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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 24 October 2019

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THURSDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2019


 The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

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


PRIVILEGE

Comments by Member for Burdekin, Apology

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (9.31 am): I rise on a matter of privilege. In question time on 20 August 2019, I asked a question without notice to the Premier in which I stated that the Deputy Premier had twice personally contacted the chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission while under assessment for matters relating to her. I have now received information that indicates that the assertion was incorrect and that, in relation to one of the matters I was referencing, the Deputy Premier was not under assessment, but rather had provided material to the CCC for assessment. I apologise to the House and Deputy Premier for my misinterpretation of the evidence provided by the CCC chair at estimates, upon which my question was based.

REPORT


Auditor-General

 **Mr SPEAKER:** I have to report that I have received the Auditor-General's report to parliament No. 4 of 2019-20 titled *Water: 2018-19 results of financial audits*. I table the report for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Auditor-General of Queensland: Report to Parliament No. 4: 2019-20—Water: 2018-19 results of financial audits [[1931](#)].

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 22 August 2019 the Deputy Premier wrote to me alleging that the member for Burdekin deliberately misled the House during his question without notice to the Premier on 20 August 2019. I note that earlier today the member for Burdekin apologised to the House in relation to this matter. Accordingly, I consider the member for Burdekin has made an adequate apology and on that basis I have decided that the 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 relating to this matter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 22 August 2019, from the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Hon. Jackie Trad, to the Speaker, Hon. Curtis Pitt, regarding an alleged contempt of parliament [[1932](#)].

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 22 August 2019, from the Speaker, Hon. Curtis Pitt, to the member for Burdekin, Mr Dale Last MP, regarding an alleged deliberate misleading of the House [[1933](#)].

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 2 September 2019, from the member for Burdekin, Mr Dale Last MP, to the Speaker, Hon. Curtis Pitt, regarding an alleged deliberate misleading of the House [[1934](#)].

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 9 October 2019, from the Speaker, Hon. Curtis Pitt, to the Chairperson, Crime and Corruption Commission, Mr Alan MacSporran QC, regarding a matter of privilege [[1935](#)].

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 16 October 2019, from the Chairperson, Crime and Corruption Commission, Mr Alan MacSporran QC, to the Speaker, Hon. Curtis Pitt, regarding allegations against the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Hon. Jackie Trad [[1936](#)].

I seek leave to incorporate my full ruling on this matter, which I have circulated, into the *Record of Proceedings*.

Leave granted.

SPEAKER'S RULING—ALLEGED DELIBERATELY MISLEADING OF PARLIAMENT, QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

On 22 August 2019, the Deputy Premier wrote to me alleging that the Member for Burdekin deliberately misled the House during his question without notice to the Premier on 20 August 2019.

The matter relates to a statement that the Deputy Premier twice contacted the Chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) while under assessment for matters relating to her.

In her letter to me, the Deputy Premier contended that this statement was misleading because she had only once made contact with the Chair of the CCC while under assessment.

I sought further information from the Member for Burdekin about the allegation made against him, in accordance with Standing Order 269(5).

In his correspondence to me, the Member for Burdekin argued that his statement was factual in that he understood the Deputy Premier was under assessment at the time she personally contacted the Chair of the CCC in May 2018.

I sought further information from the CCC about the matter in accordance with Standing Order 269(5). In his response, the Chair of the CCC advised that at the time of this telephone conversation in May 2018, the CCC was not assessing any complaint against the Deputy Premier. According to the Chair of the CCC, the call related to a query concerning referrals by the Deputy Premier to the CCC of information concerning Ipswich City Council which were provided to her by various persons.


Following receipt of correspondence from the CCC, I informed the Member for Burdekin of what was contained in this correspondence. The Member for Burdekin informed me of his intention to apologise to the House.

I note that the Member for Burdekin apologised to the House in relation to this matter earlier today.


Accordingly, I consider the Member for Burdekin has made an adequate apology and on that basis, I have decided that the matter does not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee and I will not be referring the matter.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Error in Notice Paper

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, there is an error on page 4 of the *Notice Paper* for today. The Natural Resources and Other Legislation (GDA 2020) Amendment Bill was referred to the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee, not the Economics and Governance Committee as listed. The error has been corrected and republished online.

School Group Tours

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to advise that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from Mount Ommaney Special School in the electorate of Mount Ommaney, Greenbank State School in the electorate of Jordan, Mount Sylvia State School in the electorate of Lockyer and Burleigh Heads school leaders from the electorate of Burleigh.

PETITIONS

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

Rosella, Bruce Highway Upgrade

Mr Andrew, from 741 petitioners, requesting the House to save the Rosella Store and adjacent parklands from compulsory acquisition and to consider alternative routes for the proposed Bruce Highway upgrade at Rosella [[1937](#)].

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

Toowong Creek Wildlife Corridor

From 1,272 petitioners, requesting the House to move the proposed development of the Northern GLA building away from the threatened species habitat on the Toowong Creek Wildlife Corridor [[1938](#), [1939](#)].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Hon. D'Ath)—

[1940](#) Professional Standards Act 2004: Professional Standards (Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2019, Subordinate legislation 2019 No.

[1941](#) Professional Standards Act 1994 (NSW): Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand Professional Standards Scheme

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Child Abuse Legislation, Reforms



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.35 am): For too long the survivors of child abuse have faced unnecessary and frustrating obstacles in finding their voice and having that voice heard. For too long the survivors of child abuse have been prevented from seeking justice, prevented from telling their stories and prevented from claiming back their lives. For too long they have been silenced and unable to find closure, because they have been prevented from seeking compensation from those who caused them harm. That is why I am so proud that my government has now introduced major reforms to make it easier for the survivors of all kinds of child abuse to sue the institutions where harm was brought to them.

This week marked the first anniversary of the National Apology to Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. Importantly, this week my government's amendments to the Civil Liability Act extends the definition of 'abuse' to include serious physical and psychological abuse, as well as sexual abuse. Under these landmark reforms, it is easier for child abuse survivors to claim for civil damages or personal injury now and into the future.

These reforms are crucial to Queenslanders who experienced physical or psychological abuse while they were housed in institutions. While the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse revealed systemic failings of institutions to protect children and respond to child sexual abuse, it also heard from survivors who have experienced lifelong trauma as a result of physical and psychological abuse. They were victimised by the adults who were entrusted to provide them with care and protection. Unfortunately, they are not recognised by the National Redress Scheme. My government is determined that they will no longer be overlooked.


That is of critical importance to Queenslanders such as Allan Allaway, who endured 14 years of beatings at the hands of the Sisters of Mercy and now, seven decades later, finally has the legal right to compensation for his childhood ordeal. That childhood was ripped from Allan Allaway. I have a personal connection to Allan. About 20 years ago, I noticed Allan sitting outside a ministerial office in the lobby of a government department. He would just sit there and he was determined to have his story heard. Mr Speaker, at that time I was working for your father, the former member for Mulgrave, who invited Allan in and listened to his story. This week I am incredibly proud to tell Allan and others who have suffered throughout their lives that they will finally be able to have some closure.

Allan's story is horrific. It is the story of a defenceless and helpless child who was taken from his mother on a footpath in Townsville and placed into state care in 1941. Allan was sent to the notorious Neerkol orphanage in Rockhampton, where he was beaten and injured each day and lived in fear around the clock. The psychological scars, along with the physical scars, run deep. However, Allan's determination to seek vindication is just as deep and, having fought to be heard for the past 30 years, I say to Allan and thousands of others: you have been heard, you have not been forgotten and we have acted. This Labor government has acted. Your stories are horrific, but your determination to survive and seek justice is inspiring and has now resulted in each of you being given the opportunity to truly and finally have your voice heard.

In closing, I want to say that I had the opportunity to speak to Allan on the phone yesterday. He was too emotional to come into the House. The Attorney-General, Minister Farmer and I have joined some members of the task force, along with Karyn Walsh, who has been a proud supporter of this for many years. We will invite them back into Parliament House and give them the dinner that they deserve, in recognition of their courage and the fact that they have fought for generations to make sure that this wrong has been corrected.

I say to the Attorney-General, to the ministers who have been involved, to my cabinet—it was an historic day when this legislation passed through cabinet—and to all members of my government: thank you for your support because this is what being a Labor government is all about. It is about listening to some of the most vulnerable in our communities and it is about acting and having the courage to make a stand where others over decades have chosen not to.

Domestic and Family Violence

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 am): For too long, domestic and family violence victims have lived in fear and often in silence. Behind closed doors they have endured being mentally and physically abused. For those survivors, it is a living, torturous hell. Tragically, some do not survive. Two Australians are killed every week at the hands of someone they love. That is 110 every year. This should not happen, ever.

As MPs, I am sure many members in this House can relate to these issues as members of the public would have come and seen them about this important issue. It is an incredibly important issue that affects all communities, even the ones that might not know it is going on. It is an issue I championed action for in opposition and made one of my government's top priorities when we were elected.

Just a month into the job as Premier in 2015, I received the landmark report titled *Not now, not ever: putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland*. The report and its recommendations were delivered by the chair of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence, the Hon. Quentin Bryce, and had bipartisan support. As I said then, which stands today, domestic and family violence is a violation of basic human rights and there is no excuse for not acting to eliminate it. Without hesitation, my government accepted all 140 recommendations—121 of those for government.

As a government and as a community we have brought the issue of domestic and family violence out from behind closed doors. We started along a very challenging path to stop the behaviours and attitudes that excuse or perpetuate domestic and family violence with significant reforms leading to everlasting change. This is the type of action that makes a difference. We invested a record \$328.9 million over six years to respond to the recommendations and support the implementation of our 10-year Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy.

Today, I am very proud to announce in this House that all 140 recommendations have been delivered by my government. I table the report entitled *Delivery of recommendations: Not now, not ever: putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland* and the year 4 annual highlights card.

Tabled paper: Queensland Government report, undated, titled 'Delivery of Recommendations: Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland' [1942].

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Queensland says: not now, not ever—Year 4 highlights card (1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019)' [1943].

Actions have included establishing permanent specialist domestic and family violence courts. Started as a trial at Southport, we have expanded them to Beenleigh and Townsville with circuits to Mount Isa and Palm Island. It was recommended we build two new domestic and family violence shelters—we built seven. None had been built in this state for 20 years.

The report said victims needed more support. We implemented high-risk teams in key regional areas such as Ipswich, Cairns and Brisbane. It was recommended we amend laws to better protect Queenslanders and consider strangulation as an offence. We did that and made it a standalone offence holding perpetrators to account. On top of that, we also made the sharing of intimate images without consent an offence to better protect victims. We have implemented Respectful Relationships education in Queensland schools, which is something I am very proud of because it will change behaviours in future generations by instilling respect for one another as a fundamental attitude. I thank my education minister now and those in the past for implementing that.


We have led the way in strengthening workplace support for victims in Queensland government departments and introduced 10 days DV leave. Through community campaigns we encouraged bystanders to do something and urged victims to reach out to the growing number of support services available, including DV Connect. These are just a few. I also put this on the national agenda, hosting the first COAG summit here in Brisbane to focus on this important issue.

Later today I will be hosting a special afternoon tea to extend my appreciation to some of those who have contributed to this outstanding achievement and to extend a special thanks to Minister Di Farmer and Minister Fentiman and the members of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family

Violence in Queensland, led by the Hon. Quentin Bryce, and to past and present members of the Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council, including its current chair, Kay McGrath. I extend an invitation to the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow minister to attend.

Our work does not stop here. There is still so much to do. Our Third Action Plan delivers a renewed focus for prevention, seeking to embed our efforts so far and to mobilise business and community partnerships to eliminate domestic and family violence in Queensland because we cannot do this alone. Fundamentally, this is about respect for one another, in our relationships, in our homes, in our workplaces, in our schools and in our community. It is what we all deserve. My government will continue striving to ensure Queensland is a safe place for all by saying not now, not ever together.


Skills Boost Program

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.44 am): My government is committed to helping all Queenslanders secure the skills they need for the jobs of the future. We have already announced free TAFE for year 12 graduates and \$32 million for free apprenticeships for under-21s. Today, I can announce another new initiative—the Skills Boost program.

The \$4 million Skills Boost program is about ensuring all Queenslanders can get the skills they need to work in high-demand industries with the best employment prospects. This program will assist those Queenslanders who need new skills to stay competitive and productive in the future. It will provide a second training subsidy in prioritised courses for each region to help those who want to update their skills to go further in their current job or to pursue a different career.

This is about improving the skill level of our workforce of the future. People of all ages who already hold a vocational education and training qualification can benefit from this new training subsidy for key qualifications, through reduced training fees. This means, for example, that a person who is eligible for the Skills Boost program and is studying a certificate III in a priority area will only pay hundreds of dollars rather than thousands of dollars for their additional training. I thank Minister Fentiman for making sure this was achieved.

Bushfire Appeal


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.45 am): Tonight, members of parliament, councils, the business community and members of the public will come together for a special bushfire appeal reception here at Parliament House. More than 330 people are attending for a night when we put politics aside and in a bipartisan effort raise much need funds for victims of the recent bushfires. We will be joined by representatives of Noosa Shire Council, Scenic Rim Regional Council and Southern Downs Regional Council where the most serious of the bushfires raged causing damage. The bushfire threat is well understood by Sunshine Coast residents who just yesterday faced the threat of another fire just six weeks after the last one.

Tonight, the councils will also have displays and produce to promote their regions and once again let everyone know they are open for business and tourists. Please open up your hearts and, most importantly, open up your wallets for these regions. Whether it be your next day trip, weekender or extended holiday, please visit them and spend your dollars in the towns.

Amongst the wines offered tonight is a Symphony Hill Prosecco from award-winning winemaker Ewan Macpherson from the Granite Belt, who only last week took out a gold medal for another of his ever popular wines at the prestigious Royal Melbourne Wine Awards. Queensland wines are on the national map.

I thank the sponsors who have generously donated the goods so that the profits can go directly to the people who have been impacted. Those sponsors include, not to name them all but just a few: LionCo, XXXX, Oatley Wines, Nolan Meats, Sunpork, Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture's tiger prawns, Infinity Blue's saltwater barramundi and Creative Cuisine. There are also generous raffle and auction items including cruises and holidays. I will join you, Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, over 350 guests and members of this House for what will be a wonderful night. I thank parliamentary staff who will be helping out. I put on the public record our appreciation to Spencer Jolly, who has once again brought this together.


Free, Mr S

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.47 am): I rise to make a ministerial statement in relation to the sentencing of Sterling Free. I understand there has been significant community interest in this matter. It is important that I afford the Director of Public

Prosecutions the time necessary to properly consider matters when preparing a brief in consideration of appealing any matter, especially one that involves a child. Any decision I make about an appeal is based on legal principles.

I can inform the House today that I have now received advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions. I have thoroughly considered that advice. I have decided to appeal the sentence on the basis that it is manifestly inadequate. As the matter will continue to be before the courts, I will not be making any further comments on this matter.

Indigenous Business Month; Community Enterprise Queensland, Board of Management

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.48 am): October is Indigenous business month—an ideal time to reflect on the positive economic and social impacts of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that Queensland leads the nation when it comes to the growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. Queensland is home to more than a quarter of all Indigenous small businesses in Australia. That is around 3,000 businesses across every sector and at all stages, from start-ups to large organisations.

The Palaszczuk government knows that continuing to support and grow our state's Indigenous businesses is essential to achieving maximum economic participation for First Nation Queenslanders. That is why we have in place the Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy. As part of the policy grants, workshops are administered to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses with the tools they need to secure Queensland government contracts. This approach is showing positive results. Under the QIPP we are seeing an improvement in engagement by government agencies with Indigenous businesses through the procurement process. Figures for the 2018-19 financial year show that more than 420 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses secured \$329 million in Queensland government procurement. We will continue to work hard to further improve these numbers.

The Queensland government is also committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people occupy roles that contribute to improved outcomes in the communities in which they live. I wish to advise the House that on 10 October 2019 His Excellency the Governor approved appointments to the Community Enterprise Queensland board of management. Torres Shire Council Mayor Councillor Vonda Malone has been appointed as chair of a reconstituted CEQ board of management. Torres Strait Islander man Napau Pedro Stephen and Kabi Kabi man Dr Mark Wenitong have also been appointed to the CEQ board.

These appointments strengthen the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities in the management of their organisation. All three appointees are experienced professionals with extensive board experience and expertise working in and with community and government. These appointments will ensure that CEQ operations meet local needs and support a range of community aspirations. These include aspirations around employment opportunities from in-store roles to executive level appointments, as well as ensuring affordability for local communities. I am confident that Councillor Malone, Mr Stephen and Dr Wenitong will draw upon their significant community links and partnerships in regional and remote areas to deliver strong, community focused service, and I congratulate them on their appointments.

Manufacturing Industry

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.51 am): Queensland manufacturing has remained resilient on the national and international stage in the face of strong global manufacturing headwinds. The latest ABS data shows Queensland's manufacturing industry contributed \$20.3 billion in gross value added for 2017-18. In the four quarters to September 2019, Queensland's manufacturing industry was the sixth largest employing industry, with nearly 170,000 employees.

Manufacturing employment is dominated by full-time employees who comprise 86 per cent of the total workforce, with around one-quarter of manufacturing employees being women. Manufacturing is a key industry in our regions, contributing \$5.4 billion in gross value added to the state economy in regional Queensland including over \$1 billion in Central Queensland alone.


Queensland manufacturing is expanding and has recorded 43 consecutive months of positive scores on the Australian Industry Group Australian Performance of Manufacturing Index, even in the face of a highly competitive global manufacturing environment. The index shows that Queensland has a score of 53.7 points—above the national average of 52.4 points.

Manufacturing is also a significant export earner for Queensland and accounted for around one-fifth of our total international exports, rising from \$15.83 billion in 2014-15 to \$17.2 billion in 2018-19. In terms of labour productivity, Queensland has also performed well compared to other states, rising 3.9 per cent from 2014-15 to 2018-19—well above New South Wales rise of 1.1 per cent and Victoria's fall of 1.8 per cent.

Palaszczuk government programs assisting manufacturers include the \$46 million Made in Queensland program, \$30 million regional manufacturing hubs and Industry 4.0 Masterclasses. I am pleased to inform the House that round 3 of Made in Queensland is now underway, to help companies around the state innovate, expand and provide highly skilled jobs for more Queenslanders.

The only reason these programs exist to help manufacturers in Queensland is the Palaszczuk Labor government. At a time when manufacturers are facing tough international conditions, it is essential that we retain industry assistance programs. What manufacturers do not want to see is another \$30 million cut from industry assistance programs, as occurred under the Newman LNP government. Only the Palaszczuk Labor government backs manufacturers and backs more manufacturing jobs for Queensland.

Domestic and Family Violence

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (9.54 am): Domestic and family violence is a terrible, terrible scourge in our community, and we are resolute in our commitment to end it in Queensland. As the Premier announced this morning, the Palaszczuk Labor government is so proud to announce the delivery of all 140 recommendations of the landmark *Not now, not ever* report—121 of them the responsibility of government.

This has required strong leadership, and I want to thank the Premier for her unwavering commitment to our ongoing reform work from the day she took office. She was the Premier who called for domestic violence to be placed on the COAG agenda and held the first summit here in Brisbane. She was the first Premier to put in place special domestic violence leave for Public Service employees and to call on the Commonwealth government and all states and territories to do the same. She has truly led the way, and the importance of her leadership was acknowledged in the recent evaluation of our Second Action Plan.

I also want to pay tribute to the groundbreaking work of Dame Quentin Bryce, chair of the *Not now, not ever* task force, which delivered the 140 recommendations; to Kay McGrath and past and present members of the Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council who have overseen the implementation; and to every single individual and organisation who has worked alongside us to make a difference. I look forward to marking this momentous milestone with many of them this afternoon. I also acknowledge the outstanding work of my predecessor, the member for Waterford.

The Palaszczuk government made an investment of almost \$330 million to implement the recommendations of the report. As the Premier has said, we brought in tough new laws and increased penalties including the new criminal offence of non-lethal strangulation. We introduced specialist domestic and family violence courts. We built new domestic and family violence shelters—the first in 20 years. We created high-risk teams to keep victims safe and hold perpetrators to account through integrated, culturally appropriate responses. We introduced the Respectful Relationships curriculum in Queensland schools, and massively increased funding for counselling and other support services across Queensland—and so much more.


These are all important achievements, and they have made a difference—but we all know there is so much more to do. With the figures as they are—one in six women and one in 16 men over the age of 15 having experienced domestic violence—we all know someone who is or has been a victim. If the average person heard some of the stories of what perpetrators do to the people they profess to love, they would think we had made them up. They are beyond imagination. That is why we cannot and will not stop.

The Third Action Plan of Queensland's Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy sets out the next three years of reform work to build on the significant work we have already delivered. We have built strong foundations, and now we must embed and build on that work. Government cannot do this alone. Tackling domestic violence is everyone's business. Today we ask all Queenslanders to continue with us in saying not now, not ever together.

I would also like to remind the members that tomorrow is the annual Day for Daniel and acknowledge the incredible work still being done by Daniel's parents, Bruce and Denise Morcombe. Last year's Day for Daniel saw more than one million Australians participate, including students from

2,800 schools who wore red to remember Daniel. Those numbers continue to increase every year, demonstrating the growing commitment of all Australians to educate our children about personal safety and ways they can prevent harm to themselves. I ask all Queenslanders to commit to doing everything they need to do to keep our kids safe from harm.

South-East Queensland Water Grid


 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy) (9.58 am): As all Queenslanders know, we are in a prolonged incredibly dry spell. We know the impact this has had on our rural and regional communities. Two-thirds of our state is in drought and the south-east has not been immune. Over the past few years we have seen less than average inflows into our South-East Queensland Water Grid dams across our region.

Our combined dam levels are currently at 61.8 per cent. Our largest dam, Wivenhoe, has fallen below 50 per cent—its lowest level in a decade. The reality is that we are preparing for drought here in the south-east, too. Thanks to the foresight of past Labor governments, the south-east is better placed than ever before to manage our water needs.

Our SEQ Water Grid gives us the ability to move water across the region, and a critical part of that grid is our climate-resilient water source: the Gold Coast desalination plant. The plant has been adding 10 to 20 million litres of drinking water to South-East Queensland's water supply each fortnight on average since 2013. Last year the plant supplied up to 25 per cent of Brisbane's and Ipswich's drinking water while the Mount Crosby East Bank plant was offline. This year the plant produced almost 8,000 million litres to supplement supply while the Molendinar plant on the Gold Coast was undergoing maintenance. This month the plant is offline for maintenance works to ensure it is ready for this summer.

When dam levels fall to 60 per cent, the desalination plant will kick into gear to help supplement the water grid and take pressure off our dams this summer. The work underway now will ensure the Tugun plant is ready to ramp up to 100 per cent capacity when we need it this summer. This is the same desalination plant that the then water minister, Mark McArdle, described as ineffective and inefficient. As rain clouds fail to gather on South-East Queensland horizons, I encourage households, businesses and industry to start taking heed of the waterwise messages from Seqwater and our councils.

QRIDA, 25th Anniversary

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (10.01 am): This month marks a quarter of a century since the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority was established to assist Queensland's primary producers establish and expand their businesses and recover from natural disasters. Over the past 25 years, close to \$4 billion has been invested and almost 93,000 primary producers, small businesses and others across regional Queensland have been assisted through a range of government financial assistance programs administered by QRIDA on behalf successive Queensland and Australian governments.

Already, more than \$1 billion in low-interest loans for Queensland farmers has been approved through the Queensland government's flagship Primary Industry Productivity Enhancement Scheme to assist new entrants into agriculture and build long-term productivity and sustainability. On a recent trip out to Thargomindah in Western Queensland, Anthony proudly showed me around his sheep property. He has erected 102 kilometres of wild dog fencing, an initiative of the Palaszczuk government. Another \$865 million has been delivered in disaster recovery grants and loans to help primary producers, small businesses and non-profit organisations get back on their feet after cyclones, floods, fires and other natural disasters.


On 1 October 1994, the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority was established under the Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994. Previously the Government Schemes Division within the Queensland Industry Development Corporation, QRAA became an independent statutory authority. QRAA became the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority on 1 July 2017 as a result of the Farm Business Debt Mediation Act 2017 and is now responsible for administering an even broader range of programs and services, including the now mandatory Farm Business Debt Mediation program, Farm Debt Restructure Office and the biennial Queensland Rural Debt Survey.

In total, QRIDA has administered more than 90 different loan, grant and rebate assistance programs, from solar and storage loans and grants for households, rebates on energy-saving investments for farmers and large firms, to equipment and professional advice rebates for farmers, fishers and bus operators. More recently, I am especially proud of the \$10 million Rural Economic

Development Grant Scheme, which is administered by QRIDA. Under the first round of funding for this Palaszczuk government initiative we have supported 15 regional businesses to create some 600 regional jobs.

I would like to acknowledge the work of QRIDA, its board, management and staff on its commitment to rural and regional Queenslanders over the past 25 years. I remain excited about its future as an outstanding government financial assistance delivery agency.

Cross River Rail

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Cooper—ALP) (Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for Cross River Rail) (10.04 am): Today I am pleased to update the House: demolition works are now underway at Albert Street to make way for Brisbane's new underground station. The Albert Street station will be the first new Brisbane CBD station in 120 years and will provide a major new link to the Queen Street Mall, QUT Gardens Point and the Eagle Street business district—


Ms Grace: Amazing!

Ms JONES: I take the interjection from the local member: amazing—and, of course, the multibillion dollar Queen's Wharf development in Brisbane. Preparation works are also underway ahead of the demolition of Hotel Jen and the Brisbane Transit Centre at Roma Street. These works are all part of our government's commitment to build the \$5.4 billion Cross River Rail project.

We know that without Cross River Rail the South-East Queensland rail network will grind to a halt by 2026. With only one inner-city river crossing, the Merivale Bridge, and a bottleneck at Roma Street, Central and Valley stations, the network is close to capacity. Cross River Rail will unlock the bottleneck with 10 kilometres of new track—including a six-kilometre tunnel under the city—to deliver faster and more frequent train travel for all of South-East Queensland, particularly for rapidly growing populations on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast.

We also know that Cross River Rail is a jobs generator. This project will support on average 1,500 full-time jobs a year during construction and 3,000 jobs during the most intensive year of construction. We will see at least 450 jobs created for apprentices and trainees like sparkies, chippies, welders and specialist trades like signalling and telecommunications. I am pleased to report that 21 apprentices have already worked on the new temporary long-haul coach terminal at Roma Street. I look forward to updating the House on this transformational project for our state.

World Teachers' Day

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.06 am): Queensland teachers are dedicated and passionate professionals who make a positive difference for students every day of the school year. I am sure that every member of this House remembers a teacher who had a profound impact on their lives as a child. For me, it was one of my primary school teachers, Miss Davis. There are more than 53,000 state school teachers and more than 19,000 teacher aides in Queensland. Tomorrow we celebrate their hard work on World Teachers' Day. I want to acknowledge and thank all teachers across our state. I am sure that nearly everyone here in this House is proud of a loved one or member of their family who is a teacher. In my case, it is my sister Maria.

Dr Lynham: Great teacher!

Ms GRACE: I will take that interjection from the Minister for State Development because my sister taught one of his sons, which is great. State, Catholic and independent school teachers in Queensland have received a World Teachers' Day ribbon—which I am wearing—that they can wear with pride. Some Queensland landmarks, including the Brisbane Story Bridge, will be lit up in the World Teachers' Day colours of purple, green and blue to mark the equation—sorry, to mark the occasion.

Honourable members: Ha, ha!

Ms GRACE: That was a Freudian slip, Mr Speaker, and appropriate too.


Mr SPEAKER: Be careful, Minister; we will get out the red pen.

Ms GRACE: I am on the teacher's speaking path. The Palaszczuk government firmly believes that teaching is a highly valued profession, and we know that having quality teachers in our classrooms means a bright future for Queensland students. Every day I encourage students thinking about joining the profession to do so. We are delivering on our election commitment to employ an additional 3,700 teachers over four years, and in this year's budget we added 1,000 additional teachers and over 200 extra teacher aides to cater for increased enrolments in our Queensland state schools.

We are not only hiring new teachers across Queensland but we are also investing in programs to upskill and support existing teachers in every corner of the state. We are creating opportunities for professional learning for teachers and mentoring and coaching teachers in the regions so that Queensland children are equipped with the skills needed for the jobs of the future. We are committed to lifting the status of teaching as a profession in this state to ensure that those teachers who want to enjoy a long and rewarding career at the front of the classroom are able to do so and are paid accordingly. That is why I am proud that we settled an agreement for our hardworking teachers that delivers decent pay and conditions, with teachers overwhelmingly supporting the agreement with an 89 per cent 'yes' vote.

This landmark agreement acknowledges the work that teachers do every day in every classroom in every Queensland state school. Tomorrow, when all parliamentary members return to their electorates, I encourage them to go out and thank their local teachers and celebrate the important work they do in giving every child a great start.


Police Resources

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.09 am): When the Palaszczuk government makes a commitment, we deliver. That is what is happening right across the state right now. At the last election, we committed to deliver an extra 535 police personnel by 30 June 2022 and it is happening; it is well underway. In recent months, we have announced the positioning of extra police across the state. When parliament sat in Townsville, the Police Commissioner and I announced Townsville would receive its full complement of an extra 53 police officers by the end of next year—18 months early.

Recently, when the commissioner and I were announcing news of a new police facility at Pimpama, the commissioner announced the Gold Coast would have an extra 20 police officers by the end of this financial year. The commissioner also announced that Logan would have an extra 10 police officers in the same time frame. In recent weeks, the Queensland Police Service also announced an extra 10 police officers will be deployed to Cairns by the end of this financial year.

When we promise, we deliver. There are more police in Queensland than ever before, and more are coming. Importantly, when we deliver more police, we make sure those officers are fully kitted out with all of the gear a modern police officer needs. Unlike the previous LNP government, Labor funds the essential high-tech equipment, like body worn cameras, that help police do their job. The Queensland Police Service is a world-class operation and our government backs them 100 per cent.

Mental Health Services

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.11 am): Keeping Queenslanders healthy both physically and mentally is a priority for the Palaszczuk government. That means ensuring the most appropriate and effective responses to people experiencing a mental health crisis. In Queensland 20 per cent of adults experience a mental disorder each year and 3½ per cent of Queenslanders are estimated to experience a severe mental disorder requiring a crisis response. This means many people experiencing significant episodes of anxiety, depression, psychosis, suicidal ideation or self-harm attempts will call triple 0 as the first line to access help and care.


People accessing emergency services in a mental health crisis have increased by more than 20 per cent in the past five years. This government saw the need for increased mental health supports in that first response, before hospital. This year we have partnered with the Queensland Ambulance Service and the HHSs in the South-East Queensland corner to pilot senior mental health clinicians working with senior paramedics to respond to people experiencing a mental health crisis in the community. These QAS mental health co-responder units provide an infield assessment and ensure the most appropriate management for people experiencing a mental health crisis.

We are already seeing results. Approximately 60 per cent of people seen by the QAS mental health co-responder units already operating in the south-east are staying in their own homes or utilising alternative care options to the emergency department. That is 60 per cent. Our co-responder unit in Metro South HHS will expand to a seven-day-a-week service in response to the success of the pilot. That means people experiencing a mental health crisis are getting the best possible care seven days a week.

Paramedics and emergency medical dispatchers will continue to have access to the mental health practitioners based in the QAS Operations Centre in Brisbane who operate from 8 am to midnight seven days a week providing assistance statewide. These mental health clinicians in the QAS

Operations Centre have access to Queensland Health's mental health clinical databases, which include information on a person's mental health history, treatment plans, police and ambulance intervention plans, and other important information. This government is working hard to make real change where it matters. We are committed to continuing to deliver a first-class health system that works with the patient to improve outcomes while also keeping ED beds available for emergencies.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

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

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 26 November 2019.


Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will conclude today at 11.14 am.

Nullinga Dam

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (10.14 am): My first question is to the Premier. Cairns Mayor Bob Manning said publicly that the Palaszczuk government is 'white-anting' the desperately needed Nullinga Dam. Why is the Premier blocking Queensland's regional communities from building vital water infrastructure to secure their futures?

Ms PALASZCZUK: We are absolutely committed to providing the assessments that are needed in relation to dams right across the state. As we know, when we come down to Rockhampton with Rookwood, our money is on the table and we have called for expressions of interest. We still have not received the \$176 million committed by the federal government. My understanding is that the department of natural resources was undertaking some feasibility work in relation to the Nullinga Dam and released the detailed business case prepared by Building Queensland on 2 August.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members to my left, the Premier is being responsive to the question asked. I ask that you cease your interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I also understand that what my government is working on is protecting the land around it. In terms of an analysis about when water is actually needed for the Cairns community, it is not until 2050. There are more urgent issues at the moment. As we know, there has been bipartisan support in relation to Rookwood dam, but what we are yet to see is the money flow from the federal government to Queensland for that important project. The Leader of the Opposition was down meeting with the Prime Minister just last Friday. Did she raise the issue of releasing the money for Rookwood Weir? It would be irresponsible at the moment to put money on the table in relation to Nullinga when there is a clear business case that says that the water is not needed until 2050. There are more pressing issues, more pressing drought issues.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: My understanding is that the Cairns region is not—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members, I will not have to call the House to order three times before having to rise to my feet.

Ms PALASZCZUK: My advice also is that the Cairns region is not drought declared. I have 66 per cent of this state that is drought declared. Tinaroo Dam is full, but I have 66 per cent of Queensland that is drought declared and the priority must be on those regions. It would be an irresponsible government not to focus on those drought-declared areas in this state.

Rookwood Weir

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My second question is also to the Premier. Two weeks ago the member for Rockhampton and the member for Keppel attended a rally protesting against the Palaszczuk government's decision to short-change the people of Central Queensland and only build part of Rookwood Weir.

Mrs Lauga interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Keppel, if you feel aggrieved you can wait till after the question has been asked. I will hear the question in silence, as always. Please continue, Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Will the Premier advise whether the members for Rockhampton and Keppel have lobbied her to build the full sized Rookwood Weir that Labor promised over a decade ago?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. When two parties put an equal amount of money on the table we can only build a dam to that amount. That is the way it works. I raised this issue—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, just listen. I raised this issue with the Prime Minister at a meeting that we had. I said to the Prime Minister, 'Is there any appetite for any more funding for Rookwood Weir, or is it just the \$176 million?' He said, 'Just the \$176 million.'

Mr Dick: That is what he said.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is it; there is no more.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: If there is an appetite for more money, we are happy to engage in that. However, I was told the door was shut; the door was closed.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left, I have given guidance previously. The Premier is being responsive to the question asked. You may not like the answer. I want to hear it and I ask you to cease your interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The reality is we have put money on the table, it is budgeted for, we put an expression of interest out and early works are starting on the road preparation, but we are yet to see one single dollar from the LNP. Where is the federal government's contribution? It is a bit like the NAIF fund and the Future Drought Fund; they have these bold assertions about trying to fix everything. Let me make this point: when the LNP was in government, how many dams did it build?

Ms Trad: Zero.

Ms PALASZCZUK: How many dams did the LNP build? Zero!

Honourable members interjected.

Ms Trad: They cancelled one.

Dr Lynham: They cancelled one.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They cancelled one.

Mr SPEAKER: The Premier has the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Not only is the LNP not building dams; they stop them as well.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under the standing orders. I have asked you twice to put your comments through the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: If the federal government is more than happy to put more money into the Rookwood dam, I am more than happy—

Opposition members: It's a weir.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Rookwood Weir. If they are more than happy to put extra money into the Rookwood Weir, I am more than happy to consider that. However, I will not delay this project. Under no circumstances—

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Glass House, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—will I delay this project. We are getting on with this job, we are getting the early works underway and we are committed to building the Rookwood Weir for the people of Rockhampton.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the next member, member for Maryborough and member for Caloundra, you are warned for the usual quarrelling across the chamber. If you wish to have a conversation, please take it outside.

Drought Support

Mr MADDEN: My question without notice is of the Premier and Minister for Trade. With 66 per cent of Queensland being drought declared, will the Premier provide an update on support available to drought-affected Queensland primary producers and councils?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Ipswich West for that question, because on this side of the House we actually care about our drought impacted communities. On Monday one of our first regional forums will take place at Longreach. Minister Furner, Minister Farmer and the member for Ipswich West will attend to make sure that we are continuing to listen and deliver for our communities. I can also remember that Minister Furner and I visited Ilfracombe and Longreach many times to meet with the mayor and talk about water infrastructure to ensure we are delivering for them. We did that with the additional bore that was put in there.

As we have said in this House before, since the drought started in 2013, \$740 million has been put into drought assistance by my government. There has been a \$194 million drought assistance package, we have money out there for the feral pest initiative and also, importantly, \$4 million for the Royal Flying Doctor Service to actually go and help—

Mr Mander interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am actually talking about how it is impacting the wellbeing of farmers, member for Everton, and we put money into mental health. That is why we have money for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Yes, we have put money into the feral pest initiative—\$20 million.

What is really interesting is that it is almost one year to the day that the Prime Minister convened a drought summit down in Canberra, and I attended that submit along with Minister Furner. I remember that the Prime Minister said that his No. 1 priority was going to be ensuring that drought-affected communities get the support they need. What has happened? We have a \$5 billion fund sitting there, but they say, 'Sorry, that is for infrastructure; that is not for the farmers.'

We know there is one person who is rattling the cage down there in Canberra about getting some more funding out, and that is Barnaby Joyce. He seems to be backing in my calls to get money out to the farmers. I understand from reports that the Nationals are demanding extra money to go into drought-affected communities. My question to those opposite is: has any member of the LNP put forward a proposition to the Prime Minister to get more money out to the farmers? Who has? Has the Leader of the Opposition raised it with the Prime Minister? Probably not! Perhaps there is an alternative reason, because the party was warned they could lose votes to Pauline Hanson's One Nation—

(Time expired)

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Southern Downs, you are warned under the standing orders. You will put your comments through the chair.

Queensland Rail

Mr MANDER: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. As a shareholding minister of Queensland Rail, will the Treasurer advise whether she is planning to approve payment of \$10.8 million in performance bonuses to Queensland Rail executives, as contained in the recent annual report, given that 472 services cut under Labor's rail fail were not finally restored until July 2019, six months after the Strachan report deadline?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Everton for the question. I can inform the House that Queensland Rail's remuneration practices are governed by the policy for government owned corporations' chief and senior executive arrangements. Queensland Rail's performance payments are determined annually and are approved by the Queensland Rail board. As has recently been publicised, no performance payments have been paid to Queensland Rail staff for the past two financial years, 2017-18 and 2016-17. Currently, no decision has been made regarding any performance payments for the 2018-19 financial year.

CleanCo

Ms BOYD: My question is of the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Will the Deputy Premier please advise the House what progress has been made in establishing CleanCo and what it means for affordable, reliable electricity?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Pine Rivers for the question. I understand how important renewable energy is to the member for Pine Rivers because it is not only a great source of clean energy but also a great jobs generator in our state. I am very pleased to announce to the House that as of next week CleanCo will start trading within the National Electricity Market. This is a fantastic milestone and it will be a critical and important part of Queensland achieving its 50 per cent renewable energy generation target by 2030.

I am also pleased to inform the House that the ANU released a report today into renewable energy in the national economy. It shows that, based on federal government projections, assumed solar and wind deployments almost stop in the 2020s. This would actually mean that by 2030 annual emissions would increase from current levels to more than 560 million tonnes in 2030. This is why it is so important to have a public company in the market, driving the investment and the build of renewable energy in our state.

I am also pleased to advise the House that since 2015 the proportion of Queensland renewable energy in the National Electricity Market increased from 4.3 per cent—that is what it was in 2015—to 16.6 per cent, increasing by over 10 per cent since the beginning of last year alone. By next year, it will hit 20 per cent. This is what happens when a government is committed to ensuring that we get renewables into our state economy. We are benefiting the national economy. I am very pleased that CleanCo will start trading in the National Electricity Market next week.

I am quite perplexed that the time I am on my feet answering a question is probably one of the opposition's most quiet periods. It might be because they have zero interest in renewable energy. Maybe the member for Kawana would be more interested if it were called 'QueenCo' and not CleanCo! Let me say that our policy settings and our investment in renewable energy are not only making sure that we provide clean energy into our state economy; they are creating jobs and pushing down prices on our power bills. We are doing it all while those opposite stay silent.

(Time expired)

Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries; Meramist Abattoir

Mr PERRETT: My question without notice is to the Premier. It was revealed yesterday that a vet employed by the federal department of agriculture had sent nine complaints to Minister Furner's department this year alone about the treatment of horses at Meramist but no action was taken in response. Will the Premier stand down Minister Furner and order the QRIC investigation to look into his apparent failure to respond to these multiple complaints and to determine how many other complaints he might have ignored?

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my right, this will be the last warning about questions. I ask you to stay silent during questions being asked.

Ms PALASZCZUK: On this side of the House we support the best agriculture minister there has been.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

An honourable member: Since Henry.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Since Henry! They are both the farmer's friend. There is no better advocate for agriculture, the impact of drought and animal welfare in Queensland than Minister Furner. I absolutely support the work that he is doing. As I said in this House, he is back out to Longreach—I do not know how many times—almost every month. Minister Furner has taken absolutely strong action when it comes to what we saw in relation to the 7.30 program. Let me remind those opposite that the abattoir is actually under the federal export power and is regulated—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: They do not like the facts. It is regulated by the federal government under the export power. Perhaps some questions need to be raised about what surveillance has been done by the federal government. As I said, Minister Furner and Minister Hinchliffe took absolutely strong action in relation to this issue. I hope the federal government takes action just as strong as this government.

TAFE

Mr BROWN: My question is of the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development. Will the minister update the House about the Queensland government's investment to support TAFE and advise whether there are any alternative approaches?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for Capalaba for his question and for his advocacy, particularly for the Alexandra Hills TAFE in his electorate. There is no bigger champion for reinvestment in the infrastructure at that campus after those opposite almost closed it. We see a huge enrolment—

Government members interjected.

Ms FENTIMAN: Absolutely; they almost closed it. There were no students and buildings were falling down, and this government has reinvested in it. There has been an increase in student enrolments of which I and, I know, the member for Capalaba are very proud.

Today the Premier announced our new Skills Boost initiative, which is all about giving Queenslanders the opportunity to upskill and get a new qualification in the industries where we know in the future there will be skills shortages. The cost of courses is going from thousands of dollars down to hundreds of dollars in key industries where we know we will need Queenslanders filling those jobs. In hospitality and travel we know that we will need an additional 20,000 workers in the next few years. I refer to agriculture and to rural operations at the Warwick campus. We are making it affordable for Queenslanders to upskill and get a great qualification. Of course, this comes on top of free TAFE for year 12 graduates and free apprenticeships and traineeships for under-21s, because we on this side of the House invest in our TAFEs and believe in training and the power of education to change people's lives.

On the other hand, of course, the federal government ripped \$3 billion from TAFE and training. Just this week we saw a report that says the federal government sat on \$1 billion in an underspend on training and TAFE. No wonder we see fewer apprentices across the country and a skills shortage. The federal government has sat on \$1 billion. That would mean \$180 million that could have come to Queensland. That is 18,000 apprentices that the federal government has absolutely failed. We could have so many more Queenslanders at TAFE getting an apprenticeship and getting ready to fill those jobs of the future, but the Morrison LNP government has sat on a \$1 billion underspend in vocational education and training. This comes on top of Senator Michaelia Cash's great idea that to get more apprentices they have to leave school at year 10. It is absolutely appalling. I urge those opposite to pick up their phones, talk to their mates in Canberra and ask the Prime Minister to start releasing funds, be it for TAFE and training or drought.

(Time expired)

Meramist Abattoir, Complaints

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question without notice is to the Minister for Environment. I refer to reports that the minister's department issued a breach notice to Meramist abattoir after receiving noise complaints, including about distressing sounds of animals. Will the minister explain what action she took to ensure the humane treatment of these animals, either in the two years since the complaints were lodged or in the three months since the warning issued from her department?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. Unfortunately, the member has got a few things around the wrong way. The department—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Broadwater!

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Broadwater, you are warned under the standing orders. You will direct your comments through the chair.

Ms ENOCH: The Department of Environment and Science has no legislative or statutory responsibility for monitoring or investigating the welfare of livestock. The complaint to which the member refers related only to general operating noise—not the sound of animals in distress. In fact, it was in

response to a report from a member of the public. Of course, the department issued a warning notice to the company as a result of the investigation that it made regarding the noise complaints—not of distressed animals but in fact noises such as operations that were happening in the evenings, including the sounds of gates.

Manufacturing Industry

Mrs MULLEN: My question is to the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning. I refer to the recent handover of the first Boxer combat vehicle, and I ask: can the minister update the—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Sorry, member. Member for Clayfield, you are warned under the standing orders. Please start your question again, member for Jordan.

Mrs MULLEN: I refer to the recent handover of the first Boxer combat vehicle, and I ask: can the minister update the House on the government's efforts to strengthen manufacturing and is the minister aware of any other approaches?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Jordan for her question and I am pleased to inform the House that the first Boxer combat reconnaissance vehicle has been handed over to the Australian Army by Rheinmetall Defence Australia. We are halfway through the construction of the Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence at Redbank, with an average of 300 tradies working on site, and Rheinmetall itself is on track to employ up to 200 Queensland staff by Christmas, so this is a great story about manufacturing and manufacturing jobs in our state. Those jobs would be in Victoria if the Palaszczuk government had not attracted Rheinmetall to Queensland.

I am asked by the honourable member of alternative approaches to manufacturing in Queensland. When the LNP was in power, it cut \$30 million from industry attraction funds and now it has a new plan—\$20 million for marketing instead of our \$46 million Made in Queensland program. Let me say this: Labor backs jobs; the LNP prints brochures. It is no wonder the Leader of the Opposition could not find the Rheinmetall factory. Remember when the opposition leader went to Wacol instead of Redbank? She did it again this week—opposing the Ethics Committee motion that she then voted for.

Even more confusing are the LNP attacks on manufacturing jobs. In April the Deputy Leader of the Opposition put out a media release thundering that we had lost 17,000 jobs. One month later he moved a motion but then the number was 18,000 jobs, but yesterday we had an opposition media release with a new number saying that we had lost only 14,000 jobs. The member for Whitsunday was better at numbers. He got two votes for deputy leader, but at least he was consistent. I table those media releases and the *Hansard* extract.

Tabled paper: Bundle of documents relating to the manufacturing sector [1944].

The LNP's approach as expounded by the member for Everton is selective, it is wrong and it is self-defeating because, if we were to apply the LNP's approach to the most recent manufacturing data, we would see that the ABS reports that there were 165,200 manufacturing jobs for August 2019, and I table that spreadsheet.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, depicting manufacturing employee figures [1945].

The LNP approach to those numbers shows that manufacturing jobs are 15,000 higher than six months ago and 9,000 higher than when Campbell Newman was in office. The LNP is fudging the numbers because it does not support Queensland manufacturers. The LNP is desperate to attack manufacturing in this state because manufacturing means full-time unionised industrial jobs, and it hates that the most. It did not say one word to support Rheinmetall, only after we got the contract. Only Labor and the Palaszczuk Labor government will back manufacturing in Queensland.

(Time expired)

Meramist Abattoir, Complaints

Mr MILLAR: My question is to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development. What action did the minister take to ensure animal welfare after he received nine complaints from a federal government vet about the treatment of animals at Meramist?

Mr FURNER: Everyone in this chamber should be appalled of that footage on the 7.30 program that was aired last Thursday, but to come in here and play politics on the treatment of animals and the welfare of those animals is abhorrent.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Minister, resume your seat. Member for Gregory, you are warned under the standing orders.

Mr FURNER: The Premier did the right thing with respect to this matter on Tuesday, the first sitting day of this week, by calling for an inquiry into not only the animal welfare of those horses but also the racing industry in respect of those horses that came from New South Wales under a failed scheme. Their rules and their processing should have protected those horses moving to an export facility that exports horse meat to locations around the world. It was a privilege to be with Minister Hinchliffe later on Tuesday afternoon with many representatives and stakeholders of the racing industry to commence that process of investigating this abhorrent act. I can inform the member for Lockyer that—and I will do this with respect to the comments made by the member for Gympie as well—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr FURNER: Sorry; the member for Gregory. He hardly asks a question, and that is why I very rarely get a chance to respond to him. It is good to hear a question for once on agriculture from the true shadow minister for agriculture.

As this is an ongoing investigation, I can advise the House that there were six horse related referrals in 2017 involving 16 horses, six of those in 2018 involving 12 horses and eight in 2019 involving 14 horses. There have been five cases in 2019, including the cattle case, relating to animals in poor condition considered unfit to load and three cases relating to animals suffering injuries either occurring during transit or prior to transit. Six cases have been investigated and have been finalised. Two cases are still under investigation and details of four of the cases were referred to interstate jurisdictions to follow up. Once again, to make sure that the chamber is aware of the complexity of this matter, as this is an export abattoir, this matter falls under the Commonwealth jurisdiction as well. That is why I wrote to the responsible minister on Tuesday asking for this matter to be on the agenda tomorrow at the Agmin portfolio meeting where every minister from the Commonwealth—

(Time expired)

Whitsundays, Tourism Infrastructure

Mr RUSSO: 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 government's strategy to grow the tourism industry in the Whitsundays by investing in new tourism infrastructure?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. He knows that we are absolutely committed to growing jobs right across the state of Queensland. We have just heard my colleague talk about the manufacturing jobs that we are creating in Queensland and I am very pleased to say that since the Palaszczuk government was elected we have gone from one in 12 Queenslanders being employed in the tourism industry to one in 10 Queenslanders being employed in the tourism industry. We have seen this industry grow by billions of dollars each year under our stewardship because we have invested and partnered with the private sector to create brand-new tourism experiences. Premier, we will have a lot of ribbons for you to cut next year right across Queensland's coastline.

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, member.

Ms JONES: Today I am very pleased to announce that through our partnership with Cruise Whitsundays to build an \$8 million pontoon we expect to see an extra 60,000 visitors to this tourism mecca of our state. We expect that just through this single project we will see an additional \$23 million spent in local businesses and in that local economy. This is funded through our record investment in tourism infrastructure. We are the first state government to create the Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund where we do fifty-fifty partnering with the private sector to bring forward development. The tourism industry knows that we have its back, and that is why I am so pleased to say that it is only two weeks until we have our major DestinationQ conference on the Sunshine Coast. Already we have seen registrations of up to 700 members from our tourism industry right across Queensland's coastline.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Ms JONES: It is wonderful to see the member for Whitsunday in the chamber and I am sure he would back this project in the Whitsundays, but I hope he does better than his footy tipping, because it wasn't too flash!

Mr Dick: Nor was his membership of the LNP.

Ms JONES: No, they did not want him there either, but they take his vote. Every division they take his vote. They say, 'We're standing up. We're going to kick the member for Whitsunday out of our party, but we'll take his vote every single time.' Yes, that is the kind of—you cannot say 'backbone', you cannot say 'spine'—

Mr Dick: Leadership.

Ms JONES: Yes, that is the kind of leadership that we have seen from those opposite. They stand for nothing. This week we have highlighted their absolute hypocrisy when it comes to the drought-declared areas of Queensland. They want to talk it up here and in their constituencies, but when it comes to doing something they have failed miserably in saying to the Prime Minister, 'It is not good enough to put \$5 billion in a future fund that doesn't even materialise until 2028-29.' In fact, not one dollar will be drawn down before July.

If there is one piece of advice that I have for the Leader of the Opposition it is to listen to the government. We have told her what to do. Go away and make representations to your Prime Minister—

Mr SPEAKER: No, through the chair—

Ms JONES:—to your leader on behalf of Queensland farmers.

Callide B Power Station

Mr HART: My question without notice is to the Premier. The Minister for Energy has recently announced that the Callide B power station would be closed in 2028—10 years early. However, three days later the assistant treasurer and member for Gladstone told his local media that no decision had been made. Will the Premier tell the House: is the minister correct or is Deputy Premier Trad's assistant correct?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let me start from the beginning. The reason we can talk about electricity assets in this state is that we own them. We would not be able to answer this question if the LNP were in power, because they would have been sold. Do members opposite remember their asset sales? It was called Strong Choices.

Mr Boothman: Who sold Queensland Motorways?

Ms PALASZCZUK: What was that?

Mr Mander: Who sold Queensland Motorways?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let me be clear. Recently there have been some incomplete media reports relating to Callide B. Adding to the confusion has been misleading comments from figures such as the federal energy minister, Angus Taylor, and state LNP shadow minister, Michael Hart, the member for Burleigh. To clarify, due to recent federal regulation changes, all owners of power stations are now required to report to the Australian Energy Market Operator with the life expectancy of coal-fired power stations within the NEM. The AEMO has previously used the typical technical life of generators. This suggested Callide B in 2038, based on a 50-year assumed life of a coal-fired power station.

Let me say this very clearly. In Queensland, we are energy rich. In Queensland we have the most efficient coal-fired power stations. We have gas. We are releasing more gas into the market to power our manufacturing industry in this state. We are committed to renewable energy. As I said in this House previously, we are at about seven per cent renewable energy, which will go up to 21 per cent by 2020. We are absolutely committed to our 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030.

There is no energy plan—sorry, there is an energy plan on the other side of the House, and that is to sell.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I note that the member for Kawana is interjecting. There is not long to wait now for the member for Kawana—17 November, I think—for the next season of *The Crown*. Let me say very clearly that, on this side of the House, we will keep our energy assets in public ownership. The members on the LNP side of the House will sell our energy assets.

(Time expired)

Education

Mrs McMAHON: My question is to the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the minister advise how the Palaszczuk government has restored frontline services in education and is she aware of any alternatives?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Macalister for the question. She knows that quality teachers in front of classrooms in her electorate are delivering growth in our schools and in our students. That is what having quality teachers in the classroom is all about.

Since the government was elected in 2015, we have put on 4,800 full-time equivalent teachers and more than 1,400 teacher aides. We know that education is a labour-intensive industry and that you cannot teach without having teachers in front of the classroom and that class size matters. We need to ensure that we have the teacher aides and the teachers there—fully committed, fully trained and well supported. That is exactly what is being done under this Labor government.

We also have a new classification for teachers. They can become high achieving and lead teachers. It is now in their industrial agreement that they can stay in the classroom and be rewarded for the excellent work that they do in front of our kids day in, day out.

As I said, teaching is a highly rewarding career. We are proud of many of our loved ones and family members who are teachers. For example, the Premier has two sisters who are teachers—although they get into her about the quality of education. The Premier loves hearing from them and they love teaching. I am the same with my sister and with my in-laws. It is wonderful to hear from them, because all they ever want is to have the best for their students. That is what all teachers want.

In 2013, we restored teacher numbers. When Campbell Newman was premier and the Leader of the Opposition sat around the CBRC table we saw the biggest growth in school enrolment numbers, with an additional 9,700 children signing up to attend Queensland state schools. But what did they do to employ the extra teachers who were required? I talked about mathematical equations before. I will refer to that again. Obviously, they did not listen to their maths teachers. The Palaszczuk government's equation was: in 2019, 1,000 extra new teachers, 200 new teacher aides, which equals a great start for our students. The LNP's equation was: 9,700 students multiplied by zero teachers hired—not one extra teacher in 2013. That equals zero. That is what they get for their maths test. When it comes to teachers in schools, that is their mark—a big fat zero. We are the ones who restored frontline services. We are the ones who love teachers.

(Time expired)

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Access

Mr BERKMAN: My question is to the Premier. Plenty of regular Queenslanders would be very interested in a 10-minute face-to-face meeting with a minister but, unlike the 168 lobbyists, banks and mining companies that had cash-for-access meetings this year, they cannot afford the \$5,500 price tag. Will the government ban cash-for-access meetings so that neither Labor nor the LNP can sell access to powerful decision-makers?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I reject the premise of the member for Maiwar's question, because I meet with Queenslanders every day. I am out there talking to Queenslanders every single day. I will continue to do that and my government will continue to do that, because we listen and we deliver.

A government member: How did she meet Allan Allaway?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Exactly! I take that interjection. Members only had to listen to my ministerial statement today to hear about a 20-year journey—of meeting someone 20 years ago and finally, as Premier of this state, being able to do something about it. That is what Labor governments do. When it comes to opportunity and the most vulnerable in our society, we treat people equally.

I once again remind the member for Maiwar, because he was not here, that the first piece of legislation that this government introduced into this House was to lower the donation threshold from \$12,400 down to \$1,000. If we had not done that, that threshold would have been \$14,000 today. That is the commitment that we made. I am very proud of that first piece of legislation that we introduced into this House. Secondly, we introduced real-time disclosure. I note that some other jurisdictions are following that. When it comes to reforms, openness and transparency, when it comes to issues such as donations, that is exactly what we are doing. Of course, those reforms are on the Electoral Commission website for all to see.

That is unlike those opposite where we have seen from them in total three High Court cases challenging our laws, and I would like to know the cost of that. Our laws are robust. We have banned property developers from donating. We have made that the same for the state government and councils. That is absolutely our commitment to the people of this state.

Regional Queensland, Jobs

Mrs GILBERT: 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 regional Queensland and is the minister aware of any other approaches?

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for Mackay for the question because she knows that it is this side of the House whose No. 1 priority is growing jobs in regional Queensland, not cutting them. In fact, it is this side of the House that is rebuilding Queensland after those opposite spent three years smashing it. It has been this Palaszczuk government that has delivered 226,000 jobs for Queenslanders: 26,000 of those in construction with projects like the Mackay ring-road being delivered by the Minister for Main Roads creating 1,600 jobs; in Rockhampton the Minister for Police's new correctional centre delivering 795 jobs for tradies; the Minister for Health's hospital in Roma creating 353 jobs for regional construction workers; and, in State Education Week, the Minister for Education's new Calliope secondary school creating 180 jobs for Queensland tradies.

Today I can make an important announcement: job ads are now open for another critical Queensland construction workforce—a team of dedicated tradies. This dedicated team will deploy anywhere in the state to build community infrastructure and rebuild after natural disaster strikes. I can announce today the job ads are out for our first intake of QBuild tradies and apprentices—ads for painters, carpenters, fridges, electricians and plumbers. The first tranche of apprentices will start in February, not long after the first tranche of tradies commence in January. It is only Labor and this Premier that is committed to rebuilding QBuild after those opposite cut the jobs of 1,654 QBuild workers across the state. As the Premier said, rebuilding QBuild is a landmark decision, one that sets us apart from the Liberal National Party in Queensland. The Premier is right: it is this Labor government that is advertising for jobs for regional Queenslanders to build our state.

Let us contrast that with the ads that appeared in local papers under those opposite when they were in power: \$70 billion of taxpayer funded ads used to flog their campaign of Strong Choices while they told taxpayers to tighten their belts. Queenslanders will not forget about the ads they ran while they cut their jobs: 1,654 QBuild jobs and nearly 4½ thousand jobs in our hospitals. One only needs to look at the ads that those opposite are running today—you can join, you can volunteer and donate. You can join and become a leader of the LNP. Well, that is great, because they need some leaders on that side of the House. You can volunteer and sell their message. You can go out and tell everyone how they are going to cut, sack and sell if they are elected, and you can donate. It does not matter if you are a developer. You can send your money down to one of the southern states. They will route it through the back door. She'll be right.

Small Business, On-Time Payment Policy

Ms SIMPSON: My question without notice is to the Minister for Employment and Small Business. I refer the minister to the exemption of all Queensland hospital and health services from the government's on-time payment policy and I quote—

Hospital and health services to be included after the automated accounts payable system goes live.

With Queensland Health's S/4HANA system live as of 1 August 2019, will the minister now guarantee that she will ensure that all small business suppliers of Queensland Health are paid on time or receive penalty interest?

Ms FENTIMAN: I am happy to get back to the member about that issue, but what I will say about payments to small business is that as the small business minister I am incredibly proud of our procurement commitment for small business—

Mr Molhoek interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Southport is warned under the standing orders.

Ms FENTIMAN:—moving to 20-day payment terms for small business.

Mr Mander: That was our policy!

Ms FENTIMAN: Well, you didn't do it when you were in government! Let us look at your record on small business.

Mr SPEAKER: You will put your comments through the chair, Minister.

Ms FENTIMAN: Let us have a look at the LNP's record when they were in government. They absolutely cut the Small Business Commissioner, an office that had just been established, that had been advocated for by small businesses. They slashed the Small Business Commissioner—absolutely shameful.

Ms Trad: They made promises about payroll tax they never kept.

Ms FENTIMAN: Absolutely! They promised small businesses they would do so much on payroll tax relief. This government, in this year's budget, delivered an \$885 million small business package. As I travelled the length and breadth of Queensland talking to small businesses they were so relieved that something had finally been done on payroll tax after another broken promise from those opposite.

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I refer to relevance under the standing orders and for the minister to answer the question or take it on notice so we get a fulsome answer to the question.

Mr SPEAKER: I understand your point of order. Minister, will you be taking this on notice under standing order 113?

Ms FENTIMAN: Yes.

Mr SPEAKER: Do you have anything related to the question directly asked?

Ms FENTIMAN: The question was about the on-time payment policy. It was a comprehensive question. I am giving a comprehensive answer. It was about on-time payments to small businesses and I am talking about—

Mr SPEAKER: I am asking you to come back to the question as asked.

Ms FENTIMAN: This is a government that has not just promised paying small businesses on time and putting in place procurement policies to make sure they get a bigger spend of government contracts. Those opposite made all sorts of promises to small businesses.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Everton, the minister is being responsive to the question asked.

Ms FENTIMAN: They cut the Small Business Commissioner. We have brought back the Small Business Champion. I would put this government's record on small business against that of those opposite any day of the week.

Rookwood Weir

Mr O'ROURKE: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. Will the minister advise the House how the Palaszczuk government is progressing construction of Rookwood Weir?

Dr LYNHAM: Yes!

Opposition members interjected.

Dr LYNHAM: I wish I had 10 minutes to speak about dams in Queensland. Responsible decision-making is a hallmark of the Palaszczuk government. We apply here the principles laid down in the National Water Initiative. I quote for those opposite: water infrastructure proposals are assessed 'as economically viable and ecologically sustainable' before any money leaves the till. This was agreed to by all Australian governments under John Howard. I point this principle out to those opposite for the next time they promise another dam in yet another marginal electorate. Having done the groundwork, the Palaszczuk government is building Rookwood—solid, sound infrastructure. The project will provide water security and prosperity for Central Queensland. That is why we put money where our mouth is. When it comes to the Commonwealth, when it comes to the Prime Minister, when it comes to the member for Capricornia, talk is all they are good for—just talk.

In August the Premier wrote to the Prime Minister confirming the decision. In the letter the Premier states the intention is to proceed with this '\$352 million project on the basis of your advice that the Commonwealth will not be providing additional funds.' The Prime Minister replied, in part, 'I thank you for your support for water infrastructure projects, in particular for your commitments to deliver Rookwood ...' There is no extra money coming from the federal government.

While the member for Capricornia's boss is tilting at mythical dams she is undermining the only real one he has. The only dam that is on the table is Rookwood and the member for Capricornia is undermining it every chance she gets. I can tell members that while she is bagging the project her constituents are all over it. Yesterday more than 80 Central Queensland businesses rocked up in Rocky to hear from the project team. More than 100 local businesses have registered to build Rookwood. Yesterday they heard about the opportunities ahead for their businesses, the kinds of jobs to be generated and how to get involved. While the member for Capricornia hates the project, the member

for Rockhampton, the member for Keppel and the member for Gladstone are rolling up their sleeves, making sure that locals are making the most of the opportunities available in this weir. We are not whingeing and whining like the member for Capricornia; we are building Rookwood.

Paradise Dam

Mr BATT: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources. Yesterday the minister said that he had instructed numerous experts to review SunWater's reports that the government relied on to make the decision to reduce the Paradise Dam spillway by five metres. Will the minister commit to delaying any permanent action to reduce the capacity of Paradise Dam until after the experts' findings are received and published?

Dr LYNHAM: I thank the member for the question. The most important thing is that the Palaszczuk government always puts community safety first. That is absolutely paramount. I know that the member for Burnett was mentioning things about building dams and said that no dam could possibly be built unless we lowered safety standards. That is not the way of the Palaszczuk government. Community safety always comes first.

Mr BENNETT: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at those comments. They are not true and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, the member has taken personal offence. Will you withdraw?

Dr LYNHAM: I withdraw. As I said before, community safety comes first. The mayor of Bundaberg realises that fact. He has said that we must ensure that we understand the risk to homes and livelihoods and the adequacy of the current safety arrangements. He agrees with that. He has also said that the dam operators are doing the right thing by prioritising safety. The mayor acknowledges that public safety is paramount when it comes to this dam.

As I said before, under current weather forecasts Paradise Dam is safe. We are making sure that the community is prepared for any event that could possibly come. We know that with climate change any cyclonic events are possible throughout Queensland and we are making sure that the community is prepared.

I acted immediately on advice from the technical experts at SunWater. They advised me that the action that needed to be taken was to lower dam capacity to 42 per cent and also to lower the spillway by five metres. I acted on that advice. There was a technical review panel and at the present time an overseas expert from the United States is reviewing SunWater's findings. We will have that proposal. The Inspector-General Emergency Management reports to Building Queensland, as well.

As I said yesterday, it takes time for technical experts to get all the available information and, once that information is available, I am sure that it will be passed on to the people of the community. We can all rest assured that the Palaszczuk government will always put community safety first.

Shark Control Program

Mrs LAUGA: My question is to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries. Will the minister provide an update on support for Queensland's longstanding Shark Control Program and whether there are any alternative views?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for her question. Every member in this House will realise that the Queensland Shark Control Program enjoyed bipartisan support for 57 years. That is little wonder when we consider the program's enviable record. Under the Shark Control Program only one fatality has occurred and there have been none in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. However, the program has come under attack by the Humane Society International, supported by the New South Wales taxpayer-funded Environmental Defenders Office, taking action in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to turn the program into a catch-and-release program in the Great Barrier Reef. We appealed that decision, but unfortunately we were unsuccessful. However, because we cannot safely meet the new permit conditions we have been forced to remove the drum lines from 27 beaches.


The Palaszczuk government stands by the Shark Control Program. We have called upon the federal government to pass legislation to allow it back into the federal marine park. It seems that the only park those opposite are interested in is Luna Park. During the Sydney trip that they were involved in, they missed the opportunity to have some cocktails with the Environmental Defenders Office and the HSI. Maybe they should have been sipping cocktails—whether it was Sex on the Beach or whatever cocktails they were drinking—with the HSI and the Environmental Defenders Office, but they missed that opportunity.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I appreciate the name of the cocktail concerned, but I would like you to bring the language back to parliamentary.

Mr FURNER: We have since released that report, which shows conclusively that the catch-and-release program cannot work in the marine park. Members opposite have doubled down on supporting the position of the Humane Society International.

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.14 am): Mr Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. In response to a question without notice, the Minister for Manufacturing stated that the LNP's manufacturing policy would see less investment in supporting Queensland's manufacturing industry. I have made statements in this House that clearly explain the LNP policy will see additional investment. I believe—

Mr SPEAKER: Member, what is your matter of privilege?

Mr POWELL: I believe that the minister has deliberately misled the House and I will be writing to you about this matter.

Ms Trad interjected.


Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Deputy Premier. The Deputy Premier will cease her interjections.

SUMMARY OFFENCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 23 October (see p. 3605), on motion of Mr Ryan—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.15 am): I rise to speak in support of this important bill. The member for Maiwar thinks we have gone too far. Members of the LNP complain that we do not go far enough; that we need laws that curtail any protest activity that causes mass disruption. I believe that that means we have found the sensible middle in this debate. These new laws strike the appropriate balance between the rights of our citizens to peacefully protest and have a voice, and the rights of our emergency services personnel and members of the general community to be safe.

As a government, we recognise that the right to speak out and the right to voice discontent are an integral part of the democratic process. Many have accused the government of trying to stop protesting, but that could not be further from the truth. I support peaceful protest. I protested against the Bjelke-Petersen government back in the 1980s. I believe in the fundamental democratic right to protest in this state. Since the election of the Goss government, we have had laws that allow lawful protest and, in the vast majority of cases, those laws are complied with.

However, what we will not tolerate is when protest activity puts our emergency services personnel at risk and disrupts the community to such an extent that people's lives are at risk. As I have said before, these laws are a measured and proportionate response to those people who have gone too far. These laws target the actions of those extremists who put at risk not just themselves but also the lives of other Queenslanders.

Recently we have witnessed the emergence of a small cohort that flagrantly abuses the law and shows a complete disregard for others in our community. My government does not and never will support those kinds of dangerous activities, extremist behaviours and the use of dangerous attachment devices that disrupt and endanger the lives of hardworking people across our state. The devices have the potential to injure not just the protester but also the emergency services personnel who sometimes spend hours attempting to remove the devices to make sure that the person is safe. That is where we draw the line.

When those devices are reinforced with metal, wire or glass—fragments that can become projectiles—they can injure police, emergency services workers or members of our community. It is only those dangerous attachment devices that we are targeting. I am very concerned that those

dangerous attachment devices will curtail our ambulance officers' free movement to attend to the sick or injured, our fire officers' availability to attend to fires, and our Police Service's ability to immediately respond to calls for service.

The laws proposed in this bill will be a critical tool for our Police Service to deal with those dangerous devices. Importantly, the bill contains provisions that enable a police officer to search a person without a warrant if they have formed a reasonable suspicion that the person has a dangerous attachment device that has been used or is to be used to disrupt a relevant lawful activity. A police officer can also search a vehicle if they form the same reasonable suspicion. That means that if police see a vehicle heading along the road into the CBD with a dangerous attachment device, such as a sleeping dragon or a dragon's den, they can confiscate that device to prevent it from being used. That is important, because it can prevent harm from occurring.

If a dangerous device is found on a person or in their vehicle, the device can be deactivated or disassembled, seized and disposed of as considered reasonably necessary. The usual safeguards apply to the search and seizure powers being given to police, regarding the manner in which the searches are conducted, as well as the record-keeping requirements of the searches. The police minister has told the parliament that he will be providing a report to parliament no more than 10 sitting days after 1 July each year, which details how those powers have been used. Any complaints about the use of those powers can also be referred to the CCC or the police Ethical Standards Command.

However, let me make this very clear: my government is completely committed to peaceful protest and to other fundamental rights such as the freedom of expression, the right to peacefully assemble and the right of freedom of association. These rights are fundamental to the functioning of our democracy and are universally held as central pillars of our society. The right for every individual to peacefully protest is the defining characteristic of a democratic society.

Protest movements have been behind some of the greatest progressive changes our society has witnessed and improved the lives of millions—be it universal suffrage, improving the conditions of working people, stopping the damming of the Gordon below Franklin or for civil rights and equality of all Queenslanders in this state. The importance of these values to Queenslanders is evident in the more than 200 submissions made by individuals and stakeholders to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee in its examination of the bill. A common theme underlying all of these submissions was the importance of this right and its value to our community.

This is something Queensland Labor governments strongly believe in. Labor has consistently been at the forefront of defending the importance of our right to protest. It was a Labor government that enacted the Peaceful Assembly Act and it was a Labor government that enacted the Human Rights Act. Both of these acts enshrine a person's right to peacefully assemble and have a voice in the important debates of our time.

It was a Labor government Speaker who established Speakers Corner right outside this parliament in 2010 to allow any Queenslander the right to be heard any day of the year. Most members on this side of the House will have participated in lawful protests from the time of the Bjelke-Petersen government until now. The Newman government reminded us that we cannot take that right for granted. In fact, after not having protested for many years, many of us were reunited on the streets and at Speakers Corner to protest against the actions of the LNP government. These principles underpin the values of my government and the Labor movement and are something not changed with the passage of this bill.

The vast majority of protesters do the right thing and protest peacefully, lawfully and with respect for their fellow Queenslanders and for the law. This bill is definitely not about them. This bill is not about a particular issue or a particular cause. This bill is about ensuring the safety of all Queenslanders—our first responders, protesters and everyone else who potentially could be impacted and harmed. I hope the laws contained in this bill will encourage those who wish to protest their cause to realise that the best and most effective way is to do so peacefully and respectfully and that the way to win over the hearts and minds of fellow Queenslanders is through positive messages and positive actions and not through dangerous and extremist tactics.

I want to share a letter received from a Brisbane woman whose trip home was delayed by a recent protest. Although the extra hour she spent at the bus stop was only a small inconvenience for her, it was not so small for a lady waiting with her. She was trying to reach her son who had hurt his shoulder at school and needed to see a doctor. There was another case of a woman who needed to give her housebound husband his medication.

The laws the parliament is voting on do not in any way stop anyone's right to protest. They give police the powers to stop drums filled with concrete and metal fragments from reaching a road or railway line. They are specific and limited to dangerous devices only. They are meant to stop people getting hurt. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): Before I call the member for Maroochydore, I am going to go through those members warned under the standing orders. The warnings will apply til one o'clock. The members warned are the members for Nanango, Glass House, Maryborough, Caloundra, Southern Downs, Broadwater, Clayfield, Gregory and Southport.

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (11.23 am): The LNP supports people's right to protest, but not at the expense of other people's safety and other people's right to go about their business. Small businesses should not be blockaded and lose their day's trade and have jobs being compromised. The protesting should not impact the right of people to pick up their children from school and the right of people to attend hospital appointments without having the road on the way to the hospital blocked. The recent protesting has caused not just discomfort but a lot of distress to those impacted by others exercising their right to protest in a way that diminished the rights of others.

The LNP believes that the state Labor government's legislation before the House has some weak points that are, unfortunately, setting it up to fail. This is such an important issue. We have spoken in this House about making sure that, while respecting the right of people to protest, the rights of other Queenslanders who are trying to move around safely are not diminished and subjugated by those with the loudest voice.

I acknowledge the contribution of my colleague the member for Toowoomba North. I table a copy of the explanatory notes to the state opposition's amendments that he will seek to move in this debate as long as there is sufficient time given the gag orders in place around legislation in this parliament.

Tabled paper: Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, explanatory notes to Mr Trevor Watts's amendments [1946].

I also table notes from my colleague explaining those amendments.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, regarding LNP proposed amendments to the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 [1947].

The reason the state LNP believes this legislation does not go far enough is we have seen this government's habit of being weak with regard to crime and being weak with regard to the need of ordinary, everyday Queenslanders to have their voices heard and their right to safely go about their business supported and not blockaded. The provisions in the LNP's amendments that will be moved by my colleague the member for Toowoomba North are balanced and appropriate but seek to address the weaknesses in the state Labor government's bill.

There have been people trying to justify these blockades and lock-on devices. Unfortunately, they have missed the point. The reason there has been growing concern and dismay from the broader community is that there are people who believe in the cause they are championing but not in the methods they are using.


We need to cherish and respect the right to free speech and the right to protest safely and peacefully in this state. The issue that has to be clearly understood about the legislation before the House and the amendments that the state opposition is proposing is that there have been some dangerous and reckless acts during recent protests. If people try to justify this only on the basis of the right to protest and forget about the rights of other people then someone is going to get hurt. There is the potential for great danger when we have people locking and gluing themselves to things and blockading roads and railway lines and potentially other services.

Let us champion people's right to have a say about a diverse range of issues and not have them shut down by the loudest voices. Everyone has the right to a say in the public square, but not the right to compromise the safety of other people. The blockading of streets has unfortunately been seen by some as a trivial issue, but it is not. It does not take much in those situations for things to go south and go bad very quickly.

I am also concerned that some of these beautiful young people who have been in these public spaces have potentially been exposed to safety issues because our roadways and railway lines are not designed to have people locked onto them. That concerns me. There are a lot of beautiful young people with a passion and belief in a number of issues, particularly climate change. We have to respect their right to have a voice on these issues and we have to listen. There has to be two-way dialogue. The vast array of concerns has to be heard and understood and there has to be respectful dialogue in that space.

We cannot have people putting others in danger by blockading streets and locking themselves to railway lines. There will be injuries. There will not just be the inconvenience of people being a little late home but there will be other knock-on impacts which could potentially be fatal or tragic. That is why I support the amendments that my colleague the member for Toowoomba North has put forward.

The state government, slow as they were to act, has once again come to the table with amendments to their legislation which are weak. I am calling on the state Labor government to support the LNP's amendments that have been put forward by the member for Toowoomba North because they are needed, and we want to ensure that in a free democracy the citizens who are not out there locking themselves to the street are also heard and respected, to ensure that their rights are upheld. We need to understand that, as more and more resources of our emergency services personnel are poured into addressing some of these illegal protests, they are being diverted away from people who have the right to be safe and the right to have access to emergency services. I call on the government to support the LNP's amendments, and I endorse those put forward by my colleague and member for Toowoomba North, Trevor Watts.

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (11.30 am): I rise to support the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. The last few years has seen a need to increase the actions governments can use to ensure that the day-to-day lives of Queenslanders can continue uninterrupted and unharassed, whilst supporting the ability to protest. I have taken part in many protests over many years of my life and in different careers. In my portfolio I have seen protests from farmers and fishers. The LNP's own Green Shirts Movement has also protested.

We on this side have no problem with the right to protest, and that has been well indicated by every speaker in this place. Protesting is a fundamental right to hold governments and oppositions to account. Protesters should try to convey their message and bring public support. When you reflect back to the era of September 1977, the then premier had proclaimed—

The day of the political street march is over. Anybody who holds a street march, spontaneous or otherwise, will know they're acting illegally. Don't bother applying for a march permit. You won't get one. That's government policy now.

This proclamation was echoed by the acting police commissioner as well and was police policy until April 1978. Brisbane police prohibited most political street marches until August 1979.

I was one of those protesters in front of City Hall protesting for the fundamental right to protest legally. That right, under the National Party government, was stolen from every Queensland. In fact, one of my first employers when I entered the Transport Workers' Union as an official was the then secretary, Allan McPaul, who fundamentally stood by his rights and taught me many principles in terms of standing up for your rights and the rights of other Queenslanders. When he refused to pay the fine for protesting, he was sent to Boggo Road for a period of 10 days—he felt that strongly about the right to protest in Queensland. The then Joh Bjelke-Petersen government, the National Party in this place, had brought in insidious, scurrilous acts to prevent protesting. What this bill is seeking to deliver today is nothing in comparison to that. This bill is not about limiting the fundamental right to protest but about stopping those who engage in these forms of activities.

The member for Maiwar's speech yesterday referred to the need to act on climate change and he said 'but the solutions are within reach'. The Greens talk about solutions when it comes to climate change, but they are never part of any solution. They are the party of talking and platitudes, but not solutions. In 2009, the Greens voted to kill off the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme bills. The Greens talk about climate but then vote against action.

I was a member of the Australian Senate when I saw the Greens sit with Tony Abbott's LNP and vote down climate change. On this bill the Greens try to link this government to the Joh Bjelke-Petersen government. I say to that member that I lived through those days of Joh. I know the struggles. I know the issues that we need to deliver on and I know that just laws will be delivered on this particular bill today. This is again the Greens celebrating purity and inaction and celebrating attacks on Labor without fact.

I place on the record that I support action on climate change. The Labor Party does as well. We need the public to join us on this journey of change and not to be confronted by protests that push potential supporters away through the use of devices and tactics that offend and do not educate.


In a previous life I was an industrial officer with the Queensland Police Union. During that time, like any official, the safety of workers was paramount. I recall that one of my first duties was to run a dispute in the Industrial Relations Commission of Queensland after members had raised an issue with

me about the then ID badges with pins on them puncturing their chests, both male and female, as a result of engagement in marches on that occasion. That was rectified and changed to what we see our honest, hardworking members of our Queensland Police Service now wear on their uniform.

The bill before the House enables a police officer to search a person or vehicle reasonably suspected of carrying a dangerous attachment device. While it will not be an offence to possess a dangerous attachment device, police will have the capacity to seize a device prior to its use that would disrupt a lawful activity. Under this bill, police will be able to deactivate, disassemble, seize and dispose of anything that is a dangerous attachment device.

We on this side of the House act, and act quickly, but within the rule of law and with due regard to parliament. Earlier this year, in my portfolio, we as a government amended the regulations under the Biosecurity Act to allow Queensland Police Service and biosecurity officers to immediately fine people who put on-farm biosecurity at risk. We acted, and acted quickly, and broadly industry was supportive of the quick response. Since that change to the regulations there has not been one incursion under the act or the regulations that we amended.

It is always unfortunate when, like the Greens, an organisation is quick to criticise action which is quick, good and works but is not perfect in their mind. Governments need to strike a balance, and this bill is fair in terms of what should be supported by everyone in this House.

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (11.37 am): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. This bill is the government's response to protesters who disregard the law and place our first responders and community safety at risk. It is a response which has been much hyped. We saw the *Courier-Mail* front-page headline of 'Straight to jail: Premier to fast-track protester laws', which was frankly nothing short of a joke.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition described the government's approach yesterday as a misrepresentation, which it has been. On this issue, like so many others, Labor's approach has been to distort the facts and to vacillate, when all the public want and need is a strong response which addresses the core issues at hand. The public want a response that stops a small group of people who think they are above the law from engaging in a form of protest that is deliberately obstructive and designed to cause maximum disruption to the community as a whole.

Regardless of the legitimacy or otherwise of their arguments, the actions of Extinction Rebellion and the like do nothing to assist their cause. By diverting police resources and causing considerable disruption to ordinary Queenslanders, groups like Extinction Rebellion only serve to drive the majority of Queenslanders away from their cause. That some protesters are prepared to place our police and emergency services at risk through their actions illustrates how their self-righteous crusade is more about themselves than for the good of the majority of Queenslanders.

I support the right to lawful, peaceful protest, but with rights come responsibilities. Queenslanders should be able to stand up for issues that they believe in, but they should not place public safety at risk in doing so. When protesters do that, they should face the consequences of their actions.

This bill is an impotent response to an issue that threatens public safety and public order. What we have seen here is yet another piece of weak legislation that deals with only one of the tactics the protesters use. It is a piece of legislation that does nothing to address the chronic failure of Queensland's legal system, which should be holding recidivist offenders to account. It does nothing to target the organisers of these unlawful actions. It does nothing to ensure that Queenslanders are able to get to work and go about their business. It does nothing to stop serial protesters who flout bail conditions, and it does nothing to ensure that there are real consequences for those who break the law time and time again.


It is pretty clear that the community is getting increasingly frustrated at the actions of a few. Just last week we saw members of the public turn on Extinction Rebellion protesters who were seeking to disrupt rail commuters in London. Despite the fact that I disagree with the tactics used by protesters like Extinction Rebellion, I fear it is only a matter of time before a frustrated member of the Queensland public takes the law into their own hands with injury resulting to one of the protesters. It is the government's role to prevent exactly those circumstances from occurring.

I support the amendments proposed by the shadow minister for police. Those recidivist offenders who are convicted of multiple serious breaches of the law should be subject to mandatory jail time. The LNP's unlawful assembly offence would see repeat offenders penalised with a mandatory minimum custodial sentence of a week. Similarly, the LNP's proposed changes to the Bail Act would seek to

reverse the presumption of bail for offenders charged with unlawful assembly who commit an offence of a similar nature while on bail. The government's bill does not go far enough and will do nothing to stop the ongoing illegal actions of the protesters who have been plaguing Queensland streets.

As the member for Ipswich West stated in his contribution, this bill is 'very narrowly crafted' and specific. One might surmise that this weak response is due to the considerable division that exists within the government and the open dissent of their union masters. This divided and weak Labor government either cannot or will not take the necessary steps to protect public safety and deal with those who repeatedly disregard the law. I hold out hope that the government will support the LNP's amendments, which seek to do exactly what Labor have shown they cannot.

The public is sick and tired of the disruption caused by protesters repeatedly ignoring the law to further their own objectives. The actions of the few that place our emergency services and the public at risk are disrespectful and counterproductive. The time for government action has long passed. While the LNP will be supporting the measures proposed in this bill, more needs to be done. I call on Labor to listen to the voices of the quiet Queenslanders who just want to go about their business in peace. I ask Labor to support the amendments moved by the LNP.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (11.42 am): I rise to support the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In this House we often refer to our electorates. We all believe that our electorates are the best electorates in Queensland, but I can honestly say that members should not come in here and claim things that are incorrect: McConnel is actually the best electorate in Queensland! I am fortunate to have the CBD in my electorate, which is obviously where most protests are held. The CBD, which is geographically in McConnel, is where protests occur, and that is what normally happens in capital cities. They tend to use the centres of capital cities. I am very proud of Brisbane and very proud to be the member.

There is no doubt in my mind that the right to protest is sacred in any democracy. I adopt the previous words of the Premier, who spoke of the sensible middle ground we are adopting with this piece of legislation. We all know that peaceful protests are supported by both sides of the House, but it sends chills up my spine when I listen to the contributions of some of those opposite because they can never take the middle ground. They always go too far, and that is their problem. That is what we have seen under National governments in the past. To anyone who says our amendments are going back to the days of Bjelke-Petersen—I have had experience of those times—I can gladly say this is going nowhere near that.

It is the manner in which those opposite rise in this House and say, 'We're going to stop this! We're going to get tough!' I heard the member for Everton and the member for Buderim say, 'We're going to stop this!' If anybody in this House of all colours of government honestly thinks they are going to stop people protesting in relation to their legitimate concerns, they are kidding themselves. If they think that locking them up and throwing away the key is going to do that, they are kidding themselves. Yet they come in here talking tough as if they are the ones who are going to stop anybody out on the street, peaceful or not, protesting for what they believe is their cause.

There are many causes people protest that I agree with and support and there are many I do not, but I will rise in this House every day to defend their right to do so. Those opposite can never find the middle ground, and every Queenslanders should be afraid if they are ever elected again to this side of the House. They take extreme measures, as demonstrated by the speeches of various members. None more so than when I was in the House yesterday listening to the member for Everton say, 'You think you're tough on protesters? Well, we're even tougher! You can't stop it as a government. We're going to stop them!' These are absolutely ridiculous statements that hold no fundamental truth in a democracy. If those opposite stand up and say that and actually believe it, Queenslanders should be very afraid of them being elected ever again into government because they are not fit to govern!

Over the years important issues have been brought to the forefront of people's minds because of lawful protests, and there are many around the world at the moment. You may or may not agree with the protests that are happening in Hong Kong, London, Santiago and Paris over various domestic and international issues. As I said, I was around during the realm of the Bjelke-Petersen government. I think a few photographs of me were found in Special Branch files. That is what we get from those opposite; they are always extreme. Do you know why? It is in their DNA to stop people peacefully protesting and raising issues. Lord help us if they are ever again seated on this side of the House.

Technology changes and things change. When I started protesting there were no mobile phones. Nobody rang me to say, 'We're meeting over here.' It was all done in a different way. We now have mobile phones, smart watches and iPads. People communicate differently and they are very nimble.

This legislation reflects those kinds of tactics. The reason we are introducing this legislation is for the health and safety of our first responders and, as the Premier said, for free movement in emergency situations.

I have protested most of my life. I joined the tens of thousands of public servants who were out the front here when Campbell Newman was elected. He told public servants they had nothing to fear and then went about sacking 14,000 full-time-equivalent public servants. I was in that protest with tens of thousands of people and we disrupted traffic on that day. I was proud to be part of it. It was peaceful. Can I honestly say that I have never, in all the time I was out protesting, seen any of these devices being used. I have never seen one during my career, and I organised protests in the street as the leader of the union movement. I have never seen them in bitter industrial disputes.

What I have often seen is that we are passionate and temperatures rise in different situations, but we try to calm them down in a peaceful way. If we are overstretching it, you will often find that leaders calm it down and bring it to a good point. This is a nonviolent part of doing that, but I can honestly say in this House that I have never actually seen one of these devices in use during my time. I am very proud of my background. It is often thrown at me by those opposite. I will never, ever deny my union background and the pride that I have in being a union member and the first woman elected to lead the union movement in this state. We were the ones who marched against you guys when you came in and sacked 14,000 public servants.

We have them in here from time to time crying crocodile tears because someone is not here. They get up every day in this House wanting one of us on this side to be sacked. That is all they are good for—cutting, sacking and selling and always going too far. What I believe now is that when we hear those opposite speak it is always a race to the bottom.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms GRACE: You can try to drown me out. They are all boys over there at the moment, all men. You can try to drown me out if you want but you will not succeed. None of you—no matter how many men you have on that side of the House. It is a disgrace that there is not one woman on that side of the House at the moment. They want to do nothing more than drown me out because they do not like what they are hearing. Well, you are going to hear it, because we have had to sit here and listen to your extreme measures. I am sure that other members will get up in here and talk about how tough they are going to be and they will flex their muscles and say that they are going to stop this and stop that. The reality is that you are not going to be able to do it. The reality is that you should be careful what you ask for.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118 on relevance. What does this have to do with the bill?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): There is no point of order.


Ms GRACE: They do not like it. Now it is about relevance. We have heard some fairly irrelevant contributions from you lot during this debate, so just sit there and listen to it.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! We are getting too rowdy. Please put your comments through the chair. There will be no interjections designed to disrupt.

Ms GRACE: What I say often is to be careful what you ask for. If your amendments go through, you will have your own protest movements. Be careful what you ask for because it could come back to bite you. That is all I have to say in relation to this.

In relation to the opposition's amendments, I will gladly get up here and vote against them. This bill protects police, our emergency services workers, our transport workers and the people of Queensland by acting to prevent the use of these dangerous attachment devices—devices that I have not seen—and devices used in dangerous locations and situations, while ensuring our right to gather and protest peacefully is not compromised. I reject anyone who says we are going back to the Bjelke-Petersen days because it is not in our DNA—not as a Labor government, not as Labor Party members. It is not in our DNA; it is in the DNA of those opposite. I warn every Queenslanders: when they come back in, it is in their DNA and they will come back. Be careful what you ask for because you just might get it. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (11.53 am): I rise to address the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. Lawful protests are an integral part of any free and democratic society. I heard the comments from the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations, the

member for McConnel. It is absolute scaremongering and they are false and inaccurate comments when it comes to the Liberal National Party. They are absolutely false. The Liberal National Party has a very proud record of supporting lawful protests.

In recent times, we have seen the unions protesting out the front. They have been protesting against the Labor government, with debt reaching \$90 billion by 2022-23, seasonally adjusted unemployment at 6.5 per cent and 178,000 Queenslanders thrown on the scrap heap. That is why they are protesting against this government. The unions protest against this government because Labor on that side of the House is always one of debt, tax and unemployment. That is what we are seeing here in Queensland. That is why the Liberal National Party continues—

Ms Grace interjected.

Dr ROWAN: I hear the minister interjecting over there but that is why the—

Ms JONES: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. He is talking about taxes. We are talking about protests.

Dr ROWAN: I am talking about the unions protesting against—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): Order! I have a point of order in front of me here and I am making a ruling. I find that the member is sticking to the subject at this point, but I remind him to stick to the long title of the bill.

Dr ROWAN: That is why I was talking about protests, because the unions have been protesting out the front in relation to this government and this government's failure when it comes to debt, tax and unemployment here in Queensland. It is a significant issue, so the LNP has been watching with interest those protests which have been taking place more frequently and they will continue to take place. It is very relevant to allow them to have their free, democratic right to protest against this government, and I am sure that will continue to occur as we see debt spiralling out of control, the unemployment rate going higher and higher—it is 6.5 per cent seasonally adjusted, as I mentioned earlier—178,000 Queenslanders on the scrap heap, and this government having no plan in relation to that.

Australia's history is littered with famous and infamous protests and protest events which have gone on to define our nation and our nation's character. However, unfortunately, as we have seen in recent times in Queensland, the persistent actions of a small but defined protest group known as Extinction Rebellion have similarly marked a defining moment not only here in Queensland but also across Australia. Whilst lawful protests are an integral right within our democratic society, there are ultimately rules and laws that govern protests and large gatherings to ensure not only the safety of those involved within those protests but also the safety of the general public at large.

The fundamental right to protest must always be matched by equally fundamental mandatory responsibilities. Just because a particular individual or group has a grievance, it does not entitle such persons to fundamentally disrupt social cohesion, to disrupt and jeopardise the response times of our emergency services and to severely and adversely affect our economy. Nor does it entitle such persons to fundamentally disrupt ordinary citizens who wish to go about their daily lives. By their own actions, Extinction Rebellion and other associated persons have shown little regard or respect for the rule of law; therefore, it is incumbent upon the Queensland parliament to act.

The legislation before the House today as introduced by the Palaszczuk Labor government is limited in scope, particularly with respect to some of the actions we have seen in and around Brisbane's central business district. We have every right while we are debating this legislation to question the efficacy of these new laws and whether this legislation that the Palaszczuk Labor government has introduced will lessen the chaos and disruption that has impacted not only Brisbane but other parts of our state as well.

True to form, and as is the modus operandi of the Palaszczuk Labor government, the process that this legislation has undergone has been nothing short of a haphazard mess, marked by an eagerness to appear to be doing something whilst simultaneously abandoning any meaningful consultation. On 19 September, Labor introduced the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 with the intent to crack down on unlawful protesters who use dangerous attachment devices. The bill was referred to the Queensland parliament's Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for consideration, with a reporting date of 4 November 2019.

To the absolute surprise of no-one, Extinction Rebellion continued to ignore the rule of law and only increased its disruptive, dangerous and unlawful behaviour. On 9 October, after weeks of inaction and silence by the Palaszczuk state Labor government—a government which continued to sit idly whilst

hardworking Queenslanders and emergency services workers were left to deal with the chaos and disruption—Labor's Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services wrote to the committee advising of the intent to bring forward the reporting date to 21 October 2019.

As committee report No. 52 of the 56th Parliament makes clear, a number of stakeholders raised significant concerns surrounding not just the truncated time frame for reporting but the supposed consultation that had taken place with respect to the legislation. Section 1.4 of the committee's report is damning of the government's consultation. It states—

The explanatory notes provide that consultation was undertaken with the following external stakeholders:

- Queensland Council of Unions (QCU) and member Unions
- Queensland Council of Civil Liberties
- Queensland Law Society (QLS)
- Queensland Bar Association
- Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF)
- Queensland Resources Council (QRC).

However, no additional information was provided in the explanatory notes regarding the nature of this consultation.

A number of stakeholders raised concerns that they had not been consulted on the Bill as indicated.

It is simply not good enough for the government to include in the explanatory notes that they have consulted with a number of key stakeholders when it is so clearly not the case. Indeed, it is offensive to this parliament and our legislative process. However, with the Queensland parliament finding the Premier in contempt with respect to other matters, how can one be surprised given the integrity and accountability scandals that continue to engulf the failed Palaszczuk Labor government? The Australian Conservation Foundation said—

No written correspondence has been received from the Queensland Government, by ACF regarding the Bill, nor has there been any formal opportunity to offer feedback.

They further submitted—

At the very least we would expect to see a written summary of proposed laws and be given the opportunity to present considered formal feedback. Ad hoc phone conversations are not, in our view, formal consultation and should not be represented as such in Explanatory Notes to the legislation.

After this ultimately damning indictment by the Australian Conservation Foundation of the Labor government's shockingly poor consultation, they said—

We request that reference to ACF be removed from the Explanatory Notes.

The Queensland Resources Council stated during the public hearing that it had not received any written materials in advance of the introduction of the bill. As for the Queensland Law Society, it submitted that its consultation consisted of a series of conversations with senior police officers, one of whom showed some pictures of the devices that have been used.


It is clear that, having sat idly for so long, the rush by the state Labor government to appear to be doing something has resulted in legislation which, while seeking to deal with dangerous attachment devices and enhancing some police powers, ultimately remains limited in both its application and its ability to effectively crack down on extremist protesters such as Extinction Rebellion. Protesters who use these so-called lock-on devices are small in number and form, but these are one of the many disruptive and unlawful activities. When it comes to effectively targeting these extremist protesters, Labor is all talk and no real action. That is why the Liberal National Party, as foreshadowed, will be moving amendments to this bill and seeks to act where the Palaszczuk Labor government will not.

The amendments the LNP opposition will be moving will seek mandatory jail for the new unlawful assembly offence to ensure anyone convicted of multiple breaches of the new offence will face mandatory jail time. Secondly, the Liberal National Party opposition will be seeking to amend the legislation to impose tougher bail law changes to reverse the presumption of bail for offenders charged with unlawful assembly who commit an offence of a similar nature whilst on bail. These amendments are necessary because the Palaszczuk Labor government is simply too weak and too beholden to unions and other extremist groups to meaningfully act in the best interests of the majority of law-abiding citizens.

All Queenslanders and all Australians have a right to free speech, but no-one has the right to break the law. No-one—certainly not Extinction Rebellion—has the right to endanger our society, endanger our citizens or endanger and adversely impact our hardworking emergency services, their personnel and the critical care they provide. I would call on all members of the House, in particular the

members of the Palaszczuk Labor government, to support the Liberal National Party's sensible amendments which are to be moved by the shadow minister for police and corrective services, the member for Toowoomba North.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): There is too much chatter in the House. If members can take their conversations outside that would be helpful.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (12.02 pm): This bill introduces a range of measures to deter people from using dangerous attachment devices that endanger themselves, the emergency services workers and members of the public. It also assists police officers in minimising the disruption caused to the community through the employment of these devices. I believe this is fair enough, too. I do not believe that many people would dispute the right to protest. We protest with regard to fair workers' rights as well as farmers' rights. Most of us in this House would agree with that. The policy objectives of the bill—and this is mostly about the attachments used, including certain explosive attachments, in supposedly peaceful protests—state—

The Bill defines an attachment device to mean a device that reasonably appears to be constructed or modified to anchor a person at a place or to a thing so that the person can resist being safely removed or safely separated from the place or thing. To remove any doubt things such as glue or a bike lock are provided as examples of things that are not, by themselves, attachment devices.

The Bill provides a further definition of a dangerous attachment device to mean an attachment device that:

- reasonably appears to be constructed or modified to cause injury to any person if there is an attempt to interfere with the device;
- incorporates a dangerous substance or thing such as asbestos or poisons; or
- a 'sleeping dragon' ... or 'tripod'.


There is no doubt about it; this is worth supporting. However, we do have to be very careful that we do not go too far. I will quote from a paragraph of the explanatory notes which explains this. It says—

Protest activity has been used as a vehicle by many Australians to advocate for legal and social change. Peaceful assemblies allow interest groups to express their views to the wider public and, in particular, may allow the concerns of minorities to be voiced, heard and potentially acted upon. The right to peaceful assembly has been held as a defining characteristic of a democratic society as it encompasses a number of fundamental rights including the freedom of expression, the right of peaceful assembly and the freedom of association.

As I say, I do not believe that this bill impedes those rights. We also have to be careful that we do not go too far. In the past protesters have brought about changes in direction of the policy of government, and we are a democratic country. I remember that when the Bligh government was selling our profitable assets the CFMEU and the ETU were out protesting very strongly. Those assets should never have been sold. It was those protesters who reduced the Bligh government to seven seats. Then the Newman government came to power and wanted to sell the Townsville port and the electricity generators, and they lost 36 seats. Those protesters are about the people of Queensland talking. We should never impede those rights.

I can also recall the farmers protesting when the Bligh government introduced the ERMPs—the environmental risk management plans. They brought in a \$75,000 fine for people who did not fill out that form properly and a jail sentence for those who did not fill out the form. It was the protest that stormed the Premier's office in Townsville that caused the Bligh government to remove the ERMPs and those impediments for landowners.

I think this is good legislation. It is about protection—protection of our workforce, our police, our fireys, our public servants, the general public and even the protesters themselves. We do have to be careful that we do not go too far, otherwise we remove that democratic right to protest in this state.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (12.07 pm): This government will always support the right to protest. The government will always support the right of people to have their say. These are bedrock democratic principles of this government. Those defining principles of our democracy are eternal. Those rights have shaped our society for the better. Adherence to those principles has made us who we are today as a community, and they are shared values that bind our society together. We have other shared values—values like supporting the safety of all members of our community. That is what this bill is about. It is about supporting the safety of people in our community. It is about protecting the safety of our first responders. It is about protecting our police, our fireys and our ambos, and it is also about protecting protesters.


We have seen the use of dangerous attachment devices. These devices are designed in such a manner that their removal presents a significant risk. They pose a danger to our first responders and to protesters. When our emergency workers go to cut these devices, they have to use high-speed cutting equipment in close proximity to themselves and to the protesters who are attached to the device. It is

a situation that is fraught with the potential for serious injury. This bill will make it an offence to use one of these devices. The bill will also give police the power to seize these devices prior to their use. That is the intent—to stop the devices being used and thus to avoid the potential dangers to protesters and to first responders. This is the right and responsible thing to do.

As I said, this government will never do anything to interfere with the right to undertake peaceful, lawful protest. Once these laws are in place, the protests will continue. There will be just as many protests as there were before and, just as they do now, police will support the staging of protests. Only one thing will change: dangerous devices now will be targeted by these new laws with the aim of preventing potentially dangerous and harmful situations.

I know that first responders will appreciate this support. They do not like seeing protesters putting themselves at risk. It goes against everything our police, paramedics and firefighters stand for. Their job is about protecting the community. Their commitment is to keep people safe. Their dedication is to the welfare of others. Using high-speed cutting equipment in close proximity to a protester is something that they simply do not want to do—and nor should they. These dangerous attachment devices represent an unnecessary risk. In recent times, it has become increasingly clear that these devices are being used more and more. As the member for McConnel said, in the times I have been on protests this is something we had not seen before. The government is taking action.

This bill will support community safety. To be absolutely clear, this bill will have no effect whatsoever on the right to protest. Those protests will continue. That is a very good thing, but it would be grossly irresponsible for the government not to do what it can to protect those first responders who on a daily basis put themselves in harm's way for the benefit of others.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (12.11 pm): It is ironic that members opposite speak so much about the right to protest and that freedom should be preserved, because on the speaking list are a number of members not able to speak on this bill because of the routine gag motion in this House that restricts members' right to stand up for their communities, to have their say on bills like this and to move amendments in this House.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr KRAUSE: Members on the other side of the House should hang their heads in shame for being so hypocritical when it comes to freedom of speech in this House and to the right to protest.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Those on my right will cease interjecting. Member for Cairns, if you want to interject you need to be in your seat.

Mr KRAUSE: The opposition and the LNP will support this bill but also intend to move some amendments, because this bill is too restricted in application in terms of cracking down on extremist protesters from the Extinction Rebellion movement and whatever other movements follow. The Premier and other ministers put this bill out there as a big win to crack down on those protesters who caused so much havoc in the Brisbane CBD in the last few weeks.

The reality is that the government's bill is very limited. This is why the opposition will be moving two amendments: one to create a mandatory jail sentence for unlawful assembly to ensure that people convicted of multiple breaches of that offence face a mandatory jail sentence; and also tougher bail laws to reverse the presumption of bail where people are charged with unlawful assembly and commit a similar offence while on bail. It is plainly obvious that the government's laws do not go far enough in this regard, and that is why we will move these amendments. The government bill will not stop public disruption, events that stop traffic or people hanging from bridges unless that person is using a lock-on device. It is a very specific prohibition. Labor's laws will not apply unless that specific provision applies.

The problem is that at the moment there is no deterrent whatsoever for protesters. They can be arrested one day, taken to court, let out on bail and be protesting again the very next day. This is what the people of Queensland, particularly Brisbane, are sick of. There is no deterrent whatsoever. Protesters will not get any more deterrent from the laws being passed today by the government. We need to deal with the opposition's amendments. The government should support them, but even more broadly there needs to be a review of sentencing laws when it comes to these types of public order offences. Also, the judiciary needs to get the message that, when there are multiple offences of the one type, people need some type of deterrent imposed. People in my community say that these protesters are making a mockery of the courts, of the law and of the justice system in Queensland because they know they can and will get away with it time and again.

I compare it to the deterrents imposed on farmers in my electorate under workplace health and safety laws. There is a \$3,600 fine for not updating their chemicals register. It is outrageous that those who time and again disrupt the people of Brisbane do not get anywhere near the amount of penalty that farmers get for failing to update a register of dangerous chemicals. Recently, the Deputy Premier failed to update her register but did not get any type of penalty like that either. It is an outrageous double standard in terms of dealing with farmers and with protesters who in recent times have caused so much havoc in our city.

I return to some of the submissions on this bill. The usual suspects made submissions to this bill—the Environmental Defenders Office, the Queensland Law Society, the Human Rights Law Centre, the Queensland Human Rights Commission. The QPS has publicly expressed its frustration about extreme protesters given that they are back on the streets within hours of arrest. There was a tweet from QAS medical director Dr Stephen Rashford, who said that protesters were ‘morons’ when he tweeted—

Honestly, enjoying our rights in Australia to safely protest does not give you the right to act like a moron and tie up valuable emergency services ...


That is so right. The government’s bill will not do anything to prevent those people continuing to do exactly that. The Human Rights Commission made a contribution as well. I refer to an article in yesterday’s *Courier-Mail*—and I will table that—in relation to the Queensland Human Rights Commission that stated—

A Brisbane City Council ban on Extinction Rebellion protesters could be against the Queensland Human Rights Commission Act.

Tabled paper. Article from the *Courier-Mail* online, dated 23 October 2019, titled ‘Brisbane City Council’s Extinction Rebellion ban could be “unlawful”: Queensland Human Rights Commissioner’ [1948].

This was debated in this House when we passed that bill in that it would create a situation where decisions about where law and order and the fair balance of rights in a society should lie are always a grey area. They will be taken out of the hands of elected officials—be it the Lord Mayor, the council, this place or the government—and eventually be handed over to people like the Human Rights Commissioner and the Human Rights Commission—taking away power from the democratically elected institutions.

We support this bill, but it does not go anywhere near far enough in creating a deterrent for protesters. The opposition’s well-thought-out amendments will put in place some deterrent to take away that presumption of bail so we can stop the revolving door of protesters day in, day out through our courts being back on the streets the next day. I will stop there so that other members can have their say before the guillotine hits in a few minutes.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (12.17 pm): I rise to speak on the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The increasing trend of militant and aggressive activism is the ugly side of the right to protest. Commentators may praise schoolchildren who miss school but say very little about activists targeting commuters, businesses, workers, our primary industries and regional businesses. Activists divert valuable police resources, waste emergency services resources, cause chaos on our roads, affect business operations, disrupt workers and make a mockery of our legal system. They cause gridlock, prevent ambulances getting to where they need to go and stop Queenslanders going about their daily activities. Only two weeks ago during International Rebellion Week it took 11 police officers and four firefighters to deal with just three protesters on one CBD corner. A specialist police task force was created and 150 officers were deployed to deal with the week-long protests.

The policy objective of this bill is to crack down on unlawful protesters who use dangerous attachment devices. This will be achieved by creating a new offence to apply to those who use dangerous attachment devices and by enhancing police powers to authorise the search of protesters or vehicles in situations where police suspect there is a dangerous attachment device. The bill is narrow and limited in its application as it only applies to lock-on devices. Activists are brazen and emboldened. They do not fear authorities. They do it because they know they can. These are dangerous developments.

The government says that it wants to crack down on extremist protesters such as Extinction Rebellion. They are anarchists who want to shut down our political system. Climate and the environment are just excuses to alarm the young to join the revolt. A co-founder of Extinction Rebellion, Gail Bradbrook, says that fighting global warming means ending ‘systemic racism, white supremacy and the wounds of the patriarchy’. Another, Roger Hallam, wants to end the representative parliamentary system because it is ‘irremediably corruptible in the context of the dominance of a global capitalist

system'. These are not climate warriors; they are a front. That is why we need to take strong and decisive action. The consequences must be proportionate to the damage they inflict on our communities.

Despite the rhetoric, these laws are not a strong response; they are limited and they do not go far enough. The legislation introduced to target Extinction Rebellion will only catch those who use lock-on devices, which are only a small part of activists' tactics. It will not fix the issue. It is hard not to be cynical when you look at the government's track record in pandering to inner-city activists. The government is again trying to deflect its inaction on bringing these extreme activists to task. It is split between trying to be seen to be doing something and pandering to its inner-city green zealots.

These laws do not stop public disruption, events that stop the traffic, people hanging from bridges, blocking streets or occupying parks, holding people captive to hard left demands. They only stop these activists when a protester is using a lock-on device. That is very specific, and we all know that these protesters will just find another ingenious way to circumvent the laws. They do not care. It is a badge of honour to be caught because they want to claim that they are repressed.

The laws only apply if a protester uses a lock-on device to anchor themselves onto something at a place to resist being removed or to interfere with transport infrastructure. The legislation defines an attachment device as 'a device that reasonably appears to be constructed or modified to enable a person using the device to resist being safely removed from a place or safely separated from a thing'. It defines a dangerous attachment device to be if it 'appears to be constructed or modified to cause injury to a person who attempts to interfere with the device' or it 'incorporates a dangerous substance'. We are talking about anything that is likely to explode, cut someone's skin or require someone to wear protective clothing to break it up, such as a pipe or casing made of asbestos.

Against all common sense, glue, bike locks, padlocks, ropes and chains are not considered an attachment device. Apparently they are not. That means that this legislation would not have applied to Extinction Rebellion protesters who chained themselves and sat on the railway. Activists love to chain themselves to equipment and sites. In April, animal activists chained themselves to equipment at the Yangan abattoir near Warwick. The government's bill looks more like a slap on the wrist with a wet lettuce leaf.

The LNP does not condone protesters using any device that could cause injury to innocent Queenslanders or emergency services workers, including police. These measures are unlikely to stop the protests. Extinction Rebellion claims the legislation as a win. A spokeswoman said—

These proposed laws are really indicative of the fact that civil disobedience and Extinction Rebellion South East Queensland tactics are really powerful and effective.

The LNP's amendments will make these laws stronger. We aim to ensure mandatory jail and tougher bail laws. Our amendments will ensure that anyone convicted of multiple breaches of the new unlawful assembly offence will face mandatory jail time of one week. They also will apply tougher bail law changes to reverse the presumption of bail for offenders charged with unlawful assembly who commit an offence of a similar nature while on bail—that is, unlawful assembly again, trespass or public nuisance. The Queensland Police Service has expressed frustration that extremist protesters are back on the streets within hours of being arrested. Queensland Ambulance Service Medical Director Dr Stephen Rashford tweeted—

Honestly, enjoying our rights in Australia to safely protest does not give you the right to act like a moron and tie up valuable emergency services ...

Protesters have a right to free speech, but no-one has the right to break the law. Anyone who serially breaks the law, who thumbs their nose at the law, should face commensurate consequences for their actions. Supporting a cause through civil disobedience does not justify creating mass public disorder.


The government's laws are all talk and no action. The Premier has overstated the impact of Labor's laws, and they do not go far enough. Paying lip-service, being dragged to act or implementing only minimum measures shows either incompetence or fear of these activists—or, worse still, support for their agenda. Governments that are reluctant to act because they would rather do nothing abrogate their responsibility to allow Queenslanders to conduct their business, go about their daily lives and be protected. In the minister's introductory speech he said—

On 20 August ... I addressed the House, as did the Premier and the member for Ferny Grove, about the increasing frequency of dangerous activities occurring in our state.

Governments must be judged on what they do, not what they say. Weak and ineffective laws cannot be washed away with spin. No-one should be free to trespass on another's business or someone's home. Many activists are driven by ideological fantasies and simplistic solutions. These

fanatical zealots want to shut our cities, disrupt commerce, prevent commuters travelling, shut feedlots, close farms, ban any and all animal products, close mining, turn off reliable electricity, and shut down our ports and freight lines. In effect, they want to put people out of work.

Activists do not care about how they achieve their agenda. They disrespect business owners, workers, farmers, machinery drivers, labourers, miners and train drivers. They are not interested in animal welfare, the environment or people's livelihoods. They are militant fanatics and hooligans. Whether it is animal activists invading farms and businesses or, specifically, the anarchist organisation Extinction Rebellion, they are testing the patience and goodwill of Queenslanders. The public has had enough. I urge the government to see common sense and support the LNP's amendments. I do not oppose the bill.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—Ind) (12.26 pm): During the course of this debate I have listened to a number of speakers, most recently the member for Gympie. From the get-go I flag my intention to support the amendments foreshadowed by the member for Toowoomba North in his capacity as the shadow minister for police. The member for Gympie used the word 'fanatics'. We need look no further than climate change activist Greta Thunberg. A lot of these fanatics who have been walking the streets, playing up like second-hand lawnmowers and jeopardising the safety of our emergency services personnel—

Ms Boyd: It's not like you to go after young defenceless women.

Mr COSTIGAN: I will disregard what the member for Pine Rivers has said. The aforementioned green activist was up on a pedestal at the recent National Police Remembrance Day service in the Whitsundays. Some of the law enforcement officers, who are there to protect the community—members of the Queensland Police Service—were shocked to see her face appear at that National Police Remembrance Day service. I was so disgusted that I walked out of St Martin's church at Cannonvale in my own electorate of Whitsunday. We talk about fanatics. There is one they idolise.

I will state the obvious: the government's bill does not go anywhere near far enough down the path of protecting people and listening to community concerns. These devices, which I do not profess to be an expert on, scare the living daylights out of me—and, I am sure, members of the Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Ambulance Service. I can only imagine what goes through their minds. In the context of Ms Thunberg, you have to remember that members of the Queensland Police Service in my electorate are the ones who have to go out on the Newlands railway line to deal with these people who are playing up like second-hand lawnmowers, chaining themselves to railway lines and whatnot.

In his contribution to the debate the Minister for Mines and Energy made some valid points. This is not something that either side of the House has a mortgage on. I have been listening to members on both sides of the House. The Minister for Mines and Energy made the point that these trains—these big, black snakes of Central Queensland, taking our black gold to our ports—

Ms Pugh: Ha, ha!

Mr COSTIGAN: They laugh and wonder why members of the CFMMEU do not rate them anymore. They do not rate them.


Ms Grace: They certainly don't rate you.

Mr COSTIGAN: I do not know about that; I take the interjection from the Minister for Education because she was gracious enough to acknowledge me at the Collinsville Miners Memorial Day recently. Do members know what? We were warmly received at the Collinsville-Scottsville Workers Club by Croaky Jones and Clarry Martin.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr COSTIGAN: I will name drop and it is relevant because those people are concerned about what is going on in the community too. I bet your bottom dollar they will be very interested to see what happens in the course of this debate with the bill before the House. Croaky Jones and all of those boys in Collinsville—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Member, I ask you to resume your seat. According to the business program agreed to by the House, I call the minister.

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services) (12.30 pm), in reply: I thank all members who made a contribution to the debate on the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 and I also thank those who took the time to

provide submissions to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. As I mentioned at the outset, peaceful protest brings about change, and here in Queensland peaceful protest is treated with respect and tolerance because peaceful protest has shaped our collective history for the better. This bill upholds the right to peaceful and lawful protest.

I foreshadow that I intend to propose three amendments during consideration in detail of the bill. The amendments relate to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the Summary Offences Act 2005. The amendment to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act will insert a new provision requiring the Police Commissioner to provide me with a report at the end of each financial year outlining information about the exercise of the search, seizure and forfeiture powers contained in this bill. It is important that there are safeguards in place in relation to any searches. Police will be required to record prescribed information in an enforcement register after the search is conducted.

I appreciate concerns about police search and seize capabilities. For this reason, this government has made specific amendments to this bill to allay concerns. As mentioned, I consulted with the Police Commissioner, who supports this government's view that the use of search and seizure powers must be transparent. Therefore, it stands to reason that information about their use be provided annually to the Legislative Assembly. The Police Commissioner will provide a report to me which will be tabled as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year. This report will detail the use of the search powers under the proposed sections of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act and the seizure and disposal of a dangerous attachment device. This report will then be tabled in the Legislative Assembly within 14 sitting days after its receipt. This amendment shows a continued commitment by the Police Commissioner and this government to remain accountable and transparent to the people of Queensland.

The second amendment I intend to move will clarify the things that are not an attachment device for the new proposed section 14A of the bill. This amendment provides that a thing such as glue, a bike lock, a padlock, a rope and a chain will not be an attachment device unless the thing is a component of a dangerous attachment device. Finally, I will also move a very minor amendment to the Summary Offences Act which will clarify that the application of the definition of 'dangerous substance or thing' in the new proposed section 14B will apply only in circumstances where a person is being released from a dangerous attachment device. This amendment will provide that the definition of 'dangerous substance or thing' includes anything likely to cut a person's skin whilst a person is being extricated from a dangerous attachment device and a substance or thing that requires a person to wear protective clothing to safely handle, cut or break up whilst a person is being extricated from a dangerous attachment device.

As I mentioned earlier, it was a Labor government that enacted the Peaceful Assembly Act and a Labor government that enacted the Human Rights Act here in Queensland. These acts enshrine a person's right to peaceful assembly. There is nothing in this bill which will prevent any person from taking part in a lawful peaceful protest. This bill is focused on mitigating the risk of injury that eventuates when dangerous attachment devices are used. We should not allow other considerations to become a distraction to that objective.

I will now address some of the specific issues raised by members during the debate. A number of comments have been made in this House about the effectiveness of these amendments. I take this opportunity to dispel those misconceptions. For instance, the member for Broadwater contended that this bill will not address circumstances where a tripod is used on a roadway. This is not the case. Proposed section 14C of the bill will provide an offence of 50 penalty units or two years imprisonment for any person who uses a dangerous attachment device to unreasonably interfere with the ordinary operation of transport infrastructure unless the person has a reasonable excuse. This bill will prohibit a person using a tripod on a roadway. Our message about this bill is clear and worth repeating to ensure that it cannot be misconstrued. This bill will protect our emergency services workers, it will allow police to act to seize dangerous attachment devices and it will prohibit their inappropriate use.

I will now address the amendments proposed by the member for Toowoomba North. These amendments would appear to be extraordinary in their reach. Further, they would appear to capture community members engaged in lawful protest. The new unlawful assembly offence proposed by those opposite would apply where three or more persons are present together for a common purpose and one or more of those persons is using or is fastened to or otherwise indirectly connected to a vehicle, device or object that obstructs or is likely to obstruct the use of transport infrastructure by an emergency vehicle. In this case, every one of those persons commits an offence. This means that, if 100 people are together for a common purpose of protesting—for example, the Morrison government's lack of

support for farmers experiencing drought or seven people are together protesting the removal of a right-hand turn on a road—and just one person in that group attaches themselves to the road, every single one of them would be liable for an offence.

If the LNP's concern for emergency services is real and genuine, then perhaps the arrest of those 100 people—99 of them who are lawfully protesting—is not the way to go. Even more extraordinary is that under the LNP's amendment if a person is convicted of a subsequent offence against the proposed new section they are subject to a minimum seven days imprisonment. This means that, if the same 100 people went out and lawfully protested, because of a common connection with just one person who does the wrong thing, we would then have 100 people subject to a mandatory term of imprisonment—mandatory time behind bars for all of them. That means that farmers, professionals, politicians who are in rallies out the front of parliament, children and the elderly could be imprisoned under these laws.

As if that was not enough, the new offence applies where one or more persons behave in a way that would cause a person in the vicinity to reasonably suspect the behaviour is intended to cause traffic congestion or otherwise interfere with the use of a public place by a member of the public place. This proposal is nothing short of gobsmacking. Members of the opposition one after the other have said that they support the right to lawful protest. However, the LNP's proposed amendment suggests otherwise and potentially punishes people who are lawfully protesting. Just by interfering with the use of a public place, which could include people in a park who are protesting, a person could be subject to 25 penalty units or one year imprisonment or, for a subsequent offence, mandatory imprisonment. This amendment is so broad that a public place includes a road. I table a picture from a public Google search which shows the member for Everton—one of seven people—standing in the middle of the road protesting against the removal of a right-hand turn.

Tabled paper: Photograph depicting the member for Everton, Mr Tim Mander MP, and other persons [1949].

Under the LNP's amendment, this could reasonably be said to be interfering with the use of a public place. In the photo, it looks like they have blocked a roadway. The member for Everton would be potentially liable for an offence and he could go to jail and take six people with him. It just goes to show that the LNP's amendments are gobsmacking. These proposals could only be categorised as a breach of human rights and are totally disconnected from the various remarks of the members of the opposition who claim to support lawful protest.

The proposed changes to the Bail Act are equally puzzling. Under the proposed LNP unlawful assembly offence, or our dangerous attachment device offence, if someone is granted bail and is then subsequently charged with something like public nuisance or contravening a direction of a police officer, that person could be placed in a position where they are refused bail and must show cause as to why their detention in custody is not justified. This could occur even though the public nuisance, or contravened direction offence, may have nothing to do with the unlawful or dangerous protest activity.

The main argument of the member for Maiwar against this bill is simple. He asserts that there is no evidence that a protester is trying to harm anyone, so there is no need to legislate against the use of a dangerous attachment device. This contention fails to account for the potential risk that is inherent every time a police officer is called upon to release a person from these devices—every time—or the risk to other people, for example train drivers who may come across a dragon's den on a railway line. Trains need a significant length of track in which to stop. What about the people who may be on the train? Should they be placed at risk? Quite clearly, the answer is no.

We have been very fortunate not to have had a tragedy through the use of these devices. So far, no protester has reported an injury, but that is largely due to the professionalism of our emergency services workers, their diligence, their vigilance and luck. Unfortunately, as the member for Maiwar noted in his speech, a police officer has received an injury as a result of removing one of these dangerous attachment devices.

The committee heard from representatives of the Queensland Resources Council that protesters who unlawfully entered Abbot Point chained themselves to a live conveyor belt and concealed themselves out of sight and that those people could have been seriously injured. In their submission, they said—

They were just lucky that the guy who was on duty that night went out to walk the conveyor belt, happened to see their boots sticking out and shut the whole site down. That is a risk. Was anyone injured? No, but do you really want to promote a situation where people are putting themselves in that situation?

This government recognises that our emergency services workers should not needlessly be placed in danger just for doing their job. The government has always supported a person's right to protest. However, the position of the member for Maiwar goes much further. He contends that the use

of dangerous attachment devices would be appropriate in the protest of a cause. On this point, we disagree. This bill does not prevent any person from protesting, associating, or moving freely in public. It prevents actions that place emergency services personnel and community members at risk. It prevents the use of dangerous attachment devices.

This bill is about protecting emergency services personnel, members of the community and the protesters themselves from the risk of injury or death. Our emergency services workers are frequently called upon to undertake tasks that others would not want to do, or simply could not do. They perform a difficult and often dangerous job. They deserve to have the measures contained in this bill in place to keep them safe. I am confident that this bill will achieve that purpose. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Before we proceed to consideration in detail, I will read out the names of those who are still on warnings: the members for Nanango, Glass House, Maryborough, Caloundra, Southern Downs, Broadwater, Clayfield, Gregory and Southport.

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1—



Mr WATTS (12.45 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

AYES, 39:

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

KAP, 1—Dametto

Ind, 2—Bolton, Costigan.

NOES, 48:

ALP, 47—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Lynham, Madden, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Miller, Mullen, B. O'Rourke, C. O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pegg, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Stewart, Trad, Whiting.

Grn, 1—Berkman.

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 6—



Mr BERKMAN (12.51 pm): These clauses include additional search powers for police, which are perhaps one of the most concerning parts of the bill. I have with me today a report from the *Guardian* this morning. I will table a copy of the article for the benefit of the House. It describes the stripsearching of a number of peaceful protesters, including a minor.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Guardian* online, dated 24 October 2019, titled 'Teenage girl among 20 Extinction Rebellion activists strip-searched by Brisbane Police' [[1950](#)].

I do not know if anyone else is actually concerned about the expansion of police search powers like this, but I most certainly am and I know that those concerns were reflected in evidence before the committee from Michael Clifford, the acting general secretary of the QCU. At least half the people in this place know that the QCU is the peak body for unions in this state. They do not support the bill. They do not support additional police search powers. I am genuinely shocked that this is the sort of thing that a Labor government wants to bring in.

Mr Clifford made the point that we have any number of their members—union members—tradies who are driving around the city, such as plumbers who have pipes in the back of their utes which, on an inspection from a distance, look precisely like any number of the supposedly dangerous attachment devices that this bill deals with. Are they now going to be subject to warrantless searches?

Let us ask the question, too, where will this go when we have a change of administration? How far are these search powers going to be extended? How is it that they can possibly be justified when there are already search powers that exist for items that have the potential to cause harm?

If danger to and safety of the public is the real concern here, we have laws that cover that. We have search powers that exist and are already used liberally. I oppose these clauses and I would suggest that any progressive MP who wants to claim to have concern for the rights and liberties of people in Queensland should vote against them too.

Mr RYAN: In the member for Maiwar's own words he has actually confirmed that there should be search powers that apply to dangerous items. He said it in his own words. In fact, he said that in his view he thinks those powers already exist. If those powers already exist, why then does he have a problem with us confirming that those search powers apply to these dangerous attachment devices?

Mr Berkman: They are not dangerous!

Mr RYAN: I take that interjection. There have been many photos tabled in this House and before the committee which show how these devices contain materials which present a risk to our emergency services personnel. Our emergency services personnel have provided evidence to the committee about the risk. There is a real risk that these devices in their removal will cause harm, and that is why this government is acting.

We are also ensuring that there are appropriate safeguards in place. As with all search powers of this nature in the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, a police officer must have reasonable suspicion and a person who is subject to one of those searches must comply unless they are able to provide a reasonable excuse. In addition, we have gone a step further and will be requiring the public reporting of the use of these search powers to provide additional transparency when it comes to the amendments before the House.

Division: Question put—That clauses 2 to 6, as read, stand part of the bill.

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


Clauses 2 to 6, as read, agreed to.

Debate, on motion of Mr Ryan, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 pm to 2.00 pm.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Small Business, On-Time Payment Policy

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (2.00 pm): Small business needs to be treated with respect. In the LNP we believe they also need to be paid on time. When we look at the track record of this Labor government, we see that it says one thing and it does another. In 2013, the state LNP government introduced a program to ensure that businesses were paid in a more timely way when they did business with government. There had not been a system before that. There was no tracking mechanism. We were the ones who introduced the 30-day pay proposal to ensure that small businesses were paid in a timely way and that, in fact, penalties would apply if that did not happen.


This Labor government disrespects small businesses, and more and more of them are not being paid on time. At a time of unacceptably high unemployment, the very businesses that we need to employ people have not been paid on time: 18.3 per cent of Department of Education contracts were not paid on time by this government and 23.83 per cent of the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs contracts were not paid on time.

We looked at the health department to try to find out whether it was keeping to the terms that this government was supposed to adhere to, to ensure that its contractors were paid on time. The website announces that hospital and health services were exempted. Previously we had seen that 25 per cent of Department of Health contracts were not paid on time, but the government's own website about procurement and pay policy now states that all the hospitals throughout Queensland were exempted until the new payment system came online on 1 August. That is why this morning I asked a question of the minister for business, to try to find out whether they were in fact paying people on time. The website does not even inform people that they have the opportunity to lodge a claim for penalties and it does not clarify whether that policy now applies to hospital and health services.

I call on the government to stop treating small businesses as if they are its personal bank: pay them on time. The government should not lecture to everybody else about paying on time and then fail to do it. I was pleased that, under LNP leader Deb Frecklington, we have announced that people would be paid even quicker than 30 days by mandating a 28-day payment time. The government should certainly ensure that all businesses are paid on time.

(Time expired)

Greater Springfield Festival of Learning

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (2.03 pm): Earlier this week I officially opened the Greater Springfield Festival of Learning. The week-long festival includes a wide range of connected events and activities across Greater Springfield that showcase and celebrate learning. It is also the first project of the Springfield Learning Coalition, which I was fortunate to launch earlier this year. The coalition is a partnership that formalises an agreement by Greater Springfield's 11 local schools, state and non-state, working together to further Springfield as a learning city. As outlined by the group—

A 'Learning City' is an aspiration whereby lifelong learning is expected and valued by the whole community; where learning can be seen and felt to flourish; opportunities and choices abound; and curiosity and discovery are championed.

Greater Springfield is truly becoming a learning city.


Some 10,000 students and a further 4,000 children aged between zero and four live and learn in the area. From the very first school to open in the region in 1998, Woodcrest State College, to our very newest school, Spring Mountain State School, which opened its doors in the first term of this year, I am so very proud of all our local schools. I want to ensure that all students are given a world-class education, which is the key for our young people to build a bright future.

I would like to acknowledge Springfield City Group for initiating the development of this important partnership and for their ongoing support of our schools and the Learning Festival. Starting with a professional learning day for over 600 local educators on Monday morning, the Learning Festival has included a series of activities across all of the participating schools. Those have ranged from writing workshops, Lego Legends master classes, AFL skills development workshops, Indigenous language lessons, nature play activities and coding drones, to name a few. The range and depth of the various activities led by our local schools is absolutely amazing. The festival will culminate in a community learning day on Saturday, where a display of the learning triumphs throughout the festival will be on show.

It is wonderful that the inaugural biennial Greater Springfield Festival of Learning is taking place during State Education Week. State Education Week is a time for us all to celebrate the amazing achievements of our Queensland school communities, with this year's theme being 'Creating opportunities'. I think that theme perfectly aligns with the work of the Springfield Learning Coalition. Their objectives are ambitious and smart. Promoting innovation, collaboration, and creative and critical thinking in education are all very worthy aims and they are common themes outlined in the Queensland government's own Advancing Education agenda.

The Festival of Learning held this week has provided opportunities for some 2,000 local educators to share ideas and showcase their expertise. This first important initiative of the Learning Coalition is a great example of the amazing synergy that can happen when people come together. Thank you to all involved in organising for the schools, the university and other learning providers to open their doors so that our community can view, participate, share and learn. Thank you to all of the principals from our 11 schools for working together to deliver outstanding opportunities and outcomes for local students.

Droplets in a Stream

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (2.06 pm): As the shadow minister for communities, disability services and seniors and state member for Moggill, I rise to inform the House of a recent event held at the Queensland parliament on behalf of Droplets in a Stream. DIAS is an Australian charity that works in Uganda and Kenya to support local in-country non-government organisations, all of which focus on supporting vulnerable children. Due to extreme poverty, lack of primary health care, restricted access to basic services and in some cases traumatic abuse, many children become trapped in a cycle of poverty. Droplets in a Stream and associated in-country partners work tirelessly to assist those children and provide many of the services that we here in Queensland and Australia take for granted.


DIAS was established by Mr Rodney Callanan and a number of other local Moggill constituents who remain actively involved. Over the past 12 years Rod Callanan has worked tirelessly to ensure that DIAS operations and that of its partner organisations continue to support many disadvantaged children across Central Africa. Currently, Droplets in a Stream is involved in multiple transformational projects, including the construction of an early childhood development centre in Kenya to house abandoned and orphaned infants; a feeding program for over 250 street children in a village in Kenya; the development of a rehabilitation centre in Uganda to house children who are victims of abuse; and the construction of a nursery and primary school in Kampala, the capital of Uganda.

It was a pleasure to hear about those achievements and so many more, along with the address of keynote speaker for the event, Mr Peter Michael Sewakiryanga. Peter shared his personal story about his experiences with those who have experienced childhood abuse and disadvantage and further highlighted the importance of the work of Droplets in a Stream across Central Africa. All of us in attendance were shocked to learn of some of the draconian and harmful practices employed in parts of Africa. Peter impressed upon the room his belief that DIAS and its future development would help hundreds more children out of poverty and abusive situations. His was a moving and powerful message. I thank Peter for his attendance and bravery in sharing his personal story.

It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to host the Droplets in a Stream event. I reiterate my thanks to Rod and the team at DIAS for all of their hard work. I express my appreciation to South African Airways and Virgin Australia for their assistance in arranging transport and to Mater urologist Dr David Winkle for his incredible clinical work. I thank my assistant electorate officer, Thomas Cunningham, for his hard work and professionalism in pulling together the event and ensuring that it was a great success on the day. Well done to all involved, including individual supporters and sponsors. I look forward to continuing to assist the work of Droplets in a Stream into the future.

With it being State Education Week and World Teachers' Day tomorrow, I take this opportunity to congratulate and acknowledge all local teachers in the electorate of Moggill and across Queensland. The principals of the 11 schools in the electorate of Moggill are a credit to the teaching profession in our local community. I know you in particular, Mr Deputy Speaker, would appreciate these words.

Rookwood Weir


 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (2.09 pm): The Palaszczuk government understands that Rookwood Weir is important to Central Queensland for jobs and future water security and agricultural growth. This project will create in excess of 100 jobs during construction. It will open up agricultural land that could be used for large-scale cropping or feedlots and lots of other options.

That is why we are getting on with the job of delivering Rookwood Weir. As at the end of July, \$66 million of state funds have been provided to SunWater. SunWater has used these funds to progress works, including securing necessary approvals, accessing land, road upgrades, setting up the gateway for local businesses to bid on contracts as they become available and developing a marketing plan for the sale of water. SunWater also held industry briefings for interested contractors in Brisbane on 30 September and has invited expressions of interest for the main works. Yesterday there was a briefing in Rockhampton regarding supplies and services for the weir which 80-odd local businesses attended.

Before we can even commence the construction of Rookwood Weir there are roadworks required, like the upgrade to the Capricorn Highway and Gogango intersection, which is now out for tender, to ensure the safety of road users with heavy trucks turning in and out of the site during construction. The same goes for the upgrade of Thirsty Creek Road. In places it needs bitumen laid and the road widened. I am delighted that the Rockhampton Regional Council will be delivering this \$7.5 million upgrade to Thirsty Creek Road, providing jobs for the people of Rockhampton.

The state government is getting on with the job of building the weir, despite Canberra's attempts to play politics. Sometimes we wonder what the federal LNP is thinking. I am really concerned that they are laying the groundwork to pull the project completely. We know that the federal government is determined to have a budget surplus no matter what damage it causes. I cannot believe they have betrayed many of Australia's most vulnerable by underfunding the aged-care system or saving \$4.6 billion in the NDIS space. I am worried they are going to betray the people of Central Queensland in the same way. The state government is getting on with the job of building Rookwood Weir while the federal LNP does nothing but complain. Do they want jobs for Central Queensland or not?

Veterans, Homelessness

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (2.12 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, I quote—

We the people of Australia, respect and give thanks to all who have served in the defence force and their families. We acknowledge the unique nature of military service and the sacrifice demanded of all who commit to defend our nation. We undertake to preserve the memory and deeds of all who have served and promise to welcome, embrace and support all military veterans as respected and valued members of our community. For what they have done, this we will do.

That is the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant that passed into law on Tuesday this week with the bipartisan support of the federal parliament. They are nice words, but words without action are meaningless. As a society we are failing our veterans and their families.

I acknowledge that goodwill exists throughout Australian society and on all sides of politics, yet all too frequently the soldiers that I served with continue to suffer and continue to die. Australian veterans are taking their own lives at a rate of nearly one each week. Australian veterans are three times more likely to be homeless than the rest of the Australian population. Australian veterans are crying out for help, but we are failing them. More needs to be done. I will not stand by and continue to watch my mates and their families suffer.


The Premier recently announced the establishment of an office for veterans, and I welcome that commitment, but I say again that words without action are meaningless. We have heard that the office of veterans will ensure that veterans feel connected to their communities and are assisted into new avenues of work when their time of service ends. Those are admirable and important endeavours, but nowhere did the Premier mention supporting veteran health and welfare. Not once did the Premier talk about fixing the veteran homelessness problem or dealing with the scourge of veteran suicide.

It is time for Queensland to uphold the words of the veterans covenant and do more. One area where Queensland can do more is in addressing the scourge of veteran homelessness. It is an absolute disgrace that within 400 metres of the Queensland parliament veterans who have served their nation are sleeping rough on the streets. We know that homelessness leaves people vulnerable to long-term unemployment and exacerbates mental health and substance abuse problems. As Mr Geoff Evans of Homes for Heroes states—

By the time veterans are getting to be homeless, their whole life has fallen apart, usually the last straw is family break down, then they're on the street and just a little bit further along, is suicide.

Keeping veterans off the street and in safe housing is something that together we can achieve. Goodwill and good intention does exist, but platitudes are not going to get the job done. I call on the Queensland government to work collaboratively to solve this scourge of veteran homelessness. When the Ode is read at your local Remembrance Day service in a couple of weeks time, reflect on the Australians we have failed, the veterans who could not take the pain anymore and their grieving families and those who battle on still.

State Education Week

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (2.15 pm): I rise to acknowledge the honourable work of our teachers in Queensland during State Education Week. Like you, Mr Deputy Speaker, prior to my election, I had devoted my entire working life to education. Like all beginning teachers, we began our teaching careers with a head full of ideas and a heart full with passion.

In schools, as in leadership more broadly, there are some things that hold true across different school settings while others require a unique approach. In those whom I admire, I see familiar landmarks of courage, tenacity, integrity, passion, intelligence and a faith that anything is possible. Equally in leading and advocating for schools that reflect the diversity of our broader community, I have seen that the greatest teachers are those who adapt to serve those they represent; the nimble and progressive; those who embrace risk, grasp with an open mind and willing hands the excitement of trying something new, of seeking others' more experienced counsel, advice and feedback; and hardworking, well-prepared teachers who engage reflectively with their colleagues, parents, support workers and their students to do whatever it takes to witness the twinkle in a child's eye, their half smirk and their humble pride when they say, 'I get it.'


As any experienced teacher or school leader knows too well, the decisions made by politicians are felt at every level of the school community and, ultimately, can be strings to uplift us as teachers or strictures to disempower us. Being a teacher is not a preparation for political life because teachers know the value of education. That is something that most people in our community know. Rather, it is a preparation because, through a teacher's eyes, as you know, we get to see all of the factors outside of the school gate that impact upon families, that either help or hinder their child participate fully in education.

Public education is the pillar of our democracy. It is the only medium to progress greater equality for Queenslanders. It really is the great social equaliser. Our schools are the beating heart of our community, and the benefit of our teachers' work extends beyond their students to their families and our Queensland towns. The high expectations for learning established by our teachers every day, across every subject and in every town set the challenges that nurture hope, resilience and inspire confidence in our young people.

From St Peter's in the far south of my electorate to Seton Catholic College in the north to Sinai College in the east and Upper Mount Gravatt State School in the west, and all of the teachers of the 15 schools in between, I say thank you. Thank you for being who you are. Thank you for believing in our

young people of Mansfield. Thank you for all that you do to ensure that the eyes of our Mansfield children twinkle with pride, confidence, passion and courage to be all they dream to be. My warmest wishes for a wonderful World Teachers' Day.

Labuschagne, Mr M

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (2.18 pm): I rise to speak about one of the Redlands coast's favourite sons, Ashes hero Marnus Labuschagne. If there was ever a testament to junior sport and junior cricket in the Redlands, it is Marnus. Girls and boys out there each weekend, striving to be their best in their chosen sport, can look to Marnus for inspiration because a few short years ago he was one of them. Nurtured by Redlands Tigers Cricket Club, his talents took him to the Queensland team and then national selection in the Australian team, getting his baggy green in 2014.

When Steve Smith was felled by a Jofra Archer bouncer, during the first innings of the second test at Lord's, Marnus was called up, becoming the world's first concussion substitute under new introduced rules. No sooner had Marnus taken to the crease on world cricket's most prestigious stage that he, too, was struck and felled by a vicious Archer bouncer hurtling at him at close to 100 miles per hour. Everyone back home in the Redlands who stayed up late to watch him, including moi, held their breath as he got to this feat. Undeterred, Marnus went on to make a gritty 59, helping steer Australia to a draw, saving the Aussies from a loss.

With Smith ruled out of the third test at Headingley, a big score was needed from other batsmen. Marnus stood up yet again and top scored in the first innings with 74. In his second innings while on 70, he was again struck on the grille of his helmet by an Archer bouncer. He went on to make 80, his third consecutive half-century in the top order.

For the fourth test at Old Trafford and with Smith back in the side, Marnus continued his consistent form, particularly in the first innings, contributing to Australia's win which clinched the Ashes for Australia. It was the first time Australia had retained the urn on English soil in 18 years.


Playing for pride in the fifth test at The Oval, Australia went down to England with Marnus contributing a solid 48 in the first innings. Despite copping a couple of knocks on the head from Jofra, Marnus told the media, 'Being out there is probably less nerve-wracking than being off the field.' A committed Christian, he tapes a sticker of an eagle at the bottom of his bat to remind him of the Bible verse which says—

But those who hope in the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall soar on wings like eagles; they shall run and not grow weary, they shall walk and not be faint.

This certainly sums up his Ashes series. His rise from a young immigrant from South Africa playing for Redlands Tigers as an 11-year-old boy to becoming a mainstay of the Australian top order shows the strength of junior cricket in our area and is a testament to the coaches and volunteers of clubs like Redlands Tigers and Cleveland Thornlands Cougars and other clubs in the Redlands.

This coming Australian summer we will be watching closely as Marnus scores a tonne of runs. Marnus, you have done us proud. God bless you.

State Education Week

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (2.21 pm): It is a pleasure to rise to update the House about some recent education investments in my electorate of Nudgee, particularly in State Education Week and with World Teachers' Day tomorrow. From the outset I would like to acknowledge the contribution that all of the wonderful principals, teachers and teachers' aides across my community make to education and wish them a very happy World Teachers' Day tomorrow. I also extend that acknowledgement and my thanks to all who work within the profession of education more broadly, including you, Mr Deputy Speaker Stewart, and all those across Queensland.

In respect of my local schools, it was lovely to see local schools Boondall State School and Wavell State High School on the Nudgee-Stafford border recognised in this week's Buy Smart Awards by the Attorney-General. Students from across the state once again participated in the Buy Smart competition which challenged them to research and communicate about a marketplace issue of their choice. Boondall has dominated this competition for consecutive years now and I was very proud to see their creativity recognised once again this year.

From Boondall State Primary to Nundah State School, I always enjoy the opportunity to attend P&C meetings for my local schools and it was at a Nundah State School P&C earlier this year that I witnessed a very impassioned presentation by parents about the need for a tuckshop renovation at the

school. I acknowledge president Matthew and vice-president Hayley, who were particularly passionate about the project. The vision of the P&C committee and school leadership team was for a renovated tuckshop kitchen space, new outdoor cafe area and learning space.

Following the meeting I met with the P&C and principal Deb Cox on site to see the existing facility and to discuss their proposed vision in more detail. Their vision and excitement about the contribution that a project of this nature could make to students and the broader Nundah school community was infectious.


Following this meeting I contacted the Minister for Education and wrote to her office requesting her support for their vision. These meetings were followed by a concerted effort by parents, teachers and staff at the school emailing or writing to my office to demonstrate the strong community support for and commitment to this project which I, of course, relayed in full to the minister.

So it was with great excitement that I was called to a further meeting with the Minister for Education, Grace Grace, last week and advised that Nundah State School has been successful in obtaining \$220,000 to make their vision a reality. I give my warm congratulations to Nundah State School and I cannot wait to see this project delivered for their lovely community.

I also look forward to meeting with the principal of Boondall State School, P&C reps and students tomorrow to look at their plans for the early years playground announced in this year's state budget. I also had great pleasure in dropping by Virginia State School Swimming Club last Friday night to see the change room, pool and grandstand improvements delivered there by last year's state budget.

Our government will always invest in education, teachers and students in this state. I will always back my local schools. I thank the education minister for doing likewise and I wish everyone again a very happy State Education Week.

Koalas


 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (2.24 pm): It has been two years and two months since the Queensland Koala Expert Panel released its report—two years and two months—but it is too hard a decision for the government to make. The government sat on the initial report for eight months. I would suggest that eight months would have been long enough to formulate a response, but they sat on the report for eight months. Then, having publicly said that they were ready to act on it, they said within 12 months we would have our plan for koala conservation in this state. Twelve months has come and gone—has come and gone—as of May of this year.

Today I can reveal the only action we have had on koalas—the only thing that has been delivered by the minister—and that is a bill of \$64,272 on advisory councils, meetings, room hire and catering. That is what we have achieved. We have racked up \$64,000 and we have not formulated a koala policy in this state.

Mr Deputy Speaker Stewart, let me tell you why this is important. Koalas right across the state are important. In your own electorate, there is a very significant koala population on Magnetic Island, but in the northern part of the Gold Coast it is situation critical. The member for Oodgeroo knows about it in the Redlands. It is situation critical. There have been reports, some of which have been redacted, that show that within a couple of decades the koala population in the northern Gold Coast will be at critical levels to the point that it will not recover, and within four or five decades there will not be a koala left on the northern part of the Gold Coast. Is that the legacy we want to leave? We were happy to use Borobi for the Commonwealth Games, but is our koala legacy in this state going to be a cuddly koala costume for a great significant event, or are we serious about this and are we going to get action?

So that I do not just point out the problem without a solution, allow me to give the minister the solution. The solution is simple: do an assessment of what the significant areas are, define those areas and then purchase those areas if they are not owned by the state and lock them away for generations. That is how you will get real results. Cherry-picking little bits here and there will not result in defined corridors that can save this species. The only way to do that is by protecting the significant areas. Do not undermine somebody's property value. It has to be done in a financially responsible way and transparently, but we must act on koalas now.

Perinatal Depression

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (2.27 pm): I have babies on the brain. My sister and two of my best friends are due in weeks and to say I am excited is something of an understatement. To prepare myself I watched the new TV show on Channel 10 *One Born Every Minute*. I found myself becoming pretty emotional. I was thinking back to my own early days as a new mum.

Every new parent knows the mind-crushing exhaustion that often accompanies having a new baby. I have never experienced anything quite like it and it sounds like neither has the member for Buderim! Your eyes feel red raw, your body does not belong to you and you have little time or inclination to eat. For many mums it goes far beyond that.


Post or perinatal depression is a serious matter that impacts mums when they are most vulnerable and tired. It stops them from fully bonding with and appreciating their beautiful babies, and when combined with fatigue it makes it much harder to help. That is where organisations like the Sherwood RBA come in. They provide social and emotional support for new mums, including breastfeeding advice. You can call them 24 hours a day and they are only volunteers. I personally thank Lisa, Kayleigh, Kay and the legion of other volunteers who have served our local community for many years. For mums who need more specialised care there is PANDA—Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia—who offer support to mums and dads suffering perinatal depression.

It can be caused by many things such as a traumatic or complicated birth, physical complications or good old-fashioned sleep deprivation. When my beautiful daughter was born, my labour continued over three calendar days and two sleepless nights. By the time she was born I had not slept since Tuesday. It was now Friday. Due to birth complications I could not get out of bed, but over the coming days visitors streamed into my room nonstop. I grew more fatigued by the hour, and if she had not been such a good eater I do not know how I would have coped. When I got home with my beautiful baby it took months to feel human again. Looking back now, I know there was something more going on than just tiredness. When I looked at my daughter I knew that I loved her, but I could not bond with her the way that I did with my son.

I was so tired that from the time I got up in the morning I would count the seconds until I could sleep again. I would not even eat in case I missed a chance to nap. I wish I had told more of my visitors to wait, but being a first-time parent I did not know what I was in for. When I contrast this with my experience with my son a few years later, I had fewer visitors. I think what made a real difference was that because my son was in the intensive care unit a nurse said to me, 'You can't hold him tonight. Why don't you get a good night's sleep instead?' My sense of relief was immense. I remembered how I felt with my daughter, so I took her advice and I slept. I believe that one extra night of sleep set me up for a more positive experience, and I am so grateful to that nurse.

Childbirth really is an everyday miracle. It happens every minute in our state, yet every single safe delivery is simply amazing. Thank you to the amazing local services like PANDA who make sure our mums and dads can create networks and settle into new parenthood.

Voluntary Assisted Dying Legislation


 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (2.30 pm): Is there any greater need in our world, or urgency for, compassion? It has now been more than a year since I first spoke about the requests of our terminally ill and their loved ones for an inquiry into voluntary assisted dying, and I thank the Premier for making that occur. However, questions are understandably being asked as to why an assurance has not been given for this to be brought into the chamber as a priority this term. It is appropriate that current members of this parliament deal with any recommendations, including proposed new laws, as this inquiry was authorised by members of this parliament.

As members of parliament, our focus must be on those we serve, not our personal beliefs or aspirations. Our role includes the responsibility to respectfully bring into the chamber the conversations Queenslanders wish and need to have, regardless of which side of the fence they or we sit on. Work is needed to rebuild trust in politicians and in our systems. With regard to VAD, aspersions are being cast that it will be utilised as campaign material at next year's state election. This is deeply concerning. It is reported that over 80 per cent of Queenslanders support choice. The fact that an issue so important could be utilised inappropriately goes against the role of government and what we are elected to do.

Within my electorate, National Coronial Information System data shows that in 2016-17 we lost 13 much loved terminal residents to suicide as a result of their suffering. This did not include those who flew overseas, away from all they had known and their loved ones, to end their agony alone. As part of ensuring the privacy and dignity of these beautiful people I will not speak further on their trauma. However, a Victorian coroner in an end-of-life inquiry used the example of an 82-year-old grandmother who used multiple items, including scissors, and a 90-year-old grandfather who used a nail gun. These beautiful, loved and loving human beings, who did not suffer with mental illness, were made desperate in their suffering. The horror, loneliness and fear they must have felt cannot be imagined.

This government has demonstrated compassion in so many arenas. On behalf of those we represent I make a heartfelt plea to our Premier and the Leader of the Opposition to come together in a bipartisan approach to ensure that, out of respect for Queenslanders, VAD does not become part of the next election or electioneering. This is not about politics; it is about genuine compassion for our people and their needs, not ours.


World Teachers' Day

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (2.33 pm): I rise to congratulate the teachers of Queensland, especially the teachers of Logan and, indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, you and the member for Mansfield. For thousands and thousands of years the Aboriginal people of Australia have taught new generations on the ways of the economy, law, stories and our history. This morning the minister asked us to think of a teacher who helped out in our lives. I have to say that the first two teachers who made a difference to me were my own mum and dad, who were both teachers and later teachers of teachers. Some on the other side may not support this teacher, but the other teacher who made a difference to my life was Sister Teresa, a sister of the Order of Saint Joseph. When I think back, in some ways she encouraged me to go into politics. In grade 6 she set up a special interactive class. We were asked to put forward a party, a platform and a policy. She asked me to take a lead role in that, so perhaps she saw something in me.

We all know that teachers cannot teach in the open air: they need facilities to deliver high-quality teaching, and most of all they need classrooms in good schools. Logan is a growing area, so we need new classrooms. That is why I am pleased to say we have new investments, including: the Yarrabilba State School; the Yarrabilba State Secondary College, which is just coming online and we went through the process of opening; the SEC at the Flagstone State Community College, which I opened with the member for Jordan as it used to be in the area I represent; a new two-storey classroom block with undercroft at Logan Village State School; the Logan Reserve State School, which has four new classrooms plus undercroft; the new King's Christian College; and St Clare's Catholic Primary School at Yarrabilba. I will continue to push for more investment at Park Ridge and perhaps a new school for the Logan Reserve-Chambers Flat area, and I will work with the member for Jordan for a new school to service some of the growth in the new Greenbank area.

How do we compare that to the LNP? Members, how many schools do you think the LNP built in the fast-growing Logan area? The answer is zero. How many classrooms do you think they added? The answer is zero. On World Teachers' Day teachers need to know they are going to be supported. In growing areas they know we need to have new classrooms; not the LNP's cuts, which provided no new classrooms for families in the growing electorate of Logan.

Mental Health Week


 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.36 pm): Mr Speaker, 5-13 October was Queensland Mental Health Week, highlighting the importance of talking about mental health and what Queenslanders can do to look after their own mental health. Self-awareness is as important as reaching out to those who need support. This year the theme was Take Time for Mental Health. Take time is about the simple yet proven things everyone can do to boost mental wellbeing. Take time is also about breaking down the stigma associated with mental illness and reaching out to people in our community who need support.

It is important that we talk about mental health and raise awareness of the need for positive mental health and wellbeing. More needs to be done to support those in our community who suffer from mental health issues. Statistics provided through the Queensland Mental Health Commission in their 2016 performance indicator report show that 18.7 per cent of Queenslanders aged 15 years and over—almost one in five—reported living with a mental health condition. That is higher than the national average. The LNP supports community mental health services to ensure that those who need help receive the support they need.

It is also something we need to keep front of mind, as two-thirds of our state is suffering through horrendous drought conditions. It is not just an issue in regional Queensland—it is something that families deal with right across the state. One of the issues that is always important to consider as part of mental health and wellbeing is the rate of suicide, which is something that is less spoken about. Data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics last month shows that in 2017 in Australia, 3,128 people died from intentional self-harm, an increase of 9.1 per cent from 2,866 in 2016. Deaths from intentional self-harm occur among males at a rate more than three times that of females. Intentional self-harm is the 10th ranked leading cause of death for males. All states except Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia recorded an increase in deaths due to intentional self-harm in 2017. Queensland reported the largest increase in suicide deaths: 804 in 2017 compared to 674 in 2016.

These are not statistics. Every one of these numbers is a separate human tragedy. In August, R U OK? Day highlighted issues around suicide prevention, as it does every year. R U OK? seeks to inspire and empower everyone to meaningfully connect with people around them and support anyone struggling with life in a world where we are all connected and are protected from suicide. Asking is not always easy but it could change a life. They provide four tips on how to ask: one, ask 'R U OK?'; two, listen with an open mind; three, encourage action; and, four, check in. If you or someone you know needs help now, call Lifeline on 131114. If someone is in immediate danger, call triple 0.

Greenslopes Electorate, Achievements


 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (2.39 pm): As MPs, we all have the great privilege of serving our community. This service can take many forms: listening to the individual challenges faced by people and helping them to find solutions; working to solve large problems faced by our communities and our state; or supporting community groups to deliver valuable services for our community. I am proud of the many outcomes I have been able to achieve for my community—achievements large and small, but all important.

These include: getting a school crossing guard to keep kids safe as they cross Victor Street to get to Holland Park State School; seeing a Skilling Queenslanders for Work program providing training and employment for young people while restoring the beautiful historic Coorparoo School of Arts Hall to its full glory; seeing girls and women developing into fantastic Aussie rules players, made possible by the new oval at Coorparoo Secondary College and the partnership with the Coorparoo Aussie rules club; working with community leaders to educate the community about how to say 'not now, not ever' to domestic violence; supporting newly established community groups, like Beyond DV to support families affected by domestic violence and the Scarlett May Foundation which supports families with kids in critical and palliative care; getting more classrooms and outside of school hours facilities for families at the Holland Park State School; and getting sporting facilities for students with disabilities at Nursery Road State Special School.

Every time I drive past the Mount Gravatt TAFE, I think about the work we had to do to save that TAFE. Every year I work with the Seville Road State School P&C, the Wynola Girl Guides, the Victor Scouts, the Women's Creative Centre, the Scarlett May Foundation and the Coorparoo Aussie rules club to run a celebration of Queensland Day. Every time I drive past Woolloongabba and I see the Cross River Rail drawing ever closer, I think about the achievements I have made for our community. When I go to Cavendish Road State High School and I see that new hall, I think about the hall that was promised by my predecessor, stolen by Campbell Newman but finally delivered by the Palaszczuk government. I am very pleased and proud of these achievements.

These are just a few of the things I have been able to achieve in my time serving our community and I am very proud of them. Every day I see how these achievements are improving people's lives and building our community. I serve my community each and every day aiming to deliver for my community and build my community. I do this by listening to the people in my community—not just the people who come to my office, but by going door to door, street to street, to community events and bus stops and listening to people. I work with people in our community to find solutions. I advocate for my community, just as I did on Cross River Rail, just as I did about getting the oval refurbished at Coorparoo Secondary College and just as I did about getting the school crossing guard at Holland Park State School. By listening to my community, by working with my community and by advocating for my community, I am able to deliver for my community—deliver outcomes that make people's lives better and deliver outcomes that build our community.

Tata, Dr S; Regional Queensland, Health Services

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.42 pm): In my experience, people who strive for their absolute best more often than not achieve it. I am pleased to inform the House that the Burdekin electorate has yet another resident who has achieved excellence and that Home Hill is now officially home to Queensland's best GP. As well as great news for Home Hill, this award is also great news for all of regional Queensland because it proves that there is a solution to our doctor crisis.


Just over 12 months ago, I met Dr Sarat Tata who had big plans to drastically improve access to health care in Home Hill. Not only did he want to offer new services like pathology and a visiting dentist, he wanted to grow his practice from a one-doctor practice to a three-doctor practice—and what a difference that makes in a small town. In many towns in my electorate, the only doctor is a locum and in others we desperately need more doctors. Both Minister Miles and his federal counterpart are fully aware that the system is broken and that we need to work together to find a solution. Perhaps we need to start by focusing on the positives of being a doctor in a small town like Home Hill.

Dr Tata is a perfect example of what happens when a GP and a community work together. His practice has expanded by 600 patients. A matter of great pride for Dr Tata and his colleagues is the continuity and standard of care they offer and the wide range of ailments they treat. The surgery has become a source of enormous pride in the Burdekin, and in particular the Home Hill community. It is testament to what you can achieve with a bit of vision, commitment, belief and hard work. Rural and regional Queensland offers great opportunities for doctors. An expanding practice, a new surgery, being named North Queensland's best GP and then being named the state's best GP in just over 12 months proves that without a doubt.

Regardless of where we live, I am sure we can all agree that rural communities deserve access to First World medical services. I call on all members to join me in congratulating Dr Tata on his outstanding achievements and to commit to working together to ensure the delivery of health services to regional Queensland. I am confident that, if we can display just a portion of the dedication, commitment and compassion that Dr Tata and his fellow doctors—Dr Satya and Dr Ram—show to their community, we can achieve a health system that treats all Queenslanders equally no matter where they live.

It is imperative that each and every one of us in this chamber commit to providing health services right across rural and regional Queensland. Those people who live in those rural areas go there for a reason. One of those reasons is health care and a second reason is education. If we do not provide those services, we are not going to attract residents to those communities.

Cycling in Taiwan


 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (2.45 pm): This time last year I was getting ready to fly to Taiwan and ride with a Rotary group 1,000 kilometres around Taiwan, leaving from Taipei. I was accompanied by my good mate, Stanley Hsu, whose mum and dad live in Taipei. Taiwan is a very busy place so attempting to ride around it presented its challenges. I rode 680 kilometres before my legs refused to cooperate with me and I had to take the bus. I got to see a lot of Taiwan, both cities and countryside, from seaside to countryside, from rice fields to city congestion. I also got to meet many wonderful people along the way. The food was spectacular and there was also heaps of it. The Taiwanese know how to look after you. Whilst I was riding an average of 100 kilometres per day, I do not believe I managed to lose any weight.

When in Taiwan, I was looked after on the first night by Jason and his wife, Carol, and their two daughters, Sofia and Emily. I was touched by Jason and Carol's story. In about 2006 they applied for a working holiday visa to work and travel around Australia. They came to Australia to work and at the same time recharge their batteries or have a gap year. Their first job was working on a tomato farm north of Melbourne. Although they only stayed three weeks before moving on to Sydney, they say they learnt one hundred ways to cook tomatoes. They told me that farming was not easy, having to start at 5 am and finish at 4 pm with two tea breaks a day.

On arriving in Sydney, their second job was at the Royal Easter Show, where Jason worked on the twisted chips stall and Carol on the Chinese food store. Carol was amazed at how popular sweet and sour chicken was. They commented that this was their first opportunity to see Australians at play and they said how happy and fun everyone was. The next job—or third job as Jason and Carol called it—was for five months, with Carol getting an office job working at 20th Century Fox and Jason getting a job at LG. They enjoyed the hours but were amazed that at 20th Century Fox Carol's Irish boss would yell at her to go home if she stayed after four. Carol said that this was unheard of in Taiwan. She also enjoyed the free milk in the fridge; that was a big hit.

The next part of their trip entailed them travelling 10,082 kilometres after buying a second-hand car in Melbourne. They set off travelling through Sydney, Brisbane and Cairns and many Queensland towns in between. They then headed west to Darwin where they went to Kakadu, then through Central Australia via Alice Springs to Adelaide and then back to Melbourne and home to Taiwan. The cultural difference that Carol and Jason found was they felt Aussies were more concerned about what they did on weekends than what they did during the week. Back in Taiwan, Jason and Carol run an engineering firm.

Drought, Water Supply


 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (2.48 pm): When Dorothea Mackellar penned those famous words 'I love a sunburnt country ... Of droughts and flooding rains,' it is clear that she had Queensland in mind. The drought across 66 per cent of Queensland is biting hard on our domestic water supplies across the state. We are desperately in need of those flooding rains that Dorothea wrote about.

The situation is dire, with 14 communities projected to run out of drinking water by Christmas. More communities are joining that list, sadly, as the future rainfall forecast is not promising. Furthermore, communities in the Gladstone, Gympie, Isaac, Southern Downs and Toowoomba regional council areas are facing critical supply levels. Some, like Cecil Plains and Miriam Vale, have three to four months of drinking water. These communities are already carting water in from other sources. We see in major regional towns like Stanthorpe, Warwick and Goondiwindi that councils are working overtime to find additional water sources. For towns like Warwick, it is not feasible to cart water because of the population size. Many other droughted communities are on strict water restrictions.

It is hard to find alternative supplies, all of which are expensive for ratepayers. Understandably, as a result of the drought, the economies of these communities are taking a hit. The angst and the human cost are mounting day by day. There are families who just cannot afford to continually purchase water from council standpipes. There is a water infrastructure cliff with supplies and the cliff is here. Local governments at the coalface are acutely aware of these supply problems. They are also aware that not enough has been done by this Labor government, and local governments have been warning of these consequences. Years of drought conditions combined with the abolition by Labor of the smaller communities assistance package for water infrastructure certainly have not helped. Much of the water infrastructure across Queensland is reaching an age when it needs significant repair or refurbishment. No wonder we are seeing domestic water shortages in communities.

Without decisive action, the steep and unavoidable decline in water will continue. The Palaszczuk Labor government cannot keep kicking this into the long grass because in this drought there is no grass left to kick into. Queensland communities are on the edge of that water infrastructure cliff and the Palaszczuk Labor government has no plan to address the need for essential water and sewerage services. It is clear that Labor's priorities are all wrong. The release of water from the Paradise Dam and the downsizing of the Rookwood Weir are met with dismay by Queenslanders, who are paying the high price of the Palaszczuk Labor government's inaction on water.

Liberal National Party, Red-Tape Reduction


 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (2.51 pm): Today, as I did last week, I want to examine LNP policy, specifically their promise to reduce red tape. When the LNP talk about reducing red tape, they are talking about cuts—cuts to the protection of Queenslanders, cuts to the protection that stopped Queenslanders being exploited, being robbed and being ripped off. They have not said what protections they want to cut. Firstly, for example, what about project bank accounts? Is that a red-tape measure that they want to cut? We brought in project bank accounts to safeguard payments to Queensland subcontractors. Progress payments for jobs are held in trust accounts, which ensures that the subbies are paid on time and in full. Security of payment is a huge issue for subbies and for working Queenslanders across the state. A total of 200,000 Queenslanders work in the construction industry and PBAs are a great protection for these 200,000 Queenslanders and their families. Are PBAs the kind of red tape that the LNP want to cut?

Secondly, what about combustible cladding in the building trade? We have brought in regulations that state that certain types of buildings that are likely to have combustible cladding due to their height or when they were constructed have to be registered on the Safer Buildings website and the owners have to complete the combustible cladding checklist. I ask the LNP: is this the kind of red tape they want to cut, or are they going to recognise that this is a protection that helps us prevent fires such as the tower disaster in London?

Thirdly, what about the smoke alarm regulations? Once again, is that the kind of red tape that the LNP want to cut? We introduced new laws in 2017 that require people building a new home or undergoing significant renovations to install photoelectric interconnected smoke alarms. They have to be in all bedrooms, in all hallways and on each level of the home. After 2022, all homes that are sold or leased must have these smoke alarms installed. There is no doubt that this is more onerous than previously. Once again I ask: is this the kind of red tape that the LNP want to cut? This is a protection that will save the lives of Queenslanders. Higher standards in smoke alarms means more Queensland homes will be saved and more Queensland families will be safe.

Whenever the LNP talk about what they want to do, at the core is to cut, sack and sell and the promise to reduce red tape. I ask: could that be code for more cuts—cuts to the protections that stop Queenslanders being ripped off, stop them being exploited and stop them being robbed? The LNP needs to tell Queenslanders what cuts they have in mind for them.

Toowoomba South Electorate, Schools


 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (2.54 pm): The western and south-western suburbs of Toowoomba are growing at a substantial rate. There will be another 30,000 people living in those suburbs by 2050. That means that we need our community infrastructure to keep pace. That is why it was a great pleasure to recently take the shadow minister for sport and member for Surfers Paradise to meet the wonderful community groups that are involved with the Glenholme Park sports and community hub. This is a 21st century innovative idea that will bring together many community groups from RSL sub-branches all the way through to a range of sporting clubs: Toowoomba squash, Toowoomba basketball, Brothers netball, Brothers junior Rugby League and Brothers senior Rugby League. This will be a sports and community hub. This facility will have a licensed upgrade; it will be a sports and medical centre. It will bring together a whole range of community and business interests alike into one spot over 20 acres.

This is exactly the kind of infrastructure that the western suburbs of Toowoomba need. I say to chairman Gary, to the board members such as Steve and Joe and the community groups that the shadow minister and I met on the day that we will continue lobbying. We have already arranged meetings with the government—with the minister. We will keep fighting hard for this project because this is the kind of project that will help build community right through the western suburbs of Toowoomba.

Speaking of the western suburbs of Toowoomba, I want to acknowledge the contribution of the community and the P&C at Glenvale State School where it was announced that \$1 million would be put towards the construction of 39 car spaces and a drop-off zone. A total of 2,000 vehicles travel along Glenvale Road every single day and there is only one spot for children to cross safely to get to and from the school. It is imperative that this project gets underway not only to reduce congestion along Glenvale Road but also to ensure people are safe. I want to acknowledge community leader Mel and the principal there, and it is appropriate that it is World Teachers' Day tomorrow. The principal at Glenvale State School is Dave Saxton and I could not imagine a finer educator of young minds. This is pleasing to the broader community at Glenvale. Now we just have to see the sod turned. This needs to be built as soon as possible.

There is one other key part of south-west Toowoomba infrastructure that is missing and it would sit in the electorate of the member for Condamine. It is vital to my schools of Centenary Heights and Harristown that are overcrowded right now, and that is a south-west Toowoomba high school. Together with the member for Condamine we will continue to lobby this government to think about those growing suburbs, buy some land and protect our community for the future.

Stretton Electorate, Schools

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (2.57 pm): This week is State Education Week and tomorrow we are celebrating World Teachers' Day. I say to all the teachers in the electorate of Stretton: happy World Teachers' Day and thank you for all the work that you do to support and educate our young people. Mr Deputy Speaker, as you would be well aware, great teachers are fantastic but it also helps to have fantastic facilities. That is what the Palaszczuk Labor government is putting together in the electorate of Stretton.

At Stretton State College we have 10 new classrooms being built and a specialist learning centre. Finally, there is some great news on Illaweena Street because the performing arts centre being built there is almost complete. Motorists driving past would have seen it come out of the ground and it will be ready very soon. While I am mentioning Stretton State College I do want to congratulate them on their fantastic Night of Stars they held this week.

At Sunnybank Hills State School 20 new classrooms are being built, and their Multifest is happening this Friday. I have been invited to participate in the dunk tank, and I must inform the House I have accepted that invitation. Any honourable member who wants to come along and help raise some money for Sunnybank Hills State School P&C is most welcome. There is more good news for Runcorn Heights State School with six new classrooms on the way.

Kuraby Special School is another important school in my electorate and there is a building refurbishment of block B happening. At Kuraby State School, recently the new outdoor learning area was completed. I know that the principal and the Kuraby State School community are very happy with that. At Runcorn State High School—another fantastic school in the electorate of Stretton—there is a sports court upgrade and new security fencing. I know that the member for Macalister is a former student, so she along with all other members would be very happy to hear about that.

Finally, ICB received a new capital grant as well. This represents great funding for infrastructure and our fantastic local schools in Stretton to support the learning environment for our students—our young people who are our future—and also to enhance the fantastic work of all the teachers. Once again, I say to all the teachers in Stretton and across Queensland—happy World Teachers' Day! Thank you for the work that you do. To finish, we are celebrating World Teachers' Day in Queensland tomorrow. Tomorrow is actually World Pasta Day as well. I do not want to be too cheesy, but for anyone who wants gift ideas for our teachers why not think about some macaroni and cheese, a lasagne, a spaghetti bolognese or maybe a spicy linguini. Happy World Teachers' Day. Happy World Pasta Day.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take

Resumed from 17 October (see p. 3380), on motion of Mr Russo—

That the House take note of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report No. 42 titled *Oversight of the Office of the Queensland Family and Child Commission* tabled on 4 July 2019.




Mr McDONALD (Lockyer—LNP) (3.01 pm): This Labor government's track record on child safety is less than impressive. Since the LNP established the Queensland Family and Child Commission in 2014, this agency has set out to reform and improve our state's child safety system based on the recommendations of the 2013 inquiry *Taking responsibility: a roadmap for Queensland child protection*. The act provides that there are to be two commissioners for the Queensland Family and Child Commission. One of the commissioners is to be appointed as the principal commissioner and at least one person who acts as a commissioner must be a person of Aboriginality or a Torres Strait Islander. Ms Cheryl Vardon is the chief executive and principal commissioner, and Mr Phillip Brooks was the commissioner. Mr Brooks is a descendant of the Bidjara tribe, the Kairi tribe and the Ducabrook clan. Mr Brooks was recently appointed as the Deputy Director-General, Office of Deputy Director-General, Youth Justice for a 12-month contract, and I wish him well in that role. Therefore, the commissioner's role is currently being recruited.


The committee's review of the commission was based on the examination of the annual report and a public meeting held with the Queensland Family and Child Commission on 25 February 2019 before the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. Determined to create a Queensland where children are more than safe, the Queensland Family and Child Commission in the last year has, amongst other things, made recommendations into Queensland's blue card and foster care systems and assisted with the implementation of recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. While the commission should be congratulated for the invaluable work it has undertaken, it is being let down by this Labor government's lacklustre approach to child safety. Queensland routinely fails to meet state and national goals around child safety, and changes are desperately needed.

It is disappointing but sobering that the annual report at appendix D provides an overview of Queensland's performance in relation to achieving state and national goals relating to the child protection system and compares it to other jurisdictions. The Queensland data is less than impressive against state and national figures. The measures that Queensland achieves a 'requires improvement' assessment for are: response times to complete investigation; stability of placement; placement in accordance with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principles; improve safety; and improved education.

One very concerning aspect of the annual report is outlined at page 47. During the last reporting period, 2016-17, the number of child deaths increased 7.9 per cent from the prior year, to 421 child deaths. I do recognise that the 2015-16 year was one of the lowest on record; however, the increase has gone against the trend of the past number of years. It is very disturbing to know that there is a sad story behind every one of those 421 child deaths, and many more could have been prevented. Some 17 per cent of these deaths were from non-natural causes, with suicide taking over from transport related deaths as the most common form of non-natural youth deaths that year—21 suicides. Five children were suspected or confirmed to have died due to assault or neglect, with four of those five children being known to child protection services within 12 months of their deaths. I thank the Queensland Family and Child Commission for the eager manner in which it has taken on its difficult role. What gets measured gets done. Let us hope this Labor government responds to these disturbing measures so that the commissioner's goal to reform and improve child safety across Queensland happens.

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (3.05 pm): The Queensland Family and Child Commission is established under the Family and Child Commission Act 2014 to promote the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people and to improve the child protection system. Schedule 6 of the standing orders provides that the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee has oversight responsibility for the QFCC, including to monitor and review the QFCC's functions and report to the Legislative Assembly on any matter that the committee considers should be drawn to the Legislative Assembly's attention.

Our committee tabled report No. 42 in the 56th Parliament, *Oversight of the Queensland Family and Child Commission*, on 4 July. The committee makes one recommendation in the report: that the House notes the contents of this report. The report focused on the 2017-18 financial year and notes the work the QFCC has achieved, especially given the extremely challenging issues it examined. The committee congratulates Cheryl Vardon, chief executive and principal commissioner, and her team at the QFCC on their performance. We recognise the enormous body of work generated in the context of the QFCC's focus, which is the safety, wellbeing and best interests of all children and young people in Queensland.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.07 pm): I rise to address report No. 42 of the 56th Parliament titled *Oversight of the Queensland Family and Child Commission*, as tabled by the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee on 4 July 2019. The Queensland Family and Child Commission performs a fundamentally important role in our state and has done so since first established in 2014 under the former Newman Liberal National Party government following the Carmody inquiry and report. The purpose of the Queensland Family and Child Commission is to promote the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people and to improve the functioning of Queensland's child protection system.

As a humane society, the protection of our youngest and our most vulnerable is a responsibility that falls upon us all. Unfortunately, the Palaszczuk Labor government has continuously failed in regard to fulfilling its responsibilities on child safety. Indeed, Queensland Labor has failed time and again to protect children and our most vulnerable, stretching across the terms of multiple Labor governments and Labor premiers, including the infamous 2004 election called by then premier Peter Beattie in response to the damning review of his Labor government's failure to protect children from abuse.

The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee is charged with overseeing the Queensland Family and Child Commission. As a part of this duty, the committee also reviews and considers the Queensland Family and Child Commission's annual report, in this instance the annual report for 2017-18. Having analysed the annual report, there are many concerning and in some cases disturbing findings. In 2016-17, 428 Queensland child deaths were recorded, marking an almost eight per cent increase from the prior reporting year. This report highlights some very serious issues, in particular regarding youth suicide. As the annual report outlines, 70 per cent of those deaths were due to external, non-natural causes including suicide. With respect to youth suicide, of the 21 deaths nine of these young people—almost half—were known to the child protection system 12 months prior to their death. The death of any child is simply heartbreaking, but to learn that such deaths have come as a result of suicide and that almost half are known to our child protection system only worsens that heartbreak.


As the Liberal National Party shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, I am particularly concerned by the report's revelation that in 2016-17 some 57 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children had died, an increase from 52 in the year before. Whilst the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality rate continues to be almost twice the rate for non-Indigenous children, most concerning is the fact that the suicide rate amongst Indigenous young persons is a staggering three times the rate for non-Indigenous young people. Much more needs to be done by the state Labor government.

Having previously served on the Queensland Mental Health Commission's advisory council, I take this opportunity to acknowledge Commissioner Ivan Frkovic and the great work of the Queensland Mental Health Commission to advance improvements in youth mental health and strategies to address youth suicide. I have seen firsthand how young people's suffering from educational, social, economic and health disadvantage can lead to the development of mental health conditions, alcohol or drug dependency disorders, self-harm and even suicide.

What this report identifies is that much more needs to be done to create resilient communities and that the Palaszczuk Labor government is failing by not investing enough in education or in our hospital and health system. As we have seen in the recent ABS figures, there are also significant issues

with respect to unemployment here in Queensland. It is only through sound economic management that any government can invest in community wellbeing and families and, ultimately, in the future of our young people.

I wish to finish my contribution by acknowledging the staff of the Queensland Family and Child Commission for their ongoing important work across the board to progress and protect the best interests of Queensland's children and young people. I also acknowledge all of the work that has been undertaken by committee members on both sides of the chamber in preparing this report and the relevant parliamentary secretariat staff. I commend the report to the House.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (3.11 pm): As we know, the Family and Child Commission was established in July 2014 to promote the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people and to improve child protection services. In the 2016-17 annual report the principal commissioner noted several areas the commission had examined. For example, it increased its focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The report stated that the commission had done a great amount of work in breaking down barriers to employment and developing community based approaches. The commission also worked with its partners on initiatives aimed at helping and making changes for vulnerable children and families.


The commission's annual report also provided details of delays in the implementation of recommendations from the 2013 Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry that had not been delivered at the time of the committee report. The committee report indicates that systems reviews highlight disturbing facts around delays in implementation of actions to protect those most vulnerable. A report released in July 2016 following the death of Tiahleigh Palmer identified a number of inadequacies and made 29 recommendations. We all wait for the findings of the review now due. It is very important that we continue to look after those most vulnerable. Of the 17 recommendations of the supplementary review, tabled 18 months ago, only two had been completed at the time of the committee report, with the remainder yet to be finalised. There was some bad news in relation to the prepared report requested by the Premier following the death of Mason Jett Lee, tabled 19 months ago, with only one recommendation being considered.

The commission was asked over two years ago to lead an examination of the blue card and foster care systems in Queensland to identify any gaps and problems with meeting the safety needs of children. We know that at least a reference group was created. There is also some legislation before the House. Of the 42 recommendations, at the time of the committee report work had commenced on only half of the recommendations. Others were still being reflective or under legislative review.

It was disturbing to read in the annual report that the rate of substantiated child protection cases involving Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has been declining since 2013, when other data and reports, like the Smallbone and Jones reports, paint a very different picture in Queensland. New figures show that the child safety system is continuing to suffer under pressures. A road map was developed for implementation of the Carmody reforms. I hope there will be a lot more action, considering that there have been 40 reports over the past 10 years. Children deserve us putting our best efforts into implementing those reforms.

I will provide some statistics. In 2017-18 child safety notifications reached their highest level in five years, at nearly 24,000, and response times in almost half of all cases were between five and 10-days. Statistics from Child Safety show that intakes are up around 120,000 since the Carmody reforms commenced. There are nearly 10,000 children living away from home, about a thousand more than in 2013-14. The data also shows that the number of children subject to substantiated sexual harm in 2017-18 was 345—a jump of 70 from the year before. There are significant challenges in keeping vulnerable children in our society safe. Although others see things in a different light, I believe this committee report should sound alarms bells across the state. I look forward to working with the Family and Child Commission to ensure our kids get the help they need.

I challenge the government's claim that the child safety system has shown improvements when any data sends a different message. We are seeing more children subject to substantiated harm or risk of harm, more children living away from home and more children subject to sexual harm. No matter how we cherrypick the data to sell a story, the fact remains that we need to look after those kids. I encourage everyone to get on board in promoting child safety. It is everyone's responsibility. Everyone in the community has a role to play. Anyone can start by joining one of the many Walks for Daniel—they start tomorrow—and supporting the Daniel Morcombe Foundation. We need to keep the conversation going about how best to keep our kids safe. We look forward to continuing the reforms to ensure that those most vulnerable get the action and the support they need.

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (3.16 pm): It is appropriate that I make my contribution after the shadow child safety minister, because he knows and properly understands the importance of the Queensland Family and Child Commission and the importance of this report. I listened to some of the perfunctory contributions from those opposite. I sometimes wonder whether they understand the true importance of the Queensland Family and Child Commission. Then I realise that those opposite voted against the introduction of the Queensland Family and Child Commission. Therefore, we should not be surprised that it has taken a long time for the recommendations of the Carmody inquiry to be implemented and seen through to their conclusion.

One of the surprising things for me in my first couple of years as a member of this House was the issue that brought people into my electorate office. I was expecting very different people to come and see me in my electorate office. I thought people would come with infrastructure, transport or other law and order related issues. More than any other issue in my first three years in this House, it was child safety. It was not just from biological parents; it was also from foster parents who were deeply concerned about the child safety system and about the love, care and attention they had put into children who were seemingly put back into harm's way, and it was from whistleblowers, whether it be those working in the broader foster care system or those out of the child safety department. People were concerned about what was happening and they wanted me, as a new member of parliament, to know. I have carried a lot of that with me. I am particularly passionate about the protection of our vulnerable and defenceless children. That is what the Queensland Family and Child Commission is all about. It is about protecting them and seeing through the implementation of other inquiries and other activities to make sure our children are protected.

The fact that those opposite—the Labor Party—opposed this organisation even being part of the child protection system in Queensland is shocking. It is shocking that those opposite would have opposed this in the first place. When I think about the children who have died since 2015—Latrell Dodd, Mason Parker, Mason Jett Lee—I think about—

Ms Farmer interjected.

Mr JANETZKI: I take the interjection from the Minister for Child Safety, because under this government's watch we have seen children dying, reports being redacted and delayed for years.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Weir): Member for Toowoomba South—

Mr JANETZKI: I take the interjection from the former child safety shadow minister. We have seen—

Ms Farmer interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: One moment, member for Toowoomba South. Member for Bulimba, there is room on the speaking list if you wish to speak, otherwise the member for Toowoomba South has the call.

Mr JANETZKI: We are still waiting for the release of her secret Mason Jett Lee report and other reports that have been highly redacted, so the—

Dr Rowan interjected.


Mr JANETZKI: They are, and I take the interjection from the member for Moggill; they continue to fail those most vulnerable. We have seen the Labor Party oppose the Queensland Family and Child Commission. We have seen the Labor Party in government as children have died and reports have been redacted and not even released. There is a child safety crisis in Queensland and, as the shadow child safety minister articulated, the statistics show it. They show it and they showed it was a cultural problem even last year during discussion on our private member's bill with regard to Mason Jett Lee or child homicide, and I note that one of the indicators noted by the QFCC related to child homicide in Queensland. There has been no national data released since February 2015. We need to get to the bottom of the protection system of our most defenceless and our most vulnerable, because if we in this House and in this parliament do not stand up for the most defenceless and most vulnerable in our community then who will? We know that it will never be a Labor government that stands up for them. It will only ever be an LNP that cares about our most defenceless.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note


 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (3.22 pm): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 28 of the Transport and Public Works Committee titled *Examination of Auditor-General report No. 1: 2018-19—Monitoring and managing ICT projects* tabled on 19 September 2019.

Report No. 28 of the Transport and Public Works Committee represents a summary of our committee's consideration of the Auditor-General's report No. 1 of 2018-19, titled *Monitoring and managing ICT projects*. Our committee's only recommendation was that the Legislative Assembly note the contents. We noted that historically the implementation of ICT projects has caused difficulties throughout the world. The difficulty of finding solutions that are suitable for the varying applications required by a government as an off-the-shelf product or even one that requires little modification to suit varying applications is extremely difficult. Also, the increasing rate that technology becomes out of date is another key factor in trying to keep these systems relevant and adds to the difficulty.


Overall, our committee considered the Digital Projects Dashboard helps to create a more transparent overview of government ICT projects and that prior to its implementation it was difficult to know which projects departments were undertaking, what stage they were at and the costings involved. We did note that departments need to make sure that the information on the dashboard is more up to date, in particular the status of the project needs to be accurate and end dates updated with reasons if projects are not reaching time lines. We also found that government and department bodies were largely not using the dashboard and that they should be encouraged to use it as it would help with quality assurance of projects as well as helping departments to learn from mistakes when they are made and logged. That has to help with efficiency overall.

We also noted the Queensland government's Chief Information Officer's comments regarding the difficulty in retaining highly skilled personnel and his encouragement that appropriate training and coaching of existing staff needs to be increased to help fill this gap. Overall though, we were satisfied that appropriate action is being taken to address the recommendations made in the Auditor-General's report. I want to thank the officials from the Queensland Audit Office and the Department of Housing and Public Works who attended our public briefing and thanks also, as always, to our committee members and our hardworking secretariat staff for their work on this report.

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (3.25 pm): I rise to speak on report No. 28 of the Transport and Public Works Committee. The Queensland Audit Office plays a vital role in providing parliament with independent assurance of public sector accountability through reporting on the results of its financial and performance audits. The Auditor-General's report was referred to our committee for consideration. The report presented the results of the QAO's performance audit as to whether the government's ICT program of work was achieving its objectives efficiently, economically and effectively.

The Queensland Audit Office identified a number of concerns which included major projects not being shown on the dashboard and, where the project was reported, information around the project that had changed over time was not sufficiently reported. Figure 2B of the Auditor-General's report shows the total estimated costs of projects that departments decided not to publish on the dashboard. The education department decided to report on projects that were mainly transformational and therefore 10 projects were not reported on the dashboard. The health department decided to report on projects greater than \$1 million rather than \$100,000 and therefore two projects were not reported on the dashboard. The Department of Justice and Attorney-General decided to report on projects greater than \$500,000 and therefore two projects were not on the dashboard, and it goes on.

With regard to ICT projects, the government does not have a very good record on many of these projects given its history. There was the \$1.2 billion debacle of the Queensland Health payroll system where thousands of health workers were underpaid, overpaid or not paid at all, representing the epic failure of that whole set up. Sadly, the most recent one is the hospital ordering system. There are people who come to see me because they want to be paid because they cannot pay their staff because they have not been paid by the health department for services they provided. It is very disappointing when there are people sitting in my office worrying about how they are going to pay their staff next week because they do not have the money in the bank from the health department. It is very heartbreaking to have those people sitting in front of you hoping that you can get something done. They are just a few of the issues that we have to look into and the Auditor-General's reports are very valuable reports into these issues.


 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (3.28 pm): I rise to speak to the report titled *Examination of Auditor-General report No. 1: 2018-19—Monitoring and managing ICT projects*. The committee received a public briefing from the Queensland Audit Office on 29 October 2018 and the Department of Housing and Public Works at that public hearing. The committee also wrote to DHPW and all departments seeking an update on various matters earlier this year in relation to this report. That was specifically in relation to progress on the implementation of the Auditor-General's recommendations. Responses were received from all departments.

The Auditor-General made a range of recommendations and the parliamentary committee examined those recommendations. Those recommendations included enhancing the ICT dashboard and updating the publishing guidelines by working with departments to publish one set of agreed criteria and supporting guidelines to be used by all departments; requiring departments to include more information about key decisions and corrective actions for projects that changed significantly; and strengthening whole-of-government assurance frameworks that currently complement departmental processes for monitoring ICT projects by a range of measures.

The report also contains recommendations for all departments. Those include implementing efficient and automated processes for collecting, collating, approving and publishing dashboard data; publishing data to the dashboard that is consistent with the QGCIO publishing criteria and guidelines; and providing sufficient detail in the explanatory notes when changes are made to the scope, time or budget of projects. The Auditor-General also made recommendations in relation to using learnings from project health checks and gate reviews and monitoring and managing programs and projects.

From those recommendations, the Auditor-General concluded that the Queensland government has improved the government's process for ICT projects and programs since 2013 and that the QGCIO has designed the ICT dashboard and made it available to the public and has also implemented some additional investment and assurance review processes. The Auditor-General also concluded that the ICT dashboard enables transparency about the number and planned cost of major projects across the department.

It was a fairly short and concise inquiry. I thank officers of the Queensland Audit Office and the Department of Housing and Public Works for attending the public hearing that the committee held. I thank the committee staff for their work on making the report and facilitating the hearings. I thank all committee members for the positive manner in which they conducted discussions and, of course, I thank the committee chair.

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (3.31 pm): I rise to make some comments about report No. 28 of the Transport and Public Works Committee titled *Examination of Auditor-General report No. 1: 2018-19—Monitoring and managing ICT projects*. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge my fellow committee members: Mr Ted Sorenson, Mr Robbie Katter, Mrs Jo-Ann Miller, Mr Shane King and Mr Bart Mellish. While I have Mr Bart Mellish in my sights, I remind him that the LNP has endorsed Mrs Amanda Cooper as the LNP candidate for Aspley. Although I do not want to pre-empt the outcome of the upcoming election, I suggest that it is the beginning of the end for the current member for Aspley.


The Auditor-General's report notes that the ICT dashboard is to make it easy to see at a glance all significant ICT projects and how they are tracking. The Auditor-General's office identified 32 projects with a total planned expenditure of \$161.4 million that were not on the IT dashboard. There was no consistency in the data currency across the sector. The main reason for that was that each department had its own process to manage and monitor reports. There was inconsistency in how the departments reported the various attributes of their projects, including publishing only those projects with approved budgets, which can be for one year or the entire project; publishing programs and not projects within the program; and reporting time and cost information on the stages of a project rather than the whole project. The QAO further found that whole-of-government and departmental governing bodies were not using the information that was available on the ICT dashboard and assurance processes to increase the success rate of ICT programs and projects by minimising repeating past mistakes.

I find that a worrying process. I am not up to date with technology, but I find it most amazing that government departments are not across what they should be in doing these sorts of projects. Obviously, the committee examined this issue and stated in its report that the rate at which technology is becoming outdated makes it a problem for people to keep up. The committee noted comments regarding the difficulty in retaining highly skilled personnel. There needs to be a lot of work done in that space to make sure that the millions of dollars that taxpayers invest in IT technology is being used properly.

I close with commenting on the most important statement in the whole report, which is—

The importance of plain English, clear and concise project journey information, in line with published guidance.

To me, that is the most important statement in the whole report. It is possibly why ICT projects and all of this technology is not being used properly—because people simply cannot understand how to use it.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (3.35 pm): I rise to add my comments to the debate on the Transport and Public Works Committee report on the Auditor-General's report titled *Monitoring and managing ICT projects*. In response to the comments made by the member for Aspley, I point out that the Auditor-General could say that these systems have improved since 2013 because they did not exist before 2013. The whole reason the ICT dashboard—

Ms Bates: I set up the dashboard.

Mr HART: I take that interjection. The member for Mudgeeraba has just advised the House that she set it up. The reason she set it up was that we were having massive ICT failures. Who could possibly forget the Health payroll system? It started out at, I think, something like a \$12 million project and it ended up costing \$1.2 billion and it still does not work. Obviously, the Labor Party is just no good at all at ICT.


The ICT dashboard is pretty straightforward. It is just a series of coloured lights. If it is green, it is good. If it is red, it has a problem. It is pretty simple. The Queensland Government Chief Information Officer has set down guidelines that the departments should follow, but that is not mandatory. That is a problem in itself. Even though the government has the dashboard and it is releasing advice to the public so they can see what is going on inside the government when it comes to ICT projects, departments do not have to put information on the dashboard. That was identified in the Auditor-General's report. It states that there are weaknesses with controls over the accuracy, leading to reduced user confidence. Of course, people are not going to have confidence in the dashboard if half the projects are not put up on the dashboard and, of the ones that are put on the dashboard, they do not mean anything.

There are 32 ICT projects with a planned expenditure of \$161.4 million that, despite meeting the guidelines for inclusion, are not shown on the ICT dashboard. The reason they are not there is that this government is not open, transparent and accountable, as it keeps telling us that it is. In fact, if the government cannot keep to a budget, it cannot meet a time frame and things are just not working properly, it changes the scope of the works and says, 'It has now blown out by so many millions of dollars, so we are still on target even though things have changed.' That is how transparent and accountable this Labor Party is.

As I said, we only have to look at the Health payroll debacle. We now have a medical records system that crashes constantly. We have the S/4HANA hospital ordering system. As the member for Hervey Bay said, people are just not receiving payment for their bills. We have the \$24 million SPER ICT program that was axed by the Deputy Premier when it failed. My understanding is that the government is now using something called Microsoft Dynamics, which, apparently, you can just buy off the shelf at Officeworks. It does not even contain a debt recovery module. How that is going to work for the SPER program is completely beyond me.

Energy Queensland has two programs. One is a geographical information system to show where the structure and equipment of Ergon and Energex is. It did not work. There was \$40 million to \$50 million blown there apparently. They also have an enterprise resource planning system that has not worked since 2017.

What is really worrying to me, as I have been hearing on the grapevine from the people who are coming and talking to me as the shadow for this area, is that Treasury have put out an edict that no new software that has already been put in place is to go live because they do not want it to fail before the next election. They want to hide the fact that they are hopeless at ICT. One cannot trust Labor with a calculator let alone the government's ICT program.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (3.40 pm): I too rise to give some commentary in relation to report No. 28 of the Transport and Public Works Committee. I will cut to the chase here in relation to this audit report and turn to page 5, 2.32, the audit conclusions, and quote directly from the report—

QAO found that there are several weaknesses with the completeness and controls over the accuracy of the content within the dashboard, resulting in reduced user confidence in its reliability.

I think that pretty much says it all. Just as oil and water do not mix, neither do IT and the ALP. There is a fundamental flaw every time these IT geniuses are in charge of an ICT platform across all the silo management that they oversee. Something does not compute. Back in 2013 the member for

Mudgeeraba introduced very sensible reform when it came to public administration in this state after the failed efforts of the previous Bligh government coterie of ministers that absolutely had at its heart ICT overruns galore, with the absolute motherhood of all ICT blowouts, which has been covered adequately on this side of the chamber—and who could forget it—the \$1.25 billion health blowout. I think I read somewhere it almost worked out to be more inexpensive if they gave virtually every employee in the state Public Service their own PC and MYOB package. That is how much it blew out, as the member for Burleigh said, from about \$24 million to \$1.2538 billion or thereabouts. Absolutely hopeless!

Labor's track record when it comes to IT is infamous. We are aware that Paul Lucas was popping champagne corks, waiting to say, 'Yep, good enough. Let's go live.' ICT may be a bit new to some. Some of us absolutely love it. The reality is this: dashboards are important. At the very heart of it, what it comes down to is abject waste: waste of not just millions but potentially billions.

If I go to the preface of the report, the chair has said as part of his foreword—

The committee is satisfied that departments are taking appropriate action to address the Auditor-General's recommendations and has recommended that the Legislative Assembly notes the contents of this report.

How? It is not defined in the report exactly how that committee is absolutely satisfied that we will not have a continuation of the scoping blowout with ICT. It does not address that anywhere. It is a bit of bedside reading. It did not take too long to read this particular audit report. The pages contained within the cover to the end page are damning. At the end of the day the situation is that many whole-of-government ICT report systems have absolutely failed on any measured scorecard.

A lot of people on the other side of the chamber like to harp on about what they did in their previous union careers. Dashboards have always played a very quick ready reckoner role in many private sector areas of expertise. The fact of the matter is this: if they are used wisely they save time, quality and cost—that famous triangle that you learn literally a block to my immediate left at QUT with any basic undergraduate business course. Is it any wonder that we have had abject failures when it comes to health and the rail fail? It does not matter what system or what department, the Labor Party, with its silo managerial practices, has no clue when it comes to the importance of dashboards and ICT. We had the genius member, the transport minister, try to launch a new ticketing system only 48 hours ago but was let down by an IT issue in track signalling. At the end of the day, as I said at the start, it is akin to oil trying to mix with water—the two do not compute. This report is damning and I refuse to simply accept it.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

INNOVATION, TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr PEGG (Stretton—ALP) (3.46 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee report No. 20 titled *Examination of Auditor-General Report No. 7 of 2018-19: Conserving threatened species* tabled on 19 September 2019.

This report is all about conserving threatened species. I notice that the shadow minister, the member for Broadwater, is on the speaking list.

Ms Bates: So is the member for Aspley! Threatened species!

Mr PEGG: We all know that the member for Mudgeeraba does not need to worry about being a threatened species.

Ms Bates: Because I never will be—not in Mudgeeraba. That will never happen in Mudgeeraba.

Mr PEGG: But certainly the member for Nanango and the member for Everton should well be worried about becoming threatened species.

Ms Bates: Come down and run in Mudgeeraba! Seventeen per cent of the vote Labor is getting in Mudgeeraba. Come down!

Mr PEGG: I think in the member for Mudgeeraba's electorate—and I take all her interjections—it will be the voters of Mudgeeraba who might be making her a threatened species next election. I think that will be the case. While we are talking, the member for Mudgeeraba is very enthusiastic every time the member for Broadwater's name is mentioned.

While we are talking about this important report in relation to threatened species, I flicked through the channels last night and I saw the member for Broadwater on *Sky News After Dark* and I had to check the calendar. I thought maybe it was 31 October, one of the member for Kurwongbah's favourite days, but, no, it was not Halloween. As long as the member for Broadwater continues to be on a speaking list on these topics, and on this important report, the member for Mudgeeraba may not be a threatened species, but the member for Everton and member for Nanango certainly are. They are very threatened species in this place.

I have talked about what the member for Broadwater has done to create some threatened species in this place, but in the time I have remaining I want to talk about what the government has done to conserve threatened species. The member for Broadwater is creating threatened species and we are saving threatened species, although in the case of the member for Everton, particularly the member for Mudgeeraba, and certainly the member for Nanango, they are threatened species who are beyond saving.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Weir): Order! We will have a bit of quiet in the House. Member for Stretton, it is about time you talked about this report. You have not even touched on it.

Mr PEGG: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I was just coming to the report when I was so rudely interrupted by the member for Southern Downs. Unfortunately, he is not a threatened species, although many of us wish that he were.


Opposition members interjected.

Mr PEGG: I take all of those interjections. In March of this year the government passed legislation to introduce a new class of private protected area, special wildlife reserves. Special wildlife reserves will give national park level protection to privately owned areas of outstanding conservation value. Of course, consistent with what I said earlier, members opposite opposed those initiatives. They were not interested in trying to conserve threatened species. They create threatened species, both inside and outside this House. Unfortunately and sadly, they have a very strong track record in relation to that.

I note that funding is provided for species listed as threatened under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 or the Nature Conservation Act 1992. None of the members I mentioned are listed in that legislation at the moment. The federal government might have to make some amendments there. Activities funded include weeding, revegetation and pest control to enhance and protect threatened species' habitat, as well as fire management, fencing, and flora and fauna surveys and mapping.

Mr Bleijie: Mate, you should leave those jokes to the big hitters, okay?

Mr PEGG: I am glad we have a sighting of the member for Kawana. I am glad that we have a sighting of another interesting species on the opposite side of the House. It is important to note that since accepting the findings of the Auditor-General's report No. 7 of 2018-19 titled *Conserving threatened species* and mapping out its responses, the Department of Environment and Science has made progress to improve the effectiveness in identifying, protecting and recovering Queensland's threatened species. Conserving threatened species is certainly a priority for this side of the House. It should be for the other side of the House as well. I urge those opposite to consider our initiatives and work hard to conserve threatened species.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (3.51 pm): I too rise to speak on the Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee report No. 20 titled *Examination of Auditor-General report No. 7 of 2018-19: Conserving threatened species*. From the outset, I will say that I will actually speak on the report and will not waffle on about threatened species over here when there are enough threatened species over there.

Ms Bates: The member for Gaven, the member for Aspley.

Mr BOOTHMAN: I take that interjection from the member for Mudgeeraba. The Auditor-General's job is to investigate, do quality assurance of and hold the public sector to some type of accountability, as well as to check on its performance. I found this committee inquiry quite interesting. In Queensland, 955 species are listed as threatened wildlife. Of those, 33 are extinct, 301 are endangered and 621 are vulnerable. The Auditor-General's report states that the number of species listed in legislation as threatened is likely to be understated, so it is curious that those opposite believe that the legislation does not cover all threatened species.

The Auditor-General made quite a few findings in relation to threatened species, including that the department was not proactively nominating species for listing or encouraging relevant stakeholders to make nominations. The report found that delays occur between the assessment process and the listing of appropriate threatened species in legislation. It also found that the department did not provide a periodic review to the existing classifications. For a government that takes the high moral ground when it comes to the environment, that throws a bit of egg in their faces as they are not keeping up with their own philosophies. If you think about it, that is rather hypocritical.

Further to those comments, the Auditor-General's report states that the overall focus on threatened species is not strategic enough to help individual threatened species. The Auditor-General stated that some progress has been made, but when it comes to individual species the government's approach reminds me of the Great Barrier Reef bill that we recently passed in the chamber which affected all of the Queensland coastline from Bundaberg up. It was a one-size-fits-all approach and in his report the Auditor-General states that obviously such an approach does not work very well.

Mr Bleijie: Talk about the Stretton species.

Mr BOOTHMAN: We have plenty of threatened species over there.

Ms Bates: No, the 'Stretton species'.

Mr BOOTHMAN: There is one Stretton species over there and another Stretton species is moving away from him. What have you done, Stretton?

Mr Bleijie: The 'backbenchersaurus-foreversaurus'.

Mr BOOTHMAN: I take that interjection; that is quite good. Returning to the report, the Auditor-General found that plenty more could be done, but it is not being done. We had a closed hearing and obviously cannot talk about it, although comments from that closed hearing would sit very well and should be put into the public domain. Obviously they will not be disclosed.

I know that soon the member for Broadwater will stand up and talk about the report. He will make a reasonable and very valid contribution, which will be far better than that of the member for Stretton, who would rather talk about the opposition and his love affair with the member for Broadwater. He spoke about the member for Broadwater throughout his whole contribution.


Mr PEGG: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at the suggestion that I am having a love affair with the member for Broadwater. I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Weir): Member for Stretton, do you want that comment withdrawn?

Mr PEGG: Yes, I do, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Theodore, do you withdraw?

Mr BOOTHMAN: I withdraw.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (3.56 pm): I would like to thank the Queensland Audit Office for the comprehensive Auditor-General's report No. 7 of 2018-19 titled *Conserving threatened species*. This report, which was tabled in November 2018, focused on the status at that time of the strategy that the government had in place to protect our threatened species and their habitats. Currently, Queensland is host to 995 listed threatened species. Of those, 441 are threatened nationally, and 731 are native flora and 224 are native fauna. The report identified the main threats to our native plants and animals as habitat loss, invasive plants and animals, fire and climate change.

The audit highlighted some concerning gaps in the Department of Environment and Science's implementation of a cohesive and coordinated strategy to manage conservation and recovery efforts, particularly in the process of listing threatened species in Queensland. I referred to this in part 2 of the Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019.

In March 2017 Queensland signed the *Intergovernmental memorandum of understanding—agreement on a common assessment method for listing of threatened species and threatened ecological communities*. The audit identified that there is a long way to go to ensure it is able to meet the obligations of that MOU. As outlined in the audit, it is imperative that DES, DAF and DNRME work together to develop a clear strategy to protect and restore threatened species' populations. Much work continues to be done by dedicated stakeholders, including QPWS, the Environmental Policy and Planning unit, scientists, traditional owners and local conservation groups to rebuild those fragile

habitats. From a legislative perspective, it was vital for the government to coordinate as well as fund the collective efforts of those groups to implement the common assessment method—CAM—and align legislation accordingly to remove discrepancies with the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

The CAM has the potential to be a highly effective and relatively simple mechanism to record, approve and monitor threatened species across every state and territory in Australia in line with the International Union for Conservation of Nature's best practice model. Having a transparent and consistent assessment process that is aligned with national data will allow both state and federal funding to be coordinated and prioritised based on need as opposed to the ad hoc nature in which funds have been disbursed in the past. Pleasingly, this has commenced as part of the passing of the GBR bill.

In addition, as the audit recommends, Queensland needs to urgently finalise a fully funded protected area strategy. To save time and money it would make sense to refresh and implement the well-regarded biodiversity strategy for Queensland.

Debate, on motion of Ms Bolton, adjourned.

SUMMARY OFFENCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Consideration in Detail

Resumed from p. 3652.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr RYAN (4.00 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 After clause 6

Page 7, after line 29—

insert—

6A Insertion of new s 808B

After section 808A—

insert—

808B Annual report about dangerous attachment devices

- (1) As soon as practicable after the end of each financial year, the commissioner must prepare and give to the Minister a report about the use by police officers of particular powers relating to dangerous attachment devices.
- (2) The report must include the following information for the financial year to which it relates—
 - (a) when and where a person was searched under section 29 in the circumstances mentioned in section 30(1)(k);
 - (b) when and where a vehicle was searched under section 31 in the circumstances mentioned in section 32(1)(p);
 - (c) if any thing was seized in a search mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b)—
 - (i) when and where the thing was seized; and
 - (ii) a description of the thing; and
 - (iii) whether the thing was returned, disposed of or destroyed.
- (3) The report must not include any information identifying, or that is likely to lead to the identification of, a person who was the subject of an exercise of a power mentioned in subsection (2).
- (4) Within 14 sitting days after receiving the report, the Minister must table a copy of the report in the Legislative Assembly.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, explanatory notes to Hon. Mark Ryan's amendments [\[1951\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



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

2

After clause 10

Page 8, after line 16—

insert—

10A Amendment of s 10A (Unlawful assembly)

(1) Section 10A—

insert—

(1A) If—

- (a) 3 or more persons are present together for a common purpose; and
- (b) any of the following circumstances exist—

- (i) 1 or more of the persons is using, or is fastened or otherwise directly or indirectly connected to, a vehicle, device or object that obstructs, or is likely to obstruct, the use of transport infrastructure by an emergency vehicle;

Example—

A person who is fastened to a boat trailer that has been stopped or parked in the middle of an intersection.

- (ii) 1 or more of the persons is fastened or otherwise directly or indirectly connected to transport infrastructure in a way that obstructs, or is likely to obstruct, the use of transport infrastructure by an emergency vehicle;

Examples—

- A person who has glued a part of their body to the surface of a road in a way that obstructs the use of the road by a vehicle.
- A person who is fastened to a bridge in a way that obstructs the use of the bridge by a vehicle.

- (iii) 1 or more of the persons is behaving in a way, other than a way mentioned in subparagraph (i) or (ii), that would cause a person in the vicinity to reasonably suspect the behaviour is intended to cause traffic congestion or otherwise interfere with the use of a public place by a member of the public;

each of the persons commits an offence.

Maximum penalty—25 penalty units or 1 year's imprisonment.

(1B) However, subsection (1A) does not apply in relation to a person who uses a dangerous attachment device in the circumstances mentioned in section 14C.

(1C) Subsection (1D) applies if—

- (a) a person has a conviction for an offence against subsection (1A); and
- (b) a court convicts a person of a subsequent offence against subsection (1A).

(1D) The court must make an order sentencing the person to a period of imprisonment for the offence that includes a period of detention in custody for a minimum of 7 days.

(2) Section 10A(2), 'The'—

omit, insert—

For subsections (1) and (1A), the

(3) Section 10A(2)(c), after '(1)(b)'—

insert—

or the suspicion mentioned in subsection (1A)(b)(iii)

(4) Section 10A(3)—

insert—

emergency vehicle means a vehicle driven by—

- (a) an officer of the Queensland Ambulance Service in the course of the officer's duty; or
- (b) an officer of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service in the course of the officer's duty; or
- (c) a police officer of the Queensland Police Service, or the police service of the Commonwealth or another State in the course of the police officer's duty.

Non-government amendment (Mr Watts) negated.

Clause 11—



Mr RYAN (4.02 pm): I move the following amendments—

2 Clause 11 (Insertion of new pt 2, div 2A)

Page 9, lines 10 to 12—

omit, insert—

- (2) To remove any doubt, it is declared that none of the following things is an attachment device unless it is a component of a dangerous attachment device—

3 Clause 11 (Insertion of new pt 2, div 2A)

Page 11, lines 21 to 27—

omit, insert—

dangerous substance or thing, for a dangerous attachment device, means—

- (a) any thing likely to explode, when struck or compressed, causing injury to a person; or
 (b) any thing likely to cut a person's skin while a person is being extricated from the dangerous attachment device; or
 (c) any substance or thing that requires a person to wear protective clothing to safely handle, cut or break up the thing while a person is being extricated from the dangerous attachment device.

Amendments agreed to.

Mr WATTS: I move the following amendment—

3 Clause 11 (Insertion of new pt 2, div 2A)

Page 12, after line 30—

insert—

- (3A) Subsection (3B) applies if—
 (a) a person has a conviction for an offence against this section; and
 (b) a court convicts the person of a subsequent offence against this section.
 (3B) The court must make an order sentencing the person to a period of imprisonment for the offence that includes a period of detention in custody for a minimum of 7 days.

Amendment No. 3 will ensure that any protester who is a repeat offender and convicted twice of a dangerous attachment device offence will receive a mandatory minimum seven days imprisonment. This is important to give teeth to this legislation. It is pointless having this legislation if all we are going to see is a revolving door of justice and these people back out on the street in no time at all.

With this particular amendment there is a bit of a democratic dilemma as to whose rights trump whose rights. Is it someone's right to continually bring one of these dangerous devices out into a public place and use it to cause absolute chaos on our streets? If the Premier wants to back up the rhetoric that we have seen in the media, if the Premier wants to put some teeth into the bill that is before this House and if the Premier wants to act and not just send up some virtual signal to grab a few votes off people who are frustrated and cannot get to work, then there needs to be some consequence for people's actions.

What we see is a dilemma as to whose rights trump whose rights. Someone who brings one of these devices into a public place and locks on and disrupts everybody's day, causes businesses to lose money, stops people from getting to work, stops mums from picking up their children—causes all of this chaos in our community—deserves to be punished. They deserve to be held accountable. There must be some consequence for their actions.

All we are saying is that there have to be consequences for repeat offenders of a particular action. We know the government backs this because it has brought in this bill about this device. It is now time for the government to stand up for what it said it would do. The Palaszczuk Labor government has said that it will take strong action if people bring these devices into a public place.

We do not see any strong action in the bill. What we see is a potential revolving door. What we want to see is a compulsory jail term for these people. It will not do the rest of the public any harm to have them removed from our streets for seven days and incarcerated so that they can have a serious think about what it takes to be a law-abiding citizen in Queensland. An unlawful protest, breaking the law, endangering themselves, endangering other people, complete and utter chaos on our streets is unacceptable. We need to see some teeth in this bill. That is what this amendment is about.

Mr BERKMAN: It is clearly an absurd overreach in the amendment proposed by the LNP. I do not know whether it is more or less absurd than proposed amendment No. 2 circulated by the shadow minister. What needs to be said about this is that it is the most predictable outcome as a result of the

government introducing the bill. I have my issues with the bill, but let us be clear about the fact that the political cover that has been provided by Labor cracking down on peaceful protesters has invited precisely this kind of even more egregious overreach by the LNP. When we get to the point where they sit on the other side of the chamber again—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BERKMAN: We will all rue the day we get to that. The mind boggles that Labor has failed to see what they have done here by shifting the politics. Maybe the only thing more obvious than the LNP's response is the fact that pandering to the scare tactics and chest beating of the *Courier-Mail* is not going to buy Labor any favour with them when we get to the next election. It is a pointless exercise in mind-bogglingly bad politics. That is all I have to say about that.

Mr RYAN: This bill was always about dangerous attachment devices and ensuring our police have the powers to disrupt their use. The amendment moved by the member for Toowoomba North reinforces why people can trust Labor to always get the balance right between preserving and protecting people's rights and ensuring that we have appropriate laws in place to protect our emergency services workers and to provide our police with the powers they need to interrupt, in this instance, the use of dangerous attachment devices.

It is always very dangerous to establish mandatory sentencing frameworks because it does not take into account the variety of circumstances that may arise. We oppose the opposition's amendment because we believe that we have the balance right in the bill as drafted. It provides enough powers for our police to disrupt the use of dangerous attachment devices as well as also enhances penalties, which creates a deterrent effect.

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

AYES, 38:

LNP, 37—Bates, Batt, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Hunt, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Watts, Weir, Wilson.

Ind, 1—Costigan.

NOES, 49:

ALP, 46—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Lynham, Madden, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, B. O'Rourke, C. O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pegg, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Stewart, Trad, Whiting.

Grn, 1—Berkman.

KAP, 2—Dametto, Katter.

Pair: Miller, Stuckey.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Watts) negatived.

Mr SPEAKER: Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House, the time allocated for this stage of the bill has expired. In accordance with sessional order 2B: the question is that clause 11, as amended, stand part of the bill. A division has been called. Ring the bells for one minute.

Division: Question put—That clause 11, as amended, stand part of the bill.

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

Clause 11, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

Division: Question put—That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

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

Bill read a third time.


Long Title

Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date and Referral of Auditor-General's Report


 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (4.21 pm): I seek to advise the House of the determinations made by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly at its meeting today. The committee has resolved, pursuant to standing order 136, that the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee report on the Natural Resources and Other Legislation (GDA2020) Amendment Bill by 6 December 2019.

The committee has resolved that, pursuant to standing order 194B, the Auditor-General's report 4 of 2019-20 titled—*Water: 2018-19 results of financial audits* be referred to the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee.

MOTOR ACCIDENT INSURANCE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 14 June (see p. 2126).

Second Reading

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (4.22 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Firstly, I would like to thank the committee for its report, tabled 9 August 2019, on the Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I would also like to thank those who made submissions to the committee on the bill and those who appeared as witnesses as part of the committee's inquiry. I acknowledge the committee's one recommendation, which was that the bill be passed.

The Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 is about protecting Queenslanders: their right to privacy of their personal information; their right to choose whether to make a personal injury claim in relation to a motor vehicle accident; and their right to seek counsel from a lawyer of their own choosing. It is about protecting their right not to be harassed, intimidated and bullied by unscrupulous operators more interested in their own financial gain rather than any supposed altruistic desire to inform the individual of their legal rights.

This bill is about protecting the integrity of Queensland's compulsory third-party insurance scheme, which is widely known as one of the most stable and affordable CTP schemes in the country. It is imperative that we ensure it continues to support those who are tragically injured in motor vehicle accidents while at the same time providing affordable coverage to drivers.

I want to make this point very clear from the outset: this bill is not about stopping meritorious compensation claims or preventing an injured person from being informed of their legal rights. It is not about impeding access to legal representation, nor is it about preventing law practices from promoting their services, donating funds to worthy causes or providing obligation-free services to members of community groups with which they have a long-standing association. This bill is about stopping the unrelenting, uninvited and harassing phone calls being made to Queenslanders. Too many people are being aggressively pursued by claim farmers. They are even being pressured into making illegitimate CTP claims when they have not been involved in car accidents.

Claim farming can take many forms, but it predominately involves members of the public being cold called by someone they do not know and asked whether they or anyone in their family has been involved in a motor vehicle accident. These calls may originate from overseas or local call centres. Often the call is disguised in such a way that it appears to be coming from a local or legitimate number to increase the likelihood of the call being answered. They falsely claim they are calling on behalf of an insurer, the CTP regulator, the Motor Accident Insurance Commission or another government agency. They use nefarious tactics and misleading information to solicit or induce the individual to make a compensation claim. Their sole aim is to make money for themselves by eliciting the individual's personal details and commitment to make a claim, which they then sell for a fee to a law practice to progress the claim.

Queenslanders have had enough and want these unsolicited calls to stop. They want decisive action on this, and so do I. Like many others, I too have been exposed to this aggressive and unethical practice with my own son, aged 10 at the time, being interrogated quite aggressively by an unscrupulous

claim farmer. These callers really are shameful. Several examples of claim-farming behaviour were presented to the committee during their examination of this bill, and I would like to refer to two of those examples to highlight the disgusting behaviour this bill aims to stamp out.

A woman was involved in a motor vehicle accident. She sustained horrific injuries and her adult son was tragically killed. Approximately two years after the accident, the grieving mother was contacted repeatedly by claim farmers asking about the accident and pressuring her into making a claim. She pleaded with the callers to leave her alone, telling them she already had a lawyer working on her claim. They would not take no for an answer. The woman reported that each one of those calls made her relive the accident and the traumatic loss of her son. This was incredibly distressing and impeded her recovery after the accident.

On another occasion, a woman who lives alone was startled to find a stranger at her door. The person advised they had purchased her name and were going to act on her behalf in a personal injuries claim. The woman asked the person, who was a lawyer, where they had purchased her name from, but the lawyer refused to divulge this information. The woman was highly distressed by the fact that a lawyer, with whom she had no prior contact, had her home address and information about a motor vehicle accident she had been involved in. After the lawyer left, the woman was continually called to pressure her into signing documentation to progress a CTP claim.

There are many more examples I could provide. Clearly, such behaviour is not aimed at informing people about their legal rights. The Motor Accident Insurance Commission continues to receive calls from concerned members of the public. At last count, over 1,500 people had taken the time to report such behaviour to the commission. While many more calls go unreported, based on customer survey data held by MAIC it is estimated that over 1.5 million Queenslanders have been targeted by claim farmers. Unfortunately, unless this bill is passed these types of harassing calls are likely to continue unabated. It also leaves our CTP scheme exposed to the risk of fraudulent claims being made, increasing overall claims costs and placing upward pressure on CTP premiums. Legislative reform is therefore imperative to protect the integrity of our well-performing CTP scheme.

Let me now address key elements of the bill aimed at eliminating the types of behaviour I have mentioned. Firstly, the bill creates new claim-farming offences—the first of which prohibits a person giving, receiving, agreeing to give or receive, or allowing or causing someone else to give or receive consideration for a claim referral or potential claim referral. This offence targets not only those who pay claim farmers for referring a claimant or potential claimant to them or someone else, but the claim farmers themselves who receive payment for these referrals. A breach of this offence exposes both the payer and the payee to a maximum penalty of 300 penalty units or approximately \$40,000 for an individual and \$200,000 for a corporation.

Consideration for a claim referral or potential claim referral is defined in the bill as ‘a fee or other benefit but does not include a gift, other than money, or hospitality if the gift or hospitality has a value of \$200 or less’. The definition permits the giving of a small gift or hospitality in recognition that this is commonly given in developing brand recognition and building business and social relationships. The bill prescribes a \$200 value for such gifts or hospitality to provide guidance on what is considered reasonable but is not so high as to enable the farming of claims to continue.

Importantly, the bill makes it clear that advertising or promoting a service or person which is made to the public or a group of persons that results in a claimant using the service or person is not captured by the offence provision. For example, it does not prevent a law practice from promoting or advertising its services through sponsorship of the local sporting club resulting in the firm’s logo being emblazoned on the players’ jerseys or on signage at the clubhouse.

The bill also expressly provides that the prohibition on giving or receiving consideration for a claim referral does not capture payments made due to the sale, or partial sale, of a law practice which results in the referral of a claimant to the new practice. In these circumstances, the amount paid for the referral of the claim to the new practice cannot be more than the current legal costs incurred in managing the claim for the claimant and must be disclosed to the claimant in a costs agreement. This protects the claimant from potentially paying excessive costs should the claimant choose to retain the new practice. It also ensures the exemption does not allow claim farming to continue under the guise of law practice sales.

There is also an additional deterrent for law practices that choose to engage in claim farming. If an associate or any employee of a law practice is convicted of a claim-farming offence, the law practice is not entitled to recover any legal costs or disbursements on that claim and must repay any amount received from the claimant for their claim. Not only are law practices risking significant fines under the offence provisions, they risk losing their legal fees.

In addition to banning payments for claim referrals, the bill prohibits a person from personally approaching or contacting another person, whether by telephone, email, in person or otherwise, and soliciting or inducing that person to make a claim. It does not matter whether the person being contacted is entitled to make a claim, has decided to make a claim or has already made a claim. The examples I highlighted earlier make clear the need for this second offence provision. This offence also attracts a maximum penalty of 300 penalty units. The offence will not apply, however, where the person making the contact does not expect or intend to receive, and does not receive, consideration for the contact and does not ask someone else to receive the consideration.

A lawyer or law practice will not be committing an offence by approaching or contacting a person if they are supplying or have previously supplied legal services to the person or a relative of the person, or if they have been asked by a representative of a community legal service or industrial organisation to contact the person, provided they have been advised by the representative that the representative reasonably believes the person will not object to the approach or contact. In this way, lawyers, community legal services and industrial organisations that are helping and advising their clients or members will not be caught by this offence. The legal profession, and the Queensland public they serve, can be assured a claimant's right to legal representation and access to justice are not in any way affected or compromised by these reforms.

In addition to the offence provisions, the bill requires a supervising principal of a law practice acting for the claimant to complete a law practice certificate throughout the claim process—that is, when a claim is made, when a claim is settled or when a new law practice is retained after a claim has been made. The supervising principal will need to certify they have not engaged in claim farming to obtain instructions on the claim and that they meet the fifty-fifty rule as prescribed in the Legal Profession Act 2007. The fifty-fifty rule, as it is commonly referred to, caps the legal fees payable under a no-win no-fee agreement. This aspect of the bill, as well as the requirement to complete a law practice certificate, will also apply to interstate lawyers. This will ensure that lawyers are not entering into a cost agreement in another state and contracting out of these provisions designed to protect claimants. Universal application of the certification requirements is essential to create a level playing field and to prevent claim farming by interstate practitioners.

To ensure the effectiveness of these reforms, it is essential that any potential instances of claim farming can be thoroughly investigated and prosecuted. As such, the bill expands the Motor Accident Insurance Commission's functions and bolsters its enforcement and special investigation powers. These expanded powers largely reflect those in existing Queensland legislation—namely, the Fair Trading Inspectors Act 2014.

One of the most notable provisions in part 5B of the bill, which deals with special investigations, is the partial abrogation of legal professional privilege and the abrogation of the privilege against self-incrimination. The abrogation of the privilege against self-incrimination already exists in relation to insurers and the bill extends its application to law practices and lawyers. This ensures any potential investigation into a breach of the new offences is not hampered by claims of legal professional privilege. Without these provisions, any investigation into claim farming is likely to prove futile.

The legal profession and its clients should, however, take comfort that the bill has relevant safeguards and limitations to ensure that full and frank discussions between lawyers and clients are not prevented. This power is only enlivened to deal specifically with the claim-farming offence and is limited to how a law practice received or was referred instructions for a claim and how it gave or referred instructions for a claim. It does not extend any communications between the lawyer and client regarding the merits of the claim itself or the prospects of success. Therefore, an injured claimant should not be concerned that these amendments will affect their access to justice or confidential discussions with their lawyers about the prospects of their claim.

To ensure that the CTP regulator can take immediate action if it reasonably believes an individual or business has engaged in, is engaging in or will engage in conduct that would breach the claim-farming or cold-calling offences, the bill provides the Motor Accident Insurance Commission with the power to apply to the court for an injunction to restrain the prohibited conduct. More generally, the bill expands the objects of the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994 to encourage insurers to act in a way that supports the integrity of, and promotes public confidence in, the CTP insurance scheme.

Insurers will also be required to adhere to new claims management standards as a condition of their CTP licence. Breaching this condition may expose licensed insurers to an increased maximum penalty amount of 300 penalty units. These standards, coupled with the requirement to support the

integrity of the scheme, will ensure that, where there is evidence of claim farming or fraud, insurers manage the claim appropriately. The bill also makes minor consequential amendments to other legislation by virtue of the new provisions.

In addition to amending the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994, the bill amends the Motor Accident Insurance Regulation 2018 to assist the commission in the early detection of claim-farming activity and to deter potentially fraudulent claims. The bill amends the regulation to prescribe additional information to be included in the notice of accident claim form as well as the certificates to accompany the claim form, including a claimant certificate detailing the circumstances by which the claim was lodged. The medical certificate signed by the doctor that accompanies the claim form must state the doctor physically examined the claimant and whether the injured person was an existing patient. Licensed insurers will also need to include some of that additional information when submitting their periodic returns to the commission.

There has been considerable consultation on this bill and I would like to reiterate my thanks to stakeholders for their valuable contributions. I would especially like to thank Mr Richard Douglas QC who gave significant input into the development of this bill and on whose recommendations on how best to address claim farming many of the provisions have been based. Such extensive consultation illustrates this government's commitment to the consultation process. The result of that consultation reaffirmed the need for comprehensive and effective legislative action. While there is strong and broad support for the bill's objectives, some stakeholder submissions sought clarity in relation to discrete aspects of the bill. I would like to briefly address some of the key points raised in those submissions.

A key issue from some stakeholders was that relationships between law practices and community groups, established over many years and for mutual benefit, could inadvertently be jeopardised because of how the bill defines 'consideration' for a claim referral. It was submitted that the bill could potentially impact those relationships due to the risk of the parties involved being found to be in breach of the offence provisions. Some law practices often have relationships with not-for-profit organisations that may involve a law practice offering free initial consultations and/or discounted legal fees or providing pro bono services, raising concerns that the giving of such benefits could be classified as giving consideration and not permitted by the bill even though the benefits were not given for a claim referral or potential claim referral.

I would like to reassure both the legal profession and the various not-for-profit entities that rely on their services and/or financial support that this bill is not targeting those arrangements. If consideration is not being given or received for a claim referral as defined in the bill and provided no approach or contact has been made to a person to solicit or induce them to make a claim contrary to the offence provisions, there is no cause for alarm.

This bill does not affect a law practice's benevolent endeavours, whether that be donating funds to registered charities, school associations, industrial organisations or sporting associations. If a law firm sponsors the local soccer club, erects a sign at the clubhouse or pays to have their firm's name on the team's jerseys, this is not captured by section 74's prohibition on giving or receiving consideration for a claim referral. If a parent of a soccer player then decides they want to engage the services of that particular law practice, nothing in the bill prevents that. This bill does, however, take serious aim at those who pester people, breach their privacy, intimidate them or aggressively pursue them to make a claim.

Whilst the committee did not make any recommendations for amendment to the bill, the committee noted in its report that the Queensland Law Society's suggested amendments could be worthy of further consideration to alleviate stakeholder concerns raised during the committee process. An amendment to section 74 to clarify its application is proposed to be moved during consideration in detail to clarify that consideration does not include a payment or other benefit, not for a claim referral or potential claim referral, to a community legal service, industrial organisation, a registered entity within the meaning of the Commonwealth's Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and a school association or sporting association.

The amendment references a range of groups that have dealings with lawyers based on their feedback from stakeholders and the provision drafted by the Queensland Law Society. As a result of this amendment, consequential amendments are also required to other relevant provisions of the bill.

Additionally, the insertion of a new objects clause into section 3 of the act is proposed. The new object is to establish measures directed at eliminating or reducing the practice of giving or receiving consideration for a claim referral or potential claim referral or soliciting or inducing a claimant to make

a claim in contravention of the act. I am grateful for the consideration and thoughtful submissions made by stakeholders and the work of the QLS in proposing a way in which the concerns raised by stakeholders could be addressed. That is why the committee process is so valuable.

I also want to address the non-government statement of reservation in the committee's report, which expressed concern that the bill disadvantages regional law firms. The bill does not distinguish between law practices based on their location—or at all for that matter. Accordingly, the bill does not disadvantage law practices operating in regional Queensland, nor does the bill restrict legal practitioners from engaging in legitimate marketing or advertising activities designed to inform the public about the services they offer. The reforms will assist regional firms by stopping claim farmers from contacting and harassing injured people in order to refer them to a law firm associated with the claim farmer, who may not be located anywhere near where the claimant lives.

The proposed reforms will actually go some way to creating a level playing field. Law practices, whether operating in regional areas or metropolitan areas, will still be able to refer clients to other law practices and have other law practices refer clients to them. That is what happens now and that will continue. Furthermore, section 74(3) of the bill enables payments to be made due to the sale or partial sale of a law practice which results in the referral of a claimant to the new practice.

I also want to make it clear that a lawyer will still be able to refer a client to another law practice, for example, one that specialises in an area of law outside their own legal expertise provided such a referral does not breach the bill's offence provisions. Such referrals must also comply with the existing requirements of the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002 and the Australian Solicitors Conduct Rules with which all legal practitioners should be familiar. This bill is consistent with and complementary to those obligations.


Finally, four minor amendments to the bill are also proposed to be moved during consideration in detail: firstly, by inserting a new clause in the bill to amend section 34 of the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994 to substitute the existing reference in subsection (2)(a) to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Road Rules) Regulation 1999, which has been repealed, with a reference to section 93 of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995; and, secondly, by amending section 87V(6) in clause 22 by inserting the words 'or written information' after the words 'destroy the report'. This will provide increased protection of a person's personal information by requiring the Motor Accident Insurance Commission or an authorised officer to whom a criminal history report is given to destroy written information from the report in addition to destroying the report.

Finally, amendments are proposed to clause 28(7) and clause 31(4) to remove the need to provide a doctor's unique identifier given to the doctor under the health practitioner regulation national law, section 233. Such a requirement is considered to be unduly onerous and could potentially cause delays in progressing claims and will therefore be reviewed.

The Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 strikes a fair and considered balance between the interests of the Queensland public, claimants, potential claimants and the legal profession. The new offence provision, certification requirements and the penalties attached to offence provisions will ensure that claim farming is no longer able to operate as a lucrative business model to the detriment of the Queensland community and our well-performing and well-renowned CTP insurance scheme.

The amendments contained in the bill also place a greater onus on law practices to be aware of how business is sourced or referred within the law practice. Principals of law practices must actively stamp out any potential instances of claim-farming activity so that they are in a position to certify that they and the law practice have not sourced any business via claim farming. Lawyers who breach these new provisions may not only be liable to significant financial penalties but also face disciplinary action from the Legal Services Commission for unsatisfactory professional conduct or professional misconduct.

This bill is the only effective way to protect our scheme to ensure it continues to offer essentially unlimited common law benefits to injured claimants at reasonable cost to Queensland motor vehicle owners. It is the only way to ensure claim farming is effectively stopped in its tracks and does not become an endemic issue within our scheme, as it has been in some other jurisdictions. We have seen what has happened in other jurisdictions and we want to be proactive and arrest the insidious practice of claim farming now. Rather than being reactive, it is the only way to stop the unwanted and aggressive phone calls and the source of much distress to many people, including those most vulnerable in our society. This bill delivers on our commitment to protect the Queensland community. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.48 pm): I rise to speak on the Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As stated, the objective of this bill is to stop the practice of insurance claim farming. The LNP supports action on claim farmers to ensure that innocent Queenslanders are not ripped off. Claim farming involves an anonymous person contacting members of the public from overseas call centres, via email or social media to ask whether they or a family member have been involved in a motor vehicle accident. Regrettably, under the Palaszczuk Labor government the number of claim farmers purporting to be from the Motor Accident Insurance Commission or other government agencies has reportedly increased significantly.

Claim farming has grown and festered under the Palaszczuk Labor government. The Deputy Premier made a virtue of dealing with this issue last year, but it has taken over a year to debate these issues and Labor's proposed reforms. Just like the promised North Queensland insurance inquiry that Labor promised almost five years ago, making insurance affordable—whether it is car or home—is simply not a priority for the Labor government.

To date, the Palaszczuk Labor government has allowed claim farmers free rein to fish out details of Queenslanders. The rampant spread of claim farming in Queensland is a major contributor to increases in the cost of Queensland's compulsory third-party insurance scheme. Increasing CPT costs are just another slug for Queensland motorists who continue to be gouged by Labor—Queenslanders who are already struggling under the nation's highest unemployment rate. Even without further increases in CTP scheme costs, already Queensland motorists are treated like cash cows by this Labor government. Since the Palaszczuk Labor government was elected, car registration has increased by 17.3 per cent.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. I ask the member to come back to the long title of the bill.

Mr MANDER: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will do that. Thanks to the economic mismanagement of this state by the weakest Premier in Queensland's history, the last thing motorists need is a CTP increase once again. That is not to mention the staggering \$230 million of fines dished out by Labor in the 2018-19 financial year.

Mr POWER: I rise on a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I think the unparliamentary language is unnecessary in any debate. Could that be raised with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for the point of order. I was just seeking advice in relation to that. I will ask you to withdraw that unparliamentary language, Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr MANDER: Can I seek clarification?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: 'The weakest Premier'.

Mr MANDER: I withdraw. While Queensland suffers the worst congestion crisis ever seen, all Labor is doing is repeatedly gouging motorists. Contrary to what the Treasurer just stated, during the public hearing smaller law firms outlined that, as the bill is currently drafted, it may prove to become a competitive barrier for regional and smaller law firms that cannot afford to enter into formalised relationships with industrial organisations or to undertake widespread advertising campaigns. Yet again it appears that the Brisbane-centric Palaszczuk Labor government is making it even harder for regional Queenslanders to get ahead. This government has an obvious anti-regions bias. As revealed in the latest regional unemployment data, the Palaszczuk Labor government's anti-jobs and anti-regions agenda is hurting regional Queenslanders desperate to find work—

Mr POWER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. This does not apply to the bill.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Resume your seat, member. While I am hearing points of order, I will hear those in silence, member for Glass House. There is no point of order.

Mr MANDER: Insurers also raised concerns that the proposed \$200 limit for gifts and hospitality relating to persons giving or receiving referral of a claimant or potential claimant was too high. Notably, Suncorp considered the proposed limit on the value of gifts or hospitality of \$200 too high and considered \$50 more appropriate.

Amongst all concerns raised by stakeholders, the most significant were those relating to the anticompetitive sections of the proposed legislation that—surprise, surprise—benefits the union movement. There is no doubt that the unscrupulous practice of claim farming needs to be cracked down on in Queensland. While this bill is a step in the right direction, unfortunately it also seeks to carve out special dispensations for the union bosses who run the Palaszczuk Labor government.

The exemptions for industrial organisations proposed in the bill are yet another example of how the Palaszczuk Labor government is owned lock, stock and barrel by the union movement. We have seen this through example after example, whether it is the closed shop in the rail system that has caused the rail fail blow-outs, bringing the prisons back under public control—costing taxpayers an extra \$100 million over the next four years—or granting public holiday status on Christmas Eve which will put many small businesses close to the wall.

We see it time and again. Labor is beholden to the union bosses because it relies on them for preselection and millions of dollars of cash donations. These unions have fewer members than ever before but, under the Palaszczuk government, more power than they have had for decades. Under Labor, Queensland has become the strike capital of Australia as well, because the big union bosses call the shots. Since the Premier was elected, more than 161,000 working days have been lost—higher than the much larger states of New South Wales and Victoria. That is why the LNP will move amendments to even the playing field and stamp out Labor's cosy union deal.


The principal of O'Donnell Legal, Mr Tom O'Donnell, stated on 22 July to the committee that the bill—

... will consolidate the personal injuries field into those firms that, one, have links to industrial organisations.

This statement was also mirrored by the principal of Splatt Lawyers, Mr Kerry Splatt, who stated to the committee that the bill—

... will push consumers to those firms that ... have links with industrial organisations.

The LNP will strengthen this bill by moving amendments that remove the sponsorship agreement exemption for industrial organisations and by inserting an additional section that explicitly precludes industrial organisation sponsorship agreements. The amendments seek to redefine the examples of advertisement or promotion that are not a claim referral and to preclude registered industrial organisation sponsorship agreements. The LNP's proposed amendments provide a stronger framework to prohibit all potential organisations or persons who may be giving or receiving consideration for the referral of a claimant or potential claimant. While the LNP supports this bill, Labor needs to do the right thing by Queensland and back our amendments that remove the unions' vested interest from this proposed legislation.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (4.57 pm): The regulation of insurance, both for the containment of costs and for the fair payment of claims, is an essential part of Queensland society. Yesterday, we heard the transport minister speak so movingly of the toll on Queensland of motor accidents on our roads. We know that one death or any injury is one too many. However, at the same time, we must look at those who are injured, and that is why the robust regulation of motor accident insurance is so vital.

The process of claim farming—the unsolicited calling of members of the public seeking to induce them into making a claim and then selling on that claim to a legal firm—would undermine that system. That is why the Deputy Premier and Treasurer consulted widely with the legal profession and insurers—something members opposite do not know about—and introduced the Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to ensure that the practice of claim farming is clearly and unambiguously made illegal and to put in place mechanisms to ensure compliance.

After holding hearings, the Economics and Governance Committee, of which I am chair, tabled a report. We recommended—and I note the enthusiastic support of this bill from the deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach—that the bill be passed. From 17 June, the committee invited stakeholders and subscribers to make submissions, of which 11 were received. The Queensland Treasury provided a public briefing about the bill. A public hearing was held on 22 July 2019. The Treasury also submitted in response to submitters, and that was useful for the committee in considering all the details of the public submissions.

The Treasury provided a number of examples of practices—they are growing—that make up claim farming. I note the gratuitous attacks on the Queensland government by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, but we are the first to introduce this type of legislation, even though we heard from Treasury and others that the problem is worse in other states. I commend the Deputy Premier for acting early on this issue.

The Treasury told us that a number of people were impacted and gave us examples. One was of a Queensland woman who lived alone—I think the Treasurer spoke of this case—who was stunned to find a lawyer at her door who advised that they had purchased her name. I am sure we would all be shocked if someone came to our door and told us they had purchased our name. That action breaks a number of laws, and this woman rightfully pushed back.

In another example given by Treasury, a policyholder complained that, after a comprehensive motor vehicle insurer submitted a property damage claim for his vehicle, a claim farmer contacted him on his private mobile phone number, known only to his wife and their insurer. Again, it is deeply concerning that there is a possibility that other information is being leaked and being used improperly. Treasury told us that, despite there being fewer road accidents, there was a 20 per cent increase in claims. We need laws for when someone is genuinely hurt and has a case but not a system that allows a claim that would not be brought if the claimant did not generate the claim themselves.

We heard that there is widespread support for the goals of this bill to prevent claim farming. We also heard some suggestions and concerns about the detail of the bill and the elements and mechanisms of support. Some respondents thought that other activities of law firms sponsoring or supporting organisations that would not normally be considered claim farming might be inadvertently captured. That seems to be an intention of the amendment proposed by the member for Everton. Other respondents wanted stronger penalties and to reduce the amounts that could be given in hospitality. The department responded to these concerns, saying that it felt the bill would not affect a law practice's benevolent endeavours in relation to charities and community organisations, but others such as Triathlon Australia said that they were concerned about the relationship they have with a law firm.

That brings me to the statement of reservation, which is a very disappointing document. The only quote the LNP obtained is from Mr Tom O'Donnell. The member for Everton also mentioned Mr Tom O'Donnell.

Mr Stevens: A good guy.

Mr POWER: I have no doubt he is a good guy. They failed to quote this good guy when he went on to say that it was industrial and sporting organisations that were the problem. In fact, he went on to illustrate the one organisation that he felt was the best example of the major problem. He said—

... I am aware that one of the larger firms has a relationship with Bicycle Queensland.

The member for Everton did not choose in his amendment to attack Bicycle Queensland or other sporting organisations. It is disappointing for all, but especially for Mr O'Donnell, that the statement of reservation did not address the principal concerns raised in Mr O'Donnell's submission. They were reasonably technical and were covered mostly by the Personal Injuries Proceeds Act.

In relying on Mr O'Donnell and attacking an industrial organisation, those opposite reveal an obsession. I had to do some research to find out what would be the effect of the member for Everton's amendment. A Queensland government website lists employer organisations that are considered industrial organisations. They are such radical organisations as the Australian Dental Association, the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Master Plumbers' Association.

One that struck me as interesting was AgForce. I know that the deputy chair is a passionate supporter of AgForce, as are all of us on this side of the House. What impact would the amendment have if AgForce is considered an industrial organisation? The amendment would make it clear that 'any advertisement or promotion by a registered organisation of a service or person that results in a claimant using the service or person' would be made illegal and subject to a \$40,000 fine. Let us turn to the AgForce website. It proudly lists 'Our partners', the organisations they seek partnership with through a sponsorship arrangement—a payment from them to AgForce. I think there are some fine organisations on this website, but one of them is a very fine law firm, Robertson McCullough.


Mr Stevens: McCullough Robertson.

Mr POWER: McCullough Robertson. You are right; I stand corrected. The fine law firm, the deputy chair says, is McCullough Robertson. If this amendment were to pass, that firm and AgForce would be subject to a \$40,000 fine. I urge all members of the House to utterly reject the member for Everton's proposed amendments, because we need to get out there and defend organisations such as AgForce instead of fine them. We need less red tape such as this specific provision banning advertisement by law firms with AgForce, the licensed clubs association, the Baking Industry Association and the Queensland Hotels Association. There are many others listed. These are contributors to our society that do not need the red tape of specific advertising bans by the ill thought out proposed amendment. I had to go into a lot of detail on that because our report did not cover it. I commend the report to the House and acknowledge the good work of committee members.

I point out to the member for Everton the unparliamentary language that he seemed uncertain of. We can say, 'That is the weakest amendment.' There is nothing wrong with saying that. What we cannot say is, 'The weakest amendment was moved by the weakest deputy leader in this parliament's history.'

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Pause the clock. Relevance, member. I bring you back to the long title of the bill.

Mr POWER: As I said, it is the weakest amendment we have seen in this parliament. I also withdraw my last statement if it could be seen as unparliamentary.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.06 pm): It was an eye opener for me as a member of the Economics and Governance Committee to deal with the Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. To be honest, I had never heard of a claim farmer until this bill came to the committee. This practice is a product of the very litigious society that we have, with our legal eagles unfortunately dragging every possible bit of blood out of the stone through the legal system.

In previous parliaments I have commented on the fact that claim farming is encouraged by some legal operatives. That is a matter for the Law Society to deal with. The Law Society made presentations to the committee, as all committee members are aware. Basically, they were abhorred by the practice of claim farming. That is why this legislation is before the House. We are supporting the legislation—and gladly so—now that claim farming has been explained to the member for Mermaid Beach! We see people in the community ready to milk society, particularly with the help of our legal fraternity buying referrals in bulk.

For those who are not clear on claim farming, I will explain it. Claim farmers ring up people involved in accidents and promise that they can get a lot of money from making a claim through the legal system for an injury that they may or may not have. Then these claim farmers wander along to some legal practitioners—I think they used to be called ambulance chasers, but I suppose they are tow truck chasers these days—who then take those referrals, contact the people to drum up business and make a claim through the third-party system. That obviously results in claimants receiving a greater payout, but most of that money ends up in the lawyer's coffers. The claimants initially contacted by these claim farmers may or may not get a small amount of money for the trouble of going through the court case.

This model has provided quite a lucrative business for some spurious types of legal practitioners and I again say that this is a matter that the legal fraternity should be cleaning up. It is just a shame that we have to come in here and legislate to stop this hideous and abhorrent practice, because there are some genuine people who do genuine sponsorships. Tom O'Donnell made a presentation to the committee. He is obviously a good gentleman who is a genuine sponsor of local teams in his area. Many of these people sponsor and become closely associated with clubs and if there are claimants who have problems—whether it is a marriage problem or any problem—they end up at that legal firm because that is a welcome way for them to further, firstly, the club's interests and, secondly, assist if there are genuine claims for legal representation.

That is not what claim farming is all about. Claim farming, as the Deputy Premier alluded to earlier, is a hideous, abhorrent practice that forces a claim on an insurer's purse. They could not, as I recall—and I defer to the chair of the committee—give us a financial amount in terms of the rising number of CTP claims due to claim farming, but I understand there was a major increase, as I think the chair said, of about 20 per cent which they attributed to this claim-farming activity. That has to stop because that cost is passed back on to the community right across the board through increased premiums. No-one wants to see increased premiums on their car insurance. We have been aware of registration creeping up under the particular government that we have at the moment—I cannot let it go without a cheap shot somewhere—but the fact of the matter is that we want to keep the cost to the community as low as possible.


Some witnesses said that the CTP people were overstating it and were trying to get their premiums down so they could make more profit, and that is a reasonable economic argument to mount from an insurer's point of view. We believe that this practice—it would not matter if it is for ambulance claims or accident claims—is a hideous practice that is in the community. There was even evidence of people who had been contacted on the day they came through.

One issue that the deputy opposition leader mentioned relates to the fact that union interests have been particularly excluded in this legislation. Why is there exclusive referral to unions? I understand why this government is making exclusive referral to unions. As Mr Kerry Splatt, Principal of Splatt Lawyers, said—a great name for a motor insurance law firm—it just squeezes small firms out of the market and instead we get the big union backed groups that are spread throughout its membership.

I do not think that the amendments that the member for Logan quoted referred to the CCIQ or doctors. I am pretty certain that he was referring to the large union memberships—decreasing union memberships—in relation to the economic advantage that they take over smaller members in driving

the genuine legal operatives who are sponsors for all of the right reasons, whether it be for marriage breakdowns or whatever legal problems that community might have. They are taking that opportunity away because the big boys with the big muscle—the union groups—will swallow up all of that referral work through their union muscle.

There were some complaints that \$200 would limit it, but overall this legislation is a step forward in attacking claim farmers within our community who are a blight on our community and which is a further blight on the legal operatives in this state. This legislation is a great step forward.

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (5.15 pm): This evening I rise to support the Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. This is an important bill which will stop the scamming of the most vulnerable in our community. Claim farming, as it is called, is a horrendous abuse of power which really comes down to unscrupulous people preying on unsuspecting, innocent Queenslanders for their own personal and corporate gain. At the outset, I congratulate the member for South Brisbane, the Deputy Premier, for introducing this much needed bill into the Queensland parliament. It will stop the harassment and intrusive practices of claim farmers who make unsolicited contact with people, who misrepresent their identity and who induce people into making a claim and then refer the claim for a fee or other benefit to a law practice, and this absolutely has a human face.

In terms of the practice, we have seen a sharp increase in this predatory behaviour in Queensland. We have seen a sharp jump over recent years. During the committee process we were informed that approximately 1½ million Queenslanders would have been called or contacted by a claim farmer, and that is a very alarming statistic. MAIC informed us that it has had a number of people who have informed it that they receive a call or that they receive repeated calls and that claim farmers often use disconnected phone numbers so it is very hard to trace where the call is coming from or to understand how the caller got hold of the person's personal information or knew that they were involved in an incident. In terms of the figures, we have seen a 20 per cent to 25 per cent jump in new claims—that is, about 6½ thousand claims a year has jumped to 8,200 claims a year. Predominantly those claims are in minor injuries that have arisen from car crashes where they were travelling in the same direction or often at low speeds—that is, typically where you may not see an insurance claim arise.

When we talked around the types of claims, MAIC informed us that there are essentially what it colloquially calls three types of claims—cold, warm and hot. A cold call is when there is a call centre phoning numbers on a list. People get a call out of the blue asking whether they or a member of their family has been involved in a car crash. The warm calls are when someone is aware that an individual has been involved in a car crash at some point but does not know much about the crash. They infer that they know something but not much and that would suggest where that information originated from.

The hot calls are when there is more recency and the claim farmer appears to have quite a degree of knowledge of the crash, the insurers involved, the repairers, the crash circumstances and some knowledge of the injured person. Presumably, as Mr Singleton told us at our hearing, they have been able to assess the entitled compensation and on the phone have encouraged people to go after a suggested amount of money in terms of certain symptoms that can be described as originating through crashes.

In terms of this process, we had it stepped out to us in even more specificity. The Deputy Premier in her opening remarks talked about Ms Lowe, who was involved in a motor vehicle accident and received horrific injuries. Tragically, that accident resulted in her 27-year-old son being killed. Approximately two years after the accident Ms Lowe was contacted repeatedly by claim farmers asking details around the accident. Ms Lowe reported to MAIC that she felt that each one of these calls made her relive the accident and the traumatic loss of her son. That is just simply abhorrent behaviour by these claim farmers.


There was another example where a Queensland woman received 10 cold calls from different numbers all asking whether she had been in a motor vehicle accident. The callers were extremely aggressive and rude, including swearing and shouting at her. The verbal abuse was so loud that people standing nearby could hear, despite the phone not being on speaker. When this woman advised that she had not been in a motor vehicle accident and would not answer any of their questions, the caller told her that he had her address and would arrange for her to be killed. Following this threat on her life, the woman contacted the police who advised her that there was nothing they could do. She also approached her mobile phone carrier, who recommended that she change her number. The actions of these claim farmers are simply abhorrent. We know that only a fraction of these awful instances get reported at all.

Various harassing, coercive and misleading tactics are used by claim farmers and this legislation is intended to crack down on that behaviour. It is about protecting people's privacy. It is about stopping the harassment of innocent Queenslanders. We want to see this legislation enacted so that we can prevent the intimidation, bullying and coercion of vulnerable Queenslanders.

Only a Labor state government will introduce this type of legislation. Certainly, it is a shame to come into this place to see the amendments that have been put forward by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. They are simply union-bashing amendments. I have been in this place for two terms now. Usually, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition gets up with a little bit of vigour, bounce and energy to make a contribution to this House. We have not seen that with this legislation. We saw a skerrick of it when he went on his union-bashing tirade. Interestingly, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition came from the Scripture Union.

We know that the only thing we will see from the LNP members in relation to this type of legislation is misleading rhetoric and union bashing. They had the opportunity to bring legislation into this place that would protect vulnerable Queenslanders. Instead, we see them with legislative reform that only attacks them. The LNP's record on this issue is no action, no solution—nothing. It is quite a shame that, once again in this place, the LNP members continue to put forward misleading amendments that, ironically, serve to cut their ties with their own supporters and have no real focus on protecting the most vulnerable in our community who are, indeed, being contacted more and more regularly by these unscrupulous operators.

It is a real honour to speak to this bill—a bill that we know will make a real difference to the lives of Queenslanders. The Labor government in Queensland will always take a strong stance for those who are not able to do that for themselves. The Labor government will definitely take strong action to stamp out claim farming and scamming throughout our communities.

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (5.25 pm): I rise to speak to the Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I would like to acknowledge and thank my fellow members of the Economics and Governance Committee for their careful consideration of the bill, the 11 stakeholders who made submissions to the bill and the witnesses who attended the public hearing on the bill in July this year.

The key objective of the bill is to protect Queenslanders from predatory and unscrupulous car crash scammers trawling for personal injury claims. The bill introduces new laws to the state's compulsory third-party insurance scheme that will crack down on insurance claim farming. Most of us have received calls, emails or requests on social media from individuals or call centres located both here and overseas harassing us for information about a car accident that we or a family member may, or may not, have been involved in. In fact, in her introductory speech the Deputy Premier cited research on the bill that showed that 1.5 million Queenslanders are believed to have been targeted by claim farmers.

Market research commissioned in 2018 by the Motor Accident Insurance Commission, the regulator for compulsory third-party insurance schemes, revealed that 30 per cent of Queenslanders had been contacted by a claim farmer in the 12 months prior and 50 per cent of these numbers were on the Do Not Call Register, proving it to be utterly useless. I have a silent number and I still receive these calls.

Currently, there is no consumer protection—unless we count Labor's public education campaign in February this year, which simply said, 'Just hang up on the scammers.' If people did not get that memo, they are most likely feeling vulnerable, anxious and powerless against these scammers, who will manipulate people with the lure of compensation. The Motor Accident Insurance Commission has received 1,000 formal complaints, with 550 of these being received in just a four-month period. No doubt this is the tip of the iceberg, as the daily occurrence of these calls has crept into our time-poor lives, which means that many incidents go unreported.

These long overdue reforms, which were promised by the Labor government 15 months ago, respond to a three-year concerted campaign by the Queensland Law Society for better protections. In today's world, as evidenced by the need for this legislation, survival in the digital age is cutthroat. Scammers are outscamming the scammers. The opportunity for crime, corruption and deception are more rife now than ever. I appreciate the enormous duty that we have to create laws that are foolproof and future proof—laws that protect us from the new demons of the new world, laws that do not put one interest over another.

When the World Wide Web was created, it was a playground for hungry minds and now, seemingly, all internet based communication platforms are also the playground of criminals, identity thieves, opportunists and extortionists. Under this Labor government, claim farming has grown and festered. This legislation is a good start in protecting our vulnerable citizens.

The bill contains two major reforms. The first offence under proposed new section 74 removes the financial incentive for persons to engage in claim farming. This new section includes the prohibition of cold calling for claim farming and prohibits the offer of inducements for a claim to be made; the introduction of an offence to pay claim farmers for personal information, thereby reducing the incentive for legal firms to partner with claim farmers; and the mandatory provision of a law practice certificate from all legal firms representing a claim in which they must declare they have not been paid by a claim farmer.


The second offence under proposed new section 75 bans claim farmers from approaching members of the public. This section includes the expansion of the Motor Accident Insurance Commission's powers to include special investigative and prosecution powers and supervisory powers that will allow it to work with licensed insurers, ensuring they are acting with integrity throughout the claim process; increased protections in the case of speculative personal injuries claims, stipulating the maximum amount the practice can recover in legal costs—known as the fifty-fifty rule; and a pathway for genuine claimants to change law firms if they have inadvertently been caught up in claim farming.

The committee heard a range of concerns from stakeholders, including from small and regional law firms. While all stakeholders repelled the abhorrent practice of claim farming, legal firms, like all businesses, depend upon referrals. As a result of the referral system being overhauled by this bill, potential business leads can now only come from the not-for-profit sector and industrial organisations, potentially giving the large firms with these connections and massive advertising budgets an unfair advantage.

The bill's explanatory notes state that unions will also be excluded from having their advertising or sponsorship deals captured by the offence, the very offence proposed to specifically address payments received by claim referrals. Here we are again talking about the special privileges given to the unions without any justification or evidence that there is community support for their dispensation. We all know the unions fund Labor's political campaigns.

Unions are among the richest organisations in town with a clear mandate. There is nothing objective nor special about them, which is why I support the LNP amendments to the bill that even out the playing field by stamping out Labor's cosy union deal. If Labor turn their back on small business and regional Queensland yet again by ignoring the LNP's fair and equitable amendments, this bill, like all before from this Labor government, will promote union influence and appease union bosses.

Just because the fine print is hard to read does not mean it is invisible. I am proud to be part of an opposition that works hard to reveal the true motivation of Labor and to hold them to account. Queenslanders can do better than Labor.

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (5.31 pm): I rise in this House today to support this bill. I would like to tell Tania from the supposed 'accident compensation board' who called me on Monday at lunchtime about an accident I had supposedly had in the last 12 months that this bill is for you, my friend: disgraceful claim farmers who get their hands on mobile lists from dubious sources. This legislation makes important amendments to the Queensland compulsory third-party insurance scheme to protect vulnerable Queenslanders and the integrity of our state's CTP insurance scheme.

Claim farming is a dirty practice. Like Tania on Monday, claim farming involves anonymous persons cold calling members of the public about whether they have been involved in an accident, often from dead-end numbers when you try to return the call. They falsely identify themselves as calling on behalf of an insurer, a CTP regulator, the Motor Accident Insurance Commission or, as in my case, the 'accident compensation board' allegedly with the sole purpose of assisting them to make a CTP claim. They use high-pressure tactics that are tricky and deceptive in nature—just devious. They try to elicit the person's personal information and agreement to submit a claim, often with the lure of quick and easy compensation. This information is then on-sold, of course for payment, to a lawyer or a claims management service provider to deal with the claim.

I am certain nearly every member in this House will have heard from their constituents about these dodgy types of phone calls. I know, not only through my own experience but also hearing from many seniors in my community in the scam forums that we have had, that it has been a very common complaint. It is a frequent and disturbing practice. Members of our community and some of the most

vulnerable are being harassed often and repeatedly by these unwanted calls. The survey data from the department, as the member for Ninderry pointed out, estimates that over 1.5 million Queenslanders have been targeted by claim farmers. This is a staggering number.

As a member of the Economics and Governance Committee I had the opportunity to hear from stakeholders that included Queensland Treasury, the Insurance Council of Australia, Suncorp, Australian Lawyers Alliance Queensland, Slater and Gordon Lawyers, Shine Lawyers, O'Donnell Legal, Splatt Lawyers, Queensland Law Society and the Bar Association.

During the public briefing by Queensland Treasury it was noted that market research commissioned by the commission reported that 90 per cent of Queenslanders surveyed believed claim farming was a serious problem. The report found that 93 per cent of those surveyed believed it was important that the Queensland government take action on claim farming, with results higher among those who had been contacted by claim farmers in the previous 12 months.

Treasury advised that since 2015 there had been a 20 per cent increase in the number of legally represented minor injury CTP claims despite fewer road casualties and despite a reduction in reported motor vehicle accidents. Available CTP claims data collected by the commission suggest claim farming is a contributing factor. The explanatory notes stated that without legislative reform claim-farming activities would likely increase, leading to more harassing calls received by Queenslanders, additional and exaggerated claims generated by the practice, pressure on CTP premiums and a loss of confidence in the insurance sector, and we know how important it is to try to keep down the costs of registration, particularly the CTP component.

In explaining the purpose of the bill to stop the practice of claim farming in Queensland, the Motor Accident Insurance Commissioner, Neil Singleton, noted the evidence provided by the Insurance Council of Australia spokesperson, Mr Tony Moss, who stated—

Claim farming business models ultimately undermine the scheme's objectives and work against the best interests of the public. Left to fester, claim farming will cause instability in an otherwise stable scheme and put unnecessary upward pressure on premiums.

Queensland has a fair and affordable CTP insurance scheme and it is so important we do everything within our power to keep it that way. That is why this legislation goes a very long way to making sure that we stop claim farmers. We have one of the few remaining schemes in the country which preserves an injured person's law rights while at the same time ensuring Queensland motorists pay the second lowest CTP premiums in the country.

There was substantial concern raised during the public hearing by the QLS and representatives of the legal fraternity that proposed section 74 would impact arrangements between law firms and sponsorship activities with entities like community organisations, school P&Cs and sporting associations. We made note of that in our report and I am pleased to see the amendments for consideration in detail that will provide certainty and clarity to allow legal practitioners to continue their corporate socially responsible activities in their contribution back to our communities.


In conclusion, I want to talk about the contribution and amendment of the member for Everton. It is a little bit confusing, but there is nothing new there. In his contribution he claimed the Palaszczuk government had failed to initiate the North Queensland insurance inquiry. I think he really should have gone away and done his homework a bit better. The opposition tried to raise this issue in the Townsville sitting and once again were embarrassed when they failed to read the report on election commitments. If the deputy opposition leader had reviewed the election commitments report published in November 2018—

A government member: If he could read.

Ms RICHARDS: I take that interjection from the member—he would have seen that the Palaszczuk government had taken action on North Queensland insurance issues by establishing the Household Resilience Program. The \$20 million Household Resilience Program delivered grants of up to \$11,250 to better protect people's homes by making them more resilient. I table that report for the House.

Tabled paper. Queensland government report, dated November 2018, titled 'Progress report on 2015 government election commitments' [[1952](#)].

We have taken real action. The Palaszczuk government is making sure that we are working hard for our North Queensland communities, particularly those regional places that experience these types of issues, unlike the federal government which has started a three-year inquiry which has not delivered a single outcome. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (5.38 pm): I rise today to make a contribution to the debate on the Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill as a member of the Economics and Governance Committee. From the outset I thank my fellow committee members, the excellent secretariat staff and all of the stakeholders who submitted to contribute to our report.

Most of us have personally received these phone calls that we are talking about or have heard stories from those whom we represent who have been impacted, particularly our most vulnerable Queenslanders. I remember our inquiry hearings well as we looked into this bill and it was certainly fascinating to hear the different perspectives put forward by the lawyers and the insurers who had opposing opinions on some of these aspects.

I agree with the objectives of the bill. I think it is a step in the right direction. The bill aims to stop the practice of insurance claim farming, where an anonymous person contacts a member of the public to ask whether they or a family member have been involved in a motor vehicle accident. The bill creates two new offences to firstly take away the financial incentive for this practice and then to ban claim farmers from approaching members of the public. Often claim farmers are people who call from overseas call centres or make contact via email or through social media. Claim farmers suggest that they are acting on behalf of the Motor Accident Insurance Commission or another government agency or insurer to create the impression that they have credibility. The practice is predatory and unfair in its operation in trawling for personal injury claims and obtaining people's details. Claim farming has grown and festered, and I am glad to see some action finally being taken in this area through the bill.

All 11 stakeholders involved were supportive of stopping claim farming. However, a small number of stakeholders raised concerns about the bill, which in some cases I thought were reasonable. Several highlighted what they believe is the anticompetitive nature of the bill. During the public hearing we heard from smaller law firms that outlined how the bill may prove to be a competitive barrier for firms such as theirs, particularly in regional areas. Those firms cannot afford to enter into formalised relationships, especially with industrial organisations, or to undertake widespread advertising campaigns as larger firms can. Through this unions are again benefiting from the government, and Queensland small businesses will potentially suffer as a consequence. The bill's explanatory notes even state that offences to stop claim farming do not apply if the person is from an industrial organisation. The explanatory notes also state that unions will be excluded from having their advertising or sponsorship deals captured by the offence proposed to specifically address payment received for claim referrals.

In terms of proposed new section 74 specifically, virtually all stakeholders from whom our committee heard raised concerns about the impact it would have on their legal practices, particularly when it came to sponsoring entities or organisations. One small firm is run by Mr Kerry Splatt who, as my colleague the member for Mermaid Beach noted, is aptly named for the majority of the work that he does. The principal of Splatt Lawyers stated—

... it seems to me that if referral arrangements are impacted then inevitably it will push consumers to those firms that either have links with industrial organisations and/or advertise a great deal or possibly those who have good links with community associations ... The reality is that small firms cannot afford those types of relationships. As such, if referral arrangements were squeezed out, in my view it would squeeze small firms out of the market.

I note the Treasurer's clarifying amendments that will bring in proposed new subsections 74A(2) and 74A(3) in response to those stakeholder concerns. During the public hearings it was clear that the industry representatives we heard from were very aware of the impact on the union movement through this bill. I note the further amendments to protect personal information that will be moved soon.

Insurers raised concerns about the proposed \$200 value limit for gifts and hospitality relating to persons giving or receiving referrals of a claimant or potential claimant. Many believe that that is too high. At the public hearing some stakeholders raised concerns about the \$200 consideration and its potential to create loopholes, as it was unclear how often a \$200 consideration could be gifted. Suncorp, one of the insurers presenting at a public hearing, suggested that a more appropriate limit would be \$50. The Insurance Council of Australia went further, believing that no gift of any value should be permitted to be received for the referral of a claim.

In terms of law firms and advertising, which I mentioned before, I often drive up and down the M1 and I see the advertisements. I have taken note of the Logan Law billboards all along the M1. That is a very effective campaign from one of Queensland's larger law firms. Often the ads are quite funny and I am sure they bring in a lot of clients to the firm. Sadly, I do not know how many smaller firms could afford such an expensive and effective campaign, which following the passing of this bill they may need in order to find clients.

Clearly action does need to be taken against claim farming in Queensland. However, my concern and that of my LNP colleagues is that proposed new sections 74 and 75 in clause 15, in particular, will disadvantage small and often regional firms in the market. As I said before, we are seeing unions put first, above the public and above small business. That is why the LNP will move amendments to even the playing field and stamp out that special treatment. We propose to strengthen the bill by removing the sponsorship agreement exemption for industrial organisations and inserting an additional section that explicitly precludes industrial organisation sponsorship agreements. To conclude, I support the objective of the bill and I support the amendments to be moved by the member for Everton.

Mr RUSSO (Toohey—ALP) (5.45 pm): I rise in the House to support the passing of the Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 to outlaw claim farming. The Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 was introduced into the Legislative Assembly and referred to the committee on 14 June, with a reporting date of 9 August 2019. I intend to outline the inquiry process as set out in report No. 29 of the Economics and Governance Committee which was handed down in August 2019.

On 17 June 2019, the committee invited stakeholders and subscribers to make written submissions on the bill. Eleven submissions were received. The organisations that submitted written submissions were Bicycle Queensland, Triathlon Queensland Ltd, Slater and Gordon Lawyers, the Australian Lawyers Alliance Queensland, the Asbestos Disease Support Society, the Insurance Council of Australia, Suncorp, Tom O'Donnell, Shine Lawyers, Kerry Splatt and the Queensland Law Society. On 1 July the committee received a public briefing about the bill from Queensland Treasury. Before I continue to outline what we heard at the public briefing, I will address some of the untruths that have been raised by the LNP.

As we know, the Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 is about the protection of privacy; stopping the harassment of innocent Queenslanders; preventing the intimidation, bullying and coercion of vulnerable Queenslanders; ensuring access to justice; and protecting the integrity of our—

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan): Order! I am sorry, member for Toohey. Member for Chatsworth, you will get your turn.

Mr RUSSO: I repeat: it is about ensuring access to justice and protecting the integrity of our compulsory third-party insurance scheme. Instead of wholly supporting the bill for the benefit of vulnerable Queenslanders, what have the LNP done? They are using it as an opportunity to engage in misleading rhetoric and union bashing. While disappointing, that is not surprising. They go low every chance they get.

The LNP members falsely claim that the bill gives unions special treatment by exempting them from important provisions in the bill. If the LNP members had taken the time to actually read the bill, they would know that no organisation, whether it is an industrial organisation or otherwise, is exempt from complying with the bill. The LNP live in a post-truth world, so the facts are completely lost on them. The bill does not restrict anyone or any service provider from engaging in legitimate marketing or advertising activities designed to inform the public about the services that they offer. That is made abundantly clear in the bill.

Ms Trad: All they have to do is read.

Mr RUSSO: I take that interjection. The fact that the LNP will try to turn this discussion into one about union bashing is, quite frankly, appalling. This is about protection for Queenslanders at a time when they need it most. The bill is clear and it applies equally across the board to all organisations.

The LNP members claim that the bill will result in work flowing from smaller and regional firms to firms that have links with industrial organisations. This is another false claim. The proposed reforms will assist smaller regional firms by creating a more level playing field. This bill will stop claim farmers from contacting and harassing injured people in order to refer them to a law firm that may not be located anywhere near where the claimant lives. If the LNP bothered to take the time to read and understand the bill, it would know this.

This government is unashamedly about backing our regions. It is our priority. This bill is consistent with our priorities and helps protect regional firms from claim farmers coming and poaching potential clients. If the LNP want smaller and regional firms to suffer a loss of business at the hands of unethical claim-farming practices then they should be up-front about it. It should go to regional businesses and tell them face to face that it does not support moves to stamp out practices which will benefit smaller and regional law firms.

Those opposite who claim that small firms will miss out on referral fees are simultaneously claiming that the \$200 cap on the value of a gift or hospitality is too high. These statements are plainly contradictory. Both cannot be true. No organisation, whether it be an industrial organisation or not, is exempt from complying with the bill. The provisions apply equally across the board. We are proud of our record of protecting vulnerable Queenslanders and the integrity of our compulsory third-party scheme. The LNP's record on this issue is no action, no solution, nothing.

In my contribution to this debate I intend to highlight some of the evidence the committee heard on 1 July. Mr Geoff Waite, the Executive Manager of Risk and Intelligence, Queensland Treasury told the committee that the focus of the bill is to amend the act and regulation to bring to an end the practice of claim farming. Claim farming was described by Mr Waite in the briefing as the unsolicited cold calling of members of the public to intimidate or harass them into making a claim under their compulsory third-party insurance policy and getting their personal details which are then onsold.


Mr Waite went on to brief the committee that the practice is real and that the Motor Accident Insurance Commission had received over 1,200 calls to its hotline in relation to instances of claim farming. The view of Mr Waite was that claim farming is having a social impact by infringing on the rights of individuals to their personal information and harassment and intimidation across all elements of our population, including those who are most vulnerable. Mr Waite was concerned that this practice has a potential impact on the cost and efficiency of Queensland's nationally competitive compulsory third-party insurance scheme.

Mr Waite went on to say that the bill seeks to stop claim-farming phone calls by establishing new offences to address the practice, establishing certification requirements for legal practitioners involved in a compulsory third-party claim and reporting requirements on insurance agencies and strengthening the investigative powers of the Motor Accident Insurance Commission to address instances of claim farming. In Mr Waite's concluding remarks of his briefing to the committee, he pointed out that it does not change in any way the right to access compensation for genuinely injured claimants.

In answering questions in the briefing, the following discussion with Mr Singleton ensued. I will attempt to paraphrase some of that discussion in my contribution to the debate. Mr Singleton went on to describe that they have designated three types of claim farming and that colloquially they are called cold, warm and hot.

Cold calling would appear to be where there is a call centre phoning numbers on a list and where someone gets a call out of the blue asking whether a member of their family has been involved in a car accident. The warm calls appear to be more sophisticated and have an awareness that a family member has been involved in a car accident. Hot calls appear to possess a lot more information and have a degree of knowledge of the crash, the insurers involved, the repairers, the crash circumstances and some knowledge of the injured person. They can access quite a degree of private information. The call would commence by saying words to the effect, 'You are eligible for compensation,' then encouraging the person on occasions with an amount of money they might receive and describing the sorts of symptoms that people who are involved in car accidents suffer.

Whilst this legislation has caused some discussion amongst the legal fraternity, I believe it is good legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.55 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate which should be of interest to every Queenslander. This bill is a response to evidence of claim farming in connection to Queensland's compulsory third-party insurance for motor vehicles. The evidence to the committee was convincing. Therefore, the bill is responding to a serious threat to the stability and sustainability of Queensland's CTP scheme.

Claim farming is a despicable practice that preys on people at their most vulnerable—that is, following a motor vehicle accident that has left them or a loved one injured. It preys on them in order to make money for the claim farmer and the lawyers through making injury claims against the insurers. It is tempting for those concerned to think that this is a victimless crime. It is not. It is a practice that drives up motor vehicle insurance for every Queensland vehicle owner. Claim farming has spread. If this is allowed to continue unchecked it will ultimately challenge the model of compulsory third-party insurance that has served Queenslanders so well.


While we have not yet reached that stage, there is evidence the practice is growing. Digital technology allows easy but illegal access to people's private data and the sale of such data is becoming a blight on our society, as well as a threat to individual security. It is clear from Treasury's evidence that

the claim farmers are able to purchase personal data, right down to mobile phone numbers. People are receiving calls from solicitors—and in at least one case opening the door to find a solicitor on their doorstep urging them to make a CTP claim. People rightly wonder how this person (a) knew they had been in an accident and (b) knew how to find them.

It is timely to nip this in the bud. The key way the bill seeks to do this is by creating two new offences. The first offence under proposed section 74 aims to remove the financial incentive of claim farming. The second new offence under proposed section 75 bans claim farmers from approaching or contacting members of the public to solicit them to make a claim under the CTP scheme.

The question to ask with new offences is: what are the unintended consequences and who will be impacted apart from the wrongdoers? Our committee system is there to help address this methodically and transparently. There are always issues with new legislation. It is good to see we are bringing in this legislation.

Only today I received a call from someone asking me about my health insurance. How do these people get our numbers? People are getting very concerned when our private data is being used to increase someone's profitability. It is time to stamp this out. I certainly think it is time we put an end to these claim farmers.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (5.58 pm): I rise to speak in the debate on the motor accident insurance bill. I support the observations of my colleagues in the LNP. We support the bill. It is important that we do something about claim farming. It is distressing for people when they receive a phone call from somebody who appears to have information about them that they do not think they should have. One wonders how it was obtained. That anxiety is something that we can address by adopting this bill.


I would like to add my concerns to those of my colleagues who have spoken earlier. Whenever an industrial organisation, as they are so neatly named in this bill, is given special treatment, one has to wonder why. The Labor Party never does anything without a reason when it comes to electoral laws or feathering the nest of the trade union movement.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan): Sorry to interrupt, member for Southern Downs. Firstly, if you were to continue speaking, you would need to come back to the bill. Secondly, I ask that you move that the debate be now adjourned.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lister, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hervey Bay Hospital

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (6.00 pm): Tonight I would like to talk about the crisis at the Hervey Bay Hospital. I would like to talk about the doctors, the nurses and bed shortages at the Hervey Bay Hospital. I have had it on good advice that the Hervey Bay accident and emergency saw 130 patients in just one day, with heaps of ramping. It is reported that there are about 163 funded beds at the Hervey Bay Hospital and not enough staff.

They simply can no longer cope. Worst of all, the nurses are very caring people. They are the angels who walk on this earth. They care for the most ill and frail in our community. They are being treated with a 'don't care attitude' by this government. The nursing staff are being pushed to the limit. Sometimes they make mistakes when they are being pushed to the limit like that. Nurses cannot rush patient care. That just cannot happen.

I beg a response from the health minister. Even when there is a reportable death at the Hervey Bay Hospital, he cannot respond to me. I spoke about a young man in Townsville who had to wait 12 days with a broken collarbone. They kept sending him home with Panadol. The Fraser Coast is heading into a busy holiday period, and our population swells by thousands of people over the Christmas period. How will we cope? I do not think we will cope.


The *Fraser Coast Chronicle* recently reported a story about the Cox family which proves that it is time to bring a crisis team to the Hervey Bay Hospital immediately. This is a human resources crisis, from the cancer care clinic to the ICU and everywhere in between. I would like to table some articles from the *Fraser Coast Chronicle*.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Fraser Coast Chronicle*, dated 23 October 2019, titled 'Dead days after simple surgery' [[1953](#)].

I thank journalist Jessica Lamb for having the fortitude to write these stories because they need to be told. What is happening is wrong.

(Time expired)

Morayfield Electorate, Charity Organisations

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services) (6.02 pm): I would like to pay tribute to a number of charitable works which take place in the Caboolture region. The first organisation I would like to knowledge is Caboolture Community Action, which today officially opened their new premises in Caboolture. Caboolture Community Action was first formed in 2009. I remember attending the meetings at Caboolture East State School. It was formed in response to a desire in the community to support the most marginalised and most disadvantaged in our community—people who are experiencing homelessness.

The organisation has come a long way in the 10 years since it was established. They specifically provide support to needy and vulnerable people in our region with practical support, whether it is helping them find housing, providing food packs or providing other items to support people. They are a very popular organisation in the Caboolture region, particularly when it comes to their regular cook ups, where they invite the community to come along, have a chat and share a meal.

Caboolture Community Action is a key contact point for the delivery of a number of services for needy people in the Caboolture region. They arrange appointments with hairdressers, counsellors, JPs and even Orange Sky Laundry. I want to pay tribute to Sharon Geeves and the rest of the Caboolture Community Action team for the great work that they do supporting needy people in the Caboolture region. I am very proud of their efforts.


I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Pink Belles—Corinna and the ladies—for the great work that they do in raising money for the Cancer Council. They have many fundraisers throughout the year. Their last fundraiser was just a couple of weeks ago. It was a very entertaining night, but most importantly it was a great opportunity to raise money for the Cancer Council. Well done to the Pink Belles.

Well done also to Leukaemia Support Queensland and Jane McMillan and her team for continuing to raise great money to support people in our community who might be experiencing leukaemia or another blood cancer related illness. Jane has made an outstanding contribution over the years. She was awarded an Order of Australia medal this year for her contribution to raising money for leukaemia support over many years.

Finally, I would like to give a particular shout-out in the Caboolture region to support this year's Kids in Care Christmas Appeal. The Caboolture region probably has one of the largest Kids in Care Christmas Appeals throughout the state. I encourage everyone to support it.

(Time expired)

Clymo, Mr A

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.05 pm): A couple of weeks ago we had Mental Health Week. As part of Mental Health Week, I was involved with a walk called Walk for Awareness where a couple of thousand people gathered at the Story Bridge to walk a number of kilometres to make sure that we could bring more awareness to mental health issues in our state. That was organised by friends of mine, Wes and Tudor Vasile, who own a business in my local area—Trusted Pest Management—and they have done a great job in raising awareness.


That walk has taken on increased significance in the past week in my community. A couple of years ago a young man opened a coffee shop right next door to my electorate office, a coffee shop called Toasted Cafe. I was privileged to officially open that coffee shop after he asked me to. This was a young man who told me that, despite being a qualified primary school teacher, his boyhood dream was to run a coffee shop, and that is what happened with the opening of Toasted Cafe. It had a distinctiveness about it. It had toasters on every table. He was living his dream.

He quickly became part of our business community, being actively involved in the business group, donating to local schools and actively involved in our parkrun. His name is Ashley Clymo. Last weekend we received the tragic news that Ash has taken his own life, and my community is devastated. He was so positive. He was full of life. He was generous. He was a beautiful man. Now we know that he had acute anxiety and that he battled with that.

My thoughts and the thoughts of my community are with his mum, his brothers and his long-term partner, Sashi. We miss him dearly. We will not forget him. We have been made more aware now of the hidden pain that so many people with mental health issues live with every day. For someone like Ash to take his own life is absolutely shocking—a young man with all of his life ahead of him. My community is devastated and we will not forget him.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan): Honourable member, we share your pain and wish your community well.

Woodridge Electorate, Health Services

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (6.08 pm): It is a great privilege to be able to represent the electorate of Woodridge in this House and to have the opportunity to highlight the often life-changing work happening in the community. Good schools, an opportunity to work and improved public health care—these are the pillars that shaped my promise to the people of Woodridge when they first elected me in 2015.


Following that election, I was privileged to be appointed Queensland's health minister. During my tenure, along with the Premier I was proud to announce the \$460 million redevelopment of the Logan Hospital. This is a truly transformative infrastructure project for our community—one that will ensure better health outcomes are within reach locally for all of us. I thank the current health minister, Steven Miles, for his commitment to this project and for ensuring the redevelopment of the hospital continues at pace. The project was officially kickstarted two weeks ago with the craning in of the hospital's new rapid-expansion medical ward. This ward alone will house 28 new hospital beds by early 2020. It will mean that patients with complex medical conditions can be seen sooner, and it will help better manage demand in one of the fastest growing regions in Australia.

I would also like to update the House on another important healthcare initiative I initiated as Queensland Health minister and which I continue to support as the state member for Woodridge. Our Logan community maternity and child health hubs operate in Logan Central, Browns Plains and Waterford. The hubs are supported by an investment of \$3 million annually through the Logan Community Health Action Plan and are led by Metro South Health in partnership with fantastic local community organisations, including the Logan Together project, the Access Gateway, the Benevolent Society at Browns Plains and the Waterford West Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service.

The hubs have been in operation for almost two years now and are providing wonderful care for mums and bubs. The results being delivered through improved antenatal care are making a significant difference to the Woodridge electorate and the city of Logan. For example, low attendance rates at antenatal care have dropped from over 10 per cent to four per cent, which is now better than the state average. This focus on support for new and expecting mothers is resulting in better birth outcomes for our community, particularly the Woodridge electorate. Latest figures from the hubs show rates of healthy birthweight, at term birth and breastfeeding all now sit at or above Queensland averages. Logan's maternity hubs will support almost 1,000 women from our area over the next 12 months, approximately one in four of all women birthing locally.

Universal access to quality health care is central to the mission of the Australian Labor Party and it is central to the mission of the Palaszczuk Labor government. It is also a right for all Queenslanders. I am so proud to be part of this government, which is changing lives in the electorate of Woodridge. We will continue to invest in health care in our community as a government to help improve the lives of the people of Woodridge.

Toowoomba North Small Business Advisory Committee; Gas Billing

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (6.12 pm): I wish to speak a little bit about the Toowoomba North Small Business Advisory Committee. We set this up and it has been a great source of information. I am looking forward to the final meeting this year. I get great advice from the small businesses in the electorate of Toowoomba North, and what they are telling me is that they are doing it tough. The combination of drought, the end of a major construction project—the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing—and no inland rail on the agenda is hurting lots of small businesses in our electorate. I have managed and owned my own small business, so I do understand their situation.

I also want to clarify a couple of things for the House. People often think that Toowoomba is ticking along great, but these are the unemployment rates in certain suburbs of my electorate: Newtown, 9.6 per cent; North Toowoomba-Harlaxton, 11.1 per cent; Toowoomba Central, 7.6 per cent; and


Wilsonton, 9.6 per cent. Small business is the biggest employer in the state, but they are doing it tough in Toowoomba. One of the things that concerns me is that the government here thinks that Toowoomba is in fact not regional.

Even though they came to Toowoomba to govern from the regions, the payroll tax discount is not available to Toowoomba because we are not regional. Some of the benefits for apprentices are not available in Toowoomba because we are not regional. You cannot have it both ways. If we are not regional, then why do we only have one electricity supplier: Ergon Electricity. The LNP will change this situation and bring some relief to the small businesses in our area. The payroll tax will cost some Toowoomba businesses up to \$800,000. I call on the Labor Palaszczuk government to decide: is Toowoomba metro, in which case let's get a fast train; or are we regional, in which case let's have the same discounts, privileges and benefits as other regional areas.

The other thing I would like to talk about is gas billing in our area. I would like to place on record my disappointment in the Minister for Energy over his half-hearted response to the gas billing issue that has affected thousands of people in my electorate. These people received bills that were maybe six or seven times above their last bill. This was caused by somebody reading the meters or in fact not reading the meters and just recording numbers. As a result, people had been under-billed a couple of times and then they got a massive bill. A lot of people are pensioners, people who are doing it tough. They are concerned that the companies took the money straight out of their accounts. We worked very hard with the people who have been affected to get a good outcome for them, but it was disappointing to hear the minister's response—

(Time expired)

Maryborough Electorate

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (6.15 pm): 'Mary' is making a comeback. That is the word on the street in Maryborough. The next few weeks are going to be very exciting times in the great city of Maryborough, which is one of the oldest manufacturing cities in this great state and this great country. On 28 October we will start off with community forums in Maryborough, with 20 regional people from right around the Wide Bay. Ministers will be there to listen to the people about how we can move the area forward and what they believe the area needs. It is fantastic that this Palaszczuk Labor government is talking to the people. We are going back to the people in regional Queensland and talking to them.


On 4 November cabinet is coming to Maryborough. How excited am I about getting the cabinet to Maryborough! I would like to thank the Premier, Deputy Premier and cabinet members. When I approached them about holding a cabinet meeting in Maryborough, the Premier told me she would look at it. The next day she came back and said, 'We can do it.' This is great news for the city of Maryborough. We will be able to highlight our great city to all of the cabinet members. I am looking forward to having the cabinet in Maryborough so that I can highlight what has happened since the Palaszczuk government was elected.

Maryborough was regarded as the Detroit of Queensland before the Palaszczuk government came into power in 2015, but look at the highlights of Maryborough now: the Downer contract, upgrades to the Maryborough Hospital and roadworks throughout the electorate. This government's expenditure in schools in the Maryborough electorate include in excess of \$16.5 million for a new performing arts hall at Maryborough high. I recently inspected the brand-new kitchen at Maryborough high. I am proud to announce that we will have an afternoon tea there and the students from Maryborough high will cater it out of the new kitchen provided by the Palaszczuk Labor government.

This is all good news. I would like to thank the *Fraser Coast Chronicle* also, because they have been running a series of stories called 'Mary's making a comeback' about some of the positive stories that are happening. These positive stories have happened because of the Palaszczuk Labor government because we are investing in regional Queensland. We are investing in Wide Bay. That is why these things are happening in the great city of Maryborough.

On 6 December we have another great thing happening in Maryborough: the 150th anniversary of Downer. It was originally called Walkers and then it went to Walkers EDI. Downer has taken over the facility. They have been making trains there for 150 years, and on 6 December we will all be there celebrating. I will be one of the first through the gates with my hardhat on. I will make sure that I sit at the barbecue with the 242 Downer workers who are very proud of the Palaszczuk government because we kept them in work.

Sunshine Coast Master Clinical Services Plan 2020-2030


 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (6.18 pm): Queensland Health is currently developing the Sunshine Coast Master Clinical Services Plan 2020-2030. I want to put on the record that the plan must include expanded opening times and more services at Caloundra's minor illness and injury centre. The plan is set to develop what medical services and resources are required for the coast over the 10-year period. Currently, the centre is open 12 hours per day, seven days per week, but there is a strong need and a strong urgency to expand that time to 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and also to expand services via the clinic.

I do not mean a full ED at all. We cannot staff two such facilities so close together, but there is a lot of waffle about the lack of need to expand services at Caloundra. The truth is that the current ramping figures, or those most recently released by the Palaszczuk government in relation to the Sunshine Coast University Hospital at Kawana and the Nambour General Hospital, are indeed shocking. In August this year, 45 per cent of patients at SCUH were sitting on trolleys or God knows where else for more than 30 minutes. At Nambour Hospital, the figure was 39 per cent. That means people not getting treatment and not getting what they require. More importantly, the paramedics were tied up with these patients for lengthy periods of time and they were not getting back out on the road.

Labor often portrays the fact that they are pouring billions of dollars into the health system. That might be right, but they believe that the amount itself brings success. Success is how wisely you actually utilise those funds. The minister also often states the frontline staff numbers that have been put into the field by this government, but Labor's management of health means that their expertise are not showing real benefit. The people of the Sunshine Coast need the Caloundra Hospital minor accident and illness centre to be opened 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with more resources.

In August, the EDs at SCUH and Nambour saw 6,790 and 4,606 patients respectively. Those facilities are overworked and burdened. In the same month, Caloundra saw 1,299 patients, of which 113 were categories 2 and 3—all very unwell and injured people. Add to that the growing population at Aura and Harmony and the doubt can no longer exist: the need to expand services and resources at Caloundra Hospital is absolutely obvious.

Townsville, Community Safety; Thompson, Mr P

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (6.21 pm): I am a bit angry and upset because I was going to speak on good things happening in Thuringowa. However, thanks to the extremely poor actions of the federal member for Herbert, Phillip Thompson MP, I now find my energy having to be used to respond to the so-called member's very poor lack of judgement, thought and actions. Yesterday I spoke in this place of the dangerous actions of criminals that are placing our community at extreme risk where they are driving stolen cars through Townsville. I thank the Premier and particularly the police minister for their swift response in launching Operation Romeo Seville, which has already netted results with youth being apprehended and placed before the courts and one today being refused bail. However, Phillip Thompson MP, who purports to put people before politics—using my line—rose in the House of Representatives yesterday, 23 October, and attacked not only our government but me, and I table that speech.

Tabled paper: House of Representatives proof statements by members, dated 23 October 2019, speech by the member for Herbert, Mr Phillip Thompson MP, regarding law enforcement [1954].

The gloves are off. In that speech, he referred to me as the member for Thuringowa and said that I had said that in Townsville crime was not a problem. I have never made that statement and I have never said those words. It is completely untrue and I believe he has deliberately misled the House. I shall write to the Speaker of the House of Representatives because that statement is designed to harm my reputation as the member for Thuringowa. I call on the federal MP to publicly apologise to me—

Mr Bleijie interjected.


Mr HARPER: You clearly do not know the rules. I will take the interjection because the Clerk has advised me of the rules. Thank you very much, member for Kawana. I have got this.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan): Member for Kawana, you will cease your interjections.

Mr HARPER: Perhaps the federal member for Herbert can explain to the people of Townsville why the federal government ceased funding the very successful second stage of the Project Booyah program called Framing the Future. The Queensland government, thanks to the police minister, has picked up the tab because the federal government walked away from their responsibilities and they let down the people of Townsville and that very successful program.

The member should hang his head in shame for his disgraceful actions in the House of Representatives yesterday. If he wants to try to help solve the problem, he should contribute, but standing there and attacking a state member is completely wrong and I call on him to publicly apologise. We will continue to stand up for the people of Townsville. We will continue to deliver police resources and additional police for Townsville. We will continue to stand up for the people of Townsville.

Southport Electorate

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (6.24 pm): I rise to talk about some good and fun things that have been happening in the electorate of Southport over the last few weeks. It was my great pleasure to join Milos Milosavljevic, the year 6 classroom teacher at Southport State School, which is the school I attended as a child.

Mr Nicholls: They were the best eight years of your life, mate.

Mr MOLHOEK: I take the interjection from the member for Clayfield. They were the best years of my life.

Mr Nicholls: I said eight years.


Mr MOLHOEK: The best eight years of my life. Along with Andrew Stewart, the deputy principal, and Taylor Haley, the principal, we had a great time last Sunday at the Arundel Bunnings doing the sausage sizzle. The members of the P&C and some of the fine young leaders from Southport State School were there to raise money for some extra outdoor gym equipment. Milos, the year 6 classroom teacher, is doing a great job with many of the young people there, encouraging them to become more active and getting them out in the school ground actually doing physical exercise—perhaps not the calisthenics and the warm milk that we enjoyed as primary school kids. He is certainly getting the kids involved and active at Southport State School.

I also want to acknowledge Eseta Cowley from the Aveo Southport Gardens Retirement Living estate in Beryl Street, Southport. Together with her team, they organised the residents of the community to conduct a pretty in pink lunch last week in support of breast cancer research. It was a challenge to find an appropriate pink shirt to wear as the state member, but I managed to rustle something up from about 10 years ago. I had a great time there last Friday afternoon. The community raised some significant funds for breast cancer research, and I am sure they can all be very proud of their commitment and the work they have done in that respect.

This is a bit of a boast but I am so proud of the fact that in Southport we have one of the largest and best Headspace centres in the country. Steve Hackett, who is the relationships manager and I guess fundamentally the operations manager of the centre, has established an amazing culture there. It was my privilege to head along to Headspace Day again this year and spend some time with some of the staff and the many young people who receive incredible support through that centre. It is a great initiative. They always try to do something a bit fun, and this year the theme was about mixing things up and they had a pushbike with a blender mounted on the front.

(Time expired)

Capalaba Electorate

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (6.27 pm): It is always a pleasure to update the House on 'Don delivering for Capalaba', and that is what I will be doing again tonight. In the area of education, I want to congratulate and thank all the teachers tomorrow on World Teachers' Day. They do a fantastic job in my community. We are delivering for them with infrastructure in my local community. There is \$4.25 million for the Alexandra Hills State High School. It was fantastic to have those principals and school leaders in this week. That new infrastructure is about to open soon and construction is nearly finished. I cannot wait to see the opening ceremony for that very soon.

I will be visiting Coolnwynpin next week to see the start of construction of their new prep classrooms and playground, with over \$700,000 of investment. The P&C at Vienna Woods has been fundraising for years for a new prep playground, and this year we will be able to deliver it and construction is underway. What did we see in education from the LNP during their time? There was no infrastructure spend at all in Capalaba.

Let me go to TAFE. I went to Alexandra Hills TAFE two weeks ago and saw the plans for \$10 million worth of upgrades there. There will be more trades there that will go from years 1 to 4 and they will not have to move their trade training over to Acacia Ridge. That is a fantastic outcome for our

local community. There was also an announcement today of lowering the fees for TAFE courses by up to 90 per cent. That was a fantastic announcement today, and I congratulate the minister for that. Let me look at the time when the LNP were in power in regards to the Alexandra Hills TAFE, with fees up—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BROWN: It was run down; I take the interjection. The LNP ran it into the ground trying to sell it off. They had planned to sell it off. I thank the member for Southport for that. Let's go to health now.

It was fantastic to join the health minister and also the members for Springwood and Redlands to see the construction of the expanded ED at Redland Hospital. We also saw the plans and the imminent construction of the new maternity ward there which will house three new water-birthing suites. That is going down particularly well with the mothers groups in my local area. It is a fantastic move and I thank the former health minister Cameron Dick and the member for Waterford for coming out and making that announcement before the election.

Let's look at the time when the LNP was in government with regard to Redland Hospital. Nurses were sacked and four mental health beds were cut. At the moment we have a federal member in Andrew Laming who during the election campaign went around promising \$30 million worth of upgrades. Then when we looked at the fine print of the budget when it was handed down we saw that it is not happening until after the next election. That includes the road out the front; \$16 million was announced for that and yet we have not seen a single cent during this term. I do not think we will ever see a cent because it requires the council to fund it also.

The House adjourned at 6.30 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Bailey, Bates, Batt, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyce, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Costigan, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Janetzki, Jones, Katter, Kelly, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lister, Lui, Lynham, Madden, Mander, McArdle, McDonald, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke B, O'Rourke C, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pegg, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Sorensen, Stevens, Stewart, Trad, Watts, Weir, Whiting, Wilson