gallery—and I understand the turning of the sod is happening very shortly—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Keppel, I think high fives are not the appropriate way to congratulate other members in the chamber. I suggest a 'Hear, hear!' may be sufficient.

### **Member for Toohey**

**Mr JANETZKI:** My question is to the Attorney-General. Has the member for Toohey ever raised issues relating to Legal Aid Queensland directly with the Attorney, either personally or in writing?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question. I can certainly advise that I do not recall ever being asked questions directly by the member for Toohey in relation to Legal Aid. I am happy to check our records in relation to any correspondence, but certainly there have been no discussions between the member for Toohey and me in relation to any matters relating to Legal Aid.

### **Regional Queensland, Economy**

**Mrs GILBERT:** My question is of the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on some of the challenges facing Queensland's regional economies and what different ideas have been developed to respond to these?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for Mackay for the question. Of course she understands that if you want to understand the regions, if you want to get a good understanding of what happens in the regions you should go to the regions. The member for Mackay is a proud regional member and I note that she is talking about the economy and about regions. Have we heard one single question about jobs from those opposite? Again it is another sitting day and we are halfway through question time and not one question has been asked about jobs. That is because we know that when those opposite want to talk about regional Queensland, where do they go?

**Ms Palaszczuk:** Sydney.

**Ms TRAD:** They go to Sydney; they live it up in Sydney, and they defended that. They said they were getting together with 'like-minded politicians' so that they could talk about a number of things including water security and drought. Of course we know that our New South Wales cousins are experiencing drought and so I thought maybe Sydney city is in drought. I asked my office to check whether or not the city of Sydney is in drought. Indeed, some of the city of Sydney is actually drought affected, but where they went is not in drought. The only place in New South Wales that is not in drought is where those opposite went to talk about the drought in Queensland.

Those opposite have been taking the Queensland taxpayer for a ride. The same event in the Margaret River two years ago cost more than \$40,000.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members, the volume of interjections is far too high.

**Ms TRAD:** It cost \$45,000 two years ago to go to the Margaret River for the same event and now—talk about loving spending Queensland taxpayers' money—it cost \$23,000 for nine MPs and seven spouses to go to a cocktail function in Sydney and talk about the drought in Queensland and to go to Luna Park. Those opposite should stand in this House today and commit to paying back \$23,000 of taxpayer funds.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** Mr Speaker, I am not taking interjections. Those opposite should stand in this House—

**Mr SPEAKER:** The volume of interjections is too high. The Deputy Premier is not taking those interjections. However, there is provocation. Deputy Premier, do you have anything further to add?

**Ms TRAD:** I do. Those opposite like to talk about the pub test.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** Those opposite like to talk about the pub test—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock. Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under the standing orders. Member for Southern Downs, you are warned under the standing orders. I had only just called the House to order and you immediately interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** I challenge any single one of them to go into a pub in Queensland and say, 'Was it okay that I took my spouse down on your money so that I could live it up at Luna Park?' Those opposite should pay back the money.

### **Legal Services Commissioner, Appointment**

**Mr MINNIKIN:** My question without notice is to the Premier. With the integrity scandals further engulfing this government, has the Premier satisfied herself that the appointment of Megan Mahon as Legal Services Commissioner was all aboveboard, given Mrs Mahon is the member for Toohey's former business partner?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That appointment was done by an independent appointment process. We know those on the other side have a track record of appointing—

**Ms Trad:** Michael Caltabiano.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right—DGs that they just pick. We have a process in government and we have a panel that makes those decisions.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Members to my left, the Premier is being responsive to the question asked.

**Mr Ryan** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister for Police, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Of course, there was the audit into the awarding of tenders. I think the former attorney-general and member for Kawana was involved in that. I want to raise a serious issue here today, one that the Deputy Premier has raised, about a number of MPs in this House who saw fit to take their spouse with them to Sydney for a conference. I would like to see all of those MPs explain how they believe that passes the test of integrity.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118. The question was about the appointment of the Legal Services Commissioner. That is all the question was about.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I ask the Premier to come back to the question as asked under standing order 118(b).

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I will come back to the original question. In relation to qualifications, Ms Mahon is the past president of the Queensland Law Society and a former executive director of the Law Council of Australia. She was the WLAQ 2009 woman lawyer of the year and the 2017 recipient of the Queensland Law Society's President Medal. The appointment of the new Legal Services Commissioner follows an exhaustive recruitment process which attracted quality candidates from around Australia. We know that the member for Everton does not like women being appointed to boards. We know his track record—

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Tim 'I swear on the Bible' Mander.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier!

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I withdraw. As I said, you want to talk about integrity? Where is the integrity of those opposite in taking their spouses with them to a conference to talk about drought in Sydney? The member for Everton cannot remember if he went to Luna Park. Well, if you go to Luna Park—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Oh, you did go—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock. Premier, you will put your comments through the chair. Premier, do you have anything further to add to the question asked? I have already given some guidance around coming back to the question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The opposition asked a question about integrity, and I believe that there are so many questions to be answered by those opposite.

**Mr SPEAKER:** No Premier, do not debate the point.

### **Water Infrastructure**

**Mrs LAUGA:** My question is of the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Will the minister advise the House of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to dams and water infrastructure, and is he aware of any alternatives?

**Dr LYNHAM:** I thank the member for Keppel for the question. I know the members for Keppel, Rockhampton and Gladstone know the Palaszczuk government's responsible approach to water infrastructure which includes: \$176 million to Rookwood; we are building Rookwood. There is \$215 million for the Haughton pipeline, \$13.6 million for Emu Swamp, and a detailed business case for raising the wall at Burdekin Falls Dam. That is just part of the Palaszczuk government's \$872 million commitment to water infrastructure right across this state, delivering 1,640 jobs to regional Queensland. This is action. We have not seen a brass razoo for Rookwood from the LNP. My advice to New South Wales is: make sure you do not get a cheque. Since 2017—

**Mr Perrett** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Gympie, you are warned under the standing orders. Comments will be directed through the chair.

**Dr LYNHAM:** Since 2017 the Palaszczuk government has sought nearly \$95 million from the Commonwealth through the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund for 13 water infrastructure projects across this state. What did we get? We got less than six per cent. We asked for more money for Rookwood. They said no. In relation to overruns for Emu Swamp there was silence. Wamuran? No. Theodore? No. Bungunya? No. Lockyer Valley? No. Lower Burdekin? No. That is their track record—no, no and no. We have had more knockbacks than I had as a teenager! These are the same people who reportedly are pouring billions into Snowy 2.0. Then there was Snowy 5.0 and now Snowy 10.0, because to Victorian energy expert Dr Bruce Mountain—

Here is a project that is likely to cost five times more than the Prime Minister said it would and whose capability is nowhere near what has been claimed of it.

I would not put the LNP in charge of a bird bath! Is it still Queensland LNP policy that any regional water infrastructure can only be funded by the private sector? There is no public money from those opposite for any water infrastructure in Queensland. It is only the Palaszczuk government that builds water infrastructure for this state.

**Ms McMillan** interjected.

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

### **Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships**

**Mr POWELL:** My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier tell the House who bought her undisclosed Woollongabba investment property and what was the sale price?

**Ms TRAD:** I am pleased to confirm to the House that the house has been sold but it has not settled. I have here a letter, which I am very happy to table for the benefit of the House, from the real estate agent who conducted the transaction.

*Tabled paper:* Open letter, dated 15 October 2019, from Harcourts Homeside Real Estate Agents, Ms Sam Peterffy, advising of the sale of 48 Abington Street, Woolloongabba [1829].

As I said, the house is yet to settle and the individual who bought this house is not deserving of being brought into the bottom-dwelling behaviour of those opposite.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Members to my left.

**Ms TRAD:** As I said, my commitment to sell the house at exactly the same price has happened. The person in question has asked for a longer settlement period for a whole range of personal circumstances, and that person does not deserve to be torn apart by those opposite. That person did not sign up to a political life. I am happy to stand in this place—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock. Members to my left, the Deputy Premier is being broadly responsive to the question. I have made very clear my thoughts on that in the past.

**Ms TRAD:** I will not breach their right to have a private life. If those opposite and their dirt unit located in the Leader of the Opposition's office want to go about and do their trawling, like they have been, then they are welcome to do it because we know the standard of behaviour from those opposite. We know they love having their nose in the taxpayers' trough. They love flying their spouses to Sydney to talk about drought in Queensland—\$23,000 this year and \$45,000 last year.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance with regard to 118(b). The question was about a Woolloongabba investment property and the Deputy Premier is not now speaking about that.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Deputy Premier, the point of order is correct. I ask you to come back to the question asked under standing order 118(b). Do you have anything further to add regarding the question?

**Ms TRAD:** Yes, I do, Mr Speaker. It is very important that we acquit our jobs as public officials in this place.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** Those opposite might like to laugh—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Members to my left, the Deputy Premier is being responsive to the question asked. She has come back to the question as per the Manager of Opposition Business's point of order. I ask that you hear the answer.

**Ms TRAD:** If those opposite want to set a standard, then they should be held to that standard. They should say exactly what happened in Sydney, apart from a cocktail party and dinner at Luna Park.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Ms TRAD:** If those opposite want a standard set—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock.

**Ms TRAD:**—they should live by that standard.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Resume your seat, Deputy Premier. Before your point of order, member for Kawana: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under the standing orders. After having just brought the House to order, you have again immediately interjected. What is your point of order, Manager of Opposition Business?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It is again with regard to 118(b). Within 20 seconds of the Deputy Premier speaking again, she was on to the same issue you asked her not to go to and I again ask that she be brought back to the specific question asked about the Woolloongabba investment property.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Deputy Premier, I gave you the opportunity. I think the opportunity has passed to add anything further. I call—

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Deputy Premier, I am giving a ruling and you are interjecting across the chamber. You are warned under the standing orders.

### Ecotourism

**Mr HARPER:** My question is to the Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for Cross River Rail. Will the minister please update the House on the largest ecotourism project in Queensland's history?

**Ms JONES:** I thank the honourable member for the question because I know that he knows firsthand how important tourism and tourism infrastructure is to grow jobs in Queensland. Townsville and many other regions across Queensland have benefited from our record investment—the first time ever that a state government has committed infrastructure dollars to match with the private sector to deliver brand-new tourism projects in our state. One that I am very pleased to report on to the House is the Wangetti Trail. The member for Cook has been telling me many times how important this is to her community, particularly because it is going to generate jobs in her local community. I am proud to say that construction is well underway on this game-changing project for the Far North.

Today I can confirm that tenders have closed for a new pedestrian bridge across the Mowbray River and survey and geotechnical works have begun on the Mowbray North alignment of the trail. Construction will also start before the end of the year on the seven-kilometre section of the track from Port Douglas to the Mowbray River. As I have previously reported to this House and as you well know from your local connections, Mr Speaker, more than 150 jobs will be created and, more importantly, around \$300 million will be injected into that economy.

While we are unlocking the potential of Queensland and unlocking jobs for Queenslanders, the real news today is the fact that the LNP fought all the way to the High Court to keep under lock and key its secret donations. Much has been said about integrity today, so let us go through how we ended up in the situation we have today. What we have seen unveiled in the *Australian* today is that the LNP in Queensland has kept hidden from the public of this state—the voters of Queensland—more than \$3 million worth of secret donations, yet it dares walk in here and lectures us.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under 118(b). The minister was asked by her own government member about ecotourism and I would suggest that she is straying far from ecotourism. I ask that she be brought back to the question asked by her own government member.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, the question does relate to a different subject matter than that which I believe you are straying to. I ask that you do come back to the core of the question asked by the member for Thuringowa.

**Ms JONES:** I thank the honourable member for the question. The reality is that there could be an ecotourism operator who donated to the LNP, but we would not know because it is under bloody lock and key. It is shameful that those opposite will not disclose who their donors are. It is about time that they were held to account for their shameful behaviour.

### Stewart, Mr I

**Mr MILLAR:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise why former police commissioner Ian Stewart was appointed to the role of bushfire recovery coordinator knowing he was going on five weeks leave shortly after his appointment and not long after the devastating bushfires in Peregian Beach, Stanthorpe, Binna Burra and Laidley?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Gregory for the question. I was advised by Ian Stewart that he had a precommitted event that he and his wife had booked. That is why it is the usual course of practice to have a deputy who is appointed as well. Since Ian Stewart has taken on that role, he has visited nearly all of the communities that have been impacted. He is fulfilling his duties and I have every confidence in the deputy to be able to carry out that role in his short absence. We do not know if it is going to be a three-month or a six-month recovery process. Ian Stewart has been very well regarded across all levels of government. From memory, I think he was appointed as commissioner under the former LNP.

As we know, today is a day when the LNP comes in and smears people. That is all it knows—no new ideas, no new policies. It is just smear and innuendo. That is all the LNP is capable of in this state. The people of Queensland will know at the next election who cares about them and who takes them for a ride when a whole group of its members think it is completely acceptable to take their spouse to Sydney or Margaret River at taxpayer expense.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is a very serious issue—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Point of order, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Premier, please resume your seat.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:**—and one that needs to be looked—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Please resume your seat, Premier.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Again, on 118(b), the question was about the recent bushfires and the appointment of Ian Stewart as commissioner. The Premier was straying off that subject matter again.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier, do you have anything further to add? The Premier has nothing further to add.

### **Southern Moreton Bay Islands, Ambulance Services**

**Ms RICHARDS:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Will the minister outline to the House how the Palaszczuk government will keep up with demand for ambulance services in the southern Moreton Bay region, particularly Macleay Island?

**Dr MILES:** I thank the member for Redlands for her important question and her passionate advocacy for the communities of the southern Moreton Bay islands, including Macleay and Russell islands. Just recently she met with me to put the case that they need more ambulance services in recognition of the difficulty accessing those communities, as well as the level of chronic illness, population growth and ageing. The local community had been collecting signatures on a petition which was then presented to the member and to me seeking to have those additional ambulance resources. Today I am really pleased to announce that we have listened to those communities and the residents of the southern Moreton Bay islands will get more emergency and prehospital care thanks to the advocacy of the member for Redlands.

The existing paramedics there are very busy because of population growth and an ageing population. Our allocation of an additional paramedic allocated to the water taxi will allow the paramedics on each of those islands to stay on the island while the taxi transfers patients to the mainland which will allow them to respond more quickly and to deliver better care to those residents—a great outcome. I want to commend the Macleay Island ambulance committee for its advocacy and its work with the member for Redlands. This is only possible because of our record investment into ambulance services of \$885 million delivering more ambos, including this one servicing the southern Moreton Bay islands.

Since coming to office, we have appointed 511 more ambulance officers, including 200 this year. We have funded 122 new and replacement vehicles because we back our ambulance officers. I am sure the member for Redlands would support me in saying that, if those opposite want to save some taxpayers' funds next year, Russell Island is a beautiful spot. They could take their wives there for a lot less than it costs for a trip to Sydney. In fact, we will even take them over on the water taxi to save some more money. The members opposite do not need to catch a ferry to Luna Park to talk about the drought; they can visit the electorate of Redlands and visit Russell Island or even Macleay Island. They could take their wives to both. Maybe they could have their cocktails on Macleay Island, stay overnight and visit Russell Island the next day. That would save taxpayers a whole heap of money—money that we could put towards important ambulance services.

### **Voluntary Assisted Dying Legislation**

**Ms BOLTON:** My question without notice is to the Premier. With urgency being placed on some current legislation, will the Premier guarantee similar urgency to any recommendations from the health committee inquiry into voluntary assisted dying so that members of this parliament can debate them in this term?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member, I am just seeking clarification. Because the inquiry in question was a government initiated inquiry, through the provisions of the House I will allow the question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Noosa for the question. As the member is aware, we initiated that inquiry. I understand that the chair is conducting hearings right across the state. We want it to be a comprehensive inquiry, which is why it is running, from memory, into next year as well. I urge Queenslanders to have their say. As I have said time and time again, we are a listening government. I want Queenslanders to have their say. It is a very important issue, but it is also an issue that involves very different views.



I am not going to pre-empt the findings of that inquiry. Once that inquiry is completed, it will be handed to the government and the government will have a look at the recommendations that come out of it. I urge all members of parliament, if they have people in their constituencies who have views one way or the other in relation to voluntary assisted dying, to make those views known to the committee.

### **Southport State High School, Fire**

**Ms SCANLON:** My question is to the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the minister update the House on Southport State High School's recovery from a devastating fire on 4 October?

**Ms GRACE:** I thank the member for the question. I know that she was concerned and equally amazed at the recovery effort. In the early hours of Friday, 4 October—just before the long weekend—fire destroyed the historic B Block of Southport State High School. The school lost nine classrooms, a special education area, computer labs and staffrooms.

What we saw over the following 96 hours was nothing short of a herculean effort. Despite this building being lost, school returned for the start of term 4 as usual the following Tuesday. I give my thanks to QFES for the swift recovery. They were able to, thankfully, put out the fire quickly and spare the new \$12 million three-storey classroom block, which is currently under construction as part of our government's 2020 Ready Program. This building is on track. When I was down there I noticed that there was a bit of bubbling of the paint on the downpipes due to the heat of the fire, but that is easily repaired. That building is on target to open in 2020 for the students going there on the first day of term 1. Around 100 tradespeople and contractors worked around the clock following the demolition works and replacement classrooms were put in over the long weekend to get the school back up and running.

I would like to acknowledge the responsiveness of the Queensland Police Service, which made special provisions for our relocatable buildings to be transported to the school during the very busy long weekend road conditions. Normally, big loads like that cannot be transported on a busy long weekend. The police made a special dispensation and we were able to get them from Logan down to the school. By the time the students arrived on Tuesday morning, nine replacement classrooms, complete with new furniture, were ready to go. Not a single day was lost at Southport State High School. That is a truly remarkable effort, which I was amazed to see firsthand on the first day of school in term 4.

The goal of all school fire recovery efforts is to ensure that teachers and staff are back teaching and students are back learning as quickly as possible and in a safe environment. Last year, we saw similar incredible efforts after a fire at the Morningside State School and again this year at Upper Mount Gravatt State School and the Warwick East State School.

I would like to acknowledge the work that is done to get these schools up and running. The department has a fantastic process in place. I would especially like to thank our contractor, Fleetwood, led by its executive, Daniel Howlett, and project manager, Ray Brown; the Department of Education, led by the deputy director-general, Jeff Hunt, and his team; and QBuild, led by Rob Hore, Chad Pennell and Ian Wecker. They did a fantastic job. This new building at Southport State High School is part of our \$500 million investment on the Gold Coast since we have been elected. The recovery was an incredible feat and I say well done to everyone involved.

### **Bushfires, State Recovery Coordinator**

**Mr KRAUSE:** My question is to the Premier. Why was an external contractor hired to undertake bushfire recovery coordination given that there are many capable senior police officers who could perform the same role under existing salaries, or was the appointment of Mr Stewart simply a political stunt that has spectacularly backfired?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As I said previously, I have answered this question. We have a proud history of appointing recovery coordinators in this state. They are ably assisted by deputies. The QRA also plays a valuable role in terms of assistance and making sure that the recovery is happening.

Our recovery efforts are world class. Perhaps rather than attacking individuals in this House, those opposite might thank everybody who has been involved in the recovery efforts. I find it absolutely disgraceful that people come in here once again slandering people for the sake of it. It is a disgusting habit. It is disgusting and if you think the people of Queensland like it, you have another think coming.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The Premier's comments will come through the chair.

### Brisbane North, Traffic Congestion

**Mr MELLISH:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Will the minister advise what is included in the Palaszczuk government's \$3.13 billion plan to tackle congestion on the north side of Brisbane?

**Mr BAILEY:** I thank the member for Aspley, who is a very strong advocate and very effective member on the north side. This government invests in infrastructure and invests in jobs. This government is dealing with bottlenecks on the north side. The Gateway Arterial north is open and traffic is flowing freely. The next stage of the Gateway Arterial north to the Bruce Highway is fully funded, with \$1 billion in joint funding by this government and the Commonwealth. We are seeing Linkfield Road being dealt with—a \$125 million commitment in joint funding. As well, there is the Strathpine Road bridge, Cross River Rail—a \$5.4 billion transformational project—and the Northern Transitway, which is a key project to tackle congestion on the north side by making public transport into Brisbane up to 50 per cent more effective and quicker than it is currently. We are also getting the planning done for the Beams Road level crossing despite, let me be frank, the disappointing commitment by the unelected Lord Mayor of Brisbane to fund only 15 per cent of level crossings. In the past, there had been 50 per cent funding commitments. That is a cut in level crossing funding from the Brisbane City Council.

We have seen on the north side the resignation of Amanda Cooper. It is very much a case of everybody leaving a sinking ship. It is a bit like musical chairs. The former member for Aspley has become a member of the council. She was afraid to take on the current member for Aspley. We have people leaving a 16-year administration.

**Mr Minnikin:** You left.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Minister, resume your seat. Member for Chatsworth, you are warned under the standing orders. You will direct your comments through the chair. Minister, do you have anything further to add?

**Mr BAILEY:** Absolutely. We are busting congestion on the north side. The Northern Transitway is a key project. It is interesting that we get interjections from the member for Chatsworth, who has not asked me a question in nearly a year in this place and is now casting in doubt the Northern Transitway project if ever he got his hands on power. Once again, not content with low record patronage records under the Newman government, not content with stuffing up public transport, whether it comes to non-disability-compliant trains or trains ordered overseas, not content with cutting Cross River Rail, destroying public transport, those opposite are still at it to this very day. That is what we are seeing publicly from the member for Chatsworth and the opposition.

Let us be clear: this is an opposition with seven ex-Newman government ministers still on the front bench and they are getting even more of them to come in. They have learnt nothing. We are investing in infrastructure on the north side. We are not having cocktails at Luna Park to talk about the drought. We are getting on with infrastructure, getting on with jobs and getting on with public transport, which this city deserves.

### North Stradbroke Island, Four-Wheel Drive Beach Access Fee

**Dr ROBINSON:** My question is to the Premier. I refer to Labor's new 'Straddie tax', hitting Queensland families with a threefold fee hike. Labor's member for Capalaba said this new tax was a poor decision which local MPs were not consulted about and that he would be taking up the matter with the minister. Will the Premier advise whether she will reverse her poor decision and scrap this new tax on Queensland families?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As members would be aware, this came out of the ministerial forum in consultation with the Quandamooka. It is about making sure that the money goes back into doing up the roadways around Stradbroke, making it safer, making sure that there are even more camp sites and the camp sites are adequate. It is about investing back into Stradbroke. That is what the government promised to do and that is what we are doing.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Glass House, you are warned under the standing orders. Members to my left, the Premier is being responsive to the question asked.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I understand that there is a monthly fee that families can take on which is around \$52. The annual fee is in line with other major island camping grounds across the south-east.

### **Building and Construction Industry, Jobs**

**Mr HEALY:** My question is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport. Will the minister please update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is creating jobs in the construction industry and is he aware of any other approaches?

**Mr de BRENNI:** I thank the member for Cairns for the question. The Palaszczuk government is leading national reform of the construction industry. We are building economic and investor confidence. We are building government employee housing and I am very pleased to announce that under the two years of the operation of the Housing Construction Jobs Program we have commenced construction of over 1,500 homes for Queensland's most vulnerable.

The Palaszczuk government has indeed been kicking goals in affordable housing and the creation of construction jobs for people right across Queensland. I am pleased to inform the member for Cairns that we have delivered 107 homes in his electorate, creating 95 jobs. In Townsville we have built 87 homes, creating 63 jobs. On the Sunshine Coast we have built 105 new homes, creating 95 jobs. In Moreton Bay we have delivered 224 homes, creating 190 jobs for the tradies in that region. Right here in Brisbane we have built 393 homes for Queensland's most vulnerable, delivering 362 additional construction jobs. Just last week I visited one of the 162 new homes being delivered on the Gold Coast, creating 180 construction jobs. We are ahead of schedule as well to meet our target of 5,500 new social and affordable homes for Queensland's most vulnerable.

I want to take the opportunity to compare this to the record of those opposite. If we want to hear about the record of those opposite when it comes to housing we can ask the then housing minister, the now deputy opposition leader, about their record. How many homes were built under the LNP's watch in places like the Gold Coast? Was it 100? Was it 50? Was it 20? Was it five? It was zero. How many homes were built for the most vulnerable on the Sunshine Coast? Was it 150? Was it 75? Was it seven? No. They built zero homes for people on the Sunshine Coast. In Townsville though they did a little better: three new homes in three years. In the community that I represent, and that of the member for Logan and the members for Woodridge, Waterford and Algester where some of Queensland's people are doing it the toughest, how many homes were built by the member for Everton? Zero new homes for those people.

The member for Everton has a strong record of cutting and sacking and selling. He tried to give away 90 per cent of public housing. He engaged in a fire sale of public buildings and lost \$237 million. The question today is how much of that \$237 million ended back up in the LNP coffers as part of those 1,096 donations while Queensland's most vulnerable could not find affordable housing?

### **North Stradbroke Island, Four-Wheel Drive Beach Access Fee**

**Mr SPEAKER:** I call the Member for Clayfield.

**Mr Brown** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Thanks, Don. It is always nice to have a welcome back from you and it will be particularly nice given the question.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Clayfield, no commentary and you will use members' correct titles.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** My question without notice is also to the Premier with reference to Labor's secret plan to triple the fee on four-wheel drive beach access on North Stradbroke Island from \$47 to \$158 for families. Why did the Premier choose not to publicly consult with Straddie residents, nor with the Labor member for Capalaba, before slugging Queenslanders with Labor's new Straddie tax?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is lovely to hear from the member for Clayfield. Usually it is not until the last adjournment speech. It is wonderful to see the member for Clayfield ask a question. We miss him from the opposition front bench.

As I said previously, this matter is all about reinvesting into Stradbroke. The member for Clayfield and I both enjoy Stradbroke. I want to put some facts on the table. Already we are investing \$1.4 million across the island's protected areas, including campground upgrades and four-wheel drive track upgrades which will start later this month. In the next 12 months we want new projects to include improvements to vehicle access track maintenance, new walking tracks, upgrades to lookouts as well as improved access to facilities such as Brown Lake. All of that money will go back into those facilities which will enhance the amenities for locals and families who visit the island. As I said, there is a new monthly fee that makes it still affordable for families.

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Broadwater, you are warned under the standing orders. You will use members' correct titles.

## Drought

**Ms HOWARD:** My question is to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries. Will the minister provide an update on the drought and the current views of the Commonwealth?

**Mr FURNER:** I thank the member for her question and her ongoing support for regional Queensland. As we know in this House, more than 66 per cent of Queensland is drought declared. For some producers their shire has been drought declared since 2013. We as a government commissioned a drought review, released the said review and are working with industry regarding that.

Let us look at the Commonwealth. If the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, was serious about drought he would sack Minister Littleproud who is sitting on multiple drought reports. The Queensland government received its drought report on 31 January and, after government consideration, released it in full on 28 June. However, Littleproud was critical of the government and said—

The Queensland government has been sitting on this report while farmers struggle with drought.

Taxpayers paid for this report and they have a right to see what it says.

The federal government does not walk its talk. Major General Day was appointed on 19 August 2018 and his report, according to Littleproud, may not be released and, if it is, it will be at a later date. We released our report yet the Commonwealth still has not decided whether to release its report. Taxpayers and producers have a right to see the full report.

What of the report of the drought envoy, Barnaby Joyce? On the weekend, the previous deputy prime minister said that if farmers are doing it tough they should just walk away. Joyce said that people who have not made a profit in the past 10 years really need to seriously think about what they are doing with their life and what they are doing on the land. Of course, the same federal government is cutting the Farm Household Allowance during the drought. Under the Queensland government, any producer in drought will receive access to drought assistance while the drought persists.

Littleproud states that no final report was prepared and no documents exist in relation to Barnaby's report. Is that because Barnaby is telling farmers to give up? Is that why they want it hidden? David Littleproud is already on the record saying that he does not know if climate change is man-made. This reality already places the minister responsible for drought preparedness outside of the scientific mainstream. That does not bode well for the future consideration of drought by the LNP. The LNP does not accept science, it does not release reports or, in the case of Barnaby, even write reports, and it does not assist farmers. The LNP has no policy on drought and cannot be trusted with agriculture policy in government. That is why the Palaszczuk government is the only government that assists farmers.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The period for question time has expired.

## MOTION

### Business Program



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.21 am): I move—

1. That the following government business will be considered this sitting week, with the nominated maximum periods of time as specified:
  - (a) the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, a maximum of six hours and 30 minutes to complete all stages; and
  - (b) the Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, a maximum of three hours to complete all stages.
2. The following time limits for the bills listed in paragraph 1 apply:
  - (a) the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs to be called on in reply for the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill cognate debate by 30 minutes before the expiry of the maximum hours
  - (b) consideration in detail to be completed by three minutes before the expiry of the maximum hours;
  - (c) question on third reading to be put by two minutes before the expiry of the maximum hours; and
  - (d) question on long title to be put by one minute before the expiry of the maximum hours.

3. If the nominated stage of each bill has not been completed by the allocated time specified in paragraph 2, or by 5.55 pm on Thursday, 17 October 2019, Mr Speaker:
- (a) shall call on a minister to table any explanatory notes to their circulated amendments;
  - (b) shall put all remaining questions necessary to either pass that stage or pass the bill or motion without further debate;
  - (c) may interrupt non-specified business or debate on a bill or motion to complete the requirements of the motion; and
  - (d) will complete all stages required by this motion notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders.


In moving this motion, I take the opportunity to thank the Manager of Opposition Business and the member for Noosa, who represents the crossbench at the Business Committee meetings, for their attendance at the meeting last night. I also thank the member for Murrumbidgee. As members will see from the motion that has been circulated, we have allocated three hours for the Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Additionally, a total of 6½ hours has been allocated to the cognate debate for the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, with the minister in reply commencing, at the latest, 30 minutes prior to the conclusion of the overall time. As has already been indicated in this House, the passing of this bill will require a majority vote. Of course, without pre-empting that debate, I do hope that members will support these important reforms in local government and in relation to state electoral reform.

I hope that in the future we will get to a point where we will simply note the bills that we seek to debate for the entire week, without the need to allocate individual times for that. That is what a full business committee model would achieve. For many years it is what has occurred in Victoria, where they operate in a mature way and do not allocate specific times for each bill. They simply say, 'These are the bills that will be debated for the week.' If they have not fully completed all stages by the end of the sitting week, the questions will be put. I had contemplated whether or not we could do that for some of the bills this week, but I fear that we would be at risk of putting bills to a vote without a second reading debate being done. That is what could occur if members put their names down to speak on every single bill, whether or not they have a particular interest in or passion for debating that bill, just to prove a point that they do not like the model. While I hope that we can get to that point, we are not there yet. Consequently, we are allocating time to these bills.

As the member for Kawana pointed out to me this morning, I had indicated to the member for Kawana that we will move onto the police bill after the debate today. Last night I indicated to the Business Committee that the intention was to start today with the local government and electoral legislation. While it is still our intention to debate those bills today and tomorrow, we will start with the police bill because it is important that the Minister for Local Government attend the Queensland local government conference in Cairns this morning, where he will speak directly to the many mayors and councillors who are at that conference. The minister will be returning shortly and will be here to participate in the very important cognate debate. On that basis, I ask members to support this motion, which will see this important legislation debated this week.

If there is still time, it is our intention to progress through the *Notice Paper*. I believe that the next bill on the *Notice Paper* is the workers compensation legislation, which will be debated if we finalise both of those bills and there is additional time remaining in the sitting week. Based on discussions had with the members last night, it was decided not to allocate a fixed time for that bill, but to allocate time for the first two bills, being the local government electoral bill and the police bill, to give adequate time for those debates.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Before I call the member for Kawana, I remind those members who have been issued with a warning under the standing orders. They are the members for Coomera, Gregory, Burleigh, Kawana, Nanango, Southern Downs, Morayfield, Gympie, Mansfield, South Brisbane, Everton, Chatsworth, Glass House and Broadwater.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (11.25 am): The Leader of the House mentions the *Notice Paper*. Who knows what happens on the *Notice Paper* anymore? When I woke up this morning, local government electoral reform was the first item of business on the *Notice Paper*. I went to bed last night having just attended the Business Committee meeting, where I had been told that the local government reform legislation would be the first bills to be debated cognately today. As I said, when I woke up this morning I saw the *Notice Paper* that is distributed to all honourable members. That *Notice Paper* was pursuant to what I was told yesterday. Then I received a text message saying that we would now be proceeding with the police discipline legislation.

It really begs the question: what on earth are we having these ridiculous Business Committee meetings for? Every Monday night I waste 30 minutes of my life attending a meeting with the Leader of the House and the Minister for Health—particularly the Minister for Health, being that that is an absolute waste of time. I am wasting my time, because it changes. Things change from the meeting to bedtime and then when we get up for brekkie in the morning. Things will change again because at some point shortly the Leader of the House will have to move another motion to change the agenda for the day to put the police discipline bill before the local government electoral reform legislation.

The Leader of the House says that it is important that the local government minister is here. Yes, because it is his blooming bill! I would expect the local government minister to be here. The only reason he is in Cairns this morning is because they are announcing that they are getting rid of compulsory preferential voting for local government elections through that piece of legislation. He wanted to get the cheers and claps from the local government mayors and miss parliament. That is why he is in Cairns.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There is a convention in this House to not reflect on the absence of members.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Kawana, please do not mention members who are not in the House.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There is a convention but, as the Speaker advised the parliament last time, the convention relates to specifically mentioning when a member is not sitting in a particular chair at any given time. If a member is absent from parliament, as has been advised by the Premier in relation to the minister, that is not pursuant to the convention that the Attorney raises. In her own speech the Attorney has just mentioned the absence of the minister. Mr Deputy Speaker, I am just seeking clarification. As I understand it, the convention specifically deals with when a member may have absented himself or herself from the chamber at any given time, but the minister is actually absent and the Premier was answering his questions in question time this morning.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Kawana. I will take counsel. Member for Kawana, I have listened to what you have said. I think that the point of order refers more to being critical of the member's absence. I ask you not to be critical of that member's absence from the House.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** This morning the local government minister announced that they are getting rid of compulsory preferential voting through the legislation that we are going to be debating this week. We ought to have more than six hours debate time. If we divide it in two we have three hours debate time on a cognate debate for electoral reform, and no-one has to say anything more than the member for Bundamba, who has been fighting the Ipswich City Council. We have people in jail because of issues with councils across Queensland, yet we get three hours to debate the CCC recommendations on Belcarra.

Yes it is a cognate debate of six hours, but that essentially means three hours debate time—if you divide the six hours by two—for the electoral reform bill and for the Belcarra bill which deals with fighting corruption in councils across Queensland. I do not think that a six-hour cognate debate is enough time to fully look at the issues. I have looked at the speaking list for these bills and I would say that given the number of members who have put their names down to speak on these important matters we will well and truly go over the six-hour debate time.

Again, we are going to have another debate of an important issue like we had last sitting week with the Great Barrier Reef regulation bill where seven members were gagged and not given the opportunity to speak—I table that speaking list.

*Tabled paper:* Document, undated, speaking list titled 'GBR Bill' [1830].

We also had the cognate debate on the Medicines and Poisons Bill where more members were not able to speak. I table a copy of that speaking list.


*Tabled paper:* Document, undated, speaking list titled 'Cognate Poisons and Medicines Bill' [1831].

The whole thing is a farce. The whole Business Committee motion is a farce. We go into the Business Committee meeting and the Leader of the House sets out the government's agenda and then it changes willy-nilly the next day. It is not acceptable. If they are going to continue to do that then we should get rid of the Business Committee meetings, get rid of the Business Committee motion and go back to the old days—the government says what is going to happen in the parliament, as they do anyway. Nothing has changed other than they are wasting everyone's time with all these other silly meetings so they can say they are consulting and being proactive. The member for Noosa, who was at

the meeting yesterday, would have heard exactly what I heard. That was that the local government electoral bills were going to be debated first up this morning and then we would move on to debate the police discipline bill. Now we have the other situation.

The reason the government is amending the local government reforms on the fly and taking compulsory preferential voting out is that they have heard that compulsory preferential voting in the Brisbane City Council election may lose Labor seats because of Green preferences. Now they do not want the preferences. They now do not want compulsory preferential voting. For state government elections they said we had to have compulsory preferential voting. For local government elections they said we had to have it because we had to be consistent with state government elections, but now we do not need consistency. Local government will continue to have optional preferential voting because they have worked out the numbers and it will not benefit them in the Brisbane City Council election.

That is the reason we are delaying the debate on these bills. The reason the debate is being curtailed is that they do not want to debate the real issues, the political issues at hand here. The Labor government will change any electoral law they think will benefit them—local, federal or state. They will change the electoral system to benefit them. It is disgraceful.

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (11.32 am): The parliamentary business motion moved by the Leader of the House today is pretty straightforward. The discussion at the Business Committee meeting last night was pretty straightforward. The Manager of Opposition Business was consulted in the Business Committee meeting and he indicated that the opposition was most interested in the cognate debate of the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.


In consideration of that, the Leader of the House has proposed that the bulk of our time this week be spent debating those bills whilst still reserving three hours to allow debate of the Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill which contains very important reforms and which I understand members on both sides of the House have worked on and has been the subject of very significant contribution from the Queensland Police Service and the CCC. As the Leader of the House has outlined, in order to allow the local government minister to attend what is a very important stakeholder conference, the LGAQ conference, the government intends to debate the police bill first and before the minister returns to lead the debate on the local government electoral bills.

I turn to the points raised by the member of Kawana. I appreciate his concern about the best use of my time. I am quite happy to continue to catch up with him every sitting Monday afternoon. I think the parliamentary Business Committee meetings are important. I will continue to treat them as though they are important.

The member for Kawana listed how many speakers were supposedly gagged last sitting week—seven on one bill and three on another or something like that. Do members know who the only person who moved a gag motion last week was? The only person who moved that the motion be put so that a minister could be gagged and could no longer speak was the member for Kawana.

It is the height of hypocrisy for the member for Kawana to walk in here on a Tuesday accusing the government of gagging debate when the only person who tried but failed to gag a debate last sitting was the member for Kawana himself. That goes directly to the hypocrisy of those opposite. They consistently gagged debate when they had the numbers in this House. Last sitting they tried but failed to move a gag motion. There are no saints over there when it comes to attempting to manipulate and control the timing of discussions.

On this side of the House we will continue to manage the time of the House so that significant debates occur and so that bills that matter to the community can be passed. I make no apologies for that. I urge all members to support the motion that has been moved.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (11.35 am): There is no end to the arrogance of this government when it comes to dealing with the proceedings of this House. We have seen a perfect example of that now with the Minister for Health trying to throw an accusation of gagging at us when they come in here every single sitting week and gag every debate in this place. It is a disgrace.

We should not expect anything less from a government that changed the voting system with 18-minutes notice. Who can forget that. That was a shameful act when it comes to changing our voting system. Who can forget the surprise move by the Deputy Premier in the 55th Parliament when she came in at nine o'clock one Thursday night—that is, when we used to sit past 6.30 on a Thursday—and tried to bring on debate of the vegetation management legislation. There is no end to the arrogance of this mob when it comes to dealing with the business of this parliament.

They changed the name of the Lady Cilento hospital with a dodgy poll. They have taken an axe to the ability of police to protect our people from criminals in our communities. We had a very sad example of that in Beaudesert this week. We will see the further emasculation of local government through the laws that will be debated in this House. This government is dodgy. It is dodgy in the way it deals with this parliament and its proceedings. All members of the Labor Party should hang their heads in shame for supporting their executive members who come in here every week and treat this parliament with arrogance and contempt.

We on this side of the House never thought we would have to stand up so much for the ability of every MP to speak on every single bill they want to speak on. This is the second time in four months that I have had to contribute to the Business Committee motion and defend my right to speak on behalf of all my constituents on every single bill that I wish to speak on. There will no doubt be many members who this week will not get time to speak on the local government bills because there is not enough debate time allowed. That is an absolute disgrace. We all have local governments. They are very important to us. We should be able to speak on those bills.

We are subject to this government charade every single week. The government comes in here under the pretence of managing this place efficiently and gags members from doing their jobs and representing their communities. I think those opposite have learnt a bit from their communist and socialist colleagues around the world. This is the sort of thing that Chairman Mao and his Chinese Communist Party would be proud of. They institutionalised the blocking of dissent and the fact that people cannot speak their own views and have freedom of speech. That is what those opposite do every single sitting week. They block us from addressing the issues that matter to our constituents. It is an attack on our freedom of speech.

**Mr Furner** interjected.

**Mr KRAUSE:** I hear the member for Ferny Grove, the 'minister for foodlots', speaking up now, but most of the time he does not even know what he is talking about when it comes to his portfolio. It is okay if we are gagging him, I suppose. He does not contribute much to the debate most of the time anyway.

There are serious matters that need to be discussed in this parliament this week. This gag motion, this institutionalised gag motion, shows the arrogance and contempt with which the Labor government and the Labor Party in Queensland treat Queenslanders. They have no respect for the institution of parliament when it comes to allowing members to do their job.

I do not support this motion. I will never support a motion like this because the very principle of it is about denying the rights of members to exercise their freedom of speech. We should all reject that. Labor members should reject that too if they knew what was good for them and if they had in their heart the true democracy of our country, but they do not because they have socialist tendencies, authoritarian tendencies, and we see that every day in the parliament with this business motion. This motion should be rejected.

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

**AYES, 45:**

**ALP, 45—**Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, 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.

**NOES, 42:**

**LNP, 36—**Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

**Grn, 1—**Berkman.

**KAP, 2—**Dametto, Katter.

**PHON, 1—**Andrew.

**Ind, 2—**Bolton, Costigan.

Pair: Dick, Stuckey.

Resolved in the affirmative.



**MOTION****Order of Business**

**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.45 am): I move—

That government business order of the day No. 1 be postponed.

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

**AYES, 47:**

**ALP, 45**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Lynham, Madden, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Miller, Mullen, B. O'Rourke, C. O'Rourke, Palaszcuk, Pease, Pegg, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Stewart, Trad, Whiting.

**Grn, 1**—Berkman.

**Ind, 1**—Bolton.

**NOES, 40:**

**LNP, 36**—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

**KAP, 2**—Dametto, Katter.

**PHON, 1**—Andrew.

**Ind, 1**—Costigan.

Pair: Dick, Stuckey.

Resolved in the affirmative.

**POLICE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION (DISCIPLINE REFORM) AND OTHER  
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

Resumed from 13 February (see p. 141).

**Second Reading**

**Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services) (11.51 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I start by thanking the Economics and Governance Committee for its detailed examination of the Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. On 12 April this year, the committee tabled its report about the bill which included only one recommendation; namely, that this bill be passed. I thank the committee for its support of the bill.

I also thank participants in the committee process. In particular, I acknowledge the efforts of then Acting Deputy Commissioner Wright, Assistant Commissioner Cowden, Chief Superintendent Horton and the members of the Queensland Police Service who participated in the public briefing to the committee. At the public briefing the committee heard from Mr Alan MacSporran QC, Chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission, who has made an invaluable contribution to the development of this bill.

Mr MacSporran corresponded with the chair of the Economics and Governance Committee requesting an amendment during consideration in detail to resolve an issue concerning the existing part 7A of the Police Service Administration Act 1990. I am advised that this correspondence was not received by the committee until after the tabling of the committee report. The chair of the committee corresponded with me, asking that I consider the issue and respond during the second reading debate and/or the consideration in detail stage.

I have considered the matters raised by the CCC chair and the views of relevant stakeholders. I am pleased to advise that once again key stakeholders have worked collaboratively in good faith to address the issue raised by the CCC chair. The process to design and implement the new police discipline system through this bill has been an example of how organisations can work together, find

common ground and achieve outcomes that are in the best interests of the community and the police. I propose to move amendments to the bill during the consideration in detail stage of the bill. These amendments relate to the Crime and Corruption Act 2001 and the Police Service Administration Act 1990. The proposed amendments will be circulated in my name, and the chair of the CCC will brief relevant members today about these amendments in the same spirit of bipartisanship that has shaped this bill.

Firstly, I will deal with the proposed amendments to the Crime and Corruption Act 2001. Part 7A of the Police Service Administration Act 1990 deals with the making of discipline declarations against former members of the Queensland Police Service in relation to a complaint or grounds for a complaint that arose prior to those officers leaving the employment of the Queensland Police Service. This part was not contemplated in the drafting of the bill.

The making of a disciplinary declaration against a former officer under part 7A commences upon the Queensland Police Service forming the view that an allegation against a former officer is of sufficient seriousness to warrant the making of a disciplinary declaration. The chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission expressed concerns that the existing part 7A does not allow the Crime and Corruption Commission to review a Queensland Police Service decision not to commence the process to determine whether a disciplinary declaration should be made.

I have been advised by both the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Corruption Commission that this issue has not arisen to the knowledge of any of the relevant parties prior to, or since, the examination of the bill by the committee. Regardless of the fact that any disagreement between the QPS and the CCC about whether part 7A proceedings should commence would be infrequent, this bill provides an opportunity to resolve the issue and futureproof the new police discipline system. The amendments that I propose to move are similar in effect and in line with other provisions already contained in the bill.

The bill implements recommendation 15 of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee report No. 97 titled *Review of the Crime and Corruption Commission* tabled 30 June 2016 by providing the CCC with an ability to apply for QCAT review of a Queensland Police Service decision not to commence disciplinary proceedings under part 7 of the Police Service Administration Act 1990. The proposed amendment will ensure that the Queensland Police Service decision-making processes for both former and current officers are able to be reviewed before QCAT and enhance the oversight ability of the CCC.

The procedural requirements introduced by the amendments for review of such decisions is consistent with the approach being taken in the bill to implement recommendation 15 of the PCCC report I referred to earlier. The amendments will ensure that the Queensland Police Service provides advice to the CCC of a decision under part 7A not to issue a notice to commence the formal disciplinary declaration process. After this advice is received the CCC will have 28 days to determine whether they will review the matter in QCAT or not. If the CCC determines it is appropriate to apply for review of the decision, the CCC must provide notice of the application for review to both the Queensland Police Service and the relevant former officer. The Queensland Police Service will automatically be a party to the QCAT review, and if the former officer so elects they will also become a party to the proceeding.

QCAT will be able to either uphold or set aside the original decision of the Queensland Police Service not to issue a notice to the former officer commencing the disciplinary declaration process. If QCAT upholds the CCC review and sets aside the Queensland Police Service decision, the matter must be returned to the Queensland Police Service with a direction to issue the required notice within six months under section 7A.3 to commence the disciplinary declaration process. By moving these amendments to the bill this government has quickly responded to concerns raised by the CCC chair. Again, it must be noted that stakeholders have worked hard to ensure a workable solution was designed to overcome this identified issue and provide consistencies with the other clauses of the bill.

I will now address the second amendment, being an amendment to the definition of 'relevant criminal proceeding' contained in clause 9 of the bill, specifically in draft section 7.12(4) 'When disciplinary proceedings must be started'. Proposed section 7.12 sets out the time frames in which disciplinary proceedings must ordinarily be started. Normally, this will be within one year from the date the ground for disciplinary action arises or six months from the date the Queensland Police Service or the CCC receives the complaint, whichever is the later. However, the bill provided that if a relevant criminal proceeding is commenced against a person, any discipline proceeding is delayed and must be commenced within six months of the criminal proceedings being finally dealt with.

The ongoing trial of the new police discipline system highlighted that, in order to achieve a fair and more efficient outcome for officers and people who make complaints about police conduct, the definition of 'relevant criminal proceeding' should be restricted slightly. The proposed amendment limits the definition of 'relevant criminal proceeding' in subparagraph 4 from 'a person' to criminal proceedings brought against a subject officer or another member of the service or a former officer. The proposed amendment will ensure that the investigation and any disciplinary proceeding must be commenced within the ordinary time frames provided in section 7.12 unless an officer, other member of the service or former officer is the person charged with a criminal offence.

This ensures a more timely resolution of matters for subject officers and also ensures that, in matters where the police have charged a person with a criminal offence and that person makes a complaint against the police officers involved, such complaint must be investigated and dealt with within the ordinary time frames. This proposed amendment has the support of the Queensland Police Service, the CCC and both unions representing our police officers. It is also relevant to note that the proposed amendment will closely align with a recommendation made by the Bar Association of Queensland in its submission to the committee.

I return to the major aspects of the bill. To give this bill its proper context, I will comment on its origins. In 2016, Mr MacSporran facilitated a bipartisan meeting of relevant stakeholders, including members from the government and opposition, the Queensland Police Service and both police unions to start the process of reforming the police discipline system. This process was bipartisan throughout its entire course. Through the cooperation of these stakeholders, a memorandum of understanding that reflects the principles that underlie the reforms in this bill was formed. While this bill was being developed and drafted, stakeholders were continually consulted and had the opportunity to provide input. I am pleased to say that the spirit of the memorandum of understanding is enlivened by this bill.

It is also worth noting that this bill was introduced and examined by this House 30 years after the landmark Fitzgerald report was delivered. This bill represents the most significant change that has occurred internally to the Police Service in the intervening 30 years. It is also a reflection of the maturing of the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Corruption Commission during that period. The need for reform of the police discipline system is obvious from the fact that it has been virtually unchanged since it was implemented as a response to the Fitzgerald report. A period of 30 years without change or modernisation is a long time in any organisation.

Mr MacSporran has commented that this bill is a highly relevant piece of work that will ultimately completely reform the flawed system that we have had in the past and that it will address issues, such as timeliness, fairness and consistency, that have dogged the police discipline system for decades. I consider Mr MacSporran, as the chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission, to be in a unique position to judge the value of these amendments. As his organisation provides oversight of both the police and the public sector, he has provided invaluable insight into the improvements that should be made to the practices and processes of our police discipline system. Accordingly, his comments and his support of the bill should be given much weight. Mr MacSporran acknowledged the cost to the community of training our police officers and provided context around an important facet of the police discipline system proposed by this bill when he stated—

Fundamentally relevant to its reform process is the notion that the investment in the training and equipping of a police officer is a significant investment for taxpayers, that if the conduct is not so serious as to warrant dismissal from the service every attempt should be made and will be made under these proposals to correct bad behaviour, to have the officer gain some insight and to become once more a valuable member of the service. If you can save them they should be saved, if the conduct is so serious that they fundamentally undermine confidence in the service they should be weeded out and for that purpose some of the sanctions will be ultimately more serious than those in the past.

This bill moves our police discipline system from a model that only imposed punitive measures to a model that corrects, instructs and enhances officer behaviour. This change not only improves the performance of affected individual officers but benefits the Queensland Police Service and the broader community. This improvement is one of many that will enhance the practices and processes of the proposed police discipline system.


Another important initiative is the abbreviated disciplinary proceedings, the ADP. Rather than always conducting full disciplinary hearing proceedings, the ADP process allows a prescribed officer, with the approval of the CCC, to invite a subject officer to quickly and efficiently resolve a matter. The ADP process is not a light-touch option. The ADP process is not limited to low-level complaints, as it may be used in serious complaints where the circumstances are known and the subject officer admits to his or her offending conduct, and the discipline sanction that can be imposed can be severe. Further, any disciplinary sanction may be imposed at the conclusion of the ADP process.

However, simply focusing on the disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed through the ADP process causes an important aspect of this process to be overlooked. The ADP process can only work with the cooperation and participation of the subject officer with the prescribed officer. This leads to the subject officer gaining insight into his or her own behaviour, learning from his or her mistakes and maximising his or her ability to return to appropriate behaviour.

As testament to the confidence in the ADP process, since last year a trial has been conducted that illustrates the potential benefits of the ADP process. As of 1 October this year, 78 subject officers were offered ADP. Of those, 48 accepted ADP and their matters have been finalised, 12 were still active, and in 18 instances the ADP process was considered inappropriate due to a lack of agreement between the parties. Although it is difficult to quantify the efficiencies gained by this trial, the ADP process resolved more than 50 per cent of complaints before it without requiring a full disciplinary hearing and no appeals were necessary. It is evident, on the face of it, that the ADP process dramatically streamlines the police discipline system and enhances efficiencies. The trial has been successful, with representatives from both the Queensland Police Service and the CCC praising the ADP process and emphasising its value.

Mr MacSporran, in his comments before the Economics and Governance Committee, highlighted that the independence of stakeholders is a fundamental component of the police discipline system. He emphasised that the CCC jealously guards its independence in this process. Similarly, then Acting Deputy Commissioner Wright commented that the State Discipline Office, under his command, is independent of the Ethical Standards Command. This independence is important. It ensures integrity and accountability within the police discipline system and promotes confidence in the system by subject officers and the community alike. To assist in maintaining this independence, the bill establishes a police discipline system that is balanced and fair by ensuring decisions may be appropriately reviewed by the CCC and QCAT. We are fortunate in this state to have a professional police service in which we place our trust to protect our community.

I reinforce my earlier comments on this point—the overwhelming majority of police officers perform an incredibly difficult job with honesty and integrity. These police officers have earned our respect, but this respect has to be guarded with eternal vigilance to ensure a police discipline system that is robust, effective and fair and one that ensures community confidence in the Queensland Police Service can be met and maintained. I believe this bill achieves this objective and is a testament to what can be achieved through stakeholder cooperation and collaboration. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (12.09 pm): I rise to speak on the Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The LNP welcomes the bill, which encapsulates a revised police discipline system. It has been negotiated with bipartisan support, and I acknowledge that. Bringing forward this bill today means that the briefing I will receive on the amendment will happen shortly after I finish speaking. I have had a look through it and there does not seem to be anything controversial. However, in the spirit of bipartisanship it would have been helpful to have had the briefing prior to speaking on the bill.

Public confidence in the QPS is paramount. I want to make it absolutely clear that nothing can be more important than the safety of our citizens, and the thin blue line that guards that safety is valued by us all in this House, most particularly those on our side. I would also say that thin blue line must be held to high account in terms of its ethics, its accountability and its behaviour.

Discipline within the ranks is fundamental, and we know that the majority of officers on all occasions operate with integrity and ethics in diligently making sure our community is safe. For those who do not, there needs to be a robust system. It needs to be robust in such a way that the public have confidence in it and the police know that it is a fair and just system if someone makes accusations against them. Importantly this process has been widely put together with the various stakeholders.

The QPS play an integral role and do an outstanding job in keeping the Queensland community safe. All too often they are very busy tackling crime, keeping offenders off our streets and investigating offences to ensure those who commit horrendous crimes are held to account. While the vast majority of those officers do the right thing, as I have said, there will always be a very small percentage who do not. I acknowledge the minister's words around what Mr MacSporran had to say in relation to the cost of training being a substantial part. If the disciplinary breach is something that can be managed within the system and a learning can be provided, that is a good thing. I will quote Mr MacSporran. He stated—

... the notion that the investment in the training and equipping of a police officer is a significant investment for taxpayers, that if the conduct is not so serious as to warrant dismissal from the service every attempt should be made and will be made under these proposals to correct bad behaviour—

and that part is very important. The people of Queensland need to know that that bad behaviour is not accepted. Just because they have not been dismissed, it is not accepted; it will be corrected. He goes on—

to have the officer gain some insight and to become once more a valuable member of the service.

Those are Mr MacSporran's words and I think it is very important that they are heard here.

Whether it be improper conduct or conduct which stems from the officer acting in a private capacity, it is imperative that all conduct that does not meet community expectations is investigated thoroughly. It is my view that this bill will give the community greater confidence in this investigative process and will help meet the standards the community reasonably expects of a police officer.

I appreciate the objective of the bill, which is to provide efficiencies in the investigation of complaints and hearing of allegations and suitably discipline officers while at the same time ensuring the public's confidence in the QPS is maintained. Might I say in my role as opposition spokesperson we get a lot of people who have had issues with the police come to our office. The process that has been in place for discipline has been wanting. Again, I think this is a good step forward for the Police Service.

The bill sets out to achieve greater disciplinary measures including reducing the delays in finalising disciplinary investigations, and this is very, very important. We have officers who spend years waiting to find out what is going to happen to their career. This is a narrow career path where someone has specialty skills and training. Under the current system it can drag on and that can be quite distressing not only for the officer but also for their families. Reducing delays in finalising the disciplinary investigations I think is very, very important.

Modernising the disciplinary sanctions that can be imposed upon a subject officer is also important. The bill will also: formalise the role and range of management strategies available as part of the disciplinary process and address review provisions that apply to the CCC. The key thing that I mentioned before is reducing delays. The bill reduces delays by establishing time frames for the instigation of disciplinary proceedings and the finalisation of investigations. The bill also enhances the efficiency of the investigation process and disciplinary proceedings by the introduction of an abbreviated disciplinary process, or ADP. It allows the prescribed officer, with the permission of the CCC and at any time during the investigation, to invite the subject officer to participate in the ADP.

Modernising the disciplinary sanctions that can be imposed upon a subject officer is also a key component. The bill modernises the disciplinary sanctions that can be imposed upon a subject officer. I support this modernisation as it sends a clear message that those very few police officers who do the wrong thing will be held to account in line with the expectations of the Queensland community. The disciplinary sanctions will include dismissal, which is also currently available; suspension from duty without pay for a period not exceeding 12 months, which is a new provision; disciplinary probation, which is also new; demotion permanently, which is also available currently; demotion for a stated period, which is a new provision; comprehensive transfer; local transfer; performance of up to 100 hours of community service; increasing the maximum fine from two penalty units to 50 penalty units; and a reprimand.

There are some significant changes that will allow the police discipline to be administered in a fair way that meets the community expectations and treats the officer with respect if they have been found to need those disciplinary sanctions without limiting their career. The bill omits the current available sanction of a reduction in the officer's level of salary within their current rank and forfeiture or deferment of a salary increment or increase.

The bill provides for educational activities and development opportunities that may assist in improving an officer's professionalism or minimising the risk of analogous behaviour occurring in the future. It does so by inserting a new section 7.3, which formalises professional development strategies—the PDS—in the new police disciplinary process by allowing the commissioner to impose a professional development strategy on an officer in response to a complaint as a risk mitigation strategy to improve the officer's performance.

Importantly, the bill amends the powers of the CCC. For example, the CCC can assume responsibility for, and complete investigations into, police misconduct. The bill simply removes 'breach of discipline' and replaces this with the term 'ground for disciplinary action'. 'Misconduct' will remain as a distinct ground for disciplinary action. The bill gives the CCC the power to apply for review of a QPS

decision not to institute disciplinary proceedings against an officer. This bill strikes a balance between enhancing efficiencies within the police disciplinary framework and setting appropriate disciplinary sanctions for those who need to be held to account for their actions.

This bill has bipartisan support from the LNP and all key stakeholders. That is really important, because the institution of the QPS is so important to the governance of Queensland that all stakeholders were involved, including the Police Service, the Queensland Police Union of Employees, the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union of Employees, government representatives and representatives of the legal fraternity. It is important that everybody was able to land in one spot and agree on the details of this bill. All stakeholders welcome the reform of the police disciplinary system, agreeing that the changes will likely result in a fairer and more effective disciplinary process for the QPS.

Whilst the Bar Association of Queensland supports the bill, it raised concerns about the new professional development strategies and submitted that, while professional development strategies were intended to be included in a subject officer's disciplinary history, this was not made explicit in the bill. The definition of 'disciplinary history' in the new section is silent, yet the new section 11.25(2) creates a strong inference that the PDS would be included. Further, the BAQ discussed practical examples, such as where members have often used a police officer's disciplinary history in criminal trials to support a client's allegations of inappropriate conduct by a police officer.

While I will not oppose the bill, I note concerns raised by stakeholders that referred to one objective of this bill—to improve a police officer's performance. How can a police officer focus on improving their performance while struggling to cope with inadequate policing numbers, increasing crime and having their budget cut as a percentage of the overall budget—

**Mr RYAN:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The bill is for particular purposes. It relates to police discipline. Not only are the matters that the member is straying into irrelevant to this debate; they are not based on fact as well.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Weir): Member for Toowoomba North, I would ask you to stay to the title of the bill.

**Mr WATTS:** Certainly, Mr Deputy Speaker. What we are talking about is police discipline and the ability of police to have the resources to do their job. Obviously, it is very important. It is to make sure that nobody tries to take a short cut or change a process in trying to save some time resource. So I think the staffing numbers of police are relevant and the amount of the Queensland budget allocated to the Police Service is relevant.

**Mr RYAN:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is the same point of order. You made a very clear ruling and the member has now strayed back on to the very same subject that you ruled him to ignore.


**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am listening very closely and you are starting to stray outside the long title of the bill. I will ask you to come back to the long title of the bill, if you would.

**Mr WATTS:** I thought I had made it clear that the reason this is relevant is that discipline is a fundamental key component of the—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Toowoomba North, you have made that point. I would ask you to move on, please.

**Mr WATTS:** What we see in Queensland is a great Police Service, one that the community respects. I believe that this bill will enhance that and ensure that police officers who find themselves under investigation are dealt with in a timely, effective and efficient manner. That is very important, particularly when we see the police budget under pressure and crime rising here in Queensland. It is very important that the police know that this House supports them having an efficient and effective discipline code.

I look forward to the briefing on the amendments—which should happen shortly after I finish speaking—but in the spirit of bipartisanship we will support the bill. On my brief reading of the amendments this morning I saw nothing that changes that. I thank all parties, including the committee, that reviewed this process. In particular, I thank the stakeholders who spent a lot of time making sure that this system is fair for the community of Queensland. I reiterate that. Not only does it have to be a good quality system; it also must show the people of Queensland that their Police Service is held to high account. At the same time, the bill strikes a good balance in ensuring police officers are not left hanging with their careers on tenterhooks while a complaint is investigated. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (12.25 pm): It is a privilege for me to talk to this bill today. I thank the chair of the Economics and Governance Committee, the member for Logan, for his deliberations and for the opportunities at that inquiry. I also thank all members of the committee, because in that room was more brass than in the Perth mint! It was just wonderful to see them all agree on a way forward to protect the strong reputation that our Queensland police force has and deserves.

This bill, which we support, will further enshrine a better way forward to deal with disciplinary matters that arise from time to time. In any organisation—dare I say, even amongst parliamentarians—disciplinary matters come to the fore. As a person from the Gold Coast, I have seen quite a few matters in the force there come to the fore. They must be dealt with expeditiously and quickly to keep the high integrity required of the police and the respect the community has for our police. This respect has fallen away noticeably—if members watch the news and see that the way some people react to directions from the police. This disciplinary process must and will improve the perception and the regard in which we hold our Queensland police force in Queensland society.

I commend all of the groups for their participation. I mention the Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Police Union of Employees. Of course, Mr Levers is doing a wonderful job. The Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union of Employees, government representatives and representatives of the legal fraternity all collaborated as well. Of course, the chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission, Mr MacSporran, is to be congratulated on bringing direction and assistance to a better outcome and delivery of timely disciplinary matters to the police force.


As we heard earlier from the minister and the opposition spokesperson, the artificial distinction between the two categories of breach of discipline and misconduct, under which behaviours are categorised in the current system, has been split. Rather than ongoing, long, drawn-out 'I said, she said' fights through the disciplinary system, there is a clear pathway for matters that have been proven and for officers to accept a punishment that they regard as reasonable and fair for their misdemeanour, if you like. This is not to say that misconduct issues are not dealt with in another fashion, of course—and rightly so—but we are looking at a force of around 11,000 people in Queensland of whom 99 per cent would act appropriately and with good intent at all times in the highest possible manner.

With 11,000 members, from time to time issues will be raised, some unintentionally. Police officers work in highly charged areas under great stress. I cannot imagine what it is like to be called to domestic issues, which are high on the agenda of the police force at the moment. I do not know how they get treated. What about some of the vile acts committed on them? How are they expected to respond in a very contained manner to those particular issues?

In terms of discipline, this legislation will be a map to show where they can expect their behaviour to be treated in a fair and equitable manner in a very short period. We do not want people taking stress leave because their case has not been dealt with for a long time. We want matters clearly defined and clearly determined. We want the reputation of the police force upheld to the highest degree and cleaned up as quickly as possible should matters arise.

A matter arose through a case such that the CCC required this bill not to come to the House—I think that was fair—so that appropriate amendments could be made. The minister outlined that in his second reading speech. I think that is appropriate. We should get the best legislation possible out of this House. While it was a reasonable time ago that the committee examined this bill, it is now in better shape as it comes to the House for consideration. I am very pleased that we as a parliament are supporting this legislation together, that we as a parliament are supporting our police with the best possible outcome and that we as a parliament recognise the important role our Police Service plays in our communities in keeping standards as high as possible. On that basis I will be supporting this bill 100 per cent. I join with all other members in the House in recognising this good piece of legislation.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Weir): Honourable members, I wish to acknowledge the attendance in the public gallery this afternoon of members from the following community groups: from the Algester electorate, National Seniors groups from Calamvale and Browns Plains, Greenbank RSL, Algester and Browns Plains men's sheds, and Algester men's and women's bowls clubs; and from the Inala electorate, the Forest Lake National Seniors and the Forest Lake Men's Shed.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (12.32 pm): I rise to speak in support of this legislation. At the conclusion of my speech I will recommend that the House supports the passing of this legislation. The bill achieves its objectives by repealing the Police Service (Discipline) Regulations 1990 and amending the following acts: the Crime and Corruption Act 2001, the Evidence Act 1977, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the Police Service Administration Act. As the minister said in his introductory speech, 30 years ago Mr Fitzgerald asked us to remain eternally vigilant so that history does not repeat itself here in Queensland. The bill builds on the work of Mr Fitzgerald.

I often have a lot to do with the hardworking police from the Upper Mount Gravatt Police Station. I also have a lot to do with the hardworking police liaison officers, who work very hard to ensure that people whose first language is not English feel safe in our community. They often struggle to understand how our criminal justice system works and the interrelationship between the judiciary and the police. I know how hard these great officers take it when one of their own does not live up to the high standard the community expects of our serving police officers. That is why it is important that there is legislation that deals with police officers who fall short in their integrity and honesty—a system that affords natural justice to the police officer whose behaviour has not been of the standard expected of the community.

Being a lawyer for almost 30 years now, I have had a lot of contact with the Queensland Police Service. I can honestly say that the police I have dealt with during these years have been honest, hardworking and fair, even though I know that their role is completely different from my role as a defence lawyer. I know how hard these officers take it when one of their own falls short of the standard expected by our community.

It is very important for both serving police officers and the community that there is legislation that is robust in dealing with police disciplinary matters. Without robust legislation and without a comprehensive and effective police discipline system, there is a risk of the community's confidence in our police force being eroded. Without robust legislation, police officers may not be held accountable for their actions. Prevention is important, so robust legislation encourages police officers to behave appropriately.

This bill is the result of a 2015 state election commitment to review the police discipline system and implement a new system that ensures accountability and fairness for police officers and the communities the police officers serve. The bill is a result of the hard work of the chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission, who headed the review of the police discipline system. Consultation on the bill was held through a series of roundtable talks with the Queensland Police Union of Employees, the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union of Employees, government legal representatives, representatives of the legal profession and members of the opposition. The results were historic and more than 20 years in the making. The result was bipartisan support from all of these stakeholders. It was through these discussions and a united determination to make a difference that we reached this watershed moment.

The impact that this bill and the associated Police Service policy will have on the current discipline system will be profound. This will be a defining moment in the evolution of the Queensland Police Service. This bill heralds major structural changes within the Police Service and new management practices that are designed to correct, instruct and improve officer behaviour. All this is set against the backdrop of a more mobile, agile, borderless policing model that takes Queenslanders to a safer future.

A subject officer or the Crime and Corruption Commission may apply to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal to review a prescribed officer's decision about an allegation of misconduct. However, the CCC is unable to apply for a review of a prescribed officer's decision not to commence a disciplinary hearing. This could include circumstances where the prescribed officer decides there is insufficient evidence to commence a proceeding or there is only sufficient evidence to substantiate a breach of discipline instead of misconduct.

This bill addresses those shortcomings through three distinct measures. Firstly, the bill introduces a new term 'grounds for disciplinary action'. Grounds for disciplinary action include police behaviour that would be either a breach of discipline or misconduct. Removing the artificial distinction between a breach of discipline and misconduct simplifies the police discipline system as the ability to review a decision will no longer be dependent on how the behaviour is categorised. This bill will allow the CCC to apply to QCAT to review all disciplinary decisions including the decision not to institute disciplinary proceedings against an officer. This measure strengthens the CCC's ability to monitor the Queensland Police Service's handling of complaints about police officers and ensures there is no mishandling of matters.

The third measure introduced by this bill involves establishing a central unit responsible for conducting disciplinary proceedings. The purpose of the central unit will be to deal with those disciplinary proceedings that are of such a serious nature that sanctions may only be imposed by an officer of the rank of deputy commissioner or assistant commissioner. Forming a central unit to conduct these proceedings will improve efficiency in disciplinary hearings and promote consistency in the decisions that are made. Additionally, the referral of discipline matters to this unit allows other deputy commissioners or assistant commissioners from around the state more opportunity to focus on other priority policing and responsibilities in their region or in their commands.



The bill also fundamentally changes the police discipline system by making amendments that reduce delays in finalising discipline investigations, modernises the discipline sanctions that can be imposed against an officer and formalises the role and range of management strategies that form part of the discipline process. With regard to abbreviated disciplinary proceedings, the bill modernises the disciplinary sanctions that can be imposed against an officer. It is important to note that the current sanctions have not been updated since 1990, almost 30 years ago. They are limited in scope, inflexible and do not necessarily address the cause of any deficiency in behaviour. There are also concerns about some unintended consequences of the current sanctions, which reduce an officer's pay level. Such a reduction can have impacts beyond the intended sanction by reducing long-term superannuation outcomes.

The bill omits current sections affecting an officer's level of salary. Instead, it implements a range of new disciplinary sanctions including suspension from duty without pay for a period not exceeding 12 months, disciplinary probation and demotion for a specific period in addition to the current permanent demotion sanction, localised transfer, community service and an increase in the maximum fine from two penalty units to 50 penalty units. This new range of disciplinary sanctions provides more options for dealing with inappropriate behaviour and includes options to help prevent a recurrence of the behaviour and to guide, correct and rehabilitate officers. It is important to note that dismissal still remains an option to deal with the most serious instances of inappropriate behaviour.

To further support the goal of preventing inappropriate behaviours from reoccurring in the future, the bill formalises professional development strategies such as mentoring, closer supervision, additional training, counselling, guidance or temporary reassignment of duties in the new police disciplinary system. The new legislation when introduced will include a professional development strategy. The formalisation of professional development strategies in the new police discipline process will provide avenues for risk mitigation to occur while complaints are investigated and provide avenues to ensure officers undertake development strategies. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (12.42 pm): Today I rise to speak in support of the Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and to relate some of the issues that the bill seeks to address to the part of the Gold Coast that I represent. I was proud to be part of the committee that undertook the report into this bill—the Economics and Governance Committee—and I thank my fellow committee members and, of course, the wonderful secretariat staff. The overwhelming majority of police officers in Queensland do a fantastic job in that they are dedicated to their duties, they believe in making our community safer for everyone and they put themselves on the line to do that, and I am sure that that is a sentiment that all members of this House would agree with. For those very few who do not have this ethic and put their own needs before those of the community, it is imperative that we have systems in place to deal with them swiftly and efficiently, demonstrating to the public that our Police Service has integrity and can be trusted.

The amendments in this bill bring the disciplinary system up to date to ensure that people are held to account for their actions. The current system has been under numerous reviews by the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Corruption Commission, which found that there was a lack of public confidence, outdated resources and a lack of consistency when it came to police discipline. Through the support of all stakeholders involved, the bill makes significant improvements to the police disciplinary system. These amendments modernise and expand the range of disciplinary sanctions, reducing time frames and formalising educational activities to improve performance. These changes will help ensure that members of the QPS adhere to the highest standards of conduct so that the Queensland public can continue to trust and have confidence in their Police Service.

The reduction in time frames for these issues is an essential part. These matters need to be dealt with swiftly to communicate the seriousness of breaches by officers. It ensures the right outcome is reached without unnecessary delay, freeing our police resources to go to the right areas. The provision to ensure current operations are not compromised is a helpful clarification and puts community safety as a top priority. The modernisation of the discipline sanctions is important to keep them realistic and beneficial for all concerned, as are the educational opportunities provided. However, one of the bill's objectives is to improve police officers' performance and it has to be recognised that one of the biggest things that could aid this is for more personnel on the ground. As I said, the vast majority of our officers work hard every day for the benefit and protection of our communities. They do all of this despite having very limited resources at their disposal. I have heard repeated stories from residents in my part of the Gold Coast who have ongoing issues in their neighbourhoods and struggle to get the required police presence.

**Mr POWER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is disappointing that someone on the committee, who should know the long title of the bill, does not know that this is outside the long title of the bill. You have already ruled on this. I think this is disrespectful.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Weir): Member for Bonney, I draw your attention to the long title of the bill.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. These people have been told by police at their local station that they are aware of issues and aware of crimes happening but do not have the resources to get out there. I have had residents tell me that they feel helpless. They appreciate the efforts of the police—

**Mr RYAN:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, you have made a number of rulings already. The member was in the House when you made those rulings. You made a ruling only five seconds ago and the member is still venturing in areas that you have warned him to avoid. I ask you to make a ruling on relevance.


**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I ask the member to come back to the long title of the bill regarding disciplinary procedures.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. One of the main objectives of the amendments in the bill is to improve police performance, but police performance is going to continue to stall without adequate numbers to keep our community safe. We need more police on the Gold Coast and we needed them yesterday. I firmly believe the amendments in the bill are required. However, it is important to remember that, while we expect our police officers to hold themselves to the highest conduct, they expect the Queensland government to allocate the resources they require to do their jobs efficiently.

**Mr POWER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. This is now the fourth time that he has ignored your directions. I would ask you to sit the member down. This is disgraceful.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you for your point of order, member for Logan. Member for Bonney, you do remember the long title of the bill. I would ask you to come back or otherwise we will go too far.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Much appreciated, Mr Deputy Speaker. They do not like to hear those criticisms, do they? I will conclude by saying that if we want our police to improve their performance they need the government to also improve its performance to back them up.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (12.47 pm): Today I am pleased to stand before the House and provide my support to the Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I recall that the support for a complete review and reform of the police disciplinary process was a 2015 election commitment by the Labor Party and since that time there have been years of negotiation and work to bring this bill to the House.

The origins of policing in Australia can be directly drawn from our English roots. Policing 101 can tell us that our model of policing comes from Peelian principles endorsed upon the establishment of the Metropolitan Police in 1829. Many of the nine principles can be distilled into the simple concept of policing by consent—that is to say that the power of police to fulfil their duties is dependent upon public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour and on a police service's ability to secure and maintain public respect.

One of the key policy objectives of this bill is to ensure that the public's confidence in the Queensland Police Service is maintained. People need to know that those who are entrusted to uphold the law are themselves subject to a functioning, robust and ultimately fair discipline system. It is also imperative from a morale perspective that the police officers subject to that same discipline system also have faith in it. Despite a number of wideranging reviews into police disciplinary processes and many recommendations, the necessary cooperation and consensus from stakeholders to implement such recommendations had long since been lacking. Some of the issues identified in previous reviews included a general lack of public and officer confidence in the current police discipline system, the unnecessarily long time frames it takes to investigate and resolve complaints, discipline sanctions that are primarily punitive in nature, and a perceived lack of consistency in imposed sanctions.

The measures contained in this bill that I will focus on today are the modernising and expanding of the range of disciplinary sanctions that can be imposed on a subject officer and the introduction of time frames for investigating complaints to reduce delays in finalising discipline investigations. Firstly, I

turn to the increased options to be made available when imposing discipline sanctions. I note that, currently, the disciplinary sanctions that could be imposed upon a subject officer have not been updated since the Police Service Administration Act was first enacted in 1990. These sanctions are considered to be limited in scope, inflexible and do not in any way seek to address or remediate the cause of behaviour that led to the sanction. They are purely punitive in nature.

This bill will seek to provide a wider range of penalties that are more appropriate to the wide range of behaviour subject to disciplinary sanctions. Sanctions that remain include reprimand, demotion and, ultimately dismissal, but sanctions involving monetary fines have also been expanded and now range from two penalty units to 50. New sanctions that may be considered and imposed include suspension from duty without pay for up to 12 months, disciplinary probation for up to 12 months, demotion for a specified period, a comprehensive transfer, local transfers and performance of up to 100 hours of community service. Sanctions of salary reductions and deferments of salary increases have been removed as options. This was considered disproportionate considering the superannuation implications in comparison to the breach committed.

I will make comment and provide specific support for the new sanction option that seeks to address the underlying causes of behaviour subject to the disciplinary process. It costs a lot of money, and is a substantial investment of public money, to train police officers. It takes years to train a police officer to a level of experience that makes them effective investigators and even more so when they specialise in one of the hundreds of specialty fields within the organisation. A disciplinary process should understand that, while an officer may err and be subject to a disciplinary process, they are not irredeemable in all instances. A mature organisation seeks to correct the behaviour of its members and provide opportunity for that correction to manifest itself before it cuts its losses.


This bill formalises the ability of the Queensland Police Service to impose professional development strategies as an adjunct to sanctions as a risk mitigation strategy. I understand that not all complainants appreciate that the sanction imposed does not result in suspension or dismissal and, notwithstanding instances where that may be appropriate, if a service elects for a subject member to continue their service, having that subject member undergo further training and mentoring should give members of the public faith that not only has a penalty been applied for the breach but also steps are being taken to prevent further breaches of discipline.

The most common complaint of people who are engaged in the police disciplinary process regardless of whether they are the subject member or the member of the public who makes the complaint is the time it takes to investigate and finalise such complaints. Many submissions outlined stories of internal investigations that went on for protracted periods to the detriment of not only the subject member and victim where applicable but also the subject member's family and the officer's workplace generally. The time frames imposed by new section 7.12 now mean that disciplinary proceedings in relation to a complaint must be commenced within either six months of the complaint being made or within one year from the date that the grounds from which the disciplinary action arises. For officers who are subject to a criminal proceeding, the suspension of an internal process remains so as not to infringe on the natural justice rights of the subject member. However, the disciplinary proceedings must be commenced within six months of the criminal matter being finalised or withdrawn.

This bill establishes the abbreviated disciplinary proceedings process. The ADP is intended for instances where the evidence of the conduct is compelling and the officer admits to the conduct. The option to undergo the ADP may be instigated by either the prescribed officer, with the approval of the CCC, or the subject officer themselves. I will not go into the detail of the processes of the ADP, except to say that it promotes a dialogue between the prescribed officer and the subject officer and transparency of the information being relied upon to substantiate the allegation as well as the subject officer's ability to offer a submission of their own. The process also extends to the sanctions imposed through the ADP. The creation of the central disciplinary unit will also contribute to increasing time frame efficiencies and has an added bonus of increasing the expertise and consistency involved in the disciplinary process.

I would like to commend all stakeholders involved in crafting this bill. As I mentioned earlier, progress on improving the police disciplinary process has been stilted and protracted, but we are here today because of the determination to get this done. The Crime and Corruption Commission, the two relevant police unions and other legal stakeholders have shown how they can work together to the benefit of the community and the police organisation that has the responsibility of keeping that community safe.

As someone who has seen the police disciplinary process up close, both as a colleague and member involved in many workplaces, I can tell members from a personal perspective that the impact of morale on a police disciplinary matter, even on just one member in a station, can have a broad effect and impact on everyone else who goes to work in that station. I find it absolutely abhorrent that someone would then attempt to try to excuse breaches of police disciplinary processes on staffing numbers. There is no excuse for a police officer who breaches the disciplinary process. We expect our police officers to uphold their oath of service and that oath of service does not mention anything about how many staff there may be at the station. The members of the public expect a first-class police organisation and that is what we have here in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (12.55 pm): I rise to speak to the Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I would like to thank my fellow members of the Economics and Governance Committee for their careful consideration of this bill and for the collaboration and expertise of the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Corruption Commission. This bill has bipartisan support and all key stakeholders, including the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Police Union of Employees, the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union of Employees, government representatives and representatives of the legal fraternity.

I have had personal insight into the need for the systemic changes proposed in this legislation. The current discipline system is overly complex and does not enjoy the confidence of members of the public, nor members of the Police Service. The current discipline proceedings are adversarial and legalistic in nature and do not have a time limit, in some cases taking several years and many resources for an officer simply to be found innocent. The current sanctions are punitive and there are no legalised provisions for professional development, which is paramount to the evolution of all organisations.

All governments must face the challenge of harmonising and stabilising the complex interrelationship between people, privileges and power. The police force is a perfect example of how hard this balancing act can be. The antiquated us-versus-them paradigm embedded in the current discipline system impairs natural justice and due process. We must all have faith and trust that our interests will be protected, especially from the very people charged with our care.

Of the four key areas of change in this long overdue bill, the first and most glaring need is to reduce delays in finalising discipline investigations. The bill does that by legislating time frames for the commencement of proceedings and the finalisation of investigations, which will now be no more than 12 months. The bill also includes the introduction of an abbreviated discipline process—or ADP—for officers who do not challenge the complaint, a cornerstone of the new provisions, which works in concert with the introduction of the professional development strategy as part of a raft of new sanctions.

This bill modernises the suite of discipline sanctions that can be imposed on a subject officer, building upon the existing sanctions of reprimand, permanent demotion and dismissal. There has been concern raised about the extremity of measures and the far-reaching distance between them in addition to the inconsistencies with which they have been applied to similar breaches in conduct throughout the service. The new sanctions introduce a fairer sliding scale and introduce suspension from duty without pay for a period not exceeding 12 months, disciplinary probation, demotion for a stated period, comprehensive transfer, local transfer, performance of up to 100 hours community service and increasing the maximum fine from two penalty units to 50 penalty units.

As previously mentioned, the role and range of managerial strategies available as part of the discipline process has been greatly enhanced and will help to bring the QPS human resource management system into the 21st century. The bill provides for educational activities and development opportunities through a new section that provides for the commission to impose a professional development strategy of an officer in response to a complaint as either a risk mitigation strategy or to improve the officer's performance. The QPU—the Queensland Police Union—believes that these reforms will lead to a quicker, fairer and more transparent discipline system that encourages officers to act professionally, yet recognises that occasionally shortfalls can occur that can be quickly and successfully remedied with these new measures. The prescribed inclusion of the professional development strategy sanction on an officer's conduct record was requested by the Bar Association of Queensland as it can be used to support a client's allegation of inappropriate conduct by a police officer.

Debate, on motion of Mr Purdie, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance



**Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): Towns across Queensland are on the brink of drying up. The big dry has lasted for years and farmers are calling it the worst drought in living history. Crops are being destroyed and even drinking water is hard to come by. We have seen the struggle in Stanthorpe and its surrounds where water will have to be brought in on trucks. The town faces the heartbreaking prospect of running out of water by Christmastime. The people of Stanthorpe know that every drop is precious and what little water is left must be protected, so one can imagine their disbelief when those opposite decided to let precious water from Paradise Dam spill out to sea last month.

Bundaberg is fully drought declared, but the Palaszczuk Labor government ordered 105,000 megalitres of stored water to be released. It is madness. It demonstrates the Labor government's utter incompetence when it comes to water policy and water planning. Growers were left rightfully shaking their heads because many crops are not even in the ground at this time of year. The government's statement that water should just flow and it should be free was a ridiculous promise that this minister and the Palaszczuk government made to those hardworking growers. Those opposite need to understand that water is not free; it is priceless and it must never, ever go to waste.

The Palaszczuk Labor government's justification for the release was safety, but those opposite have refused to be open and transparent about the integrity of that dam. Of course all dams must be operated safely and that is why the LNP is demanding a public parliamentary inquiry to be held into the design and construction of Paradise Dam. It is astounding that a modern dam cannot last more than 13 years. There are serious questions over the dam and those opposite must provide those answers. No more cover-ups.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Order! Member for Stafford! Member for Gregory!

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** The Bundaberg community deserves to know if this dam was designed and constructed properly, they should know exactly why the dam had to be reduced to a staggering 42 per cent and they deserve to know what the government's plan is to fix this mess. Water is everybody's business in a state like Queensland and it must be treated with respect. Thankfully, there has been some good news for the people of Stanthorpe and other Queensland towns on the Granite Belt. There is a government that they can rely on to plan for a dam that will provide water security for their future. That would be the New South Wales state government, the Berejiklian government, and the Morrison federal government. Those two governments are progressing plans for a dam on the Mole River at Tenterfield that could help droughtproof towns across the Granite Belt. It is beyond embarrassing that Queensland must depend on an infrastructure project in another state to deliver us water security. It is a disgrace and those opposite should hang their heads in shame.

When the Palaszczuk Labor government came to power it had no plan for Queensland water security. Nearly five years on it still has no plan. In fact, the Labor government is dragging water security backwards. Members on this side of the House, including the deputy, Tim Mander, joined farmers and community members in Rockhampton earlier this month following reports that Labor planned to cut the size of Rookwood Weir. What was the reason? Those opposite blamed it on the price of concrete. What a load of rot. Those opposite have not cut the length of Cross River Rail over the price of concrete, but it seems that the people of Central Queensland are going to be short-changed. Something is seriously wrong with the Palaszczuk Labor government when it can budget for its overseas travel, but cannot budget for concrete. We on this side of the House know that the Palaszczuk Labor government is simply anti regions, anti jobs and obviously anti dams.

I went to Cairns last week and stood side by side with the mayors of Mareeba and Cairns. I pledged the LNP's commitment to get Nullinga Dam shovel ready. Water security in the region would be guaranteed by Nullinga, but again those opposite have abandoned the project.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** This project was set up to fail by this anti-dams government. I will take that interjection. It was set up to fail by a dodgy government that does not understand water security for the bush.

Members on that side of the House believe that regional Queensland is not worth it. Members on this side of the House will never turn their backs on farmers and agriculture. We understand that if you have water you have jobs. That is why my team has announced a plan to droughtproof Queensland with new dams and water projects. Those opposite do not back dams, just like they do not back our plan to air-condition all state school classrooms in Queensland.

I want to thank the member for Bundaberg and the member for Burnett for their immense effort to secure air conditioning for seven local Bundaberg schools. They have been fighting for it since before they were elected. There is still a long way to go, because there are eight schools that have been left off the Palaszczuk Labor government's list. They do not care about those eight not on that list. The Annastacia Palaszczuk government is creating winners and losers when it comes to air conditioning in state schools. There are some schools, the lucky few, with air conditioning and then there are those schools without.

Term 4 began last week with record temperatures, with some places in the state hitting 40 degrees. I do not believe any students should have to swelter in those conditions. I certainly do not believe that any teachers should have to teach in those conditions. All students and all teachers deserve the same cool learning and teaching environment and that is why the LNP has committed to air-condition each and every state school classroom in Queensland. The contrast with the Labor Palaszczuk government's drip-fed announcement could not be clearer. Those opposite do not think our kids are worth it, while I and my team know our kids are worth it and we know our teachers are worth it as well because the LNP wants Queensland kids to be the smartest and the coolest in the nation.


Queenslanders also deserve a world-class health system, but under the Palaszczuk government, unfortunately, one can no longer rely on Queensland Health. If you are injured or sick or just getting out of an ambulance and into a hospital bed, that is an achievement under the Palaszczuk government.

In August, statewide ambulance ramping hit a staggering 32 per cent, which is more than double the rate when the LNP was last in office. Queensland Health has been going backwards ever since the member for Inala became Premier of this great state. There is no point blaming the flu season. There is no point blaming the increase in patient numbers. I feel for the hardworking nurses, the hardworking doctors, the hardworking paramedics and the hardworking midwives who need more help on the front line to improve patient care.

Annastacia Palaszczuk went to the last election promising better health care, but now we have a healthcare system that is in absolute crisis. Every second patient who arrives by ambulance at Logan Hospital is stuck on a stretcher for 30 minutes or more. In August, almost 50,000 patients were not seen on time at hospital emergency departments across the state. These are not just numbers on a spreadsheet. It could be your mum, it could be your dad or it could be your close family friend. The figures show that the Palaszczuk Labor government does not have a clue about how to run our hospitals. Only the LNP has a plan to get Queensland back on track.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Before I call the member for Gladstone, member for Nanango, you used the Premier's incorrect title. I remind you to use correct titles.

### **Liberal National Party, Integrity**

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (2.11 pm): In this House those opposite talk big on integrity, but the reality is that they have none. They talk about the pub test. In fact, they continually rabbit on about the pub test, but they have no hope of passing it themselves and this morning we heard that quite clearly. They are rotten from the top down. In my electorate, people say that, when a fish rots, it rots from the head down and that is what we see from the LNP and, in particular, the National Party.

How was it okay for them to spend \$45,000 of taxpayers' money in 2017 to take themselves and their spouses on a tour of the Margaret River wine region under the guise of developing policy for the National Party in Queensland? Why did they not go to the Boyne River, the Mary River in the electorate of the member to my right or the Fitzroy River in Rockhampton? Why would they have to go to Margaret River to talk about National Party policy in Queensland? It is disgraceful that they go out of Queensland to make decisions on how they should run their policy here in Queensland.

How was it okay for them repeat that in 2018, at a cost of \$23,000, when they flew themselves and their spouses to a cocktail party and dinner at Luna Park in Sydney? I did a bit of homework on Luna Park and I found out that its motto states—

Experience endless family fun and excitement at Luna Park. With classic and adventure rides, there is something for everyone.

There is something not just for the National Party, but for everyone. I had a look at the rides on offer. At Luna Park, the No. 1 ride is the Dodgem City. It is more like 'dodgy city' with the Nationals heading there! The second best ride is the Hair Raiser. The member for Chatsworth was probably disappointed that he did not get to go on the trip. I am a bit follicly challenged myself, so I bet he was filthy. I bet that by the end the whole trip had hairs all over it, so the Hair Raiser was a good ride for them. The Moon Ranger is also a classic ride for them, as I worked out that the only reason they went all the way to Luna Park was to make a decision on which rangers to sack if they ever get into parliament again. Luna Park also has the Spider ride. Let us hope that it is a money spider, because the whole trip was about wasting Queensland's taxpayer funds. They finished off the day on the Ferris wheel. The members and their partners slowly went around, looking at the sights of Sydney.

For the record, those members who charged taxpayers \$45,000 for their little jaunt to Margaret River were the member for Surfers Paradise, the member for Mermaid Beach, the member for Toowoomba North, the member for Warrego, the member for Gympie and the former member for Lockyer. The member for Mermaid Beach said that the trip provided invaluable insights. He said, 'While I was there I did some other business.' What business did the member for Mermaid Beach do? An LNP spokesman said that the conference involved a range of seminars from different jurisdictions to assist in policy development. That is a generic statement that is really shorthand for, 'We got nothing, we did nothing, we have no excuses and we ripped off Queensland taxpayers.'

For the record, the members who attended the Luna Park love-in were the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Bundaberg, the member for Callide—I am sure he would have enjoyed a trip to Sydney—the member for Nicklin, the member for Warrego again, the member for Lockyer, the member for Gregory, the member for Gympie again, the member for Ninderry and the member for Condamine. After the trip, again they sent out a spokesman to defend the fact that they went to Sydney and that several members took their spouses, costing us \$23,000. I bet the opposition leader is glad that they made it only as far as Sydney, because we know what happens when the LNP heads to Melbourne. Twelve months ago we worked that out, when one of their members went down there by himself.

The spokesman also said that a number of policy areas impacting regional Queensland were discussed, including the drought. We know what they think about the drought. They went to the only part of New South Wales that is not drought declared to discuss the drought. If you want to discuss drought, why do you not do what you say you do and go out and talk to the drought-affected farmers—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Comments should be put through the chair.

**Mr BUTCHER**:—and others who are drought affected throughout Queensland? How do these members expect Queenslanders to swallow their excuses, which they keep rabbiting on about, such as that they were discussing the drought when they were in Sydney? This is an appalling abuse of power and an appalling abuse of Queensland taxpayer funds. It is appalling because the Queensland LNP members say that they are all about integrity, but this just goes to show that they have none of it.

### **Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance**



**Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.16 pm): As the Labor government lurches from one integrity crisis to another and is distracted by those types of things, unfortunately it means that it is also distracted from the management of the economy. There is no greater example of that than the unemployment situation in this state at the moment. Currently, a record number of Queenslanders are looking for a job. Under the Palaszczuk government, more than 174,000 Queenslanders cannot find a job and the figures get even more frightening. More long-term unemployed Australians live in Queensland than anywhere else in the nation. Even though the populations of New South Wales and Victoria are significantly larger than that of Queensland, we have more long-term unemployed than those two states. Queensland has 47,000 long-term unemployed, in New South Wales there are 41,000 and in Victoria there are 37,000. That is an embarrassment for this state.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Pause the clock. Members, there are too many interjections. They are not being taken by the member for Everton.

**Mr MANDER**: Over the past 12 months, Queensland has had the largest increase in the number of long-term unemployed residents of any state in the nation. While the number of Queenslanders looking for work for more than a year increased by 13 per cent, in New South Wales that figure

decreased by 19 per cent and in Victoria it decreased by 18 per cent. Is it any wonder when they are distracted by lurching from one integrity crisis to another, by their utter incompetence and by their waste of money?

This government appointed somebody to head Queensland's bushfire recovery for a 12-week period, at a cost of \$57,000, knowing that that person was going to be away for five weeks. That is disgraceful. It is also an insult to the high-ranking police officers and firefighters who are currently in charge of those departments. For the government to think that somebody within those ranks could not do that job is an insult to those officers.

What about the dodgy poll that they put out recently? They have not learnt any lessons from the Lady Cilento disgrace. Despite the CCC recommending that those dodgy polls should be fixed they went out with another poll—this one was around bunting and advertising on election day. They were found out when Channel 9 cast 200 votes—100 yes votes and 100 no votes to make sure they were fair. They were found out and had to get rid of that poll straightaway.

It has already been mentioned today that another tax has been brought in—the Straddie tax. They have increased the monthly beach access rate from \$47 to \$158. Even the Labor stalwart member for Capalaba said that this was a poor decision and done without consultation. He was one of the people they did not consult with even though he is one of the people down around North Stradbroke Island. He is a Labor member and he was not told about this.

**Mrs Frecklington:** Chief whip.

**Mr MANDER:** The chief whip. I will take that interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. The chief whip did not know about this tax that will affect his residents as well as residents right around this state.


If it is not an integrity crisis it is some act of incompetence that continues to embarrass—

**Mr McDonald:** Or tax.

**Mr MANDER:** I will take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. It is some act of incompetence or an increased tax that distracts this government from good economic management. That is why we have one of the worst unemployment rates in the country. That is why we have a record number of people who are unemployed and looking for a job. Those opposite are anti jobs and have no idea how to stimulate the economy.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Before I call the next member, I acknowledge students and teachers from Dutton Park State School who joined us—I think they have now departed—from the electorate of South Brisbane.

### Liberal National Party, Performance

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (2.21 pm): It was interesting to hear the contribution about unemployment from the member for Everton because of course, as we all know, he, along with so many of those opposite, was the cause of a lot of unemployment when he was in government. Some 14,000 public servants—

**Mr Harper** interjected.

**Mr PEGG:** I take the interjection from the member for Thuringowa. He is bang on as always. Quite clearly, the member for Everton has unemployment on the brain after the member for Clayfield popped his head up in question time today. We have not seen much of that since the last election. If we want to talk about unemployment, I think the person who is in most danger of being unemployed is the current Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The member for Clayfield gave a bit of an audition earlier today in question time. I cannot blame the member for Everton for having unemployment on the brain. I think those opposite might be terminating his employment in that particular position in the very near future.

This is a bit of a Tuesday ritual. We start off with the member for Nanango, who gets up in this place and talks for 10 minutes often about disjointed subjects that she struggles to string together. She puts together three or four separate speeches. All those opposite—the cheer squad—pile in. As soon as the member for Nanango finishes most of them leave. I will give credit to the member for Burleigh because he did not head off to Canada this time. He is still there. Maybe the member for Southport has him anchored over there. Maybe that is the case.



I wonder where they go. They traipse in here straight after lunch, hear the 10-minute speech from the member for Nanango and then they are straight out the door. Most of them do not even bother to hang around to hear the diatribe from the member for Everton unless they are made to be here. Where do they go? Are they off eating some cold lasagne left over from lunch? Is that what they are doing? Are they going to their offices and reading the *Spectator* magazine? Is that what they are doing?

**Mr Whiting** interjected.

**Mr PEGG:** I take the interjection from the member for Bancroft. Are they listening to Andrew Bolt podcasts? Is that what they are doing? I am not quite sure. Maybe they are gazing at the portrait of Viscount Christopher Monckton and looking for some inspiration on climate changing denying. If they are doing that then they are looking in all the wrong places. I can assure them of that.

The member for Gladstone pointed out how much those opposite like to travel. He talked about the trip to Margaret River. He talked about the trip to Sydney. He talked about how much it cost. He talked about who was there.

The LNP also like to travel to the High Court in Canberra. As members would be aware, our government has a proud record of reforming our electoral system to enhance accountability and transparency. The High Court found that the legislative change undertaken by the LNP federal government to undermine Queensland's integrity measures were invalid. While the CCC and the High Court have found that property developers pose a unique corruption risk, the LNP has fought tooth and nail to have access to their money. The question asked by everyone on this side of the House—and we would like to hear the answer to it; maybe we will hear it today—is: why? We did not hear why from the member for Nanango. We did not hear why from the member for Everton. The question is why. We can see just how desperate the LNP members are to get their developer dollars with the introduction of the 'Diamond Deb' developer donor membership option.

I talked about groundhog day. Every Tuesday after lunch we hear the member for Nanango followed by the member for Everton. I do not know whether it is groundhog day or whether it is one of those cheap Tuesdays you get at Dominos—buy one get one free. As the member for Bancroft knows, the second pizza always has to be of lesser value than the first one. We see that here.

*(Time expired)*

### Townsville, Crime



**Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.26 pm): It is always a pleasure to follow the member for Stretton. The editorial headline in today's *Townsville Bulletin* says it all—'Approach to crime a shambles'. What has unfolded in Townsville in the last two days is certainly everything and more when it comes to crime and, in particular, youth crime in that city.

What we have seen from those opposite over the last two days can only be described as a thought bubble. It is an idea that they have come up with. Police officers are now going to take young offenders who are on bail fishing, to the footy and on social outings as a means of stopping them from committing crime. Is that not just an indication of how desperate this government has become to address the massive crime issue that has lingered in Townsville for three to four years?

We saw the minister stand up yesterday and say that police officers are going to be babysitting juvenile offenders. Later in the day the Premier came out and said, 'No, no, that is not quite right. It is youth justice workers who are going to be supervising these kids and taking these kids out.' The left hand is not talking to the right hand. I bet the police minister was summoned to the principal's office yesterday afternoon for that statement.

We need to look at juvenile crime in Townsville. Last night we had the incident where two girls were bashed and their house set on fire. We had the incident last week where offenders were driving a stolen motor vehicle around Townsville for two days playing hide and seek with police officers. Is it any wonder that that community has had a gut full? Is it any wonder that that community is fed up? The community is absolutely fed up with crime—houses being broken into, cars being stolen and torched, armed robberies and assaults—continuing unabated.

That raises a valid point when we look at the issue of youth justice workers. They work Monday to Friday, 8 am to 4 pm. I can tell members now that juvenile offenders do not work 8 am to 4 pm. If they were fair dinkum about supervising young offenders and getting involved to try to divert them from a life of crime then they would be working outside of the hours of 8 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday.

**Ms Farmer:** How dare you!

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Order! Minister, direct your comments through the chair.

**Mr LAST:** I take the interjection from the minister. Crime does not happen between 8 am and 4 pm, Monday to Friday. If we are serious about addressing this issue, particularly in communities like Townsville, then we need to be working on a 24-hour cycle. We need to be working seven days a week, 24 hours a day to appropriately supervise them.


**Ms Farmer** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Bulimba, order!

**Mr LAST:** The minister might like to bury her head in the sand and gloss over this issue and not acknowledge that there is a problem with crime in Townsville, but I can assure this chamber that, if you go to that community and ask them what their biggest issue is, they will tell you every day of the week that it is crime. They will tell you that these juvenile offenders are getting away with blue murder and they are sick of it. There was the failed bail houses—wasn't that a disaster! Now we are seeing 'Operation Regenerate', as the minister called it. I call it 'Operation Kindergarten Cops' because our police officers should not be used as babysitters for these young offenders. Taxpayers cannot be expected to foot the bill for our police officers to babysit criminals. Police officers cannot be expected to arrest an offender one day and then take them out on a social outing the next day. Youth workers cannot be expected to make a difference when their work is tied to normal office hours.

Above all, this Labor government needs to get serious. We have had enough of the reports, the reviews, the inquiries, the thought bubbles. We have had enough of these little criminals causing chaos on our streets. We are fed up with this Labor government wasting taxpayers' money on programs and policies that do not address the issue. What we need is a government that is united in the defence of victims and united in making a real difference in a practical way. If the Premier cannot do that with the current responsible ministers then she needs to find ministers who can. We have a serious issue unfolding in North Queensland. It has been on the radar now for three years that I know of. If we do not do something soon then someone is going to be seriously injured or, heaven forbid, lose their life because of the actions of these young offenders.

### Primary Healthcare Centres

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.31 pm): For the majority of Queenslanders the nearest hospital is typically a short drive away. However, if you live on one of the outer islands in the Torres Strait, your nearest hospital is a plane ride away and, even then, time is a huge factor. As a former health worker, I worked during a time when we had doctors visit once a month and nurses fortnightly but no-one was ever stationed there permanently. This meant that I had to carry out on-call duties with a doctor sitting in Thursday Island Hospital or a nurse on Masig Island giving me specific instructions via the telephone.

I want members to imagine a typical Sunday afternoon on a remote island. I had just been to church and about to sit down for lunch when I got a call to see someone who had an asthma attack. As I do, I grabbed the keys to the primary healthcare centre and drove to the clinic as fast as I could to meet the patient. As soon as I arrived, I noted my patient's clammy appearance and with obvious signs of distress and shortness of breath. I immediately settled my patient into the emergency room to check their vital signs—temperature, pulse, respiratory rate and blood pressure. I knew this was not a case of an asthma attack as the vital signs were telling me a different story. His blood pressure was ridiculously high and his pulse was irregular, slow and very weak. I did his ECG and it showed severe abnormalities in his heart rhythm. This person was at risk of a massive cardiac arrest.

This is one of many situations I have faced and the feeling is indescribable. You have the whole life of the person in the emergency bed in your hands, the doctor on the other end of the phone telling you everything you need to do to keep this person alive and a chopper that will take roughly 25 minutes to get to you for an emergency medical evacuation.

I would like to pay a special tribute to my fellow Torres Strait Islands health workers past and present. Like me, Torres Strait primary healthcare workers were stationed in communities 24/7 and were often the first point of contact for ongoing intervention and prevention and, at times, faced the most acute emergency situations. It has been a long time coming but to you I say: kaima eso, au esou and my heartfelt thank you for your tireless efforts, dedication and commitment to your families and community. I also acknowledge the doctors, nurses and other health professionals past and present who were instrumental in supporting health workers on the outer islands and coordinating effective service delivery under very challenging circumstances.

In 2018, the Minister for Health, Steven Miles, and I visited primary healthcare centres on Saibai, Moa and Masig islands where we toured the facilities and met with Queensland Health workers to hear firsthand of their experience with service provision in remote communities. If in 2006 I had been told that in 2018 I would be the member for Cook taking the Minister for Health around to visit different primary healthcare centres in the Torres Strait, I would have laughed it off as 'pie in the sky'. Today, I am absolutely thrilled to report that the Palaszczuk government committed \$17.4 million for the refurbishment and upgrading of four Torres Strait island primary healthcare centres, with work beginning this month.

Work will start first on Dauan Island, followed progressively by Ugar, Poruma and Masig, with completion of all four island primary healthcare centres expected by December 2020, thus creating 25 full-time construction jobs. This investment will allow for the refurbishment of the existing primary healthcare centres and a new building extension containing a treatment room, a consultation room, staff amenities, disabled access, a new main entry lobby, reception and manager's office, along with dedicated emergency vehicle parking.

In addition, Ugar and Dauan islands each will receive two studio style staff accommodation units with shared staff laundry and parking, while Poruma Island will also get a two-bedroom, self-contained staff accommodation unit to accommodate a growing range of visiting health professionals delivering more specialised services to the island communities in the near future. I stand proud to represent a government that is here for all people no matter where they live in Queensland. The Palaszczuk government believes in delivering for the betterment of all Queenslanders because we are a listening government, unlike those opposite who just pay lip-service.

**Ms Bates:** I was up there last week.

**Ms LUI:** To the member for Mudgeeraba, I heard on the grapevine that she was on Saibai Island visiting the community and the primary healthcare centres.


**Ms Bates** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Mudgeeraba.

**Mr Healy:** You didn't know?

**Ms LUI:** That is because I was not told where she was. My work across the Cook electorate is about delivering for the needs of the community, not paying lip-service, which those opposite seem to do all the time.

### Public Hospitals, Performance Targets

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.36 pm): Famous US self-help business guru W Clement Stone once said, 'Aim for the moon. If you miss, you may hit a star.' Having performance targets drives better performance. In this case, I refer to the administration of our public hospitals and providing world-class patient care to sick and injured Queenslanders. The latest annual reports released late last month revealed that the Palaszczuk Labor government has scrapped benchmark wait-time targets for hospitals across the state. These are the waiting time targets for patients in our emergency departments and surgery waiting times. As it was reported in the media on Friday, 27 September, 'Queensland Hospitals are failing to meet their own benchmarks to see emergency patients in time.'

When you look at the annual reports across the 16 hospital and health services, you can see why the targets have been scrapped. Only one of the 16 hospital and health services made their elective surgery wait-time target in 2018-19 and that was the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service, which I actually visited a fortnight ago. With a target of 25 days for median wait time for elective surgery, some of the performance for 2018-19 speaks for itself. It is the record of wait times blowing out under the Palaszczuk Labor government. In Central West HHS, the median wait time for elective surgery was 97 days, bearing in mind the target was 25 days. For the Children's Hospital, it was 62 days; in Central Queensland, it was 59 days; in South West, it was 55 days; in the Gold Coast, it was 49 days; on the Sunshine Coast, it was 45 days; in West Moreton, it was 44 days; in Townsville, it was 41 days; in Metro North, it was 36 days; and in Metro South, it was 33 days.

Surgery wait times have blown out and, instead of fixing the issue and doing what was promised, the Palaszczuk Labor government has scrapped the performance targets—hoping that no-one would ever see or know about it. Labor is effectively abandoning our public health system. Scrapping performance targets is actually giving up. It means the Palaszczuk Labor government is giving up on delivering a world-class public health system for Queenslanders. It means the Palaszczuk Labor government is giving up on providing our hardworking frontline nurses, doctors, midwives and paramedics with the help they need to improve patient care. It means the Palaszczuk Labor government

is giving up on its election promises to provide better health services. If the Premier is true to her word about providing better health services, she needs to reverse this decision and reinstate performance targets for our hospitals.


It goes to priorities and running an accountable public health system that strives to provide better patient care. We all know that Labor has the wrong priorities when it comes to health services, and this is just another example. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been wasted on failed IT health projects, be it the integrated electronic Medical Record rollout, replacing the old FAMMIS ordering system or the latest debacle in Cairns, where a multimillion dollar eHealth program rolled out in the Far North has ground to a halt two years on amid technical glitches and the original supplier being dumped. It is clear that Labor has learned nothing from the Health payroll debacle almost a decade on. Thousands of nurses are still being harassed. Labor's record on health includes: emergency departments at breaking points, skyrocketing ambulance ramping, surgery wait times blowing out, a bush baby crisis, health IT bungle after bungle and, on top of all of that, wasting money on changing the names of hospitals rather than providing better patient care to our sickest kids.

Unlike Labor, the LNP puts patient care as its No. 1 priority. The LNP will refocus our public health system on patient outcomes and ensure that better health services are provided to Queenslanders. We will restore performance targets. We will partner with the private sector to slash waiting lists and ensure elective surgeries are completed in clinically recommended times.

While speaking of Labor's performance on health services, I also want to touch on ambulance ramping data for August, which are some of the worst numbers on record. As the *Gold Coast Bulletin* reported earlier today, ambulance ramping has more than doubled under the Palaszczuk Labor government, with the Gold Coast remaining one of the worst in Labor's latest health crisis. In August, 32 per cent of patients were ramped in ambulances for longer than 30 minutes while waiting to get into overcrowded emergency departments. That is almost one-third of all Queensland patients admitted for emergency care. To put that into context, those numbers have more than doubled since the Palaszczuk government was elected in 2015. It is another horror health story.

Labor's health crisis impacts on patient care and puts pressure on the hardworking nurses and paramedics who are trying to manage under severe pressure. It does not help when the Palaszczuk Labor government cuts the hospital building budget by \$203 million this year, with promised hospital upgrades years away from completion. When it comes to providing better health services for Queenslanders, you cannot trust the Palaszczuk Labor government.

### Rockhampton Electorate, Jobs

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (2.41 pm): As my colleagues, the member for Keppel and the member for Mackay, will tell you, we have had a number of tough years in Central Queensland since the end of the mining boom. This was only made worse by a Newman LNP government that axed jobs and cut government spending in our part of the region, rubbing salt into the wounds of our local communities. Our unemployment rate soared towards 10 per cent and wages went backwards. The Australia Institute did the numbers earlier this year and worked out that in the federal electorate of Capricornia wages fell almost 7.5 per cent between 2012 and 2017, house prices fell and many businesses struggled to gain traction.

Today I can report that, although there is still a way to go, our unemployment rate has fallen, new jobs have been created—4,100 in the past year, according to the ABS—and there are finally signs that our housing market has turned a corner. I can feel growing optimism in our community. I am very proud of the role our government has played in supporting the Rockhampton community and helping to create jobs and create pathways for workers. How have we done it? By backing local projects such as: the expansion of the Capricornia Correctional Centre, which will create 232 local permanent jobs; the Northern Access Road upgrade, which is creating 400 jobs during construction; and the Capricorn Highway project between Rockhampton and Gracemere, which is creating another 180 jobs.


Then there is Rookwood Weir, which will create 100 jobs during construction, not to mention a \$53 million maintenance program at Stanwell Power Station; the upgrade to the local courthouse, ambulance station and fire station, which are either being completed or in the works; and let us not forget the 700 jobs our government has supported locally under Building our Regions. Looking to the jobs of the future, we have also commissioned a \$5 million study into the feasibility of a large hydrogen plant at Stanwell.

All up, our capital works program is supporting 3,600 local jobs, which is the equivalent of \$4,325 per capita per project in our area—more than double the figure for the south-east corner. We have also helped more than 2,100 people find jobs through our Skilling Queenslanders for Work

program and assisted another 2,500 jobseekers through our Back to Work program. Our government has supported our community by investing in the Public Service following the devastating cuts of the LNP government. The number of people employed by the state government in Central Queensland has risen from 9,160 to just over 10,000 since 2015. That means more teachers, nurses and police in our community. Compare that to the shameful record of the federal LNP government in our area, which employs just 157 people in Rockhampton. Just so we are clear, that is 157 people out of a 150,000 strong federal Public Service, which just shows that the LNP is all talk and no action when it comes to the decentralising of government services.

Finally, we are also working to rebuild QBuild in Rockhampton by re-opening the old North Street depot that was shut down by Campbell Newman. I look forward to welcoming the first round of tradies and apprentices next year. Today the Premier announced that the Office for Rural and Regional Queensland will be based in Rockhampton. As I said, the future is looking bright for Rockhampton and Central Queensland. Our government is doing its bit by creating local jobs and supporting local workers and jobseekers.

### Electricity Prices

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (2.46 pm): I seek to raise a matter of great importance to Queensland householders and businesses. I refer, of course, to the high cost of energy, which is an essential service and a critical element in the cost-of-living pressures experienced by many right across the state. The LNP has been calling out the Labor government for its approach to electricity prices, which is really a secret tax whereby hundreds of millions of dollars is gouged from consumers each year to help prop up its fragile budget. There is already overwhelming evidence to support the contention that Labor has been extracting this tax through record dividends from government owned energy companies; however, last week we saw yet another example of it wanting to unreasonably ramp up electricity charges.

Thankfully for consumers, not only is the LNP alert to its tactics but the independent umpire for wholesale electricity and gas markets, the Australian Energy Regulator, has also called out the Queensland government for its approach to energy prices. Operating under the Competition and Consumer Act 2010, the Australian Energy Regulator has rejected submissions by Ergon and Energex with regard to how much they intend to charge customers over the next regulatory period 2020 to 2025. Without the scrutiny of the AER, which is endeavouring to protect consumers from these extra charges, Queenslanders would have been gouged—wait for it—a staggering \$1.4 billion over the next regulatory period. This amounts to an extra \$102 a year over and above what the national regulator has determined acceptable. Small businesses would face even higher charges.

If Labor seeks to challenge this decision it will reinforce just how out of touch this government is. Accordingly, the LNP calls on the Premier and her dodgy Treasurer to accept the independent umpire's decision to back consumers over profits and not appeal the decision of the AER. The AER has said that Ergon should claim \$727.9 million less than its proposal, which is \$5,787 million, and Energex should claim \$701 million less than its proposal. That is a staggering \$1,429 million.

I thought I would have a look at what the minister said about this because he had been very quiet before the LNP raised this issue. I table the minister's press release.

*Tabled paper:* Media release, dated 10 October 2019, by the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, Hon. Dr Anthony Lynham, titled 'Energy Minister calls out LNP power bill porkies' [\[1832\]](#).

The minister's press release in part says—

Ergon and Energex proposed cuts to their network charges in January, and the national regulator proposes that those cuts could be a little more.

That is \$1,429 million—a little bit more. I wonder how many members in this House think that \$1.4 billion is just a little bit more. I do not think so, and I do not think the people of Queensland would accept that either.

What Ergon and Energex proposed was a 5.46 per cent rate of return on their money. This is a risk-free business; it is a regulated business. It has fixed debt level interest rates. They equate currently to a rate of return of \$4.87 billion, and the AER has said that is all those two companies should in fact claim. I want to quote one of the things that the AER raised. It said—


Our substitute estimate for ICT capex reflects our concerns that some elements of Energex's non-recurrent ICT programs cannot be delivered within the 2020-25 regulatory control period—

I understand that there are a couple of projects inside Energy Queensland. I understand that the geographic information system has in fact been scrapped at a cost of \$20 million or \$30 million. The ERP, the enterprise resource planning project, has been under testing since 2017 and it just does not

work so that has been put on hold. I understand also that Treasury has possibly put out an edict to all its GOCs that there will be no more ICT implementations before the next election because they want to hide from their ICT failures. Only the LNP is capable of running this state.

*(Time expired)*

### Central Queensland, Jobs and Economy

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (2.51 pm): The Palaszczuk government continues to back Central Queensland by creating jobs and boosting the economy. In fact, more than 5,100 jobs have been created in our region over the past year by Labor. Creating permanent, secure jobs is my No. 1 priority for the Keppel region, and our government's policies of investment in building infrastructure and the support we are providing for local people so they can get the jobs they want to provide for their families are working. They are making a difference to the lives of people living in Central Queensland.

I am pleased to report that the job growth rate in our region over the past 12 months has been 4.6 per cent, which is higher than the state average. The Palaszczuk government is committed to creating good quality jobs in the regions and we are seeing that commitment pay off. Our Back to Work program has supported almost 1,160 local businesses to take on 2,500 employees, including almost 530 apprentices and trainees across regional Queensland—not to mention our \$47 billion infrastructure budget this financial year, of which 70 per cent is being spent outside the south-east corner in regional Queensland.

The successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative continues to provide job-ready training and skills, assisting almost 4,038 people in our region with over 2,547 participants going on to get a job once they finished the program. Our Labor government has been investing in job-creating projects, like infrastructure for Great Keppel Island, upgrading the Capricornia Correctional Centre, building Rookwood Weir and upgrading the Yeppoon-Rockhampton road. We are building new classrooms at Yeppoon State High School and Parkhurst State School to give our local students and teachers state-of-the-art teaching and learning spaces. We are building a \$14.3 million 42-bed detox and rehab centre to treat Central Queenslanders suffering from ice, alcohol and other drug addictions, and we have given our local elderly people and amazing nursing staff a beautiful new Cec Pritchard wing and kitchen at the North Rockhampton Nursing Centre.

I am proud that the Palaszczuk government is rebuilding QBuild. QBuild was a major economic force in Rockhampton before the LNP sacked 1,500 local apprentices, electricians and carpenters when it was in government. I worked with QBuild on many projects in my time as a town planner before entering politics. It was a horrific time for many hardworking, loyal and experienced colleagues who had dedicated their lives to building our local schools, hospitals and community facilities. The LNP decimated QBuild, destroying its ability to provide safe, responsive trade services throughout the state. I am so proud of Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk's government's incredible announcement to rebuild QBuild and to restore the North Street depot in Rockhampton to be the regional headquarters for plumbing, carpentry, electrical and refrigeration workers and apprentices.

The Palaszczuk government is building and upgrading hospitals, schools, social housing, police stations and other government facilities—the economy-boosting infrastructure that underpins jobs, growth, investment and prosperity. We are backing Queenslanders with free apprenticeships for those under 21, as well as our free TAFE initiative for year 12 graduates. The Palaszczuk government is delivering on its commitment to Queenslanders to put downward pressure on power prices. Queensland has the lowest average power price on the eastern seaboard. In contrast, electricity prices under the LNP went up by 43 per cent. Meanwhile, the Palaszczuk government's \$2 billion Affordable Energy Plan is in full swing and continues to deliver on lower power prices and more renewables.

Those opposite have no idea how to run our great state. Last time, they cut services, sacked 197 full-time jobs from the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service, including 40 midwives, and planned to sell off our income-generating assets like Stanwell, Ergon and the Gladstone port. The LNP members have already announced \$7 billion in unfunded promises with absolutely no plan, meaning they have no other option but to sack workers, sell assets and cut services to balance the books. Their record includes sacking 14,000 Queenslanders, and the only way they can pay for their uncoded promises is to cut services, sack people or sell state assets.

Under the LNP's watch, unemployment went from 5.5 per cent to 6.7 per cent in trend terms and peaked at 7.2 per cent in seasonally adjusted terms. Overall, the Palaszczuk government has added seven times as many jobs as the LNP did. It would have taken the LNP more than two decades to create as many jobs as we have in five years. Those opposite are happy to throw mud. They are happy

to make vexatious allegations, just like the unfounded allegation they made to the Electoral Commission about me. It is dirty politics and it just goes to show that those opposite are not fit to govern. The hardworking people of Central Queensland see through the LNP's unfunded promises and vexatious allegations. Queenslanders will not be taken for fools and it is an insult to all Queenslanders to have an opposition so incompetent and so incapable of running our state.

## PRIVILEGE

### Unparliamentary Language, Apology



**Hon. KJ JONES** (Cooper—ALP) (Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for Cross River Rail) (2.57 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. This morning in question time I inadvertently used a word that is part of common vernacular but I am advised is unparliamentary. I apologise to the House.

### Courier-Mail Article, Additional Information



**Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (2.57 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. During my personal explanation this morning, I stated I had received verbal legal advice regarding section 70 and section 71 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001. I have now received written advice regarding that matter. The conclusion of the written advice from Mr Angus Scott, barrister at law, states—

... it is my view that the allegation in the Courier Mail is misconceived. The provision of legal assistance by your firm to legally aided persons does not involve transacting business with the State.

I table Mr Scott's advice for the benefit of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Document, dated 15 October 2019, titled 'Memorandum of advice—subject to legal professional privilege' [[1833](#)].

## MOTION

### Order of Business



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (2.58 pm): I move—

That government business orders of the day Nos 2 to 8 be postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL (IMPLEMENTING STAGE 2 OF BELCARRA) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### ELECTORAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill resumed from 1 May (see p. 1328) and Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill resumed from 1 May (see p. 1324).

### Second Reading (Cognate Debate)



**Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (2.58 pm): I move—

That the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

Community confidence in local government is of paramount importance. As members are aware, the Crime and Corruption Commission formed the view that the systemic issues in the local government sector identified through Operation Belcarra justified the implementation of a more stringent regulatory framework. Since the Operation Belcarra report was released by the CCC in October 2017, 113 criminal charges have been laid by the CCC against 21 councillors or council employees. Two of the four councils investigated as part of Operation Belcarra have had to be dissolved and placed into administration. This is an unprecedented situation for the local government sector in Queensland's history.



The Palaszczuk government's rolling reform agenda is aimed at rebuilding the community's faith and trust in local government. I should note that throughout Queensland we have wonderful councillors doing excellent work for their communities. I want to publicly acknowledge the good work that the vast majority of our councillors are doing every day delivering quality local services and governance to communities right across Queensland, many of whom I hope will recontest the upcoming local government elections in March 2020.

The government's wideranging raft of local government reforms is guided by four key principles of integrity, transparency, diversity and consistency, and we have a strong record when it comes to delivering reform: in 2017 we introduced real-time donation disclosure for state and local government elections; in 2018 we introduced councillor complaints legislation to establish the Office of the Independent Assessor; in 2018 we also passed Belcarra stage 1 to implement five of the 31 recommendations.

I am pleased to remind members that the ban on developer donations has now been upheld in the highest court in Australia in the recent Spence decision. The Attorney-General and I have been working with stakeholders to address the balance of the Belcarra recommendations and to implement recommendations from the independent review into the 2016 local government elections, known as the Soorley report. I express my thanks to the Economics and Governance Committee for its thorough examination of the bill. I also thank stakeholders for their contributions. The committee made one recommendation, that the bill be passed, and I am pleased to table the government's response.

*Tabled paper:* Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 26, 56th Parliament, June 2019—Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, government response [\[1834\]](#).

I will address the detail of the response and some of the committee's comments in the report as I outline the key elements of the bill.

I turn first to the proposed amendments to the council electoral system under the Local Government Electoral Act 2011. In relation to electoral funding, financial disclosure and related transparency issues, the bill proposes a range of extensive reforms. The CCC considered that a requirement to disclose expenditure would provide a complete picture of election finance, helping to reveal any inequity between candidates and ensuring that candidates' campaign expenses are able to be reconciled with their campaign income. It concluded that expenditure disclosure makes uneven financial competition between candidates transparent to voters. The bill, therefore, introduces a new scheme for real-time disclosure of electoral expenditure by candidates, groups of candidates, registered political parties and associated entities in line with Belcarra recommendation 2. I am pleased to note the committee's comment that there was broad support among stakeholders for the implementation of the real-time electoral disclosure requirements.

The CCC considered that, if voters feel misled by some candidates' claims of independence, their perceptions of the integrity and transparency of council elections may be adversely affected. To address this, the bill implements the government's policy on Belcarra recommendations 3 and 4 and amends the process of nominating as a candidate. It provides for candidates to disclose, as a condition of nomination, particular interests in relation to the local government and the membership of political parties, trade or professional organisations. The ECQ will publish the nomination form.

Similarly, the CCC also examined the ambiguity in the nature of relationships between candidates. To address this, the bill makes key amendments relating to groups of candidates to implement the government's policy in relation to Belcarra recommendation 5. First, it provides that a person must not engage in a group campaign activity for an election unless the activity relates to candidates who are members of a group of candidates or candidates who are endorsed by the same political party for the election. Second, it requires a record of membership of a group of candidates to be given to the Electoral Commission during the period starting 30 days after the polling day for a quadrennial election or the day after the polling day for another type of election and ending at noon on the last day for the receipt of nominations for candidates. I am pleased to note the committee's comment that stakeholders generally supported the bill's prohibition on group-campaigning techniques.

The CCC highlighted that a key aspect of transparency is the financial relationships between donors and candidates. To implement the government's response to recommendations 6, 18 and 19, additional details will now be required on returns for gifts, loans and third-party expenditure. Importantly, the relevant details to be disclosed will include details about the original source of a gift or loan. Further, if a person making a gift or loan has an interest in a matter that is greater than that of others in the area, the nature of the interest must be disclosed. For gifts or loans made by an individual, the name and address of the individual, their occupation and industry must be disclosed. For gifts or loans made by



a corporation, the name and address of the directors or members of the executive committee of the corporation or holding company and the type of business must be disclosed. Finally, third-party expenditure returns must include the name and business address of the supplier and the name of the candidate, group or party if the expenditure is used to benefit, support or oppose them, and a description of the relevant issue if the expenditure is used to support or oppose the issue.

The bill deems election participants and councillors to have knowledge of the original source of a gift or loan in a proceeding for an offence against the legislation to implement the government's response to Belcarra recommendations 7 and 21. I acknowledge the significant concerns of some stakeholders about this reversal of the onus of proof. Earlier I tabled the government's response to the committee report. The response outlines our intention to remove these provisions from the bill. Consistency between the local government and state electoral systems and governance frameworks is one of the key policy objectives of the bill. Reversing the onus of proof imposes a higher obligation on councillors and participants in local government elections than applies to members of the state parliament and participants in state elections.

I note the CCC chairperson Alan MacSporran's comments that this provision was a recommendation of Belcarra as an extraordinary measure because of the high corruption risk in the local government sector and the need to lift the standards—a drastic measure for drastic circumstances. However, I particularly emphasise that the new requirements in the bill for donor entities to disclose the true source of contributions will ensure that election participants and councillors are, in fact, informed of the origins of the gifts or loans they receive. This very significant transparency reform remains unaffected by the removal of the deeming provisions.

The CCC highlighted in its report that many people seemed to be unaware of or unclear about their disclosure obligations. To implement the government's response to Belcarra recommendation 8, gift recipients will be required to notify the donor of the donor's disclosure obligations. Further, candidates, agents for groups of candidates and third parties must take reasonable steps to prospectively notify the public of the candidate's, group's or third party's disclosure obligations. This amendment implements the government's response to Belcarra recommendation 10.

I now turn to the very important issue of campaign accounts. The CCC identified that issues of noncompliance with the requirement for candidate and group dedicated accounts particularly arose in the form of payment out of another account, often involving the use of a credit card. To implement the government's response to recommendation 14, the bill introduces restrictions on the use of campaign accounts for candidates and groups of candidates, including by prohibiting the use of credit cards to make payments from campaign accounts. To ensure that candidates turn their mind to the campaign account requirements early on in their campaigns, the bill requires candidates and groups to provide information about the relevant account in the candidate nomination form or the group record of membership. This is consistent with Belcarra recommendation 15.

As the committee noted, the CCC highlighted a lack of awareness among candidates of their obligations, including electoral funding and financial disclosure obligations. The bill implements the government's response to Belcarra recommendation 12 by providing that completion of a mandatory training course in the six months before nomination day will be a condition of nomination. I am pleased to note the committee's comment that the introduction of mandatory training for candidates and sitting councillors was widely supported by stakeholders.

The department has developed an online course and regional workshops for candidates who cannot access or use the online course. These will be rolled out in the coming months. All candidates, including sitting councillors and mayors, wishing to nominate for the 2020 local government elections must complete this training before they can nominate with the ECQ.

To implement the government's response to recommendations 29 and 30, the bill makes a series of amendments to penalties and limitation periods for existing offences, including prescribing certain offences as integrity offences. A person is automatically suspended as a councillor if the person is charged with an integrity offence. A person convicted of an integrity offence automatically stops being a councillor and is disqualified for four years.

To strengthen the election disclosure requirements, the bill amends the definition of 'candidate' for certain parts of the act. This means that sitting councillors and other persons who have announced or otherwise indicated an intention to be a candidate will be required to disclose gifts, loans and expenditure in real time, regardless of when the gift or loan is received during the disclosure period.

Further, to ensure consistency, the bill also amends the disclosure period in relation to third-party expenditure to align with the disclosure period for gifts to previous candidates, groups of candidates and third parties.

I turn now to the amendments to the system of voting. The bill amends the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 to mandate that, for an election for a mayor or for a local government area divided into single-councillor divisions, the system of voting is compulsory preferential voting. Over the last few months it has become clear that the majority of mayors, councillors and the LGAQ do not support the introduction of compulsory preferential voting for local government elections. During the committee process mayors or councillors representing 28 councils made submissions opposing the introduction of CPV.

The Premier, in particular, has been very receptive in listening to the feedback from the local government sector. As a result of the feedback, I will move amendments to the bill during consideration in detail to remove the provisions relating to compulsory preferential voting. We will not be proceeding with the introduction of CPV for local government elections.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr McArdle): Members to my left, thank you.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** The Palaszczuk government has consulted and we have listened. This morning I officially opened the LGAQ annual conference in Cairns, where I delivered this news to representatives of all 77 local governments in Queensland. The announcement was warmly received by everyone in the room and has been publicly supported by the LGAQ. President Mark Jamieson and CEO Greg Hallam, who both made remarks, said it was 'a sign of a listening government' and 'the government deserved applause for heeding the concerns of local councils'.

The Soorley report also considered voter concerns following the 2016 local government elections. The bill makes a range of amendments to implement key recommendations from the independent review to achieve better alignment between state and local government elections and make operational improvements and support efficiencies in the local government electoral system, as the Attorney-General outlined in subsequent parts of the debate.

The government will move an amendment to remove the changes to the penalty for failing to give an electoral return within the time required. It is considered that this offence is more appropriately dealt with through an infringement notice rather than as an integrity offence. Instead, amendments will provide that a councillor's office will become vacant if the councillor has not complied with the requirement to submit a summary return under part 6 of the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 within the required period, or a longer period allowed by the minister. If the councillor is a member of a group of candidates or endorsed by a political party and the agent for the group or party does not give the return in the required time, the councillors will be able to give the return themselves. In this situation, ECQ will advise the councillor that the agent has failed to make the return and the councillor will have 30 days, or a longer period allowed by the minister, to give the return themselves.

I turn now to key provisions of the bill about councillors' conflicts of interest. On 6 September this year the CCC handed down six new recommendations in relation to managing conflicts of interest and registers of interest for cabinet ministers and members of the Queensland parliament. The CCC recommendations specifically mentioned aligning the obligations of elected officials in state government with the obligations of elected officials in local government, consistent with the recommendations for local government made by the CCC arising out of Operation Belcarra. As a result of these new recommendations, the conflict of interest and register of interest provisions in the bill will be removed during amendments in consideration in detail. These provisions will be amended to align with the new legislative regime to regulate the ROIs and COIs of cabinet ministers and will form part of future legislation. Alignment between councillors and state ministers is a key policy outcome of these reforms.

As the Palaszczuk government has continually committed to, we will impose the same obligations on councillors as state ministers while also fulfilling all the Belcarra recommendations and the recent 6 September recommendations from the CCC. Importantly, the COI and ROI reforms will be subject to further consideration by a parliamentary committee and further stakeholder consultation.

I turn now to the proposed amendments to the Local Government Act 2009 and the City of Brisbane Act 2010 in relation to councillor complaints. As part of the government's response to the independent review panel's report *Councillor complaints review: a fair, effective and efficient framework*, the government gave an undertaking to review the councillor complaints framework applying to Brisbane City Council within six months of the commencement in December 2018 of the

new framework under the Local Government Act 2009. The department undertook this review to determine whether to provide a single and independent councillor complaints framework across all 77 local governments.

The bill amends the Local Government Act 2009 and the City of Brisbane Act 2010 to apply the relevant provisions to the Brisbane City Council. This will ensure that in relation to councillor conduct the same behavioural standards, offences, penalties and investigating and hearing bodies apply to all local governments and councillors in Queensland. Further, the bill makes a number of refinements to the existing councillor complaints framework under the Local Government Act. Also, the government will move further amendments to the councillor complaints provisions. After consideration of the views of stakeholders, it is proposed to remove the amendments in the bill which would allow the Independent Assessor to investigate the conduct of local government employees. The government will not be expanding the role of the Independent Assessor at this time when the focus is, as it should be, on the timely assessment of the large number of existing complaints.

The bill makes a number of important changes to the operation of the local government system and decision-making. These amendments repeal the powers of mayors, other than for the City of Brisbane, in relation to budgets. Further, they amend the powers of mayors, other than for the City of Brisbane, in relation to the appointment of senior executive employees and directions to the chief executive officer and senior executive employees. The bill repeals the power of the mayor to direct senior executive employees and provides that the chief executive officer appoints all employees, including senior executive employees. It provides that a direction by the mayor to the chief executive officer must not be inconsistent with a resolution, or a document adopted by resolution, of the local government. Further, the chief executive officer must keep a record of each direction given by the mayor to the chief executive officer and make each direction available to the local government.

I am pleased to note the committee's comment that stakeholders were united in their support for the proposed changes as they relate to budgets. The committee noted that views on the other changes were mixed. Removing the mayoral powers in relation to senior executive officers provides a clear separation between elected councillors and employees. The amendments address integrity concerns associated with overreach by councillors into council administration.

These measures undo the changes made by the Newman LNP government in 2012. The 2012 legislative changes provided a suite of amendments which provided mayors with more power. These reach-around powers given to mayors in 2012 are now seen as the tipping point which led to the integrity mess and the loss of confidence from the community in the local government sector which we have seen unfold in Queensland in recent years.

The legacy of the member for Broadwater when he was local government minister in the Newman LNP government is a shopping list of legislative changes which have led to today's integrity quagmire in local government. The measures in this bill right these wrongs and will help restore community faith in the local government sector.

The bill includes changes to ensure consistency between the Local Government Act 2009 and the City of Brisbane Act 2010 and improve access to information for councillors by providing that the information that councillors can request under the City of Brisbane Act is to relate to the council and that a Brisbane City Council councillor can request advice or information across all wards of Brisbane City Council, as occurs in every other local government area in the state. The chief executive officer must comply with a request for advice or information within 10 business days or 20 business days at the latest. An increased maximum penalty applies. The amendments reflect the importance of councillors requiring all the information needed to carry out their responsibilities and make informed decisions in the public interest.


The Right to Information Act 2009 exempts information relating to Brisbane City Council's Establishment and Coordination Committee from right to information requests for a period of 10 years. No other local government in Queensland has such an exemption. To improve transparency and consistency, the bill removes it.

Turning to our reforms in relation to the caretaker period, the bill extends the prohibition on local governments publishing or distributing election material to apply to local government controlled entities. Further, it prescribes additional decisions that councils are prohibited from making during a caretaker period. Certain provisions of the bill commence by proclamation to ensure the community is well informed ahead of the changes. Further, the bill also makes clear that a proposed 'local government

change', assessed by the Local Government Change Commission, can request multimember divisions. I also inform the House that the government will move a range of amendments during consideration in detail to clarify minor drafting matters and necessary regulatory-making powers.

The department has prepared a range of guidance and training materials for councillors to ensure they are aware of these changes. In particular, councillors will have access to fact sheets, webinars, videos and other online material to assist with their understanding. Following the commencement of the legislation, the department will continue to provide advice and assistance for councils and councillors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank officers from the department for their diligence and hard work in preparing this material and in preparation for this bill.

With this bill, the Palaszczuk government continues its commitment to the local government rolling reform agenda and restoring community faith in the sector. The CCC identified that the Queensland community was calling for local government to be held to higher standards. The passage of this bill will deliver the extensive package of reforms recommended by the CCC, key changes identified in the Soorley report and a raft of additional comprehensive measures which will help restore the good name of local government in our state. I thank the CCC for the critical work it has undertaken to date. I reassure all Queenslanders that the historic reforms we are progressing today will restore stability, certainty and confidence to their local communities. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (3.19 pm): I rise to contribute to the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, being debated cognately with the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. After months of suspense and great theatre, finally we get to debate this bill. This week we have witnessed Labor's dodgy approach that has seen them fall on their swords with compulsory preferential voting for local government.

Government told the councils in early August that this bill would be debated at the end of August. Months later—and coincidentally clashing with the annual LGAQ conference in Cairns being attended by mayors and councillors—we now get to debate this legislation. I note the numerous proposed amendments to this bill. In fact, it has been a moving feast, with Labor juggling the political imperatives of the day. There have certainly been some spectacular flip-flops along the way.

**Mr Janetzki:** Spectacular.

**Ms LEAHY:** I take that interjection. There have been some spectacular flip-flops. I note that these proposed amendments will remove considerable provisions of the bill in relation to councillors' conflicts of interest and the register of interests. These about-faces are more about the events surrounding the Labor Deputy Premier than about local government. Finally, after months of campaigning, the Labor government have finally ditched their proposal to rig the voting system in their favour for the local government elections due in 2020. If the government had genuinely listened to local government and the concerns held by the LNP, they would never have contemplated this approach.

The LNP opposition supports the recommendations made by the CCC in the Belcarra report. The LNP respects the hard work being undertaken by elected local government representatives across the state. We commend them on implementing numerous reforms while, at the same time, addressing challenges in their communities. Their challenges are great. We know that there are 14 communities that will be out of drinking water by Christmas. The challenges and costs to local government are significant, as drinking water is the basis of any community. It is absolutely imperative.

This bill appears to be more about the other legislation than about the Belcarra recommendations. Perhaps the star billing should go to the other legislation followed by Belcarra, as the bill is more about Labor's reforms than about Belcarra recommendations. With the original bill, 58 per cent of the clauses are about the other provisions and therefore not about the Belcarra recommendations and the Soorley report. That was before the clauses were recently proposed to be removed by the amendments, so this figure is likely to be much higher. Who knows? With amendments coming thick and fast—I think there is something like 40-odd pages of them—more than 60 per cent of this bill could be about other matters and not Belcarra.

No doubt panicked by the level of discontent expressed about some of these reform measures, the government have taken the scissors to their own legislation and removed substantial sections of the bill. The pruning even extends to removing some responses to one of the CCC recommendations. Following the backlash from mayors and councillors and the campaigns run by the LGAQ, the compulsory preferential voting reforms have been ditched for at least the 2020 elections. CPV should

never have been linked to an integrity bill in the first place. We are told that the bill aims to implement other separate government inspired reforms to improve diversity, transparency, integrity and consistency in local government; however, these government inspired reforms have nothing to do with the recommendations of the integrity bodies.

Before speaking specifically about the contents of this legislation, it is important to highlight the Labor government's shortcomings in reaching this legislation. The Labor government have been on a torturous journey to bring this bill to parliament. It could be likened to flying a butterfly bareback into a hurricane. Let me elaborate. Members may recall that the opposition asked a question of the Premier back in March this year in relation to the rigging of the local government voting system. It was only after the opposition circulated to mayors and councillors the Premier's response to the question about this rigging of the voting system that the Labor government finally awakened to the need for at least some consultation.

The minister, his staff and his department must have been working overtime, because on a Saturday afternoon following the opposition's emails out came the document with some of the government's plans. I have seen a lot in politics over the past 20 years, but this is one of the few times I have seen the government take to the carrier pigeons on a Saturday afternoon at 2.14. They must have been feeling a little bit caught out by their own Premier's answer. This begs the question: if the opposition had not asked the question of the Premier, would the government have ever bothered to write to the elected local government members? We know that this action was done in haste, because the government forgot to mention some of the proposed reforms in that Saturday afternoon email. Oops! There was a little bit of an omission in that first email. It was only after the councils asked questions about what had been left out that this was then rectified. The departmental director-general—

**Mr Power:** What had been left out?

**Ms LEAHY:** If you listen you will find out.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr McArdle): Member, address your comments through the chair and do not use the word 'you'.

**Ms LEAHY:** It was only after the councils asked questions about what had been left out that this was then rectified. The departmental director-general came to the rescue, did the tidy-up and sent another more detailed email containing the content of the proposed changes and inserting the bits that the minister's original email had missed the first time around. This is not the only time something has been overlooked. Do members remember the press release that went out that sacked mayors and councillors before the legislation was actually in place? I detect there is a pattern forming here.

Next, in response to the unilateral approach by Labor, local governments across Queensland united. They know that there is no justification for changing the local government voting system. Then we come to the flip-flop of the year. Labor members know that their voting system changes go against the Fitzgerald reforms. They were not recommended by either the Crime and Corruption Commission or the Soorley review of the 2016 local government elections. Members opposite know that the driver for introducing CPV into council elections is party political and that it is not in the best interests of the community or good outcomes for local government.

Due to these mounting concerns, a special meeting of the Local Government Association was called and held in Brisbane, with over 200 delegates attending at short notice. Mayors and councillors voted overwhelmingly to oppose compulsory preferential voting, to oppose proportional representation, to oppose dual candidacy, to oppose the government imposed expenditure caps, to oppose the public funding of council elections, to oppose the reduction of mayoral powers to direct staff and to oppose the removal of the power of the mayor and deputy or committee chair to appoint senior executive staff and called on the government to abide by the same rules they set for councils. Suffice it to say, local governments were not very happy. On 1 April, on the eve of the LGAQ special meeting, the government backflipped on some of those reforms, like the proportional representation, the expenditure caps for councillors and candidates, public funding for elections and the dual candidacy arrangements.

With all this going on, what has really been driving this Labor government to bring forward these reforms that have no genesis with the integrity bodies? The only review we can find that relates to much of this bill is the review done by the Labor Party of their inability to win wards in the Brisbane City Council—the Australian Labor Party's review of their unsuccessful 2016 Brisbane City Council election campaign. In that review they say—

It might be worth having a 'root and branch' review of the Local Government Act to level the playing field and introduce more accountability of the BCC and other councils.

Moving on, the bill aims to implement some other separate 'government inspired', 'Labor Party recommended' reforms on the basis that it will improve local government. What do we find in this bill in relation to integrity and transparency for local government? We find less than where we started, because much of this bill has been removed by the amendments put forward by the government. Under the current Local Government Act 2009, the maximum penalty for failing to update a register of interests within 30 days is 85 penalty units. If the offence is committed with intent, the maximum penalty is 100 penalty units. If the offence is then defined as an integrity offence, that means that, if convicted of an offence, the councillor automatically stops being a councillor and cannot be a councillor for another four years.

There are changes in this bill as a result of the Belcarra reforms and this replaces the two-tier offence and the maximum penalties of 85 penalty units and 100 penalty units for intentionally or unintentionally failing to correct the register of interests with a single offence and a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units. What we learn from this is that if the Labor member for South Brisbane was a mayor or a councillor rather than being the Labor Deputy Premier she would have been facing an alleged integrity offence. We will have to wait and see what the government now brings forward following the amendments to remove some of these provisions. The government has stated that it is determined to make it more appropriate to align these measures with state MPs. That is what is in the explanatory notes of this bill. However, that was written before the Crime and Corruption Commission's report in relation to the Deputy Premier's house purchase.

On face value, the bill represents the second stage of reform in relation to the following recommendations contained in the Belcarra report—namely, 16 different recommendations. In the interests of accountability and integrity, the LNP supports these recommendations. In terms of the recommendations contained in the Soorley report, the bill seeks to implement the following recommendations—41, 44, 61 and 74. I note that the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 implements the second stage of legislative changes in response to certain recommendations of the Belcarra report and the Soorley report and no doubt hence the cognate debate.

The third component of the bill includes the continuation of the government's reform agenda and, in relation to local government elections, the bill seeks to amend the Local Government Electoral Act to—well, until very recently, like this morning—mandate full preferential voting for mayoral and single councillor elections. It should be stressed that, in contrast to the convoluted approach that Labor has taken, the LNP has consistently been against the change—this imposed change—to local government elections. Local governments do not support compulsory preferential voting. In fact, a survey of the people of Queensland conducted by the LGAQ indicated that 70 per cent of Queenslanders do not support this rigging of the local government voting system. Further, the report into the local authority electoral system of Queensland from EARC said that optional preferential voting, which allows voters to vote only for the number of candidates for whom they wish to express a preference, may overcome some of the criticisms of the CPV system. We had the Labor government legislating to overturn the reforms stemming from the Fitzgerald inquiry and I am pleased to see that it has now decided to remove those proposals for the 2020 elections.

By way of background, what did the Australian Labor Party say in its submission to EARC relating to the local authority electoral system? This is quite interesting. It said that for local authorities with 2,000 or more electors and divided into single member wards preferential voting should be adopted because it is much fairer and produces councils with the support of the majority. It submitted that optional preferential voting may be the best form of voting in local government elections. That was the Labor Party's submission to EARC—that optional preferential voting was the best form of voting in local government elections, and I am pleased to see that we are returning to that.

We now have confirmation in the amendments, which are well overdue, that the Labor Party has bowed to the overwhelming pressure and gone back to optional preferential, for at least the 2020 elections. Finally, Labor has done some adding up when it realised that in Brisbane maybe compulsory preferential voting would mean that it would lose seats to the Greens rather than gain seats for Labor. It must be up there as contender of the year for award of the year for flip-flops, because we have certainly flipped and flopped all the way through this bill and this legislation. It was only the allure of the Labor political advantage that was driving this proposed change to CPV.

We also learned that the introduction of compulsory preferential voting at the 2020 local government elections would mean the cost of running local government elections would rise by up to 60 per cent from some \$13 million to over \$26 million, and I will be interested to see if the Electoral Commission now revises its estimates for running the forthcoming local government elections, and no doubt councils will also be very interested. Those additional funds—that 60 per cent increase—means

that they have to divert money from roads, parks and gardens, water and sewerage to pay for those additional costs with an imposed system of local government voting from the Labor Party. They would like to know whether the estimates that the ECQ has given them will now be revised given the changes in these amendments.

Even worse, it was neither Belcarra nor Soorley that recommended the introduction of CPV at the 2020 elections. Local government is crying out for certainty. To this end, will the government commit to providing them with clarity around the direction on the future voting system at the 2024 elections? I think we need to hear from the government in this respect—that is, will it rule out any changes in any future bills in this term? Will it rule out introducing compulsory preferential voting for the 2024 election? It was highlighted as an important issue, and we know that there were considerable submissions to the Australian Labor Party's written review of its unsuccessful 2016 Brisbane City Council election campaign, referred to as the Labor review. It states—

Analysis of past and present optional and compulsory preference data forwarded to the review indicates that optional preferential voting affected the results in both Northgate and Coorparoo, both of which are now LNP seats but would have been ALP seats if the same preference allocation had taken place as normally takes place in Federal elections.

To be clear, it was all about Labor rigging the voting system to advance its own candidates in the Brisbane City Council elections, and just ask Rod Harding how ruthless the Labor Party is when it comes to the Brisbane City Council! He knows all about being knifed. For this and many other reasons—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr McArdle): Stop the clock. Let us settle down. There is provocation both ways here.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Member for Logan, I was just addressing the chamber.

**Ms LEAHY**: For this and many other reasons I have outlined, the LNP does not accept this flawed, able to be twisted, rorted and manipulated system that was proposed in this original bill to determine who would govern our councils.

I will now turn to the other elements of the bill. In relation to the local government system and decision-making, among other things, the bill will provide for a new process for prescribed conflicts of interest and declarable conflicts of interest. However, the government has chosen to remove these provisions with amendments. It would be sensible for the government to commence these provisions at the beginning of the next local government term, not that in the past Labor has been too interested in the common-sense approach prevailing. It would also be sensible for the government to have these provisions out in the candidate training materials so candidates for the 2020 election can clearly see what is required of them should they be elected to council for the next term. Candidates need to go in with their eyes wide open. It is a huge responsibility for them and they need to be fully informed of the legislative requirements on them. This is difficult if the requirements are not out in black and white where they can see them.

Of further concern are the clauses that seek to amend the powers of mayors, other than for Brisbane City Council, in relation to budgets and the appointment of senior executive employees and directions to chief executive officers that provide for a record of directions from the mayor to the chief executive officer. I note that none of the integrity bodies recommended that the powers of the mayor be reduced in relation to the appointment of senior executive employees and directions to chief executive officers.

These powers were introduced by the previous LNP government and were a progressive reform that helped local governments do their jobs, fulfil their responsibilities and meet the day-to-day challenges. The LNP will not be supporting the removal of the ability of the mayor to give a direction to senior executive employees. The LNP will not be supporting the removal of the ability of the mayor and the deputy mayor, or the councillor who is the committee chair, to participate in decision-making to appoint senior executive employees. There is no solid reason outlined by the government that these powers of mayors and councillors should be reduced.

The bill further seeks to improve access to information for all councillors to provide greater transparency regarding the Brisbane City Council decision-making. This is a direct assault on the Brisbane City Council LNP administration. This is a direct lift out of the *Review into Labor's Brisbane City Council election campaign 2016*. This is what the Labor Party said in its review—

There should be more liaison with the Queensland Government to review the legislation governing Brisbane City Council. Amendments to the Act to ensure that there is greater transparency around Council activities so the Labor Opposition is not kept in the dark on budget and contract details.

The bill removes the right to information exemptions from the records of the Brisbane city civic cabinet, a statutory body formerly known as the establishment and coordination committee, and opens those records to access by the Labor opposition councillors at any time. I am advised that these records from the establishment and coordination committee are published every four years. I am also advised that the conflicts of interest are dealt with and minutes are taken.

Given its unique size and responsibilities, the City of Brisbane Act 2010 structures the Brisbane City Council along the lines of a state government. Unlike any other council in Queensland, the City of Brisbane Act 2010 provides the Brisbane City Council with a formal leader of the opposition, a chairperson of council, who is not the mayor, and a civic cabinet. In 2010, the Bligh Labor state government specifically granted cabinet confidentiality provisions for the civic cabinet when it drafted and introduced the City of Brisbane Bill. This provision was included for the same governance reasons that are used to justify the cabinet in confidence protections that are enjoyed by the state government cabinet. It should be noted that the Bligh government's decision to grant civic cabinet these confidentiality provisions drew particular criticism in the Labor review.

The Brisbane City Council has not been subject to any recommendations from the CCC stemming from Operation Belcarra. Nevertheless, the departmental summary published in March 2019 tried to justify the removal of the civic cabinet right to information exemption on the grounds of transparency, integrity and consistency. This represents a major step on integrity but, again, with no justification. When the provisions of the first Belcarra bill were introduced in October 2017, Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk stated—

Queenslanders should have confidence in the transparency and integrity of all levels of government—  
but—

I will not make rules for local councils that I am not prepared to follow myself, so any changes we make will apply to state as well as local government.

To retain any credibility on this matter, the Premier should therefore immediately announce the removal of the state cabinet confidentiality provisions. I will be interested to hear how the Premier views the values of transparency and integrity when they are used against her government as tools of party political expediency. We know that the Premier, unfortunately, is weak when it comes to integrity. Clearly, she will not keep her word and apply the removal of the cabinet confidentiality provisions for the state government. On the cabinet confidentiality provisions for Brisbane City Council, again, we see one rule for the Labor state government and another rule for local government. This has been a similar situation with conflicts of interest provisions for the Deputy Premier and mayors and councillors.

I note that my parliamentary colleague the member for Toowoomba South will touch on the LNP's concerns about the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill in relation to prisoner voting and concerns about the changes to the time frames associated with the postal vote applications for state elections. I look forward to listening to the rest of the debate.



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (3.43 pm): I move—

That the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

The Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 was introduced on 1 May 2019 and referred to the Economics and Governance Committee. I thank the Economics and Governance Committee for its thorough consideration of the bill and welcome the committee's recommendation that the bill be passed. I would also like to thank the seven submitters who took the time to make submissions on the bill and who were generally supportive of the proposed amendments. I note the statement of reservation from the opposition members of the committee. I will address their issues in my contribution to today's debate on the bill.

The bill will give effect to a number of important reforms to improve the integrity and public accountability of the electoral system for state elections. It will also support operational improvements to aspects of the electoral process for voters and facilitate more efficient processes for the Electoral Commission of Queensland.

The bill also makes amendments to electoral and related legislation to ensure consistency with the adoption of four-year fixed terms for the Legislative Assembly of Queensland following the referendum on this issue held in 2016. It makes other improvements and provides further consistency in legislation governing state elections and referendums and local government elections.

In addition to the committee's recommendation that the bill be passed, the committee also raised two points that require clarification. I will address each of those matters in turn. I first draw the attention of members to page 16 of the committee's report, which looks at the amendment to section 125 of the



Electoral Act 1992 to enable a preliminary processing of declaration envelopes to occur before or after polling day. The last paragraph on page 16 refers to recommendation 61 of the independent panel's report titled *A review of the conduct of the 2016 local government elections, the referendum and the Toowoomba South by-election*, which recommended that counting of the votes start prior to the close of polls on polling day. The committee has assumed that the procedures that will be made pursuant to section 130A of the Electoral Act will include the circumstances under which counting may commence prior to the close of polls.

I wish to clarify that those procedures will specify only the factors that the ECQ must consider before deciding whether to count absentee votes at the polling booth or instead send them back to the relevant returning officer to be counted in order to ensure that the secrecy of the vote is maintained. The bill does not permit counting to commence before 6 pm on polling day and neither will the regulations. Ballot boxes will continue to remain sealed until 6 pm on polling day after which counting will commence.

To clarify and make it very clear to all parties when we talk about the procedures, this amendment allows the Electoral Commission to verify the declaration votes prior to the close of polls so that, when the polls close at 6 pm, the Electoral Commission can commence counting straightaway as opposed to what often occurs now—that the checking of the declaration votes, the absentee votes and postal votes is not done until after 6 pm, leading to often that not occurring until the day after the election. This amendment will speed up the process, allowing for that verification to occur early so that, come 6 pm, those votes can be counted.

Rather than implementing recommendation 61 of the independent panel's report, which would allow earlier counting, the bill contains a number of reforms that will allow a greater number of ballot papers to be included in the preliminary vote—and to be clear, the preliminary vote, as it is referred to, is the first count after the close of polls at 6 pm; it is not a count that occurs prior to 6 pm—such as allowing absentee voters to cast ordinary votes and allowing the preliminary processing of postal ballots. That will facilitate the election result being known sooner. These provisions are about allowing for the preliminary processing of postal votes and allowing absentee voters to cast ordinary votes to speed up that process to allow more votes to be counted on the evening of the election.

The second matter that I would like to address is in response to comments made in the non-government statement of reservation contained in the committee's report regarding the timing of the cut-off for applications for postal voting. The LNP questioned why the cut-off is 12 days before polling day instead of the 10 business days as recommended by the independent panel in its report. Firstly, let me say that the government supports this recommendation of the independent panel's report and that this bill effectively implements this recommendation. In most circumstances, 10 business days results in the same outcome as 12 days. Given that all elections must be held on a Saturday, the 12-day cut-off will ensure that postal vote applications need to be submitted by the second Monday before polling day even if there is a statewide or regional public holiday in those last 12 days.

With the move to four-year fixed terms, general elections will be held on the last Saturday in October. There are currently no public holidays at that time of year. However, by-elections, extraordinary general elections or referendums can be held at any time of the year and therefore may affect the cut-off deadline if they occur close to a public holiday. The 12-day deadline creates consistency.

I note from the non-government statement of reservation that LNP committee members do not support the amendments in the bill relating to prisoner voting. The bill proposes that a person serving a sentence of imprisonment of three years or longer is not entitled to vote. Despite the sensationalist commentary of some, this is just common sense. Queensland is the last jurisdiction in Australia to have a complete prohibition on prisoner voting. The bill aligns Queensland with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions that provide for a level of imprisonment to disqualify a prisoner from voting. This will mean that individuals who are currently eligible to vote in federal elections will also be able to vote in state elections. Under the joint roll arrangements, there are operational advantages in aligning with the Commonwealth in this area.

Can I also put on the record that the prohibition that currently exists in the act was put in to align the state legislation with the Commonwealth laws. The Commonwealth laws were challenged in the High Court and found to be invalid. However, no Queensland parliament has ever gone back and rectified the state legislation to bring us back in line with the Commonwealth and the situation in other jurisdictions. Although legislation slightly differs in other jurisdictions, they all allow for some form of

prisoner voting. The bill aligns Queensland with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions that provide for a level of imprisonment to disqualify a prisoner from voting and, as I say, will allow operational advantages in aligning us with the Commonwealth in this area as the Electoral Commission Queensland uses the rolls of the Australian Electoral Commissioner as far as who is an eligible voter. It is logical to align with the Commonwealth.

I also want to clarify that during my introductory speech I stated that the bill contained amendments that would require all donations and loans made within seven days of polling day to be disclosed within 24 hours of them being made. I confirm that the bill does not contain these amendments. The timeframes for the provision of returns under the Electoral Act are currently prescribed by the Electoral Regulation 2013. As such, I propose to progress amendments to the regulation in the near future to provide a 24-hour period for disclosure on recipients of donations and loans in the final days of an election campaign.

The government proposes to move amendments to the bill during consideration in detail. Five of the proposed amendments will amend the Electoral Act so that the prescribed time for real time reporting can specify a time as well as a day by which returns must be provided to the ECQ. This will lay the path for the proposed regulatory amendment to enable 24-hour reporting in the last seven days before the election. Together, these reforms will improve the integrity of our elections in Queensland so that electors will be better informed about who is making donations to electoral participants and may be influencing those participants right up until electors cast their vote.

I will now turn to other amendments to be moved by the government during consideration in detail of the bill. Amendments will be moved to address two issues raised by the committee in its report. The first is to clarify that elector information under new section 133A of the Electoral Act, which is information about which polling booth voters used or whether they voted by post or electronic means, may be provided by the ECQ to political parties for the 2017 state general election onwards.

The second is to correct a minor inconsistency in the language used for the provisions dealing with temporary suspension of the polls to ensure they align with the language used in the adjournment provisions. This will ensure that the returning officer must form an opinion on certain factors before suspending or adjourning a poll. The government also proposes to move amendments to the provisions which require the ECQ to delete address information of silent electors before publishing them on their website. The amendments simply clarify that ECQ must delete this information if they are made aware that an individual in the return is a silent elector by the person making a return.

Further, amendments will also be moved so that published returns on the ECQ's website do not display the street address of any individual, just their town or suburb and their state or territory. I believe this strikes the right balance between the need to provide transparency of donations and the need to protect the privacy of individuals.

In conclusion, I would again like to thank the CCC and the independent panel for their reports and recommendations that provided the basis for this bill. I would also like to thank the hardworking members of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General for all their work on this bill. I also thank the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the member for Sandgate, for working cooperatively with myself and my department, and our departments working together, for the benefit of the people of Queensland in relation to these two bills.

Queenslanders expect and deserve an electoral system that they can have confidence in. The Palaszczuk government has a strong record of enhancing electoral integrity, transparency and accountability in Queensland. Continuing improvements to our electoral system will ensure we can continue to be confident in our democracy. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (3.55 pm): The speech that I was going to give in relation to these cognate bills has changed substantially from an hour ago. At one stage I was going to stand up after the Attorney-General and not sing *Kumbaya* or stand on a unity ticket, but the Electoral Act amendments that the Attorney-General has just spoken to are relatively uncontroversial, and apart from raising a couple of concerns about prisoner voting and postal voting I do not see too many issues with that bill, but I will talk more about that later.

The humiliating backdown and backflip of the local government minister on the Belcarra stage 2 bill just could not go without mention. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Warrego who went through that bill with great forensic detail and incisive analysis. That is an important step that has been taken. To reflect on this minister's humiliation here today, essentially we may as well junk the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill

2019. The two key planks of the Belcarra stage 2 bill have been thrown away in the last hour. They have been cast aside, which begs the question as to why we are even debating this bill? There is barely anything of substance left in it.

The minister gave the game up a little bit. There are two key people who have essentially rendered this bill redundant. The first is the Deputy Premier. If members go to the amendments that were tabled over an hour ago, the first one was to remove the conflict of interest and register of interest provisions. That was because the Deputy Premier could not manage her personal affairs. I will come back to that.

The second reason was given up by the minister in his comments. Sometimes it is not what we say, it is what we do not say. If I heard the minister correctly, he said, in respect of compulsory preferential voting being cast aside today, after it was in yesterday, that the Premier was very receptive to the feedback of local governments around Queensland. I take that as meaning that the minister has been rolled by the Premier and the Deputy Premier. The minister was forced to go up to Cairns this morning, probably in the government jet, I don't know, go to the local government conference and admit he was wrong.

As the member for Warrego has already said, the LNP never supported compulsory preferential voting in the local government arena. Finally, after the Premier was very receptive to the feedback from local government mayors and councillors, the minister saw the light, flew up to Cairns, admitted in a humiliating backdown this morning that compulsory preferential voting would not be introduced and then he was forced to come into this House just an hour ago and table these amendments that saw compulsory preferential voting thrown out. I take it from it being thrown out that the minister and those opposite are actually fans of optional preferential voting. This side of the House is a fan of optional preferential voting too.

**Mr Powell** interjected.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I take the interjection of the member for Glass House. We know that it is the fairest way in which to conduct elections. It gives the voter every opportunity to express his or her true intentions.

Optional preferential voting does not force the voters of Queensland to vote for somebody they do not want to vote for or preference somebody they do not want to preference. It allows the maximum degree of choice. From the government's backdown on compulsory preferential voting today, I take it that now they too are fans of optional preferential voting. It was very pleasing to hear that the Premier was very receptive and obviously the minister was very receptive to the Premier's wishes as, in a humiliating backdown, he has come in here to walk away from compulsory preferential voting, which as I understand it he supported just yesterday. That is the first comment I make about optional preferential voting.

I turn to the second reason for my uncertainty about why we are debating the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The second key plank of the bill, namely, the conflict of interest and register of interest provisions, has likewise been thrown aside. Again, that was beyond the control of the local government minister. I will give him that credit, because it was not within his control. It was entirely the doing of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer through her actions in buying the house, making the phone call to the CCC and ignoring the information on high school locations and train station locations. It was the Deputy Premier's appearance at an investigation at the CCC that caused the conflict of interest and register of interest provisions to be removed from the bill under consideration today.

Never before have we seen a deputy premier and treasurer forced into their job by amendments to the Criminal Code. We hear a lot about transparency and the restoration of faith in the democratic system, but through the CCC's assessment of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer we have a recommendation that now we need to amend the criminal law of Queensland simply because the Deputy Premier could not complete her register of interests form. The Deputy Premier did not understand the very basics of good corporate governance in Queensland and did not declare a conflict of interest in matters that were before cabinet. That same cabinet did not even have the consideration of conflicts of interest as a standing agenda item. Because of those actions and failures, today the local government minister has had to walk into the House and give up on amending the conflict of interest and register of interest provisions in the bill before us. I ask: why are we even debating this bill when those two key planks, namely, the register of interest and conflict of interest provisions and compulsory preferential voting, have been cast aside?

I feel for the local government minister, who has had to come in here and walk away from those amendments. I understand that he did a great deal of work and undertook a great deal of consultation, but more importantly for the local government minister's longer term career he has been very receptive to the Premier's very receptive views of the local government community. It is to be applauded, notwithstanding that it makes the review and consideration of the bill quite redundant. It is the right thing to do to step back from compulsory preferential voting, as the member for Warrego has articulated. It is the right thing to do, because we need to get right the provisions in relation to the activities of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. I am sure the Attorney-General and the local government minister will continue to work on those provisions, to get them right. To completely restore trust and faith in government in Queensland, the people in government in Queensland must start exercising trust and they must start exercising integrity, because all too often, as we have seen from this government in the past few months, there has been a complete lack of trust and integrity.

While those are my comments in relation to the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I know many of my colleagues will have more to say. It really does beg the question: why we are even bothering to debate it here today?

I now turn to some further remarks that I have prepared in relation to the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, which was introduced by the Attorney-General. The bill implements the second stage of legislative changes in response to certain recommendations of the Belcarra report and the Soorley report. As outlined by the Attorney-General, the objective of the bill is to improve the integrity, transparency and public accountability of state elections. Much of it is administrative in nature and creates important efficiencies.

Key aspects of the bill include expanding the ECQ's statutory functions to include administering and promoting compliance with the election funding and financial disclosure provisions of the Electoral Act 1992, which is recommendation 31 of the Belcarra report. Secondly, placing an obligation on donors to notify a recipient of the true source of a gift, which is recommendation 6 of the Belcarra report. Thirdly, amending and introducing new offence and penalty provisions within the Electoral Act 1992 to improve consistency and compliance with the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 and the Referendums Act 1997. Finally, the fourth key aspect is introducing the period over which funding and disclosure prosecutions can be brought from three years to four years from the commission of the offence.

The Soorley report—the so-called 'independent' report from the panel chaired by one of Labor's key figures of the last generation—titled *A review of the conduct of the 2016 local government elections, the referendum and the Toowoomba South by-election* also informed the drafting of this bill. That report made 74 recommendations and this bill has adopted only a few of them. They include recommendation 4, which recommended the EQC rather than the Governor in Council appoint returning officers and assistant returning officers; allowing the preliminary processing of declaration envelopes for postal votes to commence before polling day to allow such ballot papers to be included in the preliminary count; and allowing the ECQ to better disperse its workload over the election period, which is recommendation 61 and item 11 of recommendation 74. The adoption of the ideas also included administrative concerns relating to replacement ballot papers, polling booth notification processes, nomination payments, retention of election papers and financial records, ballot paper printing costs and absentee vote electoral roll requirements.

Finally, it included the moving of the deadline for postal vote applications to be submitted to the ECQ to no later than 12 days prior to the election, by 7 pm on the Monday two weeks before polling day. That was as a consequence of changes to the frequency and reliability of postal services and to ensure that postal ballots applied for can realistically be delivered to voters prior to polling day. That was contained in recommendations 41 and 43 and item 13 of recommendation 74. This particular aspect of the bill does raise some concerns for the opposition. The current process in Queensland requires the ECQ to send a ballot paper and declaration envelope to an elector who requests a postal vote if the request is received no later than 7 pm on the Wednesday prior to polling day. The bill moves that deadline for making an application for a postal vote from that time on the Wednesday evening to 7 pm on the Monday evening of the week before.

That change in the bill is again justified by the Attorney-General as being as a consequence of changes to the frequency and reliability of postal services and to ensure that postal ballots applied for can realistically be delivered to voters prior to polling day. While I understand where the Attorney-General is taking that proposal, the opposition does hold concerns with the deadline being

moved from two days prior to the election to 12 days prior to the election, in that it may create inadvertent consequences such as ballot papers not being received by the applicant before the polling day.

The opposition considers the shift from two days to 12 days before the election as excessive. The opposition considers that voters will only have a short time frame in which to apply for postal votes once the writs have been issued. This will result in voters in some circumstances, particularly in rural and remote areas, running the risk of missing out altogether. That is particularly relevant for electorates such as Warrego and Gregory.

That recommendation was reflected in the Soorley report. I want to spend a few moments talking about the Soorley report. Just a few recommendations were taken from the Soorley report and introduced into this bill. There were 74 recommendations made in that report and by my count there were probably only four or five recommendations adopted by the government.

I must say that the government has been very keen to badge the Soorley report as a report of an independent panel. Again, this goes to the restoration of confidence in our electoral system. If the government were truly serious about independence, about the restoration of faith and about trust then surely one of Labor's luminaries of the last 30 years—someone who represented the Labor Party for a generation—would not be given the job of chairing the panel tasked with analysing the electoral system. I accept that he is probably of the highest character, but just the perception of a former Labor lord mayor of Queensland undertaking an assessment of the electoral system of Queensland must raise eyebrows. It must raise concerns. Surely there would have been a far better appointment, a far more appropriate appointment to that review panel than a former Labor luminary.

As I said, there were 74 recommendations made in the Soorley report and probably only three or four taken up. Some of the other recommendations did raise an eyebrow. I would be interested in understanding the government's position in relation to a couple of these recommendations because the government gave a generic response to the report when it was handed down. They said that things would be considered in the fullness of time. They used language of that nature.

There were a couple of interesting recommendations. The Soorley report stated at recommendation 20—

... the ECQ should consider the employment of a security officer to monitor activity which might be construed as canvassing for the elector's vote. Police intervention may need to be considered where warranted.

I would hope that elections in Queensland do not ever necessitate the involvement of the police force. Perhaps the Soorley panel had evidence before it. Another recommendation that the Electoral Act bill has not address is that returning officers—

... should not automatically appoint family members and friends as polling booth staff. The ECQ can only approve these appointments under special circumstances.

I would have thought that something of that nature would have been an important recommendation to at least consider.

Recommendations 42 and 43 speak about postal vote distribution which the Attorney-General has addressed. At recommendation 53 the Soorley report stated—

... the ECQ introduces e-voting by the 2020 election at some pre-polling and polling booths.

Recommendation 54 stated—

... the ECQ investigates options for internet voting in the longer term and begins to prepare for full online voting at the first appropriate election.

I would be interested to understand whether the government would consider initiatives of that nature.

One area that was addressed by the Attorney-General was recommendation 61. This relates to the commencement of counting of pre-poll and postal votes prior to the close of the polls on election day. Another aspect of this bill that I wanted to speak about was the costs. The explanatory notes to the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 speak about the costs associated with the introduction of this bill and state that they would be addressed through the normal budgetary process.

I note that during the committee's May public hearing Pat Vidgen, the Electoral Commissioner, commented that total funding to implement the proposed reforms was 'expected to be in the millions without being precise'. The Electoral Commissioner talked about the costs associated with the introduction of this bill being in the millions without being precise. I understand the Attorney-General has been considering these matters. I think it is important to understand whether the ECQ has

undertaken any further analysis of the costs associated with the introduction of this bill and what it may imply for the carriage of elections in Queensland and whether the Attorney-General can give any update in respect of that.

One other aspect which was alluded to by the member for Warrego in her contribution and also by the Attorney-General in her contribution was prisoner voting. This is not in any way a reactionary or ill-considered approach of the opposition in opposing the introduction of prisoner voting. Clause 27 of bill amends section 106 of the Electoral Act to provide that a person who is serving a sentence of imprisonment of three years or longer is not entitled to vote at an election for an electoral district. The current provision provides that no prisoner is entitled to vote. It should be noted that this amendment is outside the government's response to recommendations in the Belcarra report and the independent Soorley report.

The opposition does not support this proposal and is of the view that no prisoner should have the right to vote. This is because the opposition believes that those who break the law should not have the right to participate in deciding who makes the law. A person serving a sentence of imprisonment, no matter the length of sentence, is not a law-abiding citizen. There should be no discretion for those who are serving shorter sentences. The government's justification that this amendment is because of a High Court decision or to bring Queensland into line with other jurisdictions is misleading. That High Court decision was from 12 years ago. This is a policy call by the Labor government, pure and simple, and to pretend otherwise is untrue.

Only two other Australian jurisdictions, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, allow prisoners who are serving a sentence of less than three years to vote. New South Wales and Western Australia only allow prisoners who are serving less than one year to vote whereas Victoria allows prisoners who are serving a sentence of less than five years to vote. This is another example of the wrong priorities of this Labor government and the opposition will be opposing it.

With respect to the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill amendments that were tabled in the House just an hour ago, I will have to consider them further. The opposition did hold some concerns about the privacy of voters who would be included in analysis of disclosure returns undertaken by the ECQ. It appears that that has been addressed. There has also been clarification that the ECQ is only required to delete the address of a silent elector before publishing disclosure returns if the ECQ is informed of that by the person giving the return. It is pleasing to see that that has been clarified.

As I said at the commencement of my contribution, the Labor government regularly talks about the restoration of faith and transparency. The local government minister has talked repeatedly about that. Let us not forget why this bill, the Belcarra stage 2 bill, is being debated. It is because of a Labor local government. It is because of a Labor mayor. It is because of Labor politicians who lost the trust of the people. It is because of Labor local governments. That is why we are here debating this bill.

The approach of the Labor government in calling on the spirit of Fitzgerald in this House in this post-Fitzgerald era is completely hollow, because they have had 30 years of Labor politicians who have often been corrupt, who have often brought the state into disrepute—Keith Wright, Bill D'Arcy, Gordon Nuttall. There was a specially convened session of parliament—


**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr McArdle): Pause the clock. Member for Toowoomba South, I think we are straying a little bit from the long title of the bill.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The Belcarra stage 2 bill is another reminder that Labor local governments have not worked. Labor state governments, as we know, have not worked. This bill, the Belcarra bill, would not even be necessary if the Labor local government in Ipswich had done its job, had not lost the faith and the trust of the people. Just when the local government minister was in the House ready to introduce conflict of interest and register of interest provisions, again he has been thwarted by the activities of a Labor politician. Just when he was about to amend the law to make sure that people like Paul Pisasale would not rot the system again, he was thwarted by another Labor politician—the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. Just as he was about to introduce these laws, today he has been forced into a humiliating backdown.

I heard the local government minister reflect on a former local government minister, the member for Broadwater, quite unfavourably, quite unfairly. Let me tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, when the member for Broadwater was local government minister he did not have anything to do with Paul Pisasale. Instead, we had the member for Bundamba calling on the Labor government in full knowledge of the complaints made about Paul Pisasale and that Labor council—and what did they do? They did nothing. It was the member for Bundamba who stood up for the people of Ipswich. It was the member

for Bundamba who stood up and talked openly and courageously about the corruption in Ipswich. It was the member for Bundamba who spoke up. Again, just when the local government minister tried to come in here and make sure that conflicts of interest and registers of interest would be appropriately adhered to in local government, he has his attempts thwarted by another Labor politician.

I reflect on this bill and I wonder again why we are debating it here today. The amendments regarding conflicts of interest, registers of interest and, amazingly, compulsory preferential voting, when the local government minister was in favour of it yesterday, have been removed from this debate. It is a shameful and humiliating backdown from the local government minister. This government should hang its head in shame because once again it has failed to deliver a fair and properly free and independent local government system for Queensland. After a very receptive response from the Premier and local government officials around the state, the local government minister was forced to come in here and back down on all the reforms he had fought so hard for. It is a shameful and humiliating backdown. The opposition condemns the government for it.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (4.24 pm): I was really disappointed by the contribution of the member for Toowoomba South. We are dealing with important issues of integrity in our local governments and our voting system. The idea that when all semblance of substance had faded the member for Toowoomba South should simply turn to abusive partisan comment is really what is wrong with some of the debate that has gone on. It is typical and it is disappointing. We can do so much better. I welcome the return of the deputy chair because I know that in the committee, of which I was the chair, we did so much more work in interrogating these difficult issues for which there are many sides and different opinions, but that is what we sought to do.

The committee did determine, as recommendation 1, that the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 be passed. In our report we attempted with clarity to put forward all points of view, including those that were alternative, or indeed those that opposed the government's view, or indeed those that were alternative or opposed even my own view and no doubt the view of the member for Mermaid Beach. This is in stark contrast to what we saw under the Newman government. If we listened to the member for Warrego or the member for Toowoomba South, we know that it is in stark contrast to any future LNP government.

They are not interested in the committee process. They are not interested in hearing alternative views, much less acting on alternative views. They are not interested in hearing new facts and new directions, much less acting on those new facts and new directions. Instead of listening, the member for Toowoomba South and the member for Warrego would, very much like the Newman government, bluster and bully their way through, regardless of the facts and new information.

When it comes to the tough job of reform of our local government sector, it is clear that the LNP are simply not up to it. They are not up to this difficult task of balancing competing priorities. For them there is no problem. They say, 'There is nothing to see here.' Even worse, they plainly deny that some of the changes that they made in their time in government have contributed to these integrity issues. I note the good grace of the minister in not emphasising, in my humble opinion, nearly enough and going through root and branch the detail of concerns that those changes made to the process of integrity within local government. To spare their blushes and to be kind to them, it is a bipartisan view. Some of these reforms are vitally important to ensure integrity and to overcome some of the weaknesses that were introduced.

Rather than wilful blindness of these integrity issues, pretending that there is nothing to see here or partisan rants, as in the member for Toowoomba South, the member for Warrego went further. The member for Warrego wilfully omitted and distorted some of the arguments. That is not to say that there are not differences of opinions and differing views on these matters. When you seek to wilfully distort the argument, it shows that you have nothing of substance to put towards the debate. Instead, you wish to obfuscate, distract, distort and run a partisan campaign rather than get to the bottom of the integrity issues in local government. I will give one example of the disappointing and frankly deliberate misleading of this House.

The member for Warrego quoted a Labor Party submission on full preferential voting which stated that the Labor Party felt that there should be first-past-the-post in local government elections. I thought, and I am sure the member for Mermaid Beach thought, that that was not a submission to our inquiry. We did not hear that. I found out that she was talking about a submission in 1991 and the statement was in comparison to first-past-the-post—a system of voting that we all believe is completely and inherently undemocratic.

I would not put it past some members of the LNP to want to go back to the 1890s and first-past-the-post voting. I notice that the member for Chatsworth is smiling; he is thinking about it. Does it wilfully distort the argument? Why do you need to not allow people to know you are talking about a 1991 submission which compared systems? The member for Warrego falsely stated that the minister said this was all about Belcarra. She set up the false premise that this was all about Belcarra, and then she suddenly revealed that some of the things are not about Belcarra. However, let us remember that in the minister's second reading speech he went to great lengths to say that this is not just about Belcarra. It is also in the explanatory notes. It is complex. The minister did it in a tricky spot: on the front page. I remember that the minister, in his second reading speech, said that setting it up to be just about Belcarra was exactly what he attempted not to do. Dot point No. 3 states clearly there are other significant reforms not from Belcarra, so why do we have false statements in order to confuse and obfuscate the issue? Because they do not want to deal with the serious issues.


Integrity is really important to us in local government. We respect the work that local governments do. We want to strengthen them. We want to give them the opportunity to do more good work for members of parliament. We also note that when it comes to obfuscating the member for Toowoomba North went even further, pretending that integrity issues are somehow a partisan thing. I am from the electorate of Logan. I could make extraordinarily partisan points about Logan local government and the participation of certain people in certain political parties which the member for Toowoomba South knows very well, but that would be an attempt to not address the central issues.

This bill attempts to address the second Belcarra recommendation: the real-time disclosure of electoral expenditure. Those opposite said that was not worth passing recommendations 3 and 4, the disclosure of candidate interests as a condition of nomination, apparently the LNP said, 'Nothing to see here' and that these were not worth passing. In relation to recommendations 5 and 6, record of membership and behaviour of groups of candidates, the member for Toowoomba South said, 'There is nothing worth passing in those.' Everyone should recognise that is the opinion of the LNP. There are many things contained on page 5 of our report that are essential and effective in changing the nature of local government.

I also want to speak directly to the issues. As a committee we sought alternate views, dissenting views and supporting views. Unlike the Newman government—and from what we have heard today, unlike any future LNP government—I admire a government that says, 'We have not convinced people of the whole totality of our decisions. We put forward our views and ideas, but we need to take people with us.' This government and this committee process should be given credit. I would like to see members of our committee recognised because we did one of the early teleconferences to hear the views of regional mayors who got together in Townsville, including Mayor Jenny Hill. They did not agree with us on these issues. They did not agree with recommendations 7 and 21, 'deeming election participants and councillors to have knowledge of the original source of electoral gifts or loans'. They said there are complexities with regard to that. We absorbed that information and took on board those complexities. They did not agree with compulsory preferential voting. They put forward a variety of views about the differences between local, state and federal governments.

Lastly, we know that the LNP is going to speak against prisoners voting. If they put forward a different time period you could give that some credibility, but they speak against our Constitution, they speak against court decisions and they also speak against what the federal government and the Morrison government—

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (4.35 pm): I rise to contribute to the cognate debate on the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I am a proud member of the Economics and Governance Committee. As the member for Logan correctly pointed out, we did receive quite strong feedback in relation to the proposed changes. It did take quite a while to digest it all, as the bill was first referred to the committee in May.

The Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is designed to increase the confidence of the community in local governments, and I support the recommendations contained in the Belcarra report. We need to have transparency and integrity at all levels of government. Too often the perception of politicians is that we are 'in it for ourselves' and that we do not seek to serve the people we represent. The Belcarra report has opened



a conversation about all levels of government and how they can operate with the highest levels of integrity. I have been encouraged to see that local governments in particular have been open to the changes Belcarra recommended, and I commend them for their desire to improve the integrity of their systems and processes. Councils do have a lot of direct power, so it is important that they have a system around them that can monitor those sorts of things. In fact, I am sure many of us have seen that they often have more direct power than some of us in this room.

It is important that people know who they are voting for on election day, and the real-time disclosure of electoral expenditure, the disclosure of candidates' interests and the disclosure of gifts and donors all goes towards this. We cannot have councillors running as independents when they clearly are aligned with a party and the public is not aware of their leanings. I think there are still concerns regarding how this will be monitored and even when the period of disclosure or candidature starts. It was clear from the public briefings that this is yet to be clarified and it may cause confusion.

This bill should be designed to support the intent of the CCC's recommendations from the Operation Belcarra report to minimise the risk of corruption and increase transparency and accountability in local government. There are significant aspects of the bill that have no relationship to that report. The Brisbane City Council and Local Government Association of Queensland stand with the LNP in stating that this bill should not be used for one side's political advantage. It must be for the integrity of our local governments, otherwise it undermines the broad purpose.

On the issue of compulsory preferential voting, I was pleased to see the government has finally listened and scrapped it. There was clearly very little support for it, with fewer than half of Queenslanders believing it would improve council elections. I think that our system of voting in local government is good, and people should not be forced to preference candidates they do not want to vote for. They have essentially solved a problem of their own making by scrapping this today. The committee heard from the Assistant Electoral Commissioner on compulsory preferential voting. They used data from the state election to show there has been a near doubling in informal votes since the change was brought in at the 2017 election. It jumped from 2.11 per cent in 2015 to 4.34 per cent in 2017. That is a significant increase, with 123,000 informal votes.

In committee hearings we also heard officers from the local government department question the conflict of interest issue, which has thankfully been resolved today. It was certainly one of the biggest issues we heard from stakeholders. They said that it dominated their discussions with councillors as they consulted on the bill. Unfortunately, there was no data available on the changes already made and how much time it took up. I think it needs further investigation to see the impact it is having on the ground.


In the hearings, I also sought to find out how the disclosures operated and how they would be defined, such as when someone becomes a candidate. I am already seeing it visibly in my area. We have people who are campaigning in one of the relocated council divisions from Surfers Paradise to around Labrador, of division 7. The department said that it was when they publicly announce their candidature, like a campaign launch, as well as laying out a budget and getting money into their dedicated campaign account—things like that. I think that is still a little unclear. I remember asking whether it is when someone creates a Facebook page saying they are running for a particular division. I think that does need clarity as we move towards the March 2020 elections. I would hate to see some candidates inadvertently get caught out by those changes.

I also asked the department about the rollout of the mandatory online training. This is on the local government department's website under 'So you want to be a councillor?' although I note that the last time I checked it was still unavailable. The sooner this is published the better. I know they have been working on this since at least May when we first examined this bill. This is incredibly important. Candidates and prospective candidates need to know what their obligations are. From memory, they said it would only take an hour or two. The quicker they can get that up, the better it will be because there are already people out in the field running for the next election.

In relation to the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I thank the Attorney-General for the minor amendments foreshadowed in response to some of the committee's recommendations. I echo the shadow Attorney-General who mentioned our concerns with the deadline change for postal vote applications being moved from two days prior to the election to 12 days prior to the election. As he pointed out, that is particularly important for regional areas. In addition, the shadow Attorney-General pointed out the issues with the amendments to section 106 to provide that a person who is serving a

sentence of imprisonment of three years or longer is not entitled to vote at an election for an electoral district. He did point out that only two other jurisdictions allow this in the way that is being put forward here.

Just to wrap up, there are some sensible changes here. The most controversial have been dropped and I thank the government for listening to basically every stakeholder on those.

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (4.42 pm): I rise in this House to speak in this cognate debate on the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. These bills were introduced into the Legislative Assembly and referred to our Economics and Governance Committee. I agree with the member for Bonney—we certainly consulted far and wide using digital technology to pull all of those mayors together and we indeed listened to what they had to say.

Next March we have the 2020 local government elections, and this legislation will build on transforming the confidence of our community in their elected representatives and those who put themselves forward for consideration. In the Redlands, we had our council and three individual councillors make submissions to the committee inquiry. The issues being addressed in this bill have been experienced in our region, particularly in the 2016 election.

As we all know, the 2016 local government elections and local government administration have seen some of the darkest days. As I said, in the stage 1 Belcarra debate we have seen a never-ending procession of newspaper headlines highlighting the significant issues that exist within local government, from Ipswich City Council through to Logan City Council and the list goes on and on. You only need to look at the workload of the Independent Assessor and the Integrity Commissioner to see the level of issues that do exist. Bad behaviour has been from a minority but it has affected many. It has affected the reputation of all politicians. It is paramount that we clean this up so we can instil confidence back into the system which has been perceived as broken and which the community has lost faith in. This continues on our government's reform agenda to repair that system.

These systemic issues impact all levels of government and they have reflected on all of us in our communities. This bill continues the government's rolling reform agenda in the local government sector and delivers on the government's commitment to improving transparency, integrity and accountability for the benefit of each and every community right across Queensland. I do not think there is a community across Queensland that has not been touched by this in some way, shape or form.

The bill represents many months of significant and continued consultation with the community and stakeholders. These stakeholders have included the Local Government Association of Queensland, the Local Government Managers Australia, the Electoral Commission of Queensland, mayors, councillors, chief executive officers and various community and ratepayer groups. I take this opportunity to again thank the CCC chairman, Alan MacSporran, and the Integrity Commissioner, Nikola Stepanov, who joined me and the member for Capalaba late last year to talk with our community about integrity, transparency and accountability expectations that our community should have of its elected representatives.

I also take this opportunity to thank all of the agencies—the CCC, the Integrity Commissioner Nikola Stepanov and Kathleen Florian and the Office of the Independent Assessor. As I said, they have had their work cut out for them as we continue to shine the spotlight on issues within local government. They have had a substantial workload as a result of these reforms. There is a lot of great work going on but there is still an awful lot to do.

The bill builds on reforms already implemented in Belcarra stage 1, which was the government's response to five of the 31 recommendations from the Crime and Corruption Commission's Belcarra report, including the prohibition of election donations from property developers and measures to improve the way councillors must deal with conflicts. It is critically important that as elected representatives we continue to improve the systems and frameworks that we conduct ourselves within and that we seek to repair the perception of communities in both the system and those elected to administer the system. This bill continues to implement our government's policy and commitment to improve transparency, integrity and accountability in Queensland local government elections and decision-making by continuing to implement further recommendations of Operation Belcarra and the Soorley report. This bill is guided by four key principles of integrity, transparency, recognition of diversity and consistency.

As we all know, the bill is the second stage and I think it is important to note that it is certainly not the last. We know there is still a lot more work to do. We should always be striving to continue to improve legislation and the framework of good governance. The bill amends the Local Government Electoral

Act to implement real-time electoral expenditure disclosure requirements. Real-time expenditure disclosure enhances transparency in relation to resources applied by candidates and third parties to election campaigns, and we have experienced some of those issues in relation to third party donations out in the Redlands.

The bill amends the Local Government Electoral Act to require candidates to disclose particular interests as part of their nomination as a candidate. These interests include if a candidate is currently or has previously been a member of a political party or a trade or professional organisation. Again, this increased transparency allows voters to be better informed. We saw that out our way in the 2017 state election when a local councillor took leave of absence in a campaign period to run in a state election. That was highly unusual. I do not think anyone would think that passes the pub test.

The bill amends the Local Government Electoral Act to further define a group of candidates by the behaviours of the group or its members rather than the purpose for which it was formed. We saw this in Redlands in the 2016 election. These amendments will provide greater transparency to the public. If councillors are operating in a group, you should know that they are operating in a group and that they may need to make decisions as a collective.

The bill amends the Local Government Electoral Act to require all candidates, including sitting councillors, to undertake mandatory training. I have had a number of conversations with councillors in my area on this very topic. They are calling for it as elected councillors already. I think it is really important that we get the information on what their obligations are. It is a momentous decision to decide to run as a candidate, let alone if you are elected, so it is very important that you actually understand the framework you are going to be elected to operate in.


The bill amends the Local Government Electoral Act to require all candidates, including sitting councillors, to undertake this training. In our public hearing last year with former Ipswich city councillors, this was very evident due to the fact that longstanding councillors who had been in there for over 15 years did not understand their obligations. It is quite incredible that you can be within an institution for 15 years and not understand your obligations to act with integrity. As I said, this training will go some way to ensuring that the conduct and standing of candidates and councillors is raised.

This bill is more than just a response to the recommendations put forward by the Belcarra report and the Soorley report; it is a continuation of our government's focused reform agenda to further improve accountability, transparency, integrity and consistency in the local government system, decision-making and local government elections.

The bill will also amend the Local Government Electoral Act in terms of the definition of 'candidate'—I think the member for Bonney touched on that—making it clearer around when a candidate becomes a candidate. I think that is very important. Finally, with regard to the electoral reforms, that bill aims to further strengthen public confidence in our electoral system. It supports operational improvements to the electoral system, which I think is really important not only to allow ECQ to achieve efficiencies but also to improve the voters' experience.

From these amendments we should expect to see a clearer indication of where results sit, and I think that is really important for our communities as well, particularly as they relate to the counting of postal votes. In those marginal seats there can be a lot of time waiting. The seat of Redlands was declared two weeks out, so I think to actually have that information sooner is really important.

Integrity, transparency and accountability are the cornerstones on which our framework of government must be founded. It is important for us to continue to improve, and these amendments do just that. These reforms will provide our communities with the confidence they rightly deserve to have in their system of government and their elected representatives. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (4.50 pm): It is October, the jacarandas are out and thank God that this time in 12 months that incompetent, shonky, dodgy mob on the other side of this House that call themselves the government will not be running the state.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms McMillan): Order! Some of that language that you used, member, is unparliamentary and I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr STEVENS:** Whichever it was I withdraw.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member, I ask you to withdraw—

**Mr STEVENS:** 'Some of it', you said, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I ask you to withdraw completely.

**Mr STEVENS:** I withdraw. This minister who is now running local government has frightened the daylight out of all the councillors throughout Queensland. He has made a complete mess of his portfolio, as he has done with rail fail and as he did when he came in here at five minutes to midnight and changed the system to compulsory preferential voting for state elections to try to suit his—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr STEVENS:** Okay. He supported the then attorney-general at five minutes to midnight. However, I know he was the great mind behind it. His track record in this House in terms of his portfolio responsibilities is absolutely and completely hopeless. Just 12 hours ago we were coming into this House to debate a different bill. We support the very recommendations that the committee spent a long time going through and investigating and we put forward our objections to the main tenet of this bill.

Make no mistake: this bill is in this House for the very reason that the minister was trying to wrangle it so that the Brisbane City Council elections would be held under compulsory preferential voting which would swing, with Greens preferences, towards them. That was his preferred method of rigging the voting system. That is why we had compulsory preferential voting as a main part of this bill, a focus of this bill. I can assure honourable members that my Gold Coast councillors and all the other councillors I have talked to during this time have been absolutely horrified at what they would have to do if this bill were passed. As we have seen, the costs to local government of compulsory preferential voting would have been a fortune. However, there was no concern about costs; it was all about trying to win the Brisbane City Council election.

The minister, as we all know, goes to the local government conference and tries to sweet-talk his way back into popularity with the myriad local governments by abolishing the key elements of the bill that were problems for the government. The councillors that I talk to tell me it is not worthwhile being a councillor anymore because of all the issues they have to deal with—the issue of conflicts of interest and other related problems. This minister is responsible for driving people out of local government.

What we see in terms of this government is a complete backflip. Coincidentally, the conflict of interest matters seem to have followed on from other conflicts of interest arising at the state level such as the conflict of interest of the member for South Brisbane involving her own dealings with the CCC, and the reaction is just amazing. All I heard from the councillors of the Gold Coast, who are still under investigation, as you would be aware, Madam Deputy Speaker, is, 'Hey, we are being investigated over minor issues compared to the major issue,' which went nowhere. The outcome of that was, 'Sorry, I've lost my Cross River Rail portfolio.' That was the only outcome of the major conflict of interest that we had in the state parliament.

We are completely disappointed in this legislation. We are satisfied now in terms of supporting the initial parts of Belcarra et cetera and we are pleased to go forward. What we are not satisfied with is why the minister keeps belting local government black and blue and forcing people—I love local government. I was a mayor once, believe it or not. In case anyone here does not know, I used to be the mayor of the Gold Coast. I love local government. It is the government that is closest to the people. The way they have been shoddily treated by this government and particularly this minister—in fact, what he is doing to local government is even worse than what he has done to racing in Queensland, but I will not even go there.

In terms of the training component of the bill we will be passing I can assure honourable members, having had hands-on experience in local government—and I do not think the member has ever had that—that the training of some of the people who put their hands up for local government is not easy. When I ran for mayor of the Gold Coast, I had the nude campaign and the Elvis Presley guy; all these sorts of people run for the fun of it. Now they are going to take a lot of interest in being trained by the department, at great expense to the management, to be a good councillor when they have no interest, no hope, but they want their five minutes of fame, which they are entitled to under our democratic system, and if they get enough votes they get their money back for nomination.

Under this bill there will be media training for these folk a month out regardless of whether or not they win—I am not too sure how long it is going to take. This is going to be a major cost to the departments and most of these candidates will not be interested in it anyway. We are living in fairyland because the minister has not had any involvement or taken advice from those myriad people who have had a lifetime of involvement in local government, many of them on our side in this House. The minister

should stop picking on local government. The next things we will probably see are a limit on expenditure coming through the House and stopping state members from running for council; the old Terry Mackenroth trick will be back in again. These things are not for the betterment of local government; it is all about the betterment of the ALP in Queensland. That is what this legislation was initially intended to do: 'We will pick up the Belcarra matters as we go through and Mr MacSporran's good recommendations.' We all want to see a clean local government. What has happened in Ipswich and to a degree in Logan—

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr STEVENS:** There are no guilty ones yet.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr STEVENS:** Oh, there are a couple of guilty ones.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms McMillan): Order!

**Mr STEVENS:** It is an—

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Logan.

**Mr POWER:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, resume your seat. I had called 'Order'. Resume your seat, please, member for Mermaid Beach. What is your point of order?

**Mr POWER:** I think the member for Mermaid Beach may have spoken in error. I am sure he did not wish to assert that anyone—


**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr POWER:** It is sub judice, and I just wanted to be helpful for the member for Mermaid Beach, who I am sure did not wish to assert anyone's guilt or innocence before the court.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Logan. I warn the member for Mermaid Beach in relation to that matter. I ask you to come back to the bill.

**Mr STEVENS:** Certainly, Madam Deputy Speaker. In terms of the bill, I am trying to say that in terms of the integrity of local government, which this bill is designed to improve, it is absolutely imperative. It is a primary concern for all those who love and live local government. The fact is that we see it used for political purposes rather than betterment.

Until 12 or 24 hours ago, the intent of this legislation was for political purposes. That is not what this legislation should be about. It should be about providing a better framework in which local governments operate instead of hiding behind the pretence of bettering the ALP's chances of winning local government, state government or anywhere. Yes, at the end of the day I support this legislation that we will vote on, but I am totally disappointed in all of this time and effort, threatening all the people involved in local government, for no outcome whatsoever. In 12 months time, I have a big surprise in terms of compulsory preferential voting at the state level which will not affect this bill.

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (5.02 pm): I rise to speak in support of the cognate debate, and in particular, the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. This bill implements the second stage of the Operation Belcarra reforms which aim to restore accountability, integrity and transparency in our local government—something to be commended. I commend the Attorney-General, Hon. Yvette D'Ath, and the Minister for Local Government, Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, for introducing these bills and for delivering these reforms after undertaking significant consultation with stakeholders, councillors and communities right across Queensland. As we all are aware, the matters that led to these reforms are extraordinarily serious and involve a number of councils, including the Ipswich City Council.

Stage 1 of the acts implementing the Operation Belcarra reforms provided powers for dissolving a local government or suspending or dismissing a councillor where the local government minister reasonably believes it to be in the public interest. The matters that arose out of the CCC's investigation into the Ipswich City Council were serious and effectively undermined the public's confidence in our

council. As the member for Redlands said, it undermined all government representatives. It ultimately led to the council's dismissal in August 2018, following months of public revelations of wrongdoing by councillors and council employees which left our community shocked and reeling.

The Ipswich investigation, known as Operation Windage, uncovered significant corruption risks in the Ipswich City Council and ultimately led to 16 people, including council employees, two mayors, two chief executive officers and one chief operating officer, being charged with 91 criminal offences including official corruption. The CCC uncovered a widespread culture of governance and integrity failures including consistent breaches of policy, inappropriate workplace interactions between councillors and council employees and misuse of council funds and assets. It also found a workplace culture that ignored or no longer recognised inappropriate behaviour or conduct and neither challenged nor reported it. That sort of behaviour posed grave corruption risks which needed to be stamped out to restore the community's confidence and trust in local government.

Failures of governance caused by the Ipswich City Council also resulted in the Ipswich CBD redevelopment coming to a complete standstill and caused significant economic uncertainty for our local businesses, leading to some being forced to close up shop. Ipswich has now been without a council for 14 months and, yes, while we have a council we do not have council representation. There have been many challenges associated with that, but in that time we have been working through the issues and also working towards introducing a new divisional boundary model which in the future will substantially change the way we engage with local government.


Like the member for Mermaid Beach, I am a big supporter of local government. It is the level of government closest to people. Really, if anything, these last 14 months have shown just how important good local government representation is for us in our city. In the past year, the council has engaged Ipswich residents on their thoughts about council and given them a say on the type of model they want to see for their council. Community reference groups have also been established to provide residents an opportunity to engage meaningfully with the council on a wide range of issues affecting the city. I commend the work of the interim administrator, Greg Chemello. Over the past 14 months he has set the wheels in motion to restore the integrity, accountability and transparency that we talk about quite a lot in the Ipswich City Council. It has been a huge undertaking, but he has done a good job in restoring confidence and in developing a thorough understanding of our community's needs and challenges and the potential of our city.

People in Ipswich are resilient and have weathered a lot of tough times throughout our history, particularly in recent years. Certainly, the dismissal of our council was another major upheaval that our community was forced to experience, but over the past year we have shown that we can get through it. Through the Palaszczuk government's Belcarra reforms, we are bringing back stability and certainty for the city of Ipswich. We do not want to return to the 'good old days', as the member for Mermaid Beach referred to. We cannot have integrity and transparency if council is lurching from one scandal to the next. I am confident that our government's rolling reform agenda will deliver on our commitment to improve transparency, integrity and accountability for the benefit of not only the Ipswich City Council but all councils across Queensland that have seen significant governance failures and wrongdoing.

The bill implements a number of recommendations made by the CCC's Operation Belcarra report in addition to a number of recommendations made by the Soorley report, which reviewed the conduct of the 2016 local government elections, the referendum and the Toowoomba South by-election. This bill will make a number of improvements to ensure transparency such as implementing real-time electoral expenditure disclosure, requiring candidates to disclose their interests upon nomination such as whether they are a member of a political party, trade or professional organisation. It will provide for greater transparency on which councillors are operating in a group during elections and, if elected, may operate as a collective. It will require additional information about donors of gifts, loans and third-party expenditure and whether expenditure will go towards supporting particular candidates, groups or parties. It also puts the onus on candidates and councillors to have knowledge of the original source of a gift or a loan.

In addition, we are improving accountability by amending the way we define 'candidates' for an election. Sitting councillors will now be included as defined candidates, meaning that they will be required to disclose gifts, loans and other donations regardless of when they receive it, up to and including the period prior to their nomination. The definition of 'candidate' will also include any person who has announced or publicly indicated their intention to be a candidate in council elections. Importantly, this bill restores integrity by making it a condition of a candidate's nomination to undertake mandatory training prior to the local government election. Last but by no means least, accountability is

being restored by reforms in managing councillors' conflicts of interest. These reforms are part of our government's reform agenda to restore accountability, transparency and integrity in local government. I cannot think of anything more important. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (5.09 pm): I rise to make a contribution to this cognate debate. I had intended to go through the bills clause by clause and focus on the nitty-gritty of the changes. I was happy to let slide what was the most humiliating backdown. Then I listened to the member for Sandgate's contribution. I will not allow the record to stand without correction. I will not allow the worst local government minister that this state has seen since Andrew Fraser attempt to lecture me on local government.

The mastermind of the 18 minutes consultation that delivered us the change in state legislation now comes into this House and tries to defend the indefensible. I will not allow his humiliation to go unchecked. When I first saw this bill up for debate I thought to myself, 'My goodness. How are we going to debate such a magnificently large change under the stewardship of two ministers in six hours?' That is no longer relevant, because today the minister has been so humiliated that the two most major changes that we are here to debate have been pulled out from under him.

In his contribution the minister attempted to ridicule me because the first bit of legislation I brought into this place was to hand power from me—from my desk—to elected officials in every community in this state. I stand by every one of those. I will tell members why. Faced with a choice between somebody sitting in an office in Brisbane and an elected mayor who is accountable to his or her community, I will take the elected mayor every day of the week. Faced with a choice between an elected mayor who is accountable to his or her community and an unelected chief executive officer, I will take the elected mayor every day of the week.

I will not allow the minister to use Belcarra to besmirch the vast majority of people in local government. The minister should not suggest that the changes made in 2012 were the green light to allow one mayor in one council, who is a member of the same political party as the minister, to suddenly become dodgy. I will tell members what those changes did. Those changes allowed a mayor to issue a direction to get things done in their community. Those changes allowed a mayor, when he or she got a phone call, rather than cower in a corner, to stand up and do what is right.

Those changes also allowed a committee of three to make a direct appointment of senior staff. These committees comprised the chief executive officer—as it should, because that is the person the staff member will report to; the mayor—as it should, because that is the first citizen in every community and the person whom people look up to; and either the deputy mayor or the committee chair where there is a direct report—as it should, because that is the person to whom that unelected official would be working. If somehow those changes were scary, that was lost on local government because they supported it.

Do members know who was the biggest supporter of those changes? It was a gentleman by the name of Tony McGrady, a former mayor of Mount Isa and a former Speaker of this parliament. He was one of the first people to come to me and say, 'I sat in the House you now sit in. I was a mayor before and have gone back to being a mayor. There just isn't the ability for me to do what I want to do in my community.' Tony McGrady might not share my values in politics, but he shares my values about the importance of local government. That is more than can be said for the current minister, who has not stood up for local government. Today he marched up to Cairns to deliver a humiliating backdown. Do members know what I really like? I like that he said the Premier was very receptive. I read 'very receptive' as, 'I got a lashing and I'm here to do somebody else's bidding.' I will tell members what I like about the Premier being very receptive. When the Premier decided that if it was good enough for councils to not be able to take developer donations—that level of government that actually approves developments—then it would be good enough for this House, she said—

I will not make rules for local councils that I am not prepared to follow myself ...

That means that for the election in 2024, if this lot opposite are re-elected, there can be only one of two options. Under the standard that has been set by the Premier, either councils will be duped and after this election they will have CPV forced on them or this minister will reverse the decision to force people against their wishes to embark on compulsory preferential voting. It can only be one of the two. Is it local government that is being told furbies or is it people in this House? It sends a shiver up my spine that this House can force on councils a set of rules that we are not prepared to abide by ourselves because of nothing more than politics.

The other key changes are those to allow the Deputy Premier to save face. I will not go into those in depth because the shadow Attorney-General did a masterful job. Those changes remove the conflict of interest that we saw exposed. Not since this House changed laws to allow Gordon Nuttall to not have his date with destiny have we seen a set of rules designed around one individual, but there we are. I thank the shadow local government minister for her forensic analysis of these changes.


**A government member:** Forensic analysis.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** It was. I take that interjection. I hope it was made in good spirit. Finally, I will speak briefly on the changes proposed by the Attorney-General. As the shadow Attorney-General has said, many of these changes are supported and are not significant in nature, but I want to touch on the changes to the prisoner voting system. The Attorney-General has mentioned that we are the only state that prohibits prisoners from voting. The Attorney-General says that the changes bring us into line with other states. I make two points for the Attorney's consideration. Firstly, our changes in most cases exceed the minimum threshold set by other states by three times. I would question whether that is overreach. The Attorney, in a well-researched and well-articulated point, mentioned that the changes align us with federal laws. She did not mention the different length of time. We are proposing three times longer.

**Mrs D'Ath:** That is not correct. Maybe you want to actually spend some time doing some research.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Does the Attorney believe that these changes make for a better and more democratic Queensland? Are Queenslanders better served by allowing prisoners to vote? Will the quality of people who come into this room be higher if we allow prisoners to vote? If the Attorney could answer that question—not talk about aligning with other jurisdictions or whether the federal government won or lost something—and say that our state would be better off because of these changes, the LNP would take a different view.

In closing, the LNP supports the changes through Belcarra. Sadly, under the guise of Belcarra a minister who has been humiliated on so many things has sought to change the metrics of local government. The reason the minister is attempting to change the metrics of local government is that he does not understand it, he does not respect it and he believes that too many people in that tier of government are independent thinkers who do not kowtow to his views. As a result, he will continue to neuter the level of government closest to the people.

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (5.19 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I will also make a short contribution to the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. The bills before us provide some of the most comprehensive reforms to elections at a state and local government level that we have seen in some time. As the minister indicated in his introductory speech, transparency and accountability are the foundation stones on which we build governments, whether state or local. The amendments proposed through these bills will improve integrity, transparency and public accountability of both the state's electoral system and Queensland's local government system.

Findings from two key inquiries in 2016—Operation Belcarra and the Soorley inquiry—have informed key reforms that are being addressed through these legislative changes. A significant focus of the bills seeks to address a number of the key recommendations of the Crime and Corruption Commission's Belcarra report, tabled on 4 October 2017. Operation Belcarra, initiated in September 2016, was the result of a number of allegations against South-East Queensland council candidates during the 2016 local government elections. Whilst the investigation dealt with the specific allegations raised, it also identified deficiencies within the current system and found widespread noncompliance with legislative obligations relating to local government elections and political donations.

Stage 2 of the Belcarra reforms, which these bills address, has a strong focus on disclosure, with a number of key recommendations to be implemented. The bill amends the Local Government Electoral Act to require disclosure of electoral expenditure of \$500 or more incurred by candidates, groups of candidates, registered political parties and associated entities during the disclosure period for the election. The bill provides that electoral expenditure is expenditure on, or a gift in kind given for, particular purposes including political advertisements and other material advocating for or against a candidate, group of candidates or political party.

Another important disclosure mechanism is the requirement to publish and maintain a register of interests for all candidates—a key condition of nomination. The act will also require candidates to declare additional matters on their nomination forms which the ECQ will be required to publish on its



website. These additional matters will include matters relating to a candidate's membership of a registered political party, trade or professional organisation. It will also disclose whether a candidate or close associate of the candidate is or has been within the previous year a party to a contractual agreement with the local government or entering a contractual process, for example through a tender process. It also addresses legitimate community concerns regarding candidates who may have development applications before a local government by ensuring these matters are disclosed prior to an election.

The bill also addresses the issue of a group of candidates operating as a collective whilst declaring themselves as independent. This means that group campaign activities such as using the same campaign slogans, brands and how-to-vote cards and sharing the same resources will not be allowed unless those candidates are recorded as a group under section 41(4) of the Local Government Electoral Act. These reforms are all aimed at improving transparency and allow voters to understand the financial interests of potential candidates and to ensure that independence is a term that is not just bandied about but is truly reflective of those candidates.

We know that sadly the reputation of local government, particularly in South-East Queensland, has suffered in recent times. Suspicion, loss of trust and confidence has impacted the entire sector. In my own electorate, which covers both the Ipswich and Logan local government areas, we find ourselves with interim administrators currently overseeing both councils. The next round of council elections in March 2020 will be particularly important as we seek to restore faith in and the good name of local government. I speak with many in my community who raise with me their growing desire to see council candidates who bring the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding of their obligations as a potential councillor.

The bill will now require councillor training as a mandatory requirement for all candidates, something which I believe is a good start for those who are serious about putting their names forward for election. Perhaps, for the member for Mermaid Beach, it may discourage those who just want their five minutes of fame, and I do not think that is necessarily a bad thing. We need people who are serious to come forward as candidates and I do not think some training will be a problem for most people. It also reflects on an old-fashioned view of what councils were. These are not tin-pot clubs; these are major organisations with large budgets, staffing and obligations. The amendment of section 26 of the Local Government Electoral Act will now provide that a person may be nominated as a candidate for an election only if the person has, within six months before the nomination day for the election, successfully completed a training course about the person's obligations as a candidate and as a councillor if they are elected or appointed.

The Belcarra report recommendations will also improve the integrity of state electoral processes as outlined in the amendments being proposed through the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This includes expanding the ECQ's functions in administering and implementing strategies to encourage compliance with the election funding and financial disclosures of the Electoral Act and a full review of offences and penalties across Queensland's electoral legislation. There are important reforms to postal voting that are more realistic in terms of frequency and reliability of postal services and the growing popularity of early voting in our communities. There are also welcome improvements to the processing of declaration envelopes for postal votes to allow those ballot papers to be included in the preliminary count to ensure that votes can be counted much faster and seats declared earlier than has historically been the case.

I want to congratulate both the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs for the work that they have undertaken on these two important reform bills. The Belcarra report and the Soorley inquiry identified many significant issues that needed to be addressed and recommended a detailed number of legislative reforms. Most of these have been agreed to or agreed to in principle by the Palaszczuk government. There are even further reforms that have been identified through stakeholder consultation and continuous improvement, and these are also included in this legislation. I also want to acknowledge the critical work of the CCC whose recommendations underpin key features of this bill. The Palaszczuk government has a strong record of enhancing electoral integrity, transparency and accountability in Queensland. These bills aim to further strengthen public confidence in both our electoral system and local government system as key democratic institutions. I commend the bills to the House.



**Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (5.26 pm): I rise to speak to the cognate debate on the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 along with the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I want to acknowledge my fellow

members of the Economics and Governance Committee for their careful deliberation of these two bills. We have already heard from my colleagues and relevant shadow ministers—the member for Warrego and the member for Toowoomba South—about the evolution of Labor's bill that purports to implement recommendations from the CCC's 2017 Belcarra report. We know of the raft of amendments Labor has made and then removed, the recommendations given and ignored and the gradual insidious shift away from the implementation of the Belcarra report to the inclusion of significant self-serving Labor reforms designed to gain political advantage. In fact, 58 per cent of the clauses in this bill do not even relate to the integrity body's, the CCC's, Belcarra report.

I am mindful that in a few minutes the House will be moving to some other matters and I honestly have not had time to peruse the 50 pages of amendments that were dumped on us only a few hours ago, so I might try to fast-track a lot of what I was going to talk about to get finished in time. As Labor has reminded us repeatedly, the intent of the Belcarra report was to strengthen and encourage more transparency and integrity within our local government processes to provide consistency and accountability to taxpayers across Queensland. What did Labor do on the back of that report? It overhauled industrial relations laws for all of Queensland local governments without consultation.

We can now all breathe a sigh of relief knowing that the Labor Party has ditched its cynical plan to force CPV on councils, but it begs the question: why did the government initially introduce CPV in the first place? Winston Churchill famously once said that preferential voting has the potential to make winners out of losers. As we all know, not only does compulsory preferential voting for mayors and single-councillor elections have nothing to do with the Belcarra report; the vast majority of local government stakeholders did not want it. The result of a survey conducted by the LGAQ, the peak body for local governments, revealed that more than 70 per cent of respondents did not support voting changes. Queensland councils rejected compulsory preferential voting systems. Indeed, 98 per cent of mayors and councillors voted it down. Should Labor have progressed its ill-thought plan to reintroduce CPV, the cost of upcoming local government elections would have skyrocketed from \$17.2 million to \$27.4 million.

One more unnecessary and convoluted change that is contained in the bill is the rewrite of the material personal interests and conflict of interest provision which I now—

Debate, on motion of Mr Purdie, adjourned.

## **FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (LEVY GROUPS) AMENDMENT REGULATION**

### **Disallowance of Statutory Instrument, Withdrawal of Notice of Motion**



**Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.29 pm): In accordance with standing order 68, I seek leave to withdraw general business notice of disallowance motion No. 1 standing in my name.

Leave granted.

## **FISHERIES (COMMERCIAL FISHERIES) REGULATION, FISHERIES (GENERAL) (VESSEL TRACKING) AMENDMENT REGULATION, FISHERIES AMENDMENT DECLARATION**

### **Disallowance of Statutory Instruments**



**Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (5.31 pm): I move—

That—

the Fisheries (Commercial Fisheries) Regulation 2019, Subordinate Legislation No. 178 of 2019, tabled in the House on 3 September 2019;

the Fisheries (General) (Vessel Tracking) Amendment Regulation 2019, Subordinate Legislation No. 180 of 2019, tabled in the House on 3 September 2019; and

the Fisheries Amendment Declaration 2019, Subordinate Legislation No. 181 of 2019, tabled in the House on 3 September 2019, be disallowed.

The government is making a dog's breakfast of our successful and well-established fishing industry. It is causing turmoil for both commercial and recreational fishers. The new fisheries regulations introduced over a month ago are just the latest to cause distress to fishers and their families. These are

a massive amount of changes—a total of 922 pages of changes with no scientific evidence provided to substantiate the regulations. There is no regulatory impact statement, no compensation and more confusion regarding the vessel monitoring system. The Queensland Seafood Industry Association has said that they will cripple the industry, which is already struggling under heavy regulation and increasing overhead costs. Regulation is forcing fishers to the wall and making it harder to source fresh, wild-caught seafood. Fishers, their families, workers and the businesses and towns they support deserve better than trite platitudes.

The Queensland coroner has shown up the department to operate in a culture of obstruction and cover-up, so fishers are justifiably wary. They are suspicious of the real agenda, because there has been no genuine consultation. There is no evidence that they are being listened to. QSIA senior vice-president, Allan Bobberman, was on the fishing working group for the past 18 months. He called the consultation a sham, with conservation groups overrepresented and fisheries officers pursuing predetermined outcomes, such as untested quota management systems. The minister should go back to the drawing board, because no-one trusts what has been overlooked, slipped in, or tweaked. The regulations are a maze of inconsistencies to meet a political agenda. There is no scientific evidence provided to justify this or any other fisheries management policy. All fishers are given are motherhood statements.

DAF's stock results published online a month ago show that there is no correlation between what is listed as 'depleting' or 'depleted' and the new catch limits in these regulations. There are also inconsistencies for both commercial and recreational fishers. Stocks of spanner crab, pearl perch and snapper in the east coast; Ballot's saucer scallops in the East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery; barramundi in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria; and king threadfin in the Gulf of Carpentaria are listed by the department as depleted. Yet the regulations allow an increase in the number of spanner crab traps when they are listed as depleting. Then we have the government closing small areas to protect juvenile prawns for trawl operators when, in fact, the department lists all prawn types as sustainable, not depleting. There are limits on mud crabs, pipis and molluscs for recreational fishers, yet they are also not listed on the depleting list. In fact, mud crabs are listed as sustainable.

Allan Bobberman said that cutting 25 per cent of his allocation was neither justified nor based on science. He said, 'Just take the barramundi. They've done a stock assessment and said it is quite healthy.' The contradictions in the published information and the regulations give credence to suspicions that the limits are there simply because of a political agenda.

True to form, there is no regulatory impact statement. An RIS was not provided for the Fisheries (Sustainable Fisheries Strategy) Amendment Bill either. The minister's excuse then was that the bill had been thoroughly scrutinised in public and that the Queensland Productivity Commission did a preliminary impact assessment. He said—

This legislation and this policy have been heavily scrutinised, well consulted on and actively considered by the government ... my department prepared a preliminary impact assessment for consideration by the Queensland Productivity Commission .... determined that further analysis and consultation in the form of a regulatory impact statement would not be beneficial at that point in time.

When will it be beneficial to have an RIS? The minister also said—

While the financial impacts were acknowledged, this is exactly why \$3 million in rebates has been made available. The reforms will provide long-term benefits to all users of the fisheries including commercial fishers.

In effect, DAF provided the estimated financial impacts to the Productivity Commission. It was not the other way around. Based on DAF's information, the commission determined that an RIS would not be beneficial. We do not know why. The department acknowledged that there will be financial impacts, but we do not know to what extent. The claim that it will provide long-term benefits is based on DAF's information about its own proposals. The government has either never questioned the financial impacts or thinks that they are immaterial to its political agenda. Those who are living and working in the industry—commercial operators—say that the changes severely impact them. In some cases, they will go broke. Who are we expected to believe?

It is the same with these regulations. This time there is no excuse that the Queensland Productivity Commission has made an assessment. The government is avoiding an assessment on whether these regulations will increase the cost of product for consumers or impact local businesses, the supply chain and regional towns that rely on a strong fishing industry. The minister's press release of 1 September said that these regulations would 'continue to have Queensland fish on the table,

protect thousands of jobs in both the commercial and recreational sectors'. No evidence is provided. There is no explanation as to how these new regulations will put more fish on the table or protect jobs other than by importing product.

Bowen seafood wholesaler Terry Must says that fish such as barramundi and other species are already being sourced from the Northern Territory and other states because they are impossible to buy locally. Throughout the state, it does not matter what type of fishing people are involved in—commercial, recreational, or aquaculture—it is the same message: the government is not interested in the little guy. Only last week I visited a successful aquaculture farm in Rockhampton run by Tony and Jodi Besch. They were highly critical of the government, which they felt was squeezing them out. Jodi said—

'With the introduction and hard push from the Labor government ... we now face an uncertain future ... We hear a lot about the BOOMING aquaculture industry. We see a lot of media release about 'Furner's Fish Farm Frenzy'. As a producer of premium barramundi for the last six years, can someone please point me in the direction of this BOOM ... in fact it is the opposite. ... Our very own Premier recently visited the big brother to our system in Abu Dhabi. It would have been far cheaper to fly to Rockhampton and see the technology in your State.'

Regulation 180 is about the vessel monitoring system. The VMS is a shambles. No-one is sure if the expansion of vessel tracking for remaining commercial boats is being brought forward by a year. These regulations say that it will be in place by 1 January 2020, yet during a disallowance motion debate in February the parliament was told—

... the government committed to introducing vessel tracking on all licensed commercial and charter fishing boats by the end of 2020 with a priority to install units on net, line and crab commercial fishing vessels by 2019.

VMS was sold to the industry on the basis that it was for safety on commercial boats and that DAF would monitor and alert authorities during emergencies. Last month's coroner's finding into the tragic loss of trawlers *Dianne* and *Cassandra* shows that the department never activated the feature. During the coroner's investigation, it became clear that the department was being deliberately obstructionist in relation to its operation of VMS on commercial fishing boats. The rollout of the VMS trackers has been nothing short of a farce.

The government endorsed Option Audio YB3i units proved to be another debacle. There are numerous very public examples of faulty VMS transponders, shonky government authorised suppliers and general mismanagement from the department that have marred the rollout of VMS. Fishers rightfully are questioning what is the real purpose for VMS? This is not about being anti technology. Younger generation fishers understand the need for VMS technology. What fishers do not trust is the government's agenda and its inability to manage any form of technology rollout. One only has to look at this government's IT rollouts, payroll debacles and purchasing debacles to know its abysmal track record on technology. There is no trust in the government to monitor or handle new technology. No one trusts the real motives.

When the minister foreshadowed this disallowance motion in February the parliament was told—

The Minister ... will be responsible for approval of harvest strategies which outline preagreed decision rules to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives ...

It now is clear that the economic and social objectives are to follow a political agenda to push fishing families, businesses and regions out of the industry. The only objective anyone hears is the continual repetition of a motherhood statement: to create a legacy for our children and our grandchildren. What is the legacy for those who fish?

The government highlights its incompetence every time it tries to divert attention from the hatchet job being made of fisheries management by misrepresenting the LNP's position. It was the LNP that initiated a report into the whole fishing management system. The MRAG Asia Pacific review was commissioned by the LNP when in government in 2014. The LNP does not have an issue with MRAG. The issue is that the government is weaponising fisheries management to suit a political agenda.

Fishers want a sustainable industry. It stands to reason they do not want to do themselves out of work. These changes are draconian, they are heavy handed and will make commercial fishing almost unviable. There is suspicion the government is going too far on catch limits. Quota changes were not developed in consultation with the industry. They are not backed up with scientific evidence. There is no trust in a departmental culture of obstruction and cover-up. I urge support of this disallowance motion.



**Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (5.41 pm): I rise to oppose this disallowance motion. Firstly, the opposition has presented no compelling reason to disallow these regulations. If it is one of consultation, the consultation began under the LNP in 2014—that is right, in 2014! If five years of consultation is

insufficient or rushed they are the snails of the political world. It is great in theory but in no way tied to reality. If it is the regulations themselves, they must have ignored the advice to the committee that these regulations, in the most part, are a continuation of the 2008 regulations.

For clarity I will make this as simple as possible for those opposite: regulations expire after 10 years or when the principal act is changed. In the case of the fisheries regulations, the regulations were older than 10 years and formally expired on 31 August 2019; hence, the need for the remake of the regulations. What of the changes that have been included in the remade regulations? I will quote from what has been communicated to fishers across Queensland—

As a result of the consultation on the proposed amendments to the Fisheries Regulation 2008, a number of changes have been made to the structure of fisheries legislation (establishing two separate Regulations), along with changes to some recreational, charter and commercial fishing rules.

This includes a number of changes to rebuild snapper, pearl perch and scallop stocks. These are all considered depleted, with stock levels under the nationally recommended 20% biomass level.

Changes for commercial fishers include:

- a new annual seasonal closure for snapper and pearl perch from 15 July to 15 August
- increasing the size limit of pearl perch from 35cm to 38cm
- new total allowable commercial catch limits of 42 tonnes for snapper and 15 tonnes for pearl perch (there is currently no catch limit on these species)
- expanding vessel tracking for remaining commercial fishing boats from 1 January 2020
- extending the winter scallop closure by 1 month to open 1 December 2019
- increasing the number of spanner crab traps from 45 to 75
- small area closures to protect juvenile prawns in South East Queensland to improve profitability for trawl operators.

Changes for recreational fishers include:

- a new annual seasonal closure for snapper and pearl perch from 15 July to 15 August
- increasing the size limit of pearl perch from 35cm to 38cm
- removing extended charter catch limits for snapper and pearl perch
- new boat limits for mud crab, prawns, snapper, black jewfish, barramundi, Spanish mackerel, shark, tropical rock lobster and sea cucumber, which hold the operator of the boat responsible for ensuring no more than 2 times the possession limit of these 9 priority black-market species is on board at any time (the boat limit does not apply to charter boats)
- general possession limit of 20 fish for species without a prescribed possession limit, excluding some bait species
- reducing the mud crab possession limit from 10 to 7
- reducing pipi and mollusc limits from 50 to 30.

It seems difficult to believe that the opposition have found support to oppose the changes I have just mentioned. In consultation, the majority of Queenslanders were supportive of the changes. It may be of interest to those opposite that stock assessments are available on the DAF website and these assessments give an indication of how the relevant fisheries stocks are doing. The science is clear that we need to take action to recover fish stocks that are depleted, yet the opposition opposes changes that would protect fish for the future. If we do nothing now we will likely have to take more drastic action in the future, as they have in South Australia where the take of snapper will be banned for three years from November this year. I do not think the commercial fishers would be happy to have that.

Of most concern is that this disallowance motion would remove the majority of regulation around fisheries and the unintended consequences could be mind-boggling. It would strip away access rights for commercial fishers and charter operators and leave them in a legal limbo. If the LNP is opposed to sustainable fisheries, they should come out and say it. If the LNP is opposed to reducing the risk of black marketing of priority species, they should say it. It seems that this is a disallowance motion without meaning. The opposition has no fisheries policy but opposes a fisheries regulation that ensures the ongoing ability for Queenslanders, be they commercial or recreational, to have access to Queensland's fisheries.


It is disappointing that the opposition has clearly not read its own report, the MRAG report on fisheries. In fact, there have been multiple reports on fisheries published since this process began. Everything indicates reform is needed and regulations such as these are required, yet it seems that the opposition opposes all reforms. For what purpose it is still unclear, but the very fact that the disallowance

motion was moved condemns any future policy put forward by the opposition. If it makes any difference, this is not the first time the opposition has been wrong-footed on fisheries policy. Members may recall the opposition to net-free zones in 2015. They campaigned hard up and down the coast. This disallowance motion was moved by the opposition and lost in 2015. However, during the 2017 election the policy of the LNP was not for getting rid of net-free zones. It did a complete 180 degree turn—

The LNP deputy leader Deb Frecklington and Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Dale Last today confirmed the LNP would retain existing net-free zones at Cairns, Mackay and Rockhampton, if elected at the next state election.

The LNP are flip-flopping all over the place when it comes to fishing regulations. The recreational fishers with whom I met last week want to have regulations in place so that they know what to expect when they go out and fish. They want to have sustainable fishing. Commercial fishers need clarity before they put their boats out. This industry is very important to a lot of people in my region.

I can only wait and see, but I expect that the 2020 election campaign of the LNP will outline exactly what is proposed here today. The opposition has clearly not appreciated that their history on fisheries is repeating as farce and comedy. I oppose this disallowance motion.

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (5.50 pm): I rise to support the disallowance motion put forward by the shadow minister. I will focus my comments on a few areas that revolve broadly around aspects related to sustainable fishing. We have long been a party that has stood for sustainable fishing practice, whether that has been commercial fishing, recreational fishing or in the charter boat sector. We look at the holistic impact of all of those sectors upon every form of fish stock and in each region in which fisheries occur, whether that is in the far north and Great Barrier Reef waters, in bay areas, far offshore in federal waters or right down through central coastal Queensland and into Moreton Bay, where my electorate is located.

In a number of ways fisheries is an incredibly important industry, not only in terms of our seafood industry and the commercial catch but also in terms of recreational fishing and the recreational tourism industry as well as all of the downstream industries that flow, which are sometimes estimated to be worth in excess of \$1 billion in Queensland. Commercial fisheries are worth many hundreds of millions of dollars. We are talking about very important industries. We are also talking about very important activities in the recreational use of our waterways. Therefore, as we consider sustainable practice it is very important that we get this right.

I have had a deep interest in fisheries and fisheries management, both as a recreational fisherman and also in terms of my own studies as a marine science graduate at James Cook University. For me, this subject has always had a very personal dimension. Over the years I have enjoyed being a member of local recreational fishing clubs in the Redlands coast area. At one stage I was the shadow minister for fisheries and marine infrastructure and had the opportunity to have a lot to do with and hear from commercial fishermen, recreational fishermen and charter boat owners from across this state.

Over the years I have noticed the concern around getting the science right and, indeed, the science that is used. As a marine science graduate, I have been concerned about the purity of that science in the past 20 to 30 years and the fact that at times that science has been infiltrated with politics. That trend continues to concern me greatly, which is partly why I support this disallowance motion. I have some real questions around the science that is being used or is purported to have been used. I do not think we have had sufficient access to all of the data. I remain concerned about that.

Over a number of decades I have observed the science presented by scientists versus the catch data presented by commercial fishermen. At times, trying to reconcile that data can be quite a challenge as the figures do not always match up. However, we should not exclude the information from the catch records of commercial fishermen or their views and experiences. I note that recreational fishermen sometimes talk about their catches as being significant. For example, in the last few years in Moreton Bay they have had very good snapper seasons. While there may be some pressure on the stock, at the same time we need to be very careful about jumping to an early conclusion that the sky is falling in and that we are about to lose the entire stock.

I am concerned about the potential for job losses in the Moreton Bay area, which is a very important region for the seafood industry and recreational fishing charter operators. On North Stradbroke Island, a number of fishermen have been hit with a double whammy. They worked as part-time sandminers and at other times of the year they worked as seasonal net fishermen. They have lost their mining jobs because of the Labor government's laws and now they face real concerns about losing at least some of their income—or being more greatly impacted than that—that they get from fishing. That is a real concern on North Stradbroke Island.

I am concerned about what the government's changes represent for recreational fishing rights. Cleveland and the Redlands coast recreational fishermen get very upset when their rights are taken from them without there being real opportunity for them to speak up, whether that involves new zones being put in place without consultation or curtailing their fishing rights in terms of size and bag limits. Those are issues of great concern.


Numbers of people from the recreational fishing clubs in my electorate have come to me and they are very upset at the way in which these changes have unfolded. Some of them see it as particularly upsetting that, on the eve of the 10-year Moreton Bay Marine Park review, decisions have been made before that review has concluded. Although the review has now started, they are concerned that they will not have the opportunity to speak to issues that will come from the review as the decisions have already been made. The marine park review will include fishing, fisheries management and many other things that are very important and that need to go ahead. However, to jump the gun and bring in these restrictions before the review has concluded is absolutely the wrong way to go about this. In my electorate and the Moreton Bay region, individuals are concerned as they do not believe consultation has happened. When you make a decision first and then you consult, people get angry, and they are angry.

I am very concerned about fishing within the Moreton Bay Marine Park, as well as the review that is underway. There is good reason for that when we look at the history of Labor state governments. Often they have deferred their fisheries thinking and their brains to the Greens. In many political areas or measures, they are sops to the Greens, supposedly on the basis of science but more often it is to do with green politics. In terms of the Moreton Bay Marine Mark plan, some of the zoning was based on science. Leading up to 2008-09, the Moreton Bay Access Alliance did some very good work historically. It concluded that some of the zoning was warranted and important, based on science. However, the rest of it was a sop to the Greens. The Greens wanted 30 per cent lockout areas or green zones where no-one could fish. A lot of people were very upset when they found out that that was not based on science. While some areas were based on science, some zones were based on pure politics. That was very disappointing to a lot of fishermen and people from the science community, who knew that the zoning was based more on politics than on science.

There is good reason to have reservations and be concerned about the way this government has approached this issue. With the Moreton Bay Marine Park review to be undertaken, we are concerned about the further damage that might be done. Obviously, there are changes for commercial fishermen. I will not go over those in great detail because they have been outlined. There are changes for recreational fishermen. A lot of the recreational fishermen are very upset about the changes to bag limits and size limits. Some feel this is unwarranted. They are not yet convinced that the science is solid enough to impose these sorts of restrictions.

**Government members** interjected.

**Dr ROBINSON:** This is the reality on the ground and not the reality for the inner-city, soy latte sipping set that would not know what a fishing rod looks like or a fishing net looks like. When those opposite get out into the real world and get out into Moreton Bay and talk to real people they will tell them what they think. They told Labor in 2009 in the Redlands when the seats of Redlands and Cleveland both went to the LNP. One of the issues then was fishing. Labor has it wrong again and it will find out next year.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (6.00 pm): I rise to oppose this disallowance motion. I want to cover a few things that have been talked about by members of the opposition. One of the claims we keep hearing is that there is no science involved in these particular regulations. After going through all these hearings, I know that there is nearly 10 years worth of science and research that has gone into these regulations—

**Mr Furner:** Twenty years.

**Mr WHITING:** I will take the interjection from the minister. Twenty years of careful research has gone into this. I am very concerned about where those opposite are heading to hear them label some of the science that they do not like as infiltrated or tinged with green. This is a very concerning development. To reject normal, fact based science as something that is inconvenient to them is a very concerning development from the other side of the chamber. All I can say is that I am glad they are not astrophysicists in charge of saving earth from a meteor hit because we would be in trouble. All of this

kind of thinking leads to the development of the office of scientific quality assurance proposed by the LNP or, as we call it on this side of the House, the office of tinfoil hat assessment. We look forward to seeing that if they ever come back to these benches.

One of the other things we want to rebut is the belief that there is no support for this from recreational fishers. Recreational fishers have given strong support to these regulations. They know what is at stake. At the hearings on the original bill at Redcliffe we heard from Sunfish and the Mayor of Moreton Bay Regional Council, Allan Sutherland, that they are looking to these regulations and the strategy to make sure there are fish for the future. This is very important to recreational fishers and they support this.

In recent times those opposite have tried to raise issues around the VMS. The vessel tracking system is not an EPIRB. It is not a safety device. It is very important to emphasise that. It is dangerous to think that it could be a safety device. Safety devices such as the EPIRB already exist. The VMS technology does not provide the constant updating of position that an EPIRB does. We have to be very careful about saying that this is a safety device.

VMS has been on our trawler fleet for many years. It has been an accepted part of fisheries management for many years around the world. If it fails there is a backup and there is funding to get those backups. The point is that the LNP members were never going to agree to the vessel tracking system. They will constantly find ways to undermine it.

These regulations come down hard on black market fishers. To get rid of these regulations would be to let black market fishers off the hook, so to speak.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr WHITING:** I just thought of that. One thing that Queenslanders will agree on, outside of supporting the State of Origin, is there visceral dislike of black market fishers. That is common across Queensland. My question to the LNP is: why are you opposing regulations that come down hard on black market fishers?

This disallowance motion is flawed badly. If the opposition members had concerns with some elements of the regulation they could have moved to disallow specific sections, but instead they have moved to disallow almost everything. If this LNP motion were passed by this parliament commercial fisheries in Queensland would be in limbo, as the member for Mackay has already said. There would be no regulation to guide or govern what they do. Would the regulation be suspended? Would it be ended or would there be simply nothing regulating commercial fisheries in Queensland?

Unfortunately, this outlook is typical of how the opposition members think. They are not looking at what the regulation is trying to regulate but broadbrush refusing to accept it. They are not comprehending why the regulation exists in the first place. It is very simple. Regulation in the fisheries sector exists to ensure that Queensland has fish for the future and to protect the thousands of jobs that rely on sustainable fisheries.

This disallowance motion would effectively end the ability for commercial operators to operate in fisheries. By disallowing the new commercial fishing regulations there would be no authorisation for commercial fishers to take, possess or sell fisheries resources. Let me repeat that. There would be no authorisation for commercial fishers to take, possess or sell fisheries resources. Their quota entitlements and access rights to the fisheries would not exist.

The shadow minister and his colleagues try to portray themselves as the best friend the commercial fishing sector could have, but this motion would put their livelihood under a huge cloud. There would be the question every time they go out: do I have legal cover? Am I operating legally? This motion would leave the commercial sector in a mess.

The LNP members are all over the shop when it comes to supporting commercial fisheries. What we have seen in recent weeks is that they are, for example, now agreeing with the Humane Society International's approach on sharks. Is the LNP siding with the Greens and embracing this threat to commercial fisheries in Queensland? Put simply, if Queenslanders want Queensland wild caught fish on the table, at the supermarket or at the fish and chip shop, this motion must be opposed.

What is surprising is why this disallowance motion is being moved in the first place. These regulations are, on the whole, similar to the 2008 regulations. When the LNP members were in government they could have changed them. They did not do it because they know they cannot argue against them. They know they cannot argue against the science. They are aimed at reducing overfishing.



Following science has not been one of the strong points of the LNP in recent times. We will not get into the climate change debate—that is an endless one. We need to support these regulations because they are based on science. The sector needs a legal framework and it is the result of long consultation. I note what the department's website says about the history and consultation. It states—

The need for fisheries reform in Queensland has been an ongoing discussion over a number of years, starting with the MRAG review in 2014, followed by the Green Paper in 2016, which received more than 11,000 submissions. The overwhelming message was that all stakeholders want the management of fisheries to be reformed.

The current system is not fit for purpose. There are few catch limits, poor compliance, and high conflict between stakeholders and concerns about bycatch and protected species interactions. Doing nothing is not an option.


We want our fisheries to be sustainable for the future, profitable for our commercial fishers, enjoyable for our recreational fishers and maintain access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders fishers for traditional fishing and commercial fishing development.

The Queensland Government has sought input from all sectors about reforms needed to our major fisheries. Independent advice has also been provided over the last 12 months through the Sustainable Fisheries Expert Panel.

It is clear that there has been ongoing and broad consultation. This process could not have been more transparent.

For those who are listening, I would encourage them to look at the MRAG documents, the fisheries green paper, the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy and the discussion paper. As we have said, these documents have been publicly available. People can comment on them. Consultation on these documents has occurred over a number of years. It is disappointing that seemingly here tonight it looks like the opposition members have not bothered to read these documents or to understand the process to date.

Queenslanders need good fisheries regulations in place to ensure that the sector is sustainable and meets community demands. These regulations deliver that to Queenslanders and they ensure that there is access to the resources for commercial fishers. If this disallowance motion is passed, the commercial fishing sector would be stranded in no-man's-land, with no legal framework there to protect them. They would be unsure of their legal access and their legal rights. That is why this disallowance motion should be opposed.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (6.10 pm): I support the disallowance motion moved by the member for Gympie. The Labor Party acted like a thief in the night when it smashed through the regulation to implement VMS on 1 January 2019. It is a disgrace that the VMS was implemented through a change in regulation without prior debate, particularly from those MPs whose constituents and businesses in their electorate it severely affected.

This has been viewed by the public as another attack on one of our primary industries. It follows hot on the heels of last year's vicious attack on farmers through the hurried introduction of the vegetation management laws as well as the reef run-off laws. The further wholesale changes to the industry have many scratching their head as to why the wholesale changes are required. The change of licences to be restricted to rezoned areas along the coast limits the portability of the fleet and could potentially affect fish stocks in certain areas.


The value of fishing licences will be severely affected, with feedback from fishers in my region stating that they are now having difficulty selling their licences. Some fishers who were in the middle of negotiations to sell their fishing licence as part of their retirement have now had potential buyers pull out due to the uncertainty in the fishing industry caused by the wholesale changes to fishing regulations and to legislation by this government. I liken it to the devaluation of the taxi industry when the government failed to protect the taxi industry when ridesharing companies hit the market hard. Now, the government is devaluing licences by the implementation of wasteful legislation that is not required as the industry is currently in a very healthy state. The industry representatives have put forward the following requests and concerns to the minister's office—

- 12 Month Moratorium to enable the best outcome to be achieved—

that is not much to ask for—

- Industry does not want effort units to be zone specific
- Poor level of open and transparent communication
- The disparity in value of effort units resulting in a 'transfer of wealth' which is currently occurring
- No acknowledgement of the outstanding health of the fishery under the current management regime
- No socioeconomic study
- The structural change to the management of ALL Qld fisheries and the potential ramifications of such

They are still scratching their head saying, 'What are we doing wrong?' This is going to be a big cost to them. They have worked hard to implement all of these reforms. The fishery is in a healthy state. Why the need for more regulations and more legislation? I wanted to bring that to the attention of the House.

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (6.13 pm): I rise this evening to oppose this motion as moved by the member for Gympie. It is clear that this disallowance motion is a reflection of the problem that sits at the rotting heart of the LNP. They have yet to grasp that the purpose of opposition is to hold the government to account and to contribute to the public discourse in a way that promotes good policy and that delivers good outcomes for the Queensland people. Under the leadership of the member for Nanango, however, that function has degenerated into the mediocrity of opposition for its own sake.

The opposition's election plan is quite simply to throw enough mud and hope like crazy that some of it will stick: vexatious allegations, disallowance motions on regulations that have already been amended—but then that motion was withdrawn at the last minute because it took them so long to work out that they were trying to disallow regulations that had already been amended weeks ago—not to mention wasting the parliament's time with frivolous divisions on the business program each and every week, \$7 billion of unfunded election commitments with no plans or transparency to the public whatsoever about how taxpayers will fund their own thought bubbles, and the list goes on. Queenslanders expect that the opposition exercises oversight of the actions of the government, but the LNP opposition is not making Queensland a better state and this parliament more robust. They are quite literally impeding Queensland's progress and this parliament's productivity.

It was 2016 when the then federal LNP attorney-general, George Brandis, labelled the member for Clayfield and the LNP state opposition as very, very mediocre. What we are witnessing from those opposite, tonight included, is far from mediocre. In fact, it is incompetence and the motion tonight is evidence of just how incapable and unfit to govern they are. It is disappointing that the member for Gympie did not consider the entirety of the fisheries sector when the motion was moved to disallow these fisheries regulations. I speak specifically of Queensland's charter fishing sector. The disallowance of these regulations will sink all of Queensland's charter fishers. To have over 350 charter fishing operators stuck on dock by the LNP's move to disallow these regulations is a disgrace. I would find it surprising if the opposition even sought the views of the charter sector when their industry-destroying measure was thought up.

Queensland's charter industry is worth \$94 million. That includes multiple fishing charter businesses in Keppel. That is \$94 million that will get away to other states if this disallowance motion succeeds. Queenslanders, tourists to Queensland and international visitors who partake in charter fishing will be left high and dry because of the LNP if this motion is passed. I support our charter fishing sector in Keppel, and in Queensland more broadly, and that is why I will be opposing this motion this evening.

To have an entire industry destroyed because the opposition does not understand fisheries is unfathomable. This disallowance motion will strip away charter fishing licences and leave charter fishers without an authority to undertake their business. I would like to acknowledge the great work that has been done by the Minister for Fisheries in promoting the charter fishing sector. One of Labor's election commitments was the development of a charter fishing action plan. It was a plan that was welcomed by the sector because the sector had an opportunity to have their say, just as the entirety of the fisheries sector have had their say on what is in these regulations that the opposition is attempting to disallow.

It was noted that public feedback to a discussion paper in 2017 found overwhelming public support for greater recognition and engagement of the charter fishing sector, and the minister at the time stated that the Charter Fishing Action Plan was developed in consultation with Queensland's 344 licensed charter operators and the government would work with industry to implement the plan. Earlier this year, parliament approved changes to the Fisheries Act to specifically recognise the charter sector in the legislation, acknowledging their important role in our community and regions.

As I mentioned earlier, there are local, Australian and international visitors who want to engage with charter fishing in the beautiful waters of Queensland—just like in my backyard, the Southern Great Barrier Reef—who have the opportunity to target game fish, visit areas of Queensland few in this House will ever see or even just be out on the water away from their day jobs. It is important for a government to support this sector.

The government is also progressing reforms as part of the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027, which will ensure healthy fish stocks that underpin a world-class charter industry. Yet the main opposition to these fisheries reforms—not just now but in the past—has been the Liberal National

Party in Queensland. I will not even place the entirety of the blame on the current Leader of the Opposition, as the opposition to fisheries began under Campbell Newman. I guess that is one slippery fish that the LNP is glad got away!

In 2014, the then minister for fisheries had the completed MRAG report on his desk. It should be noted that the MRAG report is quite a good report, and it notes—

The systems that have evolved over time to manage and share access to Queensland's fish stocks are, by any measure, exceedingly complex and inadequate to deal with the modern challenges faced by its fisheries.

Maybe the recommendations were too complex for the LNP members, as they refused to table the report—and no doubt it would have been sunk without a trace unless Labor had won the 2015 election. The report saw the light of day, and many of the recommendations were adopted as part of the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy. Thank goodness! I would advise the opposition, and in particular the shadow minister, to read that report.

The next opposition to fisheries, which benefited tourism and charter operators, came from the current Leader of the Opposition. It should surprise no-one that the opposition also sought to disallow the net-free zones, which have proved incredibly popular in these regions. I spoke in this place against that disallowance motion in the last term of parliament. The then Cleveland—renamed Oodgeroo—LNP MP, Mark Robinson, supported the proposal for net-free zones and was quoted in the media as saying—


The proper rollout of net-free zones will mean plenty of locally caught seafood for all, no price increase in seafood, more sustainable fisheries and extra jobs in Queensland's \$1 billion recreational fishing, boating and tourism industries.

Yet the member for Oodgeroo neglected to show up to vote on that motion and backed net-free zones because his policy was in stark contrast to his own party's policy. It is a wonder that the state LNP branch did not move to have him disendorsed prior to the 2017 state election because of his alternate view, as we know the LNP in Queensland has a history of doing.

As someone who fishes on a regular basis, I can confirm that the Rockhampton and Capricorn Coast net-free zone is incredibly popular with locals and visitors alike. It is making a huge difference to barramundi and threadfin salmon stocks in the Fitzroy and Keppel Bay. We are getting closer and closer to the Fitzroy becoming the largest wild barramundi fishery in the world as a result of the net-free zones. The fisheries flip-flop meant that at the 2017 election the LNP members said they supported the net-free zones. It would not surprise me if the LNP members come out at some future point and say they are supportive of the 350-plus charter operators in this \$94 million industry.

Of course, this motion to destroy that industry by banning their operation entirely will be glossed over, as it is these regulations that allow their business to operate. We want to see the fishing charter industry in Queensland thrive. In fact, we want to see an increase in the number of charter operators in Queensland, more engagement of charter operators in fisheries management, improved satisfaction of charter fishing clients, better data on charter catch, a reduction in the number of permits or approvals required to operate as a charter business and improved certainty for charter operators. Yet if this motion passes, the only certainty is that the industry will be caught out permanently.

I would encourage members of the opposition to carefully consider exactly what is being proposed tonight: the extinguishing of charter fishing in Queensland; ending commercial fishing in Queensland; stopping the recovery of key fisheries; and ignoring the feedback of working groups and expert panels. It will undo five years of progress in fisheries. It will stop access to seafood from Queensland waters to those who want to have local fish and chips. This is a disastrous motion and it should be vocally opposed. Close to one million Queensland recreational fishers will surely remember this motion the next time the LNP claims to care about fishing in Queensland. If the LNP members had any sense they would withdraw this motion, as they did the former motion, and support the Palaszczuk government's Sustainable Fisheries Strategy. I oppose this motion.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (6.22 pm): I rise to speak in support of the disallowance motion put forward by the member for Gympie. Those on this side of the House are as much about supporting a healthy and sustainable fishing habitat as any other Queenslanders in this state, but we need to delve into this regulation to realise the impact it is having across Queensland. There is not a one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to fishing in Queensland, particularly when it comes to regulation. When we look at Queensland and we talk about commercial fishing operations, I ask members to look at the gulf and the Torres Strait and then come down the coast through the Burdekin, Whitsundays, Fitzroy and South-East Queensland. There are significant differences in those fishing zones so a one-size-fits-all approach is never going to work.

At the heart of that is the need for consultation with the industry. That is so important because, if we are led to believe what those on the opposite side of this House say today, commercial fishers support these regulations. If the number of commercial operators who are coming into my office is any indication, that could not be further from the truth. People like Neil Green and his daughter came to my office. He wants to hand over his fishing business to his daughter, but they are now questioning whether there is any future for his daughter. Neil Green is a legend in Queensland. What he does not know about fishing is not worth knowing. Members should go down to Bowen and talk to Terry Must from Arabon Seafoods and Brett Bauer. The member for Whitsunday knows him. At the end of the day, these commercial fishermen have been in the industry for decades. They will tell members now that their livelihoods are under threat and they do not see a future in the fishing industry anymore.

The fishing fleet in Bowen has been decimated because of this philosophy that somehow commercial operators are out there raping and pillaging fish stocks and the sea. That could not be further from the truth because they are the farmers of the sea. It is in their best interest to make sure fishing stocks are sustainable. They understand what it means to fish localities all up and down the coastline, yet there are assertions that these commercial operators are somehow decimating fishing stocks. I think they have just become easy targets because they are so regulated. What is happening is that we are seeing them driven out of the industry. If we are not careful, we are not going to be able to go down to the local seafood shop for a feed of fish and chips because there will be nothing left. We will be eating something that is farmed overseas from Vietnam or China. I know that I would rather eat seafood locally caught in Queensland. Allan Bobberman from QSIA said—

The commercial sector's put up proposals to government, ways we could move forward at a slower pace to make this work but this just seems to be like a runaway train and all I can see is it ending up as a complete train wreck.


That is a shame! If we have a look at the commercial sector in this state, we see there is no light at the end of the tunnel for commercial fishing operators right up and down the coastline of Queensland. This is not about making it open slather for those commercial fishing operators; this is about providing an avenue for those operators to continue to work and have a livelihood going forward. At the moment, they are not seeing that.

I want to talk about one particular aspect that has caused a lot of grief in my patch, and that is the vessel monitoring system. What a debacle the rollout of that particular system has been! Operators have been unable to put out to sea because their tracking devices have malfunctioned. Other operators have just gone out to sea and their device has malfunctioned so they have had to return to land. It has been an absolute debacle. The quality of the units has been substandard, the implementation has been botched and it continues to be a nightmare for all of our commercial operators right up and down the coastline.

In closing, I support this disallowance motion for the reason that our commercial operators need more consultation. It is very simply put by the QSIA, which said—

A halt and review of the Queensland fisheries reform process including (a) a review of quota management arrangements, (b) a review of zoning and (c) modelling of the impacts of the reform on the catch to consumer seafood supply chain.

It is pretty simple stuff. I do not think there is anything too complex in that. They just want to be consulted; they want to be understood. They have solutions for a sustainable fishing habitat in Queensland, and we should listen to them because they live and breathe it.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (6.28 pm): I rise to oppose the disallowance motion moved by those opposite. I do so as someone who has grown up on the bay. I was born in Pine Street, Wynnum. My earliest memories include going in my father's boat from Wynnum Creek.

I have to commend the member for Lytton for all the work she has done with regard to the war on wrecks, getting the wrecks out of Wynnum Creek and making it look like what I experienced when I was growing up. I can remember it being instilled by my father from a very young age—along with my brother—the importance of knowing the regulations with regard to fishing size limits and bag limits. That was always drilled into us and so was sustainable fishing. If we did not need to take it home we used to catch and release and do the right thing by the bay.

In fact, fishing was so contagious in my family that my brother went on to work in the industry. He worked for a long time for Stones Corner Marine. I have to give a plug to James Cullen and the gang down at Stones Corner Marine. If members are looking for a boat and members are looking for great service, they should see the guys at Stones Corner Marine.

My brother relied on selling and servicing boats for an income and that was reliant on having a proper recreational fishing industry—one where fishermen went out on the weekend and got a catch and made it contagious for other people so that they wanted to do the same thing and enjoy the beautiful Moreton Bay. I also want to congratulate my local fishing clubs, especially the fishing club out of the Redlands Multi Sports Club. Last week Mal Cullen received his life membership. It is great to get feedback from those guys on what we are doing regarding the regulations in this industry.

This motion is further proof that not only can the LNP members not be trusted on fisheries but they do not even know what they are disallowing. If anyone in this House enjoys fish and chips, they should head down to Capalaba, which has one of the best cafes. In fact, that cafe won an award last week. Costa's Seafood Cafe won an award in the Fisheries Research Development Corporation Australian Fish and Chips Awards for Queensland. I congratulate the Costa brothers for their fantastic fish and chips. They also saved me when I was in a bit of a pickle on Good Friday. They were open and, being a good fish eater on that day, I was able to get my seafood for Good Friday this year. I thank them for that.

**Mr Boothman:** Barramundi?

**Mr BROWN:** No, it was a bit of snapper and a bit of prawns as well. I take that interjection.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Let us come back to the motion.

**Mr BROWN:** I could speak about seafood and the taste of seafood all day. I have to congratulate the Clerk for bringing seafood night back here. Sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Again, back to the motion please.


**Mr BROWN:** If we want to get Moreton Bay seafood, under this motion it will be illegal as the motion moved by the member for Gympie strips the rights of commercial fishers to fish. Under the LNP's proposal, it will be unlawful for commercial fishers to take, possess or sell fish. How will customers get local fish at their local store? The easy answer is that, under the LNP, they cannot. It does not matter how the opposition members spin this line. Their disallowance motion will destroy the commercial fishing industry in Queensland. It probably will not matter to those opposite that 1,300 jobs will be gone, or that, instead of Queenslanders looking out over the bay snacking on their local seafood, they will have to get imported fish, or the fact that the state of origin of fish will permanently be won by New South Wales thanks to the LNP.

In the case of looking after the sustainable fishing stocks in Moreton Bay, this will be gone if the disallowance motion succeeds. The changes that were introduced in September will be sunk. These changes were introduced to improve fishing stocks for future generations. I have to commend the minister for his fantastic work. It is fantastic to hear the feedback we have been getting from our recreational fishing members locally about these changes.

What will be the impact for us locally? The new annual season closure for snapper and pearl perch from 15 July to 15 August will be gone; increasing the size limit of pearl perch from 35 centimetres to 38 centimetres will be gone; removing extended charter catch limits for snapper and pearl perch will be gone; new boat limits for mud crabs, prawns, snapper, black jewfish, barramundi, Spanish mackerel, shark, tropical rock lobsters and sea cucumbers—which hold the operator of the boat responsible for ensuring no more than two times the possession limit of these nine priority black market species is on board at any time—will be gone; and reducing pipi and mollusc limits from 50 to 30 will be gone.

No-one can take the opposition members seriously when it comes to fisheries after what they have proposed here tonight. The environmental protections as well as the commercial industry are at risk if this disallowance motion goes through. Local seafood shops selling Queensland produce is at risk. Having a sustainable fishery in Moreton Bay is at risk. No Queenslanders who support the long-term viability of our fisheries, including those on the bayside, should support this disallowance motion.

Just like the net-free zones vote, I urge the member for Oodgeroo to do the right thing and go missing for this vote as well. It has been said time and time again that those opposite have been flip-flopping when it comes to our fisheries. This multimillion dollar industry is too important to play around with and mess around with, like those opposite have done. I oppose the motion before the House.

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (6.34 pm): I have heard some rubbish today on the fishing industry. I have followed the fishing industry all my life and I have had to sit here and listen to some rubbish about charter fishing. Charter fishermen usually go out on the reefs and fish for the deep sea

fish. That is what happens in the charter industry in Hervey Bay. A lot of charter boats up north go right out to the Swains and things like that. To say that charter boat operations are going to disappear is a load of rubbish.

The way this government has treated the professional fishermen is absolutely disgraceful. One fisherman came to me and said, 'They've cut my licence to nearly nothing. I've had cancer for 12 months and I'm getting over it and I want to get back in the industry,' but they slashed his quota right down to where he can nearly catch the fish in one haul. It is terrible to do things like that.

What the government did to some of those fishermen was cruel. I believe there should be some sort of help for some of those fishermen who are suffering from depression because of it. I know one bloke in Hervey Bay who really suffered depression from it and his wife was worried about him. That is the impact on some of these people who have worked all their lives in this fishing industry. To be treated the way they got treated was unbelievable.

**Mr Andrew:** Like lepers.

**Mr SORENSEN:** I will take that interjection. They were treated like lepers. They were just discarded. What they did to them was shocking.

I will talk about the crabbing industry as another example. The crabbing industry was regulated way back in 1893 when they first stopped people from taking female mud crabs and it has been like that ever since. That was one of the best things that ever happened, and that happened well over 100 years ago. If you do not look after your breeding stock, you will not have a fishery.

One fisherman said to me the other day that if there were no fish about there would not be any commercial fishing around. What they regulated—and they brought it in—was to stop fishing for barramundi when they were spawning up the rivers. He said that today there are more barramundi and they are catching more barramundi than ever before. That is because they looked after the breeding stock and that is what is really important. If you want to do some science, do it on the breeding stock. Find out when they breed and all those types of things—not this stupid idea of just slashing everything and putting people out of business. One operator has lost around \$400,000. How do you swipe that off somebody without any compensation at all? You can laugh about it, but it is not funny.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Through the chair, please, member for Hervey Bay.

**Mr SORENSEN:** It is not funny what you did.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Through the chair again, please, member for Hervey Bay.

**Mr SORENSEN:** The system is flawed. A crabber came to me the other day and said that the whole crabbing quota is flawed. On the logbooks, they had to put down how many crabs they caught. Some of the fishermen put down the crabs they actually took, the male crabs, but other crabbers put down the whole lot that was in the pot, what they chucked back in.

**Mr Andrew:** That is true.

**Mr SORENSEN:** That is true. I will take the interjection. It is a whole falsehood. The whole thing is just ridiculous. That is what they are telling me. I just cannot believe what you would do to fellow Queenslanders. It is a disgrace.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Through the chair again, please, member for Hervey Bay.

**Mr SORENSEN:** When we look at the fishing industry, especially in Hervey Bay, we see it supports the community. There was a fisherman's ball the other night that raised \$22,000 for charity. They have the seafood festival which attracts 10,000 to 12,000 people every year. This government is going to smash that. That is our community.

**Mr Costigan:** And the restaurants.

**Mr SORENSEN:** And all the restaurants—I take that interjection. I cannot believe what they have done.

That brings me to the subject of the monitoring system. When the *Cassandra* went down the monitoring system stopped. About a week later somebody said, 'Hey, what's going on?' They were supposed to be monitoring them. Even the coroner is blaming the system that was in place at the time. A whole trawler disappeared for a week. It is ridiculous. The cost of this monitoring system is outrageous. Compare that to a guy who hopped in a canoe and travelled from Tasmania up to the north. He paid half the price for his monitoring system, and it had a beacon which would have been set off if

something went wrong. The fishermen do not have that and they are paying twice as much. I cannot understand that either. Why are we putting this cost onto fishermen when there is another system that is far superior? Where are we going with it all?

**Mr Whiting** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Member for Bancroft.

**Mr SORENSEN:** I have sat here this afternoon and listened to some members opposite and I really wonder where you are coming from. The way you are treating—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Through the chair please, member for Hervey Bay.

**Mr SORENSEN:** They are not going to stop at the commercial fishermen; they are going to start attacking the recreational fishermen by making bigger green zones and then they will track them all down. Recreational fishermen will be the next group to find more and more restrictions have been put onto them. They have already put some on but they will keep going. I can see it is going to keep happening.

**Mr Dametto:** You won't be able to go fishing anymore.

**Mr SORENSEN:** People will not be able to go fishing anymore. They can only go with one hook in a lot of areas now, but those areas are going to get bigger and bigger. For example, they are not even regulating the yellow zones surrounding the Urangan Pier. People can go out there and fish. They are only supposed to fish with one line and one hook, but that is not policed. Even the fishing inspector has said so. What is the point of having some of these regulations if they are not policed?

All of this is just absolute garbage. As well as the seafood industry there is the scallop industry, and they are going to put that back to 1 December. If they are going to put it back to 1 December they may as well wipe out the whole of December because they will not be able to get people to come and do the odd jobs such as peeling the scallops and packaging them. They may as well wipe out December as well. It is just thoughtless. It is a huge export industry. We send scallops everywhere. I do not understand where this government is coming from. The way it has treated those fishermen is something that I have never seen before.

**An opposition member:** It's the Greens.

**Mr SORENSEN:** It is the Greens and they are just wiping them out. I wonder what the next industry will be.

**Mr Stevens:** Labor-Greens alliance.


**Mr SORENSEN:** It is the Labor-Greens alliance alright, but they do not care about anybody. They are just wiping industries out. Next it will be the sugar industry and then the cattle industry because the cows fart too much. That is what will happen. I am sick and tired of the rural industries coping a flogging from this government. It is criminal what you did to the fishermen.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Through the chair, member for Hervey Bay.

**Mr SORENSEN:** There should have been some compensation for those people who have lost everything, and some have lost everything. Some have had their quota slashed from six tonne of crabs down to 2½ tonne. What sort of income is that? Is that going to support a family?

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr SORENSEN:** I will take that interjection: it is not viable, yet those opposite are saying they are going to protect the industry. What a load of rubbish.

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (6.44 pm): I rise to oppose this disallowance motion moved by the shadow minister for fisheries, the member for Gympie.

**Mr Stevens:** Fisherman's friend!

**Mr FURNER:** I take that interjection; I am the fisherman's friend. Many times in this place I have offered the opposition the opportunity to have a briefing on this or any other agricultural matter. Many of them have taken up that opportunity, but some, like those participating in the debate that is occurring today, have been inept, have the blinkers on and have refused that opportunity to gain an understanding of the fisheries sector and what this motion would do if it were successful. It would be well worthwhile for the opposition to be briefed on what this disallowance motion would mean for the fisheries sector in Queensland and those jobs and those industries that it well provides for.

Simply, this disallowance motion would stop commercial fishers being able to fish. Charter fishers would not be able to operate. There would be significant environmental impacts, and rebuilding our fishery stocks would be delayed. I want to make this quite clear. The opposition's policy on fisheries would destroy the whole fishing industry in Queensland. It is not hyperbole; it is a reality. These regulations that the LNP seeks to disallow are the very ones that govern the industry in Queensland. These are the regulations that allow Queenslanders to buy locally caught fish and allow us to get out on the water through charter fishing trips, representing thousands of jobs across the commercial charter and broader sector.

As minister, I have spoken to a lot of fishers. I have spoken to commercial, recreational, charter and Indigenous fishers throughout this process—many more than you will ever meet, my friend from Gregory.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, through the chair.

**Mr FURNER:** Everyone has different opinions, which I respect, and all of us in this place should respect that. As to their right, everyone acknowledges that there needs to be sustainable fisheries for our children and our grandchildren.

When I was at Tobin's fish and chip shop in Townsville, which you would know quite well, Mr Deputy Speaker—I would also encourage members to try the best fish and chips in the country after their award—I spoke with the owners, former commercial fishers who have now become academics and professionals in this field. I have spoken with the commercial fishers—I have gone out on the water with them in Hervey Bay—and with commercial crabbers and I have seen how they operate. I say to the member for Hervey Bay that I enjoyed a good four hours on the water.

**Ms Grace:** How many crabs did you eat? Come on, fess up.

**Mr FURNER:** No crabs. I have also spoken with recreational fishers who have been very supportive of these reforms as well. Now with one million recreational fishers, there are many Queenslanders who are closely monitoring what is proposed here by those opposite.

I will outline the reasons why this disallowance motion needs to be opposed and why the opposition's approach would devastate this industry. These regulations give commercial fishers access rights to fish commercially in Queensland. With this motion the LNP is stripping the right to fish from the commercial sector. If this motion moved by the member for Gympie succeeds, there will be no legal authority for commercial fishers to catch, possess or sell fish in Queensland. The LNP does not want fishers to fish. This motion moved by the LNP would see over 1,380 commercial fishers directly affected. There would potentially be a \$180 million hit to the Queensland economy. There would be no locally caught seafood for Queenslanders. What about the loss of key international markets because the LNP want to rip out the regulations that allow fishers in Queensland?

For the benefit of those opposite, the regulation that they will vote to disallow regulates the fisheries symbols and authorises commercial fishers to access the fishery and areas that they can work. There would be no authorisation for existing quota. There will not be any ability to trade quota. What about any commercial fisher with quota entitlements for coral trout, Spanish mackerel, spanner crab or trawl or stout whiting? If the LNP motion passes, their asset does not exist and it is worthless. Unless the LNP wants to end commercial fishing in Queensland, it should oppose this motion. Only Labor will vote to allow the commercial sector to continue in Queensland.

The LNP's motion also impacts the charter-fishing sector. Not only would the commercial sector be destroyed by the LNP but also Queensland's well-regarded charter sector would sink. Some 350 charter operators in the \$94 million sector would not be able to operate. I reflect on the member for Rockhampton's feedback to me on how charter fishing is growing in the Fitzroy as a result of this government's decisions to ensure it is sustainable. What about the growth of that charter-fishing sector with visitors from interstate and the United Kingdom to the Fitzroy as a result of Palaszczuk government decisions? Tourists will not have the opportunity to catch a fish or at least be on the water trying to catch a fish. Charter operators will disappear—all because of the LNP. Instead of supporting a great tourism opportunity, the opposition wants it closed down.

In terms of the potential environmental impacts of this motion, they can be only considered as significant. If fishers were able to fish, the wildlife trade operation accreditation for Queensland would be at risk. With the regulation gone because of the LNP's efforts, there would be no requirement for bycatch reduction devices or turtle exclusion devices in the trawl fishery. This would mean that there could be no fisheries exports to the United States—all because of the LNP. There would be no rules



around net requirements. Granted, these rules regarding nets have been around for many years, but because those opposite cannot understand fishery regulations they will be swept aside, putting protected species at risk. Again, the LNP has not thought through this motion, at least at the most basic level.

What about reporting of commercial catch? Tonight's motion would end any reporting requirements. Without catch reporting, this would be a black marketer's dream. During the second reading of the fisheries bill in this place, we heard the opposition's approach. It would be an absolute black marketer's dream. We have already seen what was proposed in its amendments to that particular bill to give black marketers a five-day holiday, a five-day start. Those opposite want to give them a free pass through these regulations.

One reason Queensland has fisheries regulations rules in place—and has done for decades—is to ensure that fish stocks are sustainable. We on this side do not want to see our fisheries depleted from overfishing. With the number of stocks in Queensland below 20 per cent biomass, that has seen Queensland take some action to remedy, sustainability would end because of this motion. For this motion, the changes that commenced on 1 September—including seasonal closes, changes to catch limits and size limits for snapper, pearl perch and scallop—will be gone.

I table a letter that I wrote to the minister for fisheries and forestry which directly refers to the Queensland LNP's attempts to make changes in regard to this disallowance motion.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 10 October 2019, from the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries, Hon. Mark Furner, to Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries and Assistant Minister for Regional Tourism, Senator Hon. Jonathon Duniam, regarding the disallowance motion moved by the Queensland LNP in relation to fisheries regulations [\[1835\]](#).

It spells out that the regulations and the standard for bycatch are regulated by the Commonwealth Status of Australian Fish Stocks processes as either 'depleting' or 'depleted'. That is quite the case in terms of what these regulations would do if disallowed by the LNP. I am still awaiting a response on that correspondence.

If we do nothing now, we will need more drastic action in the future—just like the South Australian government, which recently banned snapper fishing for three years from November this year. We will not go down that path. We will make sure our industry is sustainable now and into the future. The new and recently introduced protections for Mary River cod will disappear. This is an endangered species. It is clear that the member for Gympie has no clue about fisheries management. It should be no surprise to anyone in this place that what is accepted as basic fisheries practice in a global sense is being overturned.

Ultimately, this is a motion about whether Queenslanders should be able to buy Queensland caught fish or imported fish. Under the LNP's plan for fisheries regulations, there would be only one choice—imported fish. The LNP plan is to shut down fisheries in Queensland and import fish—and all the biosecurity risks that come along with that—rather than support Queensland fisheries. There will be fishers who say 'fish fingers to the LNP' over this. The LNP have form on weakening fisheries in Queensland. The opposition could stand up to Canberra and support our Shark Control Program, abandoning 57 years of bipartisanship to back in its self-confessed shark-loving Prime Minister. Now its motion wants to close the shark fishery in Queensland. Sharks really have a friend in the LNP with this disallowance motion!

The LNP supports the catch and release of dangerous sharks off our beaches. Members opposite here tonight want to stop entirely sharks being caught. After the efforts of the members for Gympie and Broadwater, never again will the LNP be taken seriously by Queenslanders in regard to sharks. Unless those opposite are arch greenies who do not want to see fish caught at all, who want to see the end of the commercial and charter sectors in Queensland and the end of good environmental practices in Queensland, they should vote down this motion.

In conclusion, I want to comment on some of the contributions of those opposite. There was certainly a view—and it was backed up on this side of the chamber—that there was a copious amount of consultation right throughout this program, right throughout the time when those opposite were last in government as well. During estimates this year I tabled the MRAG report—a report commissioned by those opposite, a report that they hid and lacked the intestinal fortitude to table.

When elected in 2015, it was the Palaszczuk Labor government that tabled that report which formed the nexus of what we are doing tonight and what we have been doing all along in terms of protecting our fisheries sector. We need to ensure that we have a sustainable sector for our children, our grandchildren and the thousands of workers in the sector. What about the people who enjoy wetting

a line or the commercial fishers who go out on a regular basis and bring back a great quality of Queensland fish? There was a copious amount of consultation through the MRAG report, followed by the green paper.

I also take to task the well-ventilated comments in regard to science. The member for Bancroft approached this with the view of, 'Let us not go down the path of environmental science.' I want to go down the path of science when it comes to fisheries. One thing we in portfolios get to do—and I am sure every minister would be of the same view—is spend some time with departmental staff enjoying an opportunity to gain a better understanding of how they operate and what they do.

Only a few weekends ago I had the immense opportunity to be involved with the fish monitoring people on Fraser Island. Some might say I was having a bit of time off, but I was actually working with them—collecting data and fish frames with recreational and commercial fishers up and down the coast of Fraser Island. It was about collating the science involved on how we determine whether down the path we should do something with a particular species or change the size, catch or method. What I saw and what I had an opportunity to be involved in was the collection of what they call otoliths. Otoliths are the small, calcified object behind the eye of the fish. You take that otolith to determine the age of the fish, along with the size of the frames, and then make an informed scientific decision on what to do with that particular species of fish, in this case tailor.

It is a shame that those opposite have no clue when it comes to science. It is a shame that those opposite have no clue when it comes to these regulations. They come in here and move disallowance motions on matters they have no idea about. They have not taken the opportunity to get a briefing from my department or my office to gain some very basic understanding of how to deal with fisheries. Once again, those opposite are absolutely clueless when it comes to science. I oppose this motion.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): The time for the debate has expired.

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

**AYES, 40:**

**LNP, 36**—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

**KAP, 2**—Dametto, Knuth.

**PHON, 1**—Andrew.

**Ind, 1**—Costigan.

**NOES, 48:**

**ALP, 46**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, 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.

**Grn, 1**—Berkman.

**Ind, 1**—Bolton.

Pair: Dick, Stuckey.

Resolved in the negative.

## ADJOURNMENT

### Beaudesert, Police Resources; Acland Coalmine



**Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (7.06 pm): I rise to speak about the need for a new police station to be built in Beaudesert. We have needed one for years. I have argued for it for years. The old one is not fit for purpose. I will keep fighting to get a new station until one is built. It was very pleasing to hear from the assistant commissioner recently that the old station will be demolished by the end of the year and a new one constructed throughout 2020. Beaudesert police will be moving to a temporary location in the meantime.

Beaudesert also needs more police officers. When the LNP was in office we took the station to a 24-hour-a-day roster for the first time and increased the number of officers quite significantly. Since the change in government that situation, unfortunately, has been somewhat reversed. The roster is now being stretched in the extreme, with some officers assigned to other duties and not backfilled or replaced in the roles they were previously filling in Beaudesert.

This government and the Queensland Police Service need to understand that the Beaudesert Police Station is a busy posting. Not only do we have increasing occurrences of callouts for police due to development in the area; we always need to remember that the station covers a huge geographical area. That means that if police are called to incidents that take them quite a way by car, other parts of the area can be left without resources at times. I call on the government and the Queensland Police Service to put some more officers on the ground at Beaudesert. When it is built there will be a new station, but we need more boots on the ground to ensure sufficient coverage to keep our community safe. That 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week roster needs to be preserved and we need more officers for that.

We had a tragic occurrence in the Beaudesert area yesterday with the death of a gentleman. I send my deepest condolences to the family and friends of the victim of gun crime in Beaudesert yesterday. It is an horrific occurrence wherever it happens, but certainly it has hit close to home for a lot of people in Beaudesert. It simply underlines the case for additional resources on the ground in Beaudesert to keep combating drug crime, hooning and all the other community safety matters that arise in Beaudesert as a result of growth and development in that district and in the broader region.

In the time remaining to me I want to call on the government to approve Acland stage 3. Two major businesses in the Beaudesert area, AJ Bush and Gelita, have about 200 jobs between them. It is estimated that one of them will see costs of \$600,000 a year more because of Acland stage 3 not being approved.

*(Time expired)*

### **Redlands Electorate, Maritime Safety; SES Week**



**Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (7.09 pm): Redlanders love the water, they love boating, they love fishing and they love our mighty Moreton Bay. Why wouldn't they? It is the most spectacular coastal region of South-East Queensland. It has been wonderful to chair our government's War on Wrecks Taskforce. We have continued to blitz in the clean-up of abandoned vessels across the state and, importantly, work hard on education and enforcement of good boating practices. This clean-up has had a huge impact in Moreton Bay. Our islands had long been a dumping ground for irresponsible boat owners.


Earlier this month it was great to announce on behalf of our government a new maritime enforcement team to hit Queensland waters as we head into summer to help stem a rise in boating incidents. It is a fantastic collaboration across partner agencies Queensland Water Police, Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol and MSQ. It is really great to see agencies working together. The team of specially trained Maritime Safety Queensland officers have rolled out across South-East Queensland. They began their mission on Gold Coast waterways with a special operation over the long weekend. Over 200 notices were issued to boaties across the weekend for safety breaches. Unfortunately, we have seen that the number of fatal marine incidents is on the rise. With the summer boating season still ahead of us, this safety campaign could not have come at a better time. These officers will be out on personal watercraft. This helps them be a bit more agile to get into areas they might not have otherwise been able to get into.

On the weekend I also hosted a Blue Water Review with QFES assistant commissioners John Bolger and Joanne Greenfield. I am very grateful that they gave up their Sunday afternoon to come out to our beautiful part of the Redlands, always going above and beyond—just like our Volunteer Marine Rescue Victoria Point and our Redland Bay Coastguard volunteers. It was terrific to hear about the work being undertaken in the review and the potential benefits of bringing these two organisations together with the support of QFES. I want to thank Redland Bay Coast Guard Commander Jason Boon for his ongoing participation and also VMR's Doug McKenzie and Neville Brown. They lead wonderful groups of volunteers in water rescue, helping our boating community stay safe and performing some of the most incredible rescues.

This week is also SES Week and right across Queensland we know how amazing our SESs are. Our Redland SES unit is super amazing. Last week it took out three of the top four awards and several of our members were recognised for their contributions at the SES regional awards ceremony. Congratulations to all of our Redland SES members. We are really proud of all of the work that they do. They took out the honour of Regional SES Operational Response of the Year, Regional SES Unit/Group of the Year and Regional SES Volunteer of the Year went to Tim Willis. Congratulations also to Chris Evans, Helen McKenna, Rob Hurren, Dan Tuckwood, Gemma Kuhn, Justin Kirby, Anne-Marie Bennett, Alex Johnston and Dan Tuckwood—all medal recipients.

Finally, I want to give a huge shout-out to my Redland District Special School athletes who are competing for Met East in the state athletic titles in Cairns this week. I know they will do us all very proud and have a fantastic time doing so.

### **North Stradbroke Island, Four-Wheel Drive Beach Access Fee**

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (7.12 pm): I rise on behalf of the people of North Stradbroke Island who have suffered yet another kick from this Labor government. Not content with prematurely shutting down the resource industry with no viable plan for jobs, the Trad controlled Palaszczuk government has further damaged the economy by tripling a tourism tax on four-wheel drive access to the island's beaches. Stradbroke Island really is the best kept tourism destination secret in South-East Queensland, and Labor seems determined to keep it a secret by making it harder for working families to get there!

With local businesses sabotaged by resources workers being thrown out of their jobs and leaving the island, tourism is now the main economic lifeline. Tourism operators are doing their utmost to attract visitors while Labor seems to be doing its utmost to stop them. The government is only listening to its green left Extinction Rebellion friends in West End. The real fight against extinction is being waged by the desperate island residents I met with last week who are beside themselves about Labor's callous and cruel tax.

**Ms Fentiman** interjected.

**Dr ROBINSON:** The comments on my Facebook page say it all, and it would pay for the minister to listen. One business leader said—

This is another attack on local residents and the regular visitors that local businesses rely on week in week out.

Steve said—

We go to Straddie several times every year and always down the beach to camp. This grab for money means we will not be going back. The ferry was expensive but this permit cost increase kills it for us which we are very unhappy about ...

Steve then went on to use three angry emojis and two swearing emojis. Greg said—

And the relatively high car transfer fare ... keeps discouraging tourists to choose these islands over the mainland coast. Why pay another night's accommodation's worth just on getting there?

We cannot tax our way to growth and taxing the island does not grow tourism. This government has become the anvil around the ankle of the people of Stradbroke Island. There was no consultation with local business owners, local residents, four-wheel drive owners, Redland City Council, members of parliament nor the majority of the Quandamooka people. Labor's member for Capalaba has said publicly that it was a poor decision, and he is right. He said that he was not consulted and that he would speak to the minister. I wonder how that is going.


What have the other local members said? Crickets! Their silence says volumes about their support for this tax. The Premier confirmed in parliament this morning that she still is not listening and she will not reverse the decision of dodgy Jackie Trad, the member for South Brisbane, choosing instead to take the money. This begs the question as to what the \$31 million economic transition fund is for. If only Labor knew how to manage money! Labor's 'Trad-broke' island plan for North Stradbroke Island must change and the Straddie tax must go.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Pugh): Before I call the member for Stretton, there is nothing in the standing orders about emojis. However, I do think that swear emojis would not be appropriate and I ask the member to withdraw that particular reference.

**Dr ROBINSON:** I withdraw my comments about swearing emojis.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No need to repeat it; just the withdrawal. Thank you, member for Oodgeroo.

### **Kyabra Community Association, Family Fun Day**

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (7.15 pm): I rise to inform the House of the success of the Kyabra Community Association in my electorate and in particular the Kyabra Family Fun Day, which was held this year on 25 September. The Kyabra Family Fun Day has taken place in my local community for the last 10 years. It is an event that happens in the school holidays and it is looked forward to by many people in my electorate, including myself. This year there was fantastic weather with more than 700

people in attendance and around 30 stalls and activities. The fun fair recognises Child Protection Week and is deliberately held in the school holidays to focus on the importance of children, families and community, and that is what the Kyabra Community Association is all about.

It is wonderful to have such a big public event in my electorate in the school holidays every year because it allows families and young people to come together to have an enjoyable day out, have an enjoyable morning out or an enjoyable afternoon out. There is free food and there are lots of activities for the children. There was a petting zoo this year and the police came along as well with wonderful activities. In particular I want to recognise the CEO of the Kyabra Community Association, David O'Toole, who has done fantastic work. I also want to recognise Janet Stewart and the Group Work & Training Team for all of the hard work that they undertook putting together the family fun day because it is a lot of work putting the event together every year. I thank all of the staff and volunteers at Kyabra for all of the fantastic work that they do in my community.

Kyabra Community Association is based in Runcorn and works with families and communities to strengthen family and community life. Core activities and services are grouped into the following areas: NDIS, disability support services, housing support service, foster and kinship care, and parent and children activities. The Kyabra Community Association does wonderful work in my community, not just on the family fun day where it opens itself up to the whole community but each and every day. I commend the board, the staff and all of the volunteers at the Kyabra Community Association for all of the fantastic work that they do. I look forward to attending many family fun days into the future and look forward to continuing to work with my friends from the Kyabra Community Association to support the wonderful work that they do in my electorate.

### **Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct, Science Centre**



**Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (7.18 pm): Tonight in this House I am calling for a science centre to be included in the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct at Southport. I love science. I have a degree in it. Science opens the mind to see the world for all its potential. A strong education in science increases critical thinking and analytical skills. It is important for success across all aspects of life.

The Gold Coast is the only major city in Australia without a science centre. Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth all have their own hands-on interactive science centres, as does Newcastle, Canberra and Wollongong. The Gold Coast is one of the fastest growing regions in the country, with a larger population than some of those cities, but it is missing out.

I have talked about this issue at length with my good friends Professor Richard John and Randall Hall from Griffith's Science on the GO!. Since the launch of Science on the GO! in 2005, their programs have won awards and engaged over half a million people in STEM education initiatives. They run hands-on science experiences across the Gold Coast, Logan and northern New South Wales, driving many young people to take the next step and study at Griffith's Gold Coast campus. They share my passion for STEM and their work shows that there is a public demand for such a centre.

The health and knowledge precinct is missing a public face—somewhere to engage the community on the Gold Coast with the huge scale of what it is trying to achieve for the Gold Coast. If most people in the area, even people living in the neighbouring suburbs, were asked what the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct is, many of them would say that they have no idea. We need locals to engage with this space to help make it a success. The whole idea of the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct is to use the collaboration and proximity of Griffith University and the two hospitals to encourage scientific innovation and entrepreneurialism. A science centre would align perfectly with those aims of the precinct.

My vision would be land provided by the state government, funding from the federal government to help get the science centre established, and a commitment from Griffith University to have its staff run the centre. If getting land is not a possibility, the existing Nexus Way building, owned by the state, could be used as a trial site or the science centre could be placed on the ground level of Griffith's soon-to-be-built ADaPT Building.

This science centre could be a place where students from all Gold Coast schools visit regularly on excursions. That alone would mean thousands of visitors coming constantly to the centre. Students would no longer have to drive to Brisbane to get this sort of science education. It would be a great resource for local teachers on the Gold Coast. It would generate tourism and local jobs.

I urge the government to do everything it can to establish a science centre on the Gold Coast. Our kids on the Gold Coast deserve to have every possible opportunity in science and that science centre would make that a reality.

### Pine Rivers Electorate, Road Infrastructure



**Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (7.21 pm): People in the Pine Rivers electorate rely on their cars to get around. Although the Palaszczuk government has done much through the Fairer Fares initiative and additions to public transport services to make public transport a cheaper and more attractive mode of transport, much government investment is also made to ensure that people in my community can spend less time stuck in traffic.

At the last election, I identified local transport upgrades as a key focus for my ongoing work as the member for Pine Rivers. Through my community transport survey I asked people in Pine Rivers to tell me about their transport experience. That survey informed me of the priorities for my community and what my focus should be when advocating for transport upgrades.

The Pine Rivers electorate is one of the geographically largest and most diverse electorates in the greater Brisbane area, so investment in transport infrastructure matters to commuters in my community. Given the distances people in my community need to travel, fixing major bottlenecks is not just a convenience issue for them; it means more time with their families. Further, my electorate's heavily used roads need to be as safe as possible.

This year's state budget provided for much needed road projects in every corner of the Pine Rivers electorate—from resurfacing works on Mount Mee Road in Dayboro to safety works on Mount Glorious Road. Three priority intersections on Samford Road are being addressed as well as safety works at Ferny Hills to the Camp Mountain Road intersection.

Despite being an obvious problem that was neglected by previous governments, the notorious bottleneck of the South Pine Road and Stafford Road intersection will finally be addressed by this government. A full body of work is looking at safety along Eatons Crossing Road, with the Eden Road intersection works commencing any day now. Dayboro Road at Petrie will see the removal of the Petrie roundabout. I am so pleased to experience the smooth-flowing trouble-free upgrade after the removal of the Strathpine roundabout at Gympie Road and Dixon Street. There are plans for a diverging diamond interchange that will transform the Strathpine Road overpass at Bald Hills and work to lock in a northbound turning lane for commuters at the Linkfield Road overpass will be starting in the coming weeks.

This project is bitter sweet. It comes at a time when the pressure of congestion on this road is huge. A major connector to the bustling industrial hub of Brendale—connecting the suburbs of Warner, Cashmere, Bray Park, Eatons Hill and Albany Creek to the Gateway and Gympie arterial—is potentially the most complained about bottleneck on the north side of Brisbane. At the recent election the federal government promised funds to duplicate the overpass, but we now know that the federal LNP government will have zero dollars for the Linkfield Road project until 2026.

The state government is ready to take action to duplicate the Linkfield Road overpass, but it cannot do it alone. Major infrastructure projects require support from the federal government. My community cannot wait until 2026. That is why this week I launched a community petition calling on Scott Morrison and the LNP federal government to help us upgrade Linkfield Road now, to bring the money through in its current term, because 2026 is too late to start this vital work. Both Peter Dutton and Luke Howarth went to the last election promising that they would deliver funds to support Queensland and fix this bottleneck—not in two elections from now; now.

### Dairy Industry



**Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (7.24 pm): I rise to call for immediate action to save the dairy industry in Queensland. At the regional sitting of parliament in Townsville I moved a motion stating that, for every litre of milk sold in a supermarket, 10 cents goes back directly to the dairy farmer and that any future price increase for any milk is to be distributed equally between the dairy farmer, the processor and the supermarket. I thank all members who voted for that motion.

However, talk is cheap. We need action. Before the federal Liberal National government deregulated the industry, there were 207 dairy farmers on the Tablelands. There are now 52. Back in the year 2000, we had 1,500 dairy farmers. We now are down to a mere 340 dairy farmers. This decrease shows that something is going wrong. We must take action now. If this trend continues, there will be no dairy farmers in Queensland by the year 2028.

We must focus on fixing the problem. We must introduce a minimum price scheme, delivering a fair price to dairy farmers for the milk from the farm gate to the market. That minimum price scheme will also ensure that major supermarkets cannot blackmail farmers and processors.

To our surprise, earlier this year federal Labor member Joel Fitzgibbon moved a motion to introduce a minimum price scheme but, to our disappointment and dismay, former federal Liberal agriculture minister, David Littleproud, along with other prominent coalition party members, spoke vehemently against a minimum price scheme. They did that while claiming that they were the dairy farmers' friend. I would like to add that I am very disappointed that the KAP's Milk Pricing (Fair Milk Mark) Bill 2013 and Sustainable Queensland Dairy Production (Fair Milk Price Logos) Bill 2016, which were both endorsed by the industry and which were designed to ensure that dairy farmers received a fair price for producing milk, were voted against by both major parties.

The industry is in dire straits. Both sides of state and federal parliaments must support the introduction of a minimum price scheme and pressure the supermarkets to adopt a state-by-state pricing structure instead of the current national pricing structure. Most importantly, we must ensure that, for every litre of milk sold in supermarkets, 10 cents goes directly back to the farmers and that any future price increase is distributed equally between farmers, processors and supermarkets.

In the meantime, we need an urgent rescue package for the dairy industry until the long-term solution that I have outlined can be put in place. The government is spending billions on Cross River Rail. Surely, it can invest a fraction of these funds on a financial assistance package to save our dairy industry. I remind members that we had 1,500 dairy farmers. There are now only 340.

*(Time expired)*

### **Morningside State School**



**Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (7.27 pm): Tomorrow marks one year since the beloved Morningside State School was ravaged by fire. On 16 October 2018, the fire destroyed two buildings and damaged another, resulting in the removal of six classrooms and the installation of prefabricated buildings to provide temporary relief at the school.

One year ago the journey began with grief and trauma. Under the leadership of acting principal Cheryl Kennedy, P&C president Suzanne Newman and their respective teams, the year has rolled on with resilience, generosity, determination and positivity. Tomorrow the school reaches its year mark with a celebration of achievement and community.


In the weeks following the fire we saw an outpouring of support and love. Tomorrow night many of the local residents, representatives of local business, schools and community groups, and the many people who worked to rebuild the school will come together to celebrate a truly great school. I know that there will be particular thanks to the amazing team that put the school back together again. I wish I knew the names of every single one of those people, but if I thank deputy director-general Jeff Hunt and the assistant director-general of corporate services, Kevin Mara, I know that they will pass on everyone's gratitude to their staff.

I am already a huge fan of the education department. However, having spoken to the member for Mansfield and the member for Bonney, who both had fires in schools in their local areas, I know that there is widespread awe and admiration for what the department achieves under the most challenging of circumstances to help school communities get their lives back together.

On Sunday I was out with dozens of people from the Morningside State School community, along with Wayne Cameron from the Bulimba Creek Catchment Committee, planting trees to mark the one year anniversary and be part of the physical healing of the school site. There were 85 trees in total and we planted most of them, leaving a certain number so that each class could plant their own tomorrow. A big thank you to organisers Sharon Wetzig and Dominique Runham and to environment captains Cody Lelievre-Adams, Louie Forgiarini, Mia Green and Skye Riley for this event and to little Lisa for showing me how to plant properly.

I looked at all the families who had come along and best of all the many students. I thought about the way all the Morningside State School students had embraced their changed circumstances over the last year, how the wonderful P&C, all the families and all the magnificent staff had rallied around and were determined to make the school even better. There is lots happening with planning for the first stage of the school's new master plan to deliver a three-storey building replacing the destroyed classrooms. It will have six general learning spaces, a music centre, a music practice room, art and preparation spaces and amenities and the undercroft design will be future proofed for an additional two general learning areas. Every time I visit the school there is a sense of purpose and excitement about what is happening and it is this that is the best. Well done to Morningside State School and well done to our local community for showing who they are when the chips are down. I am so proud of you.

### Kawana Electorate


 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (7.30 pm): It is an honour to represent the people of Kawana in my 10th year now since being elected in 2009. Kawana is a happening place. There is lots happening. Businesses are opening. There are great people and great community groups right around Kawana. A couple of weeks ago I stood out the front with the Buddina P&C president and we talked about how hot the classrooms were in the temperatures we had had. It is beyond time for the state government to air-condition every state school classroom in Queensland. The time for talk is over. It is time for action. Every state school classroom should be air conditioned. With the government's announcement two weeks ago of \$100 million being rolled out, many schools miss out. It is time for a little less conversation and more action in this regard. That is why we are campaigning for air conditioning in all state schools.

Congratulations to Kawana Surf Life Saving Club. The lifesavers are out on patrol with their new Jarrod Bleijie marquees. They looked great on the beach on the weekend—as did the marquees! It is all going spectacularly for the lifesavers. The Kawana Surf Life Saving Club looks after one of the longest stretches of beach in Queensland—over seven kilometres of beach—and they do a fantastic job. I wish them luck for the upcoming season.

There was going to be a severe impact on craft brewers as a result of the state Labor government's beer tax, including on Your Mates Brewery. Your Mates Brewery is the fantastic story of a couple of guys, Heppy and McGarry, who went on *Shark Tank* and now have Your Mates Brewery. They make a couple of beers: the famous Larry, which is a great drink and recently they released Sally. They say about Sally that it is a botanical beauty, strong, wild and free. They could have named it after my wife. They didn't but they should have. Congratulations to those boys. Unfortunately they were going to be hit with a \$5,000 increase—a 900 per cent increase—with Labor's tax but because of the efforts of the craft brewery industry the Labor government caved in to the pressure and reduced it. It is still an unacceptable increase in taxation from this tax loving government. Labor taxes; they love it. It will not be as much as it was going to be.

I also congratulate Michelle and Ian of Malt Shovel Taphouse in Birtinya. Hello Harry has opened recently as well. The Malt Shovel Taphouse will also have NightQuarter on the Sunshine Coast which we stole from the Gold Coast—Hooray for the Sunshine Coast! It is going to be excellent. I went to the opening night. I congratulate Ian and Michelle for investing in the Sunshine Coast and the Kawana electorate. We are a great electorate—the best place to live in all of Queensland.

### Waterford Demons

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (7.33 pm): The Palaszczuk government is delivering for Waterford. Over the weekend I joined one of the largest Rugby League clubs in Logan, the Waterford Demons, at their annual trophy day. I give a particular shout-out to the under-14 and under-16 girls and the under-14 boys for their premiership wins. They are kicking goals, growing rapidly over the past few years. They already have over 700 registered players. This day was very special because it was an opportunity for me to announce that the Palaszczuk government has committed half a million dollars to build a much needed new clubhouse for the Waterford Demons. This is something I have been fighting for since I was elected as the member for Waterford and it is something that the club has been crying out for for many years. Their existing clubhouse is old, run down and, sadly, not usable, making it incredibly hard for them to host club events and raise money for the club. After numerous meetings and applications for grants, I am pleased to announce that we have been able to secure funding, along with Logan City Council, to ensure the Waterford Demons can build their new clubhouse and continue to grow. I would like to thank my colleague the member for Springwood and Minister for Sport, who helped secure the funding thanks to the government's Activate! sport strategy and action plan.

The Demons are an incredible local club that puts the community first. They have equal participation of girls and women at the core of their values. I would like to especially congratulate club president Kristen Devine, secretary Marleis Sparey and coaching coordinator Mick Sparey for instilling this culture within the club. Currently the Demons do not have enough change rooms for the amount of players that they have, especially their girls and their women players. Waterford Demons has one of the highest numbers of women participating in Rugby League. It is an incredible achievement. They have some of the highest numbers of women participating in any Rugby League club in the country. It is fantastic that as part of this upgrade and expansion they will be able to upgrade the women's change rooms to provide their players with decent facilities.



The Palaszczyk government is committed to making it even easier for women and girls to participate in sport through our Get in the Game initiative and our \$15 million Female Facilities Fund. I am incredibly proud to champion the Waterford Demons and the incredible work they do ensuring that women and girls can fully participate in Rugby League. They also do fantastic work in partnership with Youth and Family Services in Logan around mental health awareness and suicide prevention. They are a brilliant community organisation. Next year is their 40th anniversary and I cannot wait to see them continue to smash the competition, deliver more premierships and celebrate their 40th anniversary in their brand-new clubhouse.

The House adjourned at 7.37 pm.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Batt, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyce, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Costigan, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, 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, Miles, Millar, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke B, O'Rourke C, Palaszczyk, Pease, Pegg, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stewart, Trad, Watts, Weir, Whiting, Wilson