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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 2 December 2020

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WEDNESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2020



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.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tour



Mr SPEAKER: I wish to advise that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from Middle Ridge State School in the electorate of Toowoomba South.

PETITION

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

Animal Testing and Experimentation

From 969 petitioners, requesting the House to ban animal testing and experimentation [\[324\]](#).

Petition received.

TABLED PAPERS

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Disability Services Act 2006:

[325](#) Disability Services (Exclusion of Approved Aged Care Providers from Screening) Amendment Regulation 2020, No. 254

[326](#) Disability Services (Exclusion of Approved Aged Care Providers from Screening) Amendment Regulation 2020, No. 254, explanatory notes

[327](#) Disability Services Act 2006: Disability Services (Exclusion of Approved Aged Care Providers from Screening) Amendment Regulation 2020, No. 254, human rights certificate

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Coronavirus, Health Update




Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.32 am): Queensland has recorded three new COVID cases overnight. All are overseas acquired and in hotel quarantine so we are not concerned. We have 10 active cases and 4,581 tests were conducted in the past 24 hours, which is a terrific result. Total global cases are now close to 63,200,000, with 500,000 more reported in the past 24 hours. The total number of deaths is 1,400,000, with 5,000 recorded just yesterday. It took six weeks for cases to grow from 10 million to 20 million, but only half of that time to grow from 50 million to 60 million.

A country Australians know best is suffering the worst. Today in the United States more than 90,000 people are in hospital with COVID. Daily cases are at record levels. In that country 270,000 people have tragically died. I remind the House of these figures to illustrate that COVID has not yet been defeated and Australia must maintain its defences.

An international economic think tank quoted by the InQueensland news site endorses the health first philosophy, stating 'we can be satisfied the approach of the Queensland government stands as world's best practice'. Further, it states, 'The countries that swiftly focused first on pandemic abatement measures are now reopening in stages and growing their economies.' That is exactly what we are doing.

Budget, Job Creation

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.33 am): The 2020-21 budget funds infrastructure, provides for services and backs business. It continues the implementation of our plan for economic recovery and growth from COVID-19 and it prepares us for the years to follow. Above all, it creates and supports jobs. The dignity of work is fundamental for individuals and families and the productivity of work is crucial for our economy. As the Treasurer said in his budget speech, driving employment growth as strongly as possible will remain the single most important task of our government during the term of this parliament.

As I advised the House yesterday, the budget forecasts that total jobs growth over the year to the June quarter 2021 will be 160,000. That means the year average unemployment rate will peak lower than previously expected. This budget plays a vital role in that job creation and we are doing all that we can to help Queenslanders into new work or better work or to protect the job they are in.


The economic recovery plan we released in August is supporting more than 55,000 jobs and our election commitments support 50,000 jobs. The budget begins delivering those jobs. Additional front-line staff include: 2,025 additional police over the next five years; 6,190 new teachers; 1,139 teacher aides; 5,800 nurses; 1,500 doctors; 1,700 allied health professionals; 475 paramedics; 464 student health and wellbeing professionals; 357 additional firefighters; and there will be \$171 million to improve palliative care services that will support 290 jobs.

The budget's \$56 billion, four-year infrastructure program will support 46,000 jobs over the next year, with 28,000 of those jobs outside greater Brisbane. To reinforce that infrastructure spend, the budget also backs jobs by focusing on skills and training to make sure young Queenslanders can work in various trades needed right across our state. Our funding for councils to hire workers, with \$600 million for Works for Queensland and the SEQ Community Stimulus Package, will support 17,800 jobs.

We are also locking in future investments to support jobs, including making trains in Maryborough as part of our \$1 billion manufacturing pipeline, supporting 690 jobs; securing the future of the Mount Isa copper smelter and the Townsville refinery, delivering more than 1,000 jobs; an implementation agreement with CopperString 2.0 to deliver a 1,100 kilometre transmission line to connect Mount Isa to the National Electricity Market, which will support 750 jobs during construction; and projects to drive new private sector investment such as the Bells Creek Arterial Road which will unlock the \$300 million Caloundra South development that will support 850 direct and indirect jobs. Private sector jobs will be created and supported because this budget backs Queensland businesses. That includes \$1 billion in 12-month interest free loans; more than \$1.3 billion in payroll tax and land tax relief; and close to \$200 million in grants.

The budget shows that by containing COVID-19 and investing in the economic response we are delivering for our state's economic recovery. We have now seen the number of jobs lost since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic return in Queensland, with 205,900 jobs since May. Compared with January 2015, there are more than 256,000 additional jobs in Queensland. We have delivered jobs and this budget will continue to do even more.


Fraser Island, Bushfire

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.37 am): Fraser Island is one of the jewels in Queensland's crown. K'gari is beloved not just here but all over the world, which makes the sight of it burning so painful. Resources devoted to controlling the fire include 75 QFES firefighters; 21 aircraft, including our large aerial tanker; and 30 trucks. This is in addition to national parks and wildlife officers whose planned burns on the island have reached an average of 13,000 hectares a year, which is more than recommended. More than a million litres of water has been dumped on the fires, but I am informed the sandy nature of the soil means it quickly drains away making it even more difficult to combat the fires.

It is understandable that those who love the island want to be assured that everything that could be done to protect it has and is being done. That is why I can confirm the Inspector-General Emergency Management has been instructed to conduct a full review. He will examine all aspects of preparedness

and response. The extreme heatwave conditions today and predicted for this week will further test our men and women who are on the front line doing everything they can to contain this fire. On behalf of the government I thank each and every one of them for what they do for us every day and for what they are doing to control the fire on K'gari.

Budget, Job Creation

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning) (9.38 am): I congratulate the Treasurer on the budget he delivered yesterday. It is a budget that continues to drive Queensland's economic recovery plan, creating development opportunities and jobs across Queensland. The global COVID-19 pandemic has put immense pressure on our regional economies, but this budget will support and promote job creation.

We are investing more than \$62 million to continue the Building Our Regions program for 2020-21 as part of the overall \$332 million program to deliver infrastructure grants to local councils. We are investing \$42.5 million to help build the East Bundaberg flood levee to protect the people of Bundaberg who have suffered through devastating floods in the past.


We will also continue to fund new infrastructure that creates jobs. We will deliver \$200 million over two years for the COVID Works for Queensland program, which has provided funding to 77 local governments for 520 projects to build productive infrastructure. We will deliver \$100 million over four years for the SEQ Community Stimulus Package to fast track investment in new infrastructure and community assets. That is in addition to \$34 million this financial year for the government's signature Works for Queensland program, which is delivering infrastructure and creating jobs across regional Queensland. These programs are supporting jobs and providing economic stimulus to local economies right across the state.

This government is committed to supporting local councils after a difficult year through COVID-19. We are delivering on our election commitments, including more than \$3 million for the Douglas Shire and Mareeba splash parks and \$50,000 for one of the far north's premier gathering places, the Cairns Showgrounds, to assist its planning efforts.

We are also providing funding to improve water supply and security in regional councils. This year we are investing \$7.5 million towards the Houghton pipeline stage 2 now being delivered with an overall four-year budget allocation of \$195 million. That project will see the existing pipeline extended from the Houghton River to the Burdekin River and will include the construction of a pump station, high-voltage power supply infrastructure and includes proof-of-performance testing of the combined pipeline stages to create a complete water transfer system. Additional funding of \$10 million has been provided to the Burdekin Shire Council to improve air water supply by building new infrastructure and more than \$4 million for the construction of new drinking water storage reservoirs for the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council.

We look forward to continuing to work with councils to jointly play our part in keeping the Queensland economy moving, especially in our regions. This is a budget very much focused on our recovery from COVID-19.

Budget, Response

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (9.41 am): In a year of uncertainty, the 2020 Queensland budget delivered certainty to all Queenslanders. It is a budget that has been welcomed by Queenslanders and major industry figures. International ratings agency Standard & Poor's issued a statement shortly after the budget. I am pleased to report that Standard & Poor's has said that there will be no change to our AA-plus credit rating.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Treasurer is not being provocative, as I hear his statement. I ask that members listen to the statement by the Treasurer.

Mr DICK: Standard & Poor's headlined their report with the statement, 'Queensland On Solid Path To Fiscal Recovery'. Standard & Poor's also observed—

Queensland has so far been successful in suppressing the spread of the virus, allowing its economy to open and budget to recover sooner than many of its domestic and international peers.

Standard & Poor's also observed that Queensland's debt levels are falling below other states.

Standard & Poor's were not alone, with credit rating agency Moody's releasing a statement yesterday saying, 'Queensland entered the coronavirus crisis from a position of relative fiscal strength.' Moody's also noted that 'Queensland remains the only Australian state to maintain fully funded superannuation liabilities and continues to retain ample levels of internal liquidity.'

The CEO of the Queensland Resources Council, Ian Macfarlane—he is well known to members on the other side of the chamber—also welcomed yesterday's budget. Mr Macfarlane said—

Creating more Queensland jobs is exactly the right objective—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DICK: The Leader of the Opposition might like to hear this.

Mr SPEAKER: Please continue with your statement, Treasurer.

Mr DICK: Mr Macfarlane said—

Creating more Queensland jobs is exactly the right objective for this budget and this will be helped by the fact our resources sector is on the verge of becoming an energy and resources superpower.


Yesterday on ABC Radio former LNP preselection candidate and respected economist Nick Behrens said—

In this budget the Treasurer quite rightly says there will be no austerity measures ... worst thing you could do for the economy at the moment is cut government expenditure.

I will say a little more about that later.

As I said yesterday, this a budget that shows that our government is delivering for Queensland. We are delivering on our election commitments to the people of our state. We are delivering the only economy to record positive economic growth this year, alongside Western Australia, without booming iron ore. We are delivering the only economy to recover all of its COVID-19 job losses. We are delivering the extra frontline nurses, teachers, police and paramedics that our state needs. We are delivering lower debt than New South Wales and Victoria. We are delivering a budget that maintains our credit rating and achieves some of the lowest borrowing costs in the Commonwealth.

Budget, Education Infrastructure

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.45 am): The Palaszczuk government recognises that as communities grow our education system needs to grow with them. We are planning ahead to cater for that growth across the state. Well done, Treasurer, for a budget with a record \$14.2 billion investment in education and a record infrastructure spend of \$1.9 billion so that all Queensland children, no matter where they live, enjoy world-class facilities when they go to school.


On top of that, \$1 billion in additional money will be invested over four years to deliver the largest ever portfolio of infrastructure works, part of the Great Schools Great Future initiative, which will give all Queensland children and young people a great start to their future. This planned investment builds on the \$5.2 billion spent on school infrastructure since 2015. It will not only deliver new school halls, performing arts centres and new classroom blocks; it will also include smaller projects such as refurbishments to school amenities blocks, playground upgrades, security fencing and improved facilities to ensure that our schools have equitable access for all students.

This record education infrastructure budget will not only benefit our Queensland students but also support a total of more than 3,100 construction jobs, helping drive economic recovery following the COVID-19 health pandemic. This investment will see \$394 million over two years spent building 46 new classroom or administration buildings, supporting 1,300 jobs. The budget includes \$235 million to deliver 26 new multipurpose halls and performing arts centres, and 11 extensions or enclosures to existing halls, supporting 775 jobs. I know that many members are looking forward to that work starting. Another \$100 million will fund 172 refurbishment and renewal projects, including projects such as upgrades to school learning and support spaces. There is \$45 million for local shovel-ready projects in schools such as playground and fencing upgrades, supporting 148 jobs and \$20 million for planning for new schools.

The Palaszczuk government is also supporting the non-state sector with \$180 million over three years from 2021-22 for school infrastructure in Catholic and independent schools. Yesterday afternoon it was great to hear Independent Schools Queensland publicly praising this great budget.

We all know how important education is. The Palaszczuk government, including the Treasurer, the cabinet, and all members on this side of the House, will continue to provide world-class facilities for four more years so that our students can continue to get a world-class education.

Coronavirus, Health Update; Budget, Health System

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.48 am): As the Premier has reported to the House today, we have only three new COVID cases, all of them overseas acquired and detected while in hotel quarantine. That means that we remain with only 10 active cases. In the past 24 hours, 4,581 tests have been conducted. Again, I thank Queenslanders for their ongoing COVID-safe behaviour and encourage them to keep up the good work.


Today as Queensland swelters, I also encourage Queenslanders to stay out of the sun if possible, stay hydrated, keep up the water to children and pets, and check on your frail family members, friends and neighbours. If you are working outdoors, please take regular breaks to hydrate.

Our state budget includes a record health commitment of more than \$21 billion. This includes a record \$1.625 billion to deliver critical health infrastructure. We are building seven satellite hospitals. We are improving major hospitals and health facilities, including at the Gold Coast and in Cairns, Rockhampton, Emerald, Bowen, Cunnamulla and Thursday Island. These improvements include new facilities such as CT scanners, upgraded and expanded emergency departments, and new mental health units. Our health infrastructure commitment also includes \$18.1 million for new and replacement ambulance stations from Mareeba to Ormeau and \$26 million for new and replacement ambulance vehicles.

While we know that these infrastructure projects will provide the health services and facilities needed for our growing population, they will also help Queensland recover from COVID-19. Last year Queensland Health-built infrastructure programs supported more than 1,200 jobs. This budget's infrastructure commitment is expected to create more than 1,500 jobs. That is jobs for tradies on construction projects from the Torres Strait islands to South-East Queensland's rapidly growing metropolitan areas.

The government continues to make the right health investments to sustain current facilities and services and to develop new and renewed health infrastructure so that Queenslanders can access our world-class health system, no matter where they live.

Budget, Training and Skills

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (9.50 am): The budget handed down by the Treasurer yesterday made clear the Palaszczuk Labor government's focus on training and skills development as key elements of Queensland's economic recovery. In this year alone, we are investing a billion dollars in training because we know that if we are to grow our economy we need the right people with the right skills going into the right jobs.


Yesterday's announcement was exciting: \$200 million over four years for the Building Future Skills Fund including the \$100 million rollout of new and improved TAFE facilities across Queensland which will position Queenslanders in every region to take up the jobs of the future, including in renewable energy, agriculture, construction, health, cybersecurity and advanced manufacturing. There is \$21 million to extend our free TAFE and apprenticeships investment from under-21s to under-25s, helping an additional 37,000 young Queenslanders. We have committed to just over \$4 million to extend our highly successful regional jobs committees, \$8 million for a social enterprise jobs fund, \$5 million for a First Nations training strategy and so much more.

As we see the broader moves by this government to bring new industries to Queensland and expand existing ones, I can assure this House that the work that is being done to ensure Queenslanders have the skills to support those industries is absolutely outstanding. Just last week I visited TAFE's Acacia Ridge SkillsTech campus and met the award-winning augmented reality welding team. As part of securing the \$5.2 billion Rheinmetall defence contract to build armoured vehicles, we needed to have enough welders with international level qualifications. We knew we had a shortfall, so we invested \$750,000 for the new augmented welding machines on top of \$2 million to train 135 welders in the skills they needed, and we won the contract. Now, thanks to the Acacia Ridge team, our welders are doing the job they were trained to do and Queensland is known to outside investors as the place with specialist skills for these sorts of major contracts.

Our \$20 million investment to help construct the hydrogen training centre of excellence in Beenleigh will achieve similar outcomes. That centre will be complemented by an additional \$10.6 million hydrogen and renewable energy training facility at Bohle TAFE in Townsville. Boosting our economy is why we are investing \$17 million, in partnership with Electrogroupp Training, to construct a renewable energy training facility in Brisbane. When finished in 2022, some 750 apprentices will be able to complete their training in solar and renewable installation, operation and management every year.

These are just a few of the projects that show why our commitment to training is so important. Our investment will create new opportunities and new jobs and grow our economy. Investing in training and skills development is a smart way to do business.

Budget, Public Transport

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.53 am): Since 2015 the Palaszczuk Labor government has backed commuters with record investments in public transport. As this week's budget further confirmed, our government is pursuing a job-creating public transport strategy. It is a strategy of building more infrastructure and investing in services to better connect Queenslanders with trains, buses, ferries, trams and planes.


Labor has championed every stage of Gold Coast Light Rail. We built stage 2 for the Commonwealth Games which supported 760 new jobs, with the new stage to Burleigh under construction early next year—and we are planning the future stage to the Gold Coast Airport. We are partnering with the City of Gold Coast to plan for a better east-west public transport connection to Carrara Stadium. On the Sunshine Coast, work starts early next year on the \$550 million Sunshine Coast rail duplication, which will add track capacity, cut travel times and support 333 Sunshine Coast jobs. We are partnering with the Sunshine Coast Council and Mayor Mark Jamieson on a business case looking at mass transit options, including light rail to connect Maroochydore to Kawana.

Queensland Rail now runs more than 8,400 weekly rail services, the most in its 155-year history. I am pleased to inform the House that 105 temporary weekly train services added to the network in August to support social distancing will remain permanently on the timetable for commuters. We are continuing to trial and develop smart ticketing technology for commuters across Queensland as well. Smart ticketing is a \$371 million investment by the Palaszczuk Labor government. For the first time in this state, every Queensland commuter will have access to the same system and a choice of multiple options on how they pay to travel, whether they live in Coolangatta or in Cairns.

No project exemplifies the Palaszczuk Labor government's commitment to public transport more than the Cross River Rail project. Cross River Rail will transform how we travel in South-East Queensland. We are building the first full underground line with four new stations to connect key parts of our city in new ways, unlocking the bottleneck at the heart of the system, slashing travel times and growing capacity to allow future extensions to the South-East Queensland rail network. The Albert Street station will be the first new CBD station in more than 120 years, right in the heart of the CBD.

We know that the road to Queensland's economic recovery stretches long ahead. A dollar saved holds greater value in times of uncertainty and difficulty. Today I am pleased to inform the House that the Palaszczuk Labor government will freeze public transport fare prices in 2021. With patronage still down due to COVID-19, now is not the time to discourage commuters from returning to public transport. Our Fairer Fares policy, introduced in 2016, has saved Queensland commuters more than \$241 million through cheaper tickets and concessions. A freeze on ticket prices means that we will keep putting commuters first by encouraging people to continue to catch public transport.

Budget, Police Resources

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (9.57 am): The last election shows, and yesterday's state budget proves, that there will always be more police in Queensland under a Labor government. There will always be more police in places like Townsville in the north, Cairns in the far north, the Sunshine Coast region and the Gold Coast region. In fact, in every region around Queensland there will always be more police under a Labor government.

There will be more police facilities and more police resources because it is always Labor that puts community safety first. That is what we are doing with our historic investment in policing. Queenslanders have not seen an investment like this in three decades. Our budget supports an additional \$624 million over five years, on top of our already record police budget, to deliver an extra


2,025 police personnel. This is a commitment that the Police Commissioner asked for and the government delivered, because it is part of her vision for a future where police have an enhanced capability to disrupt crime before it happens. Every region in Queensland will benefit as a result.

The commissioner has stated that, at a minimum, an extra 150 police officers will be deployed to each of the state's policing regions. In addition, at least 50 positions will be allocated to child protection investigation units. In Townsville, the Queensland Police Service will establish a new regional Policelink call centre with 50 call takers.

A modern policing service is mobile, agile and flexible in its approach to enhancing community safety. To support the Queensland Police Service as a world-class policing agency, the Palaszczuk government is also investing in 25 state-of-the-art mobile police beat vans. These mobile police beats are the way of the future for policing in Queensland. They are like police stations on wheels and can be rapidly deployed wherever they are needed. The mobile police beats will mean that communities right across Queensland will see more police more often.

The Palaszczuk government has a proud record of investing in the front line and ensuring our officers have the right equipment to help them do their job and keep them safe. This commitment includes providing every officer on the front line with the locally developed but internationally renowned QLITE iPad mobile tablet device. In addition, for the first time every officer will be provided with a new, integrated load-bearing ballistic vest. Our police are world class and they deserve the equipment and resources necessary to keep the community safe. As the last election shows and yesterday's state budget proves, it is always Labor that backs our police. We will always back them.

Renewable Energy

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (10.00 am): The Sunshine State is a great state for the renewables industry. As the Premier announced yesterday, our state is proud to be on track to meet our renewable energy target. This cleaner, cheaper energy is driving our manufacturing and resources sector as well and by doing so is helping to drive job-creating initiatives like the \$15½ million boost to the hugely effective Made in Queensland grants program and the almost \$1 billion to build Queensland trains in Maryborough, generating 690 jobs.

It will be our cleaner, cheaper energy powering the resurgence of the Queensland manufacturing sector. It will keep the new floodlights on at the Redcliffe Dolphins Stadium. It will keep the cameras rolling on the set of *Thirteen Lives* on the Gold Coast. It will keep the water bottles icy cold at the Cairns run for the reef. Our cheaper, cleaner energy is powering job creation and supercharging our economic recovery. Members can bet it will be our cleaner, cheaper energy powering the expansion of TAFE training centres in places like Mooloolaba, Bundaberg and Cannonvale, with 350 construction jobs created in that space alone. Queenslanders are already reaping these rewards and will do so for years to come.


This budget, a budget already endorsed by Queenslanders at this election, is investing more than half a billion dollars into renewables development that will see cheaper, cleaner energy delivered for households from Burketown to Burleigh. An affordable, reliable energy supply underpins our economic plan post COVID and renewables will play a central role. In order to remain at the forefront of renewable hydrogen, the Palaszczuk Labor government has delivered another \$10 million through the Hydrogen Industry Development Fund to develop the renewable hydrogen industry sector in Queensland. It brings our total investment in exploration within the industry to \$25 million.

Already our investment has delivered: Stanwell developing options for a hydrogen plant near Rockhampton; the development of a waste-to-green hydrogen biohub in Bundaberg; Australian Gas Networks committing to building a facility in Gladstone to deliver renewable hydrogen into the city's gas network; Sun Metals committing to a renewable hydrogen facility in Townsville; and the University of Queensland replacing two diesel powered intercampus shuttle buses with hydrogen fuel cell electric buses. I am pleased to confirm to the House that Spicers Retreats in the Scenic Rim is proceeding with the development of a renewable hydrogen plant, storage system and fuel cells at their ecocamps. These types of announcements reflect that the private sector and our international partners have recognised the potential of the hydrogen industry in Queensland. They have recognised that Queensland is open for business and is poised to go global.

Origin Energy has announced and started early engineering on a hydrogen project in Townsville with Kawasaki Heavy Industries of Japan, involving a 300-megawatt electrolyser that is capable of producing 36,000 tonnes a year of green hydrogen for export and domestic supply. This next \$10 million

commitment extends the support available to the emerging hydrogen industry in Queensland. We are setting our state up to create both construction and highly skilled operational jobs. Queenslanders can count on this side of the House to invest in programs to deliver a stronger and more diverse economy to keep delivering Queenslanders decent, secure jobs.

Budget, Resources Industries

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.04 am): Queensland's resources sector led the way during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it will continue to lead the way for future jobs in this state as we embark on the road to recovery. Our state is set for a surge in resources exploration with the 2020-21 Queensland budget delivering more than \$29 million in exploration grants, initiatives and COVID-19 support for explorers and miners over the next few years. Exploration is critical for developing a pipeline of future resource projects.

This year's budget boost for exploration will help drive future resource projects in our state and the thousands of jobs that will flow from them. This year we will invest \$9 million to help explorers discover new economy minerals that are high in demand globally in the renewables and tech sectors. We have already fast-tracked \$2 million in spending earlier this year to understand the potential for rare earth minerals. Furthermore, we will pump in another \$11.7 million in the following three years as new economy minerals will deliver the jobs of the future.


To help keep explorers on the hunt we have also waived \$9.8 million in state rent to back explorers and have frozen exploration fees and charges until July next year. In 2020-21, we will also provide another \$3.3 million to help boost gas and mineral exploration through the Strategic Resources Exploration Program. An \$845,000 budget investment will also make data collected from exploration projects freely available from January 2021 via the government's geological database. Everything learned from the exploration projects will be shared with the whole sector, helping to stimulate more mines, exports and, most importantly, more jobs for Queensland.

We are continuing to do the heavy lifting with gas production and supply to the east coast domestic market. That is why we are investing \$5 million over the next two years on investigating potential new gas pipeline infrastructure to connect gas reserves in the Bowen Basin to domestic customers and exports.

It is not all mines and gas in my portfolio. This financial year we are delivering more than \$33.9 million in rent waivers to support Queensland's other traditional strengths—our agriculture and tourism sectors—as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. So far more than \$2.7 million in rent has been waived for 72 tourism businesses operating on state owned land and islands. Another \$31.2 million in state rent has been waived for more than 6,000 farmers and businesses, because a strong Queensland agricultural industry will also be a driving force in Queensland's post-pandemic economic recovery.

Queenslanders elected the Palaszczuk government so we could continue delivering our strong health response and our plan for economic recovery. An important part of that plan is continuing to invest in and support our world-class resources sector. Through this budget, the Palaszczuk government is making sure that our resources sector maintains its momentum, growing our regions and keeping our people employed.

Budget, Tourism Industry


 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism Industry Development and Innovation and Minister for Sport) (10.07 am): Supporting jobs, supporting small business and supporting regional Queensland economies—that is what the budget delivered by the Treasurer yesterday does. With a record \$74 million, the budget's rebuilding Queensland tourism investment will accelerate tourism industry growth and restore the regional Queensland jobs smashed by the global pandemic.

Depending on the success of a number of vaccine candidates, we know it could be some time before Queensland once again becomes one of the world's favourite holiday destinations. The shutdown of the international border was a hammer blow for the world-famous Cairns Skyrail Rainforest Cableway. This budget will deliver a hand up to the iconic Skyrail and honours a key election commitment to Far North Queensland. The Palaszczuk government's 2020-21 budget provides the funding this unique tourism treasure needs to reopen. When international tourists evaporated from the Far North, the cableway closed, taking with it dozens of direct jobs. The budget puts in place the support to restart the Skyrail's gondolas, to reboot local jobs and to re-establish the spectacular Cairns to Kuranda link above the rainforest treetops.

Our Good to Go domestic tourism campaign is delivering the green shoots of recovery. With the Skyrail back in action, domestic visitors to Cairns this summer will be able to enjoy the full reef to rainforest experience that the Far North does best. More visitors mean more jobs—because Cairns and the rainforest Skyrail are good to go.

This budget gives tourism the confidence to rebuild. There is a new \$20 million Tourism Activation Fund to generate new tourism opportunities and experiences for destinations, \$20 million for major destination events, a \$15 million marketing blitz to encourage more Australians to holiday in Queensland and another \$15 million for regional tourism organisations to target new visitor markets. The budget ensures tourist operators can look to the future with the optimism and resilience Queenslanders are so famous for.

Budget, Environmental Protection

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (10.10 am): The Palaszczuk government is investing \$989 million in this year's budget to protect our environment and support jobs in regional Queensland. We are committed to enriching the lives of Queenslanders through healthy natural environments and investing in world-class scientific research.

As part of our economic recovery plan, \$8.9 million is being invested in our National Parks Works and Jobs Boost to deliver infrastructure upgrades in multiple parks and forests across Queensland and to support jobs in the regions. A further \$10.9 million will support the Revitalising National Parks program to deliver quality visitor infrastructure and to create regional job opportunities.


Conserving Queensland's protected areas and biodiversity is at the heart of our government's vision. Queensland's Protected Area Strategy 2020-2030 will protect our world-class natural and cultural values. It includes a \$28 million investment over four years to expand the public protected area estate by acquiring and managing high conservation value land. That investment is commencing this financial year. The strategy will also strengthen our partnerships with First Nation peoples with the expansion of the highly successful Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program, increasing ranger numbers to 200.

The Palaszczuk government is also committed to protecting our natural wonders while boosting Queensland's tourism industry by supporting more than 200 jobs with a \$40 million investment to protect the Great Barrier Reef. This includes the \$10 million Reef Assist program, which will deliver 11 environmental projects in partnership with local government, natural resource management organisations and First Nation peoples, and provide support for regional economies as part of our economic recovery plan. The first new jobs have already been created, with the program expected to generate around 130 regional jobs for Queenslanders in the Wet Tropics, Burdekin, and Mackay-Whitsunday Great Barrier Reef catchment areas. Our work to improve reef water quality, and support communities and industry to reduce threats to marine wildlife, will receive a further \$27.1 million investment this financial year, because we know that a healthy reef is important to Queensland's economic recovery.

The Palaszczuk government also recognises the importance of investing in Queensland's scientific excellence with \$5.5 million over four years to expand our air quality monitoring and management system. This is a crucial source of information for governments and the community during extreme weather events like bushfires. The Palaszczuk government remains committed to boosting our economy and driving economic growth as we protect our natural environment and support the jobs that rely on it.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Agriculture Industry

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (10.12 am): I give notice that I will move—

That the House:

1. acknowledges the importance of Queensland primary producers and their world-class food and fibre for Queenslanders, Australians and our trading partners;
2. recognises the thousands of jobs and livelihoods reliant on this dynamic and vibrant industry;
3. notes the ongoing desperate struggle of more than two-thirds of Queensland against the devastating drought;
4. calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to put away its 'austerity anvil' that has been mercilessly dropped on the hardworking staff of the department of agriculture and the many Queenslanders who rely on their services; and—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my right, I have asked that motions be heard by the House. This is not the time to debate the motion. That will occur later in the day.


Mr PERRETT: I continue—

5. calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to reverse their harmful cuts.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, question time will conclude today at 11.14 am.

Budget, Borrowings

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.14 am): My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise the House what is Queensland's change in net worth given the government's decision to borrow seven times more than the \$4 billion promised?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. We heard the opposition leader yesterday talking about how we should not have deficits. If we do not have deficits then they need to cut—they need to cut services and they need to cut staff.

Let me say very clearly that on this side of the House we back Queensland. There was an election held recently where we took to the people of Queensland our strong economic recovery plan. It is about jobs. It is about diversifying the economy. It is about backing small business, and looking at skills and training. Fundamentally, everything we do is focused on the people of this state. We know that when it comes to the opposition they go to an election and say one thing and they do something else. Classic examples of this are the two greatest hoaxes that the LNP played on the people of this state—the Bruce Highway and the Bradfield scheme. What a joke!

Mr Dick: \$150 million. That is the total net worth—\$150 million.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. A \$15 billion project that the member for Nanango talked up across the state—

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

Ms PALASZCZUK:—and then put \$20 million into it.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Premier, please resume your seat. What is your point of order?

Mr BLEIJIE: I raise standing order 118(b) on relevance. The question was about net worth. We were simply asking the Premier to explain the change in net worth. It was a very limited question in its scope.

Ms PALASZCZUK: My advice is that it is about \$150 million.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I have not ruled on the point of order yet. Please resume your seat. Member, the Premier is referring to the budget, which is also referred to in the question. I am giving some latitude to that, but the Premier should come back to the question as asked regarding net worth.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am advised that it is around \$150 million.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Leader of the Opposition, your interjections are disorderly. I ask you to cease interjecting in such a manner. You have asked the question. I expect you will want to hear the answer.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They had the big plan of the Bradfield scheme. What a con that was!

Mr Dick: 'Our big, bold vision.'

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right—the bold vision, \$20 million. Now the member for Nanango is their shadow minister for water. It will be interesting to see what happens there.

We are all looking forward to tomorrow. Tomorrow is the day for the Leader of the Opposition to say what he will do when it comes to a surplus in this state. We are all looking forward to it. What will the Leader of the Opposition cut? I know that the Leader of the Opposition will probably be working all through the night writing that speech because that is what I did when I sat in that chair. You have to work hard when you are sitting in that chair.

We all look forward to hearing what the Leader of the Opposition will cut in Queensland. He said that there should not be deficits. How is he going to create a surplus? The opposition leader will have tomorrow to explain. We will all be sitting here ready, willing and waiting to hear what his plans are and what he will cut in Queensland.

Budget, Borrowings

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. The budget is based on a debt broken promise, half the amount New South Wales invests in infrastructure and locks in high unemployment in the years to come. Isn't Queensland's stagnating net worth proof that Labor has borrowed just to keep the lights on?

Ms PALASZCZUK: We reject some of that. As the national cabinet very clearly discussed, now is the time to borrow to make sure we build. The Leader of the Opposition may want to know that we have been confronted with a global pandemic, which the opposition seems to be completely oblivious to. When those opposite were in office they said they were going to have an unemployment rate of four per cent. It got to 7.2 per cent and there was no global pandemic. That is what happened when those opposite were in office.

Ms Grace interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. I take the minister's interjection. The Leader of the Opposition sat around the cabinet table making those decisions, and they are all back together. We were talking about lights, but let's talk about power. When they were in office they said they were going to lower electricity prices. They went up 43 per cent.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. There was a 'contract with Queensland' which they just ripped up.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Chatsworth, member for Kawana and member for Toowoomba South, you are all warned under the standing orders.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: It was not just then; it is cumulative, member. The member for Nanango is also warned. The level of interjection is too high, members. I want to hear the answer from the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Then they said that public servants had nothing to fear. We all know what that meant.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. What did the Leader of the Opposition say back then about the budget? He said that they had the courage to assess the threat that was posed to each and every Queenslanders. We know about that threat, because 14,000 people lost their jobs and their livelihoods.

Ms Grace: He is now a shadow minister.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. The list goes on. All of the things they said before the 2012 budget, during the campaign, and all of the things that happened afterwards—the list is endless. I will not forget, because I sat over there for three years and watched how the Newman government decimated Queensland and attacked the regions. No wonder Townsville voted out those Townsville members and backed the three Townsville members that sit on this side of the House.

Queenslanders will remember every single day. Queenslanders have backed our government's strong economic recovery plan, and that is exactly what we will deliver to the people of this state. We will invest in the regions, we will grow skills and training, we will diversify the economy and we will build back better than before. We have a record infrastructure program of \$56 billion over the next four years that is about one main thing: jobs, jobs and more jobs. The budget backs jobs.

(Time expired)

Queensland Economy

Mr O'ROURKE: My question is of the Premier and Minister for Trade. Will the Premier update the House on the importance of diversifying Queensland's economy?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. We know that, unlike other states, Queensland is in a good position because we do have a diversified economy. We have the opportunity to look in the North West Minerals Province for new minerals that are needed for batteries. Former

Labor governments looked at developing an LNG industry, and we did that. We also have the opportunity to create a brand new hydrogen industry in this state. Queensland is the energy powerhouse of the nation, and we will continue to be for many years to come. I am also pleased that the member has been appointed hydrogen champion, and I know that he will do a wonderful job when it comes to that, along with the member for Mundingburra and the member for Redlands.

If we are going to diversify then we have to make sure that our people have the skills and training needed for this future industry. That is why our budget has backed \$10 million over the next four years to develop a renewable hydrogen industry. Our \$15 million Hydrogen Industry Development Fund was snapped up last year, and that indicates the interest in hydrogen in this state. What does it mean? When we are looking at new industries, it means jobs. It is great to see that this government absolutely backs hydrogen. It would be wonderful to see the opposition jump on board as well.

There is \$20 million towards the Apprenticeships Centre in renewable hydrogen at Beenleigh, \$10.6 million towards a hydrogen training centre at the Bohle TAFE in Townsville and \$2 million for hydrogen training facilities at Gladstone State High School. The member for Gladstone is injured at the moment. He is recovering from surgery, but I know how much that means to him and his local community. The Resources Council lunch on Friday was a terrific event. Several of my ministers were there. I was able to announce—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, the member for Nanango was there. She had to listen to the speech. The Leader of the Opposition was not there, but the member for Nanango was there. There must have been a past invitation. Do not worry, member for Nanango, you will make the new Leader of the Opposition look good.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, direct your comments through the chair.

(Time expired)

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Nanango, I understand there was some provocation there and I will allow some leniency. You are under a warning, and I want to remind members who are under warnings that there will be no interjections.

Budget, Borrowings

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to the Treasurer. The New South Wales budget has nearly double Queensland's infrastructure spending and their net worth increases with these new assets by almost \$30 billion. Queensland's net worth stagnates over the full budget because Labor has increased debt to cover spending rather than investing in state-building infrastructure. Why has the Treasurer mortgaged Queensland's future to keep the lights on?

Mr DICK: I am very happy to talk about net worth because it allows me to compare the Palaszczuk Labor government to other governments that have held office in this state. The Premier is quite right: from this financial year to the end of the forward estimates, net worth in Queensland increases by \$150 million. Of course that is because of COVID-19 and the very significant and sustained injury to the Queensland economy that COVID-19 has caused. Let's look at another government.

Mr Crisafulli: Look at New South Wales.

Mr DICK: No, we do not have to worry about New South Wales. We can worry about Queensland. For the period 2012-13 to 2014-15, the period of the Newman LNP government, net worth in this state fell by \$1 billion.

Dr Miles: Without an economic crisis.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the Deputy Premier. Without an economic crisis, net worth in this state fell by \$1 billion. Who was one of the cabinet ministers—not an assistant treasurer—sitting in that cabinet room presiding over the economy? None other than the member for Broadwater. When the member for Broadwater had the opportunity to govern in this state, net worth in the state fell by \$1 billion. What is the net increase from the election of the Palaszczuk Labor government in 2015-16 to the end of the forward estimates? There has been a \$3 billion increase in net worth.

I know the training wheels are still on for the member for Toowoomba South. He has given it a red-hot go, I will give him that much. I say to the Leader of the Opposition that he has to do better than this. Politics in this state requires strong and firm leadership: the leadership that we have received day

in, day out from our Premier, who got us through COVID-19 with the best health response in the country and the best economic response when it comes to economic growth. Other than Western Australia, Queensland is the only state in this country that is growing, and we do not have record iron ore prices.

When the LNP were in government, net worth in this state fell by a billion dollars. From the election of our government until the end of the forward estimates, net worth will increase by \$3 billion, and that is because of the strong economic and financial stewardship of Labor governments. I am happy to say that each and every day for the next four years.

Skills and Training

Mr HARPER: My question is to the Premier and Minister for Trade. Will the Premier update the House on the government's strategy to rebuild our economy by investing in skills and training?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Thuringowa for the question. We know that skills and training are going to be absolutely vital for our economic recovery, and that is why I am firmly focused, along with my government and the cabinet, on making sure that young people get that opportunity.

During the election campaign, I was at Bohle TAFE with the Treasurer and the local members—the members for Townsville and Thuringowa and the candidate at the time who is now the new member for Mundingburra—and it was a wonderful opportunity to actually see in action how that TAFE is transforming lives in Townsville. We have also invested in the Pimlico TAFE. We recognise how important TAFE is in this state and how important training is in this state. We know that when it came to skills and training the minister at the time from the other side actually scrapped the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, which we have brought back. As a result, we have actually trained many Queenslanders across this state in much needed industries.

That training facility at Bohle TAFE currently supports around 3,000 trainees and apprentices. It is providing vital work, connecting the training with the industries. That is what we need to do because training changes lives and it gives people the opportunity to get into work. There is absolute dignity in having a job and that is why our budget is focused on those jobs.

As I said yesterday and today, the focus on those 160,000 jobs that we are expected to create over this financial year is absolutely critical. It means that Queensland is ahead of the pack in terms of economic recovery. We are ahead of the eastern states because we have had such a strong health response. Those opposite may think that COVID did not happen or that there is no world pandemic, but there is. We can actually sit in this chamber the way we are, but that is not the case in other parts of the world and it is not the case in the federal parliament at the moment either if we look at what is happening in the national parliament. I look forward to attending national cabinet, which will be held next Friday down in Canberra, because we have worked well together in the interests of the nation and we will continue to do so.

Fundamentally, we will work every single day to ensure that the trust of Queenslanders is kept, especially when it means creating jobs right across our state—through our infrastructure, growing our regions, investing in skills and training, making manufacturing front and centre, and showing that Queensland is up for the challenge—

(Time expired)

Budget, Borrowings

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Treasurer. The budget reveals the Treasurer has broken his promised savings and debt plan, achieving only 47 per cent of planned savings. Is the Treasurer's failure to find his promised savings the reason why Labor has mortgaged Queensland's future just to keep the lights on?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Kawana for his question. The premise of the question is completely wrong, but I appreciate the question because the more the member for Kawana is on television the higher our vote is. That is one thing so I welcome that. The truth of the matter is that we are 42 per cent of the way through the financial year and we are 47 per cent ahead on our savings target. We have delivered 47 per cent of our savings and we are 42 per cent of the way through the financial year, which means we are ahead of where we are meant to be.

Ms Grace: With seven months to go.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the Minister for Education. There are a number of months to go until we reach 30 June 2021, and I want to thank all departments for doing their best to make sure every dollar matters to Queenslanders.

I also take the point that the member for Kawana made. We have to borrow. That is what every responsible and prudent government is doing in Australia, including the federal government. They are borrowing \$1.1 trillion this year but the LNP do not talk about that. They do not talk about that figure. That is an heroic effort by Scott Morrison and Josh Frydenberg to save the Australian economy—when our borrowings are more prudent to protect Queensland. We are better than the Commonwealth government, better than the Victorian government and better than the New South Wales blues. Members of the LNP might want to wear a blue jersey, but we wear maroon on this side of the House and we are backing Queensland each and every day of the week.

The Leader of the Opposition's tactics are wrong. He was wrong on his employment target. He lectured to everyone else, including the government, about an employment target but he would not set one for himself. He lectures to the government about net worth but gets the facts wrong. This is three question times in a row. It is going to be a very long four years for Queensland if that is the best the opposition can do. It is going to be a very long four years indeed. The Leader of the Opposition has to know that it is more than just interjecting and it is more than just a smart line for the television; he has to do the hard policy work. The government looks forward to hearing from the Leader of the Opposition tomorrow on what he will cut to ensure Queensland gets back into surplus because he has said publicly he does not support deficits.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr DICK: What will he cut? We will hear that tomorrow.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under the standing orders. You cannot continuously run commentary in that role. I am sorry. It is difficult to hear the member.

Mr DICK: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at the words used by the Leader of the Opposition. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I withdraw.

Bundaberg, Flood Mitigation

Mr SMITH: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Palaszczuk government plans to protect Bundaberg residents from floods in the future? Is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Bundaberg for his question. It is a very good question and I congratulate him on his election. He is already proving to be a passionate advocate for the Bundaberg community.

Thanks in part to the new member for Bundaberg's advocacy, the Palaszczuk government is investing \$42.5 million towards the Bundaberg levee to protect the people of Bundaberg from another flood. It will protect homes and businesses in Bundaberg and it will also create jobs for locals in the Bundaberg community. The levee will protect the Bundaberg East State School, the Bundaberg sports club and, importantly for the rest of Queensland, the iconic Bundaberg distillery. In fact, 600 buildings in east and south Bundaberg and the CBD will be protected by this. It is our next stage in flood proofing Bundaberg. We have already improved evacuation routes and water level monitoring, and the levee is the next step in helping protect Bundaberg from another flood event. We know how devastating they were in 2010 and 2013.

This is not just about flood protection; it is also about jobs. This will create 679 jobs in the region in construction and that will be very welcomed, and that is why it makes it an important part of our economic recovery plan. This was welcomed by the Mayor of Bundaberg, Councillor Jack Dempsey. He said that it was the council's No. 1 priority, and it is great that the Palaszczuk government is delivering on that No. 1 priority. He said that this is 'a significant project that's vitally important to enable investor confidence, reduce insurance costs and keep people safe'. I think he said that very well. It is now time for the Morrison government to match our commitment and support our efforts for Bundaberg, and I have written to the Deputy Prime Minister to ask him to match that \$42 million commitment.

This is the kind of thing that we could not do if we were not borrowing. This is the kind of investment we could not make in jobs and in protecting communities if it were not for deficit budgets in the current economic context. The challenge for the Leader of the Opposition throughout today, as he puts the finishing touches on his first big appearance, as he practises his zingers in front of the mirror,

the challenge for the Leader of the Opposition when he brings in his alternative budget tomorrow is how is he going to get to surplus? What will he cut, and will it be the Bundaberg levee? You cannot deliver surplus budgets while also building the Bundaberg levee like we on this side of the House are doing.

Credit Rating

Mr CRANDON: My question is to the Premier. In 2009 the Premier was part of the Bligh government that lost Queensland's AAA credit rating. Moody's says this budget leaves Queenslanders vulnerable to future shocks and therefore a further downgrade. Will the Premier guarantee that Queensland's credit rating will not be downgraded?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Of course, we have already heard some positive reaction from the credit rating agencies, which is great news. They have actually said that because of our strong COVID response, our economic recovery is happening. Standard & Poor's, as the Treasurer said in his statement this morning, issued a statement shortly after the budget reporting that there is no change to our AA-plus credit rating. Standard & Poor's headlined their report with a statement that Queensland is 'on a solid path to recovery'. They also observed—

Queensland's success ... in curbing the spread of COVID-19 has allowed its "economy to open and budget to recover sooner than many of its domestic and international peers".

That happened straight after the budget. What does that show? It shows that our economic recovery plan is well received. Not only is it well received by the people of Queensland; it is also well received by one of the rating agencies, Standard & Poor's.

As we said, we have had to weather a worldwide pandemic. I cannot be more proud of the work of Queenslanders and the work of all of our frontline support staff. We only have to look at the work that our police, our fire and the volunteers did on our borders to keep Queenslanders safe. Time and time again all we heard from the opposition was attacks on our Public Service.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Coomera will cease his interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: On this side of the House we back our frontline staff. We back them every single day, and that is the clearest contrast between this government and those who sit opposite. As I said—and I will say it again—the same people who sat around that Newman cabinet table are now making the decisions from the opposition front bench. It is the same people there.

Whilst I am on my feet, I point out that the ones with ability have been shoved to the backbench. The member for Burnett is the only person I could hear last budget sitting who actually understood the budget. Where is the member for Burnett? He should be sitting on the shadow front bench. What about the member for Glass House?

A government member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right; he is gone. The member for Southport is gone. The people with a bit of talent have been shoved down the back.

(Time expired)

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will wait for silence, members.

Budget, Borrowings

Ms PEASE: My question is of the Treasurer and Minister for Investment. Will the Treasurer please update the House on how the Palaszczuk government's 2020 budget will borrow to build Queensland's economic recovery, and is the Treasurer aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Lytton for her question. As I said yesterday, this budget is the first step on Queensland's journey back to prosperity. In order to drive that prosperity, to get Queenslanders into jobs, to build our record Capital Works Program, we of course will borrow. As Treasurer, I do not like to borrow, but in this environment we have no alternative. We have to borrow and to do so we are acting on the strong advice of the OECD, the IMF, the Governor of the Reserve Bank and the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, who called on all states to borrow more to fund recovery. That is the Liberal Prime Minister of the Commonwealth who called on all states to borrow more to fund recovery, and that is exactly what we have done. Because our revenue is down and our expenditure is

up, we will borrow to run the deficits over the next four to five years. If you run a deficit you have to borrow to fund it, as Liberal governments in New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia are doing. That would seem obvious to everyone—everyone except the Leader of the Opposition.

In yesterday's *Courier-Mail* the Leader of the Opposition flew in the face of all sound and sensible economic advice saying that debt to fund deficits is 'no answer'. One month on from the election, the LNP have learnt nothing. Their first thought and their only thought is to cut. In order to avoid borrowing to fund a deficit, the LNP would have to make \$8.6 billion in cuts to expenditure this year alone and they would have to make another \$4.3 billion in cuts next year. That is \$12.9 billion in cuts that the Leader of the Opposition must reveal tomorrow in his budget reply. When he says he does not support borrowing for deficits, he must reveal those cuts tomorrow.

Honourable members do not have to take my word for it. Respected finance reporter Mark Ludlow from the *Australian Financial Review* tweeted this morning—

LNP line on Qld budget—Labor said they would only borrow \$4b more—is laughable. The ALP didn't say that. The \$4b was to fund election commitments. If that's the best David Crisafulli has got it's going to be a long four years.

That is what one of the most respected financial journalists in the country thinks about the sham position of the LNP. It is about 24 hours before we hear from the Leader of the Opposition. He says it is no answer to borrow to fund deficits. Tomorrow he will reveal what his alternative is. The only way to fund deficits without borrowing is to cut. Tomorrow we will see the cuts from the Leader of the Opposition, the cuts they promised in the election that they are maintaining during opposition. We will hear that tomorrow.

(Time expired)

Budget, Medical Research

Ms BATES: My question is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister explain why the budget cut funding for medical research by \$10.5 million in the middle of a global pandemic?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for her question. I am sure the member would appreciate that I might go off and check the facts based on opposition questions yesterday claiming we had failed to deliver election commitments. Then I was able to show we had delivered those election commitments. The reality is that we have a record budget in Health. The shadow health minister should have a look at the Health budget papers that show that we are backing our hospitals by giving them a record \$21.8 billion budget for this financial year. That includes more than \$350 million in emergency COVID funding. We have more than doubled our capital budget of \$1.625 billion. We have an operating budget increase across Queensland Health of 9.5 per cent.

Of course, we know that we are committed to increasing our health workforce because we understand the importance of our health workforce. When we talk about research, it is the Queensland government that is backing research in this state to try to find a vaccine for the COVID-19 virus. There is a \$10 million contribution to support universities in their efforts to come up with a vaccine that will not just help Queenslanders and Australians but will help globally. There are efforts being made globally to find a vaccine—and multiple vaccines—that will help us all go forward.

A government member: If they want to talk about cuts, we'll talk about their cuts.

Mrs D'ATH: I will take that interjection; I am happy to talk about cuts because we know what their cuts were. We know that they cut 177 preventive health staff working in our public health units. Who are these people? What do they do? They are the ones right now who are working on COVID-19. They sacked 4,821 Health staff including 1,800 nurses. Of course, we know they closed down the Barrett adolescent health service.

When it comes to budgets and investing in health—capital and staff—only Labor governments will do it. The record is very clear; there are no hypotheticals here. When the LNP was in government and when the Leader of the Opposition sat around the cabinet table, they made decisions to cut health. Those opposite have no credibility when they come in here. Their promise of a surplus and what they took to the election would have meant more cuts to health. When health represents a third of the Queensland budget, you cannot make the promises you did without cutting health services.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Under standing order 113(3), is the minister now indicating that she will take the question on notice?

Government members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: The minister said that she would look at her own budget. I thought she would have known the answer from the budget.

Mr SPEAKER: Let's not argue the point.

Mr BLEIJIE: If that is the case, is the minister taking the question on notice pursuant to the standing orders?

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Kawana is entitled to seek clarification. Minister, were you taking the question on notice under the standing orders?

Mrs D'ATH: No, I was not.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. There are two seconds left on the clock. Do you have anything to add?

Mrs D'ATH: No.

Mr SPEAKER: It is pretty difficult, I realise.

State Schools, Training and Skills

Mr RUSSO: My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Will the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government will assist local high schools to improve facilities so that students have the skills needed for a career in emerging growth industries?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for that great question, because he knows how important skills are—not only in his area but also throughout Queensland. Investing in skills and training in our schools is essential if we want to give students the skills they need for the jobs of the future. I say very proudly that no-one does vocational education and training in schools as well as Queensland. There is no state of Australia in which VET in schools is done as well as we do it in our schools.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms GRACE: You may laugh—

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, direct your comments through the chair.

Ms GRACE: It is really quite amazing and embarrassing that those opposite do not change one iota. They still do not get budgets that are focused on education, skills and jobs. Some of the questions asked today are quite embarrassing. I feel sorry for the next four years!

We have a program of work. I look forward to linking with Minister Farmer in relation to delivering our \$45 million investment in skills in schools. We will upgrade 26 schools across Queensland. Our major focus is in the regions. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, we do not think young people should have to leave their local community to advance their careers. We think local young people should be able to stay in their areas and, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, should not have to leave just to advance their careers. We are making those upgrades in those areas.

In the patch of the member for Rockhampton, we are providing \$2.5 million to upgrade facilities at Rockhampton State High School to complement the region's aquaculture industry. I know that the Assistant Minister for Education, the member for Keppel, is looking forward to making sure we implement these funds in our schools. Tassal is already investing in this area. We need workers ready to go. Similarly in Bowen, we will be providing Bowen State High School with \$1.4 million to update its aquaculture facility. Chinchilla State High School and Tara State College will receive \$4.8 million in opportunities for the local mining, gas and electrical industries. Gladstone State High School and many other schools in the regions will get upgrades and facilities. Hydrogen will be very important in Gladstone. Our ambassador will make sure we get the skills right. The Assistant Minister for Hydrogen will work with him as well. We do it great in the Sunshine State. VET in schools is an example of that.

Nanango Electorate, Mental Health Services

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question is to the Minister for Health. My community has the highest rate of suicide in Queensland. We also have hundreds of related police incidents. Will the minister answer this question from a constituent—

There are no reported upgrades to mental health services at the new Kingaroy Hospital. Will there be a safe room, as we have needed for so long, or any inpatient mental health beds?

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Treasurer, you will direct your comments through the chair.

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for her question. Suicide is a very serious issue. Everyone would have seen the figures reported in the media this week. My local area has the highest rate of suicide in South-East Queensland. It is not a figure that anyone would be proud of. It is very sad that so many

people are taking their lives. We know that COVID has increased the pressures on people of all ages. We know that people are losing their jobs. We know that young people are particularly affected. We know that people in domestic and family violence relationships have struggled being behind closed doors and, again, are keeping that awful violence secret. We know that the multicultural community and the LGBTI community are also affected.

Our economic recovery strategy contains \$46.5 million for local mental health community treatment and support services. We are very proud of this investment we are making. These extra community based services will be directed to areas where we are seeing greater demand—that is, areas where local economies depend on construction, tourism and related service industries that have been most impacted and in relation to COVID. The new services include a new online therapy program for young people and grants to 45 rural councils for local health initiatives. They also include extra capacity in existing NGO alcohol and drug rehabilitation services, extra support for people in quarantine, and the expansion of our existing mental health co-responder services, particularly focusing on COVID. I find it extraordinary that those on the other side—

Mr Mickelberg: Will there be any inpatient mental health beds in Kingaroy?

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Buderim!

Mr Dick: We are building a new hospital.

Mrs D'ATH: I take the interjection of the Treasurer. We are building a new hospital and we are expanding our regional—

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Treasurer, you will put your comments through the chair.

Mrs D'ATH: We are expanding our regional footprint. We are expanding both our physical services and our online and remote services, because we know—we have learned through COVID—that we can do so much more remotely, through e-health and other initiatives, including, as I said, with some of the new online therapy programs.

Ms Bates interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: One would think that those on the other side, including the shadow health minister, would say thank you for that and would recognise the importance of investing and innovating in those areas. How do we get more of these services into these local communities, particularly rural communities? We should acknowledge that 45 rural councils have local health initiatives.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member's time has expired. Member for Nanango, you are on a warning. I have given you guidance to not interject while under a warning. You can leave the chamber for the remainder of question time.

Whereupon the honourable member for Nanango withdrew from the chamber at 10.58 am.

Health System, Staffing

Mr WALKER: My question is to the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. Will the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's health staffing commitment? Is the minister aware of any alternative policies?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I am fully aware that the member for Mundingburra is very passionate about health services in his local community and understands the importance of investing in health services in terms of physical facilities and of supporting our frontline health workers. I am very proud that the Palaszczuk government will deliver on its commitment to hire a record 9,475 health staff in Queensland over the next four years. This will include 5,800 more nurses and midwives, 1,500 more doctors, 475 more paramedics and 1,700 more allied health professionals. These jobs will be right across Queensland Health and the Queensland Ambulance Service. Every region will benefit from this initiative.

In 2020-21 this means that 2,822 new health workers will come on board. This is the investment our health system needs to keep up with the increasing demand in hospital and health services. Let us contrast that with the performance of those on the other side because they are so interested in health—not COVID. They are not interested in COVID. Again, they are in denial that there is this global health pandemic. The only question they want around COVID is questioning the science behind it and the decisions—

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: And wanting to open the borders; I take that interjection from the Premier. In its disastrous three years of government, the LNP sacked 4,400 health workers, including 1,800 nurses and midwives. As I said yesterday, in my local area the LNP's candidate was running around telling people that they all went willingly—all voluntarily—and they were all very happy. When asked about the doctor issues at the time—we all remember what it was trying to do in putting doctors on individual agreements—the local LNP candidate had no idea what they were talking about. Even though this person was a registered nurse, they still had no idea what the health issues were in our local community.

The member for Broadwater sat around the cabinet table, as did the shadow health minister, when they made decisions to cut nursing graduate intakes to record lows. The member was in a government that attacked doctors' pay and conditions. In Townsville the then member for Mundingburra stood by while the LNP sacked 398 staff from the Townsville HHSs, including 156 nurses. Where was the outrage then in Townsville when those opposite got rid of all of those health workers? It is the Palaszczuk government that has restored our health system to make sure it can lead the way in relation to our COVID response—

(Time expired)

Biofuels Industry

Mr DAMETTO: My question is to the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen. While the government is hyping hydrogen, the Dalby ethanol plant has closed, with an estimated 100 jobs lost, and the state has recently pulled the funding from the e10 OK app. Will the minister please explain why the government has suddenly turned its back on biofuels given the reality that affordable hydrogen vehicles are said to be 20 years away?

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for the question. It is clear to all members of this House that the Palaszczuk government is firmly focused on making sure that we are able to diversify Queensland's energy economy. This morning we heard about the success of our investment in hydrogen when the resources minister spoke about the success of our investment in encouraging a range of resources, from traditional industries to new industries. With respect to biofuels, across the state initiatives led by the Palaszczuk government have seen significant success in that space. Queenslanders overwhelmingly support the initiatives that the Palaszczuk government has put in place to ensure that we are able to deliver cheaper and cleaner energy, and the types of initiatives that the member referred to contribute to that. In terms of the specific facility that he referred to, I am happy to spend some time sitting down with the member to gain an understanding the circumstances of that particular facility.

I assure members here and the member who asked the question that we are absolutely committed to ensuring that Queensland remains at the forefront of our renewable energy agenda. Globally, Queensland is identified as a leader. Yesterday we heard the announcement from the Premier that we are well on track to achieving our renewable energy target and are in fact achieving 20 per cent and a continuation of those sorts of initiatives, whether it be in terms of biofuels, the importance of hydrogen or our massive investment in solar and wind which has seen the creation of nearly 7,000 jobs in Queensland to date.

Over the coming weeks and months I will be making sure that I have the opportunity to speak with the member about that as well as all members of this House who are keen to support the continued diversification of the energy sector in Queensland. Importantly, I want to assure all members that our very strong principles in this space are that wherever possible we deliver publicly owned renewable energy and that we ensure that we partner with the private sector to bring investment here to Queensland because there is a huge opportunity to lead a global resources boom and continue to create jobs for Queenslanders, particularly in regional Queensland. The north of this state is incredibly blessed not only with great opportunities in terms of solar and wind but also in terms of using the diversification of those agricultural resources to deliver the energy needs of Queensland. Queensland will continue to grow. Yesterday we had a fantastic budget delivered that will see continued energy growth needs and continued jobs growth in that sector.

TAFE, Infrastructure

Mr McCALLUM: My question is of the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development. Will the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's plans to support TAFE infrastructure in Queensland, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the minister, I please ask members to take your conversations outside. I have asked consistently for questions to be heard in silence.

Ms FARMER: I thank the member for his question. I know how excited he was yesterday to hear of the \$1 billion training budget for this year alone that was announced by the Treasurer which is going to deliver \$7 million for a new metal trades manufacturing and robotics centre at his local TAFE. The Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to creating jobs for Queenslanders. To achieve that, we have to have the right people with the right skills for those jobs, and that is why we are absolutely committed to TAFE.

Since 2017, we have invested over \$150 million into TAFE infrastructure and yesterday's budget outlined a further investment of \$100 million to continue to build and modernise TAFE facilities across Queensland for key industries like construction, manufacturing and cybersecurity. We are also expanding our free TAFE and free apprenticeships to young Queenslanders under 25 which is going to support 37,000 extra young people into the right qualifications. Our TAFE system is absolutely critical and for every dollar we invest we get a \$2.55 return.

We know that the new shadow minister, the member for Buderim, loves TAFE as well. In fact, in December on Facebook he was talking about going to a local TAFE graduation when he said—

The variety of qualifications on display was impressive, with nurses and musicians and event managers and many more occupations graduating with great qualifications after their studies.

I am hoping that he can talk the member for Broadwater and his party into liking TAFE as well, because the LNP does not like TAFE. In fact, when it was in government it absolutely decimated TAFE. It sacked 2,100 TAFE workers, cut \$170 million from the budget and closed five TAFE campuses.

Going into the last election the LNP did not exactly have a skills and training policy; it just announced two things. It said that it would give \$50 million without a business case to a university for training facilities that the state would not own and it promised that it would set up the skills task force. Do members know what the skills task force did in 2012? Those opposite set that up so they could cut from TAFE, they could sack from TAFE and they could sell from TAFE. Those opposite have four years to show that they understand that skills and training are critical to our economic recovery. We call on them to show their commitment to TAFE and to show that they know where we need to head for the future.

Inland Freight Route

Mr MILLAR: My question is to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development. What year will primary producers be able to use Labor's promised inland freight route?

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for his question. As the member would know, agriculture is most important to Queensland. Right from the outset when COVID hit Queensland we designated it as an essential service. As a government we got around the table with all the key agriculture groups and formed an agriculture coordination group. We engaged with the freight companies and with our stakeholders right across the state. We sought engagement with the Commonwealth in terms of making sure they understood the importance of Queensland's agriculture sector. I wonder sometimes whether they do. I am sure the member for Gregory would understand the importance of it. Just the other week I was dining with one of his sector's growers from 2PH who was telling me about the lack of understanding by the Commonwealth in terms of labour shortages, assistance for freight movements and people to make sure freight is moved interstate as a result of their capacity as a grower of mandarins.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Although I am very interested in the eating habits of the minister, I am more interested, under standing order 118(b) on relevance, in the inland freight route as the minister is responsible for regional economic development in that sector.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my right, I cannot hear the member for Kawana with all of your interjections.

Mr O'Connor interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bonney! I am going to rescind the warning against the member for Kawana because I thought it was him earlier and it was the member for Bonney. The member for Bonney is warned under the standing orders.

An opposition member: Free!

Mr SPEAKER: Don't lap it up. Minister, it was a very direct question about a specific issue and I ask you to come to that issue.

Mr FURNER: It would be beneficial to the House if the member for Gregory concentrated on what sort of freight he was talking about. Is it freight on trucks? Is it freight on trains? Maybe he should ask the member for Callide. The member for Callide would be able to assist him in understanding what freight is about. I know the member for Callide is involved in the transport industry and is fully aware of the importance of freight movements in the agriculture sector.

I will return to the discussions I had with a grower from 2PH in the member's area. He was talking not only about the importance of biosecurity and labour shortages but also about making sure measures put in place by the Palaszczuk government in relation to freight movements were satisfactory. I can guarantee that he said wholesomely that our freight movements are quite beneficial. That is why we have invested \$200 million in this budget into freight movements to make sure that it is appropriate.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. The member for Mudgeeraba is on a warning already and can leave the chamber for an hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Mudgeeraba withdrew from the chamber at 11.13 am.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I cannot make it any clearer. If you are warned under the standing orders it is not a licence to continue to interject. It is as simple as that. Minister, I have given you a fair degree of latitude. You have 27 seconds left. Do you have anything relevant to the question as asked?

Mr FURNER: It is not for me to question the member for Gregory or the LNP's position on agriculture, but I do refer to the *Longreach Leader*, where he is indicating—whether it is the skinhead or it might be the member for Gregory himself—'The member for Gregory, Lachlan Millar, has been handed a golden opportunity to prove his worth.' Then he jumps to, 'The other accused'—

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister.

Mr FURNER:—'has a real job ahead of him'—

Mr SPEAKER: Minister! Minister!

Mr FURNER:—'if the shadow minister for agriculture, the member for Gympie'—

Mr SPEAKER: Minister! I sought your attention on numerous occasions. You are warned under the standing orders. I was going to ask you to resume your seat. I asked if you had something relevant to the question and you continued to then stray again so you are warned under the standing orders. Members, it is why I ask for no interjections. It is difficult sometimes for members to hear, but in this case I believe I was quite clear. The period for question time has expired.

MOTION

Business Program



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.14 am): I move—

1. That the following business will be considered this sitting week, with the nominated maximum periods of time as specified—
 - (a) the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, to complete all stages by 6.55 pm today, Wednesday, 2 December; and
 - (b) the Disability Services and Other Legislation (Worker Screening) Amendment Bill, a maximum of one hour and 30 minutes to complete all stages.
2. The following time limits for the bills listed in 1. apply—
 - (a) the minister to be called on in reply—
 - (i) for the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by no later than 6.25 pm today; and
 - (ii) for the Disability Services and Other Legislation (Worker Screening) Amendment Bill by 30 minutes before the expiry of the maximum hours.
 - (b) consideration in detail to be completed by three minutes before the expiry of the maximum hours;
 - (c) question on third reading to be put by two minutes before the expiry of the maximum hours; and
 - (d) question on long title to be put by one minute before the expiry of the maximum hours.

3. If the nominated stage for the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill in 1. has not been completed, and the nominated stage for the Disability Services and Other Legislation (Worker Screening) Amendment Bill has not been completed by 6.30 pm on Friday, 4 December, Mr Speaker—
- (a) shall call on a minister to table any explanatory notes to their circulated amendments, any statement of compatibility with human rights or any statement relating to an override declaration;
 - (b) shall put all remaining questions necessary to either pass that stage or pass the bill without further debate;
 - (c) may interrupt non-specified business or debate on a bill or motion to complete the requirements of the motion; and
 - (d) will complete all stages required by this motion notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders.

In moving this motion, I take this opportunity to welcome all 93 members to the 57th Parliament and, in particular, welcome the 10 new members to this chamber. Most importantly, I welcome the eight new Labor government members to the chamber and to the Palaszczuk Labor government.


The motion before the House today is straightforward and similar to previous motions in the 56th Parliament whereby the House is considering and hopefully will agree to put structure and time frames around what will be debated during this week's sitting. There are two bills which are the subject of the motion. The first is the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which was introduced by the new Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. It is a bill that is time critical and therefore the government is prioritising this bill during this week's sitting and is proposing that it be concluded today. It should be noted that the debate on this bill commenced yesterday.

The second bill within this motion is the Disability Services and Other Legislation (Worker Screening) Amendment Bill which I have been advised is a bill which will align Queensland to the national approach, meaning it is legislation which is being considered or has been considered by other jurisdictions across Australia. This bill is also time critical as there is a commencement date of early next year in every state and territory. While it is budget week and the House usually deals exclusively with the appropriation bills on Thursday and Friday, due to the time critical nature of the disability bill the House will spend some time on Thursday or Friday debating this bill.

As the member for Sandgate said last week, the House is the master of its own destiny and the motion before us today is merely a tool to help manage the business of this chamber, but to ensure the people's house works in an efficient manner on behalf of Queenslanders it requires the input of all members of the chamber. I look forward to a constructive working relationship with all members of the 57th Parliament and in particular the Manager of Opposition Business; the member for Noosa, who is also on the Business Committee on behalf of the crossbench; and, of course, my colleague the Minister for Transport.

I thank the committee members for the respectful way in which the meeting was held and for delivering what is proposed to go forward today. I advise, and have indicated to the other committee members, that there has been a change from what the committee agreed to today. I have agreed, as chair, and notified the other committee members, that although we were setting an hour aside for consideration in detail on the COVID bill at the request of the opposition we have now reduced that to half an hour. I am happy to have made that change in the motion that is before us to consider. With those remarks I commend the motion to the House and look forward to the enthusiastic contribution from the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the next member, I wish to advise members that the first of our Panel of Temporary Speakers will be taking the chair. I thought it was auspicious enough to draw to the attention of the House, the member being the first Indigenous temporary panel member.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (11.18 am): Let us not get ahead of ourselves, Leader of the House, in anticipation of my support for this process, despite the fact that the Leader of the House has indicated that I had asked for the consideration in detail on one particular bill, the COVID bill, to be reduced from one hour to 30 minutes. That was simply due to the fact that there are no amendments being moved and the honourable shadow minister, the member for Clayfield, has indicated the opposition's support for the bill. I know that debate is continuing and it will ensue.

I cannot explain to the House the level of excitement I felt yesterday when I received a note inviting me to the first Business Committee meeting of the 57th Parliament. I felt privileged. I attended the meeting this morning and it was good to be there. I ticked a box. I attended and was told that this week we would debate the COVID bill and the NDIS bill. The concern that I have relates to the time lines for the bills.

I am really excited at the fact that we have now switched over to the 57th Parliament because at some point towards the end of the last three-year term someone was possibly going to pull me up on repetition during debate on the business program motion. I am happy that today we are starting afresh so that for the next four long years I can repeat all of the things that I have said for the past three years.

Today the debate on the business program motion will finish at 11.45. We will have about 15 minutes until the lunch break to speak on the COVID bill, that is, from 11.45 to midday. From midday to 2 pm the House will adjourn for lunch. We then have a very important condolence motion that I expect will go from 2 pm to 3.30 or 4 pm. Then we will debate the COVID bill from 3.30 to 5 pm and the private member's motion from 5 pm to 6 pm. Consideration in detail will be debated from 6.30 to 7 pm. In all, that leaves about 1½ to two hours to debate the COVID bill.

For three years the Leader of the House has said to me, 'All I request is that you come into the Business Committee meeting with an open mind and do not have every one of your members on your list of speakers.' I accepted that advice. This morning I turned up with a list of 21 of 34 members who wish to speak on the COVID bill. Of course, some government members will speak as well. Based on the calculations that I have just given the House, there will be 1½ to two hours for debate on the COVID bill, excluding half an hour for consideration in detail. That is simply not sufficient.


In her contribution the Leader of the House just said—and I wrote it down—that she loves to see input by all members. However, input by all members can never be achieved under the regime in Queensland. It could not be achieved in the last parliament and it will not be achieved in this parliament because of the time lines and the guillotining of debates.

In the past 12 years that I have been in this place I cannot recall a time when the budget debate has been suspended to rush through another bill because of the time-sensitive nature of things. I understand the time-sensitive nature of the bill, but had the government listened to what I have been saying for the past three years and sat longer hours in the 56th Parliament then the NDIS bill would have been passed and we would not be debating it now under an urgency motion. If the government had sat longer in the last parliamentary term, the 56th Parliament, we could have debated all of these time-sensitive bills because we knew it was a fixed four-year term, we knew the election was going to be on 31 October and we knew when the 56th Parliament was going to finish. If there had been proper planning, it could have taken place.

However, we start this parliament where we finished the 56th Parliament by rushing bills. The debate will be guillotined. Even with allowing half an hour or an hour for consideration in detail, debate will be limited. I table a copy of the list of opposition and crossbench members who wish to speak on this bill.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, speaking list titled 'Covid Bill—p1' [328].


Many members will miss out on speaking on the COVID bill. They keep saying that COVID is the biggest issue of 2020 and this is a COVID bill, but the majority of members in this chamber will miss out on the opportunity to speak on it. As I have said, the NDIS bill had already passed through the committee process and it should have been passed in the 56th Parliament, but it was not. I am sad to say that we are going to see a lot more of the same under this government, that is, arrogance, hubris and the integrity crisis that we saw during the past three years.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (11.23 am): Madam Deputy Speaker Lui, I congratulate you and welcome you to the chair. It is a significant moment for the parliament and the state. I refer to the contributions from the Leader of the House and the member for Kawana. Of course, we heard some grand pronouncements by the Leader of the Opposition that things were going to be different under him. They were going to be a positive opposition. They would back in things that were positive and that deserved support. He said that they were going to be different. However, every time I come in here it is *deja vu*, and I hate to use French because I know it is used in the LNP executive. They come in here with the same old 'whinge fest' that we have heard before. Nothing has changed. We get the amateur thespian routine from the member for Kawana, who has learnt nothing. He received a 3.8 per cent swing against him, but I have not noticed any greater humility from him. They said that they would be different and yet we still have the ironic situation where he comes in here complaining about not having enough time for debate while wasting our time talking about procedural matters and motions that people do not care about.

This is a straightforward schedule for us to debate bills, with appropriate lengths of time. Of course we need to consider COVID after the election. That makes sense. This is a relatively straightforward bill. It is hardly controversial. The member for Kawana is trying to confect the idea—which he failed in the last term but is now repeating—that somehow we are doing something that is

unacceptable when this is the normal procedure for parliaments across the country and across other western democracies: you make a schedule and prioritise your bills. We do not need tedious repetition and the same speech being delivered over and over again. We need genuine contributions, which means that the leaders of both sides need to prioritise and work together. However, we see the same old routine.

One would think that after an election at which they lost nearly two per cent on a two-party preferred vote and the member for Kawana had a double swing of 3.8 per cent against him they might have thought to do something differently but, no, here he goes again. They say one thing and do another. I commend the motion of the Leader of the House. It is sensible. There is enough time for everybody who wishes to speak in a concerted way. Yet here we are again, hearing the same old stuff from the opposition. They have not learnt their lesson after a third election loss.

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.26 am): I note that there are a number of new members in the House today, so it is important that we run through why the business program motion is important. The member for Kawana alluded to that, but he did not go into the detail of why the debate is necessary. It is necessary that we debate this motion every single sitting week because, put simply, we do not trust that side of the House to preserve proper parliamentary process.

The previous speaker said that the member for Kawana sounds repetitious, but I for one do not believe he does sound repetitious. I think he is far more than the amateur thespian that the member for Miller miscategorises him as; I think he is quite the professional thespian. We oppose this motion time and time again simply because we do not trust that side of the House to run this parliament fairly. We on this side of the House will never apologise for defending the right of members in this House to have their say. Members on this side of the House deserve to have their say on whatever bill may be before the House. We make no apologies for that.

Over the last term of government, time and time again that side of the House, the government, showed a complete disregard for parliamentary processes. Let's think back to the sessional orders that were passed last time: they removed private members' statements before question time, they guillotined debates, they curtailed consideration in detail. Time and time again we saw that side of the House completely disregard the traditional parliamentary processes for debate in this House. Of course, there are also the 'family-friendly' hours that mean that no-one on this side of the House from regional Queensland is able to return to their electorates early. We also have to arrive here earlier. Time and time again we have seen that that side of the House has no regard whatsoever for parliamentary process. Therefore, we make no apologies for opposing this motion time and time again.

On the *Notice Paper* there are two bills: the disability services bill, which will be overseen by the member for Surfers Paradise for the opposition, and the COVID bill, which will be overseen by the member for Clayfield for the opposition. Last term bills similar to the COVID emergency response bill were introduced with no notice and debated within an hour. They were tabled in this House with no time for parliamentary scrutiny. This bill has also been dropped on the House. It has not gone through any parliamentary process and will be debated quickly by the House. In one bill we saw major changes to the Local Government Act. Members will recall that in the last parliament the local government minister completely 'balled up' a whole range of aspects—

A government member: Unparliamentary language.

Mr JANETZKI: I withdraw. Some 229 amendments to the Electoral Amendment Bill were dropped on this House at 9.30 the night before debate. Some 229 amendments—100 pages worth of amendments—were simply dropped on the House—

An opposition member: Avoiding scrutiny.

Mr JANETZKI: Avoiding scrutiny. Again here we see a COVID bill before this House that is changing significantly the local government regime. Again there is no scrutiny—no scrutiny whatsoever.

I refer to the worker screening bill before the House. Blue cards have been a major issue for this government—bills being withdrawn, amendments being moved at the last minute. This bill is an important bill and deserves extra time for debate, simply because the protection of our children is most important to the running of this state.

In my speech last week where I was happy to second the nomination of the member for Mermaid Beach for Speaker, I talked about this place being the forum for the testing of ideas. Those on the other side of the House do not want to see that; they want to see this place shut down. I cannot believe that we are still having the same debate. We on this side of the House want to have our members of

parliament heard. Yesterday worked fine without a business program motion, yet today the government wants to get this motion passed so it can gag our members. We on this side of the House will never apologise for wanting our MPs to have the right to speak on whatever bill they seek to speak on. Our communities deserve nothing less.

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

AYES, 49:

ALP, 49—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

NOES, 35:

LNP, 31—Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Purdie, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

Grn, 2—Berkman, MacMahon.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

Pairs: Butcher, Powell; Pegg, Robinson.


Resolved in the affirmative.

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 1 December (see p. 195), on motion of Ms Fentiman—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (11.38 am), continuing: I resume my contribution to the debate on the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which amends the Labor government laws that manipulated the local government voting system for Labor's own political advantage. The government is now on its third round of amendments, repeating its mistakes of the past when it did not listen. I also note the amendments made to the amendments of June. These amendments did not go through the committee process. In June, there were just 24 hours to scrutinise some 229 amendments over 100 pages and delve into the full implications of these rushed and flawed amendments.

Madam Deputy Speaker Lui, before I continue, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment to the position and welcome you to the chair.

Now the Labor government is back fixing the mess it created. The LNP opposition warned the appointment of runners-up would not be reflective of the electorate's wishes. I said in this House in June—

Filling the vacancy of a mayoral position during the first 12 months after a quadrennial election with a runner-up is a significant departure from the existing legislation ... What if the departing mayor won with 80 per cent of the vote and the next two candidates had 11 per cent ...

We did see a situation where a departing mayor had 68 per cent of the vote and the next candidate had 30 per cent. I continued—

How could appointing a runner-up be a reflection of the electorate's wishes in those circumstances? They would be appointing somebody who won 11 per cent of the vote.

As we have seen in the case of Rockhampton, it was 30 per cent of the vote.

The LNP and I told this House that the path of Labor's vote manipulation was fraught with danger and we have been proven to be correct. The LGAQ warned at the time in their submission of concerns similar to those held by the LNP. However, duly warned, the government in their blinded political agenda forged on with another example of enacting legislation to hurt Labor's political opponents. These amendments are the result of those flawed changes.

As we said, under Labor's amendments communities have been denied the opportunity to nominate or to vote should a vacancy arise, and two have—in Rockhampton and Townsville. Margaret Strelow received 68 per cent of the first-preference vote. The only other candidate, Chris 'Pineapple' Hooper, received 31 per cent of the vote. In Townsville's Division 10 the successful candidate received 64.36 per cent of the first-preference vote, with Fran O'Callaghan the runner-up on 18 per cent. As usual, in a rush for political advantage at the October state election, the Labor Party passed the legislation for runners-up to be appointed to vacancies whilst dumping democracy and the voice of the people.

The former minister for local government, Stirling Hinchliffe, admitted to numerous media outlets, 'The government had initially changed the laws in a bid to discourage councillors from running in the October state election.'

Mr Krause: How does he stay in cabinet?

Ms LEAHY: I will take that interjection. How does he stay in cabinet with that track record? For the information of the House, I table one of these articles where he is quoted saying these very words.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 11 November 2020, regarding the resignation of the Mayor of Rockhampton, Ms Margaret Strelow [\[329\]](#).

I have to ask the question: did the government change the law to discourage Margaret Strelow from contesting the state seat of Rockhampton? She had contested it before. Why is Labor so frightened of Margaret Strelow or was it because of Ms Strelow's support for the Adani mine loan the Premier controversially vetoed? Have these politically charged laws come from a bitter factional row within the Labor Party that goes all the way to the Premier who backed Ms Strelow in the bitter preselection battle for the seat of Rockhampton in 2017? Which other mayors and councillors are the Labor government so concerned about that they wanted to put up barriers to these people exercising their right—I might add, their prescribed human right under Labor's laws—to stand for election?

This is a clear manipulation of the local government voting system for Labor's own political advantage. It is, bluntly, another stuff-up of this government in the local government area. It is also an outrageous assault on democracy for Labor's advantage. The Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Labor government owe the people of Rockhampton and the people of division 10 in Townsville an apology—an apology for putting them through weeks of uncertainty for something that could have been avoided.

Further, the minister owes the existing councillors of the Rockhampton Regional Council an apology for what they are enduring. These councillors do not feel well supported by this Labor government, and I hope the minister takes the time to personally visit the council and apologise. It will be of interest to the House to learn that the current Rockhampton councillors are being harassed by members of Extinction Rebellion, there are protests outside the town hall and there are other matters which have been referred to the police. That is what happens when Labor stuffs it up. It is all because this Labor government has made up laws and they now have to come back into this House to rescind them urgently.

On the other side of the House we have the member for Rockhampton who said in the *Courier-Mail* that Margaret Strelow was having a childish temper tantrum or a stunt designed to cause a completely unnecessary by-election. I ask the member for Rockhampton: does he favour the runner-up, an Extinction Rebellion activist and self-described ratbag over the people of Rockhampton having their say in a by-election? Does the member for Rockhampton believe ratepayers should not have a say in who they fund through their ratepayer funds for the position of mayor for the next 3½ years? I say to the member for Rockhampton: will you now support the by-election that you said was not necessary? Will the member now support ratepayers, his constituents, having a say in who their mayor is for the next 3½ years? Will the member stand by his comments in the media?

This legislation has other unintended consequences which have been detrimental to all mayors in the state. Effectively, the legislation has placed a target on every sitting mayor. Concerns have been expressed to me that political and serial complainants have tried to use this legislation to force mayors into submission via continual complaints so that they feel compelled to resign. This would then enable the runner-up who might be more politically aligned to the complainants to then take on the position of mayor as a runner-up. It has been expressed to me on a number of occasions by mayors that they feel seriously targeted by this legislation.

This Labor government has a sorry history when it comes to rigging the local government voting system. Remember Belcarra stage 2—there was Labor's vote rorting approach to compulsory preferential voting which caused a major stir right across Queensland's councils. So much was the fallout that in fact Labor had to fall on its sword and ditch the CPV proposal.


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Pause the clock. Member, can I ask you to come back to the long title of the bill.

Ms LEAHY: Now the government are on their third round of amendments to address their further attempts to corruptly manipulate the local government voting system.

Government members interjected.

Ms LEAHY: They do not like it. They are their own actions and they do not like it.

Whilst elections are costly they are necessary to ensure that communities have their say. Maybe that has been a bit lost on some members opposite. It is the right thing to do for the community to repeal the runner-up provisions which the LNP supports. However, if the Labor government were not so rabid with their political agenda this would never have happened.

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (11.47 am): Deputy Speaker Lui, I congratulate you on your appointment and tell you how proud I feel to be delivering this speech today in front of the first First Nation Deputy Speaker in the Queensland parliament. You will do the most wonderful job.

I rise to speak in support of the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. I focus my comments particularly on the support this bill extends to small business. Pertinent to that, this bill will preserve rights and obligations that have accrued during the response period and extension period under the Retail Shop Leases and Other Commercial Leases (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020 and extend the operation of the Queensland Small Business Commissioner.

This bill is a big deal for small business because on this side of the House we value small business. We know that small business represents 97 per cent of businesses statewide. They employ 44 per cent of all private sector workers, which is almost one million Queenslanders. They are the heart and hub of our local communities. They create jobs and they make our communities stronger. One of the ways this bill supports small business is by extending the tenure of the Small Business Commissioner while we get on with the job of delivering on our election commitment to make that position and that office permanent. Why is that important? Since 28 May the Small Business Commissioner has received 3,038 requests for help, 524 lease disputes and 75 advocacy requests.

I want to congratulate Maree Adshead, the Small Business Commissioner, and her team for the critical role they have played and for the professional and supportive role they have played for small businesses. They have particularly played an important role in dealing with leasing disputes. Since their inception, they have had a nearly 60 per cent success rate of formal mediations and a 76 per cent success rate when informally resolved cases are included. That means that small businesses have been able to avoid lengthy and costly commercial leasing disputes.

This bill extends the specific functions of the Small Business Commissioner under the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act as they relate to the mediation of leasing disputes under the COVID-19 emergency response regulation. It preserves the rights of small businesses to continue to have leasing disputes that relate to the period from 29 March 2020 to 31 December 2020 mediated by the Office of the Small Business Commissioner.


The LNP made absolutely no mention of the Small Business Commissioner in any of their election documents. They abolished the role once before leaving Queensland small businesses without any advocacy role, and we assume that they would do it again. The creation of a Small Business Commissioner is absolutely critical. It is just one of the ways this government has supported small business during the year of COVID-19 when they have been hit so hard. We have stood with them, fighting side by side.

When they were first hit so hard, this government responded quickly, effectively and efficiently, including through \$196 million in grants supporting almost 20,000 businesses; our \$1 billion no-interest loans scheme supporting 7,000 businesses and 86,000 Queensland jobs; and \$950 million in payroll tax relief. Yesterday the Treasurer announced further support for small business with a \$140 million Big Plans for Small Business initiative which included setting up a permanent Office of the Small Business Commissioner.

While we are talking about small business, I want to make a special call-out to the staff from my the department, particularly staff in the regional offices who have gone above and beyond to make sure that regional businesses can access the support that is available, including letting those small businesses know about the support that could be offered by the Small Business Commissioner. They have all worked extremely hard. I just want to mention a few. Staff in regional offices in North

Queensland spoke to 834 businesses over two days as part of their 'Muster' campaign. In the Far North, a 'Care Call Campaign' connected 760 small businesses with available help. On the Sunshine Coast, they personally doorknocked 1,000 businesses. How magnificent are they! I really want to thank them for their efforts. Those measures are working.

We know that small business is absolutely critical to our economic recovery. It was fantastic to hear the Treasurer talk last week about Queensland being the only state where more jobs have been created than have been lost during the pandemic—and that is a thousand jobs a day. I know that small business has played a mighty role in that. There is still much more to be done. The extension of the role of the Small Business Commissioner to support small business through this bill is a great start.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (11.52 am): I rise to address the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. Madam Deputy Speaker Lui, I also congratulate you on your appointment to the panel of temporary speakers.

It will surely come as no surprise to the people of Queensland that one of the very first orders of business for the 57th Parliament—indeed, the most pressing and urgent matter of business that must be attended to—is to pass amendments to fix yet another mess that has been created entirely by the Palaszczuk state Labor government. It should also come as no surprise to the people of Queensland, and it certainly has not come as a surprise to the Liberal National Party, that the Palaszczuk state Labor government has sought once again to add amendments to legislation that ought to be presented and debated independently.

Indeed, as the Liberal National Party's Manager of Opposition Business articulated last week, this bill, the COVID-19 emergency bill, is important. There are provisions that are time sensitive, and the Liberal National Party opposition appreciates the need to debate and pass such provisions as a matter of urgency. However, that being said, the amendments in this bill that pertain to the Electoral Act and the Local Government Act should be in separate legislation.

The conduct of the Palaszczuk state Labor government is in no way surprising. However, it is deeply disappointing. It is disappointing, especially as we commence a new term of the Queensland parliament and see that the Palaszczuk state Labor government is continuing its poor legislative processes.

In briefly addressing the broader objectives of this bill, I note that primarily this legislation seeks to extend the operation of all COVID-19 related legislation until 30 April 2021 or to an earlier date to be prescribed by regulation. This is important, as to date there have been a number of regulations made under, or indeed pursuant to, the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act. However, such regulations and all secondary instruments enacted are set to expire on 31 December 2020.

This legislation will also insert appropriate transitional mechanisms, which will provide for the ability to return to normal operations in the most effective and efficient way as soon as such COVID-19 related legislation is no longer required. Again, this is important and proper to legislate for, as there are currently no allowances made for transitional provisions in the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act as it currently stands.

I now wish to address in more the detail the amendments contained within this legislation as they pertain to the Electoral Act and the Local Government Act. The disappointment that I spoke of earlier with the Palaszczuk state Labor government's poor legislative processes, particularly in view of legislation that has been passed throughout this year, is a disappointment that is only exacerbated by the fact that the Palaszczuk state Labor government was warned that such negative outcomes would likely occur. Because of Labor's own hubris and arrogance, on top of its long-held disdain for due legislative process and accountability, the Palaszczuk state Labor government chose to ignore such warnings and press ahead with its poor legislation.

In June of this year, this House debated the Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Bill. Among many changes, this piece of Palaszczuk state Labor government legislation imposed changes on how vacancies for elected councillors and mayors would be dealt with. Specifically, and incredibly, the Palaszczuk state Labor government removed the requirement for a by-election to be held where a vacancy in a mayoral position occurs within the first 12 months after a local government election.

It appears it was clear to all but the Palaszczuk state Labor government that such an amendment would lead to any number of problematic outcomes. Indeed, as Queenslanders, and especially all residents of Rockhampton, now know such an outcome has now occurred, and it is only by virtue of passing this current bill before the House that such an adverse outcome can be avoided and give the people of Rockhampton the ability to democratically elect their next mayor.

This mess was created entirely by the Palaszczuk state Labor government, given that the original legislation presented in June came with an additional 100 pages of nearly 230 amendments, which were circulated for less than 24 hours before Labor demanded that the legislation be passed with no input from the committee system or stakeholders. The Palaszczuk state Labor government cannot say they were not warned. As the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for local government said in this House on 18 June when addressing the amendments on filling mayoral vacancies—

What if the departing mayor won with 80 per cent of the vote and the next two candidates had 11 per cent and nine per cent? How could appointing a runner-up be a reflection of the electorate's wishes in those circumstances?

...

The full implication of these amendments has not been realised by the stakeholders or by the public. This is just another rorting of the voting system by the Labor government and it is particularly undemocratic when it relates to the way that mayors can be elected.

Such words by the member for Warrego were indeed incredibly prophetic. As it was reported in the *Australian* newspaper on 24 November this year, the former minister for local government practically admitted to influencing the potential candidates of the then forthcoming state election, saying that the original changes that had been brought in were designed to discourage mayors and councillors from having a tilt at the 2020 Queensland state election. Professor Graeme Orr of the University of Queensland was quoted as saying in that same article—

I think it's a bit of curiosity but the main thing is the shoddy behaviour of and motives of the Labor government ... It's an illustration of how local government is sometimes a bit of a plaything for state governments.

I wish to conclude today with my final words during the legislative debate on the Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Bill on 17 June this year. They were as true then as they now—

On matters pertaining to electoral accountability and integrity, it exists in this legislation entirely in name only. As if to further underscore Labor's complete disdain for any sort of integrity and accountability, it was not until approximately nine o'clock last night that the state Labor government circulated some 100 pages containing 229 amendments to this bill. That is an absolute farce. This bill should be seen for what it is. It is the Labor Party here in Queensland trying to rig the next state election.

The Liberal National Party understands and appreciates the need to ensure that the relevant legislation and legislative instruments to properly address the COVID-19 pandemic must be relevant and robust, and that is why we will not be opposing this legislation today. However, it is again an insult to the people of Queensland and to this parliament that other amendments are being added on to this legislation to cover for the Palaszczuk state Labor government's own failings.

Debate, on motion of Dr Rowan, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 12.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Mulherin, Hon. TS



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (2.00 pm): I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this state by the late the Hon. Timothy Sean Mulherin, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland and minister of the Crown.
2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland in the loss that they have sustained.

It is an absolute honour to have the privilege of moving the condolence motion for the late, great the Hon. Tim Mulherin. I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Tim's wife Erin and his sons Declan, Liam and Rory. Welcome to the Queensland parliament. Three of Tim's brothers are here today: Martin, Gratten and his spouse Kerri, and Brendan and his spouse Kim. His sister, Catherine Ellard, is here as are his nieces and nephews Ashleigh Mulherin, Sam Mulherin, Jasmine Gatland, Jordan Mulherin, Sophie Cruikshank, Amelia Howell-Smith and Kelsey Mulherin. We are privileged that so many of Tim's family can be with us here today.

In September this year I advised the House of Tim's sad passing. Together with Mr Speaker I attended the state funeral to honour Tim in Mackay, where I had the honour of speaking about Tim's public life and his service to the people of Queensland. Service is a word that goes hand in hand with the name Tim Mulherin. Tim served as the member for Mackay in this House for 20 years. For few

people is the word 'served' so apt. Tim loved to boast that Mackay was unique in Queensland politics, as it has had over 100 years of continuous representation by a Labor Party member in the Queensland parliament since William Forgan Smith was elected the member for Mackay in 1915.

Everywhere we went in Queensland, Tim was either related to someone or knew someone who knew someone who knew someone. His nickname was 'Cuz' because he had cousins all over Queensland. Tim viewed meeting people he did not know as an opportunity to make a new friend. Tim loved people and people loved Tim.

Modern day Mackay has been shaped by Tim's work. He delivered significant projects for the Mackay region, including: Bluewater Quay, Bluewater Lagoon, Forgan Bridge replacement, Edmund Casey Bridge, Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre, Mackay Showground redevelopment, Mackay Regional Botanical Gardens and the Mackay Base Hospital rebuild. During the recent election campaign there was an announcement made about the Harrup Park redevelopment, and I know that Tim would have loved those words 'Harrup Park' being stated in Mackay. It will be a lasting legacy to him and his community. Tim helped build the new police station in Sydney Street and established the Central Queensland University campus in Mackay. He kept Mackay's roads and bridges modern to improve safety and the supply chain, and he played an important role in the Mackay Ring Road stage 1. After the Mackay 2008 flood encroached into the hospital, he was determined to rebuild and modernise the facility from which we all benefit today.

Tim was also an authentic ally of Indigenous Queensland. He enjoyed participating in learning circles with the Lockhart River community and even cooked fresh fish curry for the community on several occasions, although Tim had to forego curry following a harrowing incident in Charleville when he went to dinner at the home of the former mayor of Murweh Shire, Mark O'Brien. Mark had 19 people over for a dinner of Indian and Thai curries which Mark proudly cooked himself. The former member for Southport, Peter Lawlor, was also there. Tim asked if he could grab Mark to immediately come into the kitchen. This caused a sense of anticipation for Mark, because he thought Tim was about to announce further funding for Charleville. Tim lifted his shirt and asked him to look at his stomach, which was bright red in colour. Mark was alarmed. He rang his friend the local GP, 'Tester', who said there wasn't time for him to get there as Tim was having an anaphylactic reaction. He told Mark to take Tim to hospital as a matter of urgency. Tim luckily pulled through, although everyone was a little concerned for quite a few hours. By 11 pm Tim was feeling okay and asked Mark to ring Erin and tell her that everything was under control. Erin must have been used to 'Tim' stories because she took it all in her stride, but thereafter Tim always took the opportunity to explain to everyone he met why he could not eat curry.

Tim was an old-school politician in the mould of Chifley and Curtin. He was smart, and he knew that good policy was essential to beneficial economic change. It was therefore no surprise when he was appointed Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries—a portfolio that he was eminently suited to. In 2009 the portfolio changed to rural and regional economies. This was a portfolio that combined Tim's two abiding interests: rural and regional Queensland and the economy. In 2011 it changed again to Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies. Tim's interest in those things never waned. In the last text message Tim sent me just a few days before he passed he had advice for me. He said—

After I got the news today, and being a super optimist, I went and bought a new sports coat. Keep up the good work. PS—you might want to look at Trade and Investment Queensland and see how many investments they have been able to attract into regional Queensland.

Tim's style as a minister was low-key and his great skill was in being a good listener. He used learning circles to harness knowledge and include stakeholders in decision-making. Tim was an old soul and a modern and progressive thinker. He was a very, very smart policy analyst and he was an incredibly deep thinker. Everyone who worked with Tim admired his policy and analytical skills and was impressed by his passion for policy based economic reform and his understanding of wealth creation and agribusiness. One of Tim's real attributes was his inquisitiveness. He thirsted for knowledge and read widely. This was evident in his passion for research and development within his portfolio.

Tim was the deputy leader of the opposition—my deputy—from 2012 until 31 March 2015. These were three pretty tough years. In fact, they were the toughest. Tim was such a great deputy. He was fiercely loyal. I can remember sitting where the Leader of the Opposition now sits. Tim was sitting next to me. During the first sitting week after the opening of parliament, as Mr Speaker might recall, we had our first question time. During that question time Tim leaned over to me and whispered, 'We'd better have skin thicker than rhinos because this is going to be a really, really long three years.' I might say to the Leader of the Opposition that, if you think three years is long, you have four.

Tim was such a hard worker. When our numbers were reduced to seven, I do not think we would have been able to survive in this House if it hadn't been for Tim because we lost so many ministers and so much corporate knowledge and history. But Tim had an encyclopaedia of telephone contacts, and he would be on the phone ringing people trying to track down information to get the most up-to-date information or check with former colleagues whether what was being said in parliament was true or not. He worked incredibly hard during those years and put in incredibly late nights. He did more than any single member of this parliament would do today. Because he carried multiple portfolios, he ran to multiple estimates and travelled the length and breadth of Queensland with a team of seven. He will always be remembered by history for the work that he did during those years.


One of my enduring memories of Tim—as I think it is of my colleagues the member for Redcliffe and Mr Speaker—is his questioning at estimates. I fondly remember how he questioned the now Leader of the Opposition. I have described him as the Atticus Finch of the Queensland parliament—gentle, dedicated, respectful but with unshakeable principles. I often think that if Tim had not chosen a parliamentary career and had had the opportunity to pursue law he could perhaps have been a Supreme Court judge. He was incredible with his cross-examination. Tim had a considered way of approaching things. He laid the basis for his questioning through solid groundwork and then cut to the chase, taking many ministers off guard. No-one ever got the upper hand by underestimating Tim during those years.

Tim was also a steadying influence in the office and was generous with his advice. The whole office became like a family. He was only too willing to share knowledge garnered over 20 years in this place—with me, with the newer members, with our team of seven then eight then nine, and of course with all of the staff. He did ban Ian Hutcheon from driving anywhere in Queensland. He was a great mentor for Tim Linley and Donna O'Donohue, who are still with me to this day.

The thing that struck me most about Tim was his love for his family. His family were at the centre of his very being. He absolutely adored Erin and had a great respect for her mother, Rose. He spoke so lovingly of his three boys, Declan, Liam and Rory. I can also recall when those boys were born. Most people show photos of their babies who have been washed and bundled up. Tim showed them just as they were born and I will never forget those images. That is how much he loved them; he was eager to show us everything. He loved bringing them into the office to meet everyone. They were part of every aspect of his life. He absolutely hated being away from all of you. He rang you constantly and he was always talking about you. I feel that you are also part of our wider family. He told us day in, day out about his love for you. He also had a deep affection and love for his parents and his five siblings. Family, like I said, was everything. He would often speak of the Sunday family feasts and the roasts and the fish that he used to cook up. There was always a place set for a visiting colleague or a lonely visitor. Tim's generosity was legend.

Like many in this chamber, I will miss Tim. Erin and the entire family, you will see that every single one of the Labor caucus is here today out of respect for Tim. The honest reality is that none of us would be sitting on this side if it were not for the hard work and dedication that Tim Mulherin gave in those lonely wilderness years in opposition. Without him, I would not be standing here, the ministers would not be sitting here and no backbencher would be here in this government because what he gave was more than himself. The fact is that he retired when he could have taken the high office of Deputy Premier or a senior minister in the government. He retired deliberately to spend more time with his family. He made that decision that family was everything and he was going back to his family.

I will miss his friendship and his advice. I will miss his stories, which might have been a bit more exaggerated with every telling. He was a true gentleman. He was a loyal friend and many in this place would attest to that. He will be remembered with fondness I believe by both sides of this House. Vale Tim Mulherin.


 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.13 pm): I rise in support of the motion, and it is with great honour and pleasure that I do so. Tim Mulherin was a giant of his beliefs and his values; indeed, he was a giant of his community. He was born and raised there, and I know from the times that I visited Mackay the high regard his community had for him.

When Tim Mulherin entered the parliament in 1995, his value to his side of politics quickly became evident. His service on committees was exemplary, but it was as minister for primary industries and later agriculture where I think he truly earned the respect of people of all political persuasions. He served in that role for over half a decade. As someone who comes from an agricultural background, I know how much he was respected. In many ways, he followed a similar path to the Premier's father, Henry, who was very much held in the same level of regard by people regardless of their political beliefs.

My time and knowledge of the late Tim Mulherin started in 2012 when I was elected to this place. Tim was the shadow minister for the following—state development, infrastructure, planning, racing, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, science, IT, innovation but, most importantly, local government. It was there that I had to square off against Tim Mulherin and it was at estimates that I did feel the wrath, Premier. What you did not know is the conversation that happened before that estimates. My estimates was on the last day and the last afternoon. The shadow minister approached me and said, ‘Son, it’s very late and no-one cares what you have to say, so let’s just play nicely and it will all be okay.’ It was with that comfort that I sat down, and I will let members read the transcript. One of us played nicely. It was a great lesson.

I want to talk about Tim’s time after public life. The mark of the man is that he kept in contact with me, albeit sporadically. He was never one to shy away from giving me observations. In the same way that the Premier read from a text message, I will read from a text message that Tim sent me on 25 May. I think it says so much about him as an individual. He said, ‘At the moment it’s been one step forward and two back. With a bit of luck I’ll get a clear shot at treatment and turn the tables around in my favour.’ That was barely three months from his passing and he was still the ultimate optimist, the ultimate man of decency.

I say to his family in the gallery—particularly to Erin and the boys, Declan, Liam and Rory—that today is a day where we will reflect on your father’s parliamentary service, and for good reason because it was lengthy, distinguished and honourable. However, please know that more important than his contribution in this House is the fact that he left this place with the same level of respect and dignity that he entered it with. He left it with his community in a better place and he left it with universal respect. The fact that we have a full House today—with people lining up to speak about his contribution as a parliamentarian, as a man of great principles and as someone who was willing to stand up for his beliefs and do so with class—shows what a valued member of society he is and what a wonderful member of your family he is. Vale Tim Mulherin.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.18 pm): It is a great honour to be able to speak to the condolence motion for the Hon. Tim Sean Mulherin, the eldest son of Helen and the late Leo Mulherin. He was the beloved husband of Erin and the proud dad to Declan, Liam and Rory, and he was such a good mate to so many. Welcome to the whole Mulherin family who are up in the gallery. As the former speakers have said, family was everything to Tim, and I know that his heart would be singing to know that you have all made the effort to be here today.

In 1995 Tim became the fourth Labor member of parliament to represent the seat of Mackay since 1915 following William Forgan Smith, Fred Graham and Ed Casey. Tim was very proud to be part of Labor’s strong history in the Mackay region and he was great mates with Ed. He was his campaign manager and Tim really talked fondly about the mentoring and the sage advice Ed had given him.

Tim being Tim, he continued that tradition. He mentored me, he passed on his wisdom and his knowledge of politics in Queensland. Out of the blue Tim would ring. He would have a thought and he would pass it on. Whether you had time to listen or not, that is what you had to do. He would tell his story and then say, ‘Oh I’ve got to go. I’m busy.’ He always shared the knowledge that he had, which I sorely miss.

One thing about Tim is that he loved politics and he lived it. He loved the tactics. He loved planning for the future. He was always trying to be ahead of change. He loved developing policy and he loved talking policy. He just loved getting things done and he wanted things done quickly. He also enjoyed bringing groups together. He really loved meeting people and continually expanding his knowledge of the world which he passed on to those he met.

As has been spoken about, he never wanted to give up being the member for Mackay, but he did so in 2015. He had his own health issues to deal with and he was also grieving the recent loss of his father, Leo, and that really affected Tim. He also wanted to be close to his family.

His decision to retire from political life gave Erin and the boys five precious years of having Tim close to home. But Tim being Tim, there was no retirement for him. He just could not sit still. He was appointed chair of the Mackay HHS. Once his feet were under the table, boy, they knew he was there. He started auditing the practices of the hospital. He began working with government and planning for new services and expansion. Mackay now has a 24/7 heart catheter lab and a dedicated orthopaedics ward. He also started the planning for the rebuild of the Sarina Hospital. These are just a few of his pet projects.

This position was not enough to keep him busy. He also joined the board of Harrup Park Country Club, Mackay’s cricket club, and they have a large number of affiliated sports clubs. Tim being the planner, he embarked on developing a concept for the Great Barrier Reef Arena which everybody on

this side of the House certainly knows about. He lobbied and then he badgered and then he did some more badgering. It was not just state government; he badgered the federal government as well until he secured the funding for the project. This precinct, when completed, will be such a great asset for the Mackay community for many years to come.

When the local media heard of Tim's passing, they immediately dubbed him 'Mr Mackay' because his list of achievements for our region is extraordinary. He is embedded in all aspects of Mackay life: in the trade union movement, the arts, health, sports, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and our South Sea islander community. There is not a part of life in Mackay that Tim did not touch.

With an eye on the future, he was an advocate for establishing the Queensland University of Technology sugar research laboratory on the grounds of Racecourse Mill. He could see years previously that there was a need to diversify that industry, and the sugar industry will do well in having that facility. He was always scheming, planning and making sure that Mackay got its fair share. As the Premier has outlined, there were so many projects in Mackay: bridges, the entertainment centre and the Botanic Gardens, and the rebuild of the Mackay Base Hospital was such a large achievement for Tim.

Tim was a humble man. There were many achievements for which he never sought recognition. There are many people in the Mackay region who come up to me now and tell me a story, very personal stories, of how Tim would quietly go around and help people during very difficult times of their lives. He knew that there were times when you did not go out looking for accolades, that you needed to show people the dignity of giving them an opportunity to get their lives together with support. He was such a good person like that. That is why the people of Mackay really love him. People share those stories about him.

We all know that Tim was related to the whole world. It did not matter where he went, he found a way to weasel his way into your family tree. If he could not do it, he would find somebody he knew that you were related to, so that would make him feel like he was part of the family. We all knew that Tim was proudly Irish—or he wanted to be Irish—and he loved Irish connections on his family tree. Tim was one of those Australians who was more Irish than the Irish. It was only fitting that Tim would meet and fall in love with the beautiful Erin, the daughter of Irish immigrants—as close as he could get to being Irish. Erin is that strong woman who stood behind Tim. She is strong herself. She is kind, she is sensible and she was so loyal to Tim. She stood with him and a lot of the time single-handedly raised those beautiful young men who are sitting in the gallery today because Tim was away so much. Erin ensured that she kept the household happy and nurtured. She allowed Tim to show off his skills of cooking the perfect steak on the Weber and share many of his bottles of red wine, which we all paid for the next day. Tim was a family man and that was the most important thing to him. He just loved talking about those Sunday roasts when he got the whole family together. He loved the Christmas gatherings as well.

Erin, it was your selflessness that allowed Tim's career to flourish as the member for Mackay, as a cabinet minister and as deputy leader of the opposition. So we thank you, Erin, Declan, Liam and Rory for allowing Tim to serve Queensland. I might give a little Irish blessing to the family—

May the road rise up to meet you.

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face;

The rains fall soft upon your fields ...

Vale Tim. I second the motion.



Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (2.27 pm): Tim Mulherin was a man who was both the embodiment of the community he came from and emblematic of the area he represented: the city of Mackay. Everything about Tim said he was Mackay born and bred. Born in 1957, his large family showed that there was plenty of love to go around and there is no limit to how many cousins you may be related to. His Catholic faith and schooling instilled in him a great sense of social justice. His involvement in local hockey in his younger days made him a competitor but also taught him about fair play.

The community of Mackay was, and still is, tight-knit. It is a place where relationships are important but never formal. Tim always showed great interest in the people he met no matter who they were. Simply put, all these attributes gave Tim Mulherin the biggest heart, which shone through during his contribution to public life, and what a mighty contribution it was.

Tim joined the Labor Party in 1974. He quickly became a fixture in Labor politics in Mackay and became a protege of the then member for Mackay, Ed Casey. Whilst Ed and Tim came from similar backgrounds, it is instrumental to note that they also shared similar philosophies. In Tim's first speech in this place, he acknowledged that the priorities in his life were ones he shared with Ed Casey: family, faith and friends. Ed and Tim were also stalwart members of the Old Guard which, over the decades, had been the dominant force of Mackay Labor politics.

While Tim never went to university, he had two educations which shaped him beyond his school years. Firstly, there was the school of life. Tim worked his way through life's lessons at Taylors Pharmacy and Michelmores department store in his youth, and once he left school he became a clerk with the Mackay Electricity Board. Through his work Tim developed an understanding of the challenges facing everyday people in Mackay. Secondly, there was also his self-taught qualification: the poorly named but well-earned 'PhD of Useless Information'. Tim was a voracious reader and learner. The Premier spoke about how Tim viewed meeting people he did not know as an opportunity to make a new friend. He also viewed it as an opportunity to learn about other people's lives—their occupations, their interests, their beliefs, their cultural background. Combined with what could only be described as an amazing memory, Tim retained an enormous amount of knowledge. As it turned out, none of it was useless.

Tim Mulherin was first elected to this place in 1995 and he would go on to serve many terms as the member for Mackay. Tim's record of achievement for the Mackay region has been well documented by other speakers, but regional Queensland as a whole is where he made his most significant contribution. We are a big state; however, each region and each community has its own needs and economic base. Tim viewed each regional community as needing its own specific policy prescription to best make each community work. This is where Tim's wide network of friendships and his encyclopaedic knowledge came into its own.

Tim was a passionate advocate for all regional and rural Queensland because he knew what made each region tick—economically, socially and spiritually. This advocacy was not just parochial; it was imbued on how good economic policy could foster positive social outcomes for all Queensland communities. Tim took this approach as a backbencher in his contributions to this place and on committees. He loved a good committee. He also took this approach to the cabinet table, where he served as Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries and, fittingly, as Minister for Rural and Regional Queensland. As primary industries minister he would speak with great passion about the importance of innovation and the harnessing of Queensland's natural advantages as a developed nation in the tropical world. That being said, it was also fun to play word bingo with what Tim would say! In any conversation, it would not take long before Tim was talking about the value chains, the Grattan Institute or, my personal favourite, multifactor productivity.

During our time in opposition Tim was my neighbour, both in the chamber and in the members' bedrooms on level 14—or, as some call it, 'the accommodation that time forgot'.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr PITT: I am aware of the irony! There are two things to note about my room. First, I inherited it from former member for Gregory Vaughan Johnson. Vaughan shared many qualities with Tim. He, too, was a collector of friends across Queensland, and it would appear that Vaughan had given out the phone number to his room to all of them! Between being woken up at 5.30 am by someone on the phone looking for Vaughan Johnson and hearing Tim Mulherin talking very loudly on speaker phone—as he often did—through the paper-thin walls, I got absolutely no sleep for three years. But I felt like I got to know him and his friends very well!

During that time Tim also had doctors tell him that he needed to take better care of himself and lose a bit of weight, so on a Monday I would sometimes help to stack the fridge with his Lite n' Easy meals for the sitting week ahead. The problem was that by Tuesday night he had already run out of meals!

My last phone call with Tim was many things—long and meandering as always, but this one was different. It was introspective and it turned to legacy. He told me how, despite having retired from politics many years earlier, it really touched him that long-serving staff from the department of primary industries reached out to him and thanked him for the work that he had done as their minister. They said that he was the best they had seen. He got really choked up on the phone. That kind of respect—almost reverence—is difficult to describe and hard to repeat.

His approach to politics also had a broader application beyond that of regional Queensland. Tim, whilst a political realist, was an optimist about how social change and economic growth could lift our standard of living. He did not see economic growth and social change as antagonists to our way of life but, rather, as facilitators. At his core, Tim saw the best in people. He saw their better angels and took great interest in seeing everyday people triumph over adversity. Tim eschewed the politics of confrontation and division along the lines of personal identity. It was this approach that won my respect and admiration. As a member of the ALP and as the son of a member of parliament, I came across Tim many times over the years. He and my father, Warren, were really good mates. When I was later elected, Tim and I were too.

Tim Mulherin's time in this place was consequential for our state and also for our parliament as an institution. I spoke to some of our new MPs at their recent induction and told them that there is an important difference between a politician and a parliamentarian: a politician plays the game, scores points and seeks to win at all costs; a parliamentarian respects the institution as a means to represent their community by building relationships in this place so that members can cooperate for the greater good. I can attest that Tim Mulherin was an exemplar parliamentarian. He was doggedly determined to advocate for what he believed, but he was also a gentleman with friends on both sides of the aisle and highly respected.


Tim's final role in this place was as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition during the 54th Parliament. He was instrumental in rebuilding Queensland Labor after the 2012 result that saw the Premier and me as two of seven opposition MPs. The health minister joined us later, after a by-election in Redcliffe. Tim's ability to pull people together, his disposition towards unity and his encyclopaedic knowledge of Queensland were pivotal in giving the opposition the credibility to begin what all thought would be a long climb back to government. Despite giving it his all in opposition, Tim could not continue in politics due to ill health and he did not recontest the 2015 election. He always said to me, 'I would have made a good Deputy Premier.'

Once he left the political fray, Tim was still as genial as ever. He was always keen for a catch-up and a chat. Tim continued his contribution to the Mackay community by serving as the chair of the Mackay Hospital and Health Board and on the board of his beloved Harrup Park. While Tim and I were contemporaries as MPs and as cabinet ministers, I learned so much from Tim. He was also a mentor to a great number of people—none more so than George Hasanakos in my office, who also hails from Mackay.

Tim's political lessons were always for unity over division, for optimism over fear. While his lessons will endure, we will miss its most genial of teachers. With the passing of Tim Mulherin we have lost a person who contributed much to public life in Queensland. I was very proud to call him my friend. It was a sad day in September when I attended his funeral in Mackay. The honour of a state funeral was fitting, with the streets lined with schoolchildren and locals who came to pay their respects. Perhaps more fitting was the wake at Harrup Park which was truly a celebration of Tim's life. And, boy, did people celebrate!

To Erin, Declan, Liam and Rory, the most important people in Tim's life: Tim loved you and you loved Tim. My condolences go out to Tim's mother, Helen; his brothers, Martin, Gratten, Brendan, Patrick and Gerard; his sister, Catherine; and the extended Mulherin family.

I recall sitting next to Tim during the condolence motion for another former member. I said that it was certain that in the future MPs would be talking about us one day in very similar circumstances. Tim said to me, 'What do you reckon they would have said about me?' Tim, I hope this answers your question.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (2.37 pm): I had the honour of serving in this House with Tim Mulherin. While he sat across the aisle, I respected him as a passionate local member, a man of conviction and a man of care for his community and his family. To his wife, Erin, and his sons, Declan, Liam and Rory: today we particularly acknowledge you and your broader family.


Reflecting on the Speaker's contribution to the House, it is always very sobering when we come to pay respect to people who have served in this House. It is a house of debate and of contest. It is a house where we do not agree on everything. One thing on which we agree very strongly is the value of those who play the ball and not the person. Tim Mulherin was such a person. He is honoured and respected today because he honoured and respected people across political lines, even though he may have not have shared their views. I certainly can attest to the fact that people returned the respect he showed them, because they saw that his care was genuine.

Tim Mulherin did serve with distinction. He proved that service above self leaves something far more significant than names on plaques and titles in history books. Far more significant are people such as Tim Mulherin who show that leadership is not a title; it is an action. It is an action that is best served with care and love for others, consistently in a local community and consistently across the state.

Tim came into this House in 1995 following on from another Labor stalwart, replacing Ed Casey—who has also left his mark here in Queensland—and serving first as a backbencher and then being elevated in the Beattie ministry. He went on to hold the many ministerial portfolios that have been outlined, but particularly throughout rural and regional Queensland as agriculture minister he was known as someone who had a passion and a real belief in developing this state. He is remembered, as I said, not for a title but because of that passion of care and leadership to serve others.

Obviously with the way that there are swings and roundabouts in politics, there were the challenges that he faced, as did other members in the Labor Party, coming back in here after the 2012 election to have so few members sitting on the opposition benches. I have reflected on this over the years myself because I have also been in this House with only a few more members than during that period of time that the Labor Party faced, but you really do come to understand that how people conduct themselves in the most challenging of times really does indicate the measure of their character. It was quite clear that even in those challenging times of so few members sitting alongside him on the Labor opposition he continued to conduct himself with the tenacity that he had later in life as he was fighting the illness that ultimately took his life.

That tenacity, that care and that dignity are something that won him great respect. They won him great admiration for the legacy that continues to this day after talking to people across his own local community. As someone who has served this state well and as someone who has shown that the measure of a person is the character that they take and the kindness that they invest into the lives of others—people in need and the many people where we may not always know their stories, but as those stories come to light—I hope it provides more comfort to his family to know that those years of service that have been given with great sacrifice—the time when the father was not around the dinner table because he was serving other people—are never in vain. They are invested in the legacy that lasts beyond their moment of service that is known. To his family, to the members who have served alongside Tim Mulherin, to the community of Mackay and to the Queensland community as a whole, we remember this man as somebody who served with dignity, with honour and with respect. Vale, Tim Mulherin, and to his family our condolences.

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning) (2.42 pm): On 7 September we lost a great leader, a great friend and a champion for Queensland and for his beloved Mackay. As you can tell from the contributions already made on this condolence motion, he was much loved within the Labor Party and respected on both sides of the aisle. Our thoughts continue to be with Erin, Declan, Liam and Rory and their extended family.


Tim Mulherin was someone who embodied the best of our movement and he continued making a contribution to Queensland until the very end. Tim served the Queensland people for 20 years as the member for Mackay, over six years as a minister in the Beattie and Bligh governments and three years as deputy leader of the state parliamentary Labor Party, time the Premier has already reflected on. He spent his life advocating for working people, particularly those in rural and regional Queensland.

I was very fortunate to work with Tim in his role as the board chair of the Mackay Hospital and Health Service after he had retired from politics. I got to see up close how hard he worked for the people of Mackay and how proud he was of that health service, in particular of his contribution to the Mackay Base Hospital and to the wonderful staff of the Mackay HHS. Tim's advocacy for his community and for world-class hospitals and health care in the Mackay region has made health care better for every person who lives there.

Tim's lifelong commitment to, and respect for, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian South Sea Islander people was especially evident in every part of his public service and his time as chair of the Mackay health service. The signing of a statement of commitment to reconciliation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2018 remained one of his proudest moments, as was the creation of the KemKem Yanga midwifery group practice to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers birthing at the Mackay Base Hospital. Tim was, on the Friday before he passed away, assisting us still with the recruitment process for a new chief executive of the health service.

Some earlier speakers have recounted their text messages from Tim. You, Mr Speaker, spoke of your last conversations and that prompted me to search back on my phone and see the messages Tim had been sending throughout the year. All of them started with a very detailed recount of his treatment and how his health had been and were ever hopeful, ever optimistic, and then he would turn to the real reason he was texting me. He would say, 'You might want to consider' and that would be a useful piece of advice about how I could do my job better—usually something very obvious that I should have already thought of.

His passing is a great loss to Queensland, to the great Australian Labor Party, to Mackay and to all those who knew and loved him. The words he spoke in his first speech in this place in 1995 ring as true about Mackay today as they did 25 years ago. He said that Mackay's greatest strength is her people. Vale, Tim Mulherin.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (2.45 pm): Many others in this place and in the wider community knew Tim Mulherin, the late member for Mackay, far better than me. They, far more than I, can—and as we have heard today—will be able to tell tales of his time growing up in Mackay; of his love of family, and I acknowledge them here in the gallery today—the love of which was great; of his love of the Labor movement, which was also great; and of his love of and passion for Queensland and, importantly, regional Queensland, his home. But perhaps I can shed some light on Tim as I knew him—as a parliamentarian, as a minister, as a colleague; as someone he did not really need to speak to, someone from the inner north of Brisbane almost 1,000 kilometres away from his home and so someone who was never likely to be able to vote for him, and even if I had been in his electorate probably never would have, not that that probably would have worried him in any event.

It would have been easy for Tim simply to ignore me not only when he was a minister in government and I was a freshly elected member but even when he held the exalted position of deputy leader of the opposition—a position, I should say, that we both held at different times and in very similar circumstances coming from small numbers. Do not forget: I was a member of the Liberal Party when we had eight! He could have simply done his duty and then never said another word to me, but that was never how he behaved. Despite our political differences, despite coming from different parts of the state and despite whatever happened in this place, Tim never did anything other than with apparent calmness and decency. He did say to me on occasions when things had not quite gone the way he thought they should that there are swings and roundabouts and that past actions can come back to haunt you, and I have to say my God have they come back to haunt me!


I am not the only person he treated with that calmness and decency. My overwhelming feedback from others, both in here and outside, is that that is how he treated people from whatever backgrounds and come what may. I have a great campaign worker—a former Ergon employee who worked at the electricity board. During one of those exciting Saturday morning campaign roadsides we have all just recently endured, he told me of his experience with Tim back when Tim was a union organiser and a clerk at the Mackay Energy Board. He told me a few stories that I really cannot and should not repeat in this place about some of their actions together, but he concluded with words, after these stories, to the effect that Tim was probably the most decent union official he had ever dealt with. My campaign worker does not like union officials. That was high praise indeed. And he did say, with a bit of a sideways glance at me, that he could have done with a bit more exercise as well! I do not know if Tim really loved this place, but I do know that he saw it as the best way to make a change and to do things to improve the lot of Queenslanders according to his principles and beliefs.

Tim's contribution in this chamber was mainly measured and always plain speaking. He treated colleagues with respect and, as others have said, he did know what he was on about. He gave freely of his advice, as others have testified to here today—and I am glad I am not the only one who received it—from the experiences of the time he had here and as an elected representative, but he was also unafraid to talk about matters that he knew of from his time as a minister and where work needed to be kept up, where a project was working and where the pitfalls, the charlatans and the shysters were, and as anyone in government knows there is no shortage of those. He was genuinely interested in the common good. He would pass on messages, without betraying a confidence, about those things that he thought important. When I was Treasurer I can recall in particular his concerns about disquiet in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton in relation to ongoing school funding. I am not sure whether he knew that my wife Mary had been to the installation of our former parish priest Michael McCarthy as the Bishop of Rockhampton or not, but he certainly knew how to get the message across. Needless to say Catholic school funding in Rockhampton was preserved.

Tim was always up for a chat, particularly on the familiar walk that many of us have had from the back of the chamber after question time, past the Clerk's office and through the Stranger's Dining Room. It did not have to be about anything much, it did not have to be about anything controversial; he was

always happy to have a chat. My view of Tim was necessarily very different from many in this chamber who knew him far better, but perhaps also my view is one that was shared by very many people who met him and found him the same way I did: ready for a chat, free with his advice, always good with a story, a fighter for what he believed in, with a little bit of cunning and a fair degree of guile, passionate about Mackay and the regions and a believer in family and friends.

To his wife Erin and his boys Declan, Liam and Rory I extend my condolences on the passing of a fine and decent man, an enduring servant of the community of Mackay and, most importantly, your husband and dad.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (2.51 pm): Like so many Queenslanders, I was honoured to know Tim Mulherin. Tim very much believed in putting his community first, so much so that, as many honourable members have observed today, he was known as Mr Mackay. Tim was a great champion for Labor, for Mackay and for regional Queensland. He was a tireless advocate for our state. As minister for agriculture and regional economies, and later as minister for rural and regional economies, he relentlessly represented the interests of his community and rural and regional Queensland in particular. Tim understood working Queenslanders, the power of having a job, and as a minister he focused on driving economic and industrial development. His tremendous contribution has helped Mackay become one of the most important regional hubs in Australia.


Everyone in Mackay knew Tim and Tim seemed to know everything about Mackay. Whenever I travelled with Tim he always had a piece of local knowledge to share or an anecdote to tell. Sitting in the House today, in perhaps a way that we do not often sit and listen to one another, made me reflect on some of the great political leaders who have made a genuine difference. During the life of Lyndon Johnson there was something known as the Johnson treatment where Lyndon Johnson applied the full force of his personality to cajole and otherwise persuade people to a particular point of view.

There was something known as the Mulherin treatment as well; generally a phone call. I first received the Mulherin treatment at the beginning of the 53rd Parliament. I was privileged to serve in that parliament both with you, Mr Speaker, and the Premier. It was a phone call I received from Tim. He said, 'Oh, Cam, it's Tim. I've got a couple of things I need to talk to you about.' The interesting thing about the phone call was that I listened to Tim intently because I was a new minister and he rang me as a senior minister. The phone call went on and on and I made a sandwich and ate it and had a rest and got up and did some more paperwork and Tim was still going. He finished the call by saying, 'It's okay, Cam, I can't finish the call now. I'll call you back tomorrow.'

Tim loved people. He was so genuine. He loved a yarn in a genuine Queensland way. It was not just because I was another minister in the government that he would talk to me, he would talk to anyone and everyone the same way. He was genuine and endearing. He loved people. He loved ideas. He loved his community and he loved his party. The last time I had a telephone call was a few weeks before his passing. He rang me and he said, 'Oh, Cam, it's Tim. I've got a few things I want to talk about. You're the Treasurer now. I need to talk to you about Harrup Park.' The rest is history. Thanks to the Premier and our colleagues in the House we put the redevelopment of Harrup Park at the centre of our economic recovery plan for Mackay. Tim never stopped working for his community. He never stopped working for Mackay and that was another example of that. He understood, as others have observed, Mackay's greatest strength is its people. Those same people will long remember the passion and pride Tim held for his community.

In 1995 as the new member for Mackay, in his first speech in the Queensland parliament Tim highlighted his ambition to build a better Mackay Hospital and to establish medical training in North Queensland. As a long-serving member for Mackay he successfully delivered on that goal, helping to secure \$480 million worth of improvement for the hospital. It was an honour for me to appoint Tim, as the recently retired member for Mackay, as the chair of the Mackay Hospital and Health Services Board. He did so much good work for his community serving in that capacity.

Tim dedicated his life to Mackay, embodying the Labor values every member on this side of the House holds so dear. I acknowledge the deep and profound love he held for his family, most particularly Erin, Declan, Liam and Rory. I join with the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and other members of this House in expressing my condolences on the passing of the late Timothy Sean Mulherin.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (2.56 pm): It is an honour to support this condolence motion. As we have heard, Tim Mulherin spent 20 years representing his community of Mackay and then, after his retirement, continued to serve on the local health board and various community organisations, including Harrup Park Country Club.


The privilege of serving in this chamber is afforded only to a few of us. To serve on behalf of your community is a privilege that I know was never lost on Tim Mulherin. Tim Mulherin was one of the first Labor Party members that I met in this House and was always up for a chat and, of course, the giving of advice. Many terms could be used for Tim Mulherin, but the one I like the most is affable. There are many others though, such as good natured, happy, gracious and gentleman.

On behalf of a few members who are no longer in this chamber, I wish to rise and make a short contribution to this condolence motion as it refers to one of my earliest but most memorable memories in this House. As a newly elected, bright eyed MP I was sat beside—and I am not sure who to blame for this—the then member for Lockyer, Ian Rickuss. On the other side of me was the member for Warrego, Howard Hobbs, and just in front of me was Vaughan Johnson. They were all full of advice and between them and Tim Mulherin there were many words of advice and encouragement in language that is no longer used or is probably inappropriate—but that, I think, was coming from the members from our side not from Tim.

One of my first memories is of Tim coming up to me and sitting down and saying something like, ‘So, you’re from Guluguba. Do you know Don Stiller?’ I said, ‘Yep, that would be my dad.’ As soon as there was a spare seat and probably no-one really better to chat to Tim would wander over and sit beside me and he would always want to discuss someone from the region or from my home town or connections that we had. It was obvious that we had something in common and that was the advancement of rural and regional Queensland. Of course, as a new MP I was always a bit nervous that our whip would call me out for consorting with the enemy, but Tim would always say that he was comfortable on either side of the chamber and I think it had something to do with our whip being Vaughan Johnson so we were pretty safe.

After Tim’s retirement and during the sugar marketing debate, when I was the shadow minister for agriculture, I was reminded of Tim Mulherin’s support for the sugar industry. His family connections with the sugar industry are long and I know that the outcome that was achieved to give a fair go to sugar farmers, even though it came from the opposition, would have pleased Tim Mulherin. Not only was he called Mr Mackay, he was also called Mr Sugar.

Tim was a true gentlemen and a true old-school Labor man. Whilst Tim Mulherin had three different ministerial titles, I am sure that his first title sums him up for the Labor Party, for his friends and for his colleagues: it was minister for rural and regional Queensland. Tim was an advocate for all things rural and regional and a great local representative. Tim Mulherin, we thank you for your service. My heartfelt condolences are with your wife, Erin, and sons, Declan, Liam and Rory. May you rest in peace.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (2.59 pm): Since 1903, 182 Queenslanders have been granted the privilege of retaining for life the title ‘The Honourable’. Without reflecting on the other 181 recipients, the Hon. Timothy Sean Mulherin was truly a worthy recipient of the title. He was indeed an honourable man.

I first got to know Tim when I became the Labor candidate for the Redcliffe by-election and joined the Labor state opposition in 2014 to become No. 8. As history shows, it was an opposition small in size but we certainly packed a punch. Although I had had the privilege of serving in another place, like any new member when I joined the Queensland parliament I was learning the ropes and Tim was always there to lend a hand. He was always ready to impart his wisdom and guidance on how this place operated, but in a genuine and supportive way.

I remember travelling with Tim as part of the shadow cabinet. No matter where you were in Queensland, whether here in George Street or on the streets of Cairns or Longreach, Tim felt at home because he was always able to find someone he knew, someone the family knew or someone who was related to his third cousin. That was Tim: a people person through and through. We have heard that from every person who has spoken today.

Tim was a true parliamentarian. He was a master of estimates questioning. To an outsider, Tim’s line of questioning would seem boring and routine, but Tim had a way of building a case. He would ask questions that lulled the minister of the day into a false sense of security and then, like a hunter stalking his prey, he pounced with one or two killer questions. I remember one year when the minister went white in the face because they did not see it coming. Tim would have been at home in a courtroom or in a Senate estimates hearing giving the great Senator John Faulkner a run for his money.


Tim was a representative of his community in this chamber for 7,141 days. For 19 years, six months and 17 days, Tim Mulherin got up each and every day to serve to the best of his ability not only the people of Mackay but all Queenslanders. While many when they leave this chamber go off to pursue personal endeavours, Tim remained loyal to the people of Mackay to the very end. He was involved in

many community groups and was appointed chair of the Mackay Hospital and Health Board in 2016. That was a position that he relished. He brought to the table his local knowledge, passion for his community and a desire to enhance the health outcomes for Mackay and the broader region.

As minister for health I recently met with all of the chairs of the HHSs across Queensland and they have nothing but high regard for Tim. They asked that we stop and remember him for a moment, which is not surprising and is a testament to him. I only wish that I had had the chance, as the new health minister, to work with him as the chair of that board.

To Erin, Declan, Liam and Rory, thank you for loaning Tim to the people of Queensland for many years. Each and every one in this chamber knows that it is our families who also serve alongside us in our pursuit of public service. For many years the Mulherin family was there serving alongside Tim, enabling him to do what he loved doing. For that we thank you.

On 12 September 1995, during Tim's maiden speech to this chamber, he said, 'Mackay's greatest strength is her people.' While that may be true, I believe that Mackay's greatest asset was Tim. Queensland is most certainly a better place due to his service. We pass on our condolences to all of the Mulherin family. Vale, the Hon. Timothy Sean Mulherin.

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (3.05 pm): It is with humbling respect that I rise today to offer my condolences for a man who was approachable, intelligent, passionate and a true gentleman who was also values based. Tim Mulherin's service to the people of Mackay, our state and this parliament occurred not just in his 20 years as the member for Mackay but also more recently as a very valued member of his community. Post his retirement from this House, Tim was a mentor and continued to be a friend and strong advocate for our region.

The testimonial dinner that as a council we hosted in March 2015 with Tim and his former colleague and adversary Ted Malone, the former member for Mirani, is a night that I will never forget. It was a night of laughter, stories, some political puns and insights. In fact, at times it was what they did not say but the wink, the nod and the laugh that said more. They both shared a commitment to their electorates and communities, being hard working, visible and always approachable as local members. I have heard many stories from current and past members, particularly in the past two weeks since I have entered this parliament, and they have contained only fond memories of Tim Mulherin. I thank members from both sides who have shared those stories.

Long after Tim retired many of my former council colleagues and myself would seek his insights or help from his little black book. He would always get back to you with advice on how to advocate on an issue. He was never afraid to pick up the phone and give you further advice on how he thought you should correct yourself or improve.


Tim's community service to the region continued through his leadership as chair of the Mackay Hospital and Health Service, as mentioned today, and as deputy chair of the Harrup Park Country Club Board of Directors. We know that he worked tirelessly with the hospital board and staff to ensure the hospital was prepared for the impacts of COVID-19, even during his treatment. Right up until the end he continued to conduct meetings and stayed abreast of the latest developments, keeping many of us in the community informed.

During his time at Harrup Park Tim implemented a new standard of governance and professionalism. I know his contribution is valued by the board, the executive and the staff. His continued advocacy for the Great Barrier Reef Arena was relentless. I know how pleased he would be with the announcement of \$10 million to fund that infrastructure. Locals will recognise that as a part of his ongoing legacy. Tim was passionate about local sports and the younger generation having access and opportunity. He was much loved and well respected across many codes, particularly hockey.

Tim and I shared a passion for regional economic development. We would have lengthy conversations about the opportunities for tropical health, agriculture and biodiversity. Although we were from different political persuasions, we would speak for hours about innovation and diversification opportunities as we were both critical thinkers.

My husband, Brendan, and I share a connection with Erin and Tim, which is our love of Ireland—where my husband is from—Irish heritage and history. Long into the night Erin and Brendan would talk about Irish history, while Tim and I would talk politics. We have enjoyed lengthy evenings swapping stories or our travels. I will always consider Tim a friend. It was great to see Rory working on the Mackay booth during the campaign and Liam handing out pamphlets in Brisbane. I know their dad would be very proud.

Tim sacrificed much family time for his service to the Mackay region and Queensland. The man should be well acknowledged: I did not cry in my maiden speech but he has brought a tear to my eye today. It was evident that he was a devoted husband to Erin and father to Declan, Liam and Rory. His love for his family, the Mackay community, politics and the party that he served will always be honoured and respected. Vale.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (3.08 pm): I join many others in the House in supporting this condolence motion. I have been thinking about what I want to say. Many people have said some wonderful things about Tim Mulherin and they are well deserved. Tim truly was a wonderful representative of Mackay in this House. While listening to others speak, I have been thinking about what I could say that is a bit different. I can only speak from personal experience, knowing Tim as I did.

I knew Tim for around 30 years. I got to know him really well when he became state organiser in 1993. From the minute I got to know him, I started to love him. He was someone you would listen to. To say that he had an incredible amount of knowledge is an understatement, as we have all said in this House before. When I met Tim, the first thing that came to mind was, 'This is someone who is the salt of the earth.' Every time I think about someone being the salt of the earth Tim Mulherin comes to mind because it is such a good description of him.

Tim and I had extremely different upbringings. Tim came from regional Queensland. He was raised and lived all his life in Mackay. I am a first generation Australian, the child of Italian migrants, and was raised in the inner city of Brisbane where I have lived all my life. Even though we had very different upbringings, we shared common values and a common view of what it meant to be a member of the ALP and a family person. That is what drew us together. To say that I loved him is an understatement. He was truly a great friend and he will be greatly missed.

Tim came from generations of Australians. I think his great-grandparents migrated from Ireland in the early 1880s. His family has an incredible history here in Australia. He had a passion for the sugar industry—something that I know his family was involved in and that he supported all his life.

Tim followed in the footsteps of the great Ed Casey. A lot of Tim's first speech was a tribute to Ed. He said that one thing they both shared in the direction of their lives was family, faith and friends. He talked very warmly about Ed and what he had given him during his time.

After Tim was elected to this House—I had the pleasure of being in the House at the same time as Tim—he had a long and distinguished career. It is very true that there are senior public servants in what is now the agriculture and fisheries department—it was then the department of primary industries—who remember and still talk very fondly of Tim. If you can attain that position where people remember and talk about what a great minister you were, you can be very proud of your life. Tim's family should be very proud of the manner in which he was spoken about, not only in this House but also in the Public Service.


Someone mentioned stepping up in times of adversity. As deputy opposition leader, Tim supported the now Premier and other members of this House. The true calibre of a person can be measured when they step up in adversity. Tim had a calm disposition and the ability to see through the jungle that was before him and plot a path forward. I am sure that he did that not only for us in the ALP, for which we are eternally grateful, but also for his family. I am sure that that pathway was always made clear to his family.

To Tim's wife, Erin, and their boys, Declan, Rory and Liam: I know that you meant everything to him. My heart goes out to you and all your family in the gallery this afternoon. Tim really cared about everyone he met but particularly about the young people in his community. I know that when he spoke to me as education minister, he always spoke about what we could do for the young people, what we could do for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the South Sea islanders in that area. He was genuinely passionate about what we could do to better their lives—that true Labor virtue of knowing the value of education—and what we could do to benefit young people and keep them in the community. 'Mr Mackay' was always about Mackay and wanting to keep them in Mackay.

It was wonderful to hear Tim's stories, his support and his at times gratuitous advice. It was always fantastic. As I said, he was salt of the earth and I will always remember him as such. He was kind, generous and funny but, most importantly, he was humble. He was a very humble man who took everything in his stride and did what he could not only for the betterment of his family and his friends but also for the benefit of the community at large. He was a salt-of-the-earth man with a very modern twist, and he always had that modern way of looking at things.

I extend my deep condolences to all of you in the gallery—to Erin and his three beloved boys, and to his brothers, his sister and their families. He was a great uncle. He will be greatly missed.

The last time we were together, at the house of the member for Mackay—Erin was there—there was a stack of people there, not only from the party but also from the community generally. It was great to be able to pay tribute to him at that meeting. It was wonderful to be able to give him the respect that I know he gave everybody he met. As I said, he will be missed. I wish his family all the very best. May he rest in peace.


 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (3.14 pm): I rise to speak briefly to this condolence motion. As one of the last remaining members of the 51st Parliament, which commenced in 2004—along with the members for Maroochydore and Hill—who served with him, I want to give a couple of brief memories of my time with Tim Mulherin.

In my first term, I was one of five members of the Liberal Party. It seemed like it was a kinder, gentler place, to my memory. Where the members for South Brisbane, Maiwar and Noosa now sit, back then sat the member for Kallangur, Ken Hayward, who had been the transport minister and had come here in 1986; Peter Lawlor, the member for Southport, my neighbouring seat—he had come here in 2001; and Tim Mulherin, who had come here in 1995. They were, to my memory, like Statler and Waldorf from *The Muppets* but very gracious. I was sitting where the member for Southern Downs now sits and they would say, ‘Come over here, young fella’—I was the youngest of the five—‘and we’ll tell you a few things.’ Ken Hayward was the chairman of the public accounts committee, on which I was privileged to serve. Of course, having Peter Lawlor and Tim Mulherin there was quite humorous. They would give me their cantankerous opinions and had a penchant for heckling, because they were on this side of the House. It was a very nice introduction into the relationships that I think can and sometimes still do exist between the two sides of the House.

When Tim Mulherin found out that my wife is the granddaughter of Irish migrants—from County Cork, no less—that started a relationship where he was only too happy to explain Irish background to me. Coming from a Dutch-American and Jamaican background, that was quite an education!

Then he was called to higher duty and he became a minister. I remember—it may be in the 52nd Parliament, because I think you came in the 53rd, Mr Speaker—that at that time, as we often have, we had a doctor in the House. We are all very thankful for that when we need prescriptions or various diagnoses. At the moment we have the member for Moggill, but at that time the doctor in the House was Dr Flegg. We had some interesting times with Dr Flegg in the House in terms of diagnoses, politically and otherwise, but there were two particular occasions that I remember—they happened within a short time period—when a minister was taken by ambulance out of the canteen. Dr Flegg said to us subsequently that he thought your father, Mr Speaker, really did have something quite significant, which turned out to be non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. A week or two later Tim Mulherin was also carried out of the canteen on a stretcher. That had everyone abuzz. In his case, he had had some sort of reaction to fish and chips. The Premier’s story about his reaction to curry was something that certainly resonated with me as I remember that Dr Flegg had diagnosed something that needed the imminent attendance of the ambulance when it was actually some sort of reaction to fish and chips!

As we came into government, Tim Mulherin was, as others have said, always very gracious to me. There were times when I would be with him on a flight to Mackay or I would meet other people from Mackay on flights to Mackay. He was always very gracious. In the 55th Parliament I was the shadow health minister and he, as chair of the Mackay Hospital and Health Board, was very gracious in affording me a full briefing with the CEO. As I recall, it was just after estimates and the CEO was recovering from whatever grilling I had given her. When I went to the Proserpine Hospital, which was some distance away—and as the honourable member for Whitsunday can attest, it was part of that hospital and health service and they were very proud of the birthing and other services offered—he made the effort to come with me and very graciously include me in a briefing. I pass on to Erin, Liam, Declan and Rory and all the family our condolences and my condolences personally. Vale, Tim Mulherin.

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism Industry Development and Innovation and Minister for Sport) (3.20 pm): The Hon. Tim Mulherin was born a couple of weeks after the 1957 post-split election. After the split in the long-ruling Labor Party earlier that year, the August election saw Frank Nicklin’s Country-Liberal coalition move to this side of the House for the first time and it was the first time for any non-Labor government in almost three decades. This was famously the beginning of the Queensland branch of the ALP’s 32 years in the wilderness. I note that today is the 31st anniversary of the election of the Goss government, breaking that record run for Queensland’s conservatives. Tim worked on that campaign as campaign director for Ed Casey, as was noted by others, including the member for Mackay.


When Tim and I first met it was before his election to this place. Like the member for McConnel, it was when he was serving as an ALP organiser. Despite coming from different traditions within the party, we bonded very quickly over our mutual interest in Queensland Labor history. This was very obvious from his first speech where he spoke about former members for Mackay—and, again, as the member for McConnel has said—especially his predecessor, Ed Casey, and his hero, William Forgan Smith, more than he did about himself. The level to which that first speech reflects how he was about Mackay and how he was about Mackay history and its extraordinary role in Queensland history was very evident.

At times I think Tim felt the weight of Labor history encumbering his position as the member for Mackay, but he lived up to it. Serving in the Beattie and Bligh ministries, Tim was a widely respected and outstanding primary industry minister and an especially consistent and strong advocate for regional Queensland. It was during that time that I had the great privilege of serving with him in this place and seeing how passionately he committed himself to those objectors, that task and that role.

He loved an industry round table or learning circle, as he liked to call them. Like all of his other conversations, these were peppered with references to his many cousins and their stories from across the state or his ancestors in the Mackay district or indeed in Ireland. Many of those who were part of these conversations or were at these round tables would often wonder where these anecdotes were going, but they inevitably made a salient point. Then Tim ducked out for a lung buster. His farm shed meetings throughout Queensland, especially in the aftermath of natural disasters, were legendary.


Mr Speaker, however, as you appreciate as much as anyone else, Tim's greatest contribution to Labor's cause was as deputy leader during the 54th Parliament. A steady and experienced hand providing unwavering support to his leader, the now Premier, in the face of a truly daunting circumstance. While his illness robbed us of his company and comradeship, his legacy remains in this government and in the party that he loved so much.

Having lived the first part of his life during Labor's wilderness years, as I referred to them earlier, he certainly put his stamp on the modernising of Queensland and especially on the shaping of modern Mackay. In our conversations Tim was always proudest of his family—their achievements and experiences. He and I would always discuss our sons and their sporting aspirations and interests. I extend my personal condolences to Erin and his sons, Declan, Liam and Rory. Vale, Tim Mulherin.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (3.25 pm): In 2006, when I first moved into this parliament, I had a really good friend on the red side, Peter Lawlor. Peter was a great mate of Tim and Kenny Hayward. As the member for Surfers Paradise referred to earlier, they were quite a little trio and had a bit of fun around the parliamentary precinct. They were Statler and Waldorf, Kenny and Peter, up the back. During parliamentary sittings the three of them would, when they could, go for their early morning exercise together. They were the only three people I could pass on my walk in the morning. I think there was quite a bit of storytelling going on while they toddled around the park and streets of Brisbane.

My introduction to Tim was through Peter. He grabs the accolade that I think is the highest one you can aspire to—that is, he was a good bloke. He was an absolutely fantastic guy. He took it up in this House. He was a terrific parliamentarian. He understood the differences you referred to earlier, Mr Speaker, in terms of being a politician and a parliamentarian. He was an absolutely classic bloke. Something all new members should aspire to in their time in this House is to treat the parliament and the other people in the parliament with the respect, friendship and comradeship that Tim displayed.

There might be one little anecdote that you may not be aware of, Mr Speaker. When I was leader of the house in our very short time in government we were looking to put in a regime for payments of parliamentarians. It was done by an outside group. It was a percentage of what the Premier earned. I had a visit from Tim Mulherin because we had to have agreement from both sides to go forward. He said, 'Listen, Ray, this is fine. We will be happy with the makeup of the different parliamentary salaries, but young Curtis has a young family. He is the manager of opposition business and he needs a lift.' I said, 'Fair enough, Tim, that sounds all right to me.' Little did I know that after the next election I would be the beneficiary of his benevolence. He was thinking of young Curtis and his young family. That was the mark of Tim. He was a great bloke and he will be sorely missed and never forgotten by all who knew him. To his family, my deepest condolences. I am sure Tim will be resting in peace.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (3.28 pm): I rise to support the condolence motion for Tim Mulherin. I first met Tim in 1993. I was a young, fresh faced candidate for the Moorooka Ward in the Brisbane City Council election and Tim was my party organiser.

He was trustworthy, committed, effective and easy to work with. He did not stay organiser for long because when Casey retired he took over the seat of Mackay and subsequently had an incredible career for 20 years, after working in the power industry beforehand.

Tim brought his well-developed values into this place and he put them to work. He saw those in other parties as opponents but not enemies. He was not a hater, and he always put others first throughout his life. Gary Highland was one of Tim's close friends. Gary's tribute to Tim after his passing captures Tim's character better than I can—

Whenever someone expressed cynicism to me about politicians, I would say, 'Ah, you obviously haven't met my mate, Tim Mulherin' Tim was one of the kindest, most generous and truly selfless people I have ever known.

All he ever wanted to do was to help people and make his city of Mackay and the world a better place. He saw politics as the best vehicle for doing this. His family can be so proud of all he achieved and how he went about this. He was such great company. You could have the deepest conversation with him and then the biggest laugh all in the space of an afternoon.

Tim did not have the opportunity to go to university, but he had a lifelong fascination and curiosity with public affairs and specifically agriculture and agricultural economics. As others have said, his family history goes back to the agricultural history of the region. He was well read. He was always curious and, as has been well said, he could talk to a PhD or the local mechanic and he would bring equal curiosity and openness to the conversation.

While he did not get to Gatton college, Tim of course would make a major contribution to Queensland agriculture as the minister for more than two terms under two premiers. He loved being able to bring people together, as has well been mentioned—people who did not necessarily come from the same background or who were not on the same page—to get an outcome.

I would especially like to acknowledge Tim's commitment to justice and the advancement of First Nation people and the South Sea islander community and his support of arts in Mackay as well, including his championing of the relocation and enhancement of the conservatorium of music, as recounted to me this morning by the then arts minister, Matt Foley.

After Tim's encounter, as has well been recounted, out west with the curry and the hospital, most people would have departed politics to look after themselves after such a close shave—but not Tim. Labor headquarters, after no doubt some dire political research at the time, asked him to run again for Mackay as they believed, quite rightly, that only Tim could hold that seat for Labor at the 2012 state election. True to his selfless approach to life, Tim put aside his own health issues and agreed to run again and did hold his seat amidst the political maelstrom that rained down on Labor in March 2012.


He became the deputy leader of the parliamentary Labor Party with seven MPs, as has well been recounted by the Premier. His effectiveness was profound. His 20 years of parliamentary experience and corporate knowledge was invaluable to turning seven members into a first-term Palaszczuk Labor government.

Very few people would have a bad word to say about Tim Mulherin, and that is not something you could say about many people. The fact that this is the longest speaking list that I ever recall on a condolence motion in the six years I have been here says much about Tim and his contribution to this place.

I am very fortunate to be able to say that Tim was a loyal and good friend over 27 years. He was a Labor true believer who had an immeasurably positive impact on countless lives through his work, contributing fully and profoundly to the last day of his service as an MP and also to his last days in his subsequent post-MP role as chair of the regional HHS board.

Of course the greatest and most profound loss on Tim's passing is for his family and friends. He was a great family man. His wife, Erin, who is here with us today, played a crucial role—and I would like to acknowledge that—in Tim's contribution to our state of Queensland, holding the fort, supporting their family and supporting him when he was away for long periods.

I acknowledge Erin; his mother, Helen; his brothers and sisters; his other family members and friends; and his sons—Declan, Liam and Rory. I offer my sincerest condolences on Tim's passing. Vale Tim Mulherin. He deserved much longer. Our community, our state and ourselves are all better for his life.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (3.33 pm): After almost nine years in this place, this is one of my first contributions on a condolence motion. It is really important for me to have this opportunity because I feel very strongly about providing a tribute to Tim. I echo the sentiments of the member for Clayfield. They were very well placed. Perhaps I did not know Tim as well or spent as much time with Tim as many others here, but my interactions were so meaningful that I feel compelled to say something, particularly after having discussions with the member for Hill, who had spent a lot more time with him.


My first interactions with Tim were when I sat on a committee with him. I was an impressionable, nervous newcomer here. My observations were that he was a bloke who stuck it out when there were only seven Labor MPs. He turned up every day and took it. He turned up and turned up. Despite what was said, he kept his rational response. It was something I really admired and still admire to this day, and remember. It left a big impression on me.

Even when I would say something that he would entirely disagree with—I felt like I really did not count for much in that parliament—he was one of the most experienced blokes in the House who would take time to talk to me to try to understand where I was coming from or to give me his advice on what he thought of that issue. For someone new, that leaves a big impression on you. On top of all of that, he would still contact you after he left parliament to say g'day and catch up. It took him a while to find a connection through my family, but he did eventually—through my uncle.

He was very effective. People in my electorate knew—and Shane commented to me—about the great job he did after Cyclone Yasi as the agriculture minister. He turned up to whatever was going on in the electorate and took his medicine. When I became aware of politics, I would see him out there. He would always front up and do the decent thing like that. He was very mature.

The other observation I made was that Tim, as we would say back home, was not a big-noter. He was never trying to be anything up there. Despite all of that experience, he was still very well grounded, and that speaks to me of why he stayed such a strong representative of Mackay and was embedded in that seat. He was truly a man of the people and someone who had compassion for his fellow man and was trying to do some good.

It was with deep sadness that I heard of Tim's passing. I really appreciated his objectivity, the way he approached parliament and the respect with which he treated everyone in this House no matter what position you were in. He was an inspiration to a new, young bloke. I certainly did not feel that I counted for much. I would like to pay tribute and give our best wishes to the Mulherin family. Tim, rest in peace.

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (3.36 pm): I rise to contribute to the condolence motion and to honour the life and service of Timothy Sean Mulherin. Just after Tim's passing in September, I was sitting down with one of his friends Donna O'Donoghue during the last sitting week before the election. I said to Donna, 'There's an added reason for many of us to be re-elected,' and that added reason is to contribute to this condolence motion, to put on the permanent record of the parliament our love, honour and respect for Tim Mulherin. I am additionally grateful to the good people of Morayfield for re-electing me so that I can be in a position to contribute to this debate.

I will always remember Tim as a friend and a comrade but more widely, as we have already heard today, he will be forever remembered as a great of the Australian Labor Party and of his beloved Mackay community. Most importantly—and, critically, most importantly to him because he told me so—he will be remembered as a devoted family member, a man who loved his family with all his being.

My thoughts continue to be with Erin and the boys, to all of his family and friends. As many in speaking to this motion have already noted, Tim was so devoted to his family and he would constantly tell everyone how proud he was of them and what they were doing and what they were up to. Importantly, he knew that they were also equally devoted to him. It is an awareness that I know Tim felt tremendously comforted by, because he was away so often and he contributed so much to the Labor Party and to Queensland. For him to know that his family were tremendously devoted to him comforted him immensely.

Tim was a man of great wisdom and he offered advice very freely. One piece of advice that confronts me daily was to always work hard to get the balance right between work and family. As many in this House would appreciate, that balance is very hard to achieve. But I try, and in memory of Tim I will try harder. I know that Erin will be missing Tim immensely. If the story is true, there was an inevitably to Tim and Erin getting together. I was told that Tim's introduction to Erin was as a result of a dare by one of his mates after a few drinks. Apparently, Tim was challenged to approach Erin and ask her out. The line from Tim's mate went something like this: 'Tim, just think about it, mate. If you and Erin get married, she'll become Erin Mulherin.' Mr Speaker, the rest is history.

As we have heard, Tim always looked for a personal connection of some sort with the people he came across. Six degrees of separation was too many for Tim. He forged many good and, importantly, genuine friendships during his lifetime. Two of those friendships, as we have heard already, were shaped right here in this chamber. It was during the early 2000s that Tim would sit up the back with Kenny Hayward, the former member for Kallangur, and Peter Lawlor, the former member for Southport,


in those three seats up there. Tim, Ken and Peter truly loved sitting there, so much so that they nicknamed themselves the 'Full Bench'. From there they would cast judgement over everything and anything, and to the displeasure of the then Speaker they were able to humorously heckle without consequence. I am told they always seemed to get away with it.

That introduction to always getting away with it continued with Tim's advice to me when I first joined the parliament in 2009. As many people would appreciate, I took over from Kenny Hayward. Ken said to me, 'Learn from Mulherin, you can't go too wrong.' In our first caucus meetings I would sit up the back with Tim Mulherin and Peter Lawlor, and they would talk and talk and talk. It got me in trouble with the then premier, Anna Bligh, who said, 'Maybe you need to find another seat.' Mulherin and Lawlor always got away with it.

It is no surprise that we have heard of the respect people had for Tim Mulherin. I heard a story just recently that, when he was the agriculture minister, he would sneak out and smoke on the Turbot Street footpath with departmental staff. He got to know some of them so well that he got a bit of a reputation as an 'agony aunt' because he used to dispense advice to them about personal, family or marital difficulties. It does go to show that he was always a man of the people. He was always grassroots. He always wanted to hear people's stories.

One of Tim's friends, Lindsay Marshall, wanted me to share these thoughts with the House: 'It is a remarkable feat to rise from seven MPs in opposition to minority government within a single term. Tim, as deputy opposition leader, was a key part of that result. Tim's experience, temperament, guidance and political and personal talents brightened many of the dark days in opposition. His personal standing in the wider Labor movement helped rebuild bridges in the wake of the 2012 defeat. The solid policy work he did alongside others in the small opposition team helped engineer the 2015 transition back to government. It was that work that laid the foundations for the majority governments that have followed.'

As the Premier quite rightly highlighted, one person—Tim Mulherin—changed the history of Queensland. It just goes to show that one person can make a difference. Tim is a legend of the Australian Labor Party. He was a strong contributor to public life and the people of Queensland. He was a good and genuine friend to many. As I said earlier, most importantly to him he was a devoted family man who loved his family with all his being. Tim was one of the most fundamentally decent people I have ever known, and it is indeed an honour to know him, and through Tim it is an honour to know his family and friends. Rest in peace, Tim Mulherin.

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (3.44 pm): It is a great honour to speak to this condolence motion and pay my respects to Tim Mulherin. Many people in this parliament have talked about how Tim made such an effort with them when they first came to this parliament. I had a similar experience with Tim, but it was when I first joined the Labor Party in the early 1990s. Tim was an ALP organiser and, like any person joining a group for the first time, I was really passionate about joining and about the reasons I joined, but I found the whole thing a bit bewildering. Who was who? What did it mean what everyone was talking about? How could I play a part myself?

I do not recall the very first time I met Tim, but I do remember that he very quickly made me feel like I was his friend. If he saw me at something he would always be the first person to come over to say hello. He would explain what was going on. He did explain who was who, and he could always tell me who they were, who they were married to, what they said at a meeting six years beforehand and what their pets' names were. Very quickly I was up on everything. He would often ring for a chat, and anyone who knew him knew that it was never a short chat. It did not matter what I said or did or what I asked; he always made me feel really valued and he made me feel like I belonged. I could never work out how Tim could fit in the support and attention that he gave me. As the months and years went on, I realised just how many people received that same amount of attention and selfless support and kindness from Tim. It became more and more remarkable to me that he could achieve everything he did, but he always managed to fit in time for others. That was because clearly one of the most important things in his life was to learn from people and make sure they felt valued.


A number of members have referred to the fact that Tim was very well known for either being related to just about everyone in Queensland, possibly Australia and possibly even the world and the universe. I remember going doorknocking with him on a campaign for a particular candidate nowhere near Mackay. It was not one of our own campaigns. We all know that when you go doorknocking you should not spend too much time in any one house because you have a lot of people to talk to. That was quite hard for Tim, because of course the first person was his third cousin eight times removed, and

then the second person was his neighbour's friend's butcher's vet's aunty's sister's next-door neighbour's teacher. It went on and on like this. I recall that we did not actually get through very many people, but of course he was fascinated by all of them and I am sure that every single person we spoke to voted for that candidate.

Going back to what the Premier said about how Tim never missed a beat and got to the bottom of things, after that afternoon of doorknocking we went back and said to the candidate and party people who were organising, 'These are the issues and this is what you need to be worried about.' It went against what the polling was saying and what the focus groups were saying. Tim said, 'No, these are the issues,' and of course they were the issues. Tim was right because he listened, he understood and he just got people.


Tim Mulherin was fearless, unstoppable and absolutely relentless in his quest to achieve the best for whomever and whatever he held responsibility for. He took that responsibility so seriously, whether it was in his job as an organiser or a member of the Labor Party, as a proud member of the union movement, as the member for his beloved Mackay, as the minister for primary industries and all of those related portfolios, or as deputy opposition leader. His support of, and loyalty to, the Premier was absolutely total. In any of those capacities, you just never said no to Tim. There was probably no point because he knew what was needed and he was going to make sure that happened for those people, those things or those communities.

It is impossible to speak about Tim and not speak about his family who were everything to him—his mum and dad, his extended family and his beautiful Erin, who was his absolute strength. I had the great pleasure of meeting Tim when Tim and Erin were in their courting days, and you knew as soon as you saw them together what an amazing bond they had and that they fitted together like hand and glove. To Rory, Liam and Declan, the joys of his life, and to all of you—thank you for sharing Tim with all of us. He was a supreme human being, a man of the people and a truly great leader. He was one in a million and we will all miss him so much.

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (3.50 pm): I rise in support of the condolence motion for the Hon. Tim Mulherin. Mr Speaker, I heard the words you said earlier about Mr Mulherin being an exemplary parliamentarian. He was also an exemplar of the community. He was very widely respected by all the leaders in the community, by decades of mayors and councillors. It is obvious to see how much he impacted the community just by the emotions of the member for Whitsunday. He always respectfully referred to my grandfather as Uncle Cedric. They shared some lively and very happy times together. It was because of Tim's honesty and decency and the way he treated everyone with respect that the South Sea islander people always got a mention. I will always say that about him. However, when I was elected to the 56th Parliament, he did take me aside and say, 'Stephen, we have to have a talk about this One Nation thing.'


Tim was always an honest and fair man. It does not matter where we met each other—whether it was in the street—he would always say to me, 'How's your grandfather, Steve? How's your father? Make sure you say hello to them for me.' He had that deep connection with everyone in the community. He was like a family member. On my daughter's 13th birthday, he was in the Creperie Restaurant in Mackay standing there on his own and I said, 'Mate, come and sit down while we cut the cake and sing happy birthday.' So he came and sat down with me, but I had no sooner put cake on his plate than he said, 'That's great. Happy birthday, Jorja. Now, Steve, what about that question in estimates about the base hospital?'

He was always straight down the line. He would always get whatever he had to say off his chest, but he would do it with respect and decency to everyone he ever met. I had the utmost—utmost—respect for Tim. I cannot imagine what his family is going through and the sadness they feel. He was so widely known and so widely loved by the community. Like I said, every elder I know in every walk of life has had nothing bad to say about that man. To Erin and his sons and his sister and his brothers, I offer my deepest sympathy and condolences from me, from the Andrew family and from the South Sea islander community on this sad occasion.

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.52 pm): I rise to pay tribute and offer my support to this motion. Tim Mulherin was a man who was devoted to his family, his community and the Labor Party. Serving in this place as the member for Mackay for 20 years is testament to his passion and dedication to both Mackay in which he was born and raised and the party he loved, shaped and helped lead as deputy leader. I had the privilege of getting to know Tim through the Labor Party and during his time serving as a minister in government. He was always happy to have a yarn, crack a joke and help out a young bloke with a bit of advice—sometimes subtly and other times far more direct, but never quickly.

One of my fondest memories is the time when I travelled to Mackay in the mid-2000s. I had only been there briefly on a couple of occasions prior. Tim met me at the airport and I jumped in his car and off we went—on a long drive for over an hour where Tim gave me a guided and extremely narrated tour of his community, culminating with a scoot up Mulherin Drive of course, sharing many stories as he did so. After the grand tour of Mackay, we then dropped into Tim's place for a cup of tea. It was warm, it was personal and it was from the heart, just like Tim. It was also an opportunity to talk to a captive audience about his vision for improved health care and community services for the base hospital. It was effective, just like Tim.

Tim was a Labor man through and through, making a rich contribution to our party through his service as the member for Mackay, a minister in government and a deputy leader in opposition. Over his 20 years in this place and many more outside of it, he had seen and done it all and he had probably forgotten more than most will learn in a lifetime. Our party, Mackay and Queensland are all the better for his contributions. I want to offer my deepest respects and condolences to his family—to Erin, Declan, Liam and Rory and the whole Mulherin clan. Gone far too soon at the age of 63. His legacy will endure. Vale Timothy Mulherin.

 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (3.55 pm): It is a real honour to offer my humble contribution to this motion of condolence. Noting where I am on the speaking list, I will try to keep my speech to 20 or 30 minutes!

I knew Tim for some years but really got to know him in those years of opposition. He was an absolute gentleman. He had a sharp policy mind with an ability to have both attention to detail and a view to the bigger picture. He brought a sensible, calm approach to policy reform with a priority on cooperation and building consensus. That was definitely his approach to agriculture and primary industries where he was passionate about bringing people together, including where there were diverse stakeholders and often opposing interests.

Tim was a very proud Labor man and a passionate advocate for our party and our movement, but he was also good to those opposite, as we have heard today. He was certainly good to regional and rural communities. A good example was in the wake of Cyclone Yasi where, as agriculture minister, he visited 32 small towns across Queensland in under a month. Landing in Cairns just two days after the cyclone had crossed the coast, he travelled south through country that looked like it had been fire bombed—to Innisfail and Tully to talk to desperate flattened canegrowers. Particular thanks goes to long-serving colleague and great friend of Tim's, Kate Adams, who I assume attended most, if not all, of those meetings with him.

In these towns across Queensland, he held what he called farm shed meetings, where farmers from the surrounding district would converge on a hot, often muddy shed to tell their stories of not just stock or crop losses but also the personal toll of the devastation. Tim would listen patiently and repeatedly advise of the government assistance available, but more importantly he would offer compassion and a shoulder to lean on for all those affected in the primary industries sector, usually in parts of Queensland that had never voted Labor. Tim earned the respect of local communities and of the sector through his endless round tables, forums and farm shed or back verandah meetings right across the state.

More simply, for me, Tim was a great bloke. I reckon he was one of the best bush lawyers this place has ever seen, and this place has seen a few. He had a great sense of humour and he was a character. I am mindful that Tim served in a parliament of 89 electorates so I do not want to mislead the House in this expanded form, but I can all but guarantee that Tim has a relative in every single electorate.

When working with Tim in those opposition years, I would like to think that I was at least competent in my job but there was one task that I did not come close to mastering—getting Tim Mulherin to the airport on time. Tim would probably dispute that, perhaps because we had very different definitions of 'on time'. We would race to the airport and with his down-to-earth charm he would inevitably talk his way through a late airport check-in and security. We would rush on board, put the bags away, sit down and buckle up—by which stage the plane had already taxied halfway out to take-off—and he would calmly turn to me and say, 'See, mate, I told you we'd get here on time.'

He contributed significantly in those years—not just by carrying the load of nine or 10 portfolios but particularly in his role as deputy to the now Premier. He brought energy and goodwill to the team. He was a generous mentor. He never forgot where he came from. Don't worry to the Old Guarders on this side—I am not trying to claim him—but this is also true: in his Mackay electorate office, Tim proudly hung a framed historic AWU ticket which I believe was from his grandfather. He backed workers, especially regional workers.

In conclusion, Tim loved the Labor Party, he loved Mackay but he absolutely adored Erin and the boys. He was a very proud husband and father and would share his pride with countless stories to everyone he knew. He leaves a great legacy in this House. He leaves a great legacy in our party. He leaves a great legacy in public services right across the state. And of course he leaves his proudest legacy—his beloved wife and sons. He will be missed.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, will you please indicate your agreement by standing in silence for one minute.


Whereupon honourable members stood in silence.

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 233, on motion of Ms Fentiman—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.01 pm): I support the COVID emergency response bill. Queensland has done an outstanding job of managing COVID-19. Do you know how I know that, Mr Speaker? I know that because every time I see Dr Jeannette Young I say to her, 'Dr Young, you have done a fantastic job of managing COVID-19.' Because she is such a humble person, she turns to me and says, 'No, no. I haven't done a good job. Queenslanders have done a good job.' Queenslanders have done a great job. She wants to put the credit right back where it is due. It is right back on all of those people in our state who have done the right thing to manage COVID-19.

I think we should also reflect that we have been led by a Premier who has done a great job. We were the first state to declare a public health emergency back in January—the 29th, if I recall correctly—and we were ridiculed by the other states and perhaps even by the federal government for taking this action. We were the first state to release an emergency response package. All throughout this pandemic, our priority has remained on keeping Queenslanders safe.

From a clinical perspective, as a nurse, I can tell honourable members that what we have to do sounds pretty simple. We have to wash our hands, we have to maintain social distance, we have to get tested if we have symptoms and, ideally, we should install an app. It sounds quite simple, but a lot of things need to happen to make all of this a reality and a lot of legislation needs to be enacted to enable those things to occur.

This bill is about continuing the legislation that has been passed to allow these things to continue to occur because we are not out of the woods. That is what QNMU General Secretary Beth Mohle said to me yesterday when I rang her to discuss some aspects of this speech and this issue. She said to me, 'This disease will come back at you really quick if you drop your guard,' and we have seen that time and time and time again. I support this legislation because it is a really key part of keeping Queenslanders safe. If we drop our guard too early, if we relax, this disease is going to get out of hand. A couple of things will happen when this disease gets out of hand, and we know this because we have seen it time and time again and we continue to see it around the world. In fact, today I had the great pleasure of having lunch with the ambassador for Argentina, and the stories from Latin America about how this disease is affecting people there are quite shocking. Two things happen when this disease gets out of control: (1) people who are vulnerable die and (2) health workers die.

There is a really great World War I memorial on the walls of the Coorparoo School of Arts and I like it a lot for a couple of reasons. Firstly, it was raised in honour of all of the local community members of Coorparoo who served in the First World War. The Coorparoo community raised this rather magnificent memorial by raising money themselves. The second reason I like this a lot is because it specifically names the nurses who served and some of the nurses who perished in World War I.

Why do I mention this today? Sadly, we are now at a point where more nurses have died during the pandemic in just over 11 months than died in nearly five years of the First World War. I want people to hear and remember this. As at 28 October, to the best of the ability of the International Council of Nurses to gather data—and it is not easy to gather data—over 1,500 nurses have died globally as a result of caring for people with COVID-19 in 44 countries. That is over 1,500 nurses of all ages and stages of life. We should not forget the doctors, the allied health professionals, the paramedics, the

pathology workers, the wardies, the admin officers or the security guards who have died. Of course, that number is going to be much higher because we do not have statistics from 151 countries. I will read from the media release put out by the International Council of Nurses on 28 October. It states—

ICN's own analysis suggests that about 10% of cases globally are among healthcare workers.

As of this week there are more than 43 million cases worldwide with approximately 2.6% of those, 1.1 million, resulting in deaths.

Even if the case fatality ratio among the more than four million healthcare workers infected is only 0.5%, in excess of 20,000 healthcare workers could have died from the virus.


I repeat: in excess of 20,000. This is carnage. It is absolute carnage and that is why we need to support this bill. We need to support this bill to keep Queenslanders safe and to keep other health workers safe.

Unions representing nurses, midwives and other health workers around the world have been battling to keep members safe. I support the recent industrial action taken by some nurses in the USA where state governors have refused to implement public health measures that we take for granted here. Yet while refusing to implement basic public health measures which we know from evidence will save lives, they expect nurses and other health workers to go to work and risk their lives and we are seeing those nurses die. Just on Saturday I posted on Facebook a story of a 38-year-old nurse who perished in the United States.

We have a strong union here and we have a culture that respects workers' rights. We have good WHS laws. None of this has happened overnight. We did not start doing it because COVID-19 started killing nurses and other health workers. The conversations between governments and employers of nurses and the unions who represent health workers are ongoing and productive. I am so pleased to be part of a government that gave a commitment to the QNMU during the recent election campaign to improve PPE effectiveness. I am so pleased that our government is continuing its good work with this bill for all Queenslanders and for all health workers. I am supportive of my union, which has joined forces with other nursing unions via Global Nurses United to call on the World Health Organization to do a better job at encouraging all jurisdictions to protect health workers. For the benefit of the House I table a copy of the letter from the GNU to the World Health Organization.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 19 November 2020, from Global Nurses United to the Director-General, World Health Organization, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, regarding the COVID-19 pandemic [330].

Over 1,500 nurses are dead. Honourable members should remember that the next time someone tries to shake their hand or give them a hug. They should remember that the next time they go out for dinner and someone complains because it is a little bit inconvenient to have to fill in a piece of paper or fill in an app. They should remember that the next time someone tries to tell them that this disease is harmless. Over 1,500 nurses and many, many other health workers are dead in just over 11 months. They should remember that as they vote to support this bill.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (4.09 pm): As has been noted by other members on our side of the chamber, we will not be opposing this bill. I will confine my comments to the elements of the bill that reverse the vacancy changes in the Local Government Act for mayors and councillors. It is a disgrace that we have to be here today, reversing changes made only a few months ago. They were rushed into the House, did not go to a committee and were obviously perplexing for many members of the House at the time they were passed. People were asking, 'What is this all about?' You cannot say that the government was not warned about the likely consequences of those vacancy provisions if a mayor died, resigned or was otherwise forced from office in the first 12 months. It has happened with the resignation of the mayor of Rockhampton. The government was warned by many members here. When then minister Hinchliffe introduced these provisions, he gave not the slightest hint of what this was all about. He said—

The bill amends the process for filling a vacancy in the office of a mayor or councillor. As a result of stakeholder feedback, the government will move amendments to further streamline the process by providing for the same process to apply to all vacancies, both mayoral and councillor, in divided and undivided local governments

That is what the minister said when he introduced the vacancy provisions. They meant that someone who received 30 per cent of the vote against someone who got 69 per cent of the vote could become mayor, as is the case under the law as it stands today with the Rockhampton Regional Council. Under the law as it stands today, the 'Pineapple' should be sworn in as mayor. Chris Hooper should be sworn in as mayor under the law passed by Minister Hinchliffe just a few months ago. Since the election the minister has said in the media that it was not about streamlining or anything like that; it was about stopping people from standing in the state election. I think Minister Hinchliffe misled the House in June, when he introduced those provisions, by failing to mention the true intention of the bill, which he subsequently conceded to in the media.

As I said earlier today when the member for Warrego was speaking, how is Minister Hinchliffe still in cabinet after this debacle? A few years ago it took the minister three attempts to get rid of Ipswich City Council. He could not get it right. We were wondering at the time what he was doing with the vacancy provisions. Now we know the truth, because he has confessed to it in the media.

I point out the minister's absolute hypocrisy when it comes to media comments before he fessed up and told the truth. I made some comments in local media about how undemocratic it is when someone gets 30 per cent of the vote—or less in Toowoomba, 19 per cent. The minister had the gall to say that my comments rang hollow and that I did not understand the real meaning of the changes. Of course I did not understand it, because the minister did not say anything about it! Now we know the real reason for the changes: to stop people running in the state election. It was this government, as it always does, using this parliament as a plaything and nobbling people in local government, bringing them under the control of the state more and more. In the paper Minister Hinchliffe said—

To denounce these as a disgrace not only rings hollow but shows a lack of understanding of the reasoning behind the decision ... If the runner up in the original election can't, for whatever reason, step up to the role then a by-election can be called.

That is true. He went on—

By-elections are expensive exercises and it is entirely reasonable not to expect the constituents ... to have to return to the polls within 12 months.

Yet here we are today reversing the changes the minister introduced in June—they did not go to a committee—to send people back to a by-election. This government abuses this parliament, abuses democracy in Queensland and abuses local government all the time. That is exactly what the government did through these vacancy provisions. It should be condemned for it by everybody in this House and everybody involved in local government, including the LGAQ, which was late to the market in terms of stepping up and denouncing these changes when they came into the public domain. It is an abuse of power and an abuse of process.

We have seen over the past five years that this government will do whatever it can in terms of abusing our institutions to win elections. I have some advice for the government which may just save some time and confusion for the Queensland community in the future: when you have people in local government whom you do not want running for the state election, just name them directly and legislate against their running, because it will make it a lot simpler for people to understand what it is doing when it comes to nobbling people in standing for state election.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr KRAUSE: Of course you cannot do it. You should not come in here and bring in legislation under false pretences.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Order! Direct your comments through the chair, please.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr KRAUSE: That is exactly what was done.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members. We will have no cross-chamber chatter, please.

Mr KRAUSE: We heard the minister say in the media what it was really about. He did not say that in June when he introduced the amendment. Only after the election, after the people of Queensland had voted, did the truth come out of Minister Hinchliffe's mouth.

It is a disgrace. This government rules by law in Queensland, not under the rule of law. If the rule of law were abided by today, Chris 'Pineapple' Hooper would be mayor because he would have been sworn in. Then this bill would not be about stopping him from becoming mayor; it would be about him being dismissed as mayor. Of course, those opposite do not want to be seen to be dismissing a mayor. They have used their power and influence on the local government to stop him from being sworn in, even though as the law stands today he should be mayor. I did not agree with that law in the first place and I do not agree with it now, but members opposite are the ones who voted for it and they should have the guts to wear the consequences, abide by the rule of law and allow this to go ahead. Of course, they do not want to do that. The state election is over, and the real purpose of this provision has been fulfilled—that is, to keep councillors and mayors out of state elections.


An honourable member: Oh, rubbish.

Mr KRAUSE: I take the interjection. The minister said in the media that that was the real reason. If the member wants to say that is rubbish, maybe he should take that up with the minister.

The other provisions of this bill that I want to speak about relate to the Electoral Act. I know that the provisions in relation to the Electoral Act re-implement measures previously legislated. We agree with that, but I sound a note of caution for the future. This bill and the provisions that have previously been in place give a lot of power and discretion to the Electoral Commission of Queensland about how elections should be run, in particular about how people should vote. I believe there is a provision to allow full postal votes in by-elections in the future if the commission determines that should be the case. That is a big change for our voting system. I know that we live in a different time at the moment, but I sound of word of caution about such changes of a large nature being made to our electoral system—giving that power and discretion to an unelected person, in this case the Electoral Commissioner. When it comes to fundamental tenets of the electoral system, decisions should be made by this House. There are other decisions, in relation to the conduct of polling as a whole, that should be made by this House and not by an unelected official on an ongoing basis.


Given that this bill has an expiry date, we are comfortable supporting it. My caution should be noted. Further wholesale changes to the Electoral Act and the granting of more power to the Electoral Commissioner in the future should be avoided, because that power should rightly sit with this House and not with an unelected body.

We will not oppose the bill.

 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (4.18 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution in support of the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. This is the latest example of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to keeping Queenslanders safe—doing the hard work, making the hard decisions and delivering the tools we need to keep Queensland safe. I take the opportunity to thank the Chief Health Officer, Dr Young, the Deputy Premier and the Premier for their leadership in tackling the health pandemic and, of course, as we continue the economic recovery I thank the Treasurer for his great contribution yesterday with a jobs focused budget.

As this bill shows, there was a whole-of-government approach to tackling COVID in partnership with the community, with business and with workers. I recognise all of the hard work by so many Queenslanders on the front line and behind the scenes who did the hard yards to get it done. I reflect on the timing of this bill and today's debate. Obviously we are now into December and the last full sitting week of the year, facing the Christmas and new year period. While many Queenslanders rightly take the opportunity to have a well-deserved break and spend time with loved ones, the work of our health workers and those managing all aspects of our health and economic approach continues. This bill seeks to give them the flexibility they need and the toolkit required to take reasonable, sensible steps in doing their jobs.

I particularly note the transitional arrangements that this bill provides, especially for those who are currently engaged in leasing alternative dispute resolution processes. It is a Labor government—the Palaszczuk government—that can be trusted to manage both our health recovery and our economic recovery, and that message was sent loud and clear on 31 October. I associate myself with the Attorney's contribution in the introduction of the bill and commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (4.20 pm): Today I stand on the first opportunity to speak in the 57th Parliament to contribute to debate of the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill intends to continue the legislative response to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic through amendment of the 56th Parliament's COVID-19 Emergency Response Act and other relevant acts. I recognise that this bill will insert mechanisms to provide for the efficient and effective return to normal operations post pandemic and make subsequent amendments to various acts in order to allow for their efficient function in our changing world. Other acts set to be amended with this bill include the Youth Justice Act, the Electoral Act and the Liquor Act. This is just a brief summary of the bill's contents and objectives. Its full contents are far too numerous to discuss in the short time I have available today.

Conscious of this constraint, my assessment of the bill will focus on a few of the key issues arising from an assessment of its contents. I will begin by reaffirming my position and that of my colleagues on this side of the House that we will not be opposing the bill. We will, however, be raising issues identified by stakeholders, including deficiencies and inconsistencies. At this time I would normally take the time to thank the members of the committee responsible for consideration of the bill but, alas, on this occasion the bill's scrutiny and its contents were considered too urgent, apparently, for the usual path taken by bills through this House. I agree with some parts of this urgency, but some

of the other amendments included simply do not require that level of urgency. I cannot help but question whether the small issues in this bill would have been better identified after going through a proper inquiry process.

The primary concern with this bill, as highlighted by the Property Council, is clause 32. This clause seeks to amend section 12(1) of the retail shop leases and other commercial leases regulation 2020 to preserve the rights and obligations accrued during the response period with regard to the general obligations of a lessor under an affected lease. Under the existing regulation, a lessor under an affected lease is prohibited from taking prescribed action against a tenant on certain grounds. This includes the failure to pay rent wholly or partly during the prescribed period or a failure to pay outgoings during the same period.

Three exemptions to this prohibition exist under the regulation. These exemptions allow a lessor to take prescribed action against a tenant if, one, a deal is struck between the parties; two, despite a genuine attempt by the landlord to negotiate rent and other conditions the tenant has failed to comply with their negotiated obligations; or, three, the breaches are not related to the effects of the pandemic. The Property Council has consistently maintained that the second and third exemptions are an unreasonably high bar for landlords to meet and have proven to be incredibly difficult to prove thus far. This bill proposes to allow the continuance of this regulation until the COVID-19 legislation expiry date, which is currently 30 April 2021.


Both the Property Council and the LNP hold grave concerns regarding the further extension of this regulation without amendment and the ongoing effect it will have on affected lessors. Simply put, this amendment virtually deprives landlords of all the rights to manage their leases as they see fit. We are not suggesting that struggling small business owners affected by this ongoing pandemic should not receive some form of assistance or protection to ensure they are able to hold on to their premises and return to business as usual. Instead, we, like the Property Council, are only highlighting the importance that landlords have the unhindered capacity to take appropriate actions against recalcitrant tenants looking to win a free pass through poorly considered legislation. Indeed, even those opposite—the very same members who developed this legislation—have previously accepted that tenants should not be given a free kick. This flaw is a significant one and cannot pass without mention or thorough questioning. While the LNP will not oppose this bill, we will emphasise the need for this amendment to be seriously reconsidered.

Another series of amendments within this bill worth noting are its amendments to the Electoral Act 1992. Broadly welcomed by stakeholders to the bill, including the Queensland Law Society and the Local Government Association of Queensland, these amendments are what we have come to expect from this Palaszczuk Labor government—another backflip because of poor legislation. It is refreshing to see those opposite admitting fault and rectifying their mistake, even if it took some time for them to do so. I can only suspect that this rectification was considered essential following the scathing review by the CEO of the LGAQ, Greg Hallam, provided to the Palaszczuk government in the wake of the recent election.

Mr Hallam called on the government to urgently meet its commitment to Queensland councils by repealing the election laws it passed in the face of strong opposition from the LGAQ and recommendations from members on this side of the House. These runner-up laws open the way for the elevation of undesirable candidates to high office against the desires of the community—a scenario we have recently seen play out in Rockhampton. These laws are inherently undemocratic and it is a relief to see that they are going to be amended by this bill. However, we have to remember that many mayors contesting a council election may do so whilst some other high-profile members of the community or even other members of the council may stand aside to let that popular mayor contest the election. The current legislation—before amendment through this bill—is a breach of those rights of members of the community to contest an election who may well have done so should the mayor have fallen ill or died. Like the LGAQ, the LNP firmly believes that a fair and democratic election is the best way to ensure a community receives the representation it desires at all levels.

I want to pay tribute to the local councillors and mayors of my two local government areas which make up the Lockyer—that is, the Lockyer Valley Regional Council and Mayor Tanya Milligan and team and Mayor Graeme Lehmann from the Somerset Regional Council. Those councillors were re-elected recently and it is testament to the incredible work that they do, and so they should have been re-elected. Were one of them to step down, it is only fair that those who elected them should have a say in who takes their place. The LNP supports the reversal of these idiotic runner-up provisions and would welcome it if those opposite wished to do a U-turn on any more of many ill-advised provisions that they have saddled Queensland with during their time in government.

This bill is not perfect, but nothing ever is. It has its pluses and minuses, though fortunately the former outweigh the latter. It is an essential piece of legislation required to keep our state functioning with some level of normality in ever-changing circumstances. As a product of a Labor government whose record on legislative reform is far from admirable, it is almost commendable and as such I will not oppose the bill.

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (4.29 pm): I rise to support the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. One of our earliest steps in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic was to increase the powers of the Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, and all emergency officers under the Public Health Act. We listened to the expert health advice and we gave the Chief Health Officer and our emergency officers the powers they needed to get the job done. This is in stark contrast to the members of the LNP, who second-guessed the Chief Health Officer's advice at every turn.

Mr Power: It was constant!

Ms BOYD: I take the interjection from the member for Logan. It was constant. Those opposite continue to this day to advocate for politicians to make these decisions and not health experts. It is dangerous and it shows that they learnt nothing from their election defeat on 31 October. Queensland's response has been world leading and the actions of the Premier, Dr Young and the Deputy Premier, alongside all of our critical workers, including health workers, police and paramedics, have kept Queenslanders safe and put us on the path to recovery. I thank them and I thank all Queenslanders who have done such a remarkable job of working together to keep one another safe.


While our response in Queensland means life is now well and truly getting back to a COVID-safe normal, we know COVID-19 still represents a significant risk. It is an insidious virus and we have seen around the world the devastating human, economic and social consequences a large outbreak can bring. That is why this bill is important and urgent in extending the operation of all COVID-19 related legislation which is still required to respond to the impacts of the pandemic.

I was proud to serve as the assistant health minister during the previous term of government and I am very proud to be given the opportunity by the Premier to continue to work with the Deputy Premier as Assistant Minister for Local Government, which brings me to the amendments to the Local Government Act which deliver a commitment we made to the people of Queensland during the past election. I want to be very clear that these amendments are not about a single person or a single council. They could not be, because we announced we would take this action back in early October before there was a vacancy in the Rockhampton or, indeed, Townsville regional councils.

These amendments mean that any mayoral vacancies that arise during the first 12 months of a local government's term will be filled by a by-election. For councillor vacancies that arise during the first 12 months of a local government's term the council will decide by resolution to fill the vacancy by a by-election or by appointing a runner-up. There are no changes proposed for filling vacancies in the second, third or fourth year of a local government term.

This bill also provides for transitional arrangements to cover the period between when we made this announcement in early October 2020 and the point at which the bill commences. Queensland's communities deserve the opportunity to choose their leaders and to have confidence, faith and trust in the democratic process. These changes will benefit local communities because it gives Queenslanders an additional opportunity to nominate as candidates for election to the vacancy and Queenslanders the opportunity to vote for whoever candidate they prefer in the by-election.

After being sworn in as Assistant Minister for Local Government I got straight to work calling each mayor across Queensland. I finished those calls and, while we talked about a multitude of different topics, I am confident these amendments also have the support of Queensland's mayors and councils. I am also very pleased that the LGAQ are supportive of these amendments. I am proud of our record on this side of the House, of working with and listening to Queensland local councils, mayors and councillors. We will continue to build on this work and we will continue to listen to councils. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (4.34 pm): I rise to speak on the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. The main function of the bill aims to extend the expiry date of the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act, regulations made under the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act and a range of statutory instruments that are all due to expire on 31 December this year.

The bill ensures that legislation or regulations necessary to respond to the COVID-19 emergency continue past the current 31 December end date by setting a new end date of 30 April 2021, subject to advice from the Chief Health Officer. Other objectives of the bill are to: insert appropriate transitional

mechanisms which provide for the ability to return to normal operations in the most effective and efficient way once the COVID-19 related legislation is no longer needed; preserve rights and obligations that have accrued during the 'response period' and 'extension period' under the Retail Shop Leases and Other Commercial Leases (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation; extend the temporary operation of the QSBC; amend the Youth Justice Act to allow the chief executive to delegate his or her powers to appropriately qualified temporary detention centre employees in the event of a future COVID-19 outbreak; amend the Electoral Act to provide flexibility, if required, to facilitate the holding of a by-election in a way that helps minimise serious risk to the health and safety of persons caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency; amend the Liquor Act to continue support for the artisan liquor sector by temporarily removing restrictions on sale to the public of the liquor of artisan distillers; and amend the process for filling a vacancy in the office of a mayor or councillor that arises during the period starting on a quadrennial election and ending on the day before the first anniversary of the election.

The LNP will not be opposing this bill but there are very serious concerns with aspects of it—in particular, concerns about the democratic process, or lack of it, which is becoming a hallmark of the Palaszczuk Labor government. A matter of significance in the legislation relates to commercial leases. These amendments were made to give effect to good-faith leasing principles for non-residential leases agreed by the national cabinet and establish a process for resolving disputes and allow for negotiation and a reduction in rent because of falls in turnover of tenants. It will also facilitate the conclusion of any lease disputes that may still be ongoing. If anyone is unable to achieve a resolution subsequently there would be a dispute process put in place as recommended by the national cabinet. This is a contentious issue for the property sector, which is one of the largest employers, investors, economic drivers and taxpayers. Subsequently the Property Council has called for the lease regulation to end completely on 31 December.

This bill has been designated as requiring urgent consideration. It was introduced last Thursday and is now being debated in the following week, with a short period in between. Like so many other proposed pieces of legislation that have come before this House, it has not gone through the normal scrutiny of the committee and parliamentary processes. In saying that, the LNP does not oppose the need to extend those parts of the bill that are set to expire on 31 December. Earlier this year the LNP supported the COVID-19 Emergency Response Bill and the Justice and Other Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Amendment Bill and will continue to support that legislation.

The COVID-19 Emergency Response Act made amendments to 33 different pieces of legislation to ensure the most appropriate responses could be made in the context of the pandemic. The majority of the amendments to acts made as part of the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act, as well as the majority of the statutory instruments made under powers inserted by the act, are, as I mentioned before, due to expire on 31 December. Hence the LNP supports the urgency to pass this legislation. However, it is the decision of this government to tack on fundamental and important amendments to laws that deal with the proper and democratic election of local government representatives which should be concerning to all Queenslanders.

These amendments should not be rushed through for a second time. These amendments concerning the Local Government Act surely require the proper attention of this House, particularly given their lack of scrutiny to date which has given rise to the government's need to urgently backtrack on them. It is recent amendments the Labor government rushed through in the previous parliament, again without proper scrutiny, which at the time were not supported by key stakeholders, that are now being amended again.

There is nothing democratic about the amendments made earlier this year as part of the Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Act that provided a new process under the Local Government Act for filling vacancies. In fact, the peak body for local government, the LGAQ, was not even aware of the amendments at the time and has since called for them to be repealed. It was only due to the resignation of the former Rockhampton mayor and the resignation of a Townsville city councillor that the full impact of the amendments was realised, prompting then local government minister Stirling Hinchliffe to put his tail between his legs and commit to retrospectively amend the Local Government Act. The full irony was realised when the minister commented that these retrospective changes will ensure that communities can have a proper vote to determine who represents them. Surely that should have been the case from the outset?

This controversial legislation mandated the automatic election of a runner-up in a mayoral or council election if a vacancy was to occur within the first 12 months of the term. Let us look at how that was to play out in Rockhampton following the sudden resignation of the mayor. In that proud city, the runner-up for the position, Chris 'Pineapple' Hooper, received less than one-third of the vote. In


Townsville, where the Labor faction selected former councillor Les Walker to run for the seat of Mundingburra, which he subsequently won, the next in line to fill his vacancy received just 18.3 per cent of the vote.

According to the LGAQ, in many cases in past council elections runner-up candidates have polled in the single digits. How this could be democratic is beyond questionable and it is no wonder that the CEO of the Local Government Association of Queensland, Greg Hallam, called on the Palaszczuk Labor government to urgently repeal the amendments. Only now, under intense public pressure and exposure, has the government been forced to address its folly. This situation could have been avoided had the original amendments faced proper scrutiny through the committee process, where the LGAQ as a key stakeholder would have had an opportunity to provide feedback.

The new amendments in this bill will rightly ensure that where a mayor resigns within the first 12 months of being elected a by-election will be called, as opposed to the runner-up laws adopted in June. Where a councillor resigns within the first 12 months, the council will be given an option to either hold a by-election or impose the runner-up provisions. That is to be determined on a case-by-case basis by the respective council, by way of a council resolution.

Part 5 of the bill operates retrospectively by providing for transitional arrangements for any vacancy in the office of a mayor or councillor that arose in the period commencing 12 October 2020 and ending immediately before the commencement. Again, this is another hastily tacked on amendment because the government failed in its first attempt to ensure the integrity of changes to legislation made in the absence of proper scrutiny.

I concur with comments made last week by the member for Kawana, who rightly pointed out that these amendments should be a bill in their own right. Queenslanders are being hoodwinked by a lazy and incompetent government. Queenslanders may have fallen for the Labor Party's scare campaign at the election, but that does not mean they do not deserve an honest government that listens, consults and respects the basic democratic process. They did not vote for a government that shirks responsibility and that uses its numbers in this House to undermine the proper parliamentary processes. I will not be opposing the bill.

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (4.42 pm): I rise to address the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 and to foreshadow some amendments to the bill. We support the extension of the special legislative framework to 30 April 2021 and we will be voting in favour of that extension. During the height of the first wave of the pandemic and during the election, it made sense to delegate some power to the executive to swiftly make regulatory changes to support the health response. Even as we look forward to a more normal existence if or when vaccines for COVID-19 become widely available, the Greens believe it is important to bring the health, regulatory and economic response to COVID-19 under proper parliamentary scrutiny.

Even though Queensland's public health response has been strong so far, and we should all feel very lucky for that, we should take nothing for granted at this point. Our amazing frontline workers and the Chief Health Officer have done a great job—an extraordinary job. The government deserves credit for taking the health advice as seriously as it has done.

At the same time, the government has clearly made some decisions based in large measure on more than just the health advice. For example, there was the reliance on a fairly harsh law-and-order style approach in the first months of the lockdown that has been shown in other states such as Victoria to have disproportionately affected marginalised communities and ignored rule breakers in wealthier areas. Another example was the testing regime and lockdown rules inside Queensland prisons that, especially in the early days, lagged a long way behind national practice advice.

The decisions about when and how to close and then reopen schools were also hotly debated. It was never clear whether the government or the Chief Health Officer was getting the last word. Rules about gatherings in private homes, public places and shopping centres have been inconsistent and sometimes incoherent and obviously were affected by political judgements. On the day that tens of thousands of people went to a footy match at the Gabba, the government used its COVID powers to shut down an outdoor peaceful protest of 200 people at Kangaroo Point.

Often it has been very difficult to understand where the health advice ends and the political decisions by the Premier or the government begin. Not only is that situation unfair to Queenslanders looking for certainty but also it is no good for the public health response. To get through the pandemic, especially if Queensland sees another wave, the public must have absolute confidence that the health advice is being adhered to. When a decision is in some respects based on a political judgement, that should be made obvious as well.

For that reason, the Greens will seek to move amendments to this bill to create a new statutory parliamentary committee, the COVID-19 oversight committee. I table a copy of the amendments for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020, amendments to be moved by Mr Michael Berkman MP [\[331\]](#).

It is nine months into the pandemic and still we are dealing with bills that are being rammed through without a proper committee inquiry. Clearly, ongoing committee scrutiny and oversight is necessary. The pandemic is the biggest health and economic crisis of our times, but right now the state government's response, especially the frontline response, has been subject to very minimal parliamentary scrutiny. The parallel inquiries conducted by the Education, Employment and Training Committee and the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee in the last parliament were not only brief but also limited by the general flaws of the portfolio committee structure and the arbitrary separation of those inquiries into health and economic responses.

The new COVID-19 oversight committee would have a similar standing to other statutory committees of the parliament, such as the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee. The amendments I will be proposing are modelled on the Crime and Corruption Act. The new committee would have the formal power to compel witnesses and documents, which would mean that the people of Queensland would be able to routinely hear directly from the Chief Health Officer about the advice she is offering, rather than having everything filtered through the Premier and the executive. By law, the committee's membership would be three government members of parliament, three opposition members of parliament and one crossbench member of parliament, with the committee choosing its own chair. I anticipate that those numbers would mean that, like the PCCC, it would be chaired by a non-government member, which can only be for the benefit of the quality of scrutiny.

The bill extends the power to make regulations about residential tenancies and rooming accommodation to 30 April 2021 even though most of the protections for renters have actually expired, while most of the commercial leasing protections will expire at the end of 2020. It is a disgrace that Queensland was the first state to abandon our ban on evictions during COVID, with that particular protection expiring at the end of September 2020. One major benefit of creating some better oversight would be that the parliament could do our job in holding the government accountable for bad decisions like that one, which has left renters, including many in my electorate, facing evictions this Christmas.

I turn to the provisions around local government elections. I support by-elections to fill casual vacancies in the offices of mayors or councillors. That is more democratic than a runner-up system, which is why the Greens will be supporting almost all of the proposed changes in the bill to the Local Government Act, except for the most excessive of the retrospective changes that would invalidate currently lawful actions. In fact, when they made these changes in June 2020, if the government had been listening to parliament and to all of the stakeholders it might have picked up on this situation and the people of Rockhampton would be on their way to a by-election already. These changes were one of a huge and sweeping raft of amendments that the government rammed through the parliament with an absolute minimum of scrutiny, as we have heard from other members.


The original version of this bill, the Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Bill, did not contain the fairly extraordinary count-back process to appoint a runner-up. That was added somewhere along the line, apparently as part of the 100-plus pages of amendments that were introduced with barely a day's notice before the passage of the amendment bill. That 100-page pile of amendments was never considered by a committee; it was simply tacked onto the bill with no time for members to read in detail, let alone understand or consult on the many changes it proposed. That is what happens when you rush: you make mistakes.

Today we are not just debating whether we fix up a mistake by Labor; we are here because the rules that Labor created threw up an outcome they did not like. It elected Mr Chris Hooper—or 'Pineapple', as he is known—as the mayor of Rockhampton. In a city in a state dominated by big mining companies, rich property developers and big businesses who are used to calling the shots, a real-life, regular person has ended up as the mayor-elect in Rockhampton. This is a guy whose campaign slogan is: 'No more people in suits and ties making decisions which only benefit people in suits and ties.' He is someone calling for free public transport, jobs for young people and action on climate change. He is someone who opposes the Adani or, as they choose to call it now, the Bravus coalmine. We are here today because the political and big business establishment will not accept that outcome. He is not one of them. He is a threat to their very comfortable existence in this state.

He is why they swung into action as soon as the former mayor resigned. As I understand it, the Labor member for Keppel went to visit Mr Hooper in person to seek to dissuade him from accepting the job that he was perfectly entitled to, and the then local government minister rushed out a media statement saying that they would be changing the laws as soon as possible. That is why the Rockhampton Regional Council has stalled and wasted time, with the support of the state department of local government. It is why council physically prevented Mr Hooper from attending the council meeting at which he should have been sworn in as mayor, in a clear breach of existing section 166A of the Local Government Act. That is why they have conspired to make sure Mr Hooper will not serve a single day as the mayor. Just in case he is sworn in, they are bringing in the most extraordinary retrospective legislation to invalidate anything he could possibly have done while in office.

To explain to the House and to anyone who is paying attention here, Labor's bill would not only trigger a by-election, which I support and which the Greens will be voting for; it would also, in proposed section 338, invalidate any appointments or any actions that the mayor might have taken during their appointment. That is an extraordinary provision. It means that if the Rockhampton Regional Council were to follow the law as it stands today and appoint Mr Hooper, then all of his actions would be invalid once this bill passes.

I foreshadow that I will be moving an amendment to stop the legislation from retrospectively invalidating the actions of a person appointed to fill a vacancy in the office of mayor under the law as it stands today. Put simply, I will propose amendments to remove proposed section 338. By all means, let's change the law to allow a by-election. I suspect that Mr Hooper will be a candidate in that by-election and I wish him all the best. The purpose of my amendments is to allow the law as it is currently written to take its course.

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (4.52 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I would like to speak to two of the matters covered in this bill. The first is commercial tenancy arrangements. Since the pandemic started and particularly through the restrictions imposed on 23 March nationally, I have had both tenants and landlords come to me about their leasing issues. Both have been shattered by the impact of the virus on their business and were shell-shocked by something they never expected to happen. Whether it be cafes, hotels, motels, hairdressers, holding yards for tourist coaches or any other business classified as non-essential, I spoke to many people sharing their disbelief at what was happening. The majority of people understood, and still understand, that this is a crisis. We have not faced a global pandemic for a century and we live in a very different world now. What they could not understand were some of the seemingly unnecessary delays and lack of clarity from the government.

The code of conduct for commercial tenancies was one issue in particular. It was agreed to by national cabinet way back on 3 April and it was months before Queensland implemented it. I had both landlords and tenants getting in touch with me regularly to ask what was happening—operations as large as Harbour Town and as small as the local place where I get coffee. It meant that tenants or landlords could not negotiate in good faith because, until the code was in place and they knew what parameters they were dealing with in the meantime, they were still operating under the situation of their usual deals. This delay was unnecessary. This was regulation made under the previous iteration of this legislation which did not require a sitting of this House to come into effect.

Despite their rhetoric, this shows the government's inability to truly support small businesses. One thing that these operators needed in that crisis was clarity. That confusion caused a lot of distress for many people. Many were still confused about whether the code would expire in September or whether it would continue. I have spoken to tenants who were getting pressure from their landlords to start paying more while their income was still affected. I have heard from hospitality venues that still could not get back to normal due to patron restrictions whose landlords were pressuring them to get back to paying 100 per cent of their rent. One of these owners has shared how unsustainable their arrangements are. They are still recovering from a 95 per cent loss to their income in April and at this stage do not know if they will make it through the next few months.

On the other side, the proposed amendment in this bill has had concerns raised by the Property Council and they are worthy of consideration. While it would be nice to think that every tenant and landlord will act in good faith, it is clear that that does not always happen. In this case, the Property Council has argued that the onus is still too high on the landlord and too low on the tenant. It is all too easy for a tenant to say that they have been affected by COVID, and in this case there is little or no recourse for the landlord when there are breaches.

We have seen hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders step up and help those around them during this pandemic. I have been proud to represent my community as they have continued to offer help to those doing it tough but, when it comes to some of these business dealings, relying on parties acting in good faith is often not good enough. We need a clear and fair framework for parties to negotiate under to ensure the best possible outcome.

To finish up on the COVID-19 aspects of this bill before us, I would like to thank all of the health workers I represent. Gold Coast Health is the largest employer in my electorate of Bonney and its workers adapted brilliantly to what has been our most difficult year on record. On a personal note, I would particularly like to thank all of those health workers who supported me at the recent election, many even telling me that they were voting LNP for the first time. I am honoured to be your local MP and I will not take your support for granted.

In relation to the changes in the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, like I said at the time as a member of the Economics and Governance Committee when this legislation came before the House in June, it was almost an entirely different set of laws from those that initially came to us. As other members have detailed, we had the outrageous situation where a couple of hundred amendments were only made available to members at nine o'clock on the night before the bill came back for its second reading.

We have been surprised by a lot in 2020, but if you had told me that a fellow who goes by the name of 'Pineapple' would be on the cusp of legally being appointed as a mayor in a major regional city after receiving less than a third of the vote, I would not have believed you. This amendment was flawed from the beginning. It took away the democratic value of our elections and could have resulted in people who had little support becoming the elected representative of large constituencies.

It is important to remember: for some councils, like my own, those divisions are almost as large in terms of population as our own electorates. In my own major division on my part of the Gold Coast, division 7, Ryan Bayldon-Lumsden received 61 per cent of the vote and the next runner-up received just over 15 per cent. Like the LGAQ, we support going back to the system which should never have been changed and replacing councillors or mayors with a by-election. Wherever possible, we need to make sure Queenslanders have every right to have their say on who represents them at every level of government. I am proud of the democracy we live in and we should not allow any government to walk over any other level, particularly the level which is closest to the people.

Debate, on motion of Mr O'Connor, adjourned.

MOTION

Agriculture Industry



Mr PERRETT (Gympie—LNP) (4.58 pm): I move—

That the House:

1. acknowledges the importance of Queensland primary producers and their world-class food and fibre for Queenslanders, Australians and our trading partners;
2. recognises the thousands of jobs and livelihoods reliant on this dynamic and vibrant industry;
3. notes the ongoing desperate struggle of more than two-thirds of Queensland against the devastating drought;
4. calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to put away its 'austerity anvil' that has been mercilessly dropped on the hardworking staff of the department of agriculture and the many Queenslanders who rely on their services; and
5. calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to reverse their harmful cuts.

Natural disasters such as flood and drought are beyond the control of government. However, the factors the government controls show its incompetence, contempt and absolute disdain for and ignorance about agriculture's importance to Queensland's economy. This year the Premier and the agriculture minister waxed lyrical about agriculture—talk, talk and more talk. Saying that you are focused and passionate means nothing when you do not deliver. The talk was cynical political spin to use as a prop or sound bite for photo and media opportunities. Actions do not back the rhetoric. The government's only action is to cut funding and staff in the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Queensland's agriculture is worth \$18 billion. It employs more than 300,000 people throughout the supply chain and 60,000 people directly. It operates on 84 per cent of the state, or 144 million hectares. It makes up 15 per cent of Queensland's total exports. On any measure it is one of our most fundamental and important economic pillars.

Despite eye-watering borrowings, record debt and record spending, DAF is going backwards—backwards in staff and in funding. There is a \$44 million cut to DAF's budget in 2020-21 compared to actual expenditure in 2019-20. There is nothing for the department—no expansion in services. There are nine fewer staff budgeted for in 2020-21 than were employed in 2019-20, a drop from 2,124 to 2,115. That is nine fewer staff when the government's only solution to create jobs is a Public Service led recovery. While other city-centric departments increase staff, DAF is cutting. Since 2015 there are 30,000 more Brisbane bureaucrats and yet the department responsible for rural and regional industries is shrinking.


Today the minister said that agriculture is designated an essential service. That is poor treatment for an essential service. The minister is presiding over a gradual weakening and emasculation of his own department. DAF's budget is cut during a long-term, ongoing drought. On 30 June, 67.4 per cent of Queensland was drought declared. Parts of Western Queensland are entering their eighth year of consecutive drought. Labor's unfair vegetation management laws make it harder for Western Queensland farmers to push mulga to feed livestock. Labor has no drought policy. In 2018 the government promised to reform drought support programs and conduct a review. It broke the promise to reform drought support. Labor's only drought plan was to cut freight and fodder subsidies. Reforms were deferred until after the election.

Labor's record on biosecurity is abysmal. The minister betrayed farmers in the north-west by withholding \$5 million he promised to tackle prickly acacia. Biosecurity's key industry advisory group did not meet for almost two years. No meetings were held the entire time Labor conducted its secret review of the Biosecurity Act and regulations.

The minister's budget press release yesterday was extremely disappointing—an embarrassment. The Queensland Farmers' Federation called DAF's budget 'underwhelming' and 'a missed opportunity to address some critical competitiveness and productivity issues, and exciting growth opportunities for the sector, which would benefit all Queenslanders'.

The government has dropped an austerity anvil on hardworking DAF staff and the sector. Agriculture faces cuts to front counter services and closed DAF offices. Extension services have all but disappeared. Research and development are ignored. The government has an appalling record of relentlessly attacking agriculture. Labor has attacked and undermined through unfair vegetation laws, blocked new dams, underfunding, mismanaged biosecurity and closed agricultural education colleges. Labor used a politically motivated report, funded by a Labor donor, to close the Emerald and Longreach agricultural colleges. The minister supported the unilateral closure of licensed armourers and dealers and he did not know farmers use firearms as tools of trade. The minister supported the government shutting down debate on the invasive weeds report. Farmers are expected to do the work of government departments which allow invasive weeds to get out of control. Farmers have to deal with wild dogs killing livestock while the government does very little.

Labor demonises farmers. It ties them up in green tape to stop them from managing their farms and creating jobs. Labor was slow to protect farmers from animal extremists who terrorise them through illegal trespassing. QFF said that the agricultural sector is the only one that can deliver food security, environmental sustainability and economic opportunity for relatively low risk. Without more targeted and deliberate action from government, agriculture will not fully capitalise on the exciting opportunities that are unquestionably available.

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (5.03 pm): I move the following amendment—

That the motion be amended by omitting all words after 'drought' and inserting the following words:

4. notes the ongoing support from the Palaszczuk government to the Queensland agricultural sector; and
5. notes the Morrison government's failures in the agriculture sector.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr FURNER: That woke them up.

This is the LNP that has learnt nothing and forgotten everything when it comes to agricultural policy in this state. The member for Gympie may be inaudible to many stakeholders, but as the shadow minister for this great department it is important that there is a competent representative of alternative views. Sadly for the member for Gympie, competency is not a word I have heard mentioned next to any of his talents that I am yet to see.

This government has a long tradition of looking after the farmers of this state when it comes to drought—at the same time as the LNP misleads its constituents when it comes to drought. I say for the member for Gympie's benefit—a member who has himself previously had an individually droughted

property and should know the process, and yet clearly does not—that those who are drought declared and remain drought declared will get support as long as the current drought lasts. The only way the LNP could not understand that statement is if it is ignorant or mischievous. Which one is it? When those opposite cannot understand simple statements, it is no surprise the people of Queensland did not trust them at the recent election.

Another reason the LNP cannot be trusted is that their legacy is woeful. In the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries 600 staff were cut under their watch—wholesale staff cuts by the LNP, something that has not gone unnoticed. Those opposite cut biosecurity staff by 26 per cent. That is something Labor would never do.

Mr Millar interjected.

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

Mr FURNER: Our budgets have been higher than the LNP budgets when it comes to agriculture. When travelling through regional Queensland I have never had a stakeholder, farmer or passer-by come up to me and say that the LNP's time in government was a good time for them. No-one in regional Queensland was jumping for joy when it came to the LNP campaign or policies. Maybe that is why there are five fewer LNP members opposite. In comparison, some of the letters of congratulations I have received since being reappointed to my portfolio have left me almost blushing!

Unlike the industry expectations of us, those opposite must be delusional to think that they could deliver anything meaningful when it comes to agriculture. It is clear that those opposite are cut from the same cloth as their federal counterparts—hopeless yet shameless. The motion mentions trading relationships. The federal government has been missing in action in that space and has been for many years. They have been picking fights with our greatest trading partner, China, and wanting to take them on and destroy the agriculture and resources sectors.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Buderim, you are warned under the standing orders.

Mr FURNER: Recently I conducted a virtual trade mission with Japan. The Palaszczuk government put in \$5 million to do this during the difficult time of COVID-19. They are our greatest agricultural trading partner. We will be doing more virtual trade missions with South Korea and China in the near future. I note that, as a result of that virtual trade mission, there have been shipments of produce like kabocha pumpkin to Japan by Qualipac in the Lockyer Valley.

Where have the federal government or the LNP been here in Queensland on this matter? They have been missing on trade matters, missing on workforce issues and missing on drought policy or COVID-19 responses. When it comes to delivery, what does the member for Broadwater's hero, Mr Campbell Newman, say about Scott Morrison and his merry band of ministers? An article states—

'After being in office for seven and a half years, this Coalition Government has not done a thing for northern agriculture or built a dam,' he raged.

They never will. They are a government of spin. No substance and they do nothing.

They are a disgrace. You can quote me on that.

That is the same bloke who ran the LNP saying that. That is the same bloke the member for Broadwater noted for 'the importance of his drive and leadership'. I have to say that Mr Newman is not wrong about the federal failures for Queensland. It seems that those opposite have learnt nothing from the election and we see the same tired, old attacks and same silly arguments presented by them. I look forward to estimates next week. As 'Skinhead' from the *Longreach Leader* said, 'It may as well be inaudible.'



Mr WEIR (Condamine—LNP) (5.09 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Gympie. Once again we see this Palaszczuk Labor government attacking the primary producers of this state—the hardworking men and women who provide the food and fibre for our state and nation, the people who have been doing the heavy lifting for decades, substantially contributing to the state's economy and supporting regional communities.

The agriculture sector is worth \$18 billion and employs more than 300,000 people throughout the supply chain, with 60,000 of those being directly employed. There is 84 per cent of this state with some type of agricultural activity taking place. This equates to almost 144 million hectares. Of this state's total exports, agriculture accounts for 15 per cent. Now we see the government ripping the heart out of the

agriculture sector again—more planned budget cuts for the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries in the midst of the ongoing drought, attacks from animal activists increasing the biosecurity risk on farms and the closure of all of the agricultural education facilities in Queensland. The bush bashing started in the Beattie era and continued in the Bligh era, and the Palaszczuk Labor government has revelled in the pain created by this mismanagement of the agriculture department.

Biosecurity breaches are an immense concern for farmers. As the Premier has continually told us she is keeping us safe, where was she and her minister when farmers were trying to keep their stock, equipment, markets and infrastructure safe—safe from the activists who present a constant risk to farmers' livelihoods and to the Queensland economy as they blatantly breach biosecurity protocols which could have devastating consequences? The potential for these trespassers to introduce a disease on farm that could destroy a whole industry overnight seems furthest from this government's mind.

Mr Fumer interjected.

Mr WEIR: The minister seems to find it amusing. I can assure him that the producers out there do not.

Mr Fumer interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Minister, you are warned under the standing orders.


Mr WEIR: The minister promised \$5 million to tackle the prickly acacia problem in the state's north-west. This funding has been withheld. That is an absolute betrayal of those farmers who are battling this noxious weed after devastating floods spread it across a vast area. The number of bureaucrats in Brisbane has increased to over 30,000 since 2015, while the department that supports rural and regional industries has been stripped bare.

It is difficult to understand why the Biosecurity Queensland Ministerial Advisory Committee—a key Queensland industry advisory group set up to discuss biosecurity matters—did not meet for almost two years. This is a very arrogant government. Not only did the advisory committee not meet for two years whilst Labor were conducting their secret review of the Biosecurity Act and regulations; no meetings were held. Wouldn't you think this would have been an optimum time for meetings to take place given the intended role of this advisory group?

The ongoing drought conditions in Queensland are distressing, with 64.7 per cent of the state as of June 2020 drought declared. Parts of Western Queensland are about to enter their eighth consecutive year of drought. This government promised to reform the drought support program and conduct a review. Five years later we are still waiting. This government has no drought policy and no vision for the future of agriculture. Now there is talk of making cuts to drought freight and fodder subsidies. As we speak, the crops across the Darling Downs are failing. At the end of this week there will be another large failure of a summer crop in this state.

This government has made it painfully obvious that it cares little for the regions or for the primary producers and fishers of this state who are the backbone of our economy. They care about Brisbane and the city-centric people who live there. They take for granted the economic and social contribution of people in the regional areas of Queensland, and I do not see that changing anytime soon.

The minister took the opportunity to criticise the federal government. If it were not for the federal government tax write-off, I do not know what these primary producers, or the businesses that rely on them, would be doing. The minister did not mention his involvement in the ban of the live cattle trade to Indonesia. I note that he did not mention that. He talked about dams. The only contribution this government has made to a dam is pulling down Paradise Dam. This government continues to fail regional Queensland.

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (5.14 pm): I rise to speak against the private member's motion moved by the member for Gympie and in support of the amendment moved by the minister. Following on from the member for Condamine, I suggest that if he really cared about agriculture, if he really cared about farmers and graziers in Queensland, he would pick up the phone to his federal LNP counterparts and demand that they sort out this trade war with China which is hurting Queensland's farmers.

This motion moved by the LNP shows that they have not learnt anything during their time in opposition. They still cannot read the budget papers and they still cannot admit that when they were in government they sacked 600 DAF staff. The Palaszczuk government has always been a strong supporter of Queensland's agricultural sector. As everyone in this House knows, there is no better friend of farmers than this government.

The LNP have never been a friend to our farmers—sacking DAF staff, opposing action on climate change, supporting failures in trade relationships and opposing good policy. I will remind those opposite that we have continued to stand shoulder to shoulder with our farmers throughout this challenging year. Not only have Queensland farmers endured years of the worst drought in living memory, not only have farmers experienced relentless and devastating natural disasters—bushfires, cyclones, floods—over the years—

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr Saunders interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): The members for Maryborough and Toowoomba North will cease their conversation across the chamber.

Ms LAUGA:—but now, in 2020, Queensland farmers are navigating a global pandemic. We were the first jurisdiction in the country to declare agriculture as an essential service so that the movement of agricultural goods could continue. During the difficult months of lockdown, we secured our food supply, meaning that not only could produce come into our state but also Queensland meat, fruit, veggies and other produce continued to feed the nation.

Mr Lister: On paper. You stuffed it up in process. I know. I have 450 kilometres of border country.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Southern Downs, that language is getting very close to being unparliamentary. I ask that you withdraw.

Mr LISTER: I withdraw.

Ms LAUGA: Groups like Growcom described the Palaszczuk government's support of the state's farmers during the pandemic as the best in the nation. The food, the fibre, the jobs, the stories and the lifelong relationships the industry fosters remain the backbone of rural communities and this state's economy. This government works closely with industry, rural communities and the people who represent those in the bush.

On top of all of the natural disasters, the global pandemic and the drought, farmers also now have to face a trade war with China—a fight that they do not need or want to be caught up in, especially not now. The Prime Minister has overseen a complete breakdown of the relationship with China which is now threatening farmers' livelihoods in Queensland and right across the country.

Like many, my heart broke at the thought of those beautiful blue and orange live Australian rock lobsters dying and spoiling on the tarmac in China as a result of the Chinese-Australian trade tensions. Tonnes of live rock lobsters, which take years to grow to size and are one of Australia's most highly prized seafood delicacies, spoiled and wasted on the tarmac because of the federal government's inability to negotiate and manage a relationship with Queensland's largest trading partner. It is an absolute mess. We know that other exports including beef, cotton and barley have been affected by Chinese-Australian tensions which are hurting Queensland farmers.

Mr Lister interjected.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Southern Downs, you are warned.

Ms LAUGA: If Queensland agricultural exports continue to be affected, there is no doubt that Queensland jobs and businesses will be deeply impacted. Farmers will suffer. Why don't those opposite care about that? What are those opposite doing about the impact on Queensland farmers? Primary industries are worth more than \$13 billion to Queensland annually in gross value of production. Farmers have certainly helped buoy our economy through this global pandemic.

The member for Gympie and all of those members opposite need to pick up the phone to their federal LNP counterparts, to Minister Littleproud and to the Prime Minister, and demand that this is sorted out. Sort it out because it is hurting Queensland farmers and our Queensland economy—and it is only going to get worse. Our farmers need our support, and the Palaszczuk government is honouring its commitments by delivering price relief for critical input costs, funding for resilience and risk reduction, dam safety improvement projects and biosecurity.

Deep down inside the member for Gympie knows that the Palaszczuk government is doing the right thing by our hardworking Queensland farmers. The member for Gympie's title of shadow minister for agriculture, fisheries and forestry remains the ghost of the Newman LNP government past—those three turbulent years in our state's recent past that Queenslanders clearly have neither forgotten nor forgiven. I do not support the motion.

(Time expired)

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (5.19 pm): I rise to support the original motion moved by the member for Gympie. It acknowledges the importance of Queensland's primary producers and allows me the opportunity to again highlight some of the many anti-farmer and anti-region policies which confront the many hardworking mum-and-dad businesses that produce food and fibre around the state and in the Burnett electorate.

It is relevant to remind the House of the debacle that occurred when the Paradise Dam was emptied and lowered by 5.8 metres in the middle of one of the worst droughts in history. The state was nearly 70 per cent drought-declared. The handling of the whole sorry saga is a disgrace. There have been cover-ups, deceit, spin and attacks on the region's prosperity as a sustainable food and fibre producer, as evidenced by the amount of investment that was placed on hold and lost opportunities for the planned expansion of farming enterprises. This really is a serious issue. The rhetoric that has been—and continues to be—rolled out is about community safety, but I still do not believe we have ever been given an explanation. Testing, which has been kept secret, continues. Mr Deputy Speaker, you work that out.

The agriculture industry deserves a better process with engineers, domestic and international, being engaged to determine exactly what is wrong with Paradise Dam and put things in place to fix the dam once and for all. The government's own commission of inquiry recommended that more testing be done. Locals had to raise funds to engage an international expert from the United States, who confirmed that the dam can be fixed for a lot less than the government is spending to tear it down. Our council and farmers like Judy, Tina, Bruce, Tom Marland, Craig, Jamie and Andrew all raised their own money to bring this international expert out. I also acknowledge Bundaberg fruit and veggie growers and the canegrowers industry for standing up to the government in the great fight which we lost.

Water security for the regions and Queensland is such an important issue. We must invest in water projects right across Queensland. We must reinstate Paradise Dam. We must build new dams. We should not mock the new Bradfield scheme. Urannah and Nullinga dams must progress as a matter of urgency. As we know, there has not been a dam built in 15 years in this state under Labor. The only thing they can take credit for now is tearing one down. It is important that the rhetoric used by the government with regard to yield and water ceases, and a real examination of what water security in this state looks like must be conducted so that everyone can understand the issues around government decision-making.


I am convinced that the government has no real plans for water security, as is evidenced in this week's budget. Issues with the seasonal worker program have to be acknowledged. There will be serious consequences in relation to the picking of fruit and veggies across this state. This issue has again become a political football. Can you believe this state government is picking a fight with the federal government about what it means to get seasonal workers, encouraging locals to take up the mantle and pick this fruit. We conducted a great media stunt in Bundaberg. We offered people money to bring them to the region. It was a complete failure, but we have not heard anything in the budget about what they are going to do to try and get the fruit and veggies out of the paddock and into the markets. We must make sure that those families are supported more than they are now.

I also want to talk about the anti-farmer issues I raised with the minister in question time in relation to MSF Sugar and the folding up of that industry. We must continue to invest to ensure that these industries continue to be the lifeblood of their communities. The Maryborough canegrowers deserve an opportunity to continue to crush their cane and the Isis Canegrowers' Association is willing to do that, but we cannot have a government minister standing up and basically telling the industry to sort it out for themselves. This is a serious issue for the industry. If we want to talk about jobs and agriculture, this is a real litmus test for the government to stump up.

I also want to talk about the committee report concerning invasive weeds. It took years to be tabled, and at the end of that not one recommendation was ever forwarded and taken up by the government. It took a long time for primary producers to garner real hope and opportunity from the government to deal with invasive weeds right across the state in our road corridors and waterways. They are again being ignored by this government and let down. I also want to remind the House about the complete debacle in the fishing industry and what happened with the tragedy of commercial producers and vessel monitoring systems. We still need the government to step up and make sure that that system links with police and emergency services so those fishermen who go out to catch that fresh fruit—seafood and fruit—

An honourable member: Fruits of the sea.

Mr BENNETT: Fruits of the sea—have the opportunity to be supported by this government. They are anti regions and anti farmers. More importantly, those families in the fishing industry who lost so much still deserve an apology from the minister for not implementing the VMS when he had the opportunity. Now is the time for this government to step up, give primary producers real support, and let's make sure that the agricultural sector can be supported and proud of what they do to produce food and fibre.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (5.24 pm): I rise to speak to the motion moved by the opposition as amended by the minister. I am thrilled that they have put this motion forward for discussion. The motion demonstrates to all Queenslanders that the LNP still has not learnt any lessons from their disastrous time in government, when they tore shreds off those dedicated Department of Agriculture and Fisheries officers who served this state so well. You name it, they cut it when they were on these benches. Biosecurity suffered a 26 per cent cut and fisheries a 28 per cent cut, which was devastating for all those involved and terrible for the proud Queensland farmers whom the LNP still claim to represent. For those opposite to make allegations about the Palaszczuk government's support for drought-affected farmers shows that they are blind, deceptive or have literally forgotten about how budgeting for drought funding works.


For more than a year the LNP has been claiming that the state budget cut funding for drought assistance, and that is absolute rubbish. Not one cent of drought support to our farmers has been cut. It has long been the practice for funding for drought assistance to be funded for a single year in the state budget and not for forward years. That is what happened under the LNP government when the current Leader of the Opposition sat around the cabinet table, and that is what happens now, but of course the corrosive LNP brand of drought politics is not just restricted to the state LNP. Their federal counterparts have much to be ashamed of in this regard as well.

Within months of the election of the Palaszczuk Labor government, the LNP federal government's then agriculture minister, Barnaby Joyce, wrote to us. We all remember Barnaby, a former Queensland—a former everything, really. After the election he wrote to us saying they would withdraw their 25 per cent contribution to the Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate scheme. Members might recall that the Queensland government provides a 50 per cent rebate on emergency water infrastructure. This is to ensure that our drought-stricken farmers can invest in their properties, making them more drought resilient and providing vital water infrastructure for livestock. But their federal mates defunded their 25 per cent contribution for more than two years. Some 2,600 Queensland farmers missed out on that federal top-up for emergency water infrastructure. Meanwhile, the Palaszczuk Labor government has continued to pay a 50 per cent rebate.

Then came the much vaunted 2018 drought summit, where the federal government made all of its announcements at the start of the summit without hearing a single word from drought-stricken Queensland or any other state. In one of their lauded initiatives, they put the 25 per cent EWIR rebate back on the table. How cruel is it to put it back on the table when they had taken it away in the first place after the election of a Labor government. What did the federal LNP do this year? They cut the 25 per cent rebate again. 'No more money,' they said, and the funding for emergency water infrastructure was solely the state's problem.

After a few months they folded on that when the now federal agriculture minister, David Littleproud, realised that cutting essential drought support to farmers in drought was untenable—but even that was deceptive. The LNP's Minister Keith Pitt has now written to the Queensland government asking us to go halves in their contribution as a contribution. After years of dudding Queensland's drought-stricken farmers the Palaszczuk government has continued with a 50 per cent rebate, and now the feds want a contribution that no other state pays.

When the LNP say they support drought-stricken farmers, this is the kind of support they are giving them. The opposition's motion shows that they have not learnt anything during their time in opposition. They still cannot read the budget papers, they still cannot bring themselves to admit that the Palaszczuk Labor government is getting on with the job and they still cannot admit that one of the best agriculture ministers we have seen is the farmers' friend here, Minister Furner.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (5.29 pm): I am delighted to speak on the original motion moved by the member for Gympie because it is only the LNP who are genuine in their support for agriculture in this state. Yesterday with the budget being handed down, the Palaszczuk Labor government chalked up another agriculture fail. When 67 per cent of Queensland is drought-declared, this Labor government cuts \$44 million from the department of agriculture. This is a disgrace. Coupled with the departmental

budget cuts are cuts of nine staff from the department, meaning 53 staff have been cut over five years. Talk about cuts, cuts, cuts from Labor in agriculture. This shows the Labor agriculture minister is failing in his portfolio responsibilities.

The minister failed again this morning when he could not tell the House what year primary producers will be able to use Labor's promised inland freight route. Primary producers in my electorate would like to know, as would the councils and communities from Mungindi, Thallon, St George, Surat, Roma, Injune and all the way to Charters Towers. What are the priorities and projects for this inland freight route?


Out in the regions, they do not call the Labor minister for agriculture a friend because time after time they see the Labor government failing the agriculture sector. They do not see the Labor government supporting innovation in the agriculture sector. They do not see the Labor government that has tried to reduce red or green tape on farmers. They do not see a Labor government fighting for lower electricity costs for farmers. What they do see is the Labor government's callous decision to close the two remaining agricultural training colleges in Emerald and Longreach. Shame. Where will the young people who are passionate and dedicated to agriculture learn the skills of how to shear a sheep or strain up a cluster fence? There are many young people in agriculture who are really passionate and this government has failed agriculture by closing those agricultural colleges.

There is 67 per cent of Queensland that is drought-declared at the present time. After this heatwave, there will be plenty more areas that will feel that they too should be drought-declared. The government should explain where these \$44 million in funding cuts to the department are coming from. Will they be the frontline biosecurity officers who have to deal with the tick outbreaks or, even worse, the anthrax outbreaks, which my electorate has experienced? If you think COVID is difficult, wait until you try to deal with anthrax. Will these funding cuts come from the drought support programs?

We know the government have already proposed to cut back on the freight and stock returning from agistment subsidies when the current drought declarations are revoked. What will they cut next? Will it be the emergency water infrastructure rebate? Contrast this to the LNP, who are genuine in their support for agriculture. The LNP introduced into this House in the last term a private member's bill that clearly outlined our tough stance on the trespass laws to protect farmers from extremists. Some of those farmers who live in my electorate have experienced the repeated trespass on their properties and they are sick to death of this illegal behaviour which continues to threaten and target them even today. The LNP put forward a solution to supporting farmers but this Labor government did not want to see that private member's bill debated.

It is the LNP that stands shoulder to shoulder with farmers, supporting them every time the Labor government goes out and does those preference deals with the Greens and makes vegetation management laws more restrictive and unfair on our farmers. Through Labor's unfair vegetation management laws, it is now harder for drought-stricken farmers in the mulga lands to feed their starving stock. Pushing mulga is about fodder regeneration, not tree clearing.

It is the LNP that wants to grow agriculture by building dams for both domestic supply and agricultural use. Labor have no plan for water security and no drought policy and they do not see drought as a priority. Labor governments have not built a dam in the regions for 15 years. In fact Labor's record on dams is that they have torn down the dam wall at the Paradise Dam. This Labor government's record on agriculture is an 'F' for fail.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.34 pm): I rise to address the private member's motion as amended and to debunk the myth once and for all that the LNP is the natural party of the Queensland farmer. Those on this side of the House—although I am now sitting on the other side of the House—have not forgotten that the Labor Party's great Australian story started among the striking shearers in Barcardine. Our literal party roots are in the farming sector, and we have not forgotten that. In fact we are very proud of it. Those opposite would be hard-pressed to say the same, given their highly selective memory of what Campbell Newman's government did to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries just seven years ago. They only need to look at our support for Queensland farmers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What did we see from the Palaszczuk Labor government? Agriculture and food production was declared an essential industry in the very earliest days of the pandemic before any other Australian state had thought to do the same. An agricultural coordination group inclusive of more than 70 key stakeholder industry groups and businesses was there to make sure that the industry could continue to feed Queensland, other states and indeed markets around the world. As the proud daughter of a restaurateur, I know just how important that is.

The Palaszczuk government worked side by side with industry to ensure that our freight routes were protected and sustainable and that the agricultural businesses were able to cross borders in a COVID-safe way that meant businesses could continue and that Queensland communities were also kept safe from this dangerous and contagious illness. We knew the importance of ensuring that agricultural freight could cross while also making sure that our communities were kept safe, and we make no apologies for doing so.

We provided the market diversification and resilience grants to help affected agribusinesses to adapt to meet new markets as access to some markets disappeared or was suspended because of COVID-19. We adapted a new round of these grants for the fisheries industry to make sure that export businesses, especially live export businesses in this sector, did not miss out. We provided \$1 billion in COVID jobs support loans. In the agricultural sector alone, these loans pumped \$16.8 million into the Queensland economy, directly supporting more than 1,300 jobs across 129 agriculture related businesses. That is real support. That is tangible support directly for the agriculture industry that saved hundreds and hundreds of jobs right across rural and regional Queensland.


I will just give a picture of why this support was so important and how it meant that the industry was able to get back on its feet. The convention centre here in Brisbane and the convention centres up and down the coastline of Queensland were the only ones that were essentially able to stay somewhat functional during the COVID crisis. They were actually able to stay open and trade in some way, shape or form. The Brisbane convention centre put out over a million plates of food a year and they source that food from Queensland farmers first and foremost. They are proud Queensland providers. It was really fantastic that they were able to continue sourcing this food and continue putting the food on the plates for people visiting the Brisbane convention centre. Thanks to the strong actions of the Palaszczuk government, our convention centres here in Queensland were the only—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms PUGH: I am sorry but my father is the executive chef there, member for Nanango, so I think I would know. I take your interjection.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Member for Mount Ommaney, you will put your comments through the chair.

Ms PUGH: My apologies and thank you for your counsel, Mr Deputy Speaker. As I was saying, these providers were able to continue supplying food. They were also providing food out the door to services like Meals on Wheels and other providers like that. The wonderful thing is that they are now up and running and they are essentially leaps and bounds ahead of other convention centres in other states because of the strong measures we took. The food that they are serving and the food that is walking out the door is good Queensland produce. I am incredibly proud of the Palaszczuk government's record on this. I think it speaks volumes. I will certainly be supporting the amendments, but I will not be supporting the original motion.

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (5.39 pm): I rise to support the motion put forward by my colleague the member for Gympie and shadow minister for agriculture, Tony Perrett. The Callide electorate is the sixth biggest electorate in the state. It straddles the Great Dividing Range in Central Queensland. Every community in the electorate—whether it be Chinchilla or Cracow, Baralaba or Bell—is reliant on agriculture.

Over recent times we have seen the mining and resource sector as well as the energy sector play a significant part in shaping our communities and their economies, but agriculture is our base. The farmers, graziers and horticulturists of the Callide electorate produce just about anything people could think of in terms of food and fibre produce. We have some of the largest operations in Australia. The flow-on effects are substantial. Thousands of jobs are created and there are many who are not directly related to agriculture who rely on agriculture for an income. I speak of people who work in the transport and shipping industry, the tourism and hospitality sector, and the commercial and retail sector. Many people owe their businesses and their job existence to agriculture.

In this 57th Parliament once again we see the honourable member for Ferny Grove, Mr Mark Furner, retain the agricultural portfolio, and I congratulate him on his appointment. He has obviously out negotiated and out jostled his colleagues to retain the coveted prize of minister for agriculture. 'Furner the farmer's friend' has been mentioned many times in this House, so I wonder what is exactly so friendly about a \$44 million budget cut to—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Apologies, member for Callide. I am having trouble hearing you over your own colleagues. I would ask those on your left to show you the respect due and hear you in silence.


Mr BOYCE: 'Furner the farmer's friend' has been mentioned many times in this House, so I wonder what exactly is so friendly about a \$44 million budget cut to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. We will also see fewer staff while other departments see an increase in staffing levels. However, it is the heavy hand of austerity that agriculture has to bear, championed by none other than the minister himself, 'Furner the frugal' I say. How can it be that an industry that has kept going and kept paying the bills for Queensland during this COVID-19 era has been so ignored by the government?

What we have is a Labor anti-agriculture agenda to deal with. We have \$90 million allocated in the budget to demolish one of the greatest water assets in the state—Paradise Dam. I might add that this is one of the most reckless and irresponsible decisions I have seen the Labor government make in my time. Where was the honourable minister while this was happening? He was nowhere to be seen. We have also seen the demise of our agricultural colleges at Longreach and Emerald. This is clear evidence that the Labor government is not interested in promoting agricultural education for the coming generation.

We have seen ongoing failures in our biosecurity protocols, failure of the integrity of the tick line, armyworms, prickly acacia, parthenium, giant rat's-tail grass, fire ants and a host of other invasive pest species. What is the minister doing to protect our shores from swine flu, which has been detected in New Guinea, a rowboat ride away from Australia? How can anything be effective with a minuscule budget and a less than adequate staffing level?

If the honourable minister Mr Furner is indeed a friend of the farmer, I charge him with making sure that there are adequate templates, directions and instructions issued to agriculture Queensland to help farmers and graziers navigate the soon to be implemented reef legislation. There are many who have no concept of reef legislation. They know nothing of what is before them. There are people with no mobile phone reception or internet service, people with little or no computer skills. It is the minister's responsibility to make sure the department is across this brief and is most helpful. I wait to see what unfolds.

Queensland agriculture is worth \$18 billion to the economy and employs some 300,000 people throughout the supply chain. Agriculture is the most important, underfunded, understaffed and misunderstood industry we have. Just as it is with coal-fired power, we cannot do without it. I support the motion and I commend it to the House.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (5.44 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the motion and to support the amendments made by the minister. Queensland is the agricultural powerhouse of this nation. We know that, from the Tablelands right down to the Border Rivers, our farmers produce the best meat. Because of the Palaszczuk government's dog fence program, we know that sheep are also on the rise. We have the best grains, the finest cotton, the best fruit and vegetables, the best sugar industry, and we cannot forget our fishers. Queensland feeds and clothes Australians as well as the world.

The Palaszczuk government has backed our farmers to the hilt to do what they do best. We back farmers through our regional economic development grants. Over three rounds we have provided businesses with grants of up to \$250,000, which have been matched by co-contributions from applicants for economic development projects that create employment and generate projects in rural and remote areas. I speak of businesses like Kialla Pure Foods near Toowoomba on the Darling Downs. One of Australia's leading organic grains processors, Kialla was given a RED grant to install a new mixer and mixing system.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kialla experienced over a 300 per cent increase in demand for their products as more people took to baking while working from home. Not only were they able to meet this demand because of the new equipment they installed with the RED grant; they were able to hire an additional six people, many of whom had recently been laid off because of the pandemic. The Palaszczuk government's RED Grants program has seen the creation of over 1,890 direct and indirect jobs right across regional Queensland. This government is backing our farmers, giving them the confidence to expand and grow.


The Palaszczuk government is also backing our farmers to export their clean, green food and fibre all around the world. Our Growing Queensland's Food Exports Program has opened doors for Queenslanders to export. This \$1.3 million program supports 15 agribusinesses seeking to enter new

markets. Qualipac near the Lockyer Valley has literally broken new ground by competing in the first shipment of commercial kabocha squash to Japan. It is a variety that is extremely popular and highly prized in Japan. With the help of the Palaszczuk government, this product has now made more inroads into the \$108 million export market. The first shipment of Queensland grown kabocha was snapped up within days and retailers in Japan are demanding more.

While COVID-19 has been a great disrupter to 2020, the Palaszczuk government has worked hard to ensure that the agricultural sector can continue to meet the needs of consumers here and overseas. As part of our \$12.5 million unite and recover economic plan for Queensland agriculture, we have invested \$5 million to reinvigorate trade relationships. This is quite different to what the federal government is doing. The Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries led the charge, in September hosting Queensland's first-ever virtual trade mission with Japan. In 2019-20 Japan imported 19.7 per cent of Queensland's total agriculture exports valued at an estimated \$9.55 billion. From Brisbane the minister hosted the Japanese Consul-General and Queensland agribusinesses. Through the wonders of technology, the minister also met with importers, retailers and other enterprises in Japan. This mission has been an unmitigated success and has helped open new markets for Queensland.

What have we heard from those opposite? The motion moved by the LNP shows they have not learnt anything in opposition. They cannot read budget papers and they cannot—

(Time expired)

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.49 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Gympie. As a newly elected MP in 2015 in the 55th Parliament, I worked hard to bring to the notice of the House the devastating effects of the drought which had seized Western Queensland in a fierce grip and was then creeping across Queensland west to east. The drought still has Western Queensland in a death grip. I cannot speak highly enough of the fortitude shown by my constituents in facing the situation. For some, it has been nearly eight or nine years. We have seen essential small businesses close, bringing an associated loss of population and a loss of skills. This is crippling us and undermining the livability of vast swathes of Queensland.

As this parliament's largest electorate, Gregory is the beating heart of Queensland. It contains all of the central land mass, from one hour out of Rockhampton to the Simpson Desert and to the borders of South Australia and the Northern Territory. The recent reports of suicide showed that the Central Highlands and Outback Queensland, both in my electorate of Gregory, were in the top five hotspots for suicide nationally. This tragic record has everything to do with drought, despair and a sense that we are being ignored, but it is more than the sense of the suffering being ignored. It is the sense of having our interests being actively attacked by the Labor government. The attacks have included reef regulations that impinge on farming as far inland as west of Emerald with no proven scientific benefit for the reef, and it is more red tape.


The Labor government's mishmash of red and green tape has directly contributed to two terrible fire seasons because farmers cannot manage fuel loads on their own lands and the government will not manage them in national parks, yet the Labor government flatly refuses to review the impacts of its own badly designed legislation on bushfire risks.

The vegetation management laws and the threatened species trigger maps mean that agriculture has lost its property rights and is so strangled by green tape that it is not allowed to manage its businesses and landscapes without the approval of bureaucrats in Brisbane. At the same time, its ability to receive advice from the same bureaucrats has been seriously impacted. Under the cloak of COVID safety, DAF employees were told not to speak directly to farmers who came into their offices seeking help. These public servants live in and wonderfully serve our communities. They are a part of our community and a part of Western Queensland. They protested that this order was causing damage to the department's reputation because customers could physically see that they were in offices but refusing to talk directly in person. What was the response? They were instructed to hide. Yes, they were instructed to hide rather than offer assistance.

It is my understanding that, despite Western Queensland never having community transmission of coronavirus, the instruction to hide is still standing. Now we see staff cuts in the same department, this most vital of all departments—Agriculture. Some \$44 million has been reamed out of the budget, no doubt to be spent on an unrelated thing in the south-east corner. Labor cuts to drought freight and fodder subsidies must be taken off the table. They are short-sighted and will impact the recovery of our state's herd and flocks post drought. More than that, they are heartless in a time of such despair. I am speaking about something close to my heart.

I have an eye on the clock, but I must speak on the disgraceful closure of the Longreach Pastoral College and the Emerald Agricultural College. This was done years ago now, and \$10 million has been spent conducting community consultation on what to do with the empty campuses. Meanwhile, our sons and daughters have lost access to key training in agriculture in our region. The decision to close these campuses was vicious. Their communities are desperate to see the facilities kept intact and used for agriculture or even trades training. Make no mistake: these were jewels in the Queensland training crown and those assets, once dispersed, will never be able to be put back together again. This budget sprinkles millions on TAFE agricultural colleges in Toowoomba, Bowen and Bundaberg—and I welcome that—while our gates in Longreach and in Emerald remain locked. Our communities, which have lost so much, now lose their young people, too.

Finally, we were hoping that in this budget we would see the minister commit to the \$5 million he promised for prickly acacia with the federal minister, but we do not see that. Prickly acacia is on our doorstep in the Channel Country. That is our 'Great Barrier Reef'. Minister, put that \$5 million into prickly acacia funding now.

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (5.54 pm): I rise to speak on the motion moved by the member for Gympie. Of course, I oppose the motion but support the minister's amendments. I must admit that I was a bit perplexed at the motion moved by the member. Firstly, it does not have the usual 'a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j' structure that we in this House became so used to and fond of. This motion has numbers that actually seem to make a bit of sense! I commend the member for Gympie for at least drafting the motion to be more readable than the motions we saw in the last parliament. Paragraphs 1 to 3 actually seem to make sense, but in paragraph 4 and 5 I thought the member was referring to the last time the LNP was in government, because our farmers are still recovering from that manmade disaster.

The Palaszczuk government is more than happy to stand on its record in agriculture, but it would be more helpful for the House to consider the mess we were left with. Like all things on farms, let's start with biosecurity. Under the LNP, 26 per cent of Biosecurity Queensland staff were shown the door. That is the vote of confidence our primary producers received. Further, those opposite reclassified biosecurity staff as 'non-essential'.

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Member for Gregory, I remind you that you are on a warning.

Mr MELLISH: How about that? Biosecurity staff were not considered essential to the agriculture industry under the LNP.

What did those opposite promise during the election? They promised an additional 10 biosecurity officers. They sacked heaps but then added another 10. People should not listen to what they say; they should look at what they do. That is what the people of Queensland did at the last election. The people of Queensland saw what the LNP did in government and have not believed it since. You would think the LNP would have learned the lessons of the past. One only has to look at what the federal LNP has done recently in terms of how it treats farmers with contempt to see that it has not.

In 2018 they promised a national biosecurity levy on importers to boost our country's fight against pests and diseases. We did not hear much about it. David Littleproud introduced that in 2018, yet quietly in March or May this year they dropped it. There was no explanation. The National Farmers' Federation described the decision as 'not a good look for the government'. It is concerning that the same government now seems to be bumbling and stumbling its way into a trade war—something that would be devastating for primary producers—but we do not hear much about that from those opposite. Farmers can be confident knowing that there are people on this side of the chamber who have their backs on biosecurity. We have stabilised staffing at the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and will continue to work closely with industry to identify biosecurity threats and diseases.

A new industry and government body is now overseeing Queensland's response to the Panama TR4 disease outbreak in Far North Queensland. Our response to this disease is so unparalleled that Colombian government officials have visited us to learn more about how we are containing the disease. We have also been on the front foot against African swine fever, which has devastated pig industries across the world. We got on the front foot by offering \$10 million of concessional interest loans through the Primary Industry Productivity Enhancement Scheme to help prepare our producers. In the budget handed down yesterday, the Treasurer reaffirmed our election commitment to additional cluster fencing in Western Queensland—\$4 million—and Regional Economic Development Grants will be available to producers for cluster fencing—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Kawana, I am placing you on a warning under the standing orders.

Mr MELLISH: I think we need some cluster fencing for the member for Kawana!

Ask farmers and they will say that lambing rates in fenced areas are going up, goat meat prices are going up and demand is up. I know that the Aspley Dosa Hut goat curry is great. I might get one this weekend. Attacks from wild dogs are down. Farmers want more support from cluster fencing. The Palaszczuk government is only too happy to give it to them, because we know that strong biosecurity makes a strong sheep industry. In fact, good biosecurity makes a strong Queensland agriculture industry.

In yesterday's budget we also reaffirmed our election commitment to provide \$1.4 million in grants to equip local councils, industry groups and nature resource groups to prepare for Panama disease and white spot disease. The LNP has never been a friend to our farmers—sacking staff, opposing action on climate change, supporting failures in trade relations and opposing good policy.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. We have 50 seconds to go, members. I would like to get through it without warning anyone else. Let us hear the remainder of this speech in silence.

Mr MELLISH: Those opposite made a bit of noise about animal activists. The biggest risk to farmers from animal activists is from those opposite.

Ms LEAHY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence and I ask that he withdraw.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Member for Aspley, the member has taken personal offence. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr MELLISH: I withdraw. We on this side passed tough laws against animal activists. Those opposite elected the Greens.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr MELLISH: Member for Nanango, it is great to see that your contribution to this House was electing another Greens MP to this parliament. That is a terrible legacy for agriculture in regional and rural Queensland.

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

AYES, 49:

ALP, 49—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

NOES, 37:

LNP, 32—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Purdie, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

Pairs: Butcher, Powell; Pegg, Robinson.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr SPEAKER: For any further divisions on this issue, the bells will ring for one minute.

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

AYES, 49:

ALP, 49—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Crawford, D’Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O’Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

NOES, 37:

LNP, 32—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O’Connor, Perrett, Purdie, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

Pairs: Butcher, Powell; Pegg, Robinson.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That the House:


1. acknowledges the importance of Queensland primary producers and their world-class food and fibre for Queenslanders, Australians and our trading partners;
2. recognises the thousands of jobs and livelihoods reliant on this dynamic and vibrant industry;
3. notes the ongoing desperate struggle of more than two-thirds of Queensland against the devastating drought;
4. notes the ongoing support from the Palaszczuk government to the Queensland agricultural sector; and
5. notes the Morrison government’s failures in the agriculture sector.

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL


Second Reading

Resumed from p. 263, on motion of Ms Fentiman—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (6.08 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. As members will know, this bill was introduced by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice on 26 November 2020, and I take this opportunity to congratulate the member for Waterford on her appointment as the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. At the outset I wish to declare to the House that I was a former councillor in the Townsville City Council, in particular the councillor for Division 10.

This bill is important as it extends the COVID powers which have already been put in place and ensures that the protections are still in place for a further period of time. Queenslanders should be proud of what we have done collectively to stem the outbreak of COVID-19 in Queensland. I am proud of everyone in Mundingburra for the resilience they have shown and the way they have complied with the directions of the Chief Health Officer which have kept us all safe. While I am on my feet, on behalf of my entire community I want to pay tribute and thank Dr Jeannette Young, our Chief Health Officer, for her amazing, dedicated work in keeping our communities safe. Together we will continue to get through COVID-19.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (6.10 pm): I rise to speak on the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. Firstly, let me place on record how grateful everybody in my community is for the frontline services and other public servants who have put in so much time, energy and effort while we have had this COVID emergency. We can all agree to support the first objective of the bill—that is, to extend the operation of the COVID-19 legislation to 30 April. Principally, I do not want to spend any more time talking about the COVID part of this bill because we support the extension of that time and we thank people for the work that they have done.

The area of the bill that needs serious consideration is the part of the bill that amends the process for filling a vacancy in the office of a mayor or councillor that arises during the period starting on a quadrennial election and ending on the day before the first anniversary of the election. In plain speaking, this is a mess. It is a complete and utter mess.

A few days after the legislation came into this House—and we had 229 amendments dumped on us the night before, one of which changed in a bizarre and peculiar way how the election of a mayoral candidate and/or a councillor may occur in this state—it was on the front page of my local newspaper because it was a perverse outcome. In my community the mayor received close to 70 per cent of the vote. The runner-up was a long way behind and not particularly popular in my community. At that time everybody was very afraid for our mayor's health and started wrapping him up in bubble wrap because the last thing we wanted was Chris Meibusch, a very unpopular mayoral candidate, to be the person who took the mayoral chair. It was a perverse and strange amendment to bring into this House. We find ourselves in the mess we are in now because it did not go through the scrutiny of the committee process.


The reason I raise this as a matter of importance is because it is tinkering at the edge of our democracy. This government has form for tinkering with our democracy to favour itself without sending legislation through a committee. I will come back to the retrospective nature of this legislation, but I first want to ask a question. There were a couple of people in this last election who, in fact, did have seats on local government. There was one on our side and two on the Labor side. Interestingly enough, one of the questions that was asked in an open forum was would this force a by-election. The answer to the question at the time was no. The people of Toowoomba were reassured that if they did vote for a sitting councillor they would not force a by-election. The people were completely misled because clearly there was always that intent.

The question for me is did those two candidates, one of whom is sitting in this House, get a favourable vote from the electorate because they would not force a by-election? If the people of Mundingburra and/or Toowoomba had known that this would force a by-election, would the vote have been lower or higher? Let us speculate that it would have been lower. Not only have the people been defrauded based on their vote and will be forced to go to a by-election; in addition, the members who gained a higher percentage of the primary vote will receive government money for that vote. One of the implications of applying the retrospective nature of this legislation in this case is that the public purse has potentially spent more money than it would have otherwise done distributing to somebody whose vote may well have been lower.

The tinkering around the edges of our democracy needs to stop. The Palaszczuk government needs to not treat this parliament like its plaything. If this mistake had been made further away from an election we may well have had a situation where there would not have been an ability to make these changes. For example, if one of our mayors had passed away or for other reasons left office between the assent to the previous bill and the election of a new government, because of the same question issue we would not have been able to put in retrospective legislation to change it. I encourage the Labor government to stop treating this parliament as its plaything, trust the institution, trust the process, be well prepared, bring legislation forward and not only put it through the scrutiny of the various committees but also allow the public and other third parties to scrutinise it and we will avoid these kinds of perverse outcomes that we are seeing now which, frankly, are undemocratic.

I am very concerned about two things: that the government is not thinking through its legislation and that it is acting in its own favour, manipulating the processes of this chamber and our democracy to ensure it has more power and control over the people of Queensland. In addition to that, I do not like retrospective legislation. Sometimes there is a really good reason. In this case complete incompetence by a minister and not following through on a process is probably a good reason. It should not be the job of this House to fix up the mess made by an incompetent minister. If ministers cannot do their job, stand aside and let someone else do it. If ministers cannot trust the institutions of this parliament, its processes and its procedures to get the best legislation, then at the very least let us debate the bills. Not only was the original legislation rushed through this place, not only were the amendments dropped on us late at night the night before the debate was coming—some 229 amendments that have led to this perverse outcome—in eight minutes we will guillotine other speakers from this bill.

Again this very proud institution, which has guided Queensland through many difficulties over 150 years, is being abused by the current and previous government and used as a simple plaything so that it can manipulate democracy to get the outcomes that it would like to see happen. That is completely and utterly inappropriate, it is undemocratic and it is certainly a manipulation of our democracy. The fourth estate should be on this government's back to ensure that it stops any future manipulation of this place when it comes to the democracy of Queensland. We have seen it too many times now. It is about power, it is not about the people. Democracy is about the people having their say in a fair, open and equitable way. This government needs to stop coming in here and preventing that from happening. I know others will want to speak so I will end my comments there because the guillotine is about to fall.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (6.19 pm): Obviously this legislation covers a number of issues that are pertinent to COVID, but it repeats the mistake that we saw happen in the parliament just a few months ago when completely unrelated legislation was tacked onto a bill in amendments that had not been seen and the bill was then rammed through the parliament in 24 hours or less. That abuse of process and power is now being repeated as this legislation covers things that have nothing to do with COVID. It contains matters involving the Electoral Act and, in particular, local government, but there will be no scrutiny of those matters through the parliamentary committee process.

For those members opposite who think this is a laughing matter because the government has been elected with a majority and can ram legislation through the House, let us have a little history lesson. Post Fitzgerald, the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission undertook a number of investigations into the electoral system. It was recognised that the electoral system needed scrutiny and attention as it should not be a plaything of government. There was a serious investigation into the processes of the electoral system. Now in 2020 we see a majority Labor government that has not learnt from history. They did not learn from their three years in opposition recently and they have not learnt from the history of the post-Fitzgerald Electoral and Administrative Review Commission that undertook an investigation and made recommendations about the care and attention that has to be taken in regard to the electoral system. They have not learnt. We should not forget the lessons of history.

We must not let this legislation pass through the parliament without commenting on it. We must not treat this as a light matter because, while these changes predominantly relate to local government—and some relate to general elections and by-elections in state seats—these are serious matters. They are about people being elected to office in Queensland. Yet once again this state Labor government is ramming through amendments to make up for the flippancy with which they not only rudely but also completely incompetently changed the local government electoral provisions. These runner-up laws are no joke. They are no light matter. They are not just an error of drafting. They are, in fact, an error of policy and process in respect to how this government has treated the electoral provisions of this state.


It is time that we again saw the electoral laws of Queensland respected rather than abused because of the numbers on the floor of the House, be it to change the electoral voting system or, as in this case, to ‘un-elect’ someone because the government did not get the result that they thought they were going to get. We have seen a quite ludicrous situation in which the Rockhampton mayor announced unexpectedly that she was quitting and, under the amendments passed by the government, as the runner-up the self-described ‘Pineapple mayor’ would become mayor. Because that was not the outcome that the government wanted they are moving a bundle of amendments that have been tacked on to COVID legislation.

This legislation cannot be passed without commentary or a ‘please explain’ from the government. How on earth did they think that this would not blow up in their faces; that it would not come home to roost at some point? It has simply happened a lot quicker than any of us thought it would. While these are retrospective laws, the original laws were dud laws that did not go through due process. There was a flippancy in the approach that the Labor government took.

We will hear government ministers say, ‘We said we would do this in the election,’ as if that was some sort of rubber stamp for their stupidity of a few months earlier when they passed legislation through an abuse of the processes of government, but that does not wash. It is about time that they were honest about why they are changing the laws. It is because they got them wrong in the first place. Still they have not learnt because still they are guillotining legislation and tacking amendments onto unrelated legislation without going through the due process of having a committee scrutinise that legislation.

I will briefly address some of the other aspects of this wideranging legislation. Again the government has gagged the debate and only allowed limited time to address some of the issues. We know that there has been a continuance of some of the provisions in regard to—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Order! Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House and the time limit for this stage of the bill having expired, I call the Attorney-General to reply to the second reading debate.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (6.25 pm), in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate on the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. The Palaszczuk government’s swift and comprehensive response to the COVID-19 emergency has played a major role in a significant reduction in the rate of infection,

protecting vulnerable Queenslanders and shielding Queensland businesses from the potentially devastating impacts of the global pandemic. However, now is not the time for complacency. COVID-19 is a highly volatile virus and we need only look to Victoria to see how quickly it can spread through the community. The government must remain agile and be in a position to act where necessary. The passage of this bill will facilitate that. Although Queensland is in the fortunate position to have very low levels of community transmission, we need to continue to be vigilant. This bill is a demonstration of the Palaszczuk government's unwavering commitment to the protection of all Queenslanders.

The explanatory notes to the bill identify that it has various objectives: to extend the operation of all COVID-19 related legislation that is still required to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 emergency until 30 April 2021 or an earlier date to be prescribed by regulation; to insert appropriate transitional mechanisms that provide for the ability to return to normal operations in the most effective and efficient way once the COVID-19 related legislation is no longer needed; to preserve rights and obligations that have accrued during the response period and the extension period under the Retail Shop Leases and Other Commercial Leases (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020; to extend the temporary operation of the Queensland Small Business Commissioner; to amend the Youth Justice Act 1992 to allow the chief executive to delegate his or her powers to appropriately qualified temporary detention centre employees in the event of a future COVID-19 outbreak; to amend the Electoral Act 1992 to provide flexibility, if required, to facilitate the holding of a by-election in a way that helps minimise serious risks to the health and safety of persons caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency; to amend the Liquor Act 1992 to continue support for the artisan liquor sector by temporarily removing restrictions on sales to the public of the liquor of artisan distillers; and to amend the process for filling a vacancy in the office of a mayor or councillor that arises during the period starting on a quadrennial election and ending on the day before the first anniversary of the election. An extension of a maximum of four months is a measured, reasonable and proportionate response in the circumstances.

I will now address some of the matters raised by members during the course of this debate. I note that members of the opposition have raised concerns about this bill being declared urgent. It is abundantly clear that the very nature of the amendments contained in this bill are indeed urgent. Responding properly to a pandemic requires swift action by government that must necessitate truncated parliamentary processes. When the LNP were last in government they declared 25 bills urgent, including their failed VLAD laws, which were introduced and passed the same day, and also the Criminal Law Amendment (Public Interest Declarations) Amendment Bill 2013, which the Queensland Court of Appeal declared constitutionally invalid. Nonetheless, I welcome the indication from the opposition that they intend to support this bill.

I turn to the member for Clayfield's contribution. First, in relation to the provisions in the bill concerning commercial leases, whilst accepting that the government had implemented decisions made at the national cabinet, the member for Clayfield expressed the view that government intervention in private property dealings is generally undesirable and the government should provide 'sufficient resources for the expeditious resolution of any disputes and the rapid end to a significant intrusion into private property rights'. I remind members that the decision to intervene in commercial leases was a decision of the national cabinet in response to the initial shock of COVID-19 restrictions.

The Retail Shop Leases and Other Commercial Leases (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020 implemented the good faith leasing principles for non-residential leases agreed to by the national cabinet in respect of lease obligations during the initial period from 29 March 2020 to 30 September 2020 and provides for associated dispute resolution processes. Those protections were later extended to the end of this year. In many cases, the leases regulation has achieved its objective of encouraging good faith leasing negotiations and enabling rent relief and protection from eviction for lessees.

With COVID-19 related restrictions easing throughout Queensland, the bill does not further extend the period for which the rent relief provisions and lessee protections apply beyond 31 December 2020. This will mean that lessors will continue to be prevented from taking a prescribed action, such as eviction, for a lessee's failure to pay rent outgoings or to trade for the hours set out in the lease during the response and extension period unless the action is in accordance with a variation of the lease or settlement agreed to between the parties or an order of a court or tribunal; despite a genuine attempt by the lessor to negotiate rent payable, the lessee has substantially failed to comply with the lessee's obligations under the regulation; or the action is being taken on a ground that is not related to the effects of the COVID-19 emergency. Sensibly, this bill preserves the rights and obligations that have been accrued during the lease protection period up to 31 December 2020 and facilitates the conclusion of any lease disputes that may still be on foot.

Leaving lessees still recovering from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic vulnerable to eviction from 1 January 2021 without the benefit of fair lease negotiations and dispute resolution procedures would be unconscionable. It is inevitable that disputes would arise, given the circumstances that gave rise to the implementation of the leases regulation. The quick resolution of a dispute is always preferable. However, the factors relevant to how long a dispute may take to resolve are many, and some of them are outside the control of government—for example, the willingness of parties to negotiate and the complexity of the dispute itself.

In the initial drafting of the lease regulation and in subsequent processes, my department, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, consulted stakeholders, including the Property Council and the Queensland Law Society, and we took into account stakeholder views when providing advice. It is not possible to simply unscramble the egg, so to speak, overnight. As I indicated previously, providing for transitional arrangements is entirely appropriate.

Continuing on the issue of disputes and government support, the government is committed to continuing to support businesses in resolving small business lease and COVID-19 related commercial lease disputes through the extension of the temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner beyond 30 April 2021 and the ongoing provision of information, advice and mediation services by the Office of the Queensland Small Business Commissioner.

It is important to note that, whilst the member for Clayfield in his contribution said that the government should provide sufficient resources for the timely resolution of disputes, when in government those opposite slashed the Office of the Small Business Commissioner and made it clear in their election commitments that they were not going to fund it.

Secondly, in relation to any proposed permanency of the temporary measures introduced in response to COVID-19, the Palaszczuk government stands ready to listen to stakeholders and those opposite and will be responsive to those measures that we have introduced during COVID that we want to keep moving forward. We look forward to those continued discussions. I say to those opposite that I am up for a constructive dialogue with members of the opposition and our stakeholders as to which measures should be made permanent.

I note the positive response from the community, legal and business sectors in relation to the modified arrangements for deeds, particular mortgages, affidavits and statutory declarations under the Justice Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response—Documents and Oaths) Regulation 2020. The Palaszczuk government will ensure that if any of these measures are to be made permanent a fulsome consultation process will be undertaken to evaluate the arrangements from all perspectives and to identify potential improvements that could be made. The modified arrangements for deeds were, in part, based on a recommendation from the Property Law Act 1974 final report, prepared by the Queensland University of Technology as part of the government's property law review.

As noted by the member for Clayfield, the Queensland Law Society in particular is keen to see these reforms continue into the future. In its Call to Parties statement, the Law Society called on government to evaluate the measures introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that those which have a lasting benefit for the community are retained and implemented on a permanent basis; and facilitate the use of electronic signatures by corporations and individuals by updating the Property Law Act 1974 requirements for signing documents, including maintaining the reforms introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the Palaszczuk government's response to the Call to Parties statement, we committed to working with stakeholders to examine which, if any, measures introduced during COVID may be made permanent. In particular, with respect to the reform of Queensland's property law system, we have committed to continuing with the progressive review and working with key stakeholders to develop a bill to modernise and replace the Property Law Act 1974 in this term of government.

Within my direct portfolio responsibility, I note that the bill extends the expiry date of four important regulations in my portfolio. We will be liaising with stakeholders about whether or not they can and should be made permanent. I will take a moment to outline some of those regulations.

First, the Justice Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response—Documents and Oaths) Regulation 2020 has enabled social distancing requirements to be adhered to for the execution of important legal documents during the COVID-19 pandemic. The modified arrangements under this regulation are proposed to continue to protect public health and safety and to safeguard human rights such as the right to health.

Second, the Justice Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response—Proceedings and Other Matters) Regulation 2020 will be extended. This regulation contains discrete amendments to ensure the continuance of the public administration of justice agencies and judicial process, and protect the health, safety and welfare of persons who are required to interact with the justice system and who are, or are likely to be, affected by COVID-19.

Third, the Domestic and Family Violence Protection (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation will be extended to facilitate the safe continuance of court proceedings and ensure there are no barriers that may prevent victims of domestic and family violence seeking protection through an application for a civil order while COVID-19 related restrictions remain in place.

Fourth, the Justice Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response Justice Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response Community Titles Schemes and Other Matters) Regulation 2020—Community Titles Schemes and Other Matters) Regulation 2020 will also be extended. Provisions in the regulation relating to community titles schemes are designed to protect the health, safety and welfare of people in the community titles sector during the pandemic. Specifically, the regulation provides bodies corporate with flexibility to adopt modified arrangements for meetings, inspection of documents, and the use of common property and body corporate assets. The regulation also provides the Office of the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management with increased flexibility to ensure public access to dispute resolution documents is conducted in a COVID-safe way and to waive certain dispute resolution fees where a person is experiencing financial hardship. Extending the operation of the regulation will assist bodies corporate and the commissioner's office to appropriately manage their affairs into 2021, including by adopting social distancing and other measures that reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

I now turn to the extension of amendments to primary legislation within the liquor, gaming and fair trading responsibilities which are achieved by this bill. The emergency response amendment act included amendments to the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997, Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980, Casino Control Act 1982, Gaming Machine Act 1991, Keno Act 1996, Lotteries Act 1997 and Liquor Act 1992. All of these amendments were designed to provide particular measures to assist Queensland businesses and individuals suffering financial and operational stress caused by the COVID-19 emergency. For example, the amendments to the Body Corporate and Community Management Act and Building Units and Group Titles Act provided modified financial management arrangements and requirements primarily aimed at providing bodies corporate with increased flexibility to respond to financial stress being experienced by unit owners within the community titles scheme. Given unit owners who may have lost employment and/or suffered a loss of income during the pandemic to date may continue to experience financial stress, particularly in the early stages of the economic recovery, an extension of this legislation is warranted.

All of the amendments to justice legislation which were made as part of the emergency response amendment act allow the government to respond proportionately to the business and community impacts of public health directions. The legislation requires the relevant authority—be it the minister, the commissioner or the Governor in Council—to have significant regard to the objects of the act and the impacts of COVID-19 before using or relying on the relevant temporary powers for temporary regulatory responses for COVID related purposes. It would be detrimental to businesses and jobs were these temporary powers and measures required but unavailable early next year. As a result, they will be continued.

I now turn to the issue of transitional arrangements. There are currently no explicit transitional provisions in the emergency response act. This means that, upon expiry, there is only a limited mechanism through reliance on provisions in the Acts Interpretation Act to transition smoothly back to normal operations. While sections 20 and 20A of the Acts Interpretation Act do provide some limited protections if a right or liability has crystallised prior to expiry, we should not leave things to chance. Therefore, in order to provide greater commercial and legal certainty to stakeholders, the bill inserts a transitional regulation-making power which enables regulations to be made, where necessary, to return to normal operations in the most effective and efficient way once the COVID-19 related legislation is no longer needed. The modified arrangements affect a large number of stakeholders from many sectors and required considerable effort to implement.

It is intended that the arrangements are measured. It is a proportionate response. It is absolutely appropriate that these regulations continue into next year. We have to remain agile. I thank all members for their contributions during the debate. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 14, as read, agreed to.



Mr BERKMAN (6.41 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

AYES, 7:

Grn, 2—Berkman, MacMahon.

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 79:

ALP, 49—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

LNP, 30—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Camm, Crandon, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Purdie, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

Pairs: Butcher, Powell; Pegg, Robinson.

Resolved in the negative.

Clauses 15 and 16, as read, agreed to.



Mr BERKMAN (6.47 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave not granted.

Clauses 17 to 51, as read, agreed to.

Clause 52—



Mr BERKMAN (6.47 pm): I move the following amendments—

3 **Clause 52 (Insertion of new ch 9, pt 16)**

Page 41, line 12 to page 42, line 18—

omit.

4 **Clause 52 (Insertion of new ch 9, pt 16)**

Page 42, lines 24 to 29—

omit, insert—

(b) immediately before the commencement, the office had not been filled.

5 **Clause 52 (Insertion of new ch 9, pt 16)**

Page 43, lines 11 to 16—

omit, insert—

(b) immediately before the commencement, the office had not been filled.

6 **Clause 52 (Insertion of new ch 9, pt 16)**

Page 44, line 1, 'section 338(2) and (3)(b) and'—

omit.

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

Resolved in the negative under special sessional orders.


Non-government amendments (Mr Berkman) negatived.

Clause 52, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 53 and 54, as read, agreed to.

Schedule 1, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (6.54 pm): I move—


That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (6.54 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.


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

Motion agreed to.


DISABILITY SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION (WORKER SCREENING) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 26 November (see p. 101).

Second Reading

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (6.55 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (6.55 pm): I rise to address the Disability Services and Other Legislation (Worker Screening) Amendment Bill 2020. The Liberal National Party will not be opposing this legislation. This legislation came before the House during the 56th Parliament and at a time when I was the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for communities, shadow minister for disability services and seniors, and shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships.

Mr Nicholls: And did a fine job too.

Dr ROWAN: I take the interjection from the member for Clayfield. Whilst the Liberal National Party will not be opposing this legislation, there are a number of issues which need to be highlighted to all members of the House.

On 18 June 2020, the former Labor minister for communities and minister for disability services and seniors, Hon. Coralee O'Rourke, introduced this legislation into the Queensland parliament. It was then referred to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee for detailed consideration and examination. The committee tabled its report to the Queensland parliament on 3 August 2020 with one recommendation—that being that the legislation be passed. In the 57th Parliament we have had the legislation reintroduced by the current minister, the Hon. Craig Crawford.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is one of the most transformational economic and social policy reforms that our state of Queensland, and in fact our nation, has seen in over a generation. Indeed, not since the introduction of Medibank in 1975 or Medicare in 1983 have we seen a more substantial set of reforms than the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which will continue to transform the lives of people with a disability, their families and carers, and the way in which support and ancillary services are delivered.

As I have said before in this House, this significant reform has had the unequivocal bipartisan support of the Liberal National Party since the scheme's inception. That continues through to today and well into the future. Such reform takes time to conceive, to properly consider and to further evolve parameters to communicate, to expand, to transition and to adjust or amend as necessary. It takes time but it is also important that we get it right.

As the former Palaszczuk Labor minister for disability services outlined in her introductory speech, the broad purpose of the National Disability Insurance Scheme worker screening is to establish a system that will assess whether a person who works or seeks to work with a person with a disability potentially presents any unacceptable risk or harm to that individual. Again, as the former Labor minister articulated, this legislation will therefore meet Queensland's commitment under the NDIS to implement

nationally consistent worker screening whilst continuing current state screening for disability services outside of the NDIS. This is what the new minister, Hon. Craig Crawford, indicated when he reintroduced this legislation into the Queensland parliament during the last sitting week.


In examining the finer detail of this legislation and, as per the explanatory notes, the objectives of this bill are, firstly, to support nationally consistent worker screening for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the Intergovernmental Agreement on Nationally Consistent Worker Screening for the NDIS; secondly, to enable Queensland to operate a state disability worker screening system for certain disability services that it continues to fund or deliver outside of the jurisdiction of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, known as the NDIS commission; thirdly, to streamline and strengthen the legislative framework for disability worker screening in Queensland; and, fourthly, to ensure the blue card system operates effectively and efficiently alongside the disability worker screening system and the strongest possible safeguards are maintained in relation to persons working with children with disability.

Accordingly, this bill seeks to make a number of amendments to existing legislation including amending the Disability Services Act 2006, the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the Evidence Act 1977. There will also be consequential amendments made to the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000.

Debate, on motion of Dr Rowan, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mudgeeraba Electorate, Hooning


 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (7.00 pm): I never thought I would say this, but I want to thank the Mexican Hoon Cartel. That is right: to the Mexican Hoon Cartel I say muchas gracias, amigos, for increasing my margin in Mudgeeraba after I ran a campaign to stamp out hooning. I thank them because it shows that, despite their destruction and intimidation tactics throughout the campaign, there is no love for hoons in our community. We do not want you here, and now I have a mandate to fight for the tough laws we need to dismantle these criminal hoon cartels.

Throughout the election they stalked and harassed me, my staff and my community because the LNP put forward policies that will not only slam the brakes on hooning but will break up this lawless hooning cartel that has infested our suburbs. A hoon in a balaclava even targeted one of my community corners, but I am happy to say that the offenders will pay the price for their reckless behaviour, endangering the safety of others. Do you know who the hoons were supporting throughout the election? Labor. They were telling their fellow hoons to vote for Labor because Labor's stance on hooning was a slap on the wrist compared to the LNP's. In fact, I want the people of Mudgeeraba, Clagiraba, Gilston, Reedy Creek, Numinbah Valley, Tallai, Robina, Austinville, Carrara, Springbrook and Merrimac to know that every time they cannot get to sleep because the hoons are skidding in their suburbs again it is because of the Palaszczuk Labor government's inaction.

There is no doubt that hooning is spiralling out of control in our area. Up to 50 hoons have been known to congregate at the intersection of Pine Creek Road and Nerang Murwillumbah Road at a time. It is not unusual for my office to receive 50 complaints per month about hooning on our streets through my 'hoon watch' form. That is why I have been taking action. I have written to the Gold Coast mayor with a list of hooning hotspots in the Mudgeeraba electorate, and he has begun investigations into the feasibility of cameras or anti-hooning strategies in these locations. As a result the council has committed to hundreds more covert CCTV cameras, but only if Labor amends the TO(RUM) Act. The Labor government needs to follow through on amending the TO(RUM) Act to put the onus of proof back on to the owners of the vehicles. However simply amending the TO(RUM) Act will not fix the issue. Labor must adopt the LNP's tough policies on hooning cartels as soon as possible.

We committed to bringing in tougher laws for hooning cartels like the Mexican Hoon Cartel, installing cameras at hooning hotspots and laying tyre-shredding road surfacing. My community will not tolerate hooning, and I encourage locals to continue sending in the hoon watch forms so we can keep busting hoons. I will not give up the fight. Viva la Mudgeeraba and adios to the Mexican Hoon Cartel!

Pine Rivers Electorate, Airport Noise

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (7.03 pm): The opening of the Brisbane Airport's second runway has undoubtedly impacted residents in the western part of the electorate of Pine Rivers. Even with the reduced number of aircraft in our skies, hundreds of residents have signed on to my community petition


calling on the Deputy Prime Minister to take action. Residents from the Samford Valley, Armstrong Creek, Highvale, Samsonvale, Cedar Creek, Mount Samson, Yugar, Wights Mountain, Dayboro, Camp Mountain, Closeburn, Kobble Creek, Mount Pleasant, Laceys Creek, Draper and Delaneys Creek have all rallied together as their lifestyles have been irrevocably altered. Residents who choose to call these suburbs home value the peaceful rural and semirural lifestyle and amenity, the opportunity to work off the land, the ability to run a small business from home, settling in for their long-awaited retirement or a tree change to raise their young family.

Many of these residents rely solely on the water they capture in their tanks—water that does not undergo rigorous treatment prior to consumption. Residents hold deep concerns now in relation to water contamination due to overhead aircraft. Locals like Leah say, 'Our old Queenslander rattles as though it will shake apart. Please at least raise the altitude.' Jenny reports a black residue on her house since the opening of the runway and only getting a few hours break in the evening from the planes. Peter states, 'The noise is remarkable, echoing around the valley as planes fly at very low altitudes and now at very frequent intervals.' Phillip highlights the apparent amplification of noise in the valley due to the topography, with a suggestion that flights could be moved further west to reduce the impact. Barry moved to Cedar Creek because he was attracted by the tranquillity and healthier lifestyle that assisted his war caused injuries—something he says has now been taken away. Some locals attribute the intrusiveness of the aircraft to the quiet nature of the community which, as opposed to densely populated urban suburbs, is without ambient noise. Many report sleepless nights and plenty of worry as well as reduced outdoor living since the commencement of the second flight path.

My community is calling on Deputy Prime Minister McCormack to state in non-technical terms what options are available to reduce noise in our local suburbs following the commencement of the operation of the second runway. They are further calling on the Deputy Prime Minister to implement any measures that are reasonably available to reduce noise, subject always to safety requirements. I encourage locals to sign on to the petition which is hosted on my webpage and to connect with the Brisbane Airport Corporation at their information station at the new Samford Community Hub from eight to 12 this Saturday.

Finally, thank you to the locals who reached out to me asking me to assist in this matter and to the Samford and Districts Progress and Protection Association for their strong community advocacy. My petition will run through to 14 December, so please join us in sending a strong message to Canberra for change.

Coomera Electorate, Health Infrastructure

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (7.06 pm): To the people of the northern Gold Coast I say thank you for your support. I am honoured to be your representative in the Queensland parliament as the member for Coomera for a fifth term. It was a close contest, as it has been in the past and is expected in a fast-growing region like the northern Gold Coast—the fastest growing region in Queensland. Northern Gold Coasters should be concerned by the sleight of hand used by Labor when selling their wares at the last election. In 2017 it was the Pimpama train station, which has still not been delivered, nor does it appear in the forward estimates as a line item, so 2024 is in doubt.

Here is the latest furphy. They said, 'We're building a hospital at Coomera. Not any time soon, but that is what they tricked their booth workers into saying. They sold the headline; they sold the sizzle. The LNP committed \$4 million to master plan a state-of-the-art hospital and health precinct—the truth on the northern Gold Coast. Labor's commitment is \$3 million. What did the candidate and booth workers tell people? 'We're going to build a hospital in Coomera.' Why? Because they were hoodwinked and Labor was desperate. They are not building a hospital at Coomera in this term of parliament or any time soon. They copied our homework. We committed \$4 million to properly plan a state-of-the-art hospital and health precinct and told the truth. They committed to \$3 million to plan it and then added the frills—sketches, drawings and already announced spending at Gold Coast University Hospital of \$111.3 million. They mentioned land that is totally unsuitable for a hospital: it is a koala corridor. The headline at the top of Labor's press release states, 'Labor's \$160 million Gold Coast health plan', and I table that for the attention of members.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 19 October 2020, titled 'Labor's \$160m Gold Coast health plan' [\[332\]](#).


Here it is again. It says, '\$160 million—First look at Gold Coast's new hospital in fastgrowing north area.' Again this is not on. I table that.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, dated 19 October 2020, titled '\$160m: First look at Gold Coast's new hospital in fastgrowing north area' [\[333\]](#).

This headline states, '\$160 million', Coomera \$3 million for planning, and it is not even a line item in this budget. That is typical Labor: smoke and mirrors. You cannot trust Labor to deliver. They are not going to deliver this hospital on the northern Gold Coast.

I give you this commitment, northern Gold Coasters: I will take up the fight for the northern Gold Coast community, the fastest growing region in Queensland, and we will see how the pendulum swings in four years time.

Greenslopes Electorate, Easts Rugby Union

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (7.09 pm): 'Tiger for life'—that is the motto of the Easts Tigers Rugby Union Club, and these words are genuine. Formed in 1947 with roots going back to the early part of the last century, the club was originally an old boys team for Brisbane state high. Since then, countless people and families have connected with the club, becoming lifetime participants, volunteers and Tigers for life.


Let us just look at two great examples. The current president is Simon Box and his father was also a club president. Simon played in the premier grade side. He also represented the state and Australia in the under-19 teams. Simon played in these teams with his good mate and current premier grade coach, Moses Rauluni. I met Moses at the junior trophy day where he was giving out trophies. He told me with pride about starting in the club when he was just six years old. Moses also played in three Rugby World Cups representing Fiji.

If success was measured purely in top grade premierships, Easts might not be at the top of the list. However, if success was measured in bringing people to the sport, keeping them engaged for life, looking after existing and former members, expanding the groups playing to include women and people with disabilities, producing rep players at all levels, staying financially viable and encouraging people to volunteer and give back to the local community, then Easts is the premier rugby club in Queensland and I would have to say in the upper ranks of Australia and the world.

Their fourth grade premiership came just nine years after their founding in 1956, but they would have to wait a further 50 years until 1997 to achieve their inaugural premier grade premiership. Fast-forward to 2020—a year when many sporting codes struggled to get back on the field—and Easts did a lot more than get back on the field. Their juniors fielded over 1,000 players, making them the biggest club in Queensland, and their seniors won six out of six grand finals—the premier grade men, the premier grade women, the second grade, the third grade, the fifth grade and colts 4. The passion on display on and off the field at the premier grade grand final was a pleasure to witness, even if I had to witness it the day after the election. This passion is always on display at every home game, as generations of supporters gather to cheer on their teams.

Six grand finals would have brought great joy to Julie Laws, the late club manager who was general manager from 2009 until her untimely death earlier this year. I pass on my condolences to her family. Julie was a force in the club and a huge contributor to the success of the club. Whenever you rang Julie and asked for something to be done, it was done. Whenever Julie rang you and asked you to do something, it got done. If the ARU brought me on as a consultant to solve their current problems, I would be saying one thing to them: head down to Easts Rugby Union because there you will learn how to really run the sport of Rugby Union. 2020 has been a great year for the club. Whatever the trophy haul looks like in 2021, they will continue to be a great club and they will continue to produce Tigers for life.

Whitsunday Electorate, Tourism Industry

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (7.12 pm): The Whitsundays is the most tourism reliant region in Queensland, representing one in every three jobs. The Whitsunday tourism industry represents 40 per cent of the \$6.3 billion Great Barrier Reef market. I recognise the resilience of the Whitsunday Charter Boat Industry Association and I commit to being their strongest voice. They would welcome consultation regarding any further COVID-safe industry plans with both the department of tourism and Queensland Health. They are willing to proactively work with the relevant departments to see restrictions eased, with visitor safety at the forefront.


There are significant challenges that I draw the House's attention to. The current restrictions mean that the transfer of passengers via ferry between the islands and the mainland can operate at 100 per cent capacity, while the same vessel operating a tour to Whitehaven Beach or the Great Barrier Reef has to operate at a reduced capacity of 50 per cent. The overnight fleet is restricted in capacity, even though it undertakes pre-screening, collects contact-tracing data and operates the majority of its

services in the open air. The combined losses of 20 surveyed members of WCBIA due to COVID-19 impacts exceed \$1.1 million per week, which is currently unsustainable and has a significant flow-on effect to the local economy.

The borders are now opening, which is welcomed by the charter boat industry, but the industry is calling for engagement with the industry and a review of these restrictions as a matter of urgency. Many of these operators have had to redesign their product to meet Australian markets as they were solely reliant on the international market, and they now need an urgent review to take advantage of the holiday season before our cyclone season and the traditionally quiet wet season commences. I also express the industry's frustration about the eligibility criteria for the marine tourism rebate. ABN holders with one vessel measuring six metres receive the same amount of funding as ABN holders with six vessels measuring 12 metres.

We have policy on the run that lacks recognition that berthing fees differ and that they are privately owned in the Whitsunday marinas, unlike Cairns where they are government owned. The goodwill of the marina owners who are providing discounts has helped our operators stay afloat in the Whitsundays. I have written to the tourism minister and I am waiting for a response. I will continue to voice the challenges that are facing my local industry as a result of inconsistent government decisions and policy on the run. Operators need every opportunity to earn revenue to be able to pay berthing fees as these will be the berths that will ensure vessels are not washed up on our beaches during cyclone season, which would cause significant costs for the state government let alone environmental damage.

Jordan Electorate, Weather Event

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (7.15 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, 31 October 2020 will be remembered by members in this House as election day, but for many people in my electorate it is also a day they will never forget as we encountered one of the most severe storms the region has ever seen. For those who live in our area, there is a local understanding that most storms usually bypass us. We see the angry, dark clouds but they tend to go around us. However, for those living in Springfield Lakes, parts of Springfield, Greenbank and Boronia Heights, unfortunately, this time it came straight for us. The storm produced hailstones the size of which we had never seen before—not golf balls, but shot-puts, measuring up to 14 centimetres in diameter.

The full devastation of what happened was not understood for many days. Many homes with tiled roofs had the hailstones smash right through, with rain soaking insulation batts resulting in ceilings collapsing. The SES received thousands of calls for assistance that night and in the following days, and power was lost to over 3,000 homes.


What emerged from these devastating storms, however, was an amazing community led recovery effort. I want to place on record just how grateful I am for the remarkable commitment and care shown by so many towards our community. To Ipswich City Council, Mayor Teresa Harding and her team, I thank you for leading the local disaster management team. To the YMCA Springfield Lakes Community Centre, the amazing Bec Andlemac, the staff and the volunteers, I am in awe of the incredible amount of work you all put in. I have always believed in the importance of the centre but never more so than now.

Principal Greg Horrigan of Springfield Lakes State School, who will be retiring at the end of this year, was there every day supporting our local students, many of whom were displaced. My deep thanks and admiration go to our SES volunteers—not only those from South-East Queensland but those from across Queensland, northern New South Wales and South Australia. Working at heights is complex, dangerous work, and the efforts of the SES in tarping and securing hundreds of houses in the space of a week and a half was just incredible.

Thank you also to the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, the Rural Fire Brigades Association and the Queensland police who all played an important role in ensuring the ongoing welfare of our community. To the community recovery team who assisted with our government's hardship grants, the Ipswich department of housing, QSTARS, Energex, Lifeline and the Insurance Council of Australia, thank you for your meaningful and critical support. I also thank our amazing community organisations and churches who all lent a volunteering hand, as well as our fantastic local businesses—many of whom, without being asked, donated meals, goods and services.

We are a strong and resilient community but we are shaken. It will take a long time to recover from this terrible storm, and I will continue to support those who need our help to get back into their homes and back into our community.

Hill Electorate, Road Infrastructure

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (7.17 pm): I rise to speak about an important road project in my electorate that requires immediate and serious attention. The Innisfail-Japoon-Silkwood road is a major regional connector which is used to transport farm machinery, refrigerated trucks, caravans and local traffic. The 2019 traffic census indicates an annual daily traffic flow of 1,319 vehicles on this road, with over 12 per cent of these being heavy vehicles. I believe this figure would triple if this road was in a reasonable condition. However, most people now avoid travelling on this road.


The road is a school bus route and caters to local businesses and government services. The road also leads to Queensland's No. 1 tourist attraction—Paronella Park. It is unbelievable and unacceptable that this tourism icon is being serviced by a road that has been described as a goat track. Visitors arrive at Paronella Park and express disbelief at the standard of the road, and I have no doubt it turns many customers away. The road also poses a serious safety risk to families whose children travel to school every day. The edges are eroding, the surface is rough and uneven, and there are sections that narrow to one lane. The winding section also makes this road unsafe for thousands of visitors and locals.

The road is not wide enough, causing concerns for locals and tourists as it is a main road which is part of the Canecutter Way that connects tourist attractions and towns in the region. Caravanners like to do the Innisfail, Japoon, Silkwood and Mena Creek loop, which supports a number of smaller communities such as Kurrimine Beach, Silkwood, Japoonvale, Mena Creek, South Johnstone, Wangan and Innisfail. This helps keep these communities, local businesses and tourist attractions alive; it delivers local jobs.

Honourable members do not have to take my word about the poor condition of this road. I now table letters from Paronella Park local businesses, Division 2 Councillor Teresa Millwood, Silkwood Local Ambulance Committee, St John's School and the Feast of the Three Saints Festival Committee. Every letter confirms the condition of this road is an extreme safety risk for everyone. Particularly post COVID we need to invest in roads, which will attract more visitors to our region and assist in the quick recovery of regional communities. I call on the minister to invest in repairing and upgrading the Innisfail-Japoon-Silkwood road to an acceptable and safe standard.

Tabled paper: Bundle of correspondence relating to upgrading the Silkwood-Japoon Road between Silkwood and Innisfail [\[334\]](#).

Bancroft Electorate, Samoan Community

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (7.20 pm): One of the things of which I am most proud is that of being a voice for the less powerful in our community. When locals are disadvantaged, when they do not enjoy the same rights and privileges as most of us do, my role is to speak out on their behalf. That is what I am doing tonight. On behalf of the Samoan born residents in my area, I want to talk about the unfair barriers placed upon them by the federal government in becoming citizens.


Most Samoans in my area have come to Australia through New Zealand and those who arrived after 2001 are not eligible for most benefits unless they become citizens. That means they cannot access higher education like uni or housing. In Deception Bay we have many Samoan families who have been living in our community for 20 years or more. They have kids and grandkids who are educated in our local schools. After school too many work in some of the lowest paid and back-breaking jobs in Queensland. I know quite a few of them who work for furniture removalists and others even do cash-in-hand jobs. They cannot afford to go to uni because they are non citizens, meaning they would have to pay full fees to go to uni. To become a citizen they would need to pay thousands of dollars—and in some cases, tens of thousands of dollars—and the process can take a long time, three to five years.

I attend many graduation events at Deception Bay State High School, for example, and I see the most amazing dances and performances by our Samoan born students and their friends; the culture is shared amongst all students at the school. It makes my heart sing to see the joy and pride they have in their culture and they are very unmistakably Deception Bay. The point is that they are enmeshed. Our Samoan families are enmeshed within everyday life in our community.

I will talk about one family. The mother is a citizen and her three children were born in Samoa and came to Australia as teenagers. They were all educated at Deception Bay State High School. Two work for a debt collector. They want to go to uni, but they cannot because they are not citizens. They cannot even do an online course. They cannot get Centrelink payments. Citizenship for that family could cost up to \$30,000. They want to become citizens because this is their home.

I am calling on the federal government and saying that these barriers are preventing families who have been here for decades from becoming citizens. These are my locals. This is their community and this is their home. They have made a commitment to Australia, their extended family is here, their future is here and they are proud Queenslanders. I think it is unfair that the federal government barriers are still in their way.

Searle, Mr T

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (7.23 pm): I rise to pay tribute to the late Tom Searle and pass on my condolences and deepest sympathies to the family, albeit somewhat belatedly. Tom sadly passed away in June this year after a long battle with illness. He was a pioneer of Rugby League on the Gold Coast and the Tweed Coast with his contribution spanning over half a century. As a player at Tweed Heads in 1972 and as captain-coach of the Seagulls, he took the side that finished last in 1971 to the grand final the following year.

Universally admired and respected for his knowledge and passion for the game, Tom made an immeasurable contribution to Rugby League and our region while also being adored for his kind and gentle nature. Tom was also part of the Gold Coast Titans, joining the club in its founding year as junior recruitment manager. Tom's funeral was held on Friday, 10 July at Piggabeen oval. I know that the celebration that followed at Piggabeen and then at the Seagulls is just what Tom would have wanted. Due to the complications of COVID-19 and the various challenges of border crossings, sadly I was not able to attend, but I was absolutely there in spirit.


I know the Searle family well. Tom's son, Michael, and I worked side by side as foundation directors of the Gold Coast Titans to secure the NRL licence. In part we were inspired by Tom, who was a passionate supporter of our bid to secure a national licence for the coast and, most importantly, to provide a pathway for Gold Coast juniors to play Rugby League at home at the highest level. I need to take a slight moment of indulgence. Players, particularly from my old school of Keebra Park—and while I was never an outstanding player, my nickname was Tangles back in 1977. I was the guy they brought on at the end of the game when we were assured of winning so I could not mess things up.

The legacy lives on in great players like Moeaki Fotuaitika, David Fifita, Tanah Boyd, Alexander or AJ Brimson—and what a great player he has been for the Titans; it was amazing to be there at the last game this season to see his stellar performance—and past players like Jesse Arthars, Jai Arrow, Leivaha Pulu, Agnatius Paasi, Tyrone Roberts-Davis and Bodene Thompson. All are former students of Keebra Park State High School and have gone on to play at the highest level.

Tom was a great entrepreneur, a risk taker and someone who leaves a great legacy on the Gold Coast. I simply say to him: farewell. I am sure he is up there organising the next—

(Time expired)

Wynnum Fringe Festival

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (7.26 pm): Madam Acting Speaker, may I congratulate you on your elevation to this important role in the parliament. The first time I met Tom Oliver was as a student at a performance of *High School Musical* at Iona College. I knew then that he would go far, and he has. Tom has had a successful career as a performer, both domestically and internationally. However, COVID has had a huge impact on the entire arts sector across the world.

Tom came to see me with a great idea, the Wynnum Fringe Festival. From our first meeting I saw that if anyone, Tom could pull this off—the very first fringe festival to play in front of a live audience during a global pandemic. Tom knocked on doors and worked with local businesses seeking sponsorship and support. Good on Margaret Vote from Raine and Horne, who came to the party as a major sponsor. Likewise, BMD, Michael Jullyan and many other local organisations and businesses supported the festival. I was particularly delighted that Arts Queensland were able to support Tom and the fringe with an \$80,000 grant. This made it all possible.

With the 6,600 tickets sold online and 22 sold-out ticketed shows, nearly 10,000 people came through Wynnum CBD in a COVID-safe environment across three days. Three local businesses—that we know of; there may well be more—reported that the weekend's trade made up for most of their losses during the COVID lockdown. An opening smoking ceremony in collaboration with the Quandamooka elders was held. There were 21 local sponsors and 150 artists, and 43 creative staff were employed over the weekend in November. There were also 61 wonderful volunteers, and my husband, Peter, was one of them who worked from the beginning on Friday afternoon right through to

the end on Sunday afternoon. Good on you Pete. The online broadcast played to 10,000 people across the world, there were 23 food truck vendors across Edith Street and 15 community groups played music. Thousands of Queenslanders visited Wynnum for the first time and local iconic buildings were repurposed: the Wynnum Opera House, Winston Churchill Hall and Mrs Quinn's car park. The buzz in Wynnum said it all. Baysiders and visitors alike embraced the fringe festival. My favourite event was *Sizzle* on Pandanus Beach and Samba dancing at Kellehers Dance Academy with Annalee.

The festival grew from a bold idea to opening night in two months. I think the community would agree that the inaugural Wynnum Fringe Festival was a raging success. I say congratulations to all involved: to the sponsors who supported Tom, and also to Tom and his family and the entire Wynnum community for supporting this. That is what baysiders are really great at. We support local initiatives. I cannot wait till the 2021 Wynnum Fringe Festival.

The House adjourned at 7.29 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyce, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Camm, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gerber, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Janetzki, Katter, Kelly, King A, King S, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lister, Lui, MacMahon, Madden, Mander, McCallum, McDonald, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Perrett, Pitt, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Skelton, Smith, Stevens, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Watts, Weir, Whiting