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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 24 February 2021

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WEDNESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2021


 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 STATEMENTS

International Mother Language Day

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I draw to the attention of the House that last Sunday, 21 February, was the United Nations International Mother Language Day. The day originated as a commemoration of fatalities during protests in Bangladesh on 21 February 1952. The protestors were rallying to have the Bangla language recognised as their mother language. The Bangladesh community and the Mother Language Conservation Movement International observes this day with pride.

International Mother Language Day was adopted by UNESCO in 1999 to promote linguistic diversity as a pathway for understanding, appreciating difference and preserving cultures. The day also signifies the importance of all the mother languages across the globe, including the perseveration of Indigenous languages. The theme of the 2021 International Mother Language Day is 'Fostering multilingualism for inclusion in education and society'. I commend International Mother Language Day to the House.

School Group Tours

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to advise that we will be visited in the public gallery this morning by students and teachers from Varsity College Primary School in the electorate of Burleigh and Somerville House in the electorate of South Brisbane.

PETITION

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

Creationism

From 390 petitioners, requesting the House to have the Premier address the concerns pointed out in petition 3380-20 in that religions that believe the Earth was created about 6000 years ago should not be granted any government funding, assistance or help because that denigrates Aboriginal culture [\[177\]](#).

Petition received.

TABLED PAPERS

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

STATUTORY INSTRUMENT

The following statutory instrument was tabled by the Clerk—

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

[173](#) Electrical Safety (Codes of Practice) and Other Legislation Amendment Notice 2021, No. 12

[174](#) Electrical Safety (Codes of Practice) and Other Legislation Amendment Notice 2021, No. 12, explanatory notes

[175](#) Electrical Safety (Codes of Practice) and Other Legislation Amendment Notice 2021, No. 12, human rights certificate


REPORT BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

[176](#) Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal: 2021 review of the additional staffing levels for cross bench members of the 57th Parliament, Determination 23/2021, 24 February 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Coronavirus, Update; Coronavirus, Vaccine

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.33 am): Queensland has recorded no new cases of COVID overnight. Some 8,455 tests were performed in the past 24 hours. Since Monday, 527 Queensland frontline hotel quarantine and health staff have received the vaccine. Today the program of vaccinating hotel quarantine and frontline health staff expands to the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

Queenslanders continue their excellent record of confronting the pandemic. But this morning there are very concerning reports about an incident in an aged-care facility in Brisbane. The rollout of the vaccine in aged care is entirely the responsibility of the federal government. They are using private contractors to deliver the vaccine. A short time ago, the federal health minister and the Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer held a media conference.


I am advised that two elderly residents of a home at Carseldine had been given an overdose of the vaccine. One, an 88-year-old man, was admitted to St Andrew's hospital for observation. He is currently showing no signs of adverse reaction. The other is a 94-year-old woman who is being monitored in her aged-care home. The next 72 hours are crucial.

I am advised the overdosing happened yesterday morning. Queensland authorities were advised late last night. In fact, the health minister rang me late last night and we convened again this morning at 7 am. Discovering these details now is simply not good enough. I am advised the couple were given four times the recommended dose by a doctor employed by a private contractor. I am advised that it was only the intervention of a nurse that prevented further overdoses. I applaud that nurse for her actions. The doctor has since been stood down and an investigation is underway, as there should be.

None of this is good enough and the federal government must explain itself. Today I will write to the Prime Minister asking him to convene national cabinet as soon as possible. I want to know what training is being provided to the people the federal government is employing to administer the vaccines in our aged-care facilities to give additional confidence. I want to know about the communication strategies for the further phases of the rollout of the vaccine. People need and must have full confidence in this vaccine.

I will also be writing to the Prime Minister stating that the federal government needs to give us regular updates about who they are vaccinating and the number of people they are vaccinating, just as we give the public an update about how many people we are vaccinating. It is only through bipartisan support that we can achieve full confidence among the Australian public and Queensland public. I will be writing to the Prime Minister later today.

Infrastructure Projects

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 am): I am proud to lead a government that is all about jobs—supporting, creating and delivering them for Queenslanders—in a strong, growing economy. As our \$11 billion COVID economic recovery plan continues rolling out, businesses have reopened earlier than other states, our employment recovery is the strongest in the nation, more people are moving to Queensland and investment in new houses is at its strongest in almost 30 years. An important part of our plan is our investment in major infrastructure across Queensland. Our four-year infrastructure plan is worth \$56 billion. The year 2021 marks the start of our record four-year, \$26.9 billion roads and transport budget. This investment will support more than 23,600 jobs—that is jobs for Queenslanders.


This year alone we will deliver billions of dollars in road upgrades across our great state. We will continue and complete dozens of projects across the length and breadth of Queensland. Projects like: two M1 upgrades between Brisbane and the Gold Coast; the second M1; five Bruce Highway upgrades between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast; two Bruce Highway upgrades south of Cairns; and the Townsville Ring Road stage 5.

On top of those, there are another 87 road safety projects set to start within the next six months. I am proud to say most of the investment will be in regional Queensland. We will invest \$17.8 billion in communities outside the south-east corner over the next four years. That will support more than 16,000 jobs. That is 16,000 people who will get an income, go shopping at local businesses, pay off a mortgage or car, rent or go on a holiday. That is good news for those local businesses, car dealers and tourism operators, and good news for those regional communities.

Some of the bigger regional projects include: the Walkerston Bypass near Mackay; the Bruce Highway bridge upgrade near Maryborough at Saltwater Creek; and the Rockhampton Northern Access upgrade. It is not just road projects creating jobs. We will start building stage 3 of the Gold Coast Light Rail this year. Cross River Rail will create 7,700 jobs over its lifetime. Minister Bailey and I will have some more good news on that front, early next week I think. We are focused on improving coastal shipping and creating new maritime jobs. Cycleways, rail trails and boating infrastructure are being constructed right around our state.

As we continue to manage the health impacts of the pandemic, we can now get on with the job of building an even better Queensland and along the way supporting and creating jobs for Queenslanders. The start of the rollout of the vaccine this week is another positive step towards life returning to normal. Our record spend on infrastructure will make sure we are ready for the opportunities which lie ahead.

Exports

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.38 am): Despite tough economic challenges around the world due to the global pandemic, I would like to update the House on how Queensland export businesses are excelling during these testing trade times and how the Queensland government is assisting them. While we are focused on our economic recovery because of our strong health response, there are many places around the world that are still in the grips of this health crisis and dealing with unimaginable daily death tolls. COVID has also led to much weaker international trade and investment activity, devastating to economies and jobs.

In these unprecedented and difficult times, new and emerging Queensland exporters, including many from regional centres, have been able to achieve global trade and investment outcomes of almost \$600 million between July and December 2020. That figure includes \$470 million investment in renewable energy with deals on two solar farms in regional Queensland including Rodds Bay Solar Farm in Central Queensland and Columboola Solar Farm on the Western Downs.


There was also the landmark partnership between Queensland government owned generator Stanwell and Japanese energy company Iwatani Corporation which will see planning progress on a new renewable hydrogen export facility in Gladstone; a \$3 million deal done for SSS Strawberries in the Wide Bay to expand operations and exports; \$20 million in exports of specialised mining equipment to Latin America; and \$20 million in exports of health tech services to Japan—just to name a few.

As the pandemic continues, our dedicated global business agency, TIQ, continues to assist Queensland companies to respond to the challenges. For example, 20 Queensland companies in the food and beverage, health and functional food and skincare sectors, including Tamborine Mountain Distillery, were recently able to market their products directly to millions of Chinese consumers during the Lunar New Year on WeChat as part of an intensive ecommerce project run by TIQ.

Six Queensland companies including Native Beeings, which make a bee propolis product that has benefits for health and skin, have been selected to participate in a Korea ecommerce pilot program run by TIQ and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. I am also proud to announce the next round of the Go Global Export Program, which has already helped 36 businesses to go global. One of those businesses is Sunshine Coast based business Process Plants International, which signed a \$6 million deal with an international gold mining company to manufacture a new type of valve—the company's first venture into valve manufacturing. Funding of \$500,000 in this next round will help Queensland businesses take their products to the world.

I am proud of our export-ready Queensland businesses that are still out there innovating and giving it a go. I am proud that we are able to be right there beside them helping along the way.

Regional Queensland, Job Creation

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning) (9.41 am): The Palaszczuk government is backing jobs in our regions and our regional economies. Through our \$175 million Jobs and Regional Growth Fund, we are supporting projects that are creating jobs in regional Queensland.

With assistance from the fund, Marciano Table Grapes will cultivate at least 80 hectares of grapes along the Flinders River at Hughenden, creating 35 new full-time jobs by 2025. There has already been strong interest from Coles, Aldi and local markets to buy locally grown, early season grapes instead of importing them from California. This means a longer shelf life and lower quarantine risk. This \$10 million project is a huge vote of confidence in the Flinders region and a massive boost to the local economy.


In Clermont we have honoured our \$1 million commitment to revitalise the showground and saleyards as part of the Year of Outback Tourism celebrations. The upgrades are complete and include electrical, water and IT upgrades, a full site master plan, construction of 60 individual horse stables, six sets of spelling yards and a designated livestock crossing. All up, this important local piece of infrastructure created 21 jobs during construction. These upgrades are part of a 20-year master plan for the saleyards which is designed to keep this facility at the forefront of the industry.

Soon Longreach will be able to process and sell more premium branded beef out of an expanded and modernised Western Queensland Livestock Exchange. AAM Investment Group is undertaking a four-stage redevelopment of the facilities under a 30-year lease from Longreach Regional Council. The fund is supporting the \$3.2 million second stage that will include new cattle weighing infrastructure and drafting facilities, creating seven construction jobs. The redevelopment will enable the throughput of 100,000 head of cattle per year by 2026 and offer best practice facilities and services that will become a significant economic driver throughout the Longreach region.

The fund will assist Western Meat Exporters to expand its Charleville facility which will create 60 new jobs and will see its production grow exponentially. Western Meat Exporters is already Queensland's largest commercial-scale sheep and goat abattoir and Charleville's biggest private employer. This \$8.2 million expansion will increase the number of sheep being processed from 100,000 a year up to 460,000 a year. The abattoir is developing a partnership with Charleville State High School to increase direct engagement with high school students through a formal work experience and traineeship program.

This is all part of our plan to create jobs in our regions. I look forward to updating the House on further outcomes from the Jobs and Regional Growth Fund.

Housing

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (9.44 am): Queensland's housing market is demonstrating that it is one of the leading lights in terms of our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The housing market is bouncing back, with a 2.4 per cent rebound in dwelling investment in the September 2020 quarter. Renovation activity also surged in the September quarter, surging 7.3 per cent, as Queenslanders took the opportunity to upgrade their existing homes.

Yesterday the Premier highlighted the magnetic appeal Queensland holds, drawing the vast majority of net interstate migration from across Australia. Combined with the Palaszczuk government's administration of the HomeBuilder program, our \$15,000 First Home Owners' Grant and our \$5,000 regional building boost, we have created an environment that boosts the outlook for dwelling investment, particularly for detached houses.

The fact that Queensland is outperforming New South Wales on HomeBuilder grants is testament to that confidence. According to the latest ABS data, dwelling approvals in Queensland rose 24 per cent in one month alone—December 2020—to be 83.3 per cent higher over the year. New house approvals are now more than 70 per cent higher than their pre-pandemic level in March. This rebound in approvals has been seen in regional Queensland, with Central Queensland, Townsville, Cairns and Toowoomba all experiencing strong growth in the value of building approvals.


In addition, the value of loan commitments for dwellings in Queensland rose 6.3 per cent in December 2020, to be 44.6 per cent higher over the year. Both owner-occupier finance and investor finance commitments have rebounded strongly from the downturn. The value of new loan commitments to owner-occupiers has risen 51.6 per cent above their pre-pandemic level of March 2020, to be at their highest level on record. This strength has been distributed across first home buyers and non-first home buyers.

Most importantly, the strength in these indicators has started to flow through to construction activity—and that means more jobs. The value of residential construction work in the pipeline in Queensland rose by almost a quarter of a billion dollars—\$227 million—to \$6.6 billion in the September 2020 quarter, to be 1.6 per cent higher than a year earlier. All these signs point to renewed activity in Queensland's housing market, and that means more jobs for Queenslanders. This activity has also

flowed through to renewed buyer confidence. The median house price in Brisbane is 4.9 per cent higher over the year, while in regional Queensland the median house price has surged by 8.2 per cent over the year.

The COVID-19 pandemic presents one of the biggest challenges we will ever face as a state. The Queensland government has been committed to keeping Queenslanders safe and making sure our economy recovers quickly and strongly. Together, our strong employment growth and the rebound in our housing market highlight the strength of the state's economic recovery. The Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to delivering our economic recovery plan to drive Queensland's economic recovery, to rebuild confidence and to create more Queensland jobs.

Coronavirus, Vaccine

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.47 am): Last night the Queensland Chief Health Officer was advised by the Commonwealth that an incident had occurred at an aged-care facility in Queensland. I subsequently contacted the Commonwealth health minister, Greg Hunt, and was advised that two aged-care residents in the Holy Spirit care centre at Carseldine on Brisbane's north side received overdoses of the Pfizer vaccine under the Commonwealth's vaccine rollout.


On receiving this information, Queensland Health immediately responded to ensure immediate steps were taken to ensure the two residents—an 88-year-old male and a 94-year-old female—were being properly assessed and monitored. The executive director of medical services at Metro North Hospital and Health Service was immediately contacted and worked with the aged-care facility to check on the welfare of both patients. The patients continue to be monitored, and I am advised both patients are not showing any adverse reactions to the vaccine at this stage. We are advised by the Commonwealth that the families of the residents were informed yesterday and we are grateful that the patients are not showing any adverse reactions at this time, but we will continue to monitor them.

Queensland is seeking more details from the Commonwealth about this very serious incident. The Commonwealth authorities have commenced an investigation into the events overnight. The Commonwealth has already committed to sharing the findings of this investigation with the Queensland government—and we welcome this.

We are seeking assurances from the Commonwealth around the rigour of the training and the strength and oversight of the safety systems in the rollout of the vaccine across residential aged care in Queensland. What these incidents highlight is the importance of full transparency and sharing information from the Commonwealth government about the rollout across the aged-care sector and the broader rollout of the vaccine.

In relation to our rollout across Queensland's six hubs, I can update the House that in the first two days of the rollout at the Gold Coast University Hospital 527 frontline workers have received their first vaccination. The Princess Alexandra Hospital vaccination hub also comes online today in a further boost for our frontline defence against COVID. Cairns, RBWH, the Sunshine Coast and Townsville are set to be operational by the end of next week. Queenslanders can be assured that Queensland will continue to follow the advice of the Chief Health Officer during the vaccine rollout. Safety will always be our No. 1 priority, as it has always been throughout the course of the pandemic.

Schools, Skills Training; School Infrastructure

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.50 am): The Palaszczuk government is investing in Queensland's recovery and future, and that means the workers we need for our high-skill industries of the future. Our \$45 million Local Jobs Local Schools plan will support Queensland's recovery with infrastructure jobs as we upgrade 26 trade training centres around the state. This plan will also train and develop the skilled workers that local businesses and industries need to grow their enterprises.


I met some of the students already benefiting from trade training in schools at Rheinmetall's Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence at Redbank. These Glenala State High School students are being trained for jobs in the defence vehicle manufacturing industry. We are providing \$2.25 million to upgrade their trade skills school centre. This is all part of our massive education investment, which is creating local jobs and opportunities for local businesses.

The Palaszczuk government's recent budget provides a record \$1.9 billion spend on school infrastructure, including: the delivery of 50 new classroom buildings, supporting 1,300 jobs; and \$235 million for 26 new halls and performing arts centres, supporting 775 jobs—all of which are so

important as Queensland recovers from COVID. There is \$100 million for 172 refurbishment and renewal projects in schools, including upgrades to school learning and support spaces and security and parking infrastructure. For example, this will provide: \$160,000 to improve equitable access at Bowen State High School in Burdekin; \$750,000 to replace the amenities block at Cairns West State School in Cairns; and \$200,000 for a water reticulation upgrade at Montville State School in Glass House. We are also investing a total of \$350 million over three years for new infrastructure in Catholic and Independent schools. This includes an extra \$45 million as per our election commitment, supporting projects including more than half a million dollars to design and build a bus pick-up and set-down area at Groves Christian College at Kingston and \$1.1 million for works at Holy Spirit College at Fitzgibbon in Sandgate.

All of this means local jobs for young Queenslanders like Sean Burr, an apprentice with FKG Group. I met Sean last month at the new Baringa State Secondary College with the Premier and member for Caloundra, and he was so thrilled to meet some of the students enrolled in the new school he helped to build—but not quite as excited as the new students who were attending the school. This Labor government's investment in schools infrastructure is creating jobs for Queensland workers like Sean right now and preparing our young people with skills for the jobs of the future.

Road and Transport Infrastructure


 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.53 am): Last year Queenslanders backed the Palaszczuk Labor government's plan for economic recovery. They backed a \$56 billion infrastructure plan to steer our state and create hundreds and thousands of long-term, stable jobs. They did not back secret plans to cut regional road funding or highway hoaxes. As 2021 ramps up people right across Queensland are turning up to job sites thanks to the start of a record \$26.9 billion road and transport spend by this government.

While other nations remain at a standstill, Queensland's construction industry is booming, making the Sunshine State the place of choice. Our fifth record investment in roads and transport is creating opportunities in existing and even new industries with a pipeline of 23,600 jobs. If you hop in a car, Mr Speaker, you will see an army of high-vis out in force from traffic controllers and bitumen rollers to surveyors, engineers and graders. You will see trucks using our upgraded freight rails carrying world-class beef, agriculture and manufacturing exports to ports along our coastal spine. From sealing our western roads and investing in regional ports, to getting started on the second M1 and building on the 33 Bruce Highway upgrades underway right now, there is no shortage of high-vis across the Sunshine State.

In 2021 heavy construction work will start on: \$1.5 billion second M1; \$662 million Bruce Highway six-laning from Caboolture to the Sunshine Coast, where early works are already clear; \$230 million Townsville Ring Road stage 5; and 87 jointly funded road safety projects right across the state worth \$300 million, just to name a few. They will join existing projects that are ramping up, including: \$5.4 billion Cross River Rail; \$1 billion M1 upgrade on the southern Gold Coast; \$750 million upgrade at the Gateway merge near the Minister for Energy's area; \$1 billion Gympie bypass; \$480 million Bruce Highway upgrade south of Cairns, which I know is close to your heart, Mr Speaker; and the continuation of the half a billion dollar pipeline to upgrade our north-west supply chain.

As the Premier pointed out, regional Queensland will be the biggest focus, with 66 per cent of our programs outside of Brisbane. Whether that is the \$103 million Bruce Highway Salt Water Creek Bridge upgrade in Maryborough, the \$35 million Lawrie Street upgrade in Gracemere or the \$120 million Mackay northern access upgrade, we will create 16,180 regional jobs. Queenslanders can be proud of their fellow Queenslanders, who are hard at work building a transformational road and transport system. The Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to boosting our thriving economy as part of our economic plan for recovery with infrastructure, projects and jobs from Tugun to the Torres Strait, from Mount Isa to Maryborough, and from Birdsville to Brisbane.

Electricity Prices; Renewable Energy

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (9.56 am): The Palaszczuk government is delivering cleaner, cheaper electricity for Queenslanders right across the state. Our policies have delivered Queenslanders the lowest average wholesale electricity prices in the National Electricity Market for the past three years. I can inform the House that Queenslanders will continue to enjoy the benefits, with power prices now forecast to reduce 14 per cent over the coming three years.

Contributing to these power price trends is the fact that this government's investment and policy framework have our renewable sector booming in Queensland. Since 2015 the Palaszczuk government has backed 44 large-scale renewable energy projects in Queensland. These projects have generated \$8.5 billion in investment for Queensland, supporting 7,000 jobs in construction alone and hundreds of thousands more jobs in industries that rely on affordable energy. It is not just big business that is investing in renewables: Queensland households are getting on board with renewables too. Queenslanders have long recognised that renewable energy will reduce their cost of electricity. In fact, more than one in three Queensland households now boasts rooftop solar—exceeding every other state in the nation—and are installing PV panels on their homes faster than any other nation on earth.


Today I am pleased to announce new research which reveals that Queensland boasts five of the top 10 solar postcodes in Australia. Postcode 4670 in Bundaberg is the first in Queensland and first in Australia with over 15,700 rooftop solar systems with a combined capacity of 71,000 kilowatts; postcode 4655 in Hervey Bay is second in Queensland and third in the nation with nearly 15,000 rooftop solar systems; postcode 4551 in Caloundra is third in Queensland and fourth in Australia with over 13,000 rooftop systems; postcode 4350 in Townsville—

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr de BRENNI: Toowoomba, sorry. I was just checking that the members for Toowoomba are watching. Postcode 4350 in Toowoomba is fourth in Queensland and seventh in Australia; and postcode 4740 in Mackay is fifth in Queensland and 10th in Australia, rounding it out with over 10,000 rooftop solar systems with a combined capacity of over 61,000 kilowatts.

This year the Palaszczuk government will continue to deliver renewable projects in solar, wind and hydrogen as well as renewable storage, including looking at our options around batteries and pumped hydro. The Palaszczuk government will continue to work with Queenslanders to collectively ensure that we pull the right levers to grow the Queensland economy and deliver jobs through cheaper, cleaner energy.

Journalists, Shield Laws; Voluntary Assisted Dying

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.00 am): There has been a lot of media attention this week about shield laws, as there should be, because these are the laws that allow journalists to claim legal privilege to protect confidential sources. We made a commitment to consult on these complex laws and it is crucial we get this right. Shield laws are important to the media but they are also incredibly important to the Queensland public. They are critical in protecting Queenslanders. We know journalists should not be going to jail for doing their job, and Queenslanders need to be protected if they come forward with important information.

We have started consulting with the media, legal experts and key stakeholders, including the Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance, who I will be meeting with later today. My department will review Queensland case law and how relevant protections operate in other Australian jurisdictions to create the best possible legal framework for Queensland.

Today I have another fantastic update for Queenslanders. I would like to table the Queensland Law Reform Commission's *A legal framework for voluntary assisted dying: review update*.

Tabled paper: Queensland Law Reform Commission: A legal framework for voluntary assisted dying—Review update, February 2021 [178].

In doing so, I thank Justice Applegarth and the Queensland Law Reform Commission for their diligent work to date. The Palaszczuk government made a commitment to Queenslanders that we will legislate this extremely complex and deeply personal issue, and we are getting on with the job. This review update is the first step in delivering this important reform for Queensland and in ensuring our community has a choice on voluntary assisted dying and end-of-life decisions. The QLRC's review update has included the close examination of the 124 submissions received from a wide variety of stakeholders, including Queenslanders who are experiencing suffering close to their end of life or who have experienced witnessing it in their family members.


The QLRC's task is not to consider whether Queensland should have voluntary assisted dying legislation but to recommend 'the best legal framework' here in Queensland. To this end, the review update describes how the QLRC has been focused on a model for voluntary assisted dying that would be suited to Queensland's unique conditions, including its geography, population diversity, access to health practitioners and public and private hospital systems, as well as the fact that many

Queenslanders live in remote parts of our great state. The review update identifies the principles that will underpin the recommended legislation but notes that work is ongoing to develop a comprehensive legislative framework.

I understand that this is a deeply personal issue for so many Queenslanders and it is something I am determined to see happen. I believe everyone should have choices about how they end their life and have dignity in death. While the inquiry time was extended, there will be a shorter implementation period of 15 months to ensure there is no delay in Queenslanders being able to have a choice on voluntary assisted dying and end-of-life decisions.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, just a reminder to ensure your mobile phones are switched off. A ping very easily turns into a ring and it cascades from there.

Social and Affordable Housing

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algerie—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (10.03 am): The Palaszczuk government's \$1.6 billion 10-year Housing Construction Jobs Program is delivering new homes for Queenslanders in need and creating jobs right across the state. We have committed to building more than 5,500 social and affordable homes and we are on track to meeting our five-year target. This is not only addressing our state's housing need but also creating and supporting jobs. Under our Housing Strategy, contracts have been awarded for more than 2,000 new social housing homes. Of these, 1,305 new homes have already been completed in communities across Queensland, and our projects have supported more than 2,000 full-time equivalent jobs in the construction industry.


Social housing is not just about providing someone in need with a roof over their head; it is also about matching Queenslanders with housing that addresses their unique needs. Just last week, I met Wendy who lived in the same three-bedroom public housing residence for almost three decades where she raised her family. She has now downsized to Marblewood Apartments, which is a new housing complex for people aged over 55 in the electorate of Logan.

Mr Power: That is great.

Ms ENOCH: I know the member for Logan is very supportive of that. This housing complex is for people aged over 55 who are currently in public housing in Logan. Wendy said she was happy to move into Marblewood so that another family could have the opportunity to move into her old home and use that space to raise their family. On top of that, her neighbour of 19 years has also moved to Marblewood and now they live one floor apart instead of next door to each other and are able to maintain that incredibly important social support. The Palaszczuk government contributed over \$8 million to the development of these new units, and more than 410 jobs were supported during construction. I was delighted to be there last week to officially open the new complex, alongside the member for Logan, and affirm the government's support for these important social housing projects.

Tenants are also moving into new homes in Woolloongabba. Our government's \$5.5 million investment, in partnership with the Brisbane Housing Company, helped complete the new complex, which includes 32 new, modern self-contained homes. The Palaszczuk government's ongoing commitment to increasing social housing and supporting construction jobs plays a vital role in our state's economic recovery, and we will continue to deliver on our commitment to the people of Queensland.

Gas Industry

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.05 am): The Palaszczuk government continues to invest in Queensland's gas sector to support regional Queensland's economy and jobs. I am pleased to inform the House that I recently appointed first-time explorer AusGasCo as preferred tenderer for two new blocks of highly prospective land near Injune. They have since moved to the next stage of exploration and have been given authority to prospect at both areas. The opportunity to explore this area was released last year as part of the Palaszczuk government's economic plan for recovery and represents yet another new opportunity to unlock more jobs and the economic benefits that come with it.


Last year alone the Palaszczuk government released a total of 8,205 square kilometres for gas exploration to maintain a pipeline of future resources projects, and we are already starting to see the results. Just last week, Senex Energy reached an incredible milestone at its Atlas natural gas processing facility in the Surat Basin by reaching its nameplate production of 32 terajoules a day—

ahead of schedule. Senex has announced it is now supplying Queensland gas users with 10 per cent of their natural gas requirements, which is vital for creating and supporting jobs in the manufacturing industry.

One of the key reasons this government is supportive of the resources sector is because we recognise the benefits that flow to regional communities—regional communities like mine. That is why it is vital that we continue to attract new projects to those regions. I saw this firsthand when I visited Roma, where gas companies Origin and Santos continue to invest in the local communities they work in. Both Origin and Santos are leaders in our gas industry, and to see their commitment to regional Queensland is testament to the confidence investors have in our state. It was great to join Origin as they unveiled their refurbished Roma office. During the construction alone, multiple local contractors were engaged to undertake this refurbishment. I am advised that Origin had spent \$34.6 million directly with 112 contractors in the Roma region in 2020, which resulted in another \$24.5 million of indirect spending injected into the local economy.

To secure our resources industry for the future, this government will deliver a Resources Industry Development Plan. This plan will capitalise on opportunities to unlock more resources and work with communities like Roma to maximise the economic and social benefits the resources sector can bring to all of us. The Palaszczuk government continues to support jobs. We are building on our existing strengths in key industries like resources, we are growing our regions by attracting investment, and we are looking to the future by investing in infrastructure and planning.

Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program


 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (10.08 am): It gives me great pleasure to update the House on the highly successful Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program. To begin, I want to acknowledge the First Nation peoples, communities and organisations, who advocated over many decades for this program that was first established in 2007. Mr Speaker, as you say each morning, we are very lucky to live in a country where we have two of the oldest continuing living cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and we can all benefit from listening and learning from those whose lands, winds and waters we all now share. I want to particularly acknowledge the former minister for environment and science, who championed this initiative and secured additional funding. I know that this is a program that is incredibly close to her heart.

This program has grown and delivered important environmental and economic results for the benefit of all Queenslanders. I am very pleased to be a part of a government that is increasing the Indigenous ranger numbers to 200 over the next three years. That is double the current program. That means new jobs while supporting the critical role of First Nation people in Queensland's environment and cultural heritage.

Rangers work tirelessly across important initiatives from conservation efforts to protect species like the marine turtle, the dugong, the migratory shorebird and the golden-shouldered parrot; biodiversity studies; weed and pest management; cultural site protection; and youth engagement with on-country camps, on-job traineeships and visits to local schools.

Today, I am very pleased to announce that we are opening applications for the first round of 50 new rangers. That is 50 new jobs to be delivered this year. I encourage all members to engage with their local communities to bring forward applications. Of course, more information on how to apply, including the guidelines and application forms, is available on the Department of Environment and Science's website. I look forward to updating the House further on this important initiative.

Manufacturing Industry

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.10 am): The Palaszczuk government understands the critical role that Queensland's manufacturers are playing as we deliver Queensland's economic plan to recover from the global COVID-19 pandemic. On this side of the House, we have always understood just how important it is to support local manufacturers to make it for Queensland. Through initiatives like our \$13.5 million Manufacturing Hubs Grant Program, we are strengthening the state's manufacturers and making a better future for all Queenslanders. To date, we have invested more than \$6.8 million in 25 companies to adopt advanced manufacturing technology and processes to help create 142 jobs in regional Queensland over the five years the program has been running. Through our Gladstone manufacturing hub we have invested almost \$1.7 million for eight companies, supporting the generation of 38 new jobs.

During my time as Minister for Manufacturing I have had the opportunity to visit grant recipients to see firsthand the positive impact this support is having on businesses and meet the people who are actually filling the jobs it is creating. For example, Mecha Engineering received \$243,605 to undertake a rapid reverse-engineering project which will allow multiple organisations within the region to collaborate and reverse-engineer parts on a large scale. I recently visited Mecha's facility, and our funding support has given the company the chance to leap into technological areas that were not thought possible in early 2020. Mecha's new state-of-the-art equipment will include handheld and in situ 3D laser scanners, a 3D printer for prototyping, a holographic wall for design and display, and software to integrate and operate the equipment. The new rapid reverse-engineering system will enable Mecha to manufacture plant and equipment spares locally and create jobs for five new workers and three new apprentices in Gladstone.

Berg Engineering received \$161,000 to purchase advanced line-boring equipment that will provide higher accuracy and finer cuts. With this funding, Berg Engineering can take its line-boring capability to the next level and seek to enter new markets such as defence, energy and mining, providing huge growth opportunities for the business.

Global Manufacturing Group was awarded \$257,000 and will boost its capability and international competitiveness with upgraded equipment. The company will now be able to bid on large local and national projects. We are also delivering similar positive outcomes for regional businesses in our other existing hubs in Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton.

The Palaszczuk government will always support regional manufacturers to help them grow, stimulate regional economies and create good, long-term jobs for regional Queenslanders under this Palaszczuk government.

MOTION

Referral to Transport and Resources Committee



Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.13 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. That the Transport and Resources Committee inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly on:
 - (a) options to reduce or prevent vehicles being used illegally or dangerously on Queensland roads, including vehicle engine immobilisation technology, non-technology options, operational considerations or other measures;
 - (b) lessons learned from other jurisdictions, particularly regarding the implementation of vehicle engine immobilisation technology to the existing vehicle fleet;
 - (c) the Commonwealth's role in relation to vehicle standards and safety, and measures the Commonwealth could take, including requiring all new vehicles to be fitted with remote engine immobilisation technology;
 - (d) the effectiveness of any proposed measures in improving road safety, preventing crime and assisting police in operational matters;
 - (e) a recommended framework for legislative, policy and operational implementation of any proposed measures;
 - (f) the benefit to and role of insurers in supporting any recommended measures;
 - (g) options to improve vehicle standards and safety in Queensland, including in relation to the:
 - (i) current Australian vehicle design rules;
 - (ii) inspection regime for registered vehicles;
 - (iii) pre-sale certification scheme, including measures to reduce fraud and improve consumer safety;
 - (iv) management of written-off vehicles and 're-birthing';
 - (v) after-market vehicle modification framework, including achieving consistency to ensure best alignment with other Australian jurisdictions; and
2. That the committee report to the Legislative Assembly within six months.

In speaking briefly to the motion, this is something for which Ian Leavers from the Queensland Police Union has been advocating for some time and I am personally a very strong supporter of it as well. This government has led the charge at ministerial council meetings of federal and state lawmakers in Canberra on this topic. We put remote vehicle immobilisers on the national agenda. This inquiry now pushes consideration of this possibility to the next level. It is part of our plan to address youth crime from every angle: better technology, more resources, tougher laws.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Estimates Process, Referral to Committee of the Legislative Assembly



Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (10.16 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House directs the Committee of the Legislative Assembly to:

1. inquire into:
 - (a) the Legislative Assembly's function to scrutinise the government's financial proposals and expenditure;
 - (b) the transparency, efficiency and efficacy of the portfolio committee estimates process; and
 - (c) whether the Legislative Assembly's scrutiny of government's financial proposals and its portfolio committee estimates process benchmarks well against other parliaments in Australia, New Zealand and other comparable democratic systems to ensure that the Legislative Assembly's scrutiny of financial proposals and expenditure is modern and appropriate to needs.
2. The committee should specifically consider measures such as:
 - (a) increasing the time available for questioning to ensure an appropriate examination of both past and future expenditure can occur;

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my right will cease your interjections.

Mr Power interjected.

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

Ms SIMPSON: I continue—

- (b) appointing the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, an opposition or crossbench member to chair the committees to ensure bipartisan oversight;
 - (c) broadening the hearing program to avoid artificially limiting time for certain portfolios;
 - (d) increasing the ranks of officials who may be directly questioned by the committee; and
 - (e) any other matter the committee considers necessary.
3. The committee is to report to the Legislative Assembly with any recommended enhancements by 1 May 2021.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will conclude today at 11.18 am.

Premier and Minister for Trade, Email Account



Mr CRISAFULLI (10.18 am): My question is to the Premier. Did the Premier use her stacia1 @bigpond.com account to conduct government business?

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Pine Rivers, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Let me say categorically that the emails in question have been through the RTI process and they have been retained.

Premier and Minister for Trade, Email Account

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. Estimates hearings were told that around 20 emails were sent between the mangocube email account and the Premier's stacia1 account, some of which were public records. Does the Premier deny using a private email account to conduct government business?

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is the same question. Let me say it again: the emails have been through the RTI process and they have been retained.

Sunshine Coast, Infrastructure

Mr HUNT: My question is of the Premier and Minister for Trade. Will the Premier update the House on the government's commitment to delivering new job-creating infrastructure on the Sunshine Coast?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Caloundra for the question. Queenslanders are interested in two things. The rollout of the vaccine is the No. 1 issue of concern to Queenslanders. The No. 2 issue is jobs. They are the two central issues for the Queensland public. I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition and those opposite have a good, hard look at themselves and start talking to members of the community. They will tell them categorically what they are interested in.

It is only the Palaszczuk Labor government that is delivering for the Sunshine Coast. Let me go through some of the great things we are delivering on the Sunshine Coast. The Minister for Education and I joined the member for Caloundra to open a brand new high school in Baringa. It was delivered by the Palaszczuk government. Not only that, we also delivered and opened a local primary school. There are two other new schools: Palmview State Primary School and Palmview State Special School. In total, hundreds of millions of dollars are coming into the area. It gets better. We are building another primary school. What does that mean? It means jobs, jobs and more jobs for Queenslanders, especially people living on the Sunshine Coast.

But wait, there is more. We are building a \$3.2 million extension to the hall at Caloundra State School, new classrooms at Mooloolaba State School and the \$35 million Bells Creek Arterial Road project. Of course, we have the business case happening on the Mooloolah River interchange upgrade—something I am very interested in. We will put that case to the federal government to see if we can get some funding. There is \$8.3 million for the Nambour Police Station, \$2.7 million for the Coolool Police Station replacement project, a \$5.5 million ambulance station at Caloundra South and money for the Mooloolaba Foreshore Revitalisation Project. But there is a missing piece: the stadium. We are putting in \$20 million. The federal government seems to be missing in action. I notice the mayor is asking, 'Where is the \$20 million from the federal government?' It is vital that that project gets upgraded. In fact, I think it is in the Kawana electorate; am I wrong?

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Oh, that is right. I put in the \$20 million.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Where are your mates in Canberra?

(Time expired)

Premier and Minister for Trade, Email Account

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to the Premier. I table an email apparently sent to stacia1 @bigpond.com by Minister Bailey.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Maryborough, you are warned under the standing orders. Members, I have said consistently that questions are to be heard in silence. I cautioned the House yesterday about the unparliamentary nature of moans, groans and any other approach that people wish to take. Can you please start your question again, Deputy Leader of the Opposition?

Mr JANETZKI: I table an email apparently sent to stacia1 @bigpond.com by Minister Bailey.

Tabled paper: Email, dated 22 April 2015, from Mr Mark Bailey to stacia1 @bigpond.com, titled 'Paul Simshauser Background' [179].

Did the Premier direct Minister Bailey to send it to her private stacia1 BigPond account?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The answer is no.

Skills and Training

Mr BROWN: My question is of the Premier and Minister for Trade. Will the Premier update the House on the government's plan to ensure Queenslanders have the skills and training they need for the jobs of the future?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Capalaba for the question. He is interested in jobs. Every member on this side of the House is interested in jobs for Queenslanders. I know that the Leader of the Opposition is only interested in one job, that is, my job. Perhaps he should focus on getting out there and listening to Queenslanders or on talking to the branches about perhaps a review of what went wrong at the most recent state election, how they can unite their team or whether they should split. Should they become the National Party and the Liberal Party? I would support that. I think that is a good

idea. He does not want to know about what went wrong or what they could do better; he is just talking it up big. In fact, it sounds like someone I used to know. It very much echoes the words of—dare I say his name?—Campbell Newman. In fact, if you shut your eyes it sounds exactly the same.

I am here to talk about delivering for Capalaba. We will be upgrading the Alexandra Hills TAFE with \$10 million. It will be open soon. I will be there with the member for Capalaba opening our investment in TAFE. We see investment in TAFE, training and skills as important for Queensland's economic recovery. We know that in the past those opposite wanted to sell off TAFE and decimate TAFE. I can remember those rallies to save our TAFE facilities. We campaigned across the state in relation to that. We will continue to invest.

It is about time we refocused on our Queensland economic recovery plan—a strong plan to lead Queensland's recovery into the future. There is nothing more important than making sure—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my left, the level of interjection is too high. I am having difficulty hearing some of the Premier's contribution.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is why we will have free TAFE and free apprenticeships to 37,000 young Queenslanders. We are partnering with the federal government to deliver the \$200 million JobTrainer program to provide cheaper and in some cases free courses. Today I can confirm that more than 21,000 Queenslanders have already enrolled in training courses under the JobTrainer scheme. That is fantastic news. At the Alexandra Hills TAFE in the member for Capalaba's electorate, people can study a Certificate I in construction for free. In Cairns, for the maritime industry, people can get a Certificate II in maritime operations. It is also free.

(Time expired)

Premier and Minister for Trade, Email Account

Mr MINNIKIN: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Was the email tabled earlier by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition provided to the CCC during its mangocube investigation?

Mr BAILEY: All of these matters in relation to emails were thoroughly canvassed by the CCC two terms ago—all of them. They were thoroughly looked at by the independent watchdog. This matter was closed in 2017. Everything was thoroughly canvassed by the independent watchdog.

Toowoomba, Infrastructure

Mr MADDEN: My question is of the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on what the government is doing to support jobs and economic recovery in the Toowoomba region as well as the proposal for a quarantine facility in the region? Is he aware of any alternative approaches?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Ipswich West for his question. I know how passionate he is about supporting regional economies, particularly from Ipswich and west to Toowoomba. The Treasurer and I were in Toowoomba recently at Wellcamp Airport helping to start construction on the new Wellcamp trade distribution centre. The government is supporting that important project—that new regional trade hub—with a \$10 million contribution. It will create 170 jobs as well as additional jobs in agriculture and freight. We congratulate John Wagner and the Wagner family. We support their vision for the Wellcamp Airport and for job creation in that region.

We are also partnering with the Wagners to develop a proposal for a national quarantine centre at the Wellcamp Airport. All members will be aware that under the Constitution quarantine should be a responsibility of the Commonwealth, but we know that the states and territories stepped in and stepped up. Our hotel quarantine has been very effective at keeping Queenslanders and Australians safe, but recent cases of transmission out of hotel quarantine in Queensland and other states has highlighted the need for purpose-built facilities. The national quarantine centre proposed for Wellcamp Airport would allow us to accommodate up to 1,000 returning Australians currently stranded overseas. It would also include accommodation for up to 300 staff. Travellers could be securely and safely transferred from incoming flights within the airport precinct to the quarantine facility.

Again we see the states, in particular Queensland, stepping up where the Commonwealth has failed, yet the Commonwealth continues to hold New South Wales up as some kind of supposed gold standard. Who could forget Prime Minister Morrison's crocodile tears over New South Wales residents' inability to attend funerals or come to our hospitals despite New South Wales owing us \$20 million for

hospital treatments already? Now I am outraged to advise the House that the Prime Minister has told New South Wales it can bill Queensland for its hotel quarantine. I am outraged to table an invoice from the New South Wales government for \$30 million to pay for its hotel quarantine.

Tabled paper: Tax invoice, dated 17 February 2021, from New South Wales Government Treasury to Queensland Treasury, regarding quarantine costs for interstate residents [180].

Scott Morrison is like a school bully telling us we have to give our lunch money to New South Wales. I can advise the House that we will not be paying that bill, not while the Commonwealth refuses to endorse our plan for a national quarantine centre.

(Time expired)

Premier and Minister for Trade, Email Account

Mr WEIR: My question is to the Minister for Transport. Why did the minister send the tabled email regarding the appointment of a director-general to the Premier's private stacia1 email account instead of her government email account?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the honourable member for his question. This matter has been thoroughly canvassed and I refer him to my previous answer: two terms ago in 2017 this matter was looked at by the independent watchdog and thoroughly canvassed and closed.

Economic Recovery Strategy

Ms BUSH: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Investment. Will the Treasurer update the House on the Palaszczuk government's approach to steering Queensland's path to economic recovery from COVID-19, and is the Treasurer aware of any alternative strategies?

Mr DICK: I thank the new member for Cooper for her strong support for Queensland's economic recovery plan, because she knows that across the length and breadth of Queensland Queenslanders look to our government—they look to Labor—to help them get through not only the health response to COVID-19 but the economic response as well.

I became the Treasurer in May last year and a couple of months later in July I made it clear that our government would borrow. We would borrow to make sure Queenslanders were supported and protected through the worst pandemic in a century, and I made that clear, just as every other government around the world has borrowed. Why? Because when the private sector falls down the public sector must stand up. We must reach out to help those businesses, individuals, families and industries that are suffering because of the necessary restrictions that had to be put in place because of the pandemic.

That is not just my choice: that is the choice and the advice of the Prime Minister; the federal Treasurer, Josh Frydenberg; the Governor of the Reserve Bank; the secretary of the federal Treasury; the International Monetary Fund; and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. If you do not borrow to fund deficits then people suffer, and of course the cost of not borrowing to rebuild would be far greater, just as the cost of not managing the pandemic itself in a cautious and prudent manner has proven far more costly for nations like the United Kingdom and the United States.

Let us look to the United Kingdom. It is not reopening cafes and restaurants until April at the earliest while everyone in this chamber and five million Queenslanders can go about their business going to restaurants and cafes because of the strong health response led by our Premier. We are borrowing less than New South Wales and Victoria and, unlike those states, we have not had our credit rating downgraded and that is because of the prudent fiscal management by Labor.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr DICK: You would have thought that the last person to interject in this parliament would be the member for Everton after having his economic credibility and that of the LNP absolutely shredded during the election—the most farcical, ridiculous costings in recent history, standing up—

Ms Grace: Embarrassing!

Mr DICK: It was; I take the interjection. It was incredibly embarrassing. On Sunday there was the Leader of the Opposition saying, 'We want you to spend more and recover less revenue. We want you to cut revenue in Queensland.' If you do not want to borrow and you want to take revenue down and you do not want to spend, that leaves you one option—cutting, sacking and selling. Those opposite have done nothing and they have forgotten nothing and their priority now is emails that are six years old—two elections ago. That is their priority, and that is the difference between the LNP and Labor.

Premier and Minister for Trade, Email Account

Mr MANDER: My question is to the Premier. Has the Premier forwarded all of her private stacia1 emails containing government business to the State Archivist to comply with the Public Records Act?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I have said in this House previously, and I will say it again: the emails have been through the RTI process and they have been retained.

Health Services

Ms HOWARD: My question is to the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. Will the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is investing in health services for the future, including in the community of Ipswich?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Ipswich for her question. I know how dedicated she is not only to her own community but also to ensuring that we have healthcare services that are delivering high-quality health care right across this great state and into the future. The Palaszczuk government understands the importance of investing in our frontline services, and that is exactly what we have been doing for the last six years. We have rebuilt the capacity of our frontline health workers—our doctors, our nurses, our allied health professionals—and we have invested in health infrastructure in Queensland. In six years the Palaszczuk government has increased the health budget by more than \$6 billion and the health workforce by more than 25 per cent.

Recently the Palaszczuk government, through the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service, purchased four former Ipswich City Council buildings and other land for \$20.65 million in the next step towards the Ipswich health precinct. The government has invested more than \$146.3 million over five years for stage 1 of the master plan to expand the Ipswich Hospital and related health services into an all-encompassing precinct to meet the growing local demand. This is a really exciting project. I know that all of the local members across Ipswich are really excited about and fully behind this multimillion-dollar investment in the local health services. This project will not only ensure health services keep pace with the community into the future but also create and support hundreds of local jobs along the way and support the recovery of the state economy.

I am advised that across Queensland the Palaszczuk government is delivering more than 120 health construction projects, with the 2020-21 built infrastructure program supporting more than 1,500 full-time-equivalent jobs. From the Gold Coast to the Torres Strait to Boulia in the west we have delivered vital health infrastructure. We have invested in new replacement hospitals, including Atherton Hospital, Sarina Hospital and Kingaroy Hospital, as well as primary health centres and multipurpose health centres. There is a lot more to come, including our new seven satellite hospitals as promised at the recent election. This will not just be leading the state but leading the country as far as alternative measures to deal with pressures on our hospital systems and, importantly, delivering high-quality health care locally in our community.

I have been advised that the LNP promised around \$231 million in hospital infrastructure investment at the recent election compared to our \$889 million. This is a prime example of how Labor builds for the future and those opposite tear down. These projects will make a real difference in the lives of Queenslanders and I am looking forward to following their progress and updating the House throughout 2021.

Premier and Minister for Trade

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Premier. Do the ministerial handbook rules apply to the Premier?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Maroochydore for the question. It is interesting that I am receiving a question about ministerial standards from someone who has never been a minister.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

A government member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take that interjection. Thirty years. It is a fact.

Mr Harper interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am talking about facts. I take that interjection: and will probably never be a minister. It is ironic for the member to ask a question about ministerial standards. There is a ministerial handbook. That handbook was updated in 2018 and everyone is aware of the obligations that they have to abide by.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

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

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Premier will direct her comments through the chair.

Education

Mr HARPER: My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Will the minister update the House on how our government is working to re-engage young people in education in Townsville and across the state and is the minister aware of any alternative policies?

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the minister, there is too much general conversation. I have asked for silence. Members will be warned if that occurs again.

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Thuringowa for that question. Last week he and I heard a truly inspirational story. We went to Kirwan State High School. I thank the executive principal Meredith Wenta and her staff who welcomed us to Kirwan. We met two inspirational young people at that school.

Gary Kyle and Banabake Benjamin were both struggling with what they were going to do with their lives until Sheree Horwood of Kirwan State High's Link and Launch contacted both of them. In both cases it changed their lives. In Gary's case, Sheree helped him to get a driver's licence, complete a certificate III and find a job in conservation and land management. He is now on a project manager's course. As a proud young Aboriginal man he moved me deeply when he explained how that job, after three years of wondering what he was going to do, completely changed his life and how proud he was that he was working in that area. Sheree worked with Banabake Benjamin to get credit for training she did at school and she is now enrolled in a diploma of nursing at TAFE. I have never seen a smile as big on anyone's face. She is loving her nursing training and was looking forward to her practical in the nearby hospital. It seems so simple yet it changed their lives.

These are programs the Palaszczuk government is implementing in our schools. Link and Launch kicked off in 2019 with Kirwan one of four sites. We will see 30 programs implemented by 2022. We will implement the program in 10 more schools this year: Beenleigh, Lowood, Morayfield, Wilsonton, Woree, Proserpine, Nanango, Palm Beach Currumbin, Toolooa in Gladstone and Urangan in Hervey Bay. I am looking forward to hearing more stories like Gary's and Banabake's. Eighty five of the 160 young people contacted who were involved in that program are now in employment, training or education.

Compare that with what those opposite do, which is cut TAFE and cut programs. Their only answer was boot camps. We implement programs that change young people's lives, such as our pathway colleges, our free TAFE and our Link and Launch program. That is what Labor does.

North Queensland, Water Security

Mr ANDREW: My question is for the Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water. During the 2020 election, the government pledged \$15 million as an election promise for water security and dam building in North Queensland. Could the minister please update the House on how much of this pledge has been spent and what actions for improving water infrastructure services have occurred to date?

Mr BUTCHER: I thank the member for the question. It is vital that we are delivering on commitments that the Premier made during the election on water security and commitments to building dams and weirs in Queensland in the upcoming years. We have just started a new election cycle and those commitments will continue to carry on. We are seeing the start of Rookwood Weir which we know is vital to Central Queensland. The only reason that project is now up and running is because the Queensland government put its money forward to get that done while waiting for the federal government to come on board. It was disappointing that the Prime Minister of Australia had a go at us about holding up projects.

I was lucky enough to be at Rookwood Weir doing a media conference when that story came through and as I was there a big truck went rolling past. Work was happening on the ground in Rockhampton and Rookwood Weir. We are working diligently in North Queensland on those projects. The Haughton pipeline is a project that this government committed to. The federal government put in \$195 million, but the federal member did not mention that they were going to take that out of GST

payments for Queensland. Thankfully our Treasurer said we are not going to rely on that, we do not want to lose our GST payments and we will do this alone for the communities that need water security going forward.

I have had conversations with the mayor of Charters Towers about Big Rocks Weir. That project will change lives. Our government has committed to that project. We are looking forward to opportunities in the future in other projects in the region. Recently while I was in North Queensland I had the opportunity to go to Burdekin Falls Dam. What an amazing piece of infrastructure. It is Queensland's largest dam. We are looking at options to raise that dam wall and opportunities for future development and future opportunities for farmers and irrigators who utilise that great water source in North Queensland.

I say to the member if you have any other options you are looking at and would like to discuss, I am a minister who will be listening to members across the chamber. If you have something you want to talk to me about do not go to the media, come to me and my department and we will work through it with you.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr BUTCHER: I hear the member for Nanango bleating over there. I am more than happy to talk to you as well.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I remind you that your comments should be coming through the chair.

Police Resources

Mr POWER: My question is for the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. Will the minister update the House on what action the government is taking to support community safety, especially in relation to police resources, including in the growing areas of Logan Village and Yarrabilba, and how these initiatives will also support Queensland's economic recovery?

Mr RYAN: When it comes to Labor governments you know we back our police with record investment and record numbers of resources, particularly in the member for Logan's electorate. I was very pleased to deliver, with the member for Logan, the new police facility at Logan Village/Yarrabilba, with extra officers keeping that community safe. I have often said that, when it comes to the LNP and their support for police, you have to look at what they do and not what they say because when they are in power they take an axe to the Queensland Police Service. In your gut you know they are going to cut when it comes to police and the last election proves that. We had a fully funded announcement. It was not an election commitment. We made a fully funded announcement that we would be providing an additional 2,025 police personnel over five years. However, we backdated that to 1 July last year so those resources are already rolling out.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Coomera, you are warned under the standing orders. Your comments are not being directed through the chair and you have been consistently interjecting. Member for Southern Downs, you will suspend your interjections as well. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr RYAN: At the last election when the LNP was running around talking about what they would do to police, what they were actually saying was that they were going to cut police numbers because they were not going to match the fully funded commitment that we made around 2,025 extra police. In your gut you know they are going to cut and that is what they were announcing at the last election.

Let us take a trip around the state. In Cairns and the far north, 90 police were going to go if they were elected. In Townsville and the north, 90 police—gone. They were going to cut them. In Mackay, Rockhampton and Central Queensland, 125 police were off the books. On the Fraser Coast, Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay, 150 police—gone. In Brisbane it would have been 130 police. They talk about the Gold Coast a lot, but on the Gold Coast and in Logan they were going to get rid of 60 police. In Toowoomba, Ipswich and the south-west they were going to get rid of 150 police.

Our fully funded commitment is rolling out right now, meaning an extra 2,025 police personnel right across the state. That is going to deliver more boots on the ground and it is also going to assist the commissioner with her vision around shifting the Queensland Police Service to have a more prevention and disruption approach: preventing crime before it happens, putting more school based support officers into our schools, putting on more police liaison officers, supporting the good work that our civilian specialists do and in Townsville putting on a Policelink call centre with 50 call operators.

This is about demonstrating our commitment to the people of Queensland. We are delivering and we always do with record investment and record police numbers. That is what Labor does.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Chatsworth you are warned under the standing orders and member for Gregory you are warned under the standing orders.

School Based Policing

Mr BERKMAN: My question is to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. On 9 February the government announced Cairns as the location for the first cohort of school based police support officers in Queensland. Will the police support officers deployed under this program be authorised to carry tasers and firearms on campus?

Mr RYAN: I am glad I have the opportunity to respond to this question because I did see a tweet that the member put out that was misleading and scaremongering and that was seeking to denigrate the good work that members of the Queensland Police Service do. These school based police support officers—and I would have been happy to answer the question before the member for Maiwar bleated on Twitter without knowing the facts—are not sworn officers. They are like police liaison officers. They are about building a connection between schools, vulnerable families and the Queensland Police Service. It builds on a very proud record that we have around having police liaison officers and civilian specialists right across the state. It actually builds on a recommendation from Major General Stuart Smith in his *Townsville's voice* report, which said that you have to put more of those support officers in schools so that you can intervene early and you can support young people in making good choices in life.

No, member for Maiwar, they will not be sworn officers. They will not carry tasers. They will not have guns. They will be specially trained in engaging with young people, supporting young people and making sure young people have the referrals they need to lead good lives, and it builds on our very proud reputation of intervening early and investing in early intervention and prevention services.

Since we have been elected, right across government we have been investing in that front end, that is, in the schools, in the health system, in the child safety system and in the youth justice system to support young people so that we can help them choose a right path in life. The statistics show that over the past 10 years the number of young people entering the criminal justice system has reduced by 30 per cent. However, we know that there is still that hard core recidivist group that we are working harder with. Just this week we will be introducing legislation to take further strong tough action against them and we will also back it in with more work by police, additional resourcing for the system and, of course, extra efforts to enhance community safety.

Sunshine Coast, Road and Transport Infrastructure

Ms KING: My question is of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Will the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government's record roads and transport program is supporting jobs in Pumicestone and the Sunshine Coast?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the member for Pumicestone for her question and I certainly congratulate her on her win at the election. In fact, the result was not even close in Pumicestone. She received a massive swing and I congratulate the member. I look forward to working more with her. She is someone who is interested in roads, jobs and other things that matter. It pleased me to be with the member a number of times on Bribie Island Road, where we now have work underway on the Old Toorbul Point Road intersection upgrade, to talk about not just Bribie Island Road but also Beachmere Road, which is a real commitment by the member. Because of her strong advocacy, the Palaszczuk Labor government recently committed a further \$10 million to duplicate the Bribie Island Road as well as \$7 million to upgrade sections of Beachmere Road as part of our election platform. That is in stark contrast to those opposite. When the Leader of the Opposition sat at the cabinet table with Campbell Newman, they cut \$13 million from Bribie Island Road. That is their record. We restored that funding and we have developed the vision for the future there.

There is a rolling program of improvements identifying 10 major upgrades that will be needed over the next decade and beyond between the Bruce Highway and the Bribie Island Bridge. We have also started planning for a new Bribie Island Bridge because of the hard work of the member for Pumicestone. We will upgrade the intersection of Bribie Island Road and Regina Avenue, which was one of our election commitments, as part of our plan to ease congestion, improve safety for Pumicestone motorists and support local jobs.

There are actually five major Bruce Highway upgrades happening between Brisbane and Gympie, supporting more than 2,000 jobs. I drove by them just recently. You can see the work starting at the Bribie Island turnoff, going up towards Steve Irwin Way, which is fantastic. That means a lot of jobs, which are much needed at the moment.

Just north of Pumicestone we see the start of the Bells Creek Arterial Road upgrade in the electorate of the member for Caloundra. I know he loves that project. It is a favourite of his. That project is bringing forward a lot of jobs because of the commitment of this government. We have never seen the scale of infrastructure happening for the growing community of the Sunshine Coast that we see today because of this government. It is no wonder that not only did we win Sunshine Coast seats and Pumicestone but we also saw big swings against the LNP in a lot of seats that they clung onto. Buderim, Kawana and Ninderry had big swings and there was a big swing against them in Glass House because the LNP took the Sunshine Coast for granted for too long. The residents have backed this government because they know we supply infrastructure, jobs and projects.

When in government the LNP failed to even start a business case for the Sunshine Coast rail duplication. We have done that. We have lined up the funding with more than half a billion dollars worth of rail. Rail and road projects and jobs: that is what we stand for; not cuts like those opposite.

(Time expired)

Premier and Minister for Trade, Email Account

Mr LANGBROEK: My question is to the Premier. I table the decision of the Premier's department RTI officer, which states—

Searches were undertaken by the Premier and the Office of the Premier and Minister for Trade, within the date range of your application.

No documents, to which the RTI Act provides a right of access, were identified.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 1 February 2021, from the Manager, Right to Information and Privacy, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Mr Lucas Clarke, to the Office of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Peter Coulson, regarding a right to information application decision [181].

Why did the Premier tell her department there were not any emails about government business in her stacia1 @ bigpond.com email account when there was at least one?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The opposition members may need to refresh their memories, but the same RTI rules apply to us that applied to them. An independent RTI officer goes through those emails and makes those determinations.

Opposition members interjected.

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

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Gregory, you are on a warning. You can leave the chamber for the reminder of question time. I have called the House to order.

Whereupon the honourable member for Gregory withdrew from the chamber at 11.00 am.

Rookwood Weir

Ms LAUGA: My question is of the Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water. Will the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is creating local jobs through the delivery of the Rookwood Weir project?

Mr BUTCHER: I thank the member for the question. I know how important Rookwood Weir is to the member for Keppel and the member for Rockhampton. They are both particularly excited about the project, the progress we are seeing and the economic opportunities flowing from that project. I am pleased to update the House today on the considerable progress being made on the \$352.2 million Rookwood Weir project and the jobs it is supporting. More than 100 jobs have already been created and are flowing into Central Queensland through the delivery of this wonderful project. With the commencement of the site mobilisation and the in-river construction of the main weir in April, there are many more jobs to come. The in-river construction phase of the project will create more than 200 jobs, with at least 140 of those sourced locally. I know how much this means to both those local members, because a lot of those jobs will be filled by people in the local area. This is great news for local workers.

As I announced recently, the latest milestone delivered on the project is the commencement of the work on the accommodation camp. I had the privilege to visit that facility recently. Work is ramping up every day. This facility will be key to ensuring safer conditions for workers and efficient delivery to the weir. The camp will ensure that fatigued workers will not have to travel far after their shifts and that time-critical construction activity, such as concrete pours, can be started earlier and finished earlier every day. The project team is also currently seeking local businesses to provide services to the camp. This is certainly a great opportunity for local businesses that supply the catering, the housekeeping and the maintenance services to secure those contracts. Several work packages have been released as we ensure local suppliers have the opportunity to work on the project.

Work is also continuing on the new Riverslea Bridge, a 21-metre-high, 260-metre-long bridge at Riverslea that will replace the existing bridge. I recently had an opportunity to visit the construction site on that bridge and talk to workers. It is already looking very impressive. This work is complemented by two other road projects associated with the weir: the \$2.2 million Capricorn Highway intersection upgrade at Gogango and the \$7.5 million upgrade at Thirsty Creek Road.

The Rookwood Weir project is creating jobs, improving water security for Central Queensland and unlocking new agricultural growth potential for that whole region. Rookwood Weir is just another example of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to water security in our state as we deliver Queensland's plan for economic recovery from the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Public Service, Appointments

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Premier. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet RTI officer has said that the tabled email will not be released because it was party political. Does the Premier agree that the appointment of a director-general is a party political matter and not government business?

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I request a ruling on whether that is seeking an opinion. Under the standing orders, that is prohibited and I believe it should be ruled out.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The word 'agree' has been used many times. Whether someone agrees can be a yes or no answer without expressing an opinion. In my view, respectfully, it is not seeking an opinion pursuant to the standing orders. Plenty of ministers have said they either agree with something or not.

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, the question that has been asked is seeking an opinion, but the challenge there is that it is seeking an opinion from the Premier related to the work of an officer and not something that she would be necessarily able to provide anyhow. I rule the question out of order on that basis.

Training 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 how the government's training infrastructure investment is supporting new jobs in new industries?

Ms FARMER: I thank the member for his question. I also thank him for showing me around the fantastic \$2 million upgrade to the metal trades area at Bundamba TAFE last week. It was a great visit. As the Premier has said, skills and training are essential to our economic recovery plan in Queensland. We know that we need to have the right people with the right skills to go into the right jobs. That is why, since 2017, we have invested over \$150 million in TAFE infrastructure right across Queensland. At the recent budget, we announced a further \$100 million to invest in new and upgraded facilities. It has been fantastic to visit some of those places such as the trade training centre at Ashmore, the nursing school at Pimlico, the fashion school at Mount Gravatt TAFE and Bohle TAFE, where we will have an advanced manufacturing and robotics centre. We are skilling Queenslanders for existing and emerging industries and we want them to be trained in world-class facilities.

The multibillion dollar Rheinmetall project, where cabinet was held last week, is a fantastic example of that. We would not have got past first base on that unless we had workers with the right skills. In a fantastic partnership with TAFE Queensland, we identified what those skills needed to be, we invested in an augmented reality welding training program and, as a result, we have internationally trained welders who are working directly on those vehicles at the Rheinmetall project.

TAFE, skills and training are critically important to our future. I believe that Queenslanders would rather we were all in this House, particularly the opposition, talking about skills and training than about emails. In fact, we know that at the last election the opposition did not even mention TAFE. That means that if they were in government we would have none of these world-class training facilities, we would have no free TAFE for under-25s and we would have no free apprenticeships. In fact, there was no costing for Skilling Queenslanders for Work or Back to Work, meaning over 64,000 people in jobs and training would have missed out. In fact, the only thing the opposition said at the last election was that they would create the skills task force. We know what that is because they did it last time they were in government. Its sole purpose was a mechanism to emasculate TAFE. They sacked 2,100 TAFE teachers, they cut \$170 million from the TAFE budget and they sold off campuses. That was their plan. I assume it is the plan of the Leader of the Opposition for winning big at the next election. I know that my shadow likes going to graduations. Let's have some action on skills and training.

(Time expired)

Domestic and Family Violence

Ms CAMM: My question is to the Attorney-General. For every day that the government delays, more victims of domestic and family violence are at risk. Will the Attorney commit to a time frame to bring forward legislation to deal with coercive control?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. I say to the member for Whitsunday that this issue is too important to play politics with. The people who work on the ground supporting victims of domestic and family violence had called publicly for us to establish a task force and consult to get this right. I table an article—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. The member for Glass House will cease his interjections. Member for Whitsunday, you have asked the question. I expect that you wish to hear the answer, as do I.

Ms FENTIMAN: I table an opinion piece from Brad Chilcott, White Ribbon Australia, and Kelly-ann Tansley, Brisbane Domestic Violence Services, which says it is so important that the government takes the time to get this reform right.

Tabled paper: Article, undated, titled 'State needs to get reform right, not rush it through' [\[182\]](#).

Let us remember that coercive control is only legislated in four countries in the world—Scotland, Ireland, Wales and the UK. Nowhere in this country has there been legislation to tackle this incredibly dangerous behaviour. We have to get this right. The sector is calling on us to set up this task force, led by the Hon. Margaret McMurdo AC who has incredible experience in the legal profession and is well respected by the sector. I was with the parents of Hannah Clarke last week for the anniversary of the tragic death of Hannah Clarke and her children. They said to me, 'Thank you for establishing an independent task force led by someone who is so experienced, held in such high regard and will take the time to get this right for Queensland.'

The member for Whitsunday said in her contribution to the estimates committee report debate last night that she has been meeting with services. If that is the case, she will have heard firsthand from the people who work tirelessly on the ground that it is so important to establish a task force and to get this right. This government absolutely knows that we have more to do to tackle domestic and family violence. What I can say to the House is that we have implemented all of the recommendations of the *Not now, not ever* report, we have supported women during COVID who experienced high rates of domestic and family violence and we put \$7.5 million on the table to help services that were being inundated during COVID. We work hand in hand with domestic violence services, we listen to survivors and we do what is needed to make a difference.

I was so proud last week to stand with the Premier to make an announcement that Queensland will be the first jurisdiction to legislate against coercive control—dangerous behaviour that is the biggest predicting factor of intimate partner homicide. The sector wants us to do this. The sector wants us to get this right. That is what we are doing. It is about time those opposite stopped playing politics with this matter.

Skills and Training

Mr O'ROURKE: My question is of the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement. Will the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is skilling Queenslanders for jobs of the future and is he aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr de BRENNI: First of all, I would like to acknowledge the work of the member for Rockhampton in advocating for his community as part of our \$11 billion economic recovery plan. He does that because he knows that that plan is delivering well paid, dignified work for Queenslanders. Under the leadership of our Premier, that plan has supported 224,000 Queenslanders back into work since the COVID pandemic hit.

At the heart of our recovery plan, particularly in Rockhampton, is a \$1.1 billion infrastructure plan delivering 3½ thousand jobs in the Rockhampton community. At the heart of that are the men and women who will deliver that infrastructure plan for us. Many of those are government employed tradies and apprentices. This government is proud to employ them. We are proud to be rebuilding QBuild in places like Rockhampton.

I am pleased to advise the member for Rockhampton and members of this House that this week we inducted another 25 tradies at our QBuild depot in the electorate of Bulimba. Three of them will be stationed in Rockhampton. They are already at work delivering construction projects in schools and other infrastructure our state needs. I can announce that next month we will appoint 20 new apprentices to QBuild—the next generation of skilled Queenslanders. I can further announce that we will appoint another 120 apprentices to join the ranks of our publicly owned electricity companies, starting with an induction ceremony this Friday—young Queenslanders who will power our state forward. That is what this government stands for—partnering with the private sector to grow jobs in the private sector as well as jobs in frontline service delivery throughout Queensland.

Queenslanders have rejected the LNP's approach to jobs—the cut, sack and sell approach. It seems that the cut, sack and sell approach is in the DNA of the LNP in Brisbane and in Canberra. We saw in Queensland the LNP sack over 1,600 QBuild workers.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr de BRENNI: The member for Everton did that. You tried very hard to put the lives of 1,600 QBuild workers—

Mr SPEAKER: The minister will direct his comments through the chair.

Mr de BRENNI: They sacked 25 workers at Tarong Power Station when they shut that down. They sacked workers at Swanbank E. At the same time, the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government was cutting \$3 million from the training and skills budget in this state.

Mr Mander interjected.

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

Mr de BRENNI: Now our nation faces a skills shortage. On this side of the House we are delivering skills for Queenslanders for jobs now and into the future. We have rebuilt TAFE. We are delivering record investment in our training and skills agenda. We are building hydrogen training centres to deliver for that industry of the future. We will always walk the walk and train young Queenslanders. We do that because Queenslanders trust Labor governments to build this state.

Domestic and Family Violence

Ms BATES: My question is to the Attorney-General. As a survivor of domestic violence, my heart breaks every time I learn of another tragic death. Five years after the bipartisan *Not now, not ever* report women are still dying at the hands of those who are meant to love them. I must ask: how many more tragedies will happen before the Attorney acts?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for Mudgeeraba for her question. She knows that I am incredibly committed to working with survivors, domestic and family violence services, legal experts—the whole system—to do everything we can to keep women safe and to hold perpetrators to account. The member for Mudgeeraba mentioned the *Not now, not ever* report. As a government, I do not think you can say we have not acted. We have implemented all of those recommendations. We have provided millions of dollars to set up specialist DV courts, the respectful relationships curriculum in all of our schools and more support for service systems than ever before.

I acknowledge in this House that of course there is always more to do. It is heartbreaking for everyone in this House to see those tragedies play out. I give you my commitment, I give the House my commitment and I give the community my commitment that this government will not stop to act to keep women safe. We have to gear the system to intervene earlier. We have to hold perpetrators to account. These tragic incidents, at their heart, have a man who thinks that he can actually commit this violence against women. That is what we have to stop.

We have a huge responsibility as a community to break the cycle of violence and to change the attitudes of these perpetrators. We have invested 140 per cent more money into perpetrator programs. Yes, I agree there is still more to do. That is why we have listened to the sector and have established an independent task force, led by the Hon. Margaret McMurdo. Can I say that the feedback from the community on that announcement has been overwhelming. People are happy that people who have knowledge of the legal system and the sector will be looking at these issue so that we can actually have effective laws.

We could introduce laws today, member for Mudgeeraba, but if they do not hold perpetrators to account and gear the system towards intervening to save women's lives what is the point? We have to do the work to get it right. Queensland has a Criminal Code, which is very different to those jurisdictions overseas that have already implemented this.

What I say to the member for Mudgeeraba is that our commitment is not just to introduce and legislate against coercive control. It also comes with it a huge commitment to invest in training for frontline responders like police and also a community awareness campaign. There are still women who do not understand that they are the subject of coercive control. It is dangerous behaviour. It is about controlling where a woman goes, what she wears, who she sees and restricting her access to money. We have to bring the whole community with us on this journey so that we can empower victims to make these reports and empower family and friends to talk to a victim about the fact that this behaviour is dangerous and can lead to intimate partner homicide. That is what we have committed to do and I am proud of our commitment.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

APPROPRIATION (2020-2021) BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill


Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, Report

Resumed from 23 February (see p. 102).

Mr SPEAKER: I remind the House that the following members are on warnings: the members for Logan, Pine Rivers, Maryborough, Kawana, Coomera, Southern Downs, Chatsworth and Everton. These warnings will continue through until the 1 pm lunchbreak.

Ms BUSH: Mr Speaker?


Mr SPEAKER: I call the member for Cooper. It might be timely to remind members that there is a reason why the only member on their feet should be the member seeking the call. I had difficulty finding the member who was seeking the call just now. Members, if you have anything you need to do conversation wise, please take those conversations out of the chamber. Member for Rockhampton and Minister for Public Works, I am looking at you. The member for Cooper has the call.

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (11.20 am), continuing: It gives me pleasure to speak in support of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee report. I want to pick up on a comment made last night by the member for Clayfield, who described the progress of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General as 'glacial'. Mr Speaker, it might interest you to know that the definition of a glacier is a persistent body of ice that is constantly moving. That is not actually a bad fit for the department. The employees there are absolutely persistent in the face of criticism. They believe in the prospects of their clients and they are constantly moving, constantly striving to make Queensland a safer place.

Perhaps when you do not have an understanding of the sociology of crime it is easy to fall into a trap of thinking there are simple solutions, but the reality is that diverting people from sometimes a lifetime of violent offending takes a substantial investment over a period of time. It takes persistence from the non-government sector and Public Service employees who, quite frankly, deserve better than to go home after working all day—perhaps working with a rape victim or a recent parolee—only to look up *Hansard* and see that a member of parliament has described them as 'sclerotic'.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to this persistent and progressive reform. We are committed to drawing from both the evidence and lived experience of those using the justice system to inform policy that works in practice and is not just a punchy headline. This reform is evident in the government's recent announcement to legislate against coercive control as a form of domestic and family violence—an announcement that has already attracted national interest and applause.

Our government has stated that the 2020-21 budget is about economic recovery. Essential to that is our ability to provide protection and support to women and to those experiencing violence so they are afforded the opportunity to reach their fullest potential. I commend the Palaszczuk government's budget and the report to the House.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (11.22 am): I rise to contribute to the appropriation debate and speak to the estimates report from the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee. I state at the outset my disappointment with the estimates process. I know that the minister stood in this place yesterday and bemoaned the fact that he was not asked very many questions during the estimates process. There is very good reason for that. We wanted answers. We wanted to get to the bottom of some of the crucial questions around budgetary requirements and performance. I want to acknowledge all of the commissioners from the emergency services who gave evidence at estimates and I want to thank them for their honesty and their willingness to participate in the process and to provide the relevant information.

From the outset, it must be said that the past year has had, and the months ahead will continue to have, immense challenges in the areas of law and order in our corrections system and for our Fire and Emergency Services. This estimates process has highlighted the importance of planning and, in the case of this government, the lack thereof and the consequences of that failure to plan. As an example, you cannot build a new prison in this state overnight. With our prisons chronically overcrowded, one has to wonder how this issue will be addressed in the short term. We should all be concerned with the rapid decline in the numbers of SES personnel across the state—something that has not happened overnight but is of critical importance in terms of providing a response during times of emergency or disaster.

I will start with the Queensland Police Service. During the 2020 campaign, this government committed to an extra 2,025 police personnel by 2025. It is important to recognise that that commitment is for police personnel. As someone who has spent 25 years in a police uniform, I know the important role that civilians play, but it is vitally important that we note that, of those 2,025 personnel, 1,450 will be sworn officers. I have great concerns about the Labor government's ability to deliver on this commitment, but I do note the commissioner's comments that she believes it is achievable. The LNP will ensure that this commitment is honoured and that the Police Commissioner's confidence is not betrayed.

Unfortunately, many Queensland communities have been betrayed. The budget process has revealed that policing services like police beats are facing closure—something the LNP firmly opposes given the current crime epidemic tearing at the heart of this state. It is interesting to note that, of the amounts committed in the budget for new and replacement police facilities, approximately 76 per cent is allocated to South-East Queensland and, in my electorate, there is no funding for the promised Clermont police station.


I will move on to corrective services, an area that shows this government is letting down Queenslanders and the brave men and women who work in our corrections system. This budget shows cuts to supplies and services of 12 per cent despite increases in prisoner numbers—something the minister needs to explain. It also shows a corrections system where all categories of assaults are well above targets, where the value of community service work ordered by the courts will reduce by almost 40 per cent and where one-third of Queensland's corrections centres had more prisoners than beds. In short, this government has failed to plan and it has failed to address the issue of overcrowding.

In the area of fire and emergency services, this budget confirms yet another area, vital to the safety of Queenslanders, having their supplies and services budget cut—this time by 23 per cent. Again, the minister needs to explain how this will be achieved without putting staff or Queenslanders at greater risk.

During the budget process, we prosecuted the debacle around the Fraser Island bushfires. How a fire could be allowed to burn for six weeks before QFES became involved or how the large aerial water tanker was allowed to sit on the tarmac at the airport for a week because aircrew needed to have days off defies logic. I look forward to the results of the review into the handling and response to that disaster.

This is a budget that does little to make Queensland and Queenslanders feel safer. The impending closure of police beats and establishments is cause for concern and, given the current youth crime crisis gripping this state, is it any wonder Queenslanders are questioning the ability of this government to keep them safe? This is about community safety and ensuring our hardworking emergency service personnel and volunteers are supported, and I will continue to fight and advocate on their behalf.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.27 am): I thank the House for the chance to speak on the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's 2020-21 budget estimates report. I want to start by saying what a privilege it is as Queensland's Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence to provide my first report on the progress of this government's commitment to fostering safer communities.


As I said to the committee, I want to thank each of our courts, our heads of jurisdiction. They did a phenomenal job during COVID to try to move things along in the justice system, to respond to challenges, to keep people's access to justice going. That exceptional work continues as we remain in the global pandemic's shadows. I am also very proud of our upgrades to courthouses such as the \$1.6 million domestic and family violence upgrade at the Pine Rivers courthouse. I was there recently with the member for Pine Rivers. Investing in our courthouses and in infrastructure upgrades to provide safer spaces for women experiencing domestic and family violence is something I am incredibly proud of.

I am also very proud of our government's record in tackling domestic and family violence. As I reported to the committee, much work has been done but there is always more to do. That is why again I have to say I was incredibly disappointed with the member for Whitsunday's contribution to the debate last night. She described our government's approach to tackling domestic and family violence as 'laissez faire' which is just outrageous given the amount of work that we have been doing to tackle domestic and family violence and the investment that we are making, particularly last year during the COVID crisis when one in 10 Australian women experienced domestic and family violence—one in 10 Australian women in a relationship—with two-thirds saying that the violence started or became worse during COVID.

We know how important it is to work with the sector and take the time to get things right. I want to say to the member for Whitsunday that I would welcome her contribution to the work we are doing to listen to stakeholders and the sector to make sure we get the right laws that will keep women safe and hold perpetrators to account. This issue deserves bipartisan support. I look forward to working not only with those opposite but with the sector and legal experts to get this right.

I also want to address the contribution in this debate of the member for Clayfield, who has described our department as on the 'go-slow'. We are still working incredibly hard to fix the mess we were left with after the member for Kawana was the attorney-general, including the fact that the LNP cut 507 full-time-equivalent staff from DJAG. That takes a while to fix. Abolishing specialist courts takes time to fix. I am absolutely committed to making sure we continue the work to fix the mess that those opposite left. They not only cut 500 full-time equivalents and all of the specialist courts, including the Murri Court and the Special Circumstances Court, but they also outsourced court reporting, which is a mess we are still trying to fix. Whilst the member for Clayfield continues to criticise the hardworking public servants in my department, they have been working hard to fix the mess that the member for Kawana left. I am incredibly proud of the work we have done since we have been in government to turn that around, including reopening those specialist courts which really do make a difference to so many Queenslanders.

I am proud to be part of a government that invests in important services to keep Queensland safe. I want to thank my department, the statutory bodies and the team for their assistance with my first estimates hearing. I want to thank the committee chair, Peter Russo, and all committee members. I commend the report to the House.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (11.31 am): In my reply to the 2020-21 budget estimates report from the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee and as stated in my statement of reservation, I would like to again draw the attention of the House to the need for a review of the estimates hearings and committee process, which I have done through a number of channels now for just on three years. Around the world improvements to committee processes and sessional orders have been sought and implemented. We are currently seeing calls for the reform of question time in federal parliament. Examples of these


improvements in other jurisdictions include further limiting the time for ministerial statements and government question time allocations and hosting non-parliamentary chairs, simultaneous hearings and regular review periods of the process.

During this estimates I was advised that a review occurred in 2012. Given that planning schemes are developed every 10 years, vital processes such as those that scrutinise government, including spending, should also be reviewed each decade, if not earlier. As I have written to the Premier, the CLA and in last year's statement of reservation, there have been several suggestions for improvements from current and previous MPs, and during this sittings we have heard some heated comments on members' concerns. We should have no anger or fear with regard to working to become more efficient. Efforts that save time and cost, such as all questions to be taken on notice, including from visiting members granted leave to attend hearings, should be considered. Hearings could then be dedicated to follow-up questions. As a result, resources would be targeted. Compare this to the current situation, where departments prepare for questions that are never asked. Given the backlog of issues that frustrate our communities which are yet to be dealt with, I have no doubt that the resources saved could be deployed elsewhere, including urgently resolving our housing crisis. There are many other priorities.

Queenslanders are increasingly disillusioned by processes that are not in line with their expectations and no longer fit for purpose. An independent review of all committee processes, including the Business Committee, is beneficial to the process and the people of Queensland and it should be a priority in this term. That the current system is inadequate is not a reflection on our committee's report, nor the departmental staff, ministers and all involved in preparing, compiling and attending the hearings. The extraordinarily short space of time allocated between budget and estimates weeks just before Christmas is testimony to the commitment and dedication of so many, and I thank and congratulate all who worked under this duress. I am sure that any reform which better utilises valuable resources to deliver better outcomes would be welcome by all.

In addition, I would like to express our gratitude to the front liners who are impacted by appropriations and the decisions made surrounding them. You do an incredible job, and the questions we ask during estimates are part of ensuring that you have what you need to keep our communities safe through prevention, detection, mitigation and legislation that works. This includes queries I had concerning the Fraser Island fire, dangerous behaviours on our roads, the technologies that are needed to assist in the apprehension of offenders, and accommodations for our domestic violence families.

Queensland has travelled a journey through the COVID pandemic that has been difficult and expensive. With the costs of the pandemic being worn by all Queenslanders now and into the future, efforts to streamline our systems are needed as part of that recovery. In closing, I thank our chair, fellow committee members, our secretariat and the committees who gave leave for me to appear. The work you do is difficult and deeply appreciated. May this year's budget and estimates process see the improvements sought by so many Queenslanders and their members of parliament.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (11.35 am): I rise to speak on the appropriations bill, this time from the perspective of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's examination of the legislation. As many in this place know, I am—and have long been—a passionate advocate for women and families who find themselves suffering at the hands of domestic and family violence. As a survivor myself I do understand the harrowing road these people take and the supports they need in order to return to society after the traumatic events that often take place—always take place—at the hands of those they love and trust. Sadly, we know that trust is often misplaced.

Year after year we on this side of the House have heard hand-wringing and excuses from the government about why Queensland women and children are not being protected. Last year more than 28,000 Queenslanders made domestic violence order applications. That is more than 530 a week. The LNP were the ones pushing for coercive control to be a summary offence as part of domestic violence offences. I have been pushing for it for five years. I do not need anyone to tell me what coercive and controlling behaviour is. I lived it, I know what it is and I have known about it for years. We know from tragic cases like that of Hannah Clarke and her three beautiful children that the seeds of that murderous violence grew from the controlling and manipulative behaviours of their partners.

A broader domestic violence offence could cover physical violence, strangulation, coercive control, financial control and sexual violence. All of these things happen within domestic and family violence. Domestic violence does not stop outside the bedroom door. Coercive, controlling behaviour is the one tool these animals use on their families, their wives and their kids to control them. Over five years, as a result of the extensive consultation I have had with survivors and my sisters—who are also


survivors of domestic and family violence—and the groups who advocate on their behalf, I know the difficulties of attempting to prosecute coercive control as a standalone offence will cause a problem because the onus of proof is always on the victim.

It is disappointing that, 12 months after the horrific death of Hannah, only now is the government forming a consultation task force. We urge the government to consider our plan to introduce the new offence of domestic violence. We urge this government to protect victims of domestic violence through the court process. Some work has been done, but more needs to be done. We urge this government to introduce Tara's law—as a result of the death of Tara Brown—so there is a pro-disclosure of previous offending against intimate partners and their families. Women and their families should be told when a prospective partner has form so they can make informed decisions about their future. We urge this government to ensure that all magistrates rotate through the specialist domestic violence court so they can grow their knowledge about this insidious crime. We urge this government to set up a domestic violence one-stop support network. Too many women are falling through the cracks. Too many people have had 30 points of contact with domestic violence agencies and they are still dead.

This government must consider the offence of strangulation as deserving a harder, more deterrent penalty. The offence should be aligned with the penalties for grievous bodily harm, which is exactly what it is. The Red Rose Foundation was established to support victims of strangulation and advocate for law reform to support these women. They also want a domestic violence commissioner as they have in the UK. They need money to keep helping these women—and even children—who are attacked with hands around their throats.

We welcome the government's commitment to counselling and crisis response, but we know it is often too little and too late. According to Queensland courts data, there were 7,206 DVO breaches across the state between July and September last year—representing a 30.5 per cent increase on the same period last year. Earlier this week we saw another tragic case, with a woman killed in a house fire by her former partner after she called the police reporting a breach of DVO taken out against that same person.

I am proud to have been part of an LNP team that introduced the toughest domestic violence laws in Australia from opposition. After the tragic death of Teresa Bradford, we ensured that the presumption of bail was reversed—if in doubt, do not let them out. I have had the privilege of standing shoulder to shoulder with mothers of murdered victims—like Tara Brown's mother, Teresa Bradford's mother, Shelsea Schilling's mother and Bianca Faith Gervin's mother. All of these women are in a club that no-one wants to or should ever have to be a part of. Sadly, that club is growing, and now Lloyd and Sue Clarke share this pain. The family of Doreen Langham, who was killed at Logan just two days ago, will be part of this grieving circle now. We must do more. We have to do more. More women are dying.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.40 am): As a member of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, I rise to address the appropriation bill debate today. In doing so, can I start by acknowledging the two contributions that were made before me. You would be hard pressed to find—in fact, you could not find—a more passionate advocate for matters pertaining to family and domestic violence than the member for Mudgeeraba. There is nothing I can add to the contribution she just gave. I encourage the government to listen again to her contribution and act before we have another tragic circumstance, as we experienced earlier this week.

I also want to acknowledge the member for Noosa. I am not going to repeat her contribution because I was watching the member for Sandgate getting itchy in his seat about pre-empting debate in a motion tonight. It was pleasing to hear members of the crossbench reiterating the calls of the opposition around how estimates functioned this year. I look forward to that debate this evening on what we might be doing to better address it.

Moving to the actual proceedings on the day, there are a number of things I would like to specifically look at that pertain to the electorate of Glass House. Whilst every member will welcome commitments around 2,025 additional police officers, there were significant concerns raised around this government's ability to actually deliver on that in five years. I do not want this to be a false promise. We need those extra police officers in the electorate of Glass House. Therefore, I want them trained and I want them on the beat within that five years. I do not want us to be at an election in 2024 wondering where all those police officers are.


It was also not surprising—as we had suspected it all along—to receive confirmation that many of our police resources were being redirected to monitoring the borders, and that included a lot of our proactive policing duties, particularly around road policing. Coincidentally, and not surprisingly, the Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay hinterlands have been visited by many road users during COVID,

with the vast majority of them doing the right thing. In another surprising twist of COVID, with a lot more discretionary funds around, a lot more people have bought Harleys, superbikes and hotted up Japanese imported vehicles, and my part of the world tends to be where they want to come.

Without the road policing units on our roads, we have seen a huge explosion in very unsafe and basically disruptive behaviour on our hinterland roads. Now that the road policing units are back, and having had conversations with both of the district officers who cover the electorate of Glass House, I am confident we will be seeing a greater presence. To the residents on roads like Bald Knob Road, Hunchy Road, all of the roads that have 'Maleny' in them and Mount Mee Road, please know that some help is coming and hopefully we will see action taken very shortly.

Like other speakers, I have some concern around the admission by the Police Commissioner that, as a result of the QPS strategic review, there will be a closure of certain policing services like police beats. Glass House does not have a police beat. We are lucky to have the few police stations that we do. What we do want to see—and we are reassured around this idea—is mobile units being placed in some of the areas that are in between stations. I think of places like Mooloolah Valley, Beerburrum or Wamuran that are between stations and that desperately need a very physical presence of police from time to time. Those mobile units will be very much welcomed, and the sooner they can be rolled out the better.

I turn now to corrective services. It is no surprise—and we knew it back when the LNP was in government—that we are facing an increase in inmates. In fact since 2015 there has been a 29 per cent increase in the number of prisoners in custody and that has led to an extraordinary amount of overcrowding. There were reports in media outlets over the weekend of what that means for Woodford. What it actually means is an increase in prisoner-on-officer actions that are resulting in officers being injured, in many cases very severely, and officers having to take time off work to recover. Every one of our government employees deserves to work in a safe environment, and that goes for our custodial officers in our correctional centres. More work needs to be done by our government. Had they enacted our plans to grow the number of correctional centres we would not be in this problem, but because they sit on their hands we are.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (11.46 am): Following on from the member for Glass House, I also want to confirm that this issue of hooning is just huge. I know the police have done—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Maroochydore, I am terribly sorry to do this to you, but the time for debate has actually elapsed but thank you for that contribution.


Report adopted.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before we move to the next committee report for debate, I welcome to the gallery students and staff from Varsity College in the electorate of Burleigh. Welcome to the Queensland parliament.

Community Support and Services Committee, Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): The question is—

That the report of the Community Support and Services Committee be adopted.

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (11.47 am): I also acknowledge the member for Mudgeeraba and her contributions. I admire her courage and her continued pursuit of those very important issues.

It was my great honour to be newly appointed to serve as the chair of the Community Support and Services Committee as we considered the Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill 2020 and the estimates of the committee's areas of responsibility, which include the portfolio areas of community, housing, digital economy, the arts, seniors, disability services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, children, youth justice and multicultural affairs. The Palaszczuk government's budget is a jobs budget. We have said for more than a year now that a strong health response will allow for a strong economic response and a record investment in infrastructure—job-creating infrastructure.

Estimates is a necessary process allowing all members of parliament—in particular, non-government members—to question members of the executive and senior public servants on the array of positive programs and initiatives being delivered by this Palaszczuk government. I felt professionally empathetic and embarrassed for the opposition members of the Community Support and Services Committee as they were continually denied the opportunity to ask questions by their self-assured, learned scholars.


Transparency and accountability are the hallmark of a good government, and I am proud to be a member of the Palaszczuk government. Estimates provides members opportunities to explore areas of government spending, and the facts speak for themselves. On review of *Hansard* and on a rough

calculation of questions, I have been advised that the committee sat for seven hours and 33 minutes, of which three hours and 52 minutes were allocated to non-government questioning, compared to two hours and 53 minutes of questioning by the government. This was deliberate on my behalf as chair. Further evidence that ample scrutiny of the government's budget was afforded to the opposition was that, of the 165 questions that were asked, just 45 questions were asked by government members and 120 questions were asked by non-government members. Again, this was a deliberate intention on my part as chair of this committee.

As a long-term employee with the Public Service, I am well aware of the degree of rigour that exists regarding the expenditure of public money, as there should be. As elected officials, we should strive every day to ensure that public money is expended for the benefit of all Queenslanders. The estimates process is a vital process to allow all members, in particular the non-government members, to hold the government to account.

I see in my community firsthand the record investments in the arts, housing, communities, disability, multiculturalism and youth justice. The benefits of the expenditure noted during estimates included: under the department of communities, the more than \$1 million supporting the proactive job readiness programs offered by the Mount Gravatt Community Centre; certificate courses that will assist the long-term unemployed or women who have been out of the work environment as a result of family responsibilities; the Australian first, Ways to Wellness program developed in Mansfield in conjunction with the University of Queensland and the Queensland Community Alliance; the \$21.2 million allocated to the new performing arts venue at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre, which will be frequented by my community; the housing provided to members of my community under the Queensland Housing Strategy 2021-2027; through access to the Seniors Card, concessions such as electricity, rates, gas and water; or community transport services for those who live with a disability. These are amongst the many investments made by the Palaszczuk government to ensure the economic recovery of our great state. I take this opportunity to thank the large number of public servants who prepared the comprehensive briefs for ministers and senior officials on all matters relating to the Palaszczuk government's budget.

Finally, I thank the three wonderful ministers that I served: the Hon. Leeanne Enoch, the Hon. Craig Crawford and the Hon. Leanne Linard. It is an absolute pleasure to serve these great leaders. I also thank the committee secretariat and other Parliamentary Service staff for their assistance throughout the estimates process. I commend report No. 2 of the Community Support and Services Committee to the 57th Parliament.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (11.51 am): I want to start my contribution by thanking the committee secretariat, who do an amazing job—and it is lot of work to put all of this together. I also thank the other members of the committee, and I think we do get on really well and do our job well. We thank the members who sought leave to attend for their contributions. I want to acknowledge the chair's contribution. Our committee has developed a mutual respect and I need to highlight that the opposition did receive a significant amount of time for questions, and that needs to be acknowledged.

As has been said, our committee examined the portfolio areas of communities, housing, digital economy and the arts; seniors, disability services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships; and children, youth justice and multicultural affairs. A lot has already been said about process and problems with the estimates process. I do not intend to prosecute those issues again except to say that we can do better for Queenslanders. We in this place should always be looking at systems and processes that make this place function at a high level.

I acknowledge machinery-of-government changes in some cases made lines of questioning less than effective, and we cannot underestimate the effect COVID had on us all. I need to highlight some areas of concern that we discovered during estimates. I will refer anyone who is interested in more detail about these areas to the statement of reservation. One such concern was about housing and communities. The committee, of course, heard the glowing opening statements from the minister about prepared achievements across the portfolio areas. In my statement of reservation I raised concerns about the Housing Strategy, which has just been mentioned, delivering 5½ thousand homes, and I heard this morning about some numbers in a ministerial statement. However, our understanding is that since 2015 the waiting list in Queensland has increased by 10,000, which is 55 per cent. We noted that the minister and the department now refer to a 'housing register' instead of a previous performance indicator of a 'waiting list'.


Further examination reveals that the Palaszczuk government has spent less per capita on social housing and has only increased this stock by a reported 73. The reality is Queensland's waiting list has blown out to an incredible 21,000 people needing assistance, which is up from 16,000 a year earlier. I

did take a lot of time to review the issues around the needs assessment, which was mentioned this morning in a ministerial statement as well. Of course, these are issues that are never easy and successive governments have always struggled in this space. A lot has been said about the pandemic, but we never factored in the population growth during last year. This resulted in a per head spend of \$132, which was down from \$135 in 2018-19, the second lowest spend rate in the nation. On reflection of the issues regarding housing demand, we were still outperformed by Victoria, which experienced that massive lockdown.

The figure of 5½ thousand homes that was mentioned a lot is a part of the \$1.8 billion 2017-2027 Housing Strategy. Our reports are that housing stock has grown by just 627 dwellings since 2017. I would welcome the minister's explanation around the line of questioning that managed to expose that and what we are going to do to make sure that people in Queensland get what they need, particularly in terms of social and affordable housing. There is real concern about the 18,000 people waiting for a home in 2020 who were classed as 'greatest need' applicants under Labor's one-size-fits-all approach to a solution as another 3,000 wait for a transfer to the state's network of 51,000 social housing dwellings.

I move quickly and briefly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships. There is only one area I want to raise out of a very interesting line of questioning, and I still do not really understand what the department does because the director-general mentioned many times that, 'We don't actually deliver, but we're the glue to bring all this stuff together.' One of the areas of concern is the new Closing the Gap memorandum that has been signed. It now has 16 targets aimed at improving life outcomes for our First Nation people, but the record of the previous Closing the Gap targets has been somewhat disappointing. In 2018 the report card showed only two of the seven COAG Closing the Gap targets outlined were on track, and that was early childhood education and year 12 attainment.

With that, I will wrap up. I wish everyone the best with the committee process. Let's hope we can make it better.

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algerst—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (11.56 am): I rise to contribute to the debate on the estimates committee report of the Community Support and Services Committee. In doing so, I acknowledge the hard work of all members of the committee, in particular the chair, the member for Mansfield, for her outstanding oversight of the events of the day; the member for Cook; the member for Nicklin; and all of those opposite and from the crossbench who also contributed to the important work of that committee; the secretariat staff; and witnesses from the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy who contributed to the estimates process last December. In particular I acknowledge all of the staff from my new department, the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy, and those from Arts Queensland who absolutely stepped up to the mark and provided some outstanding information and service during that time.

The Palaszczuk government acted swiftly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our government has always remained committed to supporting local people, communities and jobs throughout the pandemic. It is thanks to the hard work of Queenslanders that our state is now on the path to economic recovery.

During the height of the pandemic in March last year the Palaszczuk government announced a \$24.7 million package to assist vulnerable Queenslanders to have a safe place to live. The Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy is a frontline human service. Our government takes a person centred approach to housing need, providing a suite of products to assist Queenslanders to access sustainable housing.

As noted in the committee report, our government is delivering improved housing outcomes for Queenslanders through our ambitious Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027. In addition, our \$1.6 billion Housing Construction Jobs Program will deliver over 5,500 social housing and affordable homes. I am advised that it is the largest investment in social housing since World War II. These programs are not only increasing social housing stock; they are also supporting the state's building and construction industry, which employs 240,000 people directly and indirectly. These jobs are vital for Queensland's economic recovery.

The opposition's performance during estimates and their statement of reservation shows that they have no alternative plan except to continue with their denigrating rhetoric about social housing. We know from recent reports on the Gold Coast that the LNP would rather see some of the most vulnerable in our community living on the street instead of being provided with housing support.

Mr MANDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Minister, the member has taken personal offence and I ask that you withdraw.

Ms ENOCH: I withdraw. We know also that the member for Everton cannot escape his legacy as the former minister. He and the LNP will be forever remembered for their cuts to the social housing construction program, the wholesale giveaway of publicly owned assets and hundreds of Queenslanders removed from the social housing register if they did not respond to letters in time.


Mr MANDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister has clearly misled the House with the regard to the sale of houses. I will be writing to the Speaker to inform him of that and for him to take matters accordingly.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Everton.

Ms ENOCH: Very clearly, the member for Everton finds his legacy somewhat disturbing. The Palaszczuk government recognises that households on the social housing register often have complex needs and are among the most vulnerable people in our communities. This is why we allocated \$139 million in the 2020-21 budget to provide housing and support for Queenslanders.

In relation to the pandemic, we know that there still are many people who need support. That is why our latest budget includes \$1.7 million for Community Connect workers in neighbourhood and community centres in areas most impacted by COVID-19. The pandemic has also highlighted the need for a strong digital economy. It is forecast that there will be an additional 10,000 digital professionals in our state by 2024. We are investing \$8 million over four years to deliver the digital professional workforce plan to harness the opportunities this will deliver for our state as our economy recovers. Despite the huge opportunities the digital economy presents for Queensland, I did not receive one question from those opposite about that part of my portfolio during the estimates hearing—yet another disappointment from the LNP.

Another important platform for our economic recovery is the arts, which each year injects \$8.5 billion into the state's economy and supports more than 92,000 Queensland jobs. The arts and cultural sector was significantly impacted by COVID-19 and we have supported it through our two-year Arts and Cultural Recovery Package. I am very proud of that work indeed. We are so fortunate that Queensland's positive health response has led to the easing of restrictions, with theatres open to full houses, live music venues welcoming more patrons and the return of outdoor festivals. I thank the committee for its report, and I support it.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (12.02 pm): I rise to speak on the estimates process. Let's talk about legacies. That is what the minister wants to talk about. What is the legacy that she and her government will leave in the housing space? Let's look at some of the figures that are factual right at this moment. At the moment there are 16,270 people in the category of 'very high needs' on the social housing register—or waiting list or whatever you want to call it. Some 18 months ago, that figure was 8,924. In the last 18 months those in 'very high needs' increased by 82 per cent. That is an absolute disgrace. How did the minister try to explain it away during estimates? 'Oh, it is because of COVID.' The minister failed to recognise that there had been an increase of 52 per cent before COVID even started. It is actually hard to believe that the numbers can increase by that percentage in that short period of time.

At the moment, colleagues, there are 26,397 people on the social housing waiting list. That is what it is. The minister can call it what she wants, but it is a waiting list. People go on that register because they expect to get a house. The numbers have increased 30 per cent in the last 18 months. We have 16,000 people in the 'very high needs' category. Another 10,000 people are categorised as high, moderate or lower. The minister should do the right thing by telling those people, 'Forget it, you will never get a house.' The minister is misleading these people, giving them false hope that one day they are going to get a house, and has blamed it on COVID.

Ms Enoch interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Minister, I will ask you to stop interjecting, please.


Mr MANDER: I can understand why the minister is interjecting, because those figures hurt—and so they should hurt. They tell a story of failure. This government has not kept up with demand in the social housing space. That is why we in this state have an affordability issue. That is why rents are so high. That is why people cannot get into the market at the moment. That is why we have so many people on the social housing waiting list.

One thing I would really love to know—and we will find this out—concerns the number of houses that they claim they are building. I want to know the net increase in houses. Everywhere I go I hear about them selling houses: 'They have sold this house; they have sold this block; they have sold this

house.’ The community housing sector is just beyond frustration in terms of working with this government. It is a group that can provide the solutions that we require to provide the houses that we need in this state.

This minister can talk about legacies. Her legacy will be the increase in the number of people in the ‘very high needs’ category on the social housing waiting list or register. I have whistleblowers from the department emailing me as they are ashamed of what is happening. The minister fails to tell people that older people attending at the housing service centres who can no longer afford to maintain market rent are being turned away because they are not eligible for the social housing register. This is another way that the figures are being fudged. We will hear more about that as well in the future.

This is incredibly worrying for Queenslanders, particularly very vulnerable people given false hope by this minister. We need to see practical solutions, not rhetoric. We need to see cooperation with the community housing sector, who feel as though the government has just pushed them aside and not allowed them to be in the affordable housing space, to ensure that we have housing in all levels at all times of need so that we can house Queenslanders, particularly vulnerable Queenslanders. We want answers to those questions. We will come back and make sure that people have a clearer picture of the true state of social housing in this state.

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (12.07 pm): As Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, it is a privilege to represent these three particular groups of Queenslanders who make valuable and far-reaching contributions to our communities. Every Queenslander deserves the opportunity to thrive, with their human rights respected, meaning we have an unwavering responsibility to ensure all Queenslanders are empowered, are treated with respect and dignity and have equal access to pathways into employment and social, cultural and economic opportunities. Unfortunately, during my estimates hearing the opposition were more focused on whether I could recite hotline phone numbers than on hearing about the positive outcomes we have delivered. I am keen to talk about those today.

The Palaszczuk government’s commitment to reframing the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders is just one of numerous initiatives that I have made a priority for this year. Early this month, the Premier and I proudly announced the co-chairs and members of the Treaty Advancement Committee. The committee will be co-chaired by Dr Jackie Huggins AM and Mick Gooda, who will be joined by members Professor Michael Lavarch AO, Dr Josephine Bourne and Sallyanne Atkinson AO. They will work to provide expert advice to government on the implementation of recommendations to continue our path to treaty. We want to do this diligently and with an emphasis on making sure all Queenslanders are part of Queensland’s treaty process.

By engaging in truth telling and reconciling with the past, we are committed to getting this right, to ensuring we have the right processes and supports in place to facilitate this important journey that we need to take together. I believe that the Treaty Advancement Committee will hold its first meeting next week.


Queensland’s treaty process coincides with our signing of the national Closing the Gap agreement last year, committing to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards 16 new targets aimed at improving life outcomes. These targets were developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their representatives, yet the opposition has expressed concern that they will lack meaningful outcomes. I look forward to bipartisan cooperation on Closing the Gap and also on treaty from the opposition.

I want to mention a couple of our key achievements as a government in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander space. We have maintained a dedicated Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. In terms of supporting achievement of Closing the Gap, we have made the highest investment of any state or territory of \$9.3 million to support capacity and capability building of community controlled organisations to improve outcomes. We legally recognised traditional Torres Strait Islander child-rearing practices through the Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Act 2020 introduced into this parliament by the member for Cook, the first Torres Strait Islander to be elected to any Australian parliament. As we know, that was passed and I can report to the House that that is progressing well and we should be able to appoint the commissioner in the middle of this year.

With regard to disability services, the LNP does not have a good record in this space. It cut critical services for people living with disability. Under the former LNP government, we saw \$642 million cut from the disability services budget—again, completely unacceptable. This was on top of the

\$368 million cut from NGO funding in the 2012-13 budget, devastating community service providers right across Queensland. We saw the number of people with a disability on the register of need skyrocket from 5,900 to more than 17,000, and it gets worse. With no plan to outsource accommodation support and respite services, more than 600 positions were cut from disability services. At that time Queensland was the only state not to have signed up to an NDIS trial site, citing a lack of money.

Around 78,000 Queenslanders have active NDIS plans. The scheme creates thousands of jobs; it boosts our economy. Work is still underway on the NDIS. We still have a long way to go, but we are working with our federal colleagues, we are working with other states, we are working with our stakeholders and we are working with the families as we move through. Another area that was focused on during estimates was the Forensic Disability Service. I recently visited the FDS and I am confident that FDS clients are treated respectfully and supported as appropriate, taking into account the wellbeing and care of the individual clients and those working with them at the service. I had conversations with all but one of the clients in the FDS. The one whom I could not talk to was actually out at TAFE, rebuilding his future and getting ready for his transition. I am very happy with the FDS. I want to thank the committee and thank my department for its work during estimates.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (12.12 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to this committee report. I want to thank the committee for having me as a guest. I want to thank all of the parliamentary committee staff, the ministers and their staff and public servants. The hearing was conducted in a decent way through the chair. Even though there were some interesting interpretations of standing orders, we were able to get through it. I want to refer to a couple of specific incidents that I am seeking more information about. At page 20 of the estimates transcript the minister for communities, who spoke earlier in this debate, said that she would come back and speak to me after about the issue of 15 workers connecting the Care Army volunteers. I have not yet heard from her, but there was very limited time allocated for me—most of that was for housing—and I understand that that is what happens in these situations.

The Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, who spoke just before me in this debate, referred to me being preoccupied with getting Care Army details correct. It was interesting that the numbers for the Seniors Enquiry Line and the Elder Abuse Helpline on the Care Army site were exactly the same, as I pointed out at estimates, and yet they are two completely different issues. The minister refused to acknowledge that it was anything to do with his department because the Care Army is covered by communities, but—and this is something that the member for Burnett just mentioned as well—it seemed like there was an abrogation of responsibility from the minister, whether it came to these issues or Indigenous issues, about not answering questions. I use estimates as an information-gathering exercise and ask courteous questions. All I was pointing out was that those numbers for the Seniors Enquiry Line and the Elder Abuse Helpline were exactly the same on the Care Army website.

When the minister is telling us that they are getting a lot more calls for either of them, one would have to wonder whether the statistics are going to hold up given that the numbers were exactly the same. I went to the UnitingCare annual report, which the minister referred me to, and I noted that elder abuse notifications in 2019-20 were 1,534, which is 13.8 per cent lower than 2018-19, and I understand that there were 23,000 calls to the seniors helpline, and during COVID those numbers did increase. The point is during the holidays those numbers on the Care Army website were changed under the cover of holidays, and I table copies of the Care Army website that shows that the numbers for the Seniors Enquiry Line and the Elder Abuse Hotline are exactly the same.


Tabled paper: Extract, dated 14 December 2020, from COVID-19 Queensland government website titled 'Your volunteering role' [[183](#)].

Tabled paper: Extract, undated, from COVID-19 Queensland government website titled 'Care Army: Your volunteering role' [[184](#)].

This showed me that there is no coordination between departments, and that was never more evident than in the issue of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy where the minister and the director-general seemed to use self-determination, which everyone supports, as an excuse for the minister and the department to not get government coordinated and working together. This happened when I asked about the Community Support Scheme that Indigenous Queenslanders are eligible for. The Minister for Multicultural Affairs was happy to explain how multicultural clients of the Community Support Scheme are able to be given information about how they might apply for something that is in communities. When it came to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Indigenous services, the minister and the director-general said, 'We're tired of doing things to Aboriginal people. We want to do things with Aboriginal people.' I agree with that absolutely and wholeheartedly, but that does not mean that

the department should not be interacting with those departments to make sure that the people whom they are acting for—Indigenous Queenslanders—are able to find out about these particular policies that come from other departments and make sure they are getting the best service.

I also asked the minister about whether he and the department were happy with QYAC, the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation, in terms of its financial performance and delivery. Yesterday I noticed that that organisation is being audited under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act. The minister said to me that it was subject to a cabinet subcommittee. Now we will find out whether a full audit will do more than a cabinet subcommittee of the Palaszczuk government. I was also interested to note that there are significant issues about QYAC that are still to be brought out, including what is happening on Moreton Island. A Quandamooka Truth Embassy has been established at Point Lookout to stop a QYAC development that is not supported by many Quandamooka people. Many Quandamooka leaders and people feel left out of Jackie Trad and QYAC's secret plans for Straddie, including Uncle Norm Enoch. We need to get these issues worked out to avoid having more problems in the future.

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (12.17 pm): I want to thank the members of the Community Support and Services Committee for their report and work on estimates day to support the process, as well as the parliamentary staff involved. I want to particularly thank the committee chair, the member for Mansfield, for her professional chairing of the hearing. She did an absolutely fantastic job on the day and should be commended. I have chaired five estimates hearings, but this was my first appearance as a minister. While those opposite invariably criticise these hearings, their commentary tends to ignore the farcical role that they play in undermining such hearings.

As I mentioned, I have presided over many hearings and at a number of those hearings members of the opposition have yelled at and badgered ministers and public servants, asked political 'gotcha' questions rather than those focused on meaningful accountability and walked out on hearings, all in the hope of a headline. It was refreshing therefore to experience the more respectful and professional tone brought by the member for Whitsunday, who led the opposition at my hearing. This place should be a place for robust debate and direct questioning. I welcome such scrutiny—it is a vital part of a working democracy—but it does not need to be aggressive or abusive. It does little but erode the public's confidence in us all and we can do it differently.

Our government is investing significantly across my portfolio areas of child safety and youth justice and continuing to invest in multicultural affairs. We have committed a record \$1.7 billion to keep our communities safe, to help our vulnerable children and families, and to celebrate our vibrant multicultural state. This includes \$166 million to implement reforms around early intervention with families; \$86 million across five years for the running of the new \$150 million 32-bed West Moreton Youth Detention Centre; and continuing the trial family-led decision-making to help families identify and address their child's needs to stop reoffending.


These are big financial investments and meaningful numbers, but the true story of my department is told by the people who work in it: those who give tirelessly to help our most vulnerable—our child safety officers, youth justice workers and multicultural affairs team and the staff who support them. Their work is difficult and challenging and becoming increasingly so. COVID has placed additional pressures on families, and the increase in substance abuse, particularly ice, is affecting our child safety and youth justice system. Yet in spite of this my portfolio continues to rise to the challenge. The number of 24-hour priority investigations started on time is higher than 94 per cent, despite investigation numbers rising by more than 10 per cent, the highest since records began in 2008. Our reforms and investment have allowed the child safety system to respond flexibly and meet this demand, but the impact will be long lasting and many of these families will need support for many years.

Our reforms also mean there are 1,500 fewer children admitted to a child protection order than predicted by the 2013 Carmody report, despite the number of children in care increasing by 2.7 per cent in the last financial year. I would like to acknowledge those putting up their hands to become foster and kinship carers. Across the year almost 200 new families have opened their hearts to children who need a home. Thank you!

In youth justice our priority is community safety. As Bob Atkinson aptly said in his 2018 report on youth justice, public safety is paramount and community confidence essential. These principles underpin our work. We are continuing our \$332 million investment in our co-responder teams, with police and youth justice working together to tackle youth crime by preventing it. Our Transition 2 Success program goes from strength to strength helping at-risk young people gain skills and training to

continue their education or get a job. These and other reforms initiated in 2019 are making a difference, with the number of offenders charged with offences in Queensland decreasing by 23 per cent in the last financial year. But when young people continue to offend and where they jeopardise community safety they are held to account. We have invested \$150 million in the 32-bed West Moreton Youth Detention Centre and \$5.7 million for the On Country programs in Mount Isa, Cairns and Townsville. We are also investing more than \$15 million in our five-point plan, taking tougher action on bail, working with police to target high-risk offenders and providing \$2 million across 10 community based crime action committees to develop local solutions.

From youth justice to multicultural affairs, with so many events cancelled last year because of COVID, we will be back bigger and better than ever this year with a record 211 events, sharing more than \$1.5 million across the state. I commend the report to the House.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (12.22 pm): As the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for the arts I rise to address the Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill and that area of budgeted expenditure examined by the Community Support and Services Committee and, specifically, the examination of budgeted expenditure for the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy. There is no doubt that Queensland's incredibly talented and diverse cultural and artistic community was one of the hardest sectors hit during the COVID-19 pandemic. Responding to this challenge has been a core responsibility of the state Labor government and whilst I acknowledge that some financial support has been made available, including the bringing forward of \$5.2 million of the Queensland Performing Art Centre's recurrent base grant as well as the waiving of some facility and utilities costs, I continue to be contacted by members of Queensland's arts community who remain concerned that more needs to be done by the Palaszczuk state Labor government for Queensland's individual artists and performers.

I do, however, wish to join with the Labor minister for the arts and acknowledge and thank senior members of Queensland's artistic and performing arts community and our artistic institutions for their efforts during the pandemic to ensure that as restrictions and other associated measures are eased Queenslanders can once again safely view, experience and enjoy the best that Queensland's artists and performers have to offer.

I take this opportunity to highlight that when questioned regarding the construction of a new theatre at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre the minister advised that it is 'definitely on time'. However, when pressed further as to whether this project is on budget, the minister chose not to answer the question directly and instead pointed to additional funding that has been allocated to the construction of the new theatre under the guise of expanding the offerings of the theatre. The minister's response to such a simple question of probity—that is, is this state government project on budget—again underscores the difficulty that the Palaszczuk state Labor government consistently has with being accountable to and transparent with the people of Queensland.


The Liberal National Party is a fervent supporter of building the infrastructure that our state of Queensland so desperately needs, infrastructure that has long been neglected and ignored by the Palaszczuk state Labor government. The Liberal National Party welcomes this investment but investing in infrastructure should never be a blank cheque. The Palaszczuk state Labor government must do better and be more accountable and transparent with every dollar it is spending and intends to spend on behalf of Queenslanders.

I also take this opportunity to say that the Palaszczuk state Labor government budget for 2020-21 exemplifies the ongoing difficulty that the government has with transparency and accountability. Nowhere was this more evident than in the duplicity with which the state Labor government treated Queenslanders with respect to additional borrowings. Labor told Queenslanders at the last state election that it would be borrowing on their behalf \$4 billion, but just weeks later that figure had blown out by a factor of seven to \$28 billion. What is worse is that this is despite promises of investing in the job-creating infrastructure that Queensland needs and deserves to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. They were not upfront when they actually went to the election with respect to that.

There are many other issues contained within the Community Support and Services Committee report on this year's budget. With respect to community infrastructure, such as neighbourhood and community centres, there remains significant concern in the sector with respect to the indexation of the funding and the programs that are provided within various neighbourhood and community centres across Queensland. My community is very concerned about the lack of investment in local infrastructure in relation to a new community centre and the response from the Labor minister with respect to funding. At the last state election they were given the impression by local Labor representatives that there would be sites and solutions found and funding forthcoming with respect to investing in that infrastructure.

On the reformed 16 national Closing the Gap targets there is a lack of clarity as to how the state government, from a jurisdictional perspective, intends to implement those here in Queensland to close the gap. It certainly needs whole-of-government strategies. I heard the contribution from the member for Surfers Paradise with respect to how various ministers and government departments work to implement that. The social housing waiting list is growing ever longer and that is of significant concern to vulnerable Queenslanders. It needs practical solutions and a commitment to working with the sector, as was outlined by the member for Everton.

I take this opportunity to thank the committee secretariat and the members of the committee for all of their work. The estimates process can certainly improve. It needs more time allocated for members of the opposition to ask questions. I know those matters will be considered by this House in due course.

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (12.27 pm): I rise in support of the *2020-21 Budget Estimates, Report No. 2, 57th Parliament, Community Support and Services Committee*. It is an absolute honour and privilege to be part of the Community Support and Services Committee with the sole responsibility to examine this committee's first budget estimates for the 2020-21 financial year. Our committee held a public hearing on 15 December 2020 and took evidence on the proposed expenditure from, and I acknowledge, Minister Leeanne Enoch, Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts; Minister Craig Crawford, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships; and Minister Leanne Linard, Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. I acknowledge the committee chair, Corrine McMillan, committee secretariat and committee members for their valuable contribution to the estimates process.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to Queenslanders right across this state. That is reflected in the 2020-21 budget which sees record investment towards new and improved infrastructure and services to improve the safety and wellbeing of Queenslanders everywhere. We watched as this pandemic swept quickly across the globe. Queensland was ready. In Queensland we were not going to take anything for granted, as seen in our fast-acting health response putting us in a strong position towards economic recovery.

The arts sector was hardest hit. This government backed the arts by investing in the sector to create opportunities to support jobs. A sum of \$21.2 million was allocated towards the building of the new performing arts venue at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre and \$9.9 million to complete the renewal of the critical infrastructure assets at the Queensland Cultural Centre.

This government believes in people. Strong people make strong communities. Partnering with community organisations allows us to extend our reach to the most vulnerable by offering initiatives such as food rescue, school breakfast programs, goods donation services and emergency relief for food and essential household costs. Our \$1.5 million investment into 12 organisations is the reason that we are seeing Community Connect workers supported and \$1.7 million will support 15 neighbourhood and community centres.


Our world is fast advancing and technology is embedded in our everyday lives. This government understands that investment into the digital economy means that we have the skills for jobs now and into the future to support the digital economy and key industries across the state.

Housing is an essential need for all Queenslanders. This government is committed to housing and homelessness services that are responsive, integrated and accessible. Our Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027 allows Queenslanders the certainty for improved housing outcomes and it also guarantees employment opportunities for the future.

The total estimated expenditure for the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy and the Arts is worth \$2.31 billion, which is a record investment to support struggling sectors, services and new and improved infrastructure. In Queensland we have many vulnerable groups among our First Nation people, seniors and people with disability. This government is absolutely committed to our most vulnerable with a total estimated expenditure worth \$2.820 billion. We have seen the dollars invested in upgrading, improving and modifying accommodation for people with an intellectual or cognitive disability. We are establishing the office accommodation and systems requirements to support the Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Act, which is important legislation that this government was courageous enough to back to give legal recognition to children adopted under traditional practice. We are developing programs and services for seniors to reduce the cost of living, enhance wellbeing, support community participation and prevent and address elder abuse.

We are large and we are diverse. We must do all that we can to support our young people who are engaging in unhealthy antisocial behaviours. As such, the \$86.5 million to staff and operationalise the new 32-bed West Moreton Youth Detention Centre or the \$5.7 million over four years for on-country programs in Mount Isa, Townsville and Cairns are all part and parcel of this government's commitment to the most vulnerable in our communities.

In closing, I thank all of the ministers for their hard work in supporting Queenslanders right across the state. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (12.32 pm): I rise to speak about the estimates process and, in particular, the work of the Community Support and Services Committee in that process. I acknowledge the hard work of the committee and recognise the chair, the deputy chair and all of the committee members, as well as all of those who contributed to the estimates process last year. It was pleasing to see that we actually got it done. I know that many, including our parliamentary staff and secretariat, undertake an enormous amount of work. In particular, I acknowledge the departmental staff who were there. I also acknowledge the minister's statements around meaningful accountability. It is critical that we use our opportunity and our positions when it comes to the estimates process, as well as each and every day in this House, to uphold what the taxpayers of this great state expect, which is meaningful accountability.

I draw the attention of the House to the discussion that was had and the questioning around supervised community accommodation, more commonly known as bail houses, and the \$30.8 million that was spent on that failed policy. The minister and I probably do not see to eye on whether or not it was a successful program. A media release that was distributed at the time that the session commenced announced the closure of bail houses because they worked. I would question that. The failed youth justice department was dismantled as it is now a good match with the integration of youth justice and child protection. I would question that that is the reform agenda that advocates are asking for. It could be suggested that putting together two broken systems without a cohesive and social policy platform is fraught with danger and will continue to fail our most vulnerable children and young people unless the cohesive and social policy platform is clearly articulated and executed. Part of my role is to ensure that that is upheld and I look forward to working in a bipartisan way with the minister to achieve that.

Information sharing between Child Safety and the police continues to be an issue. The police are spending countless hours and time after hours performing the roles of CSOs. We recognise that there is more to do in that space. The coroner made it clear that timely and transparent information sharing was key to ensuring the safety of children. During estimates when we asked about how much redacted information was being sent to police the response was quickly shut down, which was disappointing. That is on the back of the coronial inquiry and key recommendations made after the Mason Jett Lee case. Since that time we have seen many more children failed by the system. In fact, 14 children have lost their lives since the death of Mason Jett Lee and 18 children's lives have been lost under this government, which is an exceptionally sad figure.

Failing policy has delivered failing departments. When I speak about departments I am not referring to the workforce of that department. In fact, they are the ones who are failed. Sadly, the frontline workers and those they seek to support have been failed. I point to the Moreton Bay region where staff on the front line are so desperate to have anyone in government take action on case loads, culture and management practice that they have written to the Premier, our then opposition leader Deb Frecklington MP and the former minister. When I raised that letter with the director-general, I was told that the minister had not been briefed. Sadly, I hope that has been now addressed. I will table the letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, undated, to various recipients, regarding workplace culture within Child Safety Services in the Moreton Bay region [\[185\]](#).


That broken system has been passed from one minister to another and there is more work to be done. Staff are crying out for more work to be done. The community that is impacted by the challenges that the staff themselves see every day are asking for more to be done to ensure that children are protected. I draw the attention of the House to the comments contained in that letter. In part it states—

It is time to listen to the people who are actually aware of what is going wrong on the ground. We are trying to tell you why kids are being harmed without appropriate risk assessments and effective safety planning! If you ask us, we will tell you.

The letter further states—

This letter is about seeking for change and supporting us to be able to do the work we are all so passionate about.

It also refers to 'secrecy, culture of management and leadership protecting each other at the expense of workers wellbeing and safety and the wellbeing and safety of vulnerable children in our community'. It is not acceptable and I certainly encourage the minister to delve deeper into the claims made in that letter. I commend my comments to the House.

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (12.37 pm): I rise in support of the report of the Community Support and Services Committee. This committee has a very broad area of responsibility that encompasses the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy and the Arts; the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships; and the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs. Our responsibility is to consider the policy to be given effect by legislation and the application of fundamental legislative principles and matters arising out of the Human Rights Act 2019, and to examine subordinate legislation and its lawfulness.

It is now my privilege to provide highlights of the great work and commitment of our state's Palaszczuk government and those three government departments. I will first refer to the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy and the Arts. Some key issues that are being addressed by that department—and these are only brief as it is a very detailed report—include supporting and funding neighbourhood community centres with funding of \$1.5 million to 12 organisations for Community Connect workers and \$1.7 million for 15 neighbourhood and care army connect workers throughout the network of 125 neighbourhood and community centres. This is important for my area of Nicklin. I give a shout-out to the Nambour Community Centre among other NGOs in that electorate.

Social housing is reflected in the Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027 action plan. The government's reform of rental laws will provide better protection for tenants and owners and improve stability in the market. Other programs are supporting vulnerable people, including young people, families and adults, to access and sustain safe and secure housing through investing in specialist homelessness services and delivering Partnering for Impact to reduce homelessness in Queensland and broaden partnerships with the homelessness sector to achieve better outcomes for our vulnerable Queenslanders. Anyone who visits the hinterland will realise that Nambour is the end of the rail line, and we end up with a lot of homeless people. These plans are important to us. This, combined with reforms to the regulation of manufactured homes and retirement villages and an increase to the accessibility of the Rental Tenancy Authority, is testament to the government's commitment to providing safe and affordable housing for all Queenslanders.

In the arts sector, the government is delivering the Creative Together 2020-2030 road map, with significant funding to QPAC, the QCC, the Queensland Library, the Queensland Museum and the Queensland Art Gallery. A lot of this funding will be delivered to the regions and our thriving creative community in Nicklin.

The department is supporting seniors with investment in programs that raise awareness of elder abuse, reduce isolation through the Seniors Enquiry Line and provide financial concessions in utilities, rates and cards for goods and services.

Members of our community with different needs are supported by the government working with the federal and other state governments to enact legislation that screens workers in the sector. We are increasing funding for transport services and co-funding with the federal government for better accessibility to services, especially disability services, in our remote regions.


In partnership with First Nation people, the department is working with communities and recognising cultural practices, for example those set out in the *Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa* (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Act 2020; co-funding with the federal government on Closing the Gap initiatives; supporting the path to reconciliation through treaty; and empowering Indigenous communities with employment through community housing projects while facilitating small business enterprises.

Youth justice reform is a key issue for the community and government. The department has committed to a new facility in Wacol. It is supporting on-country programs in Mount Isa, Townsville and Cairns. It is extending the Conditional Bail Program, which provides support to young people while they are released on bail and encourages families in their decision-making and identifying problems.

Institutional child abuse survivors are assisted by the department administering direct monetary payments, providing access to counselling and psychological care, and providing assistance in seeking a personal response from the institution responsible for the abuse.

I have provided a snapshot only of all the departments' programs and initiatives. These departments handle some of society's biggest issues which are not easily solved. It is encouraging as a new member to see a bipartisan and collaborative approach taken. I commend the report to the House.

(Time expired)

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (12.43 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the estimates report of the Community Support and Services Committee. It is important at the outset to once again voice my concerns about how the estimates hearings are conducted and the serious flaws inherent in the process as it currently stands. I again raised these concerns with the Premier in the estimates hearing, in addition to letters I have sent in previous years, and I made some suggestions again in my statement of reservation in this committee report. It is a little bit like groundhog day here: each and every year the issues are the same and the government seems resolute in completely ignoring these criticisms. As a means of holding the government to account, the estimates process, as it stands, is weak at best. I have come to wonder whether it may in fact be worse than nothing. It creates the veneer of accountability, but it really does not do what it says on the box.

Any Queenslanders not watching these hearings to properly understand the extent of the farce could quite reasonably assume that the process provides a meaningful opportunity to scrutinise proposed budget spending and the operation of Queensland's executive government as a whole, but it is not. I am not alone in holding this view. People who have many more years experience in this place than me have made the same criticisms, including a highly regarded former Labor Speaker no less.

The change this year, however, is that the opposition has finally come on board and agreed to support a number of the reforms that I have been proposing since my very first experience of estimates. Every year in this place I have suggested that we should abolish or severely restrict Dorothy Dixers from government MPs. The opposition leader has now come out in full-throated support of my suggestions in this regard and correctly notes that Dorothy Dixers are just an opportunity for ministers to wind down the clock. If ministers' answers to Dorothy Dixers are—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Order, members!

Mr BERKMAN: Uncomfortable truths, perhaps. If ministers' answers to Dorothy Dixers are so important, they can put them in a ministerial statement or call a press conference. Let's not pretend that backbenchers are asking their own genuine, hard-hitting questions in estimates. We do not need to waste valuable time in estimates when government members and ministers have countless other opportunities for pantomime outside of the estimates hearings.

The opposition has also picked up my suggestion that all hearings are chaired by non-government MPs to prevent government chairs shamelessly misinterpreting and misapplying standing orders and abusing their positions. It was all too common again in these estimates hearings to see baseless points of order used to protect ministers and the government's interests.

The opposition leader is now also actively advocating for an increase in the time available for hearings, as I did throughout the last term. There are plenty of ways to increase the amount of time available for estimates other than the approach taken by the former LNP Newman government, which, as we have heard countless times from the government, ultimately limited members' opportunities to ask questions and attend multiple committees. In addition to that, we could also extend the opportunity to ask questions on notice to members other than full-time committee members. There are other ways that we could improve the process and improve transparency of the system overall.

The opposition leader's comments were very strong—I would not disagree with most of them—calling it a sham. It is good to see that the opposition agrees that the process needs to be fixed. I understand that the opposition leader will write a letter to ensure the process improves. I wish him the best of luck with that. He would not be the first to write a letter about these issues and he will not be the last, but hopefully it makes some difference and progresses the necessary reform of the committee system as a whole and estimates specifically.

With the time that I have left I will make some general comments. This committee has oversight of some of the portfolio areas that are of fundamental importance to Queenslanders and particularly to some of our most disadvantaged—issues such as community housing, arts, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, children and youth justice.

(Time expired)

Report adopted.
 Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.
 Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading (Cognate Debate)



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (12.48 pm): I move—

That the bills be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills read a third time.

Long Title (Cognate Debate)



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (12.49 pm): I move—

That the long titles of the bills be agreed to.

Question put—That the long titles of the bills be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION (EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 3 December 2020 (see p. 321).

Second Reading



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (12.49 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I acknowledge the work of the Health and Environment Committee in conducting its inquiry into the bill and finalising the report, which was tabled on 12 February 2021. I also thank the many stakeholders who made submissions and appeared before the committee.

COVID-19 is one of the most significant health crises of our generation that continues to spread globally. We have now seen over 111 million people contract the virus and passed an unfortunate milestone with more than 2.5 million people having died. We have seen other countries continue their lengthy lockdowns to try to mitigate the damage in their communities and the impacts on their health systems. Some of these countries can no longer provide basic health services because their health workers are engaged in managing the significant number of COVID-19 cases in their hospitals.

In the United Kingdom, strict lockdown measures, which were imposed late last year, have now been in place for several months. While these measures have started to prove effective in flattening the curve, as of yesterday they recorded more than 10,000 positive cases within 24 hours. The United States has now recorded more than 500,000 COVID-19 deaths. To put that into context, more American lives have been lost as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic than the American lives lost in both world wars and the Vietnam War combined. That is a morbid and terrifying fact, but the sad reality is that jurisdictions had forewarning of just how catastrophic this pandemic would be on the health of our communities.

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization declared that COVID-19 was officially a global pandemic. As the Director-General of the World Health Organization observed, they had 'rung the alarm bell loud and clear'. He said, 'We have never before seen a pandemic sparked by a coronavirus' and the WHO had 'called every day for countries to take urgent and aggressive action'. But, most importantly, he observed that the power to flatten the COVID curve was within reach for all nations. He noted—

Several countries have demonstrated that this virus can be suppressed and controlled. The challenge for many countries who are now dealing with large clusters or community transmission is not whether they can do the same—it's whether they will.

He went on to set out the approach that would become a hallmark of our response, saying—

If countries detect, test, treat, isolate, trace and mobilise their people in the response, those with a handful of cases can prevent those cases becoming clusters and those clusters becoming community transmission.

Queensland did. We went hard and we went early. While the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic in March, the Palaszczuk government had the foresight to declare COVID-19 a public health emergency on 29 January 2020. To date, we have been able to suppress and control the virus. The outstanding response of our health system has ensured that we have been able to stamp out clusters before they lead to widespread community transmission. We were able to bring in additional public servants to bolster our contact tracing capacity so that we could be assured that we were able to track and trace close contacts.

We have been able to live our lives with a degree of normality that is almost without parallel anywhere else in the world. That is why this bill is so important. It allows Queensland to continue the approach that has made us a world leader in pandemic control. This virus was never just a health crisis. The World Health Organization director-general observed that the COVID-19 pandemic—

... is a crisis that will touch every sector, so every sector, every individual must be involved in the fight ... countries must take a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach, built around a comprehensive strategy to prevent infections, save lives and minimise impact.

When the WHO director-general made his 11 March statement, there were 118,000 COVID cases worldwide. As I observed earlier, there have now been more than 111 million.

Our success was not predetermined. It was not based on luck. It was the result of the leadership of the Premier, the expert advice of our Chief Health Officer and the hard work of every Queenslanders. The international experience shows it is so important that we do not become complacent in our continued success or cease our response measures before it is safe to do so, even as we roll out the vaccine. In Queensland we have already faced some challenges in 2021. These challenges remind us that the pandemic is not over and we cannot become complacent.

The recent cluster of positive cases in the Hotel Grand Chancellor shows that we are still not in a position to lift all restrictions or move away from our current rapid response measures. Our mandatory hotel quarantine scheme remains one of Queensland's greatest defences against COVID-19 being transmitted throughout our community. We need to continue our current measures, such as social distancing and hotel quarantine measures.

The new variants of COVID-19 strains spread more rapidly and we must continue to have the powers available to allow us to respond quickly and effectively to reduce the public health risks posed by them. Delays in response to a potential outbreak might mean that it is too late to prevent uncontrolled and widespread transmission of COVID-19. As the Chief Health Officer has said, 'If we let it out, especially the new variants, we will not be able to get it back in the box.'

The experience in other countries demonstrates the dire impact that a second wave would have on our health system and our economic prosperity. The success of Queensland's health response in limiting the entry and spread of the virus continues to be the envy of many countries across the world. This response could not be achieved without the ongoing support and cooperation of the Queensland community and the emergency powers provided by the Public Health Act 2005, which allow the government to react quickly to contain and respond to the potential spread of COVID-19.

In 2020, due to the rapid nature of the response required to meet the challenges of COVID-19, the amendments to health portfolio legislation to support the Queensland government's health response were made. The amendments had sunset clauses with expiry dates to ensure the powers are time limited and will only be in place while they are needed. The bill seeks to extend these provisions for a further six months to continue: the powers provided to the Governor in Council to extend a declared public health emergency for up to 90 days instead of seven days; the emergency powers provided to the Chief Health Officer and emergency officers to make directions to limit, and respond to, the spread of COVID-19 in Queensland; and the framework to allow for the recovery of costs from a person required to enter hotel quarantine.

The bill also extends the amendments made to the Mental Health Act 2016, which allow for an authorised mental health service to be declared through an expedited process—that is, without gazetta!—and to allow mental health patients to be granted leave to comply with public health directions. Other technical amendments to the Public Health Act are also being extended to support the operation of Queensland's health response to COVID-19.

The emergency powers provided to the Chief Health Officer and emergency officers to make directions to limit, or respond to, the spread of COVID-19 have been critical to the success of our rapid response to the virus. Allowing the Chief Health Officer or other senior public servants to make public health directions has been adopted in other Australian jurisdictions. Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory and Queensland have given their chief health officers the power to make

directions. Western Australia provides powers to their Chief Health Officer to make directions under their Public Health Act to address specific health related matters. Powers are also provided to the Commissioner of Police and State Emergency Coordinator to make directions under the Emergency Management Act, including the directions which restrict entry to Western Australia.


Similarly, Tasmania provides powers to the Director of Public Health to issue directions under their Public Health Act and provides powers to the State Controller to issue directions under their Emergency Management Act, including the direction to restrict entry to the state. South Australia provides powers to the Commissioner of Police, as the State Coordinator, to make directions through their Emergency Management Act. All directions made in South Australia are made under their Emergency Management Act instead of under the Public Health Act. New South Wales is the only state where the power to make directions rests with the minister, rather than a senior public servant.

Facilitating the Chief Health Officer's ability to issue public health directions provides a platform for public health response measures such as those recommended by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee or agreed by national cabinet to be implemented as quickly as possible. Chief health officers of all the states and territories are members of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee. The committee provides a forum to share the latest evidence to inform the effectiveness of public health measures. This evidence has been used by Queensland Health to develop the most successful response measures to contain COVID-19.

While the risk of COVID-19 entering the community remains high, the Palaszczuk government, primarily through Queensland Health, continues to engage with various stakeholders, from tourism representative bodies, retail associations, aged care, disability, freight, airline and resource sectors, to ensure that the risks of COVID-19 spreading in the community can be appropriately mitigated. When events occur that require an immediate response, it is critical that the emergency powers extended by the bill are available to allow us to respond rapidly before one case of COVID-19 becomes an outbreak that we can no longer contain.

Our hotel quarantine system has been critical to the success of limiting people returning from overseas entering the community while potentially infectious. I am advised that the hotel quarantine system has processed over 71,000 people since last March. The amendments made to the Public Health Act to require people to pay their own quarantine costs continues to be necessary to ensure the viability of the hotel quarantine system. The bill extends these measures to ensure that the Queensland government can continue to collect costs for the services that it provides through hotel quarantine.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

 **Mrs D'ATH:** The amendments to the Mental Health Act, to provide emergency measures in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19 at an authorised mental health service, need to continue. We have been fortunate that we have not had to use these powers to date, but they are considered necessary to ensure we are in a position to protect people receiving important mental health treatment at an authorised mental health facility if an issue were to arise.

Some submitters to the parliamentary committee, such as the Queensland Mental Health Commission, encouraged further consultation with people with a lived experience of mental ill health as they are strongly impacted by the public health measures. If these powers under the Mental Health Act are needed to respond to an emerging issue, consultation will occur with those persons who are directly impacted.

As with other key vulnerable population groups, Queensland Health will continue to engage with the mental health sector to mitigate impacts arising from the health response to COVID-19 on those suffering from mental ill health. Supporting those people who are suffering from mental ill health is a critical part of our health response to COVID-19 and the extension of these measures will ensure we have the tools necessary to respond rapidly in the event of an outbreak.

As people become vaccinated, we will have the opportunity to consider the ongoing need for the emergency measures. We have only extended these powers for a further six months rather than, for example, 12 or 18 months. Six months is considered the least restrictive time frame to ensure that the emergency measures are available to protect Queenslanders but do not continue for longer than necessary.


The Public Health Act contains a significant measure to ensure a public health emergency does not stay in place for longer than necessary. The act requires me, as Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, to declare the end of the public health emergency if I am satisfied there is no longer a significant risk to public health from COVID-19. If that declaration is made, the emergency powers will come to an end from the time the declaration is made.

Further extension of these emergency powers past September 2021 may be required. If that happens, another bill will need to be introduced to the Legislative Assembly to allow careful consideration of whether these powers remain necessary to protect the health of Queenslanders at that time.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring we have the tools we need to continue to limit the spread of the virus while we start implementing the vaccine rollout. From the beginning of the pandemic we have put the health of Queenslanders first and we will continue to do so. Queensland was the first state in the country to declare a public health emergency in relation to COVID-19 and that was primarily due to the early and expert advice of our Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young. Since 29 January 2020, Queenslanders have stepped up and followed the advice of our public health experts to ensure we do everything possible to stop the spread of this highly contagious virus—and for that we say thank you.

On behalf of the Palaszczuk government, I thank all of our frontline workers, our healthcare professionals, emergency service workers, our Queensland Police Service, our shop assistants and workers who have continued to stock our shelves, our truck drivers, our public transport workers—everyone who has continued on the front line to ensure our communities continue to have the services they need.

While Queensland is in a great position now, we must not relax our vigilance. The basic principles that applied at the start of the pandemic, still apply now: wash your hands regularly; keep your distance with people, where possible; and if sick with any symptoms, regardless of how mild, get tested and stay at home until you receive a negative result. I know that together we will continue to get through this and I encourage all members to support this important bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.04 pm): I rise to speak to the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020. At the outset, I will acknowledge that the LNP will not oppose this bill and the extension of provisions outlined within. I respect that the extension of these provisions will enable the Chief Health Officer and emergency officers the necessary powers to limit, or respond to, the spread of COVID-19 in Queensland.

The bill extends the expiry dates of the following provisions until the end of the day on 30 September 2021 and also aligns the expiry dates for all the amendments made to health portfolio legislation: the Governor in Council to extend the declared public health emergency for up to 90 days; increased powers for emergency officers and the Chief Health Officer to limit, or respond to, the spread of COVID-19 in Queensland; the chief executive to delegate their powers to the Chief Health Officer or a person with expertise or experience in public health issues and improving the operation of the provisions of emergency officers (medical) to support the Queensland government's response to COVID-19; and a person to be required to enter hotel quarantine at their own cost.

With the passing of this bill, the necessary powers to safeguard Queensland against COVID-19 are provided. We respect that the health advice must be followed, and the LNP is unequivocal on that matter. We respect, and we will follow, the expert medical advice. In the submissions received by the committee there is a prevailing sense and acknowledgement, particularly from key industry groups and peak bodies, that the medical advice must be followed. There is also a strong sense that with the extension of these provisions may come the need for further sacrifices on behalf of Queenslanders.

The LNP understands that, when elements of these provisions are enforced, the social and economic impact can be devastating. We have seen that pain in all corners of the state. Queenslanders have lost a lot to COVID-19. The LNP is acutely aware of this, and so too should all members of the chamber. The LNP know that all Queenslanders want to be kept safe from COVID-19 and that the medical advice must be followed. With that said, I do wish to make some remarks on the government's communication of restrictions with Queenslanders and the transparency of the decision-making process. I do this in the spirit of constructive criticism and in the hope that this will be improved in the future should harsh restrictions ever be required again.

I do have concerns with how the government communicates the message to Queenslanders and sharing how the decision is made to impose or to lift these restrictions. The LNP has consistently called for releasing the advice the government receives. We will continue to do so, and this is the reason why: it will allow Queenslanders to know why hard decisions are being made. Being open and transparent with the advice takes out the uncertainty and the guesswork for Queenslanders. It means that businesses and families can plan ahead. It means that Queenslanders can have confidence in the decisions they make, whether it is business or their personal life.

In their written submission to the parliamentary Health and Environment Committee, the Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland very simply put, 'The criteria and process for lifting lockdown restrictions were ... unclear.' I agree with them. I understand the need to set lockdown laws, and that is governed by the expert medical advice, but without knowing what criteria needs to be met before imposing or lifting a lockdown creates undue stress on people far and wide. I do not think it is too much to say that Queenslanders should know the criteria; they deserve to know.

In the recommendations included in their submission, the CCIQ made the point that greater consultation with industry representative bodies is necessary before imposing new restrictions. That point is something the LNP has consistently heard from all different corners of the state, and it has merit. Again, it comes down to the government being able to communicate their decision-making clearly and rationally to Queenslanders, without shock or surprise.

Queenslanders deserve better than an announcement on breakfast TV made on a whim that the borders will reopen or close. There must be transparency in the process. Queenslanders all over the state have spent many long weeks and months apart from the family and friends since March 2020. These situations are made all the more difficult not knowing when domestic borders will close or reopen. I myself have not seen any of my children who live in Victoria and New South Wales for more than 12 months. With my own circumstances put to one side, making the advice publicly available would give people the confidence to book or delay travel if they knew the criteria for opening or closing the border. It would save a lot of heartache and it would let people appropriately plan. I genuinely feel for those who have been impacted by this, as it has impacted my own family as well.

Hopefully, as the Chief Medical Officer has foreshadowed, border closures may soon come to an end with the rollout of the vaccine now commenced. There are also still questions to be answered over how the Hotel Grand Chancellor hotel quarantine breach occurred. Yes, the government has released a report put together by the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Health, but how the virus was able to escape still remains a mystery.

This point also goes to the government's on-again off-again quarantine camps. There are people in parts of the state who have been left feeling extremely anxious at the thought of these facilities being built in their communities without knowing what processes and controls will be in place to stop the virus escaping again. We heard that the government put together a dot point plan for the Commonwealth to review, but Queenslanders are still left in the dark with respect to how a facility like this might function. I can understand the anxiety that some in the community feel when the government has not been open about how the virus escaped hotel quarantine in January. The expert medical advice will dictate whether or not these facilities are suitable or not. As things stand, it appears to be a case of the government picking up a problem and putting it somewhere else should these quarantine facilities be built elsewhere.

On the subject of communication or lack thereof, I wish to address disgusting and alarmist comments made in this chamber yesterday by the member for Greenslopes. In his contribution to the appropriation debate, when referring to me the member said—

She gives comfort to the anti-vaccination movement when she comes into this place and peddles the line that there will be inequity in access to COVID-19 ...

This type of comment from the member for Greenslopes is both appalling and disturbing. Given that the member is also a nurse, I find it totally unconscionable and irresponsible that he would even think to say such a thing. People on both sides of this chamber should know better than to give oxygen to vaccine conspiracies and anti-vaccine movements, but clearly the member for Greenslopes does not. Yesterday in my contribution to the debate on the vaccine rollout I said:


I urge those opposite to do the right thing and make sure these vaccines are spread equitably across this great state so that all Queenslanders have the best chance of a healthy 2021, reunited with their families and friends.

How one could possibly draw the inference that my comment 'gives succour' to the anti-vaccination movement is beyond me. I made the point that I, like many Queenslanders, hope that the vaccine is rolled out as quickly and equitably as possible. In his remarks the member spoke about destroying confidence in the vaccination process. Sadly, the only person doing damage to that process is the member himself by making such irresponsible statements. I have written to the Speaker about my concerns over the member's comments, which are entirely inappropriate and simply untrue. I believe that he has wilfully misled the House and is seeking to score cheap political points over an issue that is far too serious for that.

As parliamentary representatives it is incumbent on us to ensure our remarks are accurate and maintain public confidence in the state's rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine. With commentary like this from its own members there is no wonder so many in the community think the government's messaging

around COVID-19 restrictions needs improving. On top of improved communication and improved transparency also comes the need to apply restrictions consistently. When thinking about celebrity exemptions from hotel quarantine, it hardly seems fair that the average Queenslander is forced to wait 14 days in hotel quarantine but Hollywood stars do not. If we are really all in this together, as the Premier has said, then we must truly be all in this together. It should not matter if you are Matt Damon or Matt from Mudgeeraba: there should not be a rule for some and not for others. It is the government's duty to apply these rules fairly and consistently.

Our message on this side of the chamber is simple: we respect the expert medical advice and we will not stand in the way of that advice. However, the LNP believes that it is incumbent on the government to be more transparent and to better communicate when new restrictions are in force. When they are in force they should be applied consistently and fairly.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.13 pm): It is always interesting to follow the member for Mudgeeraba. I note that the opposition will not be opposing this bill, which is good to hear. The member talked about improved communication. I would think they should reflect on where the opposition was 12 months ago when they did not follow clinical advice and called 64 times for the borders to be opened.

I rise to support the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in China, on 29 January 2020 a public health emergency was declared under section 319 of the Public Health Act. Fast-forward a year; the numbers are stark. As at 1 February 2021 the World Health Organization reported over 102 million confirmed positive cases and a staggering 2.5 million deaths globally. Australia has experienced a far lesser burden from COVID-19 than other countries. In Queensland as at 1 February 2021 there were 1,310 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and six deaths relating to the virus.

We made one recommendation: that this bill be passed. Our committee invited stakeholders and subscribers to make written submissions on the bill. We received 124 submissions. On 18 December 2020 we also received a written briefing from Queensland Health in response to matters raised in submissions. The committee held a public hearing on 22 January this year. As stated in the explanatory notes—

The amendments made to Chapter 8 of the Public Health Act allowed for:

- the Governor-in-Council to extend the declared public health emergency for up to 90 days (*Public Health (Declared Public Health Emergencies) Amendment Act 2020*, which received assent on 7 February 2020;

I would like to thank all of the staff of Queensland Health, the director-general, Dr John Wakefield, and the Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, who has only just given a caucus briefing on the vaccine rollout—

An opposition member: Caucus?

Mr HARPER: No, not caucus. I hope you learned. I hope you were all paying attention because it is very important.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Through the chair.

Mr HARPER:—for their incredible work and leadership as part of Queensland Health's response to COVID-19. I would also like to thank all allied health staff and emergency services for the work they have collectively done throughout COVID-19. Throughout 2020 they all worked incredibly hard to keep Queenslanders safe and allowed businesses to re-open in a COVID-safe way.

This bill will allow the current legislative response measures that have been implemented by our government to continue for a further six months until 30 September 2021. The bill will continue the amendments made by the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Act 2020. The provisions give emergency powers to the Chief Health Officer and emergency officers to make directions to limit and respond to the spread of COVID-19 in Queensland. These powers have been absolutely critical and were core to the success of our government's health response. They allowed the implementation of requirements to restrict the movement of people and for people to enter hotel quarantine. The bill provides for the continuation of the amendments under the Mental Health Act.

Even as we start the vaccine rollout in Queensland we must never be complacent about the risks of COVID-19. Our health service must be able to respond quickly to any emerging risk of COVID-19 entering and spreading throughout Queensland. The extension of the current legislative framework will allow us to do just that. The Chief Health Officer has to be able to respond swiftly to any threat of COVID impacting our Queensland community. As at 1 February 2021 there were 19 public health directions in force in Queensland. Current public health directions relating to COVID-19 include some of the

following: directions for aged care, border restrictions, COVID-19 testing for quarantine facility workers, declared hotspots, disability accommodation services, hospital visitors, mandatory face masks, movement and gathering, and quarantine and COVID-19 testing for international air crew.

I would like to share some positive comments from some of the submitters who wrote to us and appeared at our public hearing a month ago. Support for the bill was generally expressed on the basis that Queensland's Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, was competent, professional, trustworthy and responsible for keeping Queenslanders safe from the COVID-19 pandemic. I am sure that all members would agree with those remarks. There was also recognition, particularly at the public hearing, that without a strong health response the economic impact would far exceed the current economic difficulties being experienced in Queensland. It is worth noting there are other jurisdictions in Australia that provide their Chief Health Officer the same level of responsibility. The Queensland Mental Health Commissioner, Ivan Frkovic, outlined the need for the emergency provisions. He said—

A pandemic of this nature requires special and sometimes urgent measures to ensure appropriate, quick and effective responses to ensure public health and safety. Such responses can have whole-of-life and whole-of-population mental health wellbeing impacts ... Queensland has managed the pandemic extremely well.

In addition, the Queensland Human Rights Commissioner, Scott McDougall, commented in relation to the CHO's emergency powers. He said—


Clearly, the Queensland government has taken its obligation to take positive steps to protect the right to life very seriously and in this regard we acknowledge the work of the CHO in making directions that have prioritised the preservation of life.

The bill was also supported by professional organisations in the health sector. The Australian Medical Association Queensland expressed overall support for extending the CHO's powers until 30 September 2021 and extending the amendments to the Mental Health Act and the Public Health Act with regard to hotel quarantine. The AMA also congratulated the Queensland government on the work done to manage the COVID-19 pandemic in Queensland, noting that—

... Queensland acted quickly in enforcing lockdown restrictions and closing borders to the states with high community transmission rates, leading to no community transmission ... to date.

We had some submitters objecting to this bill for their own reasons. I would like to respond with this observation to put it in perspective. We have over five million people in Queensland. I believe after speaking to thousands of my own constituents in Thuringowa over the last year that the bulk of our state supports the outstanding work done by our Chief Health Officer, who should be applauded for her work over the last year in dealing with COVID-19.

I thank the hardworking team in Queensland Health who worked over the Christmas period. Our committee did not stop either, and I would like to thank and acknowledge all of the committee members for doing that work over the December-January period. I also thank our secretariat. We did a lot of work in a very short time frame to get this important report before the House, and it was tabled on 12 February. I support the bill.

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (2.21 pm): I would like to add my thanks to the committee secretariat and committee members for their work over the summer break, as mentioned by the member for Thuringowa. It was interesting to turn up in the second week in January and have to prepare for a hearing on that Friday. It was an important hearing and an opportunity to voice the concerns of Queenslanders and also investigate thoroughly the need for the extension of these powers.

I would also like to put on the record my thanks to Jeannette Young and the team in Queensland Health who have led the Queensland government response. I know for them it has been particularly challenging. It was a privilege to listen to her presentation and her responses and to hear some of the detail that she and her team went into in dealing with some of the challenges. I might add that there were some conflicting views in some of the submissions that were presented, and I will talk more about that in a moment.

On behalf of my colleagues, I would also like to express a special thanks to all of the emergency services workers and frontline staff—the nurses, doctors and first responders—who have had what could only be described as a fairly harrowing year. We heard in some of the submissions, particularly from the nurses' union and others, about some of the challenges of upskilling, training and managing PPE and other protocols during the early stages of the pandemic when so little was actually known. As the chair said, I add my thanks to all of those involved.

I particularly want to single out Mark Wheeler, the head of the Gold Coast police response. Mark certainly spent a lot of time down on the border with border management issues, and I know the member for Currumbin, who is the Deputy Speaker in the chair at the moment, had to deal with many challenges

down there with her constituents, let alone without the normal annual twilight zone that everyone enters around daylight savings. I know that you and your team in the Currumbin office have had a lot to deal with. I want to pass on my thanks to Mark Wheeler, the police officers, the volunteers from the SES and other volunteers on the Gold Coast who contributed significantly to border control.

The shadow minister and member for Mudgeeraba outlined earlier the LNP's response—that is, we will not criticise or oppose the extension of these powers, although we do believe it is incumbent on the government to be more transparent and to better communicate as the new rules are enforced. The committee received about 113 submissions, and while those of substance from some of the major organisations—like the AMA, the nurses' union and some of the organisations that are very much at the front line of this—were very complimentary, there were members of the public and other interest groups that expressed concerns about the timing of some of the announcements and the lack of understanding and the rationale behind some of the announcements. There is an old saying in marketing—that is, communicate, communicate, communicate, and then when you think you have communicated enough, communicate just a little more.

It was pleasing as a member of the opposition to be invited to a briefing with the Chief Health Officer today. She outlined the program for Queenslanders, which is available online. I note that 47,000 first responders are to be vaccinated in the first wave of vaccinations, depending on the timing of the supply. They will be followed by all of those Queenslanders who are aged 70 plus, and then I get a look in in the next round—which I think they are calling 2a—which is perhaps April, May or a little further down the track for all those aged over 50.

Mr Minnikin: Surely not.

Mr MOLHOEK: Thank you, member for Chatsworth. I will take that interjection but I am over 50. Once all of those aged over 50 are vaccinated, it will go to all other adults with the hope that the vaccinations will be completed by Christmas—although the Chief Health Officer did say that there was still more research and work to be done in respect of whether children should be vaccinated and when that should occur.

Needless to say, the pandemic has had a huge impact on Queenslanders, and I feel it is important to bring before the House concerns raised by the Mental Health Commissioner around how Queenslanders are coping and to give a few statistics. One of those is that, during the pandemic, Queenslanders and Australians actually consumed more alcohol. Nationally, we saw an increase of some 26 per cent, or \$3.3 billion, in extra alcohol sales during the pandemic. One of the concerns that was raised by Caterina Giorgi from the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education in Australia is that there has been some significant predatory marketing tactics undertaken by some online businesses and some of the major retailers of alcohol in Australia over the last year. I would suggest to the House that, beyond this legislation, at some point we should be looking at adopting some of the legislation that other states are now considering around home delivery and digital marketing tactics undertaken by retailers of alcohol online.

In December alone, retail stores around Australia—65 per cent of which are owned by Coles and Woolworths, I might add—turned over almost \$2 billion, making it the highest earning month in Australian history. There are some significant challenges there. In the Mental Health Commission's *Queensland Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategic Plan: 2018-2023*—and these statistics are a few years old—it was concerning to see that one in five Queenslanders over the age of 14 actually drink alcohol at risky levels. I suspect that if we had more current statistics available to us we would probably be a little alarmed at just what that has looked like over the past 12 months. The government's response to COVID needs to dig deeper in terms of how we deal with mental health, alcohol and other drug addictions.

We heard some other statistics from the Mental Health Commissioner that I thought were quite interesting. During the pandemic we saw a 20 per cent increase in calls to triple 0 in respect of mental health issues, and I think that is concerning. We saw an 11 per cent increase in the presentation of people struggling with mental health issues to emergency departments across Queensland. Queenslanders are feeling the pain and the strain of this. We saw a 24 per cent increase of children's calls to Kids Help Line and we saw through that a 21 per cent increase amongst 12- to 18-year-olds calling for greater support and looking for more information.


During the public hearings we had the opportunity to ask a lot of questions. I will be honest; there were two lines of questioning that we thought we would run. One was going hard and asking lots of very challenging questions and the other was to perhaps take a slightly more conciliatory approach, which is the approach that I took on the day.

Ms Boyd: What happened on the day?

Mr Minnikin: Something happened on the road to Damascus!

Mr MOLHOEK: I am not taking those interjections. The rationale for our questioning was the belief that Queenslanders deserved to see the full health advice and all of the reasons behind some of the decisions. Of course, that hearing came very briefly after that snap lockdown of three days, which was inconvenient but understandably necessary. I think Queenslanders rightly want to have access to the information and reasons. They want to know what is behind the decisions that are being made.

We did hear in some of the submissions real concerns around human rights. It was pleasing to hear from the Human Rights Commission that, while they have had an increase in complaints, they have been managing and dealing with those in a fairly meaningful manner. While there were some concerns raised, they did not believe there were any significant breaches of human rights throughout the process of last year.

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (2.31 pm): I am proud to stand in this place to talk on the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Positions) Amendment Bill. May I clarify some of the comments made by my esteemed colleague the member for Southport with regards to the Mental Health Commissioner, who was thrilled at the Palaszczuk government's commitment and funding to supporting people with mental health, both at the beginning of the pandemic and also as a part of our Unite and Recover strategy. With regard to the human rights, the Human Rights Commissioner, who spoke on the day, very clearly outlined that the human rights of people were not being breached during COVID because the right to life is the most important and overarching aspect of the Human Rights Act.

On 29 January 2020 the Queensland government declared a public health emergency under section 319 of the Public Health Act 2005 due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in China. The declared public health emergency was extended to 31 December 2020 through regulation. Throughout 2020 the Legislative Assembly passed several pieces of legislation to amend the Public Health Act and the Mental Health Act to support the Palaszczuk government's response to COVID-19. Due to the rapidly evolving situation, amendments were made either through urgent bills or amendments during consideration in detail. Sunset clauses were included so that the amendments were not permanent but would expire after a set date, generally 12 months after commencement.

The Palaszczuk government has been a global leader in the health response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are the envy of the world. A large part of our success can be attributed to our Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young. By following Dr Young's advice and giving her the emergency powers needed, the Palaszczuk government has been able to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in a swift and decisive manner. If we had not provided emergency powers to the Chief Health Officer to issue directions to limit and respond to the spread of COVID-19, I have no doubt that many more Queenslanders would have contracted the virus. I am actually really thrilled to hear those in the opposition agreeing with that today, because that was not the case during the previous government. How many times did they call for the borders to be opened? Sixty-four I think it was.

Honourable members: Sixty-four.

Ms PEASE: Thank you very much: 64.

This bill will allow the current legislative response measures implemented by the Palaszczuk government to continue for a further six months until 30 September 2021. The bill will continue the amendments made by the Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Act 2020. These provisions give emergency powers to the Chief Health Officer and emergency officers to make directions to limit and respond to the spread of COVID-19 in Queensland. These powers have been critical to the success of the Palaszczuk government's health response as they allow for the implementation of requirements to restrict the movement of people and for people to enter hotel quarantine.

The objectives of the previous bill were to: amend chapter 8 of the Public Health Act 2004 to allow for the Governor in Council to extend the declared public health emergency for up to 90 days, which received assent on 7 February 2020; increase powers for emergency officers and the Chief Health Officer to limit, or respond to, the spread of COVID-19 in Queensland under the Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Act 2020, which received assent on 19 March 2020; the chief executive to delegate their powers to the Chief Health Officer or a person with expertise or experience in public health issues and improving the operation of the provisions of emergency officers (medical) to support the Queensland government's response to COVID-19 under the Justice and Other Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Amendment Act 2020, which

received assent on 25 May 2020; and a person to be required to enter hotel quarantine at their own cost. Amendments were also made to the Mental Health Act 2016 through the Justice and Other Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Amendment Act 2020 to allow declarations to be made about a mental health service through an expedited process and mental health patients to be granted leave to comply with mental health directions. The bill extends the expiry dates of these provisions for a further six months, until the end of September 2020 and also aligns the expiry date for the amendments made to the health portfolio legislation.

As we have heard, the committee invited stakeholders to make submissions on the bill, and we received 124 of those. We also received a briefing from the Queensland health department on 18 December. Can I say that support for both the bill and the Queensland Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, was acknowledged as competent, professional and trustworthy and was responsible for keeping Queenslanders safe from the COVID-19 pandemic. This was an overarching response in the submissions. There was also recognition, particularly at the public hearing, that without a strong health response the economic impact would far exceed the current economic difficulties being experienced in Queensland.


The bill was supported by professional organisations in the health sector with the AMA of Queensland expressing overall support for extending the CHO's powers until 30 September 2021 and extending the amendments to the Mental Health Act and Public Health Act—hotel quarantine. Further, the AMA Queensland congratulated the Queensland government on the work done to manage the COVID-19 pandemic in Queensland, noting that Queensland acted quickly in enforcing lockdown restrictions and closing borders to the states with high community transmission rates, leading to no further community transmission in Queensland to date.

Whilst the act of closing the borders was highly criticised by other states and territories, the Queensland government continued to act in the best interests of the health of Queenslanders and followed the CHO's evidence based medical advice. This support was reflected by other stakeholders, including the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, the Lung Foundation of Australia and the Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland, who also acknowledged that the delegation of authority to the CHO during the pandemic was an important mechanism and had a timely effective response to COVID-19. Similarly, the Queensland Hotels Association and the Queensland Tourism Industry Council also supported the bill. The Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland outlined its support for the extension of powers to extend to public health emergency as did the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association and the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union.

Further, the Queensland Police Service explained the need for the bill from a policing perspective. If they had not had these sorts of powers, they would not have had the authorities needed for their work at the borders to keep people from coming out of the hotspots or put them into quarantine. Being able to respond quickly in an evolving and fast-moving health crisis is paramount to protecting Queenslanders. The Chief Health Officer outlined that the advice on health that she received was based on a large range of expert health advice including the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, or the AHPPC, which is advised by experts in multiple fields. At its core, it has every Chief Health Officer from every state and territory in the Commonwealth.

About 60 people sat on that committee in advising our Chief Health Officer and working together. There are also multiple committees that sit under the AHPPC such as the Communicable Diseases Network Australia, the Infection Control Expert Group, the National Emergency Medical Service and the Public Health Laboratory Network.

I thank the Premier; the Deputy Premier; the current health minister; our wonderful Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young; first responders; our frontline health workers; all of our frontline workers, such as people who worked in the retail industry and the like; and all of the businesses that responded to the evolving and changing face of restrictions, requirements and guidelines. I congratulate them on how quickly they responded and I appreciate the great work that they all have done. They have followed the expert advice of our Chief Health Officer and have worked to keep Queenslanders safe. This bill will ensure Queenslanders' health and ensure we all are in safe hands. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (2.40 pm): I thank the Health and Environment Committee—I am a new member of the committee—the secretariat, frontline workers and doctors in the hospitals and all of Queensland for how they have handled themselves through this pandemic. This bill amends the Public Health Act to allow a declared public health emergency to be extended by regulation for periods of up to 90 days. The bill also amends various other pieces of emergency COVID legislation by extending their expiry dates by another six months, to the end of September 2021.

Under Queensland's COVID-19 public health emergency legislative framework, enormous legislative and executive decision-making powers are left in the hands of a select few. The original powers the Palaszczuk government granted were developed and granted in haste, following a late-night emergency sitting of parliament without any public debate. What must be made clear is that delegated legislation is an exception and a break to the separation of powers principle. All these decisions have been made by the executive, including unelected departmental officials, with no oversight, debate or parliamentary scrutiny.

During a time of emergency it is essential that we continue to hold governments to account in the exercise of their powers. Even in an emergency, governments must exercise their powers in accordance with the rule of law. A failure to do so will seriously threaten civil liberties and many fundamental legal principles inherited from our common law tradition including due process, the presumption of innocence and habeas corpus.

Mr Saunders interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Member for Maryborough, cease your interjections.

Mr ANDREW: There is also a real danger that, without any clearly defined exit plan, these emergency powers and laws will become normalised over time and eventually could become permanent. We see hints of this direction in the bill's explanatory notes, which state—

Further extensions past September may be required in the future.

Mr Saunders interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Maryborough, I have warned you. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr ANDREW: Dr Young echoed this when she appeared before the committee. She said—

It is difficult to determine with absolute certainty how long these emergency response measures will be required.

I was also alarmed by some of the witness testimony I heard as a member of the Health and Environment Committee which detailed some of the terrible impacts these restrictions and sudden lockdowns are having on ordinary Queenslanders. There was a lot of confusion in pubs when certain measures were handed down. People did not understand fully the restrictions and what they had to comply with. It was difficult.

According to testimony given by the Mental Health Commissioner and the Human Rights Commissioner, there are many significant and adverse effects on people's mental health and wellbeing as a result of the government's emergency laws and restrictions. The Mental Health Commissioner in particular told the committee that many people are facing a number of huge challenges including financial stress, business and job losses, pressures of homeschooling, loneliness and social isolation.

Demand for mental health services in Queensland has increased significantly since March 2020. Medicare subsidised mental health service provision increased by 15 per cent. The Queensland Ambulance Service reported a 20 per cent increase in triple 0 mental health related incidents. Self-harm and suicide cases presenting at emergency departments have increased by 11 per cent. The commissioner said that many cases of self-harm and suicide were amongst young people who face particular challenges and mental anxiety as a result of the ongoing restrictions and uncertainty around lockdowns. These include missed schooling, remote learning, social isolation and the loss of rites of passage such as birthday parties, schoolies week and graduation ceremonies, all having a lasting psychological impact on our young. Kids Helpline reported a national increase of 24 per cent in demand for counselling services alone, while public mental health services saw an almost 21 per cent increase in referrals of 12- to 18-year-olds in the July to September quarter.

The pandemic has also affected Queenslanders' use of alcohol and other drugs, with government funded drug and alcohol services reporting a shocking 54 per cent rise in weekly calls last year. The Human Rights Commissioner said at the hearing—

... the right to life creates positive obligation on the government to protect lives.

However, he was also critical of the Queensland government's interpretation of this obligation, saying—

... they have gone, in my view, too far in saying that it automatically overrides all other rights.

We also heard from other witnesses of the countless hardships inflicted on families, workers, small business owners and sole traders in Queensland. The CEO of the Queensland Hotels Association, Bernie Hogan, told committee members—

Many of—

our members—

are family owned enterprises with long histories of being the heart of their communities. I will put it simply: 2020 has been the year that brought our industry to its knees in many parts of Queensland.

Many of our iconic hotels were forced into bankruptcy or closed down across Queensland, which Mr Hogan said was 'probably one of the most disheartening things we are seeing, because once they go they do not come back'.

Many written submissions as well as a number of witnesses at the public hearing also expressed concerns over the secrecy and lack of transparency around data and the medical advice on which the CHO and Queensland Health were basing some of their policies. Trying to get information from the Queensland government on anything to do with the virus or detailed information regarding cases has been impossible. At a time when the government should be providing as much information as possible to the public, it has brought down the shutters and told the public simply to trust the government.


The people need information so that they can better understand why these decisions are being made and on what basis. Hiding the scientific basis for pandemic policies makes it harder for the public to evaluate what is being done. When health authorities present one rule after another without clear, science based substantiation, their advice ends up seeming arbitrary and inconsistent. That erodes public trust and makes it harder to implement rules that do make sense.

Of the 124 public submissions to the committee on the bill, I counted 107 that were opposed to the bill and just 17, mostly from government or government connected groups, in favour of it. That equates to 87 per cent of submissions opposing the bill and just 13 per cent in favour. Most of the 107 who opposed the bill did so with a great deal of conviction and emotion. Against the bill there were submissions from at least six doctors, one a former director-general of Queensland Health; one from the Menzies School of Health Research; and another a former consultant thoracic physician in Queensland from 1988 to 2018 with considerable experience in treating people with acute respiratory viral infections. There were also submissions from Senator Malcolm Roberts, the Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland, a leading biomedical scientist, several highly qualified naturopaths, a former high-level federal Treasury economist/analyst as well as two law professors from Queensland universities.

It was stated as being a core goal that the committee give proper consideration to the legislative or democratic principles at stake here. That being the case, why were there no legal or constitutional experts at the public hearing to provide expert legal opinions on some of the legal questions around the bill? There were two written submissions from constitutional law academics, both of whom were opposed to the bill's use of delegated powers and extension of the CHO's extraordinary emergency powers. Why were these two legal experts not invited to appear at the hearing—or the Queensland Law Society, the Queensland Bar Association or a professor of constitutional law from one of the universities?

Under the rule of law model Australia was built on, any exercise of the executive's regulation-making powers needs to be proportionate. The government, CHO, the committee's report and the bill's statement of compatibility with human rights all state in perfunctory fashion that it is. Unless you believe that absolutely anything is justifiable in the interests of eliminating the transmission of this disease, that is clearly too simplistic, as the Human Rights Commissioner pointed out in his evidence at the hearing.

Many scientific experts that I have heard from have stated that, unlike smallpox, the COVID virus cannot be eliminated as it is also hosted by other species. Maintaining an eradication strategy in Queensland risks a future of economic impoverishment, endless snap lockdowns, disruptive travel restrictions, panic buying and rationing. There is a whole list of things that can go on, but thankfully this week we have seen the rollout of the vaccine. It is not a silver bullet, as the CHO has said. There will be other vaccines that will come after this vaccine. With regard to transparency, it would be nice if the government could give the health committee some sort of oversight when emergency powers are going to be wielded so that people can get some forewarning so they can understand what they can do about it to better ensure that Queensland stays COVID free.

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (2.50 pm): I am proud to rise in support of the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020. I was privileged to give this bill particular attention in my role as a member of the Health and Environment Committee, and I thank the chair and my fellow committee members. However, it is interesting to give my contribution after that of my colleague the member for Mirani, whose contributions have been interesting, to say the least. In particular, I reflect with some irony on the bandying about of the right to life in a manner that I am yet

to hear up until this time from more conservative members of this chamber. It seems that the right to life is suddenly of extraordinary importance when it comes to people's ability to go to the pub, yet I struggle to put that into context with some of the behaviour I saw during the recent election campaign.

I also note with interest that Queensland's economic response following on from the economic recovery plan that the Palaszczuk Labor government is rolling out has been exemplary and the seemingly disastrous impacts that have been referred to by the member for Mirani are not coming to pass and have not been indicated by anything we have seen before this chamber or anywhere else, so I look with interest to see in what fever dreams those imaginings will play out.

It has been nearly 400 days since the first case of COVID-19 was diagnosed and announced in Queensland, and it is true that in that time our world has changed in ways we could hardly have imagined. Not for over 100 years have we faced such an overwhelming global threat. Since that day in January 2020, the world has seen 111 million cases and nearly 2.5 million deaths. At this very moment over 92,000 people are known to be in a serious or critical condition suffering from COVID-19. By comparison over that period, Queensland has had only 1,323 cases, with most of those contracted overseas and detected in our world-leading hotel quarantine system which other jurisdictions internationally are now attempting to copy. None of this distracts from the tragedy that six Queenslanders have lost their lives.

My electorate of Pumicestone has seen our share of this crisis. With a median age more than a dozen years above the average, Pumicestone is the oldest state electorate in Queensland. Pumicestone residents also experience more than their share of chronic health conditions and disability, and this means that people in Pumicestone have good reason to fear the impacts of COVID-19. Early in 2020 the Palaszczuk government took swift action in this place to create a framework for our response. We passed laws to urgently amend the Public Health Act and various other pieces of legislation but, given the urgency of that response and the wideranging and serious nature of the measures taken, appropriately short sunset periods were included to ensure Queenslanders could have confidence that those measures would continue only as long as was necessary to address the COVID-19 threat.

Those measures are the essential tools in our Palaszczuk government's toolkit that have worked so well to contain COVID-19 and now we in this place need to ensure that those tools remain available while the risk to Queenslanders continues. These tools include the powers of our Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, to activate the complex machine that has worked so effectively to keep Queenslanders safe. Many members in this place have today received a briefing from Dr Young on the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine, our next phase of Queensland's health response. Her strength and knowledge shine through. There is no better respected state Chief Health Officer anywhere in Australia, and no wonder: this is the fifth pandemic Dr Young has managed in her role as Queensland's Chief Health Officer. Her reassuring presence on our TV screens and her careful explanations have given us confidence and her advice has kept us safe and protected our economy.

I again turn to the comments of my colleague the member for Mirani. In the time since the COVID-19 pandemic hit Queensland, our Chief Health Officer has attended upwards of 200 media conferences where she has taken question upon question about the measures taken and the scientific basis for those measures. I hardly think that the member for Mirani is correct in his assertion that somehow the people of Queensland have been deprived of appropriate information or scientific decision-making underlying the restrictions and other measures taken.

As Queenslanders we owe Dr Young a huge vote of thanks, but Dr Young could not have taken those actions without the legislative framework created by our Palaszczuk Labor government. That framework was the basis for our health response and our health response has led the world, has protected our economy and is now allowing us to begin to build back better and grow Queensland jobs with our \$56 billion reconstruction plan over the next four years—and all this at a time when other developed nations remain in crisis. None of this would be possible without our strong and world-leading health response.


Worldwide cases continue to grow and hospital systems are overwhelmed. The global health toll is appalling. It is not only the 2.5 million who have lost their lives to COVID-19 who must be counted in that toll. Across developed nations where COVID-19 has not been controlled successfully, right now whole populations are missing routine screening appointments. People are afraid to seek essential health care. We cannot yet predict what the secondary health toll will be worldwide—we may never know—but we do know that here in Queensland not only has our COVID health response been exemplary but our routine health care has continued. Where it was disrupted during the height of the restrictions, it is now catching up.

I am deeply proud of what our Palaszczuk government achieved in the management of this global pandemic and I know that people in my electorate of Pumicestone are proud. I know because they tell me every single day and they do not want to see their hard work go to waste and they do not want to see the government's response picked to pieces by those opposite. The legislation before the House today provides the government with the tools to make sure that their hard work and the hard work of people like them right across Queensland is not wasted. That is what we owe to Pumicestone's vulnerable older people and the aged-care workers who take care of them. It is what we owe to the frontline workers who drove trucks and staffed local supermarkets through the height of the pandemic. We owe it to the teachers who supported Pumicestone kids through home learning and kids like them right across Queensland. It is also what we owe to our local healthcare workers.

Heartbreakingly, the dedicated staff at Caboolture Hospital cared for one of the six Queenslanders to have lost their battle with COVID-19. I can only begin to imagine how that was for those doctors, nurses and allied health workers. Where there have been strains though, our community has also shown strength. People in Pumicestone have stepped up over the last year and supported each other like never before. The Care Army has been out in force and unofficial care networks have driven people to appointments, dropped off groceries, walked pets and provided social contact for those in isolation. All of this work of the Pumicestone community and communities like it right across Queensland cannot be allowed to go to waste. Every Queenslander has done their bit to keep our state safe. They have protected our economy and set us up to build back better with more infrastructure, new manufacturing and the jobs of the future.

As much as we are already returning to a new normal, we know that the COVID-19 crisis is not over yet. With the vaccine rollout now just beginning, now is not the time for complacency. Here in Queensland we have a long history of dealing resiliently with natural disasters. Cyclones, floods and fires are crises our communities see all too often, but COVID-19 is not like a cyclone. We cannot just look out the window, see that the risk has passed and safely begin to rebuild.

COVID-19 is more like a tiger hiding in the grass that could spring an attack without warning. The risk is not over. In fact, with the emergence of new and more transmissible variants in circulation around the world the threat is more real than ever. This bill ensures that the Palaszczuk government has the tools we need to continue to manage this risk, to continue to protect the health of Queenslanders, to continue to support our economic recovery, to build back better and to support more jobs for Queenslanders as we emerge from this global pandemic. This bill is essential to that endeavour. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (3.00 pm): As a member of the Health and Environment Committee, I will make a brief contribution to the debate on the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020. I thank all of the committee members and the secretariat for their work on what is a very important piece of legislation. I acknowledge the federal government's handling of the health crisis—

Ms Boyd: It was terrible.

Dr ROBINSON:—the economic crisis and the jobs crisis that followed these events. For the most part, our federal government and its hard work has kept us safe. I express that on the public record today. It seems some members opposite do not agree with that. I think there has been amazing cooperation between governments at a federal and a state level across our nation and that has been important in terms of initiatives like the national cabinet framework. That level of cooperation is important. Members of parliament should remain open-minded and not political on this matter.

Along with my LNP colleagues in the House, I will not be opposing the extension of the provisions outlined in this bill. We in the LNP respect the Chief Health Officer in her role to provide accurate and timely medical advice to the government, to the parliament and to the public. It is very important that we understand that role in those three areas. The role provides advice to the government, but in a broader sense it advises the parliament. I appreciate Dr Young's involvement in the hearings and her availability to answer questions that the committee posed, which is important in terms of the parliament's operation and in terms of communicating information to the public in a timely, accurate and effective way. We further understand that the extension of these provisions will give the Chief Health Officer and other authorities the necessary powers to respond to the ongoing risks associated with the spread of COVID-19 in Queensland so that Queenslanders can be kept safe.

I support the bill. Having said that, and being clear about that, my community has raised concerns with me about how the state government has at times exercised these powers in some instances. I believe we can learn from these instances, as we must. I want to put on record this feedback from the Redlands Coast community. There is also an element in my community that is concerned about the

fitness of this particular state government to hold such special powers for too long, if at all. The fact is that the powers the government is to hold are temporary and conclude in September 2021, to my understanding of things. That is significant to them and I acknowledge that. That is the feedback that I have received from my local community.

Concerns have been raised about what at times appears to be the government's lack of compassion and consistency—again, I clarify that I am talking about the government's interpretation of things—lack of clear and timely communication, and transparency. These matters have been raised with me locally. There have been questions also about some of the exceptions or exemptions to quarantine, particularly when it has involved very sensitive situations like funerals and events that have impacted on people deeply. There have been concerns raised in my local community about that. I note that in the committee meetings the Human Rights Commissioner made comment on the low level of exceptions or exemptions and about one per cent being a very low rate. I think we need to be very aware that at times there have been circumstances that we may have looked at in a different light. It is always easier to look back on those matters with hindsight, and I understand and accept that.


There was one significant local example, which I think illustrates some of the concerns, and that was the story of Sarah Caisip. Sarah's partner and her partner's family live in the Redlands, in Cleveland. They came to my office for help. Sarah was living in Canberra and wanted to come back to Brisbane to see her father who at the time was still alive but then passed away. She wanted to be at his funeral. While she was in quarantine she made contact with my office. We made contact with the Premier's office, which referred the matter to the health minister's office. In the process of both phone and email contact from my office over several days, we received no return communication from the health minister's office. There was not an attempt to phone us. There was not an attempt to email us. I do not think that is good enough.

A government member interjected.

Dr ROBINSON: When members of parliament, in a caring and bipartisan way, raise issues about very real circumstances that impact on the mental health of young people I think it is important to respond. Rather than argue, I would hope that the minister would take these things on board. I note what seems to be the minister's argument with it, but I will park that.

In communicating with Sarah through that week, she felt very lonely in quarantine. Her father passing away had a very deep impact on her. She contacted my office and we kept up that communication with her through the week. It was a very difficult time and she suffered through it. She was not allowed to go to the funeral but eventually she was allowed to go to a viewing of her father's body. That was meaningful to her. Looking at all of this in hindsight, it could have been handled better. The human impacts are very deep for some people. After quarantine the first thing Sarah did was come to my office to say thank you to my staff for the way they cared and stayed in contact with her during her very low period of feeling isolated in quarantine. We were very grateful to her for that. We had never met her or known her before that incident.

Without beating up on the government, I think we need to learn from these instances and make sure that there is communication with members of parliament and officers so that we are working on the same team in this regard. I believe this matter could have been handled better. In supporting this bill, I ask the government to be more careful in considering the human impacts. In closing, we know that being kept safe is a high priority for all Queenslanders. We respect and understand that the health advice must be followed. The LNP have been unequivocal on the matter of following health advice. We support following the health advice and we acknowledge the great sacrifice many Queenslanders have made through this terrible period of our history. We support the bill.

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning) (3.09 pm): I rise in support of the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020. On 29 January 2020, which seems like a very long time ago, we declared a public health emergency in Queensland. We were the very first state in the country to do so. In the time since then it feels like the whole world has changed. On every single day since we have been faced with difficult decisions. Some of them were surreal. Who knew that we would ever have to lock down the Chinese international women's football team in one of our hotels, ban dancing or close pubs? More often than not, they were very tough decisions.

I get asked a lot about 29 January 2020. It was the day we reported our first COVID case in Queensland and it was the day that I sat down with the Chief Health Officer to finalise the plans for what she needed to contain the virus. Our Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, is the country's longest serving chief health officer. She has managed previous pandemics including SARS and Ebola, and her advice has been crucial in keeping Queenslanders safe. I know her experience is valued in

AHPPC meetings with other states and territories, where she has helped to shape national guidelines that have led to Australia's enviable record fighting the spread of the virus. However, our initial briefings were bleak.

Members will remember the briefing we provided on the earliest modelling, which showed that more than 12,000 Queenslanders would die by the end of last year. Since then we have had 1,323 confirmed cases, 1,309 have recovered and, sadly, six lives have been lost, although I note that only one of those contracted the virus here in Queensland. Had those early projections been correct, Queensland's death toll due to COVID-19 would be more than 20 times greater than the number of total cases we have seen. Other countries have not been so fortunate. The UK has had over four million cases and over 100,000 deaths. They remain in a strict lockdown. The US remains the world frontrunner with over 28 million cases and over half a million deaths, which is more American lives lost than in World War II, Pearl Harbour and 9/11 combined. The global death toll is almost 2.5 million and the global case number is now 112 million.


Even though there have been plenty of restless nights thinking about the impact this pandemic has had on Queenslanders, their families, their friends and their communities, we always knew the health response had to come first. In the very early days we injected \$1.2 billion into public hospitals to double intensive care and triple emergency department capacity. We ordered more PPE and brought forward millions of dollars worth of medicines, gloves and masks. We boosted testing capacity and employed extra doctors, nurses and paramedics. We ordered another 110 new ventilators. We boosted the protection of workers by introducing big fines for people who deliberately cough, sneeze or spit on public officials and workers, including shop assistants. We announced an additional \$46.5 million to support the delivery of critical mental health, drug and alcohol services across the state. We even announced that we would purchase an additional hospital, the Gladstone Mater in Central Queensland, to bolster our resources. On 29 January last year I could not picture a day like Monday when we would be rolling a vaccine out to Queenslanders—at least not nearly this quickly. I am awestruck by the tireless work of our researchers and our health staff.

I have learnt three important lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic that I think must continue to shape our response, both now and in the case of future pandemics. Firstly, it has shown us how vital our world-class free universal healthcare system is—something that Labor has always backed. Our health system and our response to the pandemic is the envy of many countries around the world. I know that the Palaszczuk government will continue to invest to support free public health care and I will keep demanding greater federal investment in our public healthcare system.

Second, for much of last year some accused us of putting health before the economy, but we know that we have to get the health response right first. Countries that opened up too soon have seen thousands die and have suffered worse economically. We cannot create jobs in a lockdown. People cannot find a job when businesses are shut.

Finally, we must continue to act quickly and decisively when outbreaks occur. The virus spreads quickly, even quicker with the newer mutations. Taking the advice of the experts is what has squashed every outbreak and potential outbreak in Queensland so far. That is why it is more important now than ever to ensure that our Chief Health Officer has the powers she needs to continue shepherding Queensland through the pandemic. I am excited about the vaccine but I know it will take till the end of the year at least to get everyone vaccinated with their second shot. Until then we must continue to act on the health advice. We must continue to back our healthcare workers. We must continue to put Queenslanders' health and safety first.

I feel obliged to respond to the attack that the member for Oodgeroo made on my office and my staff. While it might not be possible for him to see, from where he sits, what they were dealing with at that time, I know that they were working incredibly hard. While the matter he raised might have seemed to him to be the most important thing, I can assure him that we were dealing with thousands of inquiries just like that one. Just because he chose to use that one to score political points does not make it any more important than all of the other matters that they were dealing with. I want to put on the record my thanks and appreciation to all of my staff and all of the staff of Queensland Health who dealt with all of those complex matters, even in the face of grubby political attacks and attempts to politicise this pandemic. They are below even the member for Oodgeroo.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (3.17 pm): I wish to make a short contribution on the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020. As has been said before, the LNP will not oppose the extension of the provisions outlined in the bill. The LNP respect the extension of those provisions to enable the Chief Health Officer and emergency officers to have the necessary powers to limit or to respond to the spread of COVID-19 in Queensland.

Firstly, I put on the record my appreciation for the Chief Health Officer, Jeannette Young, for giving us a briefing this afternoon on where we are at with the vaccine. I congratulate her and her staff for the job that they have done over the past 12 months. I also congratulate Jeannette Young, her husband and her two children, who have probably not had a wife and mother for 12 months as she put herself into what was probably an incredible situation in her career.

Ms Pease: Under terrible scrutiny from your side of the House, might I add.

Mr MILLAR: I will take that interjection. I am trying to express an opinion and I am congratulating the Chief Health Officer for what she has been able to do. Over the past 12 months she has done an amazing job, as have all the people who work beside her.

I also congratulate the health professionals in my seat of Gregory. The Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service is headed by Paul Bell and CEO Steve Williamson. The Central West Health board chair is Jane Williams and the CEO is Jane Hancock. I acknowledge the magnificent work they were able to do to reassure the community in Western Queensland and the Central Highlands that we were going to get through this. I put on record my thanks to Tony Rayner, the mayor of the Longreach council, and Mitch Murphy, the CEO. We held fortnightly hook-ups with community leaders to reassure the community that we were going to get through this.

I place on the record first my appreciation for all the doctors, nurses, administration workers and all involved in Queensland Health right around the state for the wonderful job they have done. It has been an incredibly difficult year not only for Brisbane, South-East Queensland and places where the COVID-19 virus was confirmed but also for Western Queensland. Although we did not have cases of COVID-19, it was because of the actions of Queensland Health and the way that their plans were conducted over the last 12 months that places like regional Queensland were able to continue to function as best they could. I thank the staff of Queensland Health for that.

There have been some lessons learned in case this happens again. To put it simply, we have to make a distinction between Eagle Street, Longreach and Eagle Street, Brisbane. What I mean by that is: we were under the same restrictions that Brisbane was for a while. I congratulate the people involved in the health department for sorting that out as quickly as they possibly could. The Birdcage Hotel in Longreach was shut down for three months. Gavin Ballard, a good mate of mine and an excellent publican, was struggling just doing takeaway sales. Takeaway sales work well in Brisbane because of the volume of population, but the takeaway sales in Longreach just barely kept the lights on because the refrigeration still had to continue.

If we can learn something from this it is that, from a geographical perspective, especially in Western Queensland, the restrictions needed to be tinkered with. They were eventually. There was an understanding from the decision-makers in Queensland Health that there were different situations to consider. We saw an example of that a couple of months ago when Brisbane went into lockdown and the rest of Queensland was able to operate as normal. I congratulate all on the fantastic work that has been done.

There have been some casualties throughout the COVID-19 pandemic from an economic perspective. In some places such as my own electorate, some businesses and small cafes which rely on heavy tourism traffic have not been able to continue operation. A couple of well-noted restaurants in my electorate have had to close down. I really do feel sorry for them.

Sporting groups also suffered difficulties, certainly in Western Queensland and the Central Highlands. Kids' Rugby League and other important sporting groups out there were not able to get off the ground straightaway. They are coming back now. It is good to see kids getting out there and playing in teams and sporting groups starting to come together.

While the LNP will support the passage of the bill, we understand that when elements of these provisions are in force the social and economic impacts can be devastating for some areas. We have seen the pain in all corners of the state. Queensland has lost a lot to COVID-19. The consequences have been far-reaching. That point is not lost on me, not lost on us and not lost on many people out there in the community.

In our support for the bill, the LNP acknowledges the sacrifices which many Queenslanders have made and will continue to make. We have to continue to be vigilant when making decisions, but overall I think the decisions made to date have been good. I congratulate Jeannette Young on the work that she has done. In the briefing we had this afternoon, she was able to clarify a lot of things that we need to know to pass onto our communities.

I place on the record now that I believe every Queenslander should get the vaccine. We have to stop those people who are out there peddling misinformation, either for their own political purposes or because they just do not have the knowledge they should show. My grandfather caught polio. It always weighed on his mind because my aunty caught polio as well. The significant scientific medical research we have been able to do with vaccines in Queensland, in Australia and the world is important—


Mr Nicholls: The triple antigen, the whooping cough.

Mr MILLAR: I take that interjection from the member for Clayfield. Whooping cough is a devastating disease. It breaks your heart to see the images or video of children who are suffering with whooping cough. I will always encourage vaccination. My kids have all been vaccinated, as they should be. I find it disturbing and it makes me angry when people spread misinformation about vaccinations on social media.

Firstly, we need to recover healthily. If we have a healthy society, we have a good society. Then we need to get Queensland back on track with regard to operating as normally as possible. We need to eventually open the state and international borders. I know that the agriculture minister is aware of the struggles at present to find enough fruit pickers to pick valuable crops in Queensland. To see this you only have to look at what is happening in Gayndah and the worry they have there.

Let's get on with this. Give the Chief Health Officer the powers that she needs to be able to continue her good work. Let's make sure that everybody is vaccinated and make sure we get Queensland back on track after COVID-19.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Walker): Before we proceed, I apologise for naming the member for Southport when it was the member for Oodgeroo who made that interjection. For the record, I apologise.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (3.25 pm): I rise today in support of the bill before House. At the outset, I wish to say what a wonderful job my community and I think the Chief Health Officer has done in her brave and considered leadership throughout this time. She has disseminated the information to help us as local members from both sides of the House to keep our communities informed.

I remember at about this time last year there was a bipartisan briefing attended by many members of this House. We were told that we could reasonably expect a quarter of the Queensland population to be infected with COVID and potentially expect up to 30,000 deaths. That is the entire electorate of one member sitting here today. I remember drawing breath, along with every single person in that room, as we tried to comprehend the magnitude of what could be to come.

One year on, many of us have just come from a similar briefing with the Chief Health Officer and the Minister for Health. Thankfully, that expectation has not come to pass. Instead, we have experienced six deaths and our state has led the way on a strong and united health response, thanks to our Chief Health Officer, our Premier and our community, who have, by and large, observed the restrictions so well that we have been able to keep our infection rates incredibly low.

Make no mistake: it has not been easy for the Queensland community. There is not a single member of my community or that of any member here that has not been impacted in some shape or form by COVID and the ensuing restrictions. Some of the most cumbersome restrictions have been felt on those three great life milestones—births, deaths and marriages.

During the pandemic, expectant parents were restricted in a number of ways, from not being able to tour hospital facilities to, at a certain point last year, being allowed only a certain number of birthing partners with them in the room when in labour. I was lucky that when I gave birth on New Year's Day those restrictions were no longer in place.

We have also seen maternity care change and evolve. Many mums rejoiced that we were no longer required to undertake the dreaded two-hour glucose test unless we had the diabetes markers. There are now studies afoot to determine whether this test needs to be reinstated at all as a routine test for expectant parents. That has been an unexpected benefit in improving medical care as a result of the innovation that COVID has required.

We also saw birthdays and birthday celebrations heavily affected at certain points throughout the year when restrictions on gatherings were in place. I recall that during April-May, in that first month of lockdown, I personally called older residents in my community who were celebrating milestone 70th or 80th birthdays to not only wish them a happy birthday but also commiserate with them and say, 'I am

sorry. I am sure you were planning a special celebration probably with family and friends and I know that you will not be doing that anymore.' I remember speaking with a lovely woman from the Sherwood RSL—I will not name her and she may not want me to say how old she is—who had been assisted by a member of the Sherwood RSL to set up Zoom so that she could celebrate that milestone birthday with her interstate family who could no longer attend.

I found from those phone calls—and I would have made over 100 in that month—that the overwhelming sentiment among our seniors celebrating significant birthdays was that they understood, even in the early days, the importance of doing the right thing and following the health advice. I know that funerals right around the country were also impacted. I am happy that, thanks to the compliance of Queenslanders, we are able to increase numbers at funerals and have farewells that are fitting for our loved ones.

Marriages looked very different during the height of COVID. I had a COVID-safe wedding in my backyard with fewer than 20 people and in compliance with the restrictions. I know that for a lot of couples COVID well and truly threw their marriage plans for 2020 into turmoil and they were not able to have the celebrations they had planned. For many couples it is really important that they have large cultural family celebrations and smaller celebrations like mine are not appropriate for them.


Unfortunately, this was necessary because it was quickly established that weddings, along with funerals, are super spreader events because of the intimacy and emotion of such days. It is very difficult to restrain from hugging a loved one at such a wonderfully exciting and emotional event such as a wedding or at something as sad and touching as a funeral. That is why it was important that those restrictions applied, even though they are major life events.

I want to share the story of a lovely local family in Westlake. Like many members of the House, I dealt with countless local people who wanted to follow the advice and wanted to do the right thing so they sought advice from my office. This family was trying to organise an international wedding over Zoom. They were doing it a little bit differently. The bride and groom were in the Mount Ommaney electorate but they had family overseas. They were going to invite the family to participate via Zoom. At that time some very heavy restrictions were in place. Unfortunately, we were not able to facilitate exactly what they wanted, but the family was so grateful that we had taken every possible step to facilitate the event for them. Even though we were not ultimately able to work through all of their issues they appreciated how hard we worked.

I thank the then health minister's office for his office's willingness to always answer the phone. Maddie Cunningham, in particular, did a wonderful job. She was always available to chat to and to work through the many issues that we were all dealing with.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear to Queenslanders why these powers to limit the size of gatherings are very important. Around the world we have seen horrendous numbers of deaths. The USA has just passed the sad milestone of half a million deaths. That is up 100,000 since the middle of January. The UK now sits at well over 100,000 deaths. That number is growing every single day.

Queenslanders have shown that they trust the government to make measured, considered decisions and that they trust the Chief Health Officer to make decisions around the limitations that are required to protect them. For that reason, I certainly commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.33 pm): I rise to address the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020. At the outset, I pass on the gratitude and thanks of the people of Glass House to our health workers, including the Chief Health Officer, who have done such a marvellous job of keeping us healthy and safe over the past 12 months as COVID has had its way around the world, in Australia and Queensland.

I also thank each and every person in the electorate of Glass House for tackling what has been an extraordinarily challenging year with, in large part, a really positive attitude. It is fair to say that we have not always agreed with some of the decisions that have been made. Some of them have had disastrous impacts on businesses and organisations and on the personal lives of people across the electorate, but we have sucked it up and got on with it.

It was particularly challenging during the brief lockdown that occurred in the Greater Brisbane area. The electorate of Glass House is split across the Moreton Bay Regional Council and the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. Half of my constituents were in hard lockdown and the other half continued to enjoy the freedoms that we had on the Sunshine Coast.

For businesses on the Sunshine Coast it was particularly challenging during that time. We have had a bumper tourism season in all of our tourist areas—the Glass House Mountains, Maleny, Montville, Mount Mee, Woodford and the like—but when Greater Brisbane went into hard lockdown that evaporated very quickly. We are talking about 70 per cent reductions in turnover in the space of a day and maintained for a week.

The resilience of our businesses is extraordinary. The previous speaker was talking about weddings. We are the home of the wedding industry in Queensland. Whilst we were able to eventually get some improvements in terms of what could occur, last year was absolutely dreadful for them. The good news hopefully is that all those people who were hoping to get married last year are now getting married this year. Whereas it used to be one or two weddings a week for most of these venues, some of them are up around three, four and even five weddings a week. That is a bright light on the horizon for many of these guys. However, as others have said, it does come down to our continuing ability to meet the challenges that COVID throws at us.

Like all members, I attended the briefing with the Minister for Health and the Chief Health Officer on the rollout of the vaccine. I say to the people of Glass House that I have just shared that information on my Facebook page. I encourage people to jump on board and have a read of that information. In terms of a number of the issues and a range of the concerns that people have raised with me over the last couple of weeks, it looks like nearly all of those things have been addressed in the information on the website, the link for which I have shared. Please head there. As always, if there are any outstanding concerns do not hesitate to contact me and I will do my best to get the answer.

I want to focus on one aspect of this amendment bill. It is around people being required to enter hotel quarantine at their own cost. We originally passed this as part of the Community Services Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 2020 in June last year. I want to focus on this as it pertains to our agricultural sector and particularly the horticultural sector.

Glass House is home to pineapple and strawberry production in this state. We talked about disasters. Last year was the worst it could possibly be. I will refer to one of my operators, Pinata. Pinata is a very large operator with holdings not only in Glass House but across Queensland, North Queensland and even the Northern Territory. Last year they left over three million punnets of strawberries in the field to rot. They have also recently left 400 tonnes of pineapples in the field in Mareeba. In both cases it was due to a lack of labour.

A lot of people will say, 'There are plenty of people in Australia who should be stepping up and taking on these jobs.' I will give members the example that Gavin Scurr, the Managing Director of Pinata, gave me. He stated—

During September we employed 663 Australians on our strawberry farm. Of these 42—

that is less than 10 per cent—

were in more than 1 pay period (worked for more than 1 week)—

that was not because of Pinata; that was because the workers chose not to continue to work on the farm—

and at the end of season we only had 2 still with us.

It clearly is an example that Australians just do not want to do this kind of work. It is a crying shame. I am concerned that there are a number of people out there on JobSeeker and JobKeeper who could be doing some of this work. Clearly those statistics demonstrate that they are not willing to do this kind of hard yakka.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr POWELL: I take that interjection from the member for Logan about paying more. Most of the operators in the electorate of Glass House are paying above-award wages.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr POWELL: The member for Logan clearly does not understand how a market operates. If you pay your staff too much, customers will not be able to afford to buy the strawberries at the supermarket. Growers will not be able to sell the strawberries to the supermarket because they will not be able to make any profit whatsoever to employ those workers in the future. Gavin goes on to say—

As I see it the quickest part of the solution is to sort out the quarantine for the Seasonal Workers from the Pacific Islands. These people are highly experienced having done many seasons for us in the past as well as a very low Covid risk due to there being no Covid in the islands due to their borders being closed for close to 12 months.


My understanding is that the federal government has cleared the way in terms of immigration and migration. I heard the minister's response yesterday to a question without notice, but I am hoping that we can come to a very quick arrangement where we can create travel bubbles with these Pacific islands so that quarantining is not needed for seasonal work. As Gavin said, they have not experienced COVID for nearly 12 months. They have been as successful as Queensland has in that case. We have done it with New Zealand. Why can't we do it with the Pacific islands? Why can't we get these seasonal workers over here and not require them to quarantine at all? If that is not suitable, then come up with an arrangement where it is not the farmer who has to pay the quarantine costs. Again, if they have to quarantine on farm, that is an expense that most farmers cannot afford.

Mr Last: \$4,000.

Mr POWELL: I take the interjection from the member for Burdekin—\$4,000. As to the reason they cannot afford it, let me add this complexity to it. As I said at the start, many farmers left punnets of strawberries or pineapples rotting in the field last year. That was the revenue they needed to pay for the runners and the plants to go into the fields this year. As a result of their poor season last year, they cannot afford to service loans. When they go to the bank this year to get a loan to put the runners in the ground to grow the strawberries, the banks will not lend them the money. They are caught in an insidious situation where they need to put a crop in the ground, but they cannot afford to put a crop in the ground or they are worried that they will not be able to get the crop out of the ground at the end of the season because of there being no seasonal workers and, yet again, their debt increases.

It is not a simple equation of paying the workers more, as the member for Logan said. In fact, that would not work at all. We need to access experienced seasonal workers from the Pacific islands. The way we can do that is to create travel bubbles, bring them in quarantine free and get them working, particularly now with the vaccine. If it is a case of these workers having to have the vaccine, give them the vaccine. Get them in here quarantine free and get them on the ground working. That way we can ensure that when we go along to Coles, Woolies, IGA or Aldi, there are Queensland-grown strawberries and pineapples and all of the other products produced in the electorates of Burdekin, Lockyer, Bundaberg and Burnett. All of those seats that are the fruit and salad bowls of this state require these workers.

I call on the minister for agriculture and the government to come up with a solution this week. It is that critical. It cannot wait any longer. We do not have the time. The farmers do not have the time and they need certainty.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (3.42 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020, introduced in this chamber by the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services last year. We are incredibly fortunate to live in Queensland where our world-class health response has meant that COVID-19 has not drastically spread throughout our community as we have seen happen in other countries.

As the Assistant Minister for Health and Regional Health Infrastructure, I would like to put on the record my thanks to all of our health workers in our hospitals, our paramedics, our police, our teachers, our supermarket workers, all those working in the health department and all those who kept going during COVID-19. The work they did was extremely important to all of our communities. Because of the work that they have done, our health system has not become overwhelmed with rapidly escalating numbers, and Queensland has not contributed to the death toll arising from COVID-19 since 18 April last year. That is really important.

Every loss of life is tragic, and it is really distressing to see that more than two million people have now died since the pandemic began. I extend my condolences to the families who have lost loved ones because of COVID-19 in Queensland, interstate and overseas. Because we live in such a multicultural country, I know that in my community of Mackay there are many families who have lost family members overseas. This is really tragic. It has hit home even though those people were not living amongst us.

The amendments to the health portfolio legislation introduced by the Palaszczuk government and passed by this House last year grant powers to effectively limit, or respond to, the spread of COVID-19. That is so important for our community. The powers are essential so that we can act on the knowledge provided by experts through the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee and other experts to rapidly implement the public health measures required to respond to the emerging situation presented by COVID-19.

While I am on the subject of experts, I want to pay tribute and thank our Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, for her ongoing dedication and expert advice. While I know there is a whole team of people right across Queensland fighting this virus, it is through Dr Young's advice and leadership that Queensland is in such an enviable position to continue to fight COVID-19 in 2021. On behalf of my Mackay community, I say thank you to Dr Young.

On 29 January 2020, the Palaszczuk government declared a public health emergency for what is now known as COVID-19. The declaration of a public health emergency under the Public Health Act 2005 allows for powers to be provided to emergency officers to respond to the public health emergency—in this instance, to respond to the highly contagious virus. When the declaration was made, the Public Health Act only allowed for the regulation to be extended for up to seven days. On 5 and 7 February 2020, the Governor in Council made a regulation to extend the declared public health emergency relating to the virus for two further seven-day periods.

On 7 February 2020, the Legislative Assembly passed the Public Health (Declared Public Health Emergencies) Amendment Act 2020 to allow the Governor in Council to extend the declared public health emergency for up to 90 days instead of seven. On 19 March 2020, the Legislative Assembly passed the Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Act 2020, which provided emergency powers to the Chief Health Officer and emergency officers appointed under the act.


The bill inserted these amendments into chapter 8 of the Public Health Act as they relate to the declared public health emergency for COVID-19. Further regulation extensions of the declared public health emergency to support the operation of chapter 8 of the Public Health Act continued throughout 2020 and into 2021. The most recent regulation was made by the Governor in Council on 17 December 2020 to extend the declared public health emergency until 31 March 2021.

Further extensions of the declared public health emergency may be required. Effective public health response measures must be readily available to support the Queensland government's response for as long as there is an ongoing risk to public health from COVID-19. This bill does not seek to pre-empt the decision of the Governor in Council to extend the declared public health emergency but proposes to allow the amendments made to the health portfolio legislation to continue for a further six months.

This bill will continue the COVID-19 response framework if the public health emergency is continued by the Governor in Council. The bill extends amendments, including powers provided to the Governor in Council to extend a declared public health emergency for up to 90 days instead of seven; emergency powers provided to the Chief Health Officer and emergency officers to make decisions to limit and respond to the spread of COVID-19 in Queensland; and a framework to allow for the recovery of costs from a person required to enter hotel quarantine. The bill also extends the amendments made to the Mental Health Act 2016 which allow for authorised mental health services to be declared through an expedited process—that is, without gazettal—and to allow mental health patients to be granted leave to comply with public health decisions and directions. Other technical amendments to the Public Health Act are also being extended to support the operation of Queensland's health response to COVID-19.

The extension of these frameworks for a further six months achieves an appropriate balance to ensure that these emergency measures are not extended for too long or indefinitely. While the act's time frames in relation to when the pandemic will end remain uncertain, there is a possibility that a further extension of these emergency powers past September 2021 may be required. We must not look at our success and become complacent before we have further success in combating the virus. The rollout of vaccines in the coming weeks and months will be critical to this success. Until the rollout is well underway and we can evaluate its success we must continue to be cautious, vigilant and ready to rapidly respond when an issue arises.

We all need to go back to our communities and encourage everybody to be vaccinated when the vaccine comes to our community. I know that as soon as it gets to Mackay my family and I will ensure that we make appointments to have our vaccinations. We need to ensure that the Palaszczuk government has the tools it needs to respond. We must extend these emergency measures for a further six months. We need to remain on the front foot. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.51 pm): I rise to address the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020. On 30 January 2020 the World Health Organization officially declared the novel coronavirus 2019 outbreak a public health emergency of international concern, and in doing so signalled to countries around the world that a pandemic was potentially imminent and may require a coordinated international response. Such a declaration was

made after the first case of the novel coronavirus to be reported outside of China was confirmed on 13 January 2020 and following additional cases being reported in five World Health Organization regions in just one month.

As we now know, the declaration that a novel coronavirus pandemic was potentially imminent proved to be correct. The declaration by the World Health Organization was a signal not just to all countries but all jurisdictions. Certainly at a state jurisdictional level here in Queensland we saw various public health safety measures enacted in response to the unfolding events of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At a local public health level I have sought to provide professional assistance as a specialist physician, including contributing directly to the public health efforts and response. I was grateful today to receive and attend the briefing from the government, and I thank the health minister for that opportunity. That briefing was attended by the Chief Health Officer, where there was information provided in relation to vaccines and the vaccination program here in Queensland. We have to remember that vaccines and vaccination programs are one of the most effective public health strategies not only in Queensland but around Australia and internationally when tackling infectious diseases such as diphtheria, measles, polio, influenza and now COVID-19. I would add my voice to all those in the public domain in supporting those who are eligible for the vaccine to receive that at the appropriate time and in accordance with the vaccination schedule and program which has various phases and which is continuing to be implemented here in Queensland in collaboration with the Commonwealth.

All members elected to the Queensland parliament bring with them to this place their own unique knowledge, skill set and expertise as a result of their own professional training, industry experience, formal education and/or community and life experiences. In my case, as a senior member of the medical profession in Queensland with specialist qualifications and experience in health management and clinical medicine, I have always endeavoured as a legislator and parliamentarian to apply due diligence when examining legislation including not only this bill but also various pieces of preceding legislation, submissions made to the parliamentary Health and Environment Committee and various committee reports, including the Health and Environment Committee's report No. 4 of the 57th Parliament on this piece of legislation. I have taken this approach in order to deliver the best possible framework for public health safety in Queensland. Much of my professional frame of reference relates to previous roles as a former deputy chief medical officer, former executive director of medical services of some of Queensland's largest private hospitals, former senior public servant in Queensland Health and former president of both the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland and the Australian Medical Association of Queensland.

The last 12 months have been an extraordinarily testing time for not only all Queenslanders but residents across Queensland and, indeed, citizens around the world. The COVID-19 health pandemic has been unlike any other health event witnessed or experienced this century. The COVID-19 pandemic has tested our health system, our interstate and international relationships, and indeed at times it has tested our humanity. I believe we can all agree that Queenslanders and Australians have certainly risen to the challenges of COVID-19, and through sacrifice and a common appreciation for the safety of our fellow citizens we have persevered together to keep one another safe.

It was a significant milestone to see the first COVID-19 vaccine being administered here in Queensland and Australia this week. This is an incredible feat which underscores the very best of humanity and the global effort to combat this pandemic. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all Queenslanders for their efforts and sacrifice during the last 12 months. I would particularly like to acknowledge and thank all residents in my electorate of Moggill for their understanding and adherence during the recent three-day lockdown of the greater Brisbane area and also their compliance with public health directives over the last year. Can I also acknowledge and thank the wonderful work of our local COVID-19 testing centres, pathology providers and all health professionals for their tireless efforts and contribution to tackling this public health crisis.

The legislation before the House today seeks to extend the expiry dates on a number of provisions within legislation that was passed last year concerning the state Labor government's initial health response to COVID-19. This extension will now be granted to the end of 30 September 2021, and it will align with the expiry dates for all amendments made to various health portfolio legislation. The Liberal National Party supports the extension of provisions as outlined in this legislation.

Further, the Liberal National Party respects that the enabling of these extensions will allow for the Chief Health Officer to respond as necessary to the COVID-19 pandemic throughout this year. However, I do think it is important that I highlight the submission made to the committee by Dr Rob Stable AM, who is a former distinguished director-general of Queensland Health and a previous

vice-chancellor and president of Bond University. He has also been a chair of the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council and a board chair of the Metro North Hospital and Health Service during the tenure of the Palaszczuk state Labor government.

I have enormous respect for Dr Stable's professional views and his sense of collegiality. Like Dr Stable, I hold our current Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, in the highest regard for her knowledge, expertise and professionalism. Dr Stable did offer some important views and recommendations in his submission to the parliamentary Health and Environment Committee, including the establishment of a Queensland health protection committee to be chaired by the Chief Health Officer. Dr Stable recommended that a Queensland health protection committee have balanced representation with the purpose of such a structure being to enhance governance, transparency and accountability with respect to future state government decision-making in times of any declared public health emergency.


I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the submission of AMA Queensland, and I certainly support the commentary that was contained within that. Can I also take this opportunity to mention that, following an invitation from well-respected ear, nose and throat surgeon, Professor Chris Perry, the current president of AMA Queensland, I recently attended the AMA Queensland's dinner for the profession. It was certainly an honour on that night to see Dr Jeannette Young awarded the Excellence in Health Care Award. Dr Young is an outstanding leader and she has certainly discharged her responsibilities as Chief Health Officer with grace, humility, unwavering professionalism and distinction. It was also a pleasure to see both Professor Noel Hayman and Associate Professor Alan Bruce Chater formally recognised on the same night for their contributions to Indigenous health and rural medicine respectively.

In concluding, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the importance of both understanding and quality assurance learning from the experiences over the last 12 months when it comes to the way in which all governments and health agencies respond to pandemics, such as COVID-19, into the future. A global infectious disease outbreak was always a possibility in the 21st century, and certainly with the benefit of hindsight much more could have been done by all governments to prepare for such outbreaks. Indeed, I offered as much in a medical interview with journalist Brittany Vonow from the *Courier-Mail* shortly after I was inducted as the President of AMA Queensland. The *Courier-Mail* reported at the time—

'The world is very connected now, with transportation what becomes a problem in southeast Asia or America can quickly become a problem in Australia,' Dr Rowan said.

'We certainly need to be planning ... not only for the current infectious diseases that exist but new and emerging ones as well. In all this we need a strong and robust warning system and good planning.'

Queenslanders have endured complex and difficult circumstances over the last 12 months, but there is certainly hope. The patience, sacrifice and endurance of all Queenslanders is to be not only commended but applauded. As we continue to roll out the vaccine here in Queensland and across Australia, it will certainly have significant and positive health benefits for Queenslanders and be part of our economic recovery in Queensland and across Australia. Again, I would encourage all of those eligible for the vaccine to seek advice from a relevant health professional and take up the vaccine at the earliest opportunity and in accordance with the various phases as part of the implementation program here in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (4.01 pm): The Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to ensuring the health and safety of all Queenslanders, and I rise today to speak on this bill which will continue the incredibly important work to ensure their health and safety through this global pandemic. It was 29 January 2020 when Queensland declared a public health emergency and we were the very first state in the country to do so. It was the same day as the first case was diagnosed in Queensland. Since then, it has been a turbulent time with many, many difficult decisions. Who knew that we would have to ban dancing or close pubs? Try explaining to a three-year-old that the playground is closed: 'But it doesn't have a door, Mum,' Odette told me. There have been very tough decisions, and I want to acknowledge the pain and suffering experienced by many, many Queenslanders who have sacrificed so much in order to keep us all safe.

I hear stories of Queenslanders who have missed funerals of loved ones, who have missed weddings and births of family and friends' children, who have missed out on the trips they have been planning and saving for their entire lives, whose businesses have suffered terribly—all in the name of community health and safety. These are Queenslanders who missed out on incredibly important parts

of their lives in order to keep us all safe. Queenslanders have been incredibly selfless. They have put the health and safety of all of us ahead of their own needs and wishes, and 'selflessness' is really the word to describe Queensland's collective response to this global pandemic.

I would like to join the chorus of members in this place in congratulating the Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, and also the Deputy Chief Health Officer, Dr Sonya Bennett, for their leadership, guidance, professionalism and expert advice in navigating through this pandemic. I acknowledge and thank Queensland Health, all of the healthcare workers on the front line, the Queensland Police Service, paramedics, aged-care workers, local disaster management groups, the public health units, cleaners, retail staff who kept food and supplies on the shelves, truck drivers, the Defence Force, teachers, early childhood educators, farmers, fruit pickers, miners and the resource workers who kept our economy going, and going strong at that. The workers kept our health safe and the workers kept our economy ticking over.

I would also like to put on record in this place my gratitude to the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service, including chairman of the board, Paul Bell, all of the board members and the CEO, Steve Williamson, who work together with Dr Julieanne Graham, Sue Foyle and the executive of the CQHHS. In particular, I acknowledge Dr Gulam Khandaker and the Public Health Unit of the CQHHS, the epidemiologists, the contact tracers and the public health officers.

Who would have thought that there would be over four million cases and over 100,000 deaths in the UK, or that there would be 28 million cases and over 500,000 deaths in the USA. More American lives have been lost than in World War II and Pearl Harbor combined, and now we have a global death toll of over 2.5 million. Despite the overall low numbers of COVID-19 in Queensland, recent outbreaks both here and in other Australian jurisdictions and continued large-scale outbreaks around the world demonstrate how rapidly COVID-19 can spread and overwhelm hospital systems. New strains are proving to have a greater viral load and, in turn, spread faster.

Risks for community transmission in Queensland—such as new strains, interstate cross-border travel and Australians returning home from overseas—will remain for as long as the virus continues to circulate in Australia. As the situation relating to COVID-19 continues to evolve in Australia and around the world, Queensland Health and the Chief Health Officer have said that it is difficult to determine with absolute certainty how long the emergency response measures, particularly the emergency powers provided to the Chief Health Officer and emergency officers appointed under the Public Health Act 2005, will be required. Therefore, this bill seeks to extend the amendments until 30 September 2021. This is considered to be the most effective way to allow for the continuation of the Queensland government's health response to respond to any emerging threats of COVID-19 in Queensland. I note in relation to the provisions in this bill that we would not have been able to react so swiftly to the case in Brisbane earlier this year without those provisions in place. Acting swiftly has been one of the greatest defences that we have against this virus, and that is why this bill is so incredibly important.

We now have the benefit of not one but two vaccines being rolled out across Australia. There is no doubt that COVID-19 changed our lives. For us to live our everyday lives more freely, we need the added protection of COVID-19 vaccines. Australian medical experts are looking carefully at the clinical trial results, along with data on quality and manufacturing of the vaccines. The Therapeutic Goods Administration only approve vaccines when we have enough evidence that they work and are safe. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Therapeutic Goods Administration on their work. This pandemic has definitely shone a light on the important work that the TGA do and the way in which they work so rigorously to keep Australians safe, even outside of a global pandemic. The TGA safeguards and enhances the health of the Australian community through effective and timely regulation of therapeutic goods. Before a COVID-19 vaccine is approved for use in Australia, it must pass the Therapeutic Goods Administration's rigorous assessment and approval processes. This includes assessment of its safety, quality and effectiveness.

Queenslanders have shown that they trust the health professionals. They have taken the health advice over the past 12 months and acted selflessly in their response to this pandemic. It is now time for Queenslanders to continue to trust the health professionals and get vaccinated. This bill is integral to the continued fight against COVID-19 in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.



Ms BOYD (Pine Rivers—ALP) (4.07 pm): I rise to support the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020. All Queenslanders have a vested interest in this bill, and so have I, as I have been engaged and observant in this bill as it has made its way through the parliamentary committee process and back to this House. While many of the contributions so far in

this House have talked about the content, the process of the bill and the report, there was one section of the report that I found particularly perplexing and of particular interest and I want to shine some light on that right now.

I was stumped when I came across a five-page contribution, a complete dissenting report, from the member for Mirani in the report of the bill. It was not just the size of the contribution the member for Mirani made; it was in equal parts astounding and completely terrifying. It begins—

Domestic and international jurisprudence contain principles for law making during a public health emergency.

This instantly affirmed my fear that this was not a traditional statement of reservation from a committee member. Any reader can separate the member for Mirani's words from those just quoted. Any reader can see that this dissenting report is an outright attack from a political party—that of One Nation. My fears were further confirmed when a reliable witness used by the member for Mirani was none other than the climate change denying One Nation senator Malcolm Roberts.

These submissions are a direct attack on Queensland Health's response—the very health response that has saved lives and livelihoods here in Queensland. While over the last 12 months we have seen the LNP stoop to inconceivable lows—calling for the Queensland border to be opened 64 times, walking across hard interstate border closures and erecting billboards calling for planes to be able to arrive back once more in Queensland at the height of a global pandemic—let us not forget that the LNP are joined right down there with One Nation.

The party's leader, Pauline Hanson, was banned from TV outlets as she spewed misleading and inciteful misinformation, comparing COVID to the flu, calling for borders to be opened and the elderly and vulnerable to lock themselves away inside, and levelling vile and hurtful comments at Melbournians locked down in social housing towers. All One Nation have to contribute on this and every other topic, frankly, is the politics of fear, division and hate. Who could forget Pauline Hanson launching a High Court case against our CHO and Premier, crowd funding for legal counsel?

Mr Power interjected.


Ms BOYD: I take the interjection from the member for Logan: crowd funding for legal counsel.

Mr Power: The federal government was supporting it.

Ms BOYD: The federal government—Scott Morrison was absolutely supporting it. I also take that interjection. I could not locate what was the amount of money raised, but let us not forget also Pauline's promise to donate any unused money to charity. I have to admit, though, that a Google search with the words 'funding, court case, Pauline Hanson and One Nation' provides a multitude of shocking and troubling results, taking us all on a trip down memory lane filled with disgrace, wrongdoing and of course Pauline's incarceration. They have no credibility and are not to be taken seriously on this topic.

Our exemplary public health staff are of course the heroes and heroines of this COVID pandemic. In the short time that I was privileged to be the assistant minister for health, appointed in the midst of the pandemic, it was an absolute honour to be able to personally thank and recognise our frontline staff. Over the course of 145 days I had 51 external meetings with the likes of hospital and health services, Queensland Health, the Chief Health Officer and all manner of stakeholders. I had 41 internal meetings and I went on 95 site visits. Every one of those days I was in awe of the courage, the dedication and the professionalism of our health workforce. When it comes to matters of public health, it is their advice we should follow. We should never politicise the health of Queenslanders or cherrypick which piece of advice we should follow or opt out of. That is what One Nation would have us do. That is what the LNP would have done if in government.

This week in particular as the vaccine commences its rollout, I understand that Queenslanders feel more at ease than they did one year ago. They feel that way because we always followed the expert health advice and we have successfully kept the virus at bay. They feel that way because of the provision of the powers in this bill and the bills before it. There still exists a grave risk. We need to manage it correctly. The measures in this bill will see that happen. Queensland's Chief Health Officer will see that happen and the Palaszczuk Labor government will see that happen. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (4.13 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the bill that seeks an extension of the powers of the Chief Health Officer. Like the LNP opposition, I will also be supporting this bill. I would like to add to the warm comments made by other members in relation to the Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young. I have had personal dealings with her in relation to the operation of her powers and the closure of borders and so forth in my own electorate. Within her scope of responsibility she has been open and, wherever possible, obliging to me and also to the two mayors

who share my area and the border country along it, the Hon. Lawrence Springborg, the Mayor of Goondiwindi Regional Council, and also the mayor of Southern Downs Regional Council, Councillor Vic Pennisi.

I would like to state for the record that at no stage have I ever advocated for the opening of borders contrary to medical advice. I have always supported the closure of the borders. However, representing as I do an electorate that has about 450 kilometres of border country which is fairly richly inhabited along the way with towns on both sides that have a mutual community where the border previously has meant very little, it has challenged me and my staff and we have had to do a great deal of work.

Whilst I do support the Chief Health Officer in having the powers that the House is proposing to give her, it is important that members such as myself and mayors such as Councillor Pennisi and Councillor Springborg have the opportunity to be consulted before important decisions are made. Obviously, there are occasions when decisions have to be made very quickly such as in the case of outbreaks of COVID and so forth. However, I do not accept that in all cases decisions have been made about matters for which there was no possibility of foreseeing the action to be taken. I would like to give an example to the House of some of the ways that border closures and restrictions of all sorts have impacted my electorate.

I think it would be fair to say that those good and true folk who live in towns like Wallangarra, Texas, Goondiwindi, Bungunya, Talwood, Stanthorpe and Killarney have been affected more than the average Queenslander because of the closure of the borders. They have stoically accepted the closures and have worked around them as best they could and, like most Queenslanders, they have been happy to play their part in the fight against COVID. However, I still think that more can be done in any future actions to contain coronavirus and to save Queenslanders that will make our lives a bit easier.

I will give some examples of the effects of the border closures. Whilst I support the closure of the border when it has to be done, I do not support there being hundreds of kilometres where there are no crossings. There are operators of farming businesses, small businesses and contractors who need to travel on both sides of the border. In many cases they have had to drive very long distances in order to reach a manned checkpoint to be able to exercise their right to cross the border with whatever exemption they were operating under. The lack of crossings meant that in many places emergency services such as fire brigade, police or ambulance could not possibly get to an emergency on the other side of the border as quickly as they can when the border is open. That was not a problem for highly populated areas like the Tweed Heads-Coolangatta border in my electorate.

Mr Power: Just take an ambulance into New South Wales.

Mr LISTER: The interjection from the member for Logan was immensely helpful. Perhaps if he understood anything about my electorate and the border country he would not have—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Walker): Members, direct your comments through the chair.

Mr LISTER: We need to remember that in my electorate people do have to travel a long distance to get across a border. If they are waiting for an ambulance to cross the border because they have had a heart attack or a car crash and it takes 10 or 20 minutes longer for that ambulance, whether it be a New South Wales ambulance coming to Queensland or a Queensland ambulance going to New South Wales, they might die; that is the honest truth. On a number of occasions I have written to the state government, to the Premier, about these issues and I have not had any success in getting additional border crossings opened. That is something I would like the House and the government to consider.

We saw the ban on fishing and water activities which occurred earlier in the coronavirus response. Within I think two days—and I beg the pardon of the House if I am a day or two out—the Minister for Transport and Main Roads had revoked the ban because there had been an enormous response from people who fish and use boats and so forth—

Mr Krause: Overreach.

Mr LISTER:—and it was overreach at the time; that is correct. Where there were votes that the Labor Party were concerned about, that was reversed. However, in my electorate where there are Sunwater dams and so forth, Sunwater persisted in keeping them closed for weeks in spite of my attempts to get the then minister for natural resources, mines and energy to intervene in the name of common sense.

Mr Krause interjected.

Mr LISTER: I will be getting to that. I take the interjection from my honourable friend the member for Scenic Rim. I will be getting to licensed armourers.

In my electorate there are a number of businesses—many in fact—that geared up to support inland fishing. They supply tackle, bait and so forth and a lot of other things. Their business dropped off straight away. It was just stubbornness and a lack of empathy for the bush, which meant that the giant system that we face on the other side did not extend the same courtesy to people in the bush.

I also refer to the impact on individuals who need to cross the borders when they are closed: schoolchildren, small businesses and contractors who need to work on both sides of the border, farmers and those in emergency services. At length, the government did come up with arrangements that would enable exemptions for certain categories; however, we found that the processing system for permits and so forth took a long time to catch up. There were institutionalised assumptions in the process that an exemption for someone crossing the border for agriculture could only be for a person coming from a New South Wales postcode to a Queensland postcode. It took quite some time to get some common sense injected into that. A number of farmers and contractors were needlessly disadvantaged in the process.

As my friend the member for Scenic Rim said, armourers and gun shops were closed. I fail to see—and we are still waiting for any evidence that this was necessary—why closing gun shops was necessary in the fight against COVID. This did not just close retailers of firearms, parts and so forth; it also closed the part of their business that sold tents, lubricating oils, tow bars or whatever else. It took a lot longer to get corrected than it should have. What about wine tastings? In my electorate of Southern Downs we are fortunate to have the Granite Belt, which provides a magnificent experience if people are interested in wines and wine tastings.


Mr Molhoek: And Anna's.

Mr LISTER: And Anna's Restaurant. I take the interjection from the member for Southport. He knows that they are great. We all do. If you operated a winery, a B & B or something like that on the Granite Belt, you were savagely impacted. To conclude that a wine-tasting area is the same as a pub is false. I wrote to the government and I mentioned it in parliament, but, again, it was very slow to introduce these changes. Innocent small businesses—people who work hard to employ people, to make a living for themselves, to generate taxes that they themselves pay and that their staff pay to provide for police, schools, teachers, nurses, welfare measures and so on—are disadvantaged by these measures. It is no small matter. I urge the government to bear these things in mind in the future.

I assure the government that I will not politicise any approaches made to me asking for advice on what the impacts of a proposed action might be. I would greatly appreciate if my role as the elected representative of the people of Southern Downs was respected by the government in that apolitical context.

I encourage all Queenslanders to take the COVID vaccine. I know that a number of people in my electorate have expressed concerns about it. I will have no trouble taking it. I had a briefing from the Chief Health Officer and the health minister today and am confident that it is perfectly safe. We all ought to take it for the public good. I thank Councillor Vic Pennisi; Councillor the Hon. Lawrence Springborg; and my staff, Ian Jackson, Virginia Marsden and Ryan Burton-Ree, who did an enormous job over the initial six months or so of border closures, lockdowns and so forth which really hurt people. They did an enormous amount of work to solve problems, and I am most grateful to them. I also thank Wendy Bourne, a senior adviser in the Premier's office, who worked closely with my office. Wendy was a Trojan. She put a great deal of hard work into getting the best possible outcomes for the people affected. I am grateful to her. For the benefit of the House, I will table the letter to the Premier in which I complimented her.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 9 September 2020, from the member for Southern Downs, Mr James Lister MP, to the Premier and Minister for Trade, Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk, regarding Ms Wendy Bourne [\[186\]](#).

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (4.23 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020. I will reflect a little bit. We are in a unique circumstance with something that Queensland has not faced before, but this is what we built our laws for, because we knew that these things were coming. Since Queensland was created as a British colony we have recognised, right from the beginning, that we need powers to restrict infectious diseases within our borders. Queensland, even before it was a separate colony, restricted the entry of ships with fever, imposing quarantine on them in Moreton Bay, on their passengers and on the islands of the bay including Peel Island. In the flu pandemic, often mistakenly called the Spanish flu, that started around 1918, Queensland also put in place these quarantine provisions on our overland borders to protect Queenslanders. This is a key part of our history in protecting Queenslanders from disease.

A key part of our law was to have powers for someone to carefully, scientifically and soberly make decisions to protect Queenslanders. No doubt there was a colonial chief health officer or equivalent who received letters from those who had come all the way from England on a ship with infections and who, within sight of Brisbane, were complaining that they could not come in to see their family. Chief health officers then had to make hard decisions in order to keep Queensland safe. At that time there might have been members of parliament who tried to undermine that tough decision-making process, but I will speak more about that later. It is vital that all members of parliament support the extension of these provisions and emergency measures to be used when needed.

We have seen that other countries are still devastatingly affected by this disease. Highly infectious diseases can quickly multiply. They do not do so in a linear fashion, increasing by a set number or even a set percentage of the population each day, but instead increase exponentially as each person infected acts as a new vector of transmission. That is why we have seen it get out of control, in some cases multiple times, in countries such as England in the UK, where we see that over 123,000 people have died.

I put that into perspective. We all know the history of London during the Blitz, when thousands of raids rained down bombs upon English homes. During that time 43,000 UK civilians were killed. This time the bombs have rained down on English homes killing 123,000—and we are still counting. Each day there will be a new toll, a new raid of this disease. We have seen this incredible number. It has had a profound impact on every community in the UK. As a way of giving Queenslanders and members of this place a reference of the impact in human terms, the total number of students, teachers and assembly attendees in a school would be about 800. In the UK, one in every 800 people has died. Next time you are at a large school event, look out across those 800-odd people and think of one of the families grieving an untimely death. Think of the many families who would have had family members hospitalised and still suffering in recovery. This is not just about the school community in your community. Every single group of 800 within our communities would have been affected by deaths, hospitalisations and suffering.

Speaking of school communities, I recognise Parklands Christian College and the leadership of Principal Gary Cully and Pastor Mike Warman. A cleaner who worked at that school had crossed our border to go to Victoria, lied, crossed back across our border and brought the infection to Queensland. The school was simply wonderful, because it went to great lengths to ensure that the entire school community were tested. In fact, the night before that happened, my son had played at the nearby Park Ridge Soccer Club with children from that school so he and I went to get tested along with the community. That testing meant that we knew we were keeping the community safe. It is also a credit to the principal and the school community that they had kept the school safe and that there was no new transmissions in that school, because they were following the rules.

I recognise every Queenslander, because we all made a special effort to keep ourselves safe. I also recognise the staff in this place who did such a good job of keeping us safe by ensuring we followed the rules, kept things clean and stopped the spread.

As the member for Keppel said, some Queenslanders have had to make a much greater sacrifice than others. There are those who have had to quarantine and those who have tried to travel interstate in order to see a sick relative or to attend a funeral. Indeed, some of the border MPs recognised that people on the border made an extra sacrifice. I recognise that they went above and beyond what other Queenslanders had to do in order to keep us safe.


As I said earlier, many years ago there would have been people who were held up at Peel Island when they came across our borders on ships and they would have complained that they could not get to Brisbane if they wished to. I want to put a different perspective. When we put these rules in place, we asked the Chief Health Officer and the team that made the assessments to try and keep Queenslanders safe and to assess the risk of those who wanted to come across the border. Other members, in particular the member for Oodgeroo, were attacking them for those decisions, saying that they had no compassion for Queenslanders. They had extraordinary compassion for Queenslanders.

No doubt when they listened to those stories firsthand it was deeply heart-wrenching for them, but they also knew that they needed to have compassion when looking at the consequences of making those decisions in order to make a difference. Whenever I had someone ring me—I felt deeply for them because they made extra sacrifices—I spoke of the difficult decisions that the Chief Health Officer and the team had to make and I told them that they were not without compassion, but in this place so many people have said that the government was heartless and that the government had no compassion. However, it is not easy for those people to recognise that there is a false compassion in taking the risk of letting someone into the state who is infected and possibly seeing funerals as a result of that decision.

I want to thank the Chief Health Officer. I want to thank that team of people that had to make those tough decisions but who were not without compassion. They felt deeply for every Queenslanders, especially those who had to make those extra sacrifices. When I had these conversations with people who had been through these things, I asked them if they wanted politicians to be making that decision. Did they want politicians to be able to play perhaps a compassion card? We recently had the Prime Minister write letters about individuals and I asked if they wanted the Prime Minister to make individual decisions. After I explained the process that they were going through, every single one of those people said that, no, they wanted someone to soberly and scientifically assess the risk that was presented to Queenslanders. That is why we need to get behind the Chief Health Officer, not make these sideways remarks that undermine these decisions and say that the public servants making these tough decisions have no compassion.

I want to thank the Chief Health Officer and the team, as I said. I especially want to thank the police who had the difficult task of being on the front line to communicate this politely, professionally and with great enthusiasm, and they do a great job in keeping us safe. I want to thank all of those public officials who did the hard work during this time, people like the nurses who took risks to take the swabs in order to get people tested. I want to recognise the fact that every Queenslanders made a difference.

The vaccine is coming. That is a really encouraging thing and I encourage every Queenslanders to get the vaccine, but we still have trials and tribulations. We still need to maintain these standards to ensure that we keep transmission to a minimum. We need to back our Chief Health Officer and know that those making the decisions have enormous compassion in their hearts for all Queenslanders to ensure that we can continue to be the best place to be. Recently I was at a business forum organised by the local Baptist Church. The Baptist minister, Peter, asked us to think of one thing we were thankful for and almost half the audience said that they were thankful that they were in Queensland because we are safe and can do what we want, and that is due to every Queenslanders.

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (4.33 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution on the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill. I rise to support the bill and support generally the extension of the emergency powers. We are clearly not yet finished with the COVID-19 pandemic, either internationally or domestically, so it is important that those emergency provisions and powers are extended to allow our health workers and the Public Service more broadly to continue with that vitally important response to the pandemic. I will take the opportunity though to reiterate what I have said previously.

Given that we are still in the thick of the COVID-19 response, it is vitally important that the government initiates or reinitiates an inquiry or inquiries to provide parliamentary oversight of that response. I will make it clear for anyone who might want to dispute it that I have all of the respect in the world for the Chief Health Officer, the DG of the health department, all of those senior public servants and all of our health workers, but that is no reason for us to abrogate our responsibility here in this place to maintain parliamentary oversight of the exercise of what are extraordinary powers for extraordinary times. It is so fundamental to the work that we do here that we do not outsource our responsibilities or hand over the vitally important oversight of such extraordinary powers in the Public Service.

Let us not forget that less than a year ago the Premier commenced parallel inquiries into the health and the economic responses to this pandemic. Both of those inquiries were required to report back within three months after the conclusion of the public health emergency that was declared under the Public Health Act at the beginning of last year—that is, within three months of the completion of that. The public health emergency is ongoing—that declaration is ongoing—and yet the government has taken a position now that the inquiry that it initiated is no longer necessary. In the last parliament the health committee tabled only an interim report in September last year, having had the inquiry initiated back in April. The Economics and Governance Committee has tabled nothing—literally a six-month inquiry that produced nothing. The chair of the Economics and Governance Committee has given us a rollicking little trip down memory lane and through history in his contribution, but still we have seen nothing from six months of committee work on that inquiry.

It is arguable and brighter minds than me have told us that we have not yet seen the worst of the economic fallout here in Queensland or nationally. The federal supports are going to run out next month and we still have no international tourism market and no international student market. This is when the full brunt of the economic impacts of this pandemic will be felt, so state government decisions about what economic supports it is going to provide are more important now than ever before. These are decisions that are not in any meaningful way tied to the health advice, but it is still important that we have some oversight of those decisions.


We are also arguably dealing in coming months with the most important part of our health response as the vaccine rollout takes place. This is the point where the health response and government policy settings are, in some respects, most in need of scrutiny. As more of us are vaccinated in Queensland, it is ever more complicated to shift and to readjust our approach to restrictions that have been imposed and that could in the future be imposed under health directions. How we respond to the inevitability of more cases of COVID-19 in coming months or years is really important, because more infections are inevitable.

We all sat in the briefing with the Chief Health Officer today who told us that the vaccine will not prevent infection. It will not do that and we will continue to have cases of COVID-19, even if we had 100 per cent vaccination coverage. So how will we respond to cases as they emerge in the community when the rollout is incomplete? This is the point at which we have to explicitly acknowledge the distinction between health advice and political decisions that are made on the basis of that health advice and even beyond that in terms of those political decisions that cannot be based on any health advice because they are political decisions in the context of a global pandemic.

The parallel inquiries that were undertaken were a good start. I think it makes much more sense to have a standing committee—a select committee—that looks at this as a holistic concern for the state. I will make the case again: in the absence of any action from the government to refer such an issue to a standalone committee, I implore the chairs of those existing committees to take up their work again and to recognise that the health committee put together an interim report and that it is important that that information come out.

During the last parliament I sat in those hearings for the health committee and the Chief Health Officer does not care about scrutiny. She has done a damn fine job and I am sure she would welcome the opportunity to present the good news story. If that is all it is, then that is great. If it can help our interstate or our international counterparts to understand how we have responded here in Queensland, that is worth doing. If it just helps us in future pandemics—if we have any similar situations unfold in years to come and it helps us in that circumstance—that is reason enough to hold an inquiry.

I want to thank the committee for the work it has done and thank the secretariat, as always, for the work that it puts in behind the scenes. Once again before I sit down I want to thank all of our health workers in Queensland and all of those frontline workers who have done the hard yards to keep us safe.

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (4.40 pm): This Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill does what it says on the tin: it extends expiring provision of acts, specifically some of those acts which have come about as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Queensland acted early and we acted swiftly on the global health crisis in 2020. On 29 January last year we declared a public health emergency under the Public Health Act 2005 due to the early advice on the COVID-19 outbreak in China at the time. Of course, back then we largely called it coronavirus, not COVID-19, and we have all learnt an awful lot about it since that time.

As these amendments were made through an urgent bill or as amendments during consideration in detail, sunset clauses and expiry provisions were inserted into the act so the amendments were time limited. This bill extends the expiry dates of these provisions until 30 September 2021 and also aligns the expiry dates for all the amendments made to health portfolio legislation to support the Palaszczuk government's health response to COVID-19.


Despite overall low numbers of COVID-19 in Queensland, recent events in other Australian jurisdictions and continued large-scale outbreaks around the world serve as a clear reminder of how rapidly it can spread and overwhelm hospital systems. Certain risks for community transmission in Queensland, such as interstate cross-border travel, will remain for as long as the virus continues to circulate in Australia. Having the ability to respond at short notice to an evolving situation will continue to ensure public health objectives are met while also balancing the social and economic needs of the community.

In Queensland we have done incredibly well. With a population of just over five million we have experienced only six deaths. Compare this to similar areas of population in the western world and the results speak for themselves: Wisconsin, with a population of 5.8 million, has had over 6,000 deaths; Alabama, with a population of 4.9 million, has had over 9,000 deaths; Louisiana, with a population of 4.6 million, has had over 4,500 deaths. Going over to Scotland, with a population of 5.4 million, there have been over 7,000 deaths and in Wales, with only 3.1 million people, over 5,000 deaths. To have only six deaths in Queensland is an incredible outcome.

In Europe over the last year we have seen countries previously held up as role models for progressive democracies making disastrous health decisions and sabotaging their economies. We are seeing terrible outcomes in the UK on a health and economic level which they are only now starting to come out of. Here in Queensland we have seen our exemplar health response feeding into a nation leading economic response. It is easy to forget how well we are doing. Just over a week ago I was talking to a number of friends living in Europe, London, Germany and in other countries and I was saddened to hear about the constantly changing restrictions—pretty severe restrictions in some cases—many of them are still facing and have been facing for over a year in some instances. Many of them are desperate to get out and see their friends, to socialise and even to go back to work. I am so proud of our response here in Queensland and, indeed, in Australia and that these challenges are hopefully behind us at this point. We are able to go about our lives in a very open and relaxed way in Queensland in 2021 which seems light-years away from what I was hearing out of Europe and largely the rest of the world.

We are now thankfully moving into the vaccine rollout stage which is very good to see. It was, however, very concerning to hear this morning worrying news in relation to two residents of Carseldine within the Aspley electorate. In the federal government's rollout of the vaccine into nursing homes two constituents of mine, an 88-year-old man and a 94-year-old woman, were given incorrect doses—up to four times the recommended dose according to some reports. This afternoon we hear that the doctors may not have even been properly trained. This needs to be sorted out by the federal government. How can this happen on day 2 of the rollout? We need public confidence in the vaccine rollout and we need it to be carried out properly.


As the situation relating to COVID-19 continues to evolve across Australia and internationally, it is difficult to determine with absolute certainty how long these emergency response measures will be required. An extension of these amendments until 30 September is considered to be the least restrictive and reasonably available way to allow for the continuation of our health response to respond to any emerging threats. Whilst they are broad, the emergency powers are clearly defined and subject to limits, including that the person giving a direction or order must reasonably believe that it is necessary to assist in containing or responding to the threat of COVID-19.

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (4.43 pm): I rise to support the extension of emergency powers. This Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill recognises that we are still in a health emergency and still in the middle of our COVID-19 response. When the COVID-19 Emergency Response Bill came through this House in 2020 the Premier herself said no-one should be without a place to call home, especially when we are all being asked to stay home. This bill recognises that we are still in a health emergency and that over the coming months we may be asked to stay home for days, for weeks—for however long it takes to keep us safe. We were in a snap lockdown just a month ago and, while the vaccine goes out in a staged process, we may very well find ourselves again in a lockdown.

This bill does nothing to include any provisions to make sure all Queenslanders have a safe place to call home. Clearly lacking from this bill are measures to provide housing support to Queenslanders who are sleeping rough, renters who are now facing evictions or people struggling to meet their mortgage repayments. When the COVID-19 legislation came through this House last year it included provisions to support renters here in Queensland, including an eviction moratorium. The government put aside its promise to finally reform Queensland's tenancy laws that continue to disadvantage renters, preventing them from putting down roots in their homes, exposing them to skyrocketing rents with no controls and allowing them to be booted out for no reason. It has apparently done so indefinitely. What we got instead as part of the COVID-19 response was nowhere near good enough.

After some intense lobbying by the well-funded real estate lobby, the so-called eviction moratorium was passed full of holes. The bill allowed rental deferrals rather than reductions, forcing families to sink into debt during a recession. Renters have been met with strict sets of eligibility criteria just to access COVID-19 protections. This government has not even deemed it important enough to extend any provisions in this bill to keep roofs over the heads of Queenslanders. If the government recognises the need to extend mental health provisions, why then has the government stopped all emergency support for Queensland renters, for people struggling to meet their mortgage repayments and people sleeping rough? These concerns are set against an economic climate that is likely to get worse. Despite modest employment growth, unemployment in Queensland is at seven per cent which still represents thousands of families in dire conditions. These conditions will only get worse at the end of March given the drop in JobSeeker to just \$307 per week.

The government's minimal commitment to social housing has seen the social housing register balloon, a sharp increase in the people in the high-needs category since the COVID-19 pandemic started and 47,000 people—including 15,000 children—who are waiting for homes. Only one-third of those people who were housed in hotels during the height of the crisis have been moved into permanent housing. Everyone else is back on the streets or in insecure housing. I have spoken to people in my own electorate who are back on the streets after being in hotels. Given that there is nothing in this bill, or anywhere else in the government's response, to house these Queenslanders, I would also ask what the government's plan is to contact and vaccinate those Queenslanders who have no fixed address. If we are in the middle of a health crisis, these support measures deemed essential just a few months ago should be extended, particularly as we are yet to see the full economic and social impacts of the crisis. Every Queenslander deserves a home, particularly in the midst of a pandemic.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.47 pm): I am surprised the member for South Brisbane is not out the front dancing around with clowns again today and has taken the time to come in here and give the parliament the respect that it deserves. While the member for South Brisbane was outside dancing about with a bunch of clowns and accusing us in here of being zombies, in fact most of the people who were in this chamber yesterday were spending the time acknowledging the traditional owners and establishing a new tradition for this parliament and improving the institution that is our fine parliament. I want to continue to make a decent contribution to this parliament.

I support the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill. I promised the people of Greenslopes that I would work with them and the Premier to keep Queenslanders safe and lead the recovery from COVID-19. This bill is an important part of keeping Queenslanders safe. The people have always been fundamentally important in keeping people in our state safe. They have done everything that they have been asked to do.

On a number of occasions I have bumped into Dr Jeannette Young around the place, as we all do from time to time. I have taken the opportunity, on behalf of the people of Greenslopes, to thank her for the great work that she is doing. Being the humble person that she is, she always responds to me, 'No, no, it is Queenslanders who have done the good job.' I think that it is certainly because people have trust in Dr Jeannette Young and trust in the systems that we have put in place that they have done what they need to do to keep Queenslanders safe.

I think the Premier has done an amazing job. She was the first in the country to act. She was the first to provide funding. She stuck to the course, no matter what. She always based her actions and decisions on the best available evidence based advice. Those opposite cannot always say that they have done a good job, 64 times calling for the border to be opened.

This bill really should be a no-brainer: we are where we are at because of the strong public health response. The recent lockdown that we endured here in Brisbane—and thankfully it was for only a few days—should have reminded us all that this disease can and will come back if we are not ever vigilant. Sadly, we have seen that happen overseas on many occasions.

A clue to the fact that the bill is a no-brainer is the diversity of the groups that support its objectives. Deputy Speaker, you would not be surprised, as I was not, that the QNMU, the AMAQ, the Lung Foundation, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, Health Consumers Queensland and the Public Health Association of Australia support the bill. However, groups such as the Queensland Hotels Association, the Queensland Tourism Industry Council and the Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland also support the bill. Even though we all know they have members who have been negatively impacted by the sorts of provisions that have been put in place, they have seen the sense in supporting this bill. In the report the Queensland police stated clearly that without these powers they could not have done what was needed to keep Queenslanders safe. I really loved what some individual submitters said and I would like to read out a lot of their comments, but I will restrict myself to the comments of Michael Kiss, because I think he nailed it. He said—

Definitely extend the powers. Dr Young has been amazing. In Jeanette, we trust!

I think that summarises it.


Those objecting to the bill labour under the misunderstanding that because we have low numbers of disease or death we do not have an imminent or real threat. Lack of disease in our community does not diminish the imminence or reality of that threat. We have seen how quickly the disease can spread if governments and their citizens choose to ignore it. We have seen the devastating outcomes in the USA and Brazil, and earlier in the pandemic in the UK. Sadly, we have also seen the very real impact on countries and societies where governments have had a will but have not had the means to respond.

Those raising concerns around human rights issues should take comfort from the evidence proffered by the Human Rights Commissioner. I encourage people to read that evidence in its entirety, but I want to quote one thing. He said—

In my view, looking at the risks of a pandemic to Queensland as a whole, I think the measures that have been taken to date insofar as the directions of the CHO go have been proportionate and reasonable.

I am proud that this vaccine is finally being rolled out. It is a modern healthcare miracle and I will say that many times. It gives us a very large potential to see that there is light at the end of this tunnel. If that was not the case and we were still labouring along without a vaccine, I think we would have to give serious consideration to the views expressed by Dr Kate Galloway. If we are still seeking exemptions in 12 to 24 months, I think we would have to seriously consider legislating for a new normal rather than relying on emergency powers, but that is not a case. We do have a vaccine rolling out and we do have the potential to see a light at the end of the tunnel. Extending these provisions by a further six months or so is very sensible and it is a really good step forward in keeping our communities safe.

For now, even with the vaccine rolling out, we are still in the grip of the emergency but I believe that we are very much winning. Keeping Queenslanders safe is what the Premier has done, that is what the Chief Health Officer has done, that is what the people of Queensland have done by working together and that is what this bill does. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (4.53 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill. It is extraordinary for this place to give up its sovereignty over Queensland in any set of circumstances, but we find ourselves in extraordinary times and in extraordinary circumstances. Whilst I would normally be very cautious, the health emergency has been good reason to ensure that the parts of the Queensland government bureaucracy that need these powers have these powers.

I place firmly on the record my thanks and the thanks of everybody in the Toowoomba North electorate and Toowoomba generally to the doctors, nurses, police, paramedics, pathologists and everybody else who has been working on the front line not knowing if the situation they are dealing with right in front of them involves someone who may be infected. In Toowoomba thousands of people have been tested. They have been lining up in their cars and going through the process. The people working at the testing sites do not know whether or not the person in front of them is contagious. Our heartfelt thanks go to all of those people.

Obviously the vaccine changes things. By the time these powers expire, we will have been able to start measuring the impact of the vaccine on our communities, which is a good thing. However, I do have some concerns. Yesterday the Premier said—

All through this pandemic the government has made informing Queenslanders a priority. I believe part of Queensland's success in this pandemic has been because of good communication.

I would absolutely dispute that for the people of Toowoomba. At the moment there is a great deal of stress and nervousness being experienced by businesses, among individuals and in retirement homes because of the proposed quarantine facility that has been spoken about in my community. Many people in my community are not supportive of that quarantine facility, although some are supportive of it. We know that lots of people around Australia have taken the position of 'not in my backyard'. At the end of the day we are going to need a facility but the question becomes: should it be in Toowoomba or should we maintain the hotel quarantine system that we have? Over the period we have had just one serious breach although we do not yet know all of the facts of that case. I ask for there to be transparency and communication around that kind of breach.

In late January I sent a letter to the Premier asking for details so that I could reassure my community about the sorts of things that people have spoken to me about. I will table several letters. On 5 February I again wrote to the Premier. I did not get a response to my first letter or my second letter. On 12 February I wrote a third letter and within 15 minutes I received a response from the Premier's chief of staff stating—

I note the concerns raised on behalf of your constituents and I can assure you that the analysis of any specific options will include consideration of the health, safety and economic wellbeing of all relevant local communities.

That is fantastic, although it was three weeks late and followed a lot of publicity in my local community.

Tabled paper: Bundle of correspondence regarding a regional quarantine facility in Toowoomba [187].

I can tell the House that the impact is already being felt. Motels are receiving cancellations because people are concerned. People who have to drop their kids off at boarding school—and there are a lot of boarding schools in my electorate—are deciding that they will not stay in Toowoomba to do

their regular shopping and catch up with friends. Instead they will run in, grab their child and leave because they are concerned that there may be an outbreak. Those concerns need to be taken seriously because they are having a real impact. People need reassurance.

The Premier has said, 'All through this pandemic the government has made informing Queenslanders a priority.' However, she has been deathly silent on this issue in Toowoomba. The people of Toowoomba are concerned. It is affecting jobs; people are not employing people. It is affecting investment; people are not making investments. A petition has started in Toowoomba stating that the quarantine facility is not wanted in Toowoomba. People are worried about reputational damage. They are worried about many things that could all be cleared up if the Premier was true to her word, but she is not. She is not communicating with any of the people in Toowoomba save the Wagner family.

There is no doubt that the Wagners have built a fine airport and there is no doubt that they would be able to build a quarantine facility. The questions are: can it be run safely for the community of Toowoomba, or will Toowoomba, which has a gross domestic product of just over \$25 million a week, face being shut down? If it is shut down, what compensation exists for all of the people there?

A government member interjected.

Mr WATTS: I hear someone barking away on the other side about—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member, I ask that you adjourn the debate, please.

Debate, on motion of Mr Watts, adjourned.

MOTION

Estimates Process, Referral to Committee of the Legislative Assembly



Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (5.00 pm): I move—

That this House directs the Committee of the Legislative Assembly to:

1. inquire into—
 - (a) the Legislative Assembly's function to scrutinise the government's financial proposals and expenditure;
 - (b) the transparency, efficiency and efficacy of the portfolio committee estimates process; and
 - (c) whether the Legislative Assembly's scrutiny of government's financial proposals and its portfolio committee estimates process benchmarks well against other parliaments in Australia, New Zealand and other comparable democratic systems to ensure that the Legislative Assembly's scrutiny of financial proposals and expenditure is modern and appropriate to needs.
2. The committee should specifically consider measures such as:
 - (a) increasing the time available for questioning to ensure an appropriate examination of both past and future expenditure can occur;
 - (b) appointing the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, an opposition or crossbench member to chair the committees to ensure bipartisan oversight;
 - (c) broadening the hearing program to avoid artificially limiting time for certain portfolios;
 - (d) increasing the ranks of officials who may be directly questioned by the committee; and
 - (e) any other matter the committee considers necessary.
3. The committee is to report to the Legislative Assembly with any recommended enhancements by 1 May 2021.

The parliamentary budget estimates process is broken and it must be reformed. It was one of the worst abuses of power and process I have seen, with government members seeking to protect and block questions to ministers which competent ministers should have no problem fronting up to and answering. It was a complete protection racket, it was an overreach and it was an abuse of power.

Budget estimates is the one time in the year when parliamentarians who are not part of the executive have the opportunity to ask questions of ministers, their departments and statutory office bearers about their budget, and the administration of that budget, in greater detail. It is the only time when statutory office bearers and departmental officials appear before a committee to answer questions from members of this House who are not members of the executive.

A government member interjected.


Ms SIMPSON: If the minister knows anything about parliamentary process and respects it, he knows that the budget estimates process went through a reform process a number of years ago.

It was really disappointing to see what happened this financial year where the intentions and actions of that process have now been thrown out the window. There was an understanding that free-flowing questions should be allowed and that ministers should answer those questions, that the process should not be stilted by chairs interrupting and trying to control proceedings, even repeating or rephrasing questions, wasting time and counting down the clock. We also saw backbench government members with repeated frivolous interjections, again wasting precious time.

This inquiry represents an opportunity for us to seek the highest benchmarks, to look at other jurisdictions where it is done better and to find a better way, particularly for a unicameral parliament, to have a parliamentary estimates process that allows for free-flowing questioning. In a unicameral parliament, the committee process has to be stronger and provide more opportunities for non-government and non-executive members to ask questions of the government. This year it was an absolute joke the way some of the government members behaved. It was so blatant and ham-fisted that even to casual observers who do not live within the parliamentary bubble or understand the rules of parliament would say, 'That is ridiculous. Why can't you ask those questions? Why are they wasting time?'

That is why we have put forward a motion seeking a bipartisan way, to allow the crossbenchers as well to have a voice, to benchmark the estimates process against better and higher standards, to allow us to look at who is doing it best. It is so important particularly in a unicameral parliament.

The estimates process is already very time constrained. If people are running down the clock and interrupting, there is not the opportunity realistically to go offline and to press back against the rules. It is time for reform. This is a very reasonable way of achieving it. That is why we are moving this motion today.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (5.05 pm): Talk about living in the bubble! I rise to oppose the motion moved by the member for Maroochydore. I cannot believe the hypocrisy of what I just heard in the speech by the member for Maroochydore. Of all people! The member has been in this chamber since 1992. It is unfortunate that the member has forgotten the face of the Newman government—a complete memory gap of three years.

Let's walk down memory lane, shall we? The first thing the LNP did was throw the then Labor opposition out of the parliamentary precinct. This left them without dedicated offices for weeks. It is all about democracy!

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister not only is misleading the parliament but also her comments are offensive, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): I will take some advice. Member, if you think the minister is misleading the House there are mechanisms to deal with that. Minister, the member has asked that you withdraw and I ask you to withdraw.

Mrs D'ATH: I withdraw. Let's take a walk down memory lane. The first thing the LNP did was throw the Labor opposition out of the parliamentary precinct.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member!

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, Minister! The member on their feet is addressing the substance of the motion. Members will respect that and listen in silence. Many of you will have the opportunity to put your own points of view.

Mrs D'ATH: This left the then opposition without dedicated offices for weeks. Then during the debate on the Appropriation Bill the then treasurer, the member for Clayfield, came into the chamber, rose to make his reply and closed down the debate. Think about how many members there were in the opposition, but they still had to guillotine the debate. This meant that a number of the then Labor opposition members were unable to have their say and make a contribution on behalf—

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: They do not want to hear it, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mrs D'ATH: In 2014, we all remember the leadership of Campbell Newman and those opposite—the member for Kawana and the member for Broadwater—who trashed the estimates process. Normally governments respect the estimates process, but when members get into opposition they all want to complain about it. That is the normal process; we hear that. That is not the case with the LNP. The LNP complain when they are in opposition and they also pull apart the estimates system when they

are in government. It is extraordinary what they did. They truncated the estimates process to run over two days. When the member for Maroochydore talks about the best practice model, is the best practice model of the LNP two days? This is so-called making sure there are free-flowing questions, ensuring there are no time constraints, recognising the importance of a unicameral parliament. They made eight opposition members cover all committees at the same time over two days.

This was not just about trying to avoid scrutiny by the opposition. This was about avoiding public transparency. It also stretched the media to try to cover every estimates process at the same time. They wanted that because who stopped the live feed from parliament? We all remember that. This was their idea of transparency under the pretence of openness and transparency. It was done to disadvantage the then opposition. I read with interest—

Ms Simpson interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Member for Maroochydore.

Mrs D'ATH: What did the worst Attorney-General in Queensland's history claim on the ABC on 3 April 2014?

Ms Simpson interjected.

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


Mrs D'ATH: The member for Kawana, the then attorney-general, said about forcing all of the hearings into two days, 'This is a more transparent process.' What an absolute joke.

Those opposite come in here and shed crocodile tears, 'We do not like estimates anymore. We want it changed.' Let us have a look at the actual figures and the percentage of non-government questions back to 2013. I have been advised of the figures as follows: 2013, 55 per cent; 2014, 53 per cent; 2015, 61 per cent; 2016, 61 per cent; 2017, 61 per cent; 2018, 63 per cent; 2019, 70 per cent; and 2020, 75 per cent.

This shows that under the Palaszczuk government non-government members have had more opportunity to hold the government to account by asking their questions. The facts speak for themselves. Those opposite should stop pretending that the Newman years did not happen and forgetting what they did then. They should stop with the crocodile tears. This government is more transparent than they will ever be.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. Before I call the next speaker, I remind the members for Maryborough and Maroochydore that you are on warnings.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (5.11 pm): I second the motion moved by the member for Maroochydore. At the heart of this issue is accountability by the government to the people of Queensland. At the heart of this motion we are arguing for the need for more accountability by the government to the people. Those opposite want to talk about the past. We want to talk about the future of this place. We want to talk about the future of Queensland.

To do that, as outlined in this motion, we need to look at: providing more time for scrutiny; appointing a more independent chair to ensure there is bipartisan oversight; broadening the estimates program to give committees the opportunity to delve more deeply into the details of an issue—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Gregory and member for Gympie, you are actually interjecting over your own member and making it difficult for me to hear.

A government member interjected.

Mr CRANDON: I will take the interjection of the member opposite.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The clock is paused, member for Coomera. Resume your seat. Member for Gregory and member for Gympie, you are interjecting over your own speaker and making it difficult for me to hear your speaker.

Mr CRANDON: We need to look at where we sit with regard to best practice principles. We currently have seven portfolio committees and each committee has only one day to delve into the budget papers. For example, the Economics and Governance Committee has three ministers and their entourages to appear before it, including the Premier and Treasurer of this state and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Let us break this down. Mr Speaker and the Clerk were there for 45 minutes. We have the Parliamentary Annexe which is falling apart and we were able to talk to them on the public record for 45 minutes. The Premier was allocated three hours and 15 minutes. What is the Premier responsible for? She is responsible for the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the Integrity Commissioner, the Office of the Governor, the Public Service Commission, the Queensland Audit Office, Screen Queensland and Trade & Investment Queensland.

The Treasurer was allocated three hours and 45 minutes. What is the Treasurer responsible for? He is responsible for Queensland Treasury, the Motor Accident Insurance Commission, the National Injury Insurance Agency Queensland, the Nominal Defendant, the Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority—that is, Seqwater—the Queensland Competition Authority, the Queensland Productivity Commission, Queensland Rail, Queensland Treasury Corporation and government owned corporations. That is a huge portfolio which was allocated three hours and 45 minutes.

The Minister for Tourism Industry Development and Innovation and Minister for Sport was allocated 2½ hours. What is he responsible for? He is responsible for the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport—one of the most important portfolios for this state—Stadiums Queensland, Tourism and Events Queensland and Trade & Investment Queensland. The list goes on.


The government makes the decisions on timing. The government needs to make it possible for proper scrutiny to occur. It is a broken system that is failing to deliver for the people of Queensland. We need to be able to delve more deeply into past and future budget expenditure on behalf of all Queenslanders. We are after all the people's house. We represent all Queenslanders. Through the estimates process they deserve more opportunity to see government expenditure scrutinised by the people whom they elected into this House. They brought us here. We on this side are responsible for making sure we keep those on that side of the House in order. We need to look far more deeply into their portfolios. To think we only had three hours and 15 minutes allocated for the examination of the Premier of this state with all of her responsibilities!

The list goes on. Day 2 of estimates was the State Development and Regional Industries Committee. There was three hours and 15 minutes allocated for the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning. The list of his responsibilities is huge. There was 2½ hours allocated for the Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing. The Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities was allocated three hours.

Mr Krause: That includes Dorothy Dixers.

Mr CRANDON: That includes all of the Dorothy Dixers. I will take that interjection from the member for Scenic Rim.

At the end of the day, we represent all Queenslanders. They deserve more opportunity to see government expenditure scrutinised by the people they elected through the estimates process. I call on all members to vote yes and support this important motion to make our estimates process the best it can be. Let us fix this system.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (5.16 pm): I rise to oppose this motion and this is why. The opposition's use of estimates shows they are spectacularly ill-equipped to pose as the champions of transparency and efficiency. Firstly, let us look at the quality of their questions and their general approach. On the quality of their questions, I note that they had 18 months or so to prepare. In my committee they had nearly five hours of questions compared to three hours of government questions, and guess what? They were still hopeless.

Members heard the Treasurer say it: if you want better answers ask better questions. The epitome of hopelessness was a question from the member for Warrego. She asked why the local government department used the example of a councillor with a dog having a conflict of interest if they are voting on a dog park. She said it was in the departmental training manual. It quickly emerged that the department had on their website an example of a councillor being able to vote on a dog park if they had a dog. It is an example of an interest held in common. She got it completely wrong.

What they did was peddle half-digested bits of information and try to package them up as probing questions. I will not apologise for trying to bring their questions into line with the standing orders. What thanks did I get for trying to help them out? None.

In terms of their general approach, they view estimates as a chance to launch political gotcha attempts. They have no real interest in the actual scrutiny of expenditure. They are prepared to throw everything at six-year-old emails and disrupt the proceedings of the committee just to make a political point.

The LNP want this to be a process of scrutiny but scrutiny works both ways. Political observers scrutinising the general approach of the opposition during estimates have found it very, very mediocre. Let us look at what they propose. They want to inquire into the transparency, efficiency and efficacy of our committee estimates process. I am going to be Nostradamus here. The answer is that any system is only as good as the quality of the opposition: if the opposition give bad inputs, they get bad outputs. It does not matter what system we use because it would be wasted in the hands of the LNP. They want to see how we benchmark against other parliaments. I would love to see how the performance of this opposition benchmarks against other oppositions.

In talking about the quality of questions, the member for Nanango asked a question about potential job losses in manufacturing. When the member was asked to show her source, she referred the committee to a *Courier-Mail* opinion piece by economist Gene Tunney. If you want better information, go to government sources.


Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order, members!

Mr WHITING: They just do not like taking my advice, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am going to make it easy for the opposition. I will give them some preliminary findings of any an imaginary inquiry into the estimates process—that is, any system of scrutiny is wasted in the hands of an inept opposition and, when it comes to any complaints about answers, the quality of answers directly reflects the quality of the questions asked. I oppose this motion because I think it is a waste of our time and it is rubbish.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! I will have order before I call the next speaker.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (5.21 pm): I rise to support the motion. Firstly, it is my view that the government earn the right to be the government and manipulate the process, as far as the process allows, to suit themselves, as other governments of both persuasions have done before. That does not mean that the government is free from scrutiny. The government should still be the subject of the greatest of scrutiny. If it strives to be a good government, it should welcome scrutiny to the highest level. I think anyone who knows their job and knows their portfolio should welcome questioning as it gives them an opportunity to answer.

As a member of a minor party and a member of the crossbench, in the context of this budget, we had a week I think it was. I went home from parliament. I was buried in a sea of issues across a vast electorate. In the meantime I raced back to Brisbane to compile some questions. Then I get to estimates and hear answers that are akin to ministerial statements again—statements that I have heard before. There was a definite strategy of interjection this year. I was definitely pulled up more than I have been in other years. That surprised me. That was a reality. The main issue was preamble. I mentioned this the other day in another speaking spot.


With the preamble, without diluting the message of the question, I am trying to give the minister some context to give a reasonable answer. I would have thought they would appreciate me giving them some context so they understand what I am asking. I can ask a 'gotcha' question and try to catch the minister out, if they like. I am trying to make this process meaningful so they can give an answer. I might not like the answer but I think it is an important part of the process. I kept getting pulled up on the preamble. There was a strategy evident to me—perhaps it did not start at this estimates—to lengthen answers and reduce the time for questions. That does diminish the process. They can hide it or they might not see it as a problem, but it does diminish the process. If they are striving to be a good government, they must welcome that sort of scrutiny and rigour. When it comes to avoiding scrutiny, well I wonder why they would. They should invite scrutiny.

Estimates is a part of parliament that observers really enjoy because it is about getting to the crunch, airing opposing views, having time to apply rigour and having the DGs there to answer questions. I really look forward to that process now. There are times when I run out of questions, but most of the time I find that I am fighting to ask them. Other members come in and ask questions. In my case, it is a five-hour trip just to get here and spend the day here. It is an impost. To have that process diminished in any way to just hear more ministerial statements does not do anyone any good.

Trying to improve that process by having some independence in the chair I think would work wonders in this place. Any good government should not be scared of that. They should welcome that scrutiny and welcome that rigour. I love having a debate and having to defend myself on points that I want to put forward in the parliament, because it gives me an opportunity to explain where I am coming

from. They should love it too. That is why we are here in parliament. That is what people want to hear. They do not want to hear repetition of government policy or positions. They want to hear opposing sides clash and to hear outcomes. That is the essence of why we are here. That process is being diminished.

The process could do with an overhaul. It could be improved. I think there is a linear trajectory. As a participant, one becomes more and more disengaged because there is less opportunity. This is a good opportunity to refresh and to reset the clock. We need to have a process that people deserve. There is a lot of disillusionment about politics and government out there at the moment. I can assure members of that. Estimates is a time when people get their value out of politicians. The government should not diminish that, but they are diminishing it if they keep manipulating the process as they do now. On that basis, we will be supporting the motion.

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism Industry Development and Innovation and Minister for Sport) (5.26 pm): The member for Maroochydore's proposal to inquire into the transparency, efficiency and efficacy of the portfolio committee estimates process is a ruse. It is nothing more than a cheap trick by the opposition. Therefore, I will be opposing the motion.

When those opposite were last in government they 'reimagined' the estimates process. I made this comment earlier this week. They reimagined the estimates process. In 2014, under the veil of accountability and transparency, those opposite reduced seven estimates hearing days to two days of scrutiny. Yet the Newman government ministers lined up to defend the changes under the guise of integrity.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): You will have your opportunity in a moment, member for Kawana.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The then deputy premier, Jeff Seeney, said—

... these changes will add an extra depth to the consideration of the government's budget bills ...

The then attorney-general and current member for Kawana, Jarrod Bleijie, said—

This is a more transparent process. The opposition will have more opportunity to do what they are paid to do—that is, hold the government to account.

The changes that the Newman government implemented in 2014—that is, cutting the schedule from seven days to two, with each of the eight hearings taking place simultaneously instead of one at a time—meant that the then Labor opposition, media and other observers—people from community organisations, third parties out and about in our polity—all had to scramble to adequately cover those public hearings that scrutinise budget spending and to understand the statements being made by ministers of the Crown at the time. It was a ridiculous attempt to obfuscate and hide what the government was doing. It diminished scrutiny. We have seen what those opposite mean by 'reimagining'—and it happened in 2014.


I note that today's motion proposed by those opposite does not make reference to whether the Committee of the Legislative Assembly should investigate the accountability and transparency of running estimates committee hearings concurrently. Paragraph 2(a) refers to 'increasing the time available for questioning to ensure an appropriate examination of both past and future expenditure can occur'. In relation to that request I am advised that during the 2020 estimates hearings process 51 per cent of the total time was spent on non-government questions with only 37 per cent of the time on government questions. Of the 1,314 questions asked, 991, or 75 per cent, were non-government questions.

I am also advised that during the Economics and Governance Committee hearing last year when my portfolio, the Premier's and the Treasurer's were examined, 168 of the 237 questions were non-government questions. Scrutiny of data from estimates hearings going over the last seven years going back to 2013 shows that there has always been more non-government questions than government questions in all but one year. What was that year? 2014. More time is afforded to non-government questions than government questions across the board, and that is how the system works. From these statistics it appears that the opposition is already afforded adequate time to appropriately examine budget expenditure.

A request for the Committee of the Legislative Assembly to scrutinise the estimates process and address the opposition's incompetence and failure to capitalise on the generous time already afforded them seems to be what really needs to occur. We earlier heard an interjection from the member for Clayfield where he described the Palaszczuk opposition as the worst opposition ever. Results would

suggest that a somewhat different analysis should be the case. The reality is that the proposals of those opposite are really, in essence, an attack on the portfolio committee system that was created in the early 2010s and something that the father of the LNP, Lawrence Springborg, was a great advocate for and the progenitor of. This is the first step to undermining his legacy in this place. It strikes me that this might be step 1 of undermining the now mayor of Goondiwindi's legacy. Is step 2 going to be the demerger of the LNP? That might be next. I look forward to these further steps from the opposition.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): I remind members that under the COVID-safe plan for the parliament all members are required to remain in their own seats. It is good that everyone is back there now.

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (5.32 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Maroochydore, the former Speaker of the Queensland parliament and mother of the House. It is great to have the experience in the parliament that comes from being the longest serving current MP in Queensland. The Premier's personal attack on the member for Maroochydore this morning was below the standard you would expect of a Premier. It is the sign of a Premier who is running away from scrutiny and is tiring as she approaches 10 years of her long-term Labor government. I know that everyone on this side, a good many government and crossbench MPs and many thousands of Queenslanders value Fiona Simpson's contribution to Queensland.

This motion focuses on reforming aspects of the parliament and seeks to do so by directing the Committee of the Legislative Assembly in two main areas: to inquire into the Legislative Assembly's function in scrutinising government financial decisions and the operation of the committee estimates process and to do so with reference to similar parliaments elsewhere; and secondly, to consider a raft of specific measures to improve the bipartisan operation and accountability of the estimates committee system.

Part of the impetus for this motion today was the way the estimates process occurred around the current budget. The level of intervention by many government chairs to protect ministers from questions was almost unparalleled in my experience of this parliament. All other state parliaments and the Commonwealth parliament have two houses. Queensland started out with two houses. The upper houses are typically smaller and act as a place of review and further scrutiny and most commonly moderate and approve legislation passed by the lower Houses. As we know, in 1922 the state government abolished the Queensland Legislative Council. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the abolition of the Legislative Council.


That was one of the most infamous events in Queensland political history. Who would have thought—a Labor state government removing the upper house so it could get its way and avoid further scrutiny! Since then without an upper house we have been the poorer politically. A system of committees has evolved over time, and today we have the portfolio based system. We are all on the LNP opposition side working constructively within that system while noting the failure of this government at times to be fair with the advantage that it has.

When I first entered the parliament in 2009 as the member for Cleveland it seemed that the parliamentary committee system was a fairer one than the one that operates today. With the longer hours of the parliament there was more opportunity for the scrutiny of government bills and time to even debate many amendments. What are they? Sadly, today we rarely debate amendments. Things have gone backwards in terms of proper scrutiny. Some government MPs, particularly some ministers and some chairs, act as if the committee system belongs to the government when in fact it belongs to the parliament. To those MPs I say, 'The committees are not yours. Return the committees back to the parliament.'

In 2012 I had the honour of being appointed by the House as the Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees. I believe that I may have been the last of the deputy speakers to also have the title Chairman of Committees, but I am not making any inferences about that. Perhaps the 'chair' bit was seen as a vestigial leftover from a bygone era when there was more rigour in this House. I thoroughly enjoyed the job, both here in Queensland and in my role on the executive committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the CPA.

In that CPA role I was able to look at other Commonwealth countries and study other parliaments, both bicameral and unicameral. One observation I made when considering a number of countries is that those with weak parliaments that were dominated by strong and at times autocratic and controlling governments were not as functional as countries with strong parliaments. In short, when governments have too much power they tend to use that power to the fullest of their advantage alone. There are times when the governing style of this government seems to be more like an autocratic and dictatorial government in the guise of a Westminster system.

In conclusion, if the day ever came in this House where we could restore the Legislative Council in a system that was fair and fully representative of the decentralised nature of our state, provided fair representation for northern Queensland and involved fewer politicians overall, it would have my support. I support this motion.

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (5.37 pm): I am pleased to rise to oppose the motion by the member for Maroochydore. It is quite galling and embarrassing that the opposition would move a motion like this, because from my experience of the estimates process it is those opposite who do not take the estimates process seriously, who ask irrelevant questions and who perpetuate silly stunts. That is hardly best practice.

At the outset I wish to thank the ministers, their staff and the many public servants across all departments who worked so diligently and professionally on the estimates process. I know the hours and weeks that go into the preparation of the responses to questions on notice by those who attend and respond to questions at the estimates hearings. It is an important process and one that we on this side of the House take very seriously.

Other members have already highlighted the absolute hypocrisy of those opposite in pursuing this motion. The Newman government changed the estimates committee hearing times so that all seven committees sat at the same time and only over two days, making it impossible for opposition members to attend and scrutinise ministers. The member for Clayfield, thinking to himself, said, 'Yup, them were the days!'

We were the ones who restored the estimates committee schedule to one committee per day spread over two sitting weeks—two sitting weeks, not two days. We know one of the absolute mistruths that the opposition peddled last year was about the state budget. They told Queenslanders that the government was deliberately not delivering a budget. 'Where's the budget?' we heard them say. What they were not telling Queenslanders was that there was a national agreement that states would deliver their budgets after the federal government delivered theirs, which of course had been delayed as a result of COVID-19. That was a deliberate mistruth and it was so disappointing to not respect the agreement of the national cabinet.

This motion seeks to increase the time available for questioning. And, yes, member for Coomera, I have also had a look at the 2020 program, and the Premier of Queensland did spend more than three hours answering questions, the Treasurer did spend more than four hours being questioned and the Deputy Premier did spend more than three hours answering questions. Honestly, if you could not get answers after that time, what is wrong with you? That was not including the breaks; that was straight questioning.

The Palaszczuk government believes in our democratic processes. Most of those opposite would remember that before the election the Treasurer handed down the *COVID-19 Fiscal and economic review* which outlined the government's economic position at the time. As part of this, there was also a public hearing held on Friday, 11 September where the Premier and the Queensland Treasurer appeared before the Economics and Governance Committee to respond to questions. This is just another example of how our government is ready to answer the questions Queenslanders have about their government and their budget.

What I would say to the opposition is that I do not think extra time is the problem. What takes up time, member for Maroochydore, is when a member throws a terrible tantrum, screeches—which is the only way to describe it, because I swear my dog heard it in Springfield—then is thrown out for poor behaviour and does an amateur drama teacher stomp out of the chamber. It was not only embarrassing but it was highly disrespectful of the many people who, as I said earlier, had worked to prepare and be prepared for the estimates.

I do want to say something about preparation. I had the opportunity to be part of the estimates process in 2018 and 2019 as part of the Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee. One of the things that I enjoyed greatly was observing what the member for Burleigh understood as preparing for estimates. Members, this is what it looked like: one, member for Burleigh gets out of bed; two, member for Burleigh cranks up the computer; three, member for Burleigh goes to Google and types something indescribable; and, four, member for Burleigh smiles widely and thinks 'Gotcha.' In 2018, the member turned up to estimates with his gotcha question, and this is how it went. Honestly, this was the question. He asked—


I wonder if you have done a Google search of 'department of innovation Queensland' lately? I did that this morning. I seek leave to table the results of that search.

Based on his Google search, the member stated that the department's website had not been updated since 2015. Shock, horror! What became self-evident two minutes later when every one of the members actually pulled up the website on their phones was that the member for Burleigh was actually looking at the wrong page. We probably wasted about 10 minutes on that question—

Mr HART: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is misleading the House and I will be writing to the Speaker about it.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): There is a process for dealing with that, member for Burleigh. It is not a point of order.

Mrs MULLEN: It was a gotcha question that got no-one, except the member for Burleigh. When those opposite talk about reforming the estimates process, perhaps they need to look more closely at their own behaviour and their own preparation—but then it would seem that self-reflection is a little lost on the LNP.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (5.42 pm): I rise to make a very brief contribution as I have already spoken on this in my estimates speech today. It is well known that in the last term I raised concerns over committee and estimates hearing processes and through statements of reservation, letters and speeches asked simply that these be reviewed to address the concerns raised by past and current members of parliament, including me.

By supporting this motion, all MPs through their vote will give the capacity for the CLA to undertake an inquiry. Even though it is not the independent review I had requested into the broader committee system, it provides the opportunity to achieve what is sought—that is, equitable processes to deliver greater efficiencies and improved outcomes for Queenslanders. It would also put an end to the arguments I have seen here in this debate. There should be no-one in this chamber who would oppose this. I will repeat it: equitable processes to deliver greater efficiencies and improved outcomes for Queenslanders. As we have all heard, Queenslanders are increasingly disillusioned by processes and decisions that do not meet their expectations. The call and support for this inquiry would very much meet their expectations.

As I said earlier, we should have no anger or fear regarding working to become more efficient or having an inquiry to achieve this. Any and all efforts that improve our performances as members of parliament and the performance of government should be wholeheartedly supported. I ask MPs on both sides to put aside the past and the anger and to come together in bipartisan support to allow this chamber the opportunity to move into the future.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (5.44 pm): The opposition and the member for Maroochydore are obviously having a laugh with this motion. It is ridiculous that they have come into this House with this. Who can forget when they said in opposition that the Public Service has nothing to fear but when they get into government they did the complete opposite? This motion is exactly that.

I want to go to the point in the motion about the independent chair of the committee. Let me go back to when they were in government. I can remember the PCMC had an independent chair. What did they do to that independent chair? They did not like that the committee was scrutinising the Ken Levy affair, so the member for Kawana came in here in the middle of the night and sacked the whole committee, including the independent chair. I warn the crossbenchers that it may be good on paper but they will not do it in government, and the crossbenchers should know that better than anyone in this place. They will not do it in government. They will say it and pretend to be nice. They want us to forget the Newman years. They say, 'We've changed. We've listened to Queenslanders.' They might say something nice and cuddly in opposition, but they do the complete opposite when they get into government. I suggest that the crossbenchers have a chat to the independent former member for Gladstone.


I do want to support part of the motion, and I would love to vote for part of the motion. The part of the motion I want to address is giving opposition members more time. Each time I have seen the estimates process, I have noticed that if you give them more rope they make more mistakes. Who can forget the contribution from the member for Everton with regard to his quotas of female representatives on the Parole Board? We kept on feeding him the rope and he kept on digging the hole.

I will just go back to the last estimates to see some more great examples. I would love to bring a television in here and play an instant replay. I watched the whole estimates process, but I want to go to the Friday night session and the more than three hours that was required for the resources section. I thought I would rather be in a thousand other places than here on a Friday night, but the members for Condamine and Gregory put on a comedic act that was worth the price of admission itself.

The member for Condamine asked a brilliant question—I am going to give him credit for that—and was getting a really good answer, but the member for Gregory piped up with a point of order and the point of order was that the answer was too comprehensive. Obviously, the acting chair ruled that out of order and the minister finished his answer. The member for Gregory then thanked the minister for the comprehensive answer, and the minister said, ‘You’re welcome.’ The member for Mount Ommaney then said, ‘So the point of order was that the answer was too good?’

We would love to give them more time, especially late on Friday nights, but that gets me to the point the member for Maiwar made in his contribution earlier today. One would think the Greens and the member for Maiwar in particular would love to turn up for the session with the Minister for Resources. They are the anti-Adani party; there are a lot of issues that the Greens have with mining. Did they turn up after 5 pm on a Friday? No, the member for Maiwar could not be bothered. The weekend had started: ‘I’m not coming in here to cross-examine him.’ I will just have a look at the member for Maiwar’s contribution. On the last day of estimates, the member for Maiwar asked 10 questions in 10 minutes to the housing minister. I would love to give the member for Maiwar 20 questions in 20 minutes, because he could not get the simple, basic understanding that they were talking about two different application forms.

Again, I would like to remind especially the crossbenchers that those opposite say one thing in opposition and do the complete opposite when in government. That is why I cannot support the motion, because they are not deadset about this. They will not do it if they ever get back into power. They say one thing when over there and do the complete opposite when on this side. We should all oppose the motion.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (5.49 pm): Thank you for your forbearance, Mr Deputy Speaker. The reality is the Labor government do not want the estimates process changed because they want the protection racket to continue throughout the years. I love being in this place when we get a history lesson from a Labor member who was not here at the time we are talking about. He has basically been given the script from his staff saying, ‘Here’s some background to what happened.’ If we asked him to go off the cuff and go further into the explanation he would not have a clue because it is not on the piece of paper in front of him.

Let me give the member for Capalaba a history lesson regarding what he was just telling us. The reason that committee was discharged was that Jackie Trad and Peter Wellington were tweeting about the subject matter of the committee. That is why they were discharged. We all know the rules of committee processes, and they were finding someone guilty before the committee even finished its process. If the member wants to give a history lesson, maybe he should go and google a little bit rather than rely on the talking points the Leader of the House has given him.

I love estimates. I can remember when I was a minister in estimates and our chair would say, ‘Mr Attorney, would you like to make an opening statement?’ I said, ‘No, let’s go for it.’ I loved estimates. I loved it so much that when I saw the then leader of the opposition, Annastacia Palaszczuk, struggling to come up with questions, I recall that I texted our deputy chair and our members on the committee. I said, ‘Cease with the Dorothy Dixers. Let the opposition go because I think they are struggling and they are running out of questions.’ Then Ms Palaszczuk said, ‘Thank you, Mr Chair. Over to the government.’ The chair said, ‘No, we’re happy to continue with opposition questions.’ ‘No, Mr Chair. No, go back to the government now.’ Mr Chair said, ‘No, no, no. We’re okay. We’re free. We’re right. Just go.’ ‘No, Mr Chair. We agree it’s the government’s time now,’ because she ran out of questions. That is why when the LNP changed the system—

Mr Nicholls: The most well resourced, laziest opposition you ever came across.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection, the most overresourced, lazy opposition they were. That is why when we changed the estimates process and we forced them to turn up to two full days, they did not like it because they did not have the questions. It was not, as one of the members said, because they had to run around. If they wanted to watch all the estimates, all they had to do was get the remote control and flick from channel 61 to 62. They did not have to run around. The reality is they did not like it because they did not—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Sorry to interrupt you, member for Kawana. The member for Clayfield and the member for Sandgate will stop quarrelling across the chamber.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you for giving me some more time. The reason they did not like it was they would not have been able to fill the two full days with questions. That is why in opposition the Labor Party hated the two full days of estimates. Ministers sat there from 8.30 in the morning until six or nine o’clock at night for two full days.

Now we hear from the member for Jordan that the Premier gave us three hours. Oh wow! What a job, three hours! That was from the member for Jordan, who was also giving us a history lesson about things she does not know about. Then we had 'Three-Piece Bancroft' who said, 'If you want to go to the truth, go to the government.' If they want to know the truth, go to the director-general or the bureaucrats during the estimates hearings, not to the ministers.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Kawana—


Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Kawana. We will continue to refer to members by their correct parliamentary titles.

Mr BLEIJIE: The reality was that the Labor Party members were interrupting and for the first time that I have seen during my 12 years in this place the chairs of the committee—and I think the member for Logan did this every time. He said, 'Member, thank you for the question. What I think you really meant to ask was—' I said, 'No. We ask the questions. The chair does not rephrase the questions.' The chair was offering commentary on every single question to fill the time and to work down the clock. That is all they were doing. The member for Logan was doing that. He was offering his advice and his opinion on every question, which was not necessary. All he was doing was winding down the clock.

Then we had the member for Nicklin—what a show! I think earlier today a member was talking about 'clowns out the front'. The member for Nicklin had to go and have a costume change halfway through because he had rocked up to estimates in a Hawaiian shirt and then was told by his Labor colleagues, 'Go and put a suit on, mate.' It was an absolute joke. The estimates process is serious and should be treated seriously. That is why it needs to change.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (5.54 pm): I rise to oppose the motion. After hearing the debate in this House this evening we on this side of the House really have no option but to oppose this ridiculous motion before us. We on this side of the House will not be lectured to by those opposite on accountability and transparency. If members had heard the previous speech—and nobody else over there can get up and speak. I will give the member for Kawana his due; at least he will get up and have a go. He is about the only one over there who will do it. The rest are nothing but a lazy mob, and that is exactly what came through in estimates: lazy, gotcha moments.

Let me say something about the election campaign. If there is one thing that the Queensland electorate cannot stand it is hypocrisy. They cannot stand hypocrisy—

Mr Crandon interjected.

Ms GRACE:—and that is what we see over there in spades.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order, member for Coomera.

Ms GRACE: The member for Coomera can yell all he likes. It is a pity that his speech did not have any substance other than reiterating the times that were given during estimates, which are on the public record. That was his contribution, 'This committee sat for this many hours and this is what this committee looks at.'

Mr Crandon: Why don't you put it on the record?

Ms GRACE: For goodness sake, member for Coomera. I suggest you stop interjecting because I am not taking any of your interjections.

Mr Crandon: You just did.

Ms GRACE: I am not taking any of them. This is the point. We have an issue here where we want quality, not quantity. They lost the election; they know that. They are hurting at the moment; we know that. It is not a game on that side when they get up and make all these character assassinations that we hear time and time again about various members. That is all we have; that it is a game. Nothing more purely showed that it is a game than when the member for Maroochydore came into my estimates hearing. We saw all the fake indignation, all the self-righteous rage, all the feigned disdain from the member for Maroochydore asking me about a report which I did not even write—it was a CCC report. She was saying, 'Minister, you should know. This is something. Answer this question.' It was absolutely—

Mr Nicholls: How was that Inner City South State Secondary College selection process?

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

Ms GRACE: Well may you laugh because that is where the member opposite will be for a long time, and the performance of the member for Maroochydore was laughable. I am sure that in Maroochydore there is some amateur theatre company that would be dying to recruit the member for Maroochydore because they need someone who can play the theatrics.

My simple response to her was, 'Not my report; ask the CCC. Take the opportunity and ask the CCC when they are in estimates.' Luckily the member for Maroochydore did take up my suggestion that she ask the CCC. Basically the CCC said, 'We wrote the report. We made the assessment. We decided that we were not going to expand on that.' In other words, mind your own business. That is basically what was said.

It is embarrassing being here listening to those opposite. I agree with the member for Capalaba: be careful what you ask for. Those opposite cannot be trusted and the people of Queensland know that. If they are talking about process and equity of time, let me tell honourable members that they will take it away from the crossbenchers. They have done it in the past and they will do it again.

The reality is that for those opposite this is nothing but a game. They were done over in estimates. There were no 'gotcha' moments. They use the words 'protection racket'. I do not know where that comes from. They think these words will get them elected. Let me tell them something: it is not a game in here. If you want quality, bring quality to the table. If you want good answers, ask good questions.

(Time expired)

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

AYES, 40:

LNP, 33—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, Powell, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

Grn, 2—Berkman, MacMahon.

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 50:

ALP, 50—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, 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, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pegg, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

Pair: McMillan, Purdie.


Resolved in the negative.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION (EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 182, on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (6.06 pm), continuing: Just before the break we were talking about the quarantine facility in Toowoomba and the anxiety it was causing in my community in terms of concern for people's businesses and, in fact for some people, their lives. We were also talking about the Premier and how she said she had been communicating transparently and openly. I have some questions for the Premier from the people of my constituency, Toowoomba North. When will the community be consulted on this quarantine facility? Senior ministers have come to Toowoomba but have not spoken to the people of Toowoomba. They have not answered any questions or given them any information about this facility. If there is a positive case that needs medical treatment, will the person go to Brisbane or be dealt with locally?

The medical fraternity in Toowoomba, both public and private, is very concerned about this. If an ambulance is used, will it be one from Toowoomba? Will that ambulance be taken out of circulation while it is cleaned? Will its paramedics have to self-isolate afterwards? These are questions being asked in my community and not answered by the Premier, despite her statement this morning, which


goes some way to misleading the House, that communication has been good, open and transparent. There has been no communication about this quarantine facility in Toowoomba. How quickly will a positive case be picked up? People are asking me this question. Will sewage from the facility be tested? I was told by the Wagners when I had a briefing about the facility that that is possible. The petition exists in Toowoomba because people are scared and anxious. That has been created by the inaction of this government. They need to come and answer some questions for the people of Toowoomba.

If there is a fire, how will the fire be managed? Who will put out the fire? What will happen to the personnel who put out that fire? Where will people congregate as the fire is put out? These are genuine questions that people have which are causing anxiety and concern in my community. If there is some civil unrest in the facility, who will deal with that? How will it be dealt with? Where will the police come from? What kind of quarantining will they have to go through afterward? Will there be a penalty for a private provider or otherwise if there is a biosecurity breach? Will there be compensation to the people of Toowoomba, their businesses and livelihoods, if they are shut down because there is a breach of this facility? These are genuine concerns.

Open and transparent communication should be answering these questions, not leaving a town of 160,000 people so anxious. I have businesses such as motels that are receiving cancellations right now for the September holidays. People who were going to pick up their boarders and spend some time shopping in town have decided they are not coming. It is causing an economic impact right now. What will happen to the boarders if Toowoomba is locked down? Will they be allowed to go home or will they have to stay through the holiday period? These are genuine questions.

Who will manage the waste facility? How will that waste be processed? Will it go into the creek? These are genuine questions being asked. How will passengers leave the facility? Will they be transferred through Toowoomba? Will they be cleared through Toowoomba? People are concerned. There was an outbreak in the Illawarra after 16 days of quarantine. People are concerned about what that means. We have been told that there could be hundreds of thousands of overseas students coming through. It may well be a good thing for the education community in Australia but it will be very bad for the education community in Toowoomba if there is a breach. All these concerns can be alleviated with some good communication, with the minister and the Premier coming up to Toowoomba, talking to people and discussing this. If they did that, we would not have people chasing a petition and saying, 'We do not want it in Toowoomba.'

(Time expired)

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (6.09 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020. On behalf of my communities I want to extend my gratitude and appreciation to our Premier and to our Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, for their strong leadership in making tough decisions under very extreme circumstances to keep Queenslanders safe.

With the strength demonstrated by our Premier and the strong health advice from our CHO, the Palaszczuk government took nothing for granted and made sure that no stone was left unturned when it came to making important decisions on how to respond to this global health emergency in a swift and decisive manner. I acknowledge our cabinet ministers and all members of parliament who all stood up to the plate, determined to work together to keep COVID out. However, I want to point out that Queensland's collaborative effort would not have been possible if it were not for our frontline heroes. Our frontline heroes stepped up for Queensland and were prepared to be at the coalface of this pandemic to protect and fight for Queensland. Talking to frontline workers in my electorate gave me the reassurance that we were in good hands.

Twelve months ago when we were watching how COVID-19 swept across the globe, it almost seemed like a bad dream. There is certainly no doubt that we had only one chance to get our COVID response right. We have seen what has happened overseas in that when an inadequate response occurs it costs lives. That is what is at stake and Queensland has done so well. My experience was people wanted reassurance and people wanted certainty for the future, and what played out in the media day in and day out in terms of the impact that COVID had on people's health gave us a glimpse of what could become of us—our community, our state. We knew that it was only a matter of time before COVID would come knocking on our door, and it did.

Representing the northern-most electorate of the state, many of my communities are regional and remote, thus elevating the risks for the most vulnerable groups in my electorate. No doubt the spread of COVID would have been devastating to the most vulnerable population in my electorate and we needed to do all we could to keep COVID-19 out of our local area. On 29 January 2020 Queensland


declared a public health emergency under section 319 of the Public Health Act 2005 due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in China, its pandemic potential due to cases spreading to other countries and the public health implications within Queensland resulting from recently arrived travellers from the epicentre of the outbreak. The public health emergency was declared for all of Queensland under section 323 of the Public Health Act. The declared public health emergency was extended until 31 December 2020 through the making of several regulations and may need to be further extended.

In early 2020 the Legislative Assembly also passed several pieces of legislation to support the Queensland government's health response to COVID-19. The amendments made to chapter 8 of the Public Health Act allowed for the Governor in Council to extend the declared public health emergency for up to 90 days under the Public Health (Declared Public Health Emergencies) Amendment Act 2020, which received assent on 7 February 2020; increased powers for emergency officers and the Chief Health Officer to limit or respond to the spread of COVID-19 in Queensland; the chief executive to delegate their powers to the Chief Health Officer or person with expertise or experience in public health issues and improving the operation of the provisions of emergency officers to support the Queensland government's response to COVID-19; and people were required to enter hotel quarantine at their own cost under the Community Services Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 2020, which received assent on 22 June 2020.

Despite overall low numbers of COVID-19 in Queensland, recent events in other Australian jurisdictions and continued large-scale outbreaks around the world serve as a clear reminder of how rapidly COVID-19 can spread and overwhelm hospital systems. Certain risks for community transmission in Queensland such as interstate cross-border travel will remain for as long as the virus continues to circulate in Australia.

I want to give a special shout-out to our Chief Health Officer for all of the tough decisions that she has made in this space. I am eternally grateful for all of her support that has resulted in the Cook electorate not having one case of COVID-19. Twelve months ago we knew what the risks were and what the implications would be for vulnerable people living in my electorate such as our First Nation communities as well as seniors and people with disabilities. Given that many of my communities are so regional and remote, every measure that this government took to safeguard communities right throughout Queensland reflected the results seen in Far North Queensland. I want to put on record my thanks and appreciation to this government because without its support the outcome could have been very different.

The reality is communities in the seat of Cook are almost literally on the doorstep of other countries. Saibai Island is only four kilometres away from Papua New Guinea. The risk of people travelling in and out of Cairns Airport and the risk of community transmission into our most vulnerable parts of Cape York and the Torres Strait was concerning, so the measures we took in terms of border closures and quarantine efforts determined the outcome in that we did not see any cases in my community. I am proud to be part of this government that puts people first. This is a story that I will always tell for years to come because economic recovery is just not possible if we do not put the health and wellbeing of people first. I stand with this government and commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (6.17 pm): I rise to briefly address the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill and note that the LNP will not be opposing the extension of provisions outlined in the bill. The LNP acknowledges the considerable sacrifice made by all Queenslanders, none more so than the thousands of small business owners and employees who have had to deal with months of uncertainty and considerable financial impact. Businesses have gone to the wall and businesses will continue to go to the wall as a result of COVID public health constraints. That is the reality of the sacrifices that some Queenslanders have made in keeping us all free from the scourge of COVID-19.

In my contribution today I wish to specifically address the concerns of small businesses across the state. The overwhelming issue expressed to me by small business owners across the state and by members of my community more broadly is a desire for more transparency in relation to government COVID decisions. Transparency and better communication will result in greater acceptance of these very significant decisions.

The LNP has long called for the medical advice to be released and for the decision-making process to be more transparent and consistent. The government needs to do a better job of communicating the basis of decisions made under this legislation. Uncertainty around how and why public health decisions are made has created fear. I acknowledge that governments of all colours have learned much over the last 12 months dealing with the impact of COVID-19 and I accept that during the

early stages of the COVID response detailed information was no doubt difficult to come by, but we are now 12 months down the track and I would be very concerned if a criteria has not been developed that details the conditions under which major decisions like border closures will be made.

Uncertainty creates fear and the best antidote to that fear is information. That uncertainty has had a considerable impact on businesses across the state and it continues to have a considerable impact. During their submissions to the committee hearings into the bill the CCIQ indicated its support for this bill, but they also expressed concerns in relation to the need for greater transparency, saying—

... we consider that there is an opportunity within these powers to also require a transparent framework for that decision-making. For example, if we are looking at three-day, seven-day, 28-day lockdowns or longer what does that mean, and is there an opportunity for the CHO through these powers to have a requirement to have a framework that is publishable that does outline what that looks like? We consider that we are at a point where we do need more understanding.


This month I visited Currumbin and participated in a small business forum organised by the hardworking member for Currumbin, Laura Gerber. It was attended by more than 100 local business owners. The message was really clear: businesses in Currumbin and the border regions are still hurting, and wider community uncertainty around potential future border closures has caused a considerable drop in trade for businesses on both sides of the border. People are avoiding border areas like Coolangatta and it will take time for confidence to improve.

Just as the economic impact of COVID-19 has disproportionately affected some industries, so too have regions like Currumbin been disproportionately impacted. Such regions deserve better state government COVID support when they are impacted by short-notice decisions like imposing a hard border closure. Echoing the calls of the member for Currumbin, local businesses have requested the state government consider measures such as creating a dedicated lane to facilitate cross-border travel for local residents and businesses should future hard border closures be imposed.

The final issue I would like to address today is in relation to the mandatory electronic sign-in requirements. While I am supportive of the government's directive to mandate electronic contact information collection at all hospitality businesses, concerns have been expressed to me from both businesses and, more particularly, from elderly residents in my electorate who have found the implementation of this directive problematic. I understand that all Australian states and territories have made QR code based check-in apps which can be used by numerous businesses and venues to keep records of visitors. This has been expressed to me as being of particular benefit for the visually impaired and the disabled.

It is my view that the state government should be doing more to support small and medium businesses in this regard. The failure to streamline and deliver consistency to this process has meant that people are left standing in queues having to type information into their devices and staff are often required to assist patrons, taking them away from their core duties and increasing costs. Many elderly residents have told me that they have just given up going out because of the confusion that different systems and requirements has created. In my view, it is time for the state government to assist businesses to comply with its own mandated requirements by introducing a statewide process as other Australian states have done.

In summary, I acknowledge that the powers in this bill provide the CHO and emergency officers with the ability to respond to COVID-19—and they should; they are important powers—but there needs to be an improved focus on transparency and on communicating the rationale of the decisions contained within this bill to all Queenslanders.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (6.23 pm): I rise in support of the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill. I congratulate the Premier, the health minister and the former health minister for showing leadership in giving such powers to the Chief Health Officer. We were the first jurisdiction in the nation to do so. It put us in good stead for what was to come and the statistics speak for themselves in that regard. I thank the Chief Health Officer and her team for their efforts over the last year.

I understand that it has been particularly tough. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak people have missed out on going to funerals, people have suffered financial loss due to lockdowns, people have had to delay weddings, people have had to rearrange their lives and been unable to see loved ones.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr BROWN: I take the interjection from the member for Logan. I thank them for their sacrifice. Everyone in some way has sacrificed during this pandemic. I also thank those on the front line, in particular retail workers during announced lockdowns. Unfortunately we had more panic buying. They have been very patient. They have suffered verbal and physical abuse. It is a shame. They are usually young workers who have now had well past their years when it comes to experience. I thank those in

the arts and those in hospitality who suffered through lockdowns. I thank police, ambulance officers and healthcare workers on the front line. I particularly thank my old profession, the pathology scientists of our state, who do a wonderful job to turn around in quick time COVID tests. I have had two COVID tests now and on both occasions I have had the results back in under 24 hours. That gives certainty to the public and also means, once we get that negative test, that we can get on with our lives. I thank them in particular for the job they have been doing.


I was surprised about who came up to me in the lead-up to the election and thanked me, the government and the CHO for our efforts. Elderly constituents, who may not have voted Labor for a long time, came up in droves and thanked us. The usual pearls and white shoe brigade came up and thanked us for our wonderful efforts. I was blown away by the small business owners who said that the measures we had taken had meant certainty for their business. We know that if we get the health response right businesses can open up and recover. Some industries, such as those involving international tourism, cannot get back on their feet as quickly as other businesses can, but at every opportunity the CHO has done a wonderful job to ensure that we get the numbers down to give certainty to businesses to enable them to open.

Unfortunately, COVID is not predictable. We have seen examples of outbreaks across every state, particularly with the UK strain. I thank the Chief Health Officer for taking decisive action to ensure we get back on our feet. In the outbreak in New South Wales they had the chance to lock down early, but they did not and it dragged on for over a month, causing worry in the community. Up here we immediately went into lockdown for three days. The public in the Greater Brisbane area were willing to go into that lockdown. There were no protests. People understood. During the year the Chief Health Officer built up the trust of the people of Queensland. I missed out on my 40th birthday party that weekend.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BROWN: It is this Saturday. I will not be going to the Mad Cow. I will make sure I am home before one o'clock. I will be allowed to do belly dancing thanks to the CHO. It is important to understand that because of our health measures and the actions taken by the Chief Health Officer we can have hospitality functions, 40th birthday functions, weddings and those other things that are important to people in our community and to get back to some normality of life. We are not all the way there yet, but we have come a long way.

It is important that through this bill we extend the time frames because the rollout of the vaccine is occurring right now. It is important that we get herd immunity. Being a former microbiologist I understand the importance of having a good public health campaign. I want to make sure that good public health information goes out to my community so that high numbers of people are vaccinated. We need to get herd immunity across our state and across our country so that we can take further steps towards removing restrictive measures when it comes to COVID-19, thereby helping those in our hospitality and international tourism sectors and ensuring that we get back on our feet. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (6.30 pm): I rise to give my contribution to the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020. I acknowledge that the purpose of this bill is to extend the expiry date of provisions in several pieces of legislation to 30th September 2021 and align generally with the expiry dates for all of the amendments made to the Health portfolio legislation regarding the Queensland government's health response to COVID-19.

While the LNP will not oppose the passage of this bill, and indeed the bill has received support from healthcare industry stakeholders, it is important to acknowledge that other industry groups and peak bodies have indicated concerns. It is appropriate that I give those concerns a voice in this chamber because it must not be forgotten that when these powers are exercised the oppressive measures exercised as a result of them, necessarily enabled through these provisions, do result in a devastating social and economic impact. The need to consult and engage with industry and the community when such oppressive measures are acted on cannot be underestimated. It is something that I fear the government has not done very well to date and that I for one would like to see improved.

The concerns raised by some of the submitters to the committee should not be ignored. They are concerns around the inconsistencies in decision-making arising out of the public health directions and the lack of community consultation, the lack of engagement, the lack of clear communication and the lack of transparency by the state Labor government during these unprecedented times. Queenslanders have lost a lot to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the Currumbin electorate which thrives on showcasing its natural beauty through tourism and hospitality. While the rest of the state has somewhat bounced back, I have seen firsthand how our border community is still suffering.

Many people in the Currumbin electorate go about their lives with one foot in Queensland and one foot in New South Wales. When the COVID-19 border blockades are enforced, their daily lives turn into a disaster. Insane border queues clog all of the roads—the M1 and the local roads. Those people are simply trying to go to work, trying to go to school, trying to get to their health service. They are not travelling interstate; they are going about their daily lives. My community continues to live in fear of another abrupt lockdown followed by mixed messages and rumours sending the community into a spiral of anxiety and panic. We have seen droves of people lined up at our office who need assistance with border passes or help interpreting the new rules that might be handed down at short notice.

A major contributor to the fear in my community is that the Labor government does not communicate the rationale behind the enforcement of the public health directions. Concern around the lack of transparency is a common thread in the submissions to the health committee. While the LNP will not oppose the extension of these powers, we believe it is incumbent on the government to be more transparent and to communicate the rationale when the rules are enforced. Let us be clear: this is not about questioning the health advice. The opposition has been very clear on that. We will always follow the professional health advice relating to COVID-19. This is about the government not keeping Queenslanders in the dark. This is about the government informing Queenslanders about the criteria used to trigger border lockdowns or to trigger restrictions imposed on a community. This is about the inconsistencies in the application of that power.

A large number of constituents have reached out to us expressing their displeasure with the lack of explanation and the lack of rationale when oppressive measures are enabled through these provisions, particularly the business community. The small business community in Currumbin has suffered significantly with each restriction that is imposed. In part, that is due to their proximity to the border. They are stressed and anxious. They feel forgotten on the border of Queensland. We know that being kept safe is a priority and Queenslanders respect that. Queensland businesses on the border respect that. We respect the health advice and we know it must be followed. However, we want it delivered in a clear, transparent and consistent way so that people are not left confused and uncertain and so that businesses have the confidence to continue, knowing that people will come.

Having rules apply to some and not to others—as was the case with celebrities allowed hotel quarantine exemptions and other exemptions and social distancing with crowd caps allowed at major sporting events when ordinary Queenslanders who were doing the right thing were overlooked—is a bitter pill for the community to swallow. Queenslanders have been treated like mushrooms by this state Labor government. They have been kept in the dark when it comes to the decision-making around these restrictive decisions imposed on them. The lack of transparency greatly impacts business confidence and the daily lives of each and every person, particularly in my border community of Currumbin. It is a hard time for anyone to plan ahead in this constantly changing environment and the effect it has on small business is huge.

The concern over the lack of engagement with various industries was noted in the CCIQ's submission on this bill. The increased powers for emergency officers and the Chief Health Officer to limit or respond to the spread of COVID-19 in Queensland was only conditionally supported by the CCIQ.

Ms Grace interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Order, Minister!


Mrs GERBER: I am not taking the minister's interjections. People simply wish for some consultation to happen. That is echoed by the business community of Currumbin. I held a small business forum in Currumbin to which over 100 small business operators came to voice their concerns and to be heard because they feel like they are not being heard by this state Labor government. COVID-19's impact on the business community of Currumbin is nothing short of devastating. Businesses in Currumbin know they have to play their part in keeping people safe, but at that forum they consistently told me that they want greater transparency. They just want to understand what the triggers are for the restrictions that will be imposed on them so that they can plan for their businesses. They also want to know that people from across the border who want to come to Currumbin can make plans to do so.

There remains no clear criteria available to the public that determines when the powers will be used or ceased. Given that the powers granted in the legislation have the ability to cause significant economic and social strain, it is important that a balance be struck between Queensland's health and

Queensland's economic health. Clarity and certainty regarding the decision-making process is key to that. The reason people in my community are so anxious is because Labor refuses to release to Queenslanders their decision-making process. Labor refuses to lay out for people the trigger points for the health restrictions.

The mental health of my community has greatly suffered due to the lack of consistency and certainty around the decision-making involving health restrictions. The government needs to restore confidence in Queenslanders by informing them how and when decisions are made so they can regain their business confidence and go about their daily lives without being crippled by anxiety that at any moment the border may be slammed shut and their local roads cut off.

The LNP will support the passage of this bill, but the government must do better in communicating and consulting with the community and industry when strict measures are enforced under the powers given in these provisions.


 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (6.39 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill. It is hard to believe that just over a year ago we were all first coming to grips with this pandemic and figuring out how much it would change our everyday lives. The restrictions that were placed on businesses, gatherings, movements and especially borders were matters that many people would never have imagined. They left massive impacts on Queenslanders that will be felt for months and years to come.

I want to give credit to Chief Health Officer Dr Young. We have not been privy to all the medical advice she was providing—we have asked the government multiple times to increase the transparency around it—but one thing we cannot dispute is that she has worked tirelessly over the last year to do her best to protect Queenslanders, and it is right to acknowledge that.

The extension of the CHO's powers is necessary while this virus remains an active threat. I think many people hoped that once the clock struck 12.01 am on 1 January 2021 the virus would suddenly disappear, but we know that that is not the case. The reality is that things will not go back to the way they were for some time to come, but the rollout of the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines will be essential to getting there.

I will add that I have been surprised by the level of scepticism that is out there on the vaccine, judging by a couple of responses I received to Facebook posts I have done. I was inundated with hundreds of comments from people. I had to take a deep breath and remain calm as I replied to them, some of them being quite ridiculous. I urge the government to do everything they can to educate people on the safety of these vaccines, to ensure that they explain it in a way that people can easily understand so that as many Queenslanders as possible will choose to get the jab. A good starting point for the advertising budget would be something like the millions spent talking about the unite and recover plan, a plan that seemed to disappear last November for some reason; we no longer see those ads. Most of the questions people have are genuine, so we need to arm them with information and evidence to allay their fears.

I am proud to represent thousands of Gold Coast health workers in my electorate and at the Gold Coast University Hospital. It is in fact my biggest employer in Bonney. These health workers, as well as many more around the country, did not falter when cases were rising a year ago. They did not shirk from their duties but came to work every day, ready to put themselves in the line of this virus to care for those who had been infected. I do not think our community has ever been more thankful for them. Gift baskets were being dropped off at the Gold Coast University Hospital, businesses were dropping off coffees, food and other goodies, many cafes and restaurants were offering discounts and freebies to these frontline workers, and Arundel State School even had the children who were still at school then writing cards to say thank you and those were all sent or given to the health professionals. It was great to see so many take the opportunity to say thank you. It is clear that these frontline workers were truly seen as heroes during the pandemic. Now they are stepping up to get vaccinated so they can keep going in to work to safely care for Queenslanders. I was proud to see that rollout begin in my electorate earlier this week. As we hopefully move towards beating this virus, the work of our health workers in getting us through this cannot be forgotten. I want to ensure that we continue to take every chance to say thank you for the work that they do.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (6.43 pm), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions on this very important bill. I recognise and thank the members for acknowledging the great work of our frontline staff, particularly our health workers, our paramedics, our police, those working on the borders, those working in our hospitals but also those working in our retail shops and in other services who kept going to ensure that we had the products,

goods and services that we needed while we went through this over the last 12 months. Sadly, some of those people have been treated atrociously. Thankfully, the majority of the community have been very respectful, but some have treated others atrociously.

I remember very early on hearing stories that health service staff had stopped wearing their uniforms home. They were taking their scrubs off because they were being spat at and abused because of the job they did, trying to keep us safe. Retail workers were abused simply for doing their job. It was just shocking. I thank all the members who acknowledged the important contributions of all those workers. It does not stop. There are still people working on those COVID wards today. We may have only seven active cases right now, but on any given day we do not know what we will find after we do the tests and how many positive cases there are.

Those numbers have been higher. At one point we had tens of thousands of people in quarantine—not just in hotel quarantine but also quarantining at home. Think about that. We were asking people to go home and stay home, including people who were positive. If they were well, they were isolating and quarantining at home and were being remotely cared for through the HHSs. They were to not leave home and not go out for any reason whatsoever, not even to get groceries, for the period they were being treated. They did it. They put their trust and confidence in us. Why? Because we had put in place a framework, through this legislation, that ensured every decision we made was based on medical advice. We did not do what New South Wales did and give the power to the minister to decide whether there should be any restrictions, lockdowns or border closures. We put it in the hands of the Chief Health Officer and the clinicians, and so we should. That is what this bill seeks to extend. It is the right thing to do.

I take issue with those members on the other side who said that they support the Chief Health Officer, they think she has done a fantastic job, they support her advice and they would act on that advice but then said, 'But we want to see the evidence.' In other words they are saying, 'We trust your advice, but prove it. We know that you are an expert in your field and we know you have extensive experience, but we do not quite trust what you say. Can you please divulge the confidential information that comes out of the AHPPC? Can you please divulge all the conversations you have with all of your colleagues and the 60-odd staff that we have all around the state feeding in various information around serology and everything else?' The CHO stands up every single time there is a restriction and explains why we are putting it in place. The CHO makes herself available every single time, answers every single question that the media ask her, has briefed the opposition, has answered questions in parliamentary committees and was available to answer questions in estimates, yet we are being told that we are keeping the community in the dark and we are not communicating. It is just extraordinary.

I thank all of the members who came along for the CHO's briefing today. We thought it was a really positive information session. We really valued the really good questions that people asked today. I thank members very much; we appreciate that. We have been extremely transparent and we have communicated like no government has ever communicated before.

Mr Watts: Come to Toowoomba and be transparent. Come on, Minister. You have told them nothing.

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection. This bill is not about whether we establish a quarantine facility at Toowoomba.

Mr Watts interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Member for Toowoomba North, cease all interjections, please.

Mrs D'ATH: The reality is that no decisions have been made around that, and I would ask that members be more constructive in considering. We in Cairns, Townsville, Brisbane and the Gold Coast have all been managing quarantine from day one, yet we are not complaining. The fact is that we have to be sensible. We do not scaremonger. We should be sensible and have a discussion about whether there needs to be, and there can be, better ways of managing hotel quarantine. No decisions have been made.

I want to focus on the issue of the communication around our decisions and the idea that we should have a criteria—a criteria that everyone apparently wants to see; if we get five cases we will do this and if we get 10 cases we will do that. The member for Currumbin said that that would make it easier for people to book holidays and book flights. No, it would not. Even if it were remotely possible

to have black and white criteria, it still would not tell people when there was going to be an outbreak. We cannot plan when there is going to be community transmission. We cannot say, 'On Wednesday every second week we are going to get an outbreak so do not book a holiday around then.'

We can have the best criteria in the world, but we do not know when we wake up tomorrow whether there is going to be a positive case. We cannot go out and consult and say, 'Would you like us to do something about this? How do you feel about it? What would you like us to do?' We have to act and we have to act decisively. That is what we have to do. The World Health Organization said on 11 March that we must act decisively.

There is complexity around this. If we get a positive case today the issue is what variant they have. Is it the UK variant? Is it the South Africa variant? They are much more contagious. Have they just become sick today? Does that mean they were infectious two days ago? Where have they been in those two days? They may have been nowhere, immediately got tested and isolated until they got their result. That is great; there is very little risk that there has been any spread in the community.

Alternatively, there could be someone who has been sick, coughing and feeling unwell for the last seven days. They went and got tested, but while they were waiting for their results they went shopping, went to a wedding, went to a cafe and went to a restaurant. They could have gone to 30 or 40 sites over the seven days. The contact numbers could be in the thousands.

With the Glen Hotel I think there were around 500 people impacted as a result of one visit by one person. We need to think about that. We just cannot have a rule that if we get 10 cases a day for three days in a row then that is when we should implement restrictions. If we get 30 cases of the South Africa or UK variant in three days and we have not done anything, it is out of the box. The Chief Health Officer has made that very clear. We have been transparent. We have communicated like no other government has ever communicated on an issue before. We thank the Chief Health Officer and the other amazing people who have kept us safe.

I want to go back to the comments of the Director-General of World Health Organization on 11 March when declaring the pandemic. He stated—

There's been so much attention on one word.

COVID. He continued—

Let me give you some other words that matter much more, and that are much more actionable.

Prevention.

Preparedness.

Public health.

Political leadership.

And most of all, people.

We're in this together, to do the right things with calm and protect the citizens of the world. It's doable.

It is doable. It is doable. We are doing it. It is because of legislation like this—and I welcome the support for it across the parliament—that we can continue to keep the community safe while we roll out the vaccine and while we work towards what we hope is a better future for everyone and for business as well.

In talking about business, I want to touch on the issue the member for Buderim raised around small businesses and the registration process. We understand that it has been a challenge for everyone to have to register at venues. We know that not everyone has a smartphone. We know some elderly people do not have any sort of digital device that they can register with. We are working with small business to make it easier. We have not hit the end of the road yet. There is still more to do. We want to make it easier and we are working to do that. We want to make it easier for the community and for small business. The Premier has already indicated that we are undertaking that work. I wanted to address that issue raised by the member for Buderim.

The member for Currumbin's comments that we are keeping people in the dark like mushrooms is offensive. It is offensive to all those working in the health area. It is offensive to the Chief Health Officer who has made herself available each and every time these decisions are made. I acknowledge her great work. I acknowledge my director-general, Dr John Wakefield. I acknowledge all people in our health services and in my wonderful department. For the time I have been the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services I have been in awe of the amazing people around me and of their expertise, knowledge and dedication.

When it comes to dedication, I want to talk about Zoe Park—the first person to get the vaccine. She is a registered nurse. She deserves to be safe. That is what the vaccine is about. She goes to work every day to treat positive patients and keeps us safe. I could not be more thrilled that she was the first to get the vaccine. She deserves to feel safe in her job. She said, ‘I feel safer for having the vaccine.’ Everyone should follow Zoe’s lead.

I give a shout-out to Erin, the nurse unit manager, whom I met at the vaccination centre on Monday. Erin donned all the PPE. She was the first person to care for the first positive COVID patient who walked into the Gold Coast University Hospital on 28 January. She was there on Monday as the nurse unit manager to see the first vaccination. She said she was getting texts from her family overnight wishing her all the best for the next day and congratulating her. They were so proud of her. Erin, we are proud of you. Thank you for what you do. 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 16, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. YM D’ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (6.56 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. YM D’ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (6.56 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.

ADJOURNMENT

O’Brien, Ms I; Lockyer Valley and Somerset Water Collaborative


 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (6.57 pm): On 13 December 2020 the Lockyer Valley lost a true matriarch of the community. Ivy Ellen O’Brien of Gatton passed away peacefully—a beautiful, gentle and noble lady. These words define Ivy: delightful, lovely, kind and tender, displaying a strength of character with fine personal qualities and high moral principles and a person others should follow.

Many would know the name John O’Brien of O’Brien Toyota fame, but those who knew the O’Brien family knew of the wonderful and strong matriarch that Ivy was. She was the solid foundation for many of the family’s successes. Ivy lived by her values. Ivy loved her family and saw to it that her children and those of others that she met where raised and nurtured. Ivy is survived by her children—Peter, Neil, Andrew, Ian, Sue—and their families. Rest in peace, Ivy Ellen O’Brien—a beautiful, gentle and noble lady.

The Lockyer Valley and Somerset Water Collaborative have a great project for South-East Queensland. The strategic business case and report was recently made public. I thank the member for Nanango, Deb Frecklington, the shadow minister for water, for attending on the night, along with 150-odd growers. I also thank the Minister for Water for recently visiting the Lockyer to show his interest in this \$200 million project, which is a game changer for South-East Queensland. This \$200 million water security project will deliver 363 jobs and 1,923 ongoing jobs. More importantly, the \$200 million will return sustainable productivity of over \$210 million every year. This project is an absolute no-brainer.

The farmers have real skin in the game. They have put up \$50 million, and they are calling on the state government to fund another \$50 million and to get \$100 million from the federal government through their National Water Infrastructure Development Fund. I call on the minister to fund this project in this year's budget. Let us not wait. This is an opportunity for Queensland to see another \$210 million of sustainable production delivered in the next couple of years. If a farmer had to spend \$200 million to get a return of \$200 million every year, of course they would do it. I call on the minister to deliver the money.

Redland City Council

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (7.00 pm): Acting with integrity is one of the most critically important qualities we should expect of our elected representatives. It is also an absolute prerequisite for anyone considering standing for public office to represent their community.

Redland City Council Mayor Karen Williams in the lead-up to the 2020 local government elections initiated a campaign calling on candidates and councillors to #pledgenottosledge. In a *Redland City Bulletin* article, the mayor was quoted as saying, 'Bullying is out of control ... and candidates are being urged to pledge not to sledge as social media heats up in the lead-up to the election.' I table that article.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 25 February 2020, titled "'Bullying out of control': Mayor Karen Williams launches anti-bullying campaign ahead ...' [188].

Yesterday at my parliamentary office I received a corflute from Redland City Council with that very pledge on it.

All too often we see bad behaviour on social media—fake news, fake pages and fake profiles. I know our federal member is all too familiar with holding multiple profiles. As it turns out, he is not alone as an elected representative.

Before I go on, I want to confirm that I have the permission of Mrs Hewlett to table correspondence, and I want to be clear that this matter is not proceeding with the QPS and it is not before the courts. For the benefit of the House, I table a *Courier-Mail* article dated 1 November 2020.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 1 November 2020, titled 'The sister of Queensland's "penis plonking" former MP Peter Dowling was the target of a bizarre attempt to discredit her professionally' [189].

The *Courier-Mail* article outlines an extraordinary attempt to smear, denigrate and jeopardise the employment of Mrs Hewlett, the wife of Redlands councillor Lance Hewlett, in the lead-up to local council elections. A fake Facebook profile and email account under the name 'Scarlett Rivers' was allegedly created to send Mrs Hewlett's employer, a Gold Coast kindergarten, unfounded and false accusations in messages that asserted Mrs Hewlett was posting unauthorised images of students on social media.


The article went on to detail that police documents seen by the *Courier-Mail* revealed that the IP address of the computer used to create the fake profile 'Scarlett Rivers' and to send those emails was traced to the computer of a Queensland councillor's home. The article did not state the name of the local councillor under investigation. Tonight I can reveal that it was Redland City councillor for Division 7, Rowanne McKenzie. I table emails from the QPS in regard to the investigation.

Tabled paper: Bundle of emails between Sheena Hewlett and Queensland Police regarding a stalking complaint [190].

To go to these lengths to be vexatious and mischievous is beyond the pale. It sets a new low in one's conduct. It has to be noted that this occurred in the lead-up to the local government elections. Given the council's commitment to a culture of pledging not to sledge, I ask: what is the council going to do about this? No family member of an elected representative should be targeted in such a disgraceful manner.

Integrity is everything and these actions outlined above speak for themselves. We should and must expect more of our candidates and elected representatives. As the mayor said in her article, 'The community expects more,' and the community deserves more. Scarlett Rivers, it would now appear evident who you are.

Scenic Rim Electorate, PCYC

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (7.03 pm): It is time that we had a PCYC in Beaudesert. It is a campaign that I am getting fully behind—and the community is behind as well—for our sporting needs, for our youth and for community purposes. Beaudesert needs a public indoor sporting facility for groups such as the Beaudesert Boxing Club, which is seeing years of commitment by locals coming to fruition. Recently Dylan Biggs, one of the graduates from the Beaudesert Boxing Club, turned professional boxer for the first time. This boxing club works out of someone's backyard in Beaudesert because there is no facility in our region to cater for that activity or the multiple other activities that could be run by the

PCYC in an indoor sports facility, not to mention the early intervention youth programs and other engagement programs for people in the town. Then there are the community facilities that can come from an investment in a PCYC in Beaudesert.


We have a great steering committee run by the chamber of commerce. They have been engaging with the community and with PCYC Queensland to get this project up and running. The police at the Beaudesert level, and also at the district level, are very supportive. When this proposal comes to fruition, the government should back it in. There is a dearth of programs of the type offered by PCYC in the Scenic Rim region and, in fact, throughout the whole Mount Lindesay corridor. From Jimboomba south, in the electorate of Logan, there is a shortage of this type of facility.

I am calling on the government to get behind it. I will be lobbying the federal government as well to put money towards it and for PCYC Queensland to get behind this great community initiative that everybody in the community is behind. We had 60 people show up to a local meeting about this on a State of Origin night. I do not know what you think, Madam Deputy Speaker, but for 60 people to come out for a community project on a State of Origin night—and they were not all New South Wales supporters; they were dinky-di, true blue Queensland supporters—shows the depth of support in our local community for this project, so the government should get behind a PCYC for Beaudesert when the time comes.

The government should also get behind sensible design rules when it comes to our main roads. I am glad the Minister for Main Roads is in the chamber tonight because there is a project that is getting ready to proceed on the corner of Cedar Grove and Cedarvale roads on the Mount Lindesay Highway. They are putting signals in there. Some people like that project; others are not so in favour of it. I have spoken to TMR about it. They say that it is not possible to have ‘turn left at any time with care’ lanes at that intersection. That is ridiculous. They say that the design standards have changed and they do not let them do it anymore. If they are not put in, there will be a red light just for one car. That does not make sense on Cedar Grove and Cedarvale roads.

(Time expired)

McKay, Mr SM


 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (7.06 pm): At the end of last year I attended the funeral service of long-time Labor member Sydney Michael ‘Mick’ McKay. To be in attendance and listen to Mick’s family speak about their love for him, his love for his family and the experiences of their times shared together was very humbling. What really struck me though was to hear how important it was to Mick to see a Labor government returned by Queenslanders and how much it mattered to him that a Labor member for Bundaberg was able to form part of that government. It is at this moment that I speak through the chair to my colleagues on this side of the House.

It means a lot to us and to our families to be representatives of our communities in our role of being a member of parliament. It is a great privilege. But, once more, it is something greater to be a part of a movement that reaches back beyond a century, a movement that enables us to be a Labor member of parliament.

As Mick’s daughters read out their father’s eulogy, they dedicated a significant portion to Mick’s love of the labour movement and his love for the Labor Party. On this side of the House, we are individuals filling a temporary space in a role that is so much more than the individual in that role. It was not the individual filling the role of the member for Bundaberg that meant so much to Mick in those final weeks. It was that all of the principles that he believed in and all of the values that he had gained and shared through his time in the labour movement were now once again being represented in the House that belongs to the people of Queensland. When people join the Labor Party they are not simply signing up to a political party. Rather, they are demonstrating their commitment to a cause that is greater than us all but aims to create a way of life that is greater for us all.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I cannot claim to have attended that service having known Mick, his wife, Carmel, and his family well, but I can promise you that the experience I received from attending that day will always continue to shape the way I look upon this role as a member in this Assembly. I wish to extend my condolences but also acknowledge Mick’s life and the endearing nature of the whole McKay family.

Burnett Electorate, Bargara-Hughes Road Intersection

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (7.08 pm): Tonight in a desperate bid to save a child’s life I stand before this parliament before it is too late. Parents, teachers and students are calling for urgent action at a dangerous intersection at Bargara Road and Hughes Road in my electorate. Primary school aged


children are playing Russian roulette every day to cross this busy road to get to Bargara State School. I am sad to say that I have heard many witnesses report near misses at this intersection every week. Bargara State School is one of the very few schools that does not have a formal crossing in place. There is no lollipop supervisor or traffic lights in sight, despite an ever-increasing population.

We have a situation where a year 6 student, a school captain, is playing lollipop lady along this busy road, often herding groups of half a dozen from one side of the road to the other with their bikes. Pria Grills, who is 11, is fearful that young children will be hit. Today she rang my office and said, 'With a lot of younger children it is scary because you have to be in charge of the little kids since you don't want them to be hurt.' Young Pria said that she often witnesses kids going too early or too late into the path of oncoming traffic. It is inexcusable to have a child take responsibility for protecting other children. As representatives of our community it is our job to keep children safe.

The bureaucratic response we received as a result of petitions and other engagement is that there are not enough children crossing the road to warrant a designated pedestrian crossing. That simply does not cut it. It is cruel and offensive that the minister's department does not consider dozens of children's lives worthy of protecting by implementing essential safety measures. What the department has not taken into consideration is that more parents would be happy to let their children walk or ride to school if a designated safe pedestrian crossing was installed. It is important for us to acknowledge that many parents are reaching out with desperate pleas for this Labor government to stop ignoring their pleas and act immediately to upgrade the Bargara-Hughes Road intersection before our worst fears are realised.

It is also important to talk about the other upgrades that are happening around the region, which I am very thankful for, but again we cannot turn our minds away from this important intersection upgrade on Hughes Road. More and more car accidents are presenting every day and there are more and more near misses. I thank the school for their advocacy. They have also tried to put in place safety responses. They do need urgent attention and funding to get this done before we have more permanent solutions. I thank those families who joined us recently to highlight the need for the safety upgrade to the Bargara-Hughes Road. It is a dangerous intersection. It does need upgrading. Until that time the government is failing our kids.

Waterford Electorate, Infrastructure

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (7.11 pm): The construction of key infrastructure projects is underway right across Waterford. We have seen great progress with the new eight-storey car park at Logan Hospital, which will provide an extra 1,500 car parks for our growing community. The car park forms part of a major expansion which will also involve moving the Loganlea train station to the front door of the hospital and, importantly, a new maternity ward which will be completed later this year.


This vital work will make life easier for constituents who have mobility issues such as my good friend Jenny Bennett. Jenny has MS and is in a wheelchair. When she visits the Logan Hospital for her regular appointments her husband Charlie has to drop her off at the front door, leaving her there while he finds a parking spot. This means that sometimes Jenny has to wait more than 15 or 20 minutes outside, even if it is raining, for Charlie to accompany her to her appointments. In total, we are investing over \$600 million into the project to ensure our growing community has the services it deserves, especially for those who need them the most.

Logan is also getting a new cultural precinct. Work has started on the \$16.1 million transformation of the Kingston Butter Factory. This new precinct will include performing arts, rehearsal and workshop spaces, black box theatre, an outdoor space for up to 5,000 people and a cultural centre. Given that Logan is one of the most multicultural cities in the world, it is about time we had our own precinct. Through our Works for Queensland program the state government has provided over \$6 million towards the project, which is expected to create 150 local jobs.

Finally, I would like to celebrate a recent win for road safety. Road safety is such a huge issue for my Waterford community, with two Bethania constituents being particularly strong advocates for change. After Henrietta and Roy Moran had a near miss on the Albert and Station Road intersection in Bethania, they lobbied me and Logan City Council to upgrade this intersection. Since I have been elected we have been delivering upgraded signage and new fencing to protect pedestrians, but finally Logan City Council has come to the party. We are getting a proper upgrade with traffic lights on every

corner, a pedestrian crossing and new footpaths. I want to acknowledge all of the community members who have fought for this change, especially Roy and Henrietta Moran, who have been fierce advocates on this issue for many years.

First Nation People


 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (7.14 pm): I rise to speak about the growing list of sites across Queensland where First Nation people are standing their ground against the continued dispossession of their land and culture. There is a common thread in these struggles: Labor's habit of dismissing and belittling First Nation people's concerns if they stand in the way of their projects and big corporate donors. In Gympie the Bruce Highway expansion is threatening to destroy the Djaki Kundu site. Local elders have been camping out since January to defend their sacred healing places from destruction. In Ipswich elders have been camping out at Deebing Creek Mission since 2019 to defend land from expansion by property developers. A Jagera elder from Deebing Creek was among those climate protesters outside Parliament House yesterday.

On Minjerriabah the Quandamooka Truth Embassy has been set up at Point Lookout to prevent the development of a tourist whale facility. You would think the government would have learned a lesson from their Labor colleagues in Victoria, who have approved the destruction of the djap wurrung trees, or their government colleagues over in WA who are now responding to the destruction of the Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara. I have been told by ministers in this chamber that supporting the elders occupying the Djaki Kundu site is encouraging intercommunity conflict, but in circumstances like this where community members care so deeply about these issues that they camp out to protect their land for days, months and years, how can the government so brazenly claim they have community support? Why would they openly belittle and dismiss people's concerns as irrelevant and illegitimate?

The fact is that what Labor cares about is the profits of their mining and property developer mates and rushing ahead with projects to suit their political agenda, so here is what they do: they choose to dismiss elders' concerns if they get in the way of their projects and their big corporate donors; they choose to extinguish native title and approve the Adani Carmichael mine; they choose to approve the Deebing Creek Priority Development Area; they approve a ministerial infrastructure designation on Minjerriabah; and they choose to build a highway ramp through a site of significance to Kabi people. If the government really cared about First Nation justice in this state they would listen to the whole community instead of going with whatever suits them and their big corporate donors.

(Time expired)

Ipswich West Electorate, Infrastructure

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (7.17 pm): Rosewood was the town where my Madden ancestors settled when they immigrated to Australia from Ireland in 1863; Marburg is the town where my De Berg ancestors settled; and Walloon is the town where my McGuire ancestors settled. All of these towns comprise the western portion of my electorate of Ipswich West, so it is an area close to my heart. That is why I am always happy to fight for infrastructure funding from the state government for this area.


The projects completed since I was first elected in 2015 include: a \$315,000 upgrade to the historic Rosewood Railway Station; a \$2.7 million contribution to the construction of the new Ipswich City Council Rosewood Library; and flashing school zone lights at Ashwell and Haigslea state schools. At Rosewood State School there is a new \$600,000 manual arts and agricultural building as well as full air conditioning of the classrooms. Also at Rosewood State School there has been a \$1 million upgrade to the main teaching block and a \$550,000 outdoor learning centre. For the Rosewood Community Centre there is five years guaranteed funding as well as improvements to the community centre facility leased from the Girl Guides and funding for a Skilling Queenslanders for Work program.

State government Transport and Main Roads roadworks completed in the area include: upgrades to Lanefield Road, Rosewood Marburg Road, Rosewood-Laidley Road and School Street in Rosewood. At Marburg State School the education department funded the conversion of the former principal's residence into a school library.

Those projects that have received state funding but are yet to be completed include: a new fire station and police station at Rosewood; a \$35,000 playground at Marburg State School; a new \$650,000 amenities block at Haigslea State School that is specifically designed to cater for students with disabilities at that school; a badly needed upgrade of the Rosewood-Karrabin Road between Dellvene Crescent and Stirling Road; and \$200,000 for new facilities at Walloon State School.

There will always be projects I will seek funding for. One of these is an upgrade of the Rosewood State School football fields to Queensland Rugby League standards so they can share these facilities in partnership with the Rosewood Roosters Rugby League club. I look forward to continuing to work with the Rosewood Roosters president, Shane Brandley, and the Rosewood State School principal, Georgia O'Shea, to obtain funding for this project. In closing, I would like to thank the Premier and the ministers who have supported me in my hard work to obtain funding for infrastructure projects in Ipswich West.

Surfers Paradise Electorate, Crime

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (7.20 pm): I rise to speak on an issue that the member for Mermaid Beach spoke about last night and that fellow Gold Coast members continue to raise in this House—that is, that crime on the Gold Coast continues to spiral out of control. I spoke on this issue and gave the example of Gold Coasters in my electorate in my budget reply speech on 4 December 2020. Here I am 12 weeks later and my calls to this Brisbane Labor government have fallen on deaf ears and that is why I am speaking on this issue today.

The criminal justice system in Queensland is unable to deter youth offenders who continue to act with complete disregard for the law-abiding citizens of the Gold Coast and my electorate. It is unacceptable that Labor's lax, soft-on-crime laws mean Gold Coasters do not feel safe in their own communities. These brazen youths are indiscriminate in their perpetrating. The frustrated communities in the Isle of Capri, Benowa Waters, Clear Island Waters, Paradise Waters and other areas in Surfers Paradise, including Broadbeach, are experiencing car heists on a regular basis and home robberies when they are asleep. This type of behaviour has become so commonplace in Paradise Waters that there is a WhatsApp neighbourhood watch group chat to share vehicle details and descriptions of individuals who they are fearful are casing their homes. It is also happening in areas like Sorrento and Benowa Waters, where residents are paying for private security because they are feeling so concerned.


In Broadbeach, residents have raised concerns of hoons making regular use of the surrounding area as their own 'drag track'. Aside from interfering with the peace for these mostly elderly residents and the obvious safety concerns of such reckless behaviour, it is equally having a negative impact on the reputation of the Broadbeach precinct. In fact Broadbeach local councillor Darren Taylor was set to have a meeting with a few local constituents today but instead found an angry mob of 50 people converged with concerns over this dangerous driving and the hooning that is going on between Main Beach through to Broadbeach via Surfers Paradise. It is also happening on the Nerang-Broadbeach Road, Bermuda Street, Bundall Road and the Robina Parkway, which are all parts of the Surfers Paradise electorate.

In Surfers Paradise, innocent teenagers are being attacked at knifepoint. About a month ago, a woman known to police was tearing along Monaco Street before she slammed into a parked car of a local resident. Budds Beach residents live in fear and frustration of the criminal activity, including drug deals and hooning, attracted by the nearby derelict vacant block of homes, marked by broken windows and scattered with nitrous oxide canisters.

My residents are frustrated and fearful. The Queensland Police Service are under-resourced and hard-pressed trying to deal with these juvenile offenders. The Labor government's solution about GPS trackers has been condemned by former Law Society president Bill Potts and Bond University's Dr Bruce Watts. It is unacceptable that Gold Coasters have to live in fear and frustration. We deserve better from the Brisbane Labor that does not get the Gold Coast.

(Time expired)

Ipswich Electorate, Community Services

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (7.23 pm): I rise to voice my appreciation of St Paul's Anglican Church in Ipswich for the great work they do through their Food Ministry program. The Food Ministry was started in August 2019 by the Reverend Stephen Monsiegnour and has been serving hot meals to homeless people out of their church's kitchen every Sunday. Last Sunday I helped out at the Food Ministry and saw firsthand the amazing work they do. They put me to work straight away slicing tomatoes and veggies and washing dishes. It was an absolute honour to work alongside good local people like Annette Isager, a retired teacher who actually taught my children, and a number of other ministry volunteers who give up several hours of their time every Sunday to serve our community's most vulnerable people. I want to take this opportunity to thank them all for their generosity, energy and enthusiasm to serve others.

St Paul's Food Ministry is a vital community service at a time when there are people in the Ipswich community doing it tough—whether that be through homelessness, unemployment or ill health. Homelessness exists in many cities, and Ipswich is no exception. There are a variety of circumstances—like needing to flee domestic and family violence situations, losing a job or experiencing mental health or substance abuse issues. Losing housing or family support must be a very lonely and traumatic experience. That is why it is so encouraging to see individuals and organisations in our community providing support and relief—whether it be through housing assistance, food hampers, clothing or everyday living essentials.

Ipswich has a strong sense of community. However, like many communities across Australia, we are seeing fewer people signing up to volunteer for charities, community organisations or even P&Cs and tuckshops. The 32 people who volunteer at St Paul's Food Ministry manage to fit volunteering in with their jobs, family and study commitments. They range from teenagers to retirees, proving that you are never too young, too old or too busy to help out. St Paul's volunteers prepare and serve around 40 hot meals to homeless patrons each Sunday, and they are supported by another great organisation, Rosies food van, which provides hot and cold drinks and baked goods.

Homeless people have every right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of how they ended up homeless, and something as simple as a hot meal can make all the difference to a person who would otherwise go without. The Food Ministry is also an opportunity for homeless patrons to connect with others and talk with volunteers in a supportive environment. Seeing that connection in that safe and secure environment was really evident in the faces of the people who came along on Sunday.

There are many other organisations in Ipswich that do great work helping people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We have organisations like IRASI, Ipswich Community Youth Service, the Domestic Violence Action Centre, Ipswich Assist, Liworaji and other churches doing invaluable work in our community. When the LNP were in government, many of these organisations had their funding cut. I want to assure them that this will not happen under a Labor government and it certainly will not happen on my watch. I will continue to help support and fight for these organisations every day.

The House adjourned at 7.26 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyce, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, 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, Pegg, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Skelton, Smith, Stevens, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Watts, Weir, Whiting