



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, 25 May 2021

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TUESDAY, 25 MAY 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.

ASSENT TO BILLS

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

The Honourable C.W. Pitt MP

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Parliament House

George Street

BRISBANE QLD 4000

My dear Mr Speaker

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

Date of assent: 20 May 2021

A bill for an Act to amend the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 and the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Regulation 2014 for particular purposes

A bill for an Act to amend the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, the Nature Conservation Act 1992, the Recreation Areas Management Act 2006 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 for particular purposes

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

Yours sincerely

Governor

20 May 2021


Tabled paper: Letter, dated 20 May 2021, from His Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to bills on 20 May 2021 [691].

Ms Simpson interjected.


Mr SPEAKER: Member for Maroochydore, can I ask that you please keep your comments to a lower volume. I heard you all through our acknowledgement.

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House


 **Mr SPEAKER:** On 21 May 2021, I tabled a ruling regarding a matter of privilege relating to a complaint by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads alleging that the member for Chatsworth deliberately misled the House on 25 February 2021. I ruled that the matter did not warrant the further attention of the Ethics Committee. I now refer to the matter so that if any member wishes to exercise their rights in respect of that matter under the standing orders they should do so immediately.

Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House

 **Mr SPEAKER:** On 21 May 2021, I tabled a ruling regarding a matter of privilege relating to a complaint by the Minister for Tourism Industry Development and Innovation and Minister for Sport alleging that the Leader of the Opposition deliberately misled the House on 25 March 2021. I ruled that


the matter did not warrant the further attention of the Ethics Committee. I now refer to the matter so that if any member wishes to exercise their rights in respect of that matter under the standing orders they should do so immediately.

Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House

 **Mr SPEAKER:** On 21 May 2021, I tabled a ruling regarding matters of privilege relating to complaints by the member for Southport alleging that the Leader of the House deliberately misled the House on 23 March 2021 and published a misleading account of proceedings that day. I ruled that the matter did not warrant the further attention of the Ethics Committee. I now refer to the matter so that if any member wishes to exercise their rights in respect of that matter under the standing orders they should do so immediately.


SPEAKER'S RULING

Error in Question on Notice


 **Mr SPEAKER:** I refer to the minister's answer to question on notice No. 442 of 2021 advising that the authority referred to in the question does not exist. I am advised that Table Office staff amended the question to expand on an abbreviation and incorrectly expanded it to 'Cross River Rail Development Authority' instead of 'Delivery Authority'. In order to ensure the member is not further disadvantaged by this error I have ordered that this question on notice be corrected and resubmitted to the minister for response as an additional question on notice for the member for Chatsworth today.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Absence of Member, Proxy Voting


 **Mr SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 20 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and the statement I made during the previous sitting week, I advise that the member for Southern Downs has granted a proxy vote to the member for Toowoomba North to act as his first proxy and the member for Theodore as his second proxy for all divisions held during this week's sittings. The exercise of this proxy vote in each division will be evidenced on the division sheets with the letter 'P'.

National Palliative Care Week


 **Mr SPEAKER:** This week is National Palliative Care Week. National Palliative Care Week provides an opportunity to discuss the benefits of palliative care and celebrate the tremendous dedication of all those working and volunteering in palliative care across Australia.

Last night the House was lit up in navy and maroon to acknowledge this important week. This will continue for the next two nights. The theme this year is 'Palliative care: It's more than you think'. It is designed to promote discussion, awareness and engagement with a topic that is relevant to all Queenslanders yet usually is not thought about until needed. On behalf of all members I wish to record our thanks to those workers and volunteers who provide palliative care for our loved ones.

National Reconciliation Week

 **Mr SPEAKER:** As part of the Parliamentary Service's contribution to 2021 National Reconciliation Week, members and staff are invited to an event in the Legislative Council chamber commencing at 1 pm. A panel discussion featuring Dr Jackie Huggins AM in conversation with Emeritus Professor Kay Saunders AO will explore the legacy and achievements of some notable Brisbane Indigenous women. Both panellists are acclaimed historians and have provided significant contributions to Queensland's Path to Treaty. I commend this event to all members and staff.

School Group Tours

 **Mr SPEAKER:** I wish to advise members that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from St Ita's Primary School in the electorate of South Brisbane; Hillcrest College in the electorate of Mudgeeraba; Dutton Park State School in the electorate of South Brisbane; Toowoomba State High School in the electorate of Toowoomba North; and student leaders in the electorate of Springwood.

PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, sponsored by the Clerk—

North Burnett, Service Delivery

324 petitioners, requesting the House to define and cost an acceptable Queensland standard of service delivery for water, wastewater, roads and waste in the North Burnett Regional Council community [\[692\]](#).

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

Mount Crosby Road, Signage

Dr Rowan, from 521 petitioners, requesting the House to review the current animal advisory and motorist safety signage in place along Mt Crosby Road [\[693\]](#).

Gold Coast, City Plan Amendments

Mr O'Connor, from 1,230 petitioners, requesting the House to investigate the appropriateness of the level of community engagement undertaken by the Gold Coast City Council before signing off on the City Plan amendments for Labrador, Biggera Waters and Southport. [\[694\]](#)

Feral and Pest Animals

Mr Dametto, from 5,650 petitioners, requesting the House to prevent a legislative ban on the use of dogs, trapping, baiting, and shooting in controlling feral or pest animals and prevent any changes to section 42 of the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 and its associated regulations [\[695\]](#).

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

Animals, Shelter

1,300 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure legislation includes mandatory codes for provision of species-specific shelter and consider each species' capacity to tolerate extremes in weather [\[696\]](#).

Dogs, Confinement and Tethering

2,178 petitioners, requesting the House to amend the provisions of the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 that permit prolonged unsupervised confinement and/or tethering of a dog [\[697\]](#).

Dogs, Electric Collars

728 petitioners, requesting the House to remove any provisions in the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 that permit the use of electric (shock) collars on dogs and implement legislation to prohibit their use [\[698\]](#).

Dogs, Pronged Collars

637 petitioners, requesting the House to ban the use of pronged collars on dogs [\[699\]](#).

Dogs, Choke Collars

484 petitioners, requesting the House to ban the use of choke collars on dogs [\[700\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS (SO 31)

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

14 May 2021—

- [652](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 8, 57th Parliament—Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021
- [653](#) Takeaway liquor authority notice number 14 issued in accordance with section 235D and 235F of the Liquor Act 1992 by the Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming
- [654](#) Takeaway liquor authority notice number 15 issued in accordance with section 235D and 235F of the Liquor Act 1992 by the Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming
- [655](#) Takeaway liquor authority notice number 16 issued in accordance with section 235D and 235F of the Liquor Act 1992 by the Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming
- [656](#) Takeaway liquor authority notice number 17 issued in accordance with section 235D and 235F of the Liquor Act 1992 by the Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming

17 May 2021—

- [657](#) Response from the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (Hon. Furner), to an ePetition (3484-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 1,270 petitioners, requesting the House to bring Queensland up to speed with the rest of Australia and ban the breeding and import of dolphins and other cetaceans for entertainment
- [658](#) Queensland Music Festival—Financial report for the 12 months ended 31 December 2020

18 May 2021—

- [659](#) Queensland Law Reform Commission: Report No. 79—A legal framework for voluntary assisted dying, May 2021
- [660](#) Queensland Law Reform Commission: Report No. 79—A legal framework for voluntary assisted dying, Report Summary
- [661](#) Queensland Law Reform Commission: Report No. 79—A legal framework for voluntary assisted dying, Interim Government Response

20 May 2021—

- [662](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to an ePetition (3463-21) sponsored by the member for Mirani, Mr Andrew, from 2,071 petitioners, requesting the House to revise the current COVID-safe Blueprint for Anzac Day 2021 and to take note of the need for fairness and consistency when applying state laws on mass gatherings and social distancing
- [663](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to an ePetition (3490-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 403 petitioners, requesting the House to legalise the use of psychedelics for use in psychedelic assisted psychotherapy
- [664](#) Response from the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (Hon. Linard), to an ePetition (3465-21) sponsored by the member for Mirani, Mr Andrew, from 15,907 petitioners, requesting the House to revise and reform the youth justice system and legislate to better reflect the needs and expectations of the public
- [665](#) Response from the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing (Hon. Grace), to an ePetition (3448-20) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 2,184 petitioners, requesting the House to guarantee that every state school in Queensland has access to a well-maintained school library under the stewardship of a professional library team, comprised of (at a minimum) a qualified Teacher librarian and a qualified Library Technician or trained Library Officer
- [666](#) Response from the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing (Hon. Grace), to an ePetition (3489-21) sponsored by the member for Moggill, Dr Rowan, from 4,022 petitioners, requesting the House to retain the Queensland Academy of Science, Mathematics and Technology in its current location
- [667](#) Response from the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs (Hon. Scanlon), to an ePetition (3439-20) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 440 petitioners, requesting the House to enforce provision of reticulation of sewerage to the Southern Moreton Bay Islands
- [668](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to a paper petition (3519-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(3), from 9 petitioners, requesting the House to not move the quarantine system to the privately owned Wellcamp Airport near Toowoomba
- [669](#) Response from the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services (Hon. Ryan), to an ePetition (3437-20) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 591 petitioners, requesting the House to address the remaining recommendations from the 1991 Royal Commission into Indigenous Deaths in Custody
- [670](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to a paper petition (3520-21) presented by the member for Mansfield, Ms McMillan, and an ePetition (3469-21) sponsored by the member for Mansfield, Ms McMillan, from 8 and 802 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to construct the new bikeway connecting Rochedale to Eight Mile Plains Park and Ride Busway, the Veloway to the City, to Wishart and to Upper Mount Gravatt
- [671](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3474-21) sponsored by the member for Hill, Mr Knuth, and a paper petition (3536-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(3), from 938 and 178 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to fast track the construction of a new road linking the Tablelands and Cairns, and ensure continued and safe use of the Barron River Bridge at Kuranda
- [672](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3470-21) sponsored by the member for Moggill, Dr Rowan, from 373 petitioners, requesting the House to review and increase the frequency and scope of vegetation management along the state-controlled roads of Moggill Road and Mt Crosby Road
- [673](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3436-20) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 249 petitioners, requesting the House to deliver shorter vehicular access routes to Russell, Karragarra, Macleay and Lamb Islands
- [674](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3460-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 402 petitioners, requesting the House to arrange for a temporary road bypass route through Childers for heavy vehicles to be used until the planned permanent bypass is constructed

21 May 2021—

- [675](#) Ruling by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Curtis Pitt—Alleged deliberately misleading the House by the member for Chatsworth
- [676](#) Ruling by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Curtis Pitt—Alleged deliberately misleading the House and publishing a false or misleading account of proceedings by the Leader of the House
- [677](#) Ruling by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Curtis Pitt—Alleged deliberately misleading the House by the Leader of the Opposition
- [678](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3464-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 1,812 petitioners, requesting the House to resolve the conflicts presently inherent in the Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Vehicle Standards and Safety) Regulation 2010 and the Vehicle Standards in the Australian Design Rules to ensure certainty and confidence in meeting the requirements of the regulations, specifically concerning replacement exhausts and noise emissions

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Criminal Code (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2020:

- [679](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 40
[680](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 40, explanatory notes

Evidence Act 1977:

- [681](#) Evidence (Intermediaries) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 41
[682](#) Evidence (Intermediaries) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 41, explanatory notes
[683](#) Evidence (Intermediaries) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 41, human rights certificate

Environmental Protection Act 1994:

- [684](#) Environmental Protection (Commercial Cropping and Horticulture Activities in Great Barrier Reef Catchment) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 42
[685](#) Environmental Protection (Commercial Cropping and Horticulture Activities in Great Barrier Reef Catchment) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 42, explanatory notes
[686](#) Environmental Protection (Commercial Cropping and Horticulture Activities in Great Barrier Reef Catchment) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 42, human rights certificate

Youth Justice Act 1992:

- [687](#) Youth Justice (Monitoring Device Conditions) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 43
[688](#) Youth Justice (Monitoring Device Conditions) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 43, explanatory notes
[689](#) Youth Justice (Monitoring Device Conditions) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 43, human rights certificate

REPORT BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

- [690](#) Report pursuant to Standing Order 169 (Acts to be numbered by the Clerk) and Standing Order 165 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Clerk, prior to assent by His Excellency the Governor, viz—

Nature Conservation and Other Legislation (Indigenous Joint Management—Moreton Island) Amendment Bill 2020

Amendments made to Bill

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—


'Nature Conservation and Other Legislation (Indigenous Joint Management—Moreton Island) Amendment Bill 2020'

Insert—

'Nature Conservation and Other Legislation (Indigenous Joint Management—Moreton Island) Amendment Bill 2021'

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS


Coronavirus, Update

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.38 am): In terms of our daily COVID update, I can confirm that there are two new cases, both overseas acquired and detected in hotel quarantine. We have 16 active cases and in the past 24 hours 5,303 tests were conducted.

Yesterday the Chief Health Officer advised travellers to certain sites in Melbourne to quarantine following the discovery of four new cases. Queenslanders are urged to reconsider travel to Melbourne's northern suburbs.

I am also proud to announce the addition of 14 community based vaccination centres to open across Queensland in July. These will be open to members of the general public aged 40 to 49 to coincide with additional supplies of the Pfizer vaccine. Four community based vaccination locations have already been stood up across the Wide Bay and Mackay regions, at Central Queensland University City Campus in Mackay, Bundaberg TAFE, Hervey Bay TAFE and the Maryborough City Hall. In South-East Queensland three community based vaccination locations will be stood up in the coming weeks. An additional seven community based vaccination locations will progressively be opened.


Voluntary Assisted Dying Legislation

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 am): Later today I will introduce a bill that, if passed, will give terminally ill Queenslanders the power to choose how their life will end. The path to this day has been long and considered and paved with reverence and respect. I pay tribute to members of the former Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee and in particular its chair, the member for Thuringowa. Over 18 months they conducted 34 hearings across the state and took 4,719 submissions. The Queensland Law Reform Commission took further submissions and developed the legal framework for the bill. Importantly, the framework gives equal protection to those health practitioners and entities that do not want to participate as those that do. It provides a chain of safeguards to ensure only those at the end of life can make these choices and then only those capable of making that choice for themselves.

This bill is only one part of the story of end-of-life care. Mr Speaker, as you mentioned, this is National Palliative Care Week. We have committed an additional \$171 million to improve and expand palliative care and the inspirational work undertaken by its practitioners on a daily basis across our state. This historic reform is an opportunity to show the true value of this parliament. We will have 12 weeks for the committee process to consider and take further submissions on the bill before we debate it in this House. If passed, there will be a further 15 months to ensure the service's implementation.

At its heart this reform is about love and the dignity we all share and owe to each other. Speaking personally, the heartbreak of losing a loved one is only made worse by watching them needlessly suffer. I am proud to bring this reform to this House today.


Renewable Energy Projects

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.41 am): When it comes to economic recovery we have the wind in our sails. Renewable energy is an important part of our plan for economic recovery and jobs growth in Queensland. Over the past five years, construction has begun on 44 large-scale renewable energy projects throughout the state. This represents around \$9.9 billion in investment and 7,000 Queensland jobs.

Today I am proud to confirm that, thanks to the work of our government, construction has begun on another large-scale renewable project. It was great to get out to the Barron Gorge Hydroelectric Power Station last week. Mr Speaker, along with yourself, the Minister for Energy, the member for Barron River and Minister for Disability Services, the member for Cairns and the member for Cook we announced \$40 million for upgrades to transmission lines between Cairns and Townsville. I am proud to say that, thanks to this support, Neoen is forging ahead with a \$373 million investment in a brand new wind farm west of Cairns. This initiative will create 250 local jobs and produce enough energy to power about 60,000 homes.

At the election I announced three new renewable energy zones, in northern, central and south-west Queensland, as part of our commitment to 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030. The announcement we made last week is the first major investment in our Northern Queensland Renewable Energy Zone and will help to ensure that we meet our targets while creating jobs and opportunities for workers in our regions. The Kaban wind farm is already taking shape. As we speak, workers are on site digging trenches in preparation for the arrival of turbines, generators, wind towers and transmission lines. This is a great win for the people of Far North Queensland—not just the 250 workers who will get a job on this project but also the thousands of working families that stand to benefit from another large-scale energy project in regional Queensland. We will continue to invest in new large-scale renewable energy projects that create jobs and help to power Queensland's economic recovery.


Brusasco, Mr I

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.43 am): We have lost a great Queenslander, the late Ian Brusasco. Few people have matched Ian's contribution to Queensland life, his community service, his enterprise, his generosity or his wisdom. He was born near Ingham in 1928. After secondary school at St Joseph's Nudgee College, Ian studied pharmacy and started business in 1955. What followed was an extraordinarily productive career: seven decades dedicated to business, the community, sports administration and philanthropy. Even a short list shows his remarkable breadth: pharmacy entrepreneur, city councillor, WorkCover Queensland, Queensland Investment Corporation, the Australian Soccer Federation, radio station 4KQ and Foodbank, just to name a few.

For 14 years Ian represented his community as an alderman. In later life, when he and Clem Jones set up Foodbank Qld, he gave not just his energy but also a financial commitment to what has become one of our most important community organisations. In 2008 he was named a Queensland Great. In 2012, he was awarded an Order of Australia for 'distinguished service to the community ... with a range of public administration, sporting and charitable organisations.' Again, we hear that word 'service' and a reference to the range of his involvement. Most of us would be pleased to be remembered in one area of life. It is rare that someone invests their time and talents so productively in so many varied fields. Ian's outstanding service to the Labor Party is well known. As Lord Mayor Schinnerer said, 'He was respected by everyone who met him.' Across the council chamber, Councillor Jared Cassidy described Ian as 'a true gentleman, a true leader'.

To the Brusasco family, Patsy and their children, Mark, Tim and Linda, on behalf of our state I express our deep appreciation for Ian's life. I offer my deep condolences at this time. The simple but profound fact is this: Ian Brusasco made Queensland a better place.


Sunshine Coast, Development

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning) (9.45 am): Today I am pleased to announce that thousands of lots for new homes will be opened up on the Sunshine Coast. Economic Development Queensland has assessed and approved a total of 3,019 subdivision lots in the Caloundra South Priority Development Area. Ultimately, the Caloundra South PDA is expected to provide approximately 20,000 homes and create in the order of 15,000 jobs. There are plenty of people who would love to call the Sunshine Coast home and this will improve housing options and affordability for them.

The strong health response to the COVID-19 pandemic has driven the highest rate of net interstate migration in Australia to our state. The Centre for Population predicts the population of South-East Queensland alone will increase by 250,000 in the next four years. That is why we are accelerating land supply in the south-east. It is why I established the Growth Areas Team to address the current pressure on land supply and provide a mechanism for government, councils, developers and the industry to keep up with the increasing demand for land and housing and the supporting infrastructure that comes with that. The team includes the State Planner and Economic Development Queensland.

The Growth Areas Team have already made progress with the first pilot site in the heart of the rapidly growing corridor north of Brisbane at Caboolture West. This will be a new neighbourhood precinct of up to 3,000 new homes that will eventually provide approximately 30,000 homes for around 70,000 people and generate close to 23,000 jobs. The Growth Areas Team is now working on more sites in South-East Queensland where it can accelerate development and cater for Queensland's booming population. The Growth Areas Team have been hard at work developing the program required to deal with South-East Queensland's predicted population growth. To date the local government areas of Ipswich and Logan have brought significant land to market and the team will look at other areas that could benefit from new communities. The Palaszczuk government is getting on with the job of unlocking growth and offering housing choice whilst addressing affordability in order to build communities of the future.

Economy

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (9.47 am): Queensland is leading Australia's economic recovery from COVID-19. Queensland's economic growth is the fastest in the nation. State final demand grew by 2.4 per cent over 2020, double that of Western Australia. Queensland has had the largest employment growth—up 54,900 or 2.1 per cent—of any state or territory since March 2020. Queensland's household consumption increased by 2.6 per cent over 2020, while across Australia household consumption fell by 2.7 per cent. State and local government investment in Queensland grew by six per cent in 2020 but, sadly, over the same period federal government investment in Queensland fell by 10.8 per cent.

The federal government's lack of interest in backing Queensland and backing Queensland jobs is, put simply, appalling and it is on show every single week. For example, our government is backing renewable projects across the length and breadth of this state: projects that support jobs, that reduce electricity prices and that help us grow industries like manufacturing. They are projects like Genex's pumped hydro at Kidston and Neoen's Kaban wind farm and battery project on the Atherton Tablelands.

The Palaszczuk Labor government is investing \$40 million to upgrade transmission lines for the Kaban wind farm, creating 250 jobs. We are a government that understands renewable energy and supports renewable energy jobs. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the Morrison LNP government. Federal Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia, Keith Pitt, decided to use his veto power to stop Kaban getting access to a loan from NAIF which, for Queensland, has become the 'no actual infrastructure fund'. This federal LNP minister, who bizarrely is a Queensland, attempted to justify his decision by saying he was not convinced Kaban would lower prices. It is hard to know what he wants. It is in a proven renewable energy zone. The Northern Queensland Renewable Energy Zone includes some of Queensland's best renewable resources, spanning from Far North Queensland north of Cairns, down to areas around Mackay and as far west as Barcaldine. Just up the road, the Mount Emerald Wind Farm powers Queensland homes every day.


Our investment in upgrading the existing transmission line means Kaban is plugged into the grid. Through our publicly owned generator CleanCo, Kaban already has a customer that will buy the power that it produces. The project included approval for a 100-megawatt battery to make its generation dispatchable. Put simply, this is nothing short of economic renewable energy and jobs vandalism by the federal LNP. In a car crash interview on Sky News, this Queensland based federal minister, Keith Pitt, who has an engineering degree, could not bring himself to admit that a battery attached to a wind farm provides reliable, affordable power for the grid.

Queenslanders have a premier and a state Labor government that cares about jobs—a government that invests in affordable renewable energy produced in conjunction with our publicly owned power companies. What Queenslanders deserve is a federal government that delivers the same level of respect to Queenslanders. Instead, we have one that sacrifices Queensland jobs, Queensland infrastructure and Queensland investment for their own base political purposes.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I said this to the minister the other day: no relation.

Industrial Relations Act, Review; Occupational Dust Lung Diseases

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.51 am): I am pleased to advise the House that a review of the Industrial Relations Act will commence in the coming weeks. In 2015, Jim McGowan AM headed the first major review of Queensland industrial relations laws since 1998. Following on from the review, the Industrial Relations Act 2016 delivered fairer and balanced Queensland industrial laws. It is now time to ensure Queensland's IR laws provide contemporary industrial protections and keep pace with the changes in work. Two eminent reviewers will lead this work: a former member of this House and Queensland's first female attorney-general, Linda Lavarch, and former Queensland industrial relations commissioner John Thompson.


The review will explore the following matters to ensure our IR laws keep pace and provide contemporary protections: protections for workers in precarious and short-term employment arrangements such as independent courier drivers and casual workers; how our industrial relations laws interact with federal IR laws, including recent changes to casual employment; and the implementation and effectiveness of the reforms following the 2015 review.

Significant workplace issues have been identified in recent times; namely, in the *Respect@work: sexual harassment national inquiry report*. Events in Canberra have shown that workers in any workplace can be the victims of sexual harassment and gender inequity. That is why these pressing issues will be addressed in the review, including the relevant recommendations from the *Respect@work* report in our IR laws, such as industrial protections for workers subjected to sexual harassment and powers for the QIRC to make anti-sexual harassment orders.

I am also pleased to advise that we are delivering on yet another election commitment when it comes to Queensland workers. This government will invest \$5 million over four years for research that improves the health and wellbeing of Queensland workers with occupational dust lung diseases; namely, silicosis and coal workers' pneumoconiosis. Expressions of interest are now open until 14 June, with a panel of local, national and international health, safety, medical and research experts to assess the expressions of interest.

As Queensland recovers economically from the global health pandemic, this government will continue to stand up for Queensland workers.

Coronavirus, Update; Palliative Care Week

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.54 am): I wish to give the House an update on what the Premier said in relation to Victoria. The Victorian government has just released an updated statement saying that restrictions have been reimposed in Greater Melbourne following five new locally acquired cases of COVID-19. The Acting Premier, James Merlino, said that from 6 pm on Tuesday private gatherings will be limited to five visitors per day, public gatherings are limited to 30 people, and masks will need to be worn indoors unless an exemption is applicable. This comes after four new cases of COVID-19 were reported yesterday, breaking an 86-day streak of no locally transmitted cases. A fifth, reported after midnight, was symptomatic before the first of Monday's cases was declared.

The Chief Health Officer of Queensland has indicated that people who have plans to travel to Melbourne may want to reconsider those plans at this time because, as we know, things evolve very quickly when it comes to COVID and local community transmission. Anyone travelling from Greater Melbourne who has been to any of these venues and who will arrive from 1 am tomorrow will have to go into government hotel quarantine for 14 days. Anyone else who has been to any of the venues—and I call on anyone who has been in Victoria to check the Victorian website and the Queensland website regularly for updates on the venues—should be reaching out to Queensland Health. There is now an online contact-tracing system where people can register. They should test, they should isolate and Queensland Health will contact them and let them know what they should do going forward.

This week is National Palliative Care Week. No doubt, members would have noticed Parliament House lit up in maroon and navy overnight to mark this occasion. Sadly, in our lifetimes we will all know a friend, a loved one or a colleague diagnosed with a life-limiting illness. Palliative care teams throughout Queensland do an amazing job caring for people with these illnesses, and I want to acknowledge their efforts as we mark this very important Palliative Care Week.

Since coming to office in 2015, we have increased funding for palliative care to almost \$150 million a year, around a 50 per cent increase. This is in addition to the \$12.9 million delivered to non-government organisations for palliative care services in the community. I acknowledge the Treasurer, who is a former health minister. In May 2015, very early on, we launched the Queensland statewide strategy for end-of-life care and simultaneously launched the Queensland Clinical Senate's charter for care of adult patients at the end of life which was aimed to further educate health professionals on how to recognise the care needs of terminally ill patients.

I have heard some commentary that some people believe that our actions on introducing the voluntary assisted dying legislation are somehow putting that ahead of palliative care, but right back when we were first elected in 2015 we started to act to ensure funding increases and also further work done around education and support in palliative care.

As our population continues to grow and age, and as our rate of chronic and life-limiting illnesses increases, so too will demand for palliative care services. We want to ensure Queenslanders have access to compassionate care in the most appropriate setting at the end of their lives, no matter where they live. That is why since 2015 we have employed over 7½ thousand extra nurses, including midwives—sadly, as we know, terminal illness does not just affect adults—as well as earmarked an additional \$171 million for statewide palliative care services. The extra funding we are delivering will employ more frontline palliative care workers and enable more home based hospice care. It will allow more people to spend their final days at home or in a home-like setting surrounded by loved ones.

The additional funding will complement and build on ongoing existing investments in the Queensland palliative care system. We are investing \$17 million in the Care in the Right Setting, CaRS, initiative for palliative care services in community based settings with a focus on regional Queensland. These services include a new paediatric palliative care outreach collaborative for new regional and remote services for children, assistive technology through an extension in the Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme, specialist telehealth services and a specialised palliative care room within the Longreach Hospital which I look forward to opening shortly.

The Palaszczuk government is also immensely proud of our additional \$8.25 million investment in Hummingbird House to support the incredible and difficult work they do. I want to acknowledge the staff out there. I visited very early on when I became health minister and saw the incredible work they do. It is a very difficult job, but they find it extremely rewarding to know they can be there to support families at the most difficult time.

Effective palliative care will improve a terminally ill person's quality of life. It can assist in managing their pain and suffering. It can provide some level of comfort to family and friends. We are committed to ensuring our palliative care services support Queenslanders throughout the state, no matter where they live.

As we introduce the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill, it is important for the community and members of parliament to understand these are not mutually exclusive issues. Palliative care is just as important when we are discussing end-of-life care. This was recognised by the QLRC which said, 'Voluntary assisted dying should complement, not detract from, high-quality and accessible palliative care.' We can do both. It is about giving Queenslanders a choice. That is why we have a Human Rights Act in Queensland. It puts the person's individual rights at the centre of care, as it should.

Renewable Energy Projects



Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (10.00 am): Today, the *Australian* newspaper reports that panellists at the Competitive Advantage Forum on 20 May identified Queensland is in the box seat for world-leading renewable technology and jobs. In fact, Queensland's renewable energy credentials already lead the nation. It has been Labor policy certainty that has enabled more than 20 per cent of our energy mix to now come from wind, solar and hydro.

Renewables are powering Queensland's economic recovery with jobs in construction, manufacturing and resources the big winners. Our commitment has already delivered 7,000 jobs in regional Queensland. Both the Premier and Treasurer have updated the House today that two major announcements last week have well and truly reinforced our position as a renewables jobs superpower.

Last week, the Palaszczuk government delivered 407 megawatts of good news to workers in North Queensland. The first was that Genex's Kidston pumped hydro project has reached financial close. At 250 megawatts, Kidston's storage capacity enables the continued investment in otherwise intermittent renewables. The project gives new life to an abandoned gold mine north-west of Townsville. The real Eureka comes with the 900 construction jobs Kidston will create for North Queensland workers. Our government has backed Genex since 2018 because, on this side of the House, we are committed to more jobs in energy, manufacturing and resources.

As members know, Kidston was not the only large-scale renewables project given the go-ahead last week. As the Premier has reported to the House, thanks to this Palaszczuk government, the Kaban wind farm is back. The 157-megawatt wind farm and second stage 100-megawatt, 200-watt-hours battery marks construction commencement—

A government member: A battery.


Mr de BRENNI: I take that interjection. There is a battery. This marks construction commencement of our Northern Queensland Renewable Energy Zone, which will enable up to a further 500 megawatts of additional renewables.

Only three weeks ago, we learned the Morrison government turned its back on this project and the 250 jobs it will create. As the Treasurer said, the federal minister for Northern Australia personally vetoed Kaban's Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility loan in an attempt to block renewable energy jobs for Queenslanders. They claimed that this was due to a lack of storage. He must have known at the same time as he was issuing the veto that the Kidston pumped storage project was reaching financial approval—a large-scale storage project in North Queensland that categorically contradicts the Morrison government's claims. North Queenslanders deserve better than to be misled by the coalition so today I have written to the minister seeking an explanation because his statements and their explanations just do not add up.

The Palaszczuk government was not going to sit back and let a shovel-ready project fall by the wayside. The jobs of Queenslanders are a priority for this government. Thanks to our government's commitment of \$40 million, we will deliver an upgraded transmission line, as we heard from the Premier, spanning 320 kilometres between Cairns and Townsville, generating cleaner, cheaper, reliable power for homes and businesses across the Far North. This publicly owned and operated transmission infrastructure investment unlocks the north's renewable potential and signifies commencement of construction of the Northern Queensland Renewable Energy Zone.

With Kaban as its cornerstone, the North Queensland REZ will enable a pipeline of large-scale renewable projects estimated to deliver 500 megawatts of clean, cheap energy to power manufacturing and sustain our growing, jobs-rich resources sector in Queensland. We are backing renewable energy zones, like the one in North Queensland which is expected to support 700 jobs, because they continue to power North Queensland's economic recovery.

Tourism Industry, Jobs

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism Industry Development and Innovation and Minister for Sport) (10.04 am): Work in Paradise has captured the imagination of jobseekers in Queensland and across the country. Interstate Australians make up 63 per cent of the 10,529 registrations of interest in taking up tourism jobs in regional Queensland. The Palaszczuk government's focus since the pandemic on attracting domestic tourists has seen Queensland become Australia's favourite holiday destination. However, regions that relied on overseas visitors have been hit twice by the international border closure with loss of international tourists and much of their traditional workforce, including international students and backpackers.

Since February, Cairns has created up to 60 tourism jobs a week, but with too few applicants. Mark Olsen of Tourism Tropical North Queensland explains the challenge like this—


This is paradise but it's not the paradise that makes the difference, it's the people that make the difference—it's the talented workforce who create those memorable moments and what we want to do this winter is help so many of those businesses who are trying to close the two billion dollar gap left by COVID in 2020.

We have listened to the industry and worked with the industry to develop incentives to work in paradise to fill the 4,000 vacancies operators need filled to rebuild better for Queensland's economic recovery plan. Work in Paradise has been warmly welcomed by Tash Wheeler at Tourism Whitsundays who says—

It's great to see the Palaszczuk Government is listening to what the tourism industry needs and providing assistance ... with more domestic visitors and the ongoing closure of international borders we need more workers to ensure the region can maximise the strong consumer demand.

While backpacking overseas is off the bucket list for young Australian and New Zealand adventurers, never has there been a better time to live, work and play in one of Queensland's world-class holiday destinations—and get a \$1,500 bonus plus travel expenses.

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month


 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.06 am): May is Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month. Now more than ever it is so important that we continue to raise awareness and let victims know that they are not alone and that support is on hand. We all know that on top of a particularly difficult year with COVID, the events of recent weeks and months have been incredibly distressing and continue to remind us of the devastating impact of domestic and family violence on our communities.

This week we launched a new domestic and family violence prevention campaign to recognise the variety of forms that domestic violence can take. Most Queenslanders know how to recognise physical domestic and family violence, but we also know financial abuse, social abuse, isolation and technology based abuse can be just as dangerous. That is why we have launched a new domestic and family violence awareness campaign to help Queenslanders recognise all forms of domestic and family violence and what they can do if their friend or family member is experiencing this violence.

The theme of Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month this year is 'We all play our part', and we do all play our part—government, communities, organisations, corporations and individuals. However, at the end of the day, a large part of the responsibility comes down to so many of the hardworking women and men who work on the front line of our domestic, family and sexual violence services. They sit in a room or on the phone with vulnerable women and children and support them to safety and help them to rebuild their lives.

Last night I had the pleasure of hosting some of these incredible frontline workers to thank them for the incredible work they do each and every day. Each of these workers can be managing up to 50 cases—each of them with unique concerns and risk factors. They support Queensland women and children, listen to their stories, believe them, develop intricate safety planning and do life-saving risk management planning every day. As Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month comes to an end, it is important that we all acknowledge and thank these frontline staff, and reflect on how we can do more to play our part in ending violence against women and their children.

Ministerial and Government Champions Program

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.09 am): I rise to speak about the Ministerial and Government Champions Program, first established in 2002, that operates across all

Queensland discrete and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. After being cut by those opposite in 2012, the Palaszczuk government re-established the program in 2015, recognising the value it brings to participating communities.

During our last term of government, the program achieved a number of significant outcomes and also small but important wins such as flashing lights installed at school zones, improving street lights for safety, modifying an ex-Commonwealth Games minibus for disability access, partnering with Green Fleet to plant 2,000 fruit trees to support a community market garden, increasing telecommunications capability, bushfire safety equipment, cultural events and major construction projects.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to continuing this program as it connects ministers and Queensland government chief executives with community mayors and leaders to support more effective engagement with the Queensland government on the opportunities and challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The program enables joint problem solving and co-design between communities and government, with priorities agreed by all stakeholders. We have recently confirmed the appointment of our new Ministerial and Government Champions. I thank the ministers for their input.

As the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, I have oversight of the program across all communities, supported by the Premier, as well as my assigned community of Doomadgee. I am pleased to report that some ministers have already visited their communities, to hear from the new mayors elected just last year and the community organisations about their priorities. For example, in March I accompanied the Attorney-General, Minister Fentiman, on her champions visit to the Torres Strait. The value the community places on the program and the strong relationship the community have developed with their champion was very obvious. I thank her for that.

I thank mayors Malone and Mosby of the Torres Shire Council and the Torres Strait Island Regional Council, Councillor Francis Pearson from Poruma, or Coconut Island, and Councillor Hilda Mosby from Masig, or Yorke Island, for their warm hospitality in hosting us on our visit. Minister Farmer, the Ministerial Champion for Aurukun, has also visited her community. During COVID, Minister Farmer was in regular contact to ensure that Aurukun had what they needed during the lockdown period. I look forward to visiting my community of Doomadgee in the very near future with my office working to confirm dates. I know that a number of other ministers are raring to go and preparing scheduled visits to their community.

Since the beginning of this year I have personally visited four communities. In February I visited Cherbourg. We heard from Uncle Eric about the hard times and the strong spirit of people who were sent to Cherbourg under previous government policies, as well as some entertaining anecdotes about key local characters. One anecdote I can remember is that there was a young lad who went to Cherbourg who apparently competed in a talent contest and beat someone called Barry Gibb at singing.

I also met with the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council and heard their aspirations for their community. Last month, I visited Hope Vale and caught up with the Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council, the Hope Vale Congress of Clans, the Community Justice Group, the Alliance of Guugu Yimithirr People, and the Family Responsibility Commission. Spending time with Elder Willie Gordon on a shortened version of his cultural tour was humbling and inspiring. Mr Speaker, earlier this month I visited Yarrabah with you. We met the leaders of the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council, the Yarrabah Leaders Forum, the Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services, the Yarrabah Community Justice Group and the Djungaal Elders Group.

The champions program is crucial to reframing the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the government. With the Palaszczuk government's focus on economic recovery, the champions program also provides key supports for communities to pursue their economic development aspirations. It provides a foundation for greater self-determination and empowerment for councils and communities and drives positive change that will contribute to closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Made in Queensland



Hon. GJ BUTCHER (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.13 am): It is a great day to be the Minister for Manufacturing in Queensland.

Ms Palaszczuk: Any day is a great day!

Mr BUTCHER: Of course, that is true for any day—I acknowledge that, Premier—because I am proud that the Palaszczuk government is delivering Queensland's plan for economic recovery by committing the funding to make Queensland Australia's premier manufacturing state.


This is an especially good day to be the minister because I can update the House that we have had an unprecedented level of interest in the fourth round of the \$61.5 million Made in Queensland program. We have had over 170 applications from manufacturers right across Queensland. These are local businesses who have looked at our \$15.5 million of support to become more internationally competitive by adopting innovative processes and technologies and have said, 'This is for me.' For that I commend them.

Through the first three rounds of Made in Queensland we are supporting 84 advanced manufacturing projects, generating over 1,100 new jobs here in Queensland, and underpinning \$100 million in private sector investment. I remind the House that, when I announced this program, I said we were offering something special for regional manufacturers—up to 75 per cent of their costs covered for projects up to \$500,000.

As Minister for Regional Development as well, I am very pleased to say that our regional manufacturers have stepped up, and nearly 50 of those 170 applications are from regional Queensland. In the coming months, my department will be reviewing these applications, and I am really looking forward to seeing some of the innovative ideas and job-creating opportunities that will be progressing under this plan.


Today I want to thank those 170 manufacturers who have put their hand up to be part of Queensland's manufacturing revolution. This is a Palaszczuk government program with a proven success rate—one that is helping Queensland businesses to become more productive, to grow, to innovate and to create the knowledge based jobs of the future. These are the secure long-term jobs that this government is delivering to help our economy recovery. They are the jobs of the future, and they are being created thanks to this government's support for the manufacturing industry in Queensland. I look forward to updating the House on the ongoing success of the Palaszczuk government's economic recovery plan through Made in Queensland.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.16 am): I advise that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads will be absent from the House today due to illness. The Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning will take any questions relating to the minister's portfolio in question time today.

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (10.16 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 8 of the Health and Environment Committee titled *Report No. 8, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 24 February 2021 and 20 April 2021*.


Tabled paper: Health and Environment Committee: Report No. 8, 57th Parliament—Subordinate Legislation tabled between 24 February 2021 and 20 April 2021 [\[701\]](#).

Of interest to members, this report includes the Public Health (Further Extension of Declared Public Health Emergency—COVID-19) Regulation 2021. I commend the report to the House.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time today will conclude at 11.17 am.

Toowoomba, Quarantine Facility

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.17 am): My question is to the Premier. Why won't the Premier reveal the full details of Labor's Toowoomba quarantine proposal to every Queenslanders?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. They are commercial-in-confidence matters and they are being considered by cabinet.

Toowoomba, Quarantine Facility

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Minister for Health. Under Labor's Toowoomba quarantine proposal, how will COVID patients be transported to hospital?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. The Premier has just answered the question in relation to the details. All of these details are still being negotiated.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Scenic Rim and member for Theodore.

Ms Bates interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: What I think the Leader of the Opposition should be doing is asking the Morrison government why they are not giving genuine consideration to any alternatives to hotel quarantine. Those opposite have done absolutely nothing but harp on the sidelines since February last year when we declared a public health emergency.

Mr Krause interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Member for Scenic Rim, you are warned under the standing orders. Comments will be directed through the chair.

Mrs D'ATH: Every time there is any suggestion of a proposal for regional quarantine those on the other side are scaremongering in the community. That is what they do: they start scaremongering in the community. Anything that the Palaszczuk government does in relation to quarantine will be with the intent of reducing the risk to the community. That has been our priority from day one. We know that hotels are not built to be quarantine facilities and we should be looking at alternatives that can contain and bring together a large number of people who are in quarantine. We have seen an increase in the number of positive cases coming from overseas. The Morrison government keeps wanting to bring more and more people from overseas but not take on any responsibility for managing—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Mermaid Beach will cease his interjections. The member for Kawana will cease his interjections.

Mrs D'ATH: The Leader of the Opposition has not had any constructive debate on these issues at all in the public arena. They scaremonger when there is any suggestion whatsoever of putting in place processes that can keep our community safer. That is what these processes do. The Morrison government is more than happy to put more money into the Northern Territory and Howard Springs but nothing into Queensland—

Ms Palaszczuk: And Victoria.

Mrs D'ATH: And Victoria. As we know, that is not limited to quarantine facilities. In relation to the budget as a whole the Morrison government does not care about Queensland.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: They are happy to invest in capital infrastructure everywhere else around the country, but when it comes to investing in infrastructure here, including quarantine facilities to keep our community safer, the Morrison government is missing in action. The Leader of the Opposition should be asking the Morrison government why they are not stepping up and supporting—

(Time expired)

Tourism Industry

Mr HEALY: My question is of the Premier and Minister for Trade. Will the Premier update the House on the government's economic recovery plan for tourism?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Cairns for his interest in Queensland, Queensland jobs and backing Queensland. We know that those opposite want to back Scott Morrison. They do not want to back Queensland: they want to back their southern mates. They do not want to talk about things in the open. They do not want to talk about jobs for Queenslanders. Work in Paradise is about getting people to work here and getting jobs in Queensland, because on this side of the House we listen to the public and we respond, whether that is in relation to tourism or dealing with COVID.

Let me say to the Leader of the Opposition that it is a very simple concept. Our hotels were not built to contain infectious diseases. I challenge the Leader of the Opposition to ask members of the public what they think of regional quarantine. They support regional quarantine. What does the Leader

of the Opposition have against Toowoomba? That is what I want to know. I know there are members of the LNP who do support what is happening in Toowoomba. You better get your facts right, Leader of the Opposition. Before you—

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—come in here and start muckraking you better get your whole story right. Back to Work in Paradise, Mr Speaker. I love Queensland. The member for Cairns loves Queensland. We have put in over \$7 million to attract people to go to hard-hit tourism areas to support our businesses. Not only that, but in Tropical North Queensland they have identified that accommodation which used to be utilised by backpackers and international students can also be utilised by people coming to work there. It is a \$1,500 incentive and, as the minister for tourism said, we have received 10,500 registrations from people right across the country. Why? Because they want to come to Queensland. Last week in Cairns when I announced this it was about nine degrees down south but it was a lovely 25 degrees in Cairns. Why would you not want to come to paradise? We know there are some people in the opposition who want to leave paradise. There are a couple over there who are looking at going down south.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right; the member for Nanango is thinking about going to Canberra. The member for Callide is thinking about going to Canberra—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, you have had a good go already. You are warned under the standing orders.

Toowoomba, Quarantine Facility

Ms BATES: My question is to the Minister for Health. With police having to fill the gaps of ambos stuck in hospital parking bays due to the ongoing ramping crisis, how many ambos will be tied up with patient transfers from Labor's Toowoomba quarantine proposal?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for the question. I have already answered that.

Apprenticeships

Mr McCALLUM: My question is of the Premier and Minister for Trade. Will the Premier update the House on how the Palaszczuk government's commitment to skills and training is helping increase the number of Queenslanders taking on apprenticeships, and is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Bundamba for the question. On this side of the House we care about jobs. We care about keeping Queenslanders safe and we care about jobs. That is very fundamental. In fact, I think that was a key issue during the election campaign. The people of Queensland back this government for looking after their health, making sure they are safe and having a concrete plan for economic recovery. The member for Bundamba knows how important manufacturing is.

Mr Millar interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: It was great to be out at Rheinmetall in Ipswich recently meeting with apprentices. We took the whole cabinet out there; that is how important we believe Rheinmetall is. We want to grow the regions. We want to make sure that our young people are connected and that they have the opportunity to get a good, decent long-term job. When we were out there we had students from right across the region who came there because they know the opportunities that exist for their future. We also know that with building our schools there are a lot of apprenticeships happening, and every time I go to school sites with the Minister for Education we meet new apprentices. Just last week when we were up at the Barron Gorge hydroelectric power station we met with another apprentice who is working. This gives them long-term secure jobs.

That is why I am proud to report that from July 2020 to April this year the number of people who have commenced an apprenticeship and traineeship in our state is up nearly 36 per cent. That is a phenomenal figure! We have assisted this through not only our over \$50 billion infrastructure plan—this

includes Cross River Rail—but also free TAFE and free apprenticeships for those aged under 25 so that more young Queenslanders can access training across priority qualification areas. Over 32,000 have commenced training since 2018. There are 6,700 who have commenced our Back to Work program since 2016. Our payroll tax rebate is also assisting.

We know that on this side of the House we are focused on jobs. The Treasurer will be handing down the budget next month focusing on jobs, looking to the future about how we grow jobs and infrastructure, making sure that we take our regions with us and making sure that young people have hope and opportunity. We will continue to look after Queenslanders. We will continue to make sure that they have a safe and secure future in this state. We will continue to make sure that all of our capacity goes to pulling those levers, whether it is helping our tourism industry, which is doing it tough, or looking for those new opportunities in manufacturing. This government—

(Time expired)

Princess Alexandra Hospital, Elective Surgery

Mr PURDIE: My question is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister confirm all elective surgery has again been cancelled at the Princess Alexandra Hospital today due to a shortage of beds?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I am happy to check on the current status of the PA Hospital today, but once again what we see from the opposition is the typical scaremongering and negativity around the health system.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Mander: The minister doesn't even know.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Everton will cease his interjections. As I hear the response, the minister has given a commitment to investigate the matter.

Mrs D'ATH: I will check the facts of that situation. As we know, on any given day the hospitals and the hospital and health services make these decisions in relation to what is in the best interests based on their capacity and demand needs at the time. This happens. In fact what we have seen over the last 18 months, particularly with COVID, is that we are having to suspend elective surgery based on an increase in trauma and also due to community transmission. These are the things and the disruptions that for three weeks now I have tried to explain to the opposition.

Queenslanders understand it. As I go around the state, they actually understand that the health system is being disrupted because of COVID. They get it. It is only the LNP who do not understand. I am happy to keep explaining that there is disruption to the health system and there is extraordinary demand being experienced right now. When there is an increase in trauma coming in the door, then hospitals sometimes need to make the difficult decision to defer elective surgery. This happens across the hospital and health system when they have an increase in trauma coming in the door—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Nanango.

Mrs D'ATH:—because they have to deal with those priority emergency cases that come in.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: I will follow up on the issue but it would be good if those on the opposite side actually went out to the community—they keep going out and saying 'Tell us your stories. What's going on?'—and acknowledged the disruption that is happening in our health system, not just in Queensland but across the country and across the globe right now. For the last 18 months, you would swear those on the other side have had no idea whatsoever about the impact COVID is having on our health system.

Job Creation; Waste Reduction

Ms LUI: 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 how the government is supporting projects that create jobs and reduce waste? Is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Cook for her question. Thanks to the policies of the Palaszczuk government, all over Queensland we are reducing waste, creating new resources and in the process creating jobs. I was really pleased last week to join the Cairns Regional Council mayor, Mr Bob Manning, and the chair of Re.Group, Mr Robert Hill, to open the new Cairns Materials Recovery Facility. The regional council was able to build this new facility thanks to a \$3 million investment from our Building our Regions fund. It is a \$14 million facility that doubles the recycling capacity in the Cairns region, and in the process we have created 47 new jobs. The new facility will allow us to recycle 30,000 tonnes of waste, increasing the proportion of waste recovered from 35 per cent to 85 per cent. The glass alone will be used in local supply chains, as well as 5,000 tonnes that is expected to be shipped down here to the south-east to be used in our facilities here.

This is just one of the many new material recycling facilities that are popping up all over Queensland thanks to investments by the Palaszczuk government, thanks to the policies of our government and thanks to our waste levy that has created an incentive for people to divert waste from landfill and into recycling, recovering it as a valuable resource that can be used by industry and in the process creating jobs in those industries as well as jobs in material recovery and recycling. This is a great result for the environment, reducing waste and creating jobs.

It is finally time for the Leader of the Opposition to stop recycling old leaders and putting them on as executives and to start admitting that he was wrong about the waste levy—to admit that he was wrong when he called it filthy and rotten because there is nothing filthy about diverting waste and there is nothing rotten about creating jobs.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr Dick interjected.

Dr MILES: On this side of the House, we stand proudly in support of the material recovery industry, proudly in support of those who are redirecting waste—

Mr SPEAKER: Treasurer and Leader of the Opposition!

Dr MILES: into recycled goods, and in the process creating jobs right across this state, including in Cairns.

Mr SPEAKER: The Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition will cease their cross-chamber attacks. The Leader of the Opposition is reminded that comments will be directed through the chair.

Health System

Dr ROWAN: My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to media reports about Anthony from Ipswich who had to watch his father, Neville, being shuffled between Toowoomba and Ipswich hospitals during a suspected heart attack. He waited in the emergency department for over a day and sadly Neville died later that week. Is Labor losing control of Queensland Health?

Ms GRACE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I refer again to standing order 115(b)(vi) which states that questions should not contain names 'unless they are strictly necessary to render the question intelligible and can be authenticated'. I ask for your ruling on whether this should be ruled out of order. The name is not necessary to render the question intelligible and the name cannot be authenticated.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. This is not an opportunity to debate the matter. I have heard your point of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. In respect of the aspect of the standing order the minister raises in terms of the naming rendering the question intelligible, it is specifically relevant to name the person who has had the particular issue with Queensland Health and the hospital crisis. When we refer to the specific matter that this person was—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my right, I am hearing the point of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: When we raise these specific matters, it is because these people or their families have asked us to raise the specific matters. Finally, in relation to the authentication, yes, we can authenticate where these stories are coming from.

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

Mr SPEAKER: Before the new point of order, please allow me to address the previous point of order and this point of order. The standing order that has been raised by the Minister for Education does relate to the use of names in questions as well as authentication. By logic, the use of the name gives context to a question, which I do accept. It also, however, does provide an opportunity for the minister to ask whether something should be authenticated. Based on the response from the Manager of Opposition Business, that authentication should be forthcoming. I now will hear your point of order, Minister.

Ms GRACE: With the authentication, I believe that those kinds of questions—under your ruling, of course—should be a question on notice and not a question used where it cannot be immediately authenticated.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. With regards to whether a question is on notice or whether it is without notice, usually that will come down to the level of detail required in the question and not whether it is naming an individual or authentication, so I do not agree with the premise that the minister has put forward. However, I will ask the member who has asked the question whether it can be authenticated and whether that evidence will be forthcoming. I would like to understand that.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, I am happy to table a copy of the media report.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian* online, dated 20 May 2021, titled 'Queensland man dies after waiting harrowing 26 hours in emergency department in Ipswich Hospital' [[702](#)].

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Ms GRACE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. In relation to the comments that you made earlier in regards to my point of order about the standing order, I would advocate that media reports are not authentication of—

Mr SPEAKER: Please resume your seat, Minister. Media reports are used as a process of authentication on a number of matters in this House. I will need to be satisfied in order to ascertain whether future questions may be in order or ruled out of order. On this basis, the member has provided what he believes is authentication. I will consider the matter and I will also allow the question.

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Moggill for his question. I want to express my condolences to the family of the gentleman in question. I understand West Moreton Hospital and Health Service are continuing to work with the Department of Health on strategies to increase capacity to cater for the extra demand that is being seen. I will say that in this particular case it is important to note that this gentleman was in the hospital and under the care of a doctor and nurses at all times. I appreciate he was in the emergency department, but it is important to note that he was in a hospital with care and the relevant physicians to address his needs at the time.

While I am on my feet can I address the issue on which I said I would come back to the member for Ninderry in relation to the PA Hospital. I can advise that three cases have been rescheduled, but there are 58 elective surgery cases being done today at the PA Hospital. It is not all elective surgery. There are 58 elective surgery cases being done today. Also as at 8.30 this morning there was no code yellow across our HHSs.

Dr MILES: Mr Speaker, I think given the clarification the Leader of the House has just provided, the member for Ninderry has misled the House and I ask you to rule on it.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members!

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

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Please resume your seat. I have called order and I expect order will be maintained in this chamber. Before ruling on your point of order, do you have a point of order which relates to the Deputy Premier's?

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes, I do. The Labor government are abusing the standing orders.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, you have ruled—

Mr SPEAKER: No. Please, member for Kawana, how about you start your point of order again without any reference to political parties and let's talk about the process within the House.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, you have made rulings previously about frivolous points of order. If the member opposite believes under the standing orders that a member has misled the House, he should rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising and then write to you, Mr Speaker, not raise it as a point of order, as he has just done. He should understand the standing orders as you have previously ruled, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Kawana. In response to certain elements of your point of order I was going to suggest a very similar course of action. I believe that the Deputy Premier was looking to rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising, which he did not do but that is not something on which he has been provided guidance and I am happy to provide that guidance. If there is a matter of privilege suddenly arising, Deputy Premier, I am happy for you to take that course of action. There will be no immediate action in this House as to what your point of order was suggesting. If you have a matter of privilege suddenly arising I would encourage you to write to me with regards—

Mr Walker: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mundingburra, there is a rule that generally you do not interrupt the Speaker—I know you are keen—particularly while a ruling is being provided. I would encourage the Deputy Premier to write to me on that matter. Is there a member who wishes to seek the call?

Electricity Prices; Job Creation

Mr WALKER: My apologies for the earlier interruption. My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Investment. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the government is reducing power prices and creating jobs in the regions, and is the Treasurer aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr DICK: What an enthusiastic member we have representing an important part of Queensland. I want to thank the member for Mundingburra for his question, his enthusiasm, his commitment and his advocacy for jobs and economic growth in North Queensland.

Our government is pushing ahead with strengthening our electricity network through renewable energy projects that will drive down electricity prices and support jobs and industry. We are investing \$147 million to connect the Genex Kidston pumped hydro project, which has now gone to financial close, and that will help Queensland households and businesses. Kidston pumped hydro will create 500 jobs and the transmission line being built with our support will support another 400 jobs—so 900 jobs in total.

On the Atherton Tableland, as we have heard this morning, we are putting another \$40 million into transmission lines for the 157-megawatt Kaban wind farm, creating another 250 jobs—great news for the far north of our state. This is a project that ticks all the boxes: millions in private sector investment, hundreds of regional jobs and clean power generation to push us further towards our emission reduction goals and further downward pressure on power prices for hardworking Queenslanders, yet Scott Morrison and the LNP turned their back on this project. They turned their back on Queensland. That is because climate change sceptics, right-wing nutters and of course fully paid up members of the nuclear lobby have got control of the coalition party room in Canberra. There is Keith Pitt, and you would not believe a Queensland federal minister is arguing against a Queensland project—not only arguing against it, but stopping a Queensland project. He personally vetoed the project. What about those members opposite?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DICK: Well might they interject, but what have they said about supporting the Kaban renewable project? Absolutely nothing! In fact, what did the Leader of the Opposition say in a recent podcast? He has gone back to the language of Campbell Newman. What did the Leader of the Opposition say in a recent podcast? We have to stop 'gold-plating' our electricity network. We have heard that before. We know what that means: cutting infrastructure. That is what happened when Newman said it. That is exactly what happened and the Leader of the Opposition is using the words of his mentor. That is what he is doing.

In their first budget people opposite like the member for Broadwater boasted about cutting infrastructure in Queensland. They hate infrastructure because it means good, well-paying jobs for union members and other Queensland workers. That is why they hate it. They mothballed Swanbank E—do honourable members remember that?—closed two generators at Tarong and cost 100 workers their jobs. That is what they think about power security and energy security in Queensland. I tell them who will support renewable energy and renewable jobs in our economy and that is the Palaszczuk Labor government.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, given that I have cautioned you directly on that, I will warn you under the standing orders. You will direct your comments through the chair.

Elective Surgery, Waiting Times

Mr MICKELBERG: My question is to the Minister for Education. Twelve-year-old Abby from Buderim continues to suffer while waiting for knee surgery six months longer than clinically recommended. The minister said last week the opposition was making up stories about Queensland Health patients, a claim she later repeated. Will the minister apologise to Abby and her mum for dismissing their legitimate concerns about suffering long-term delays for surgery?

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I ask for your ruling as to whether this question can be asked of the education minister when it does not relate to her portfolio.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Standing order 113(1)(a) says that in questioning ministers members can ask questions about matters that ministers are officially connected to. I submit to you, Mr Speaker, that at the last sitting the minister spoke about this matter in an answer to a government question about health. The minister then repeated those comments in the media. I would say the minister has connected herself to this story and you should allow the question to be answered.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Ms Grace interjected.

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: The member for McConnel will cease her interjections. Standing order 113(1)(a) states that a question must relate to the public affairs for which the minister is connected to or responsible for. On this particular point commentary does not fall within 'connecting to or being responsible for'. I will rule the question out of order.

Workers Compensation

Ms PUGH: My question is to the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Will the minister update the House on the workers compensation average premiums and discounts for Queensland businesses next year, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left, I have asked for silence while questions are being asked. I heard commentary to my left. No individuals were identified, but I ask that you give the same courtesy which is afforded to other members.

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for the question. While those opposite stretch the truth in questions, government members ask questions about supporting businesses in this state and about jobs. As an ex-small business operator, with her dad, of a restaurant in the city—a very good one too, I might add—the member knows how important it is to have low WorkCover premiums, and that is exactly what this state is delivering.

I am pleased to say that we will continue to have the lowest average workers compensation premium rates of any state or territory in this country. The average premium of \$1.20 for \$100 of wages paid has now been locked in for the 2021-22 financial year. In 2021 that will mean no increase, which is really quite amazing when we consider what is happening in other Australian states with increases in insurance premiums that businesses have been complaining about. Eight times in a row we have not increased our premiums. At the same time, we have seen increasing benefits for injured workers. It is an extraordinary achievement and it is testament to our good management of WorkCover.

I join the Premier in paying tribute to the contribution of the late Ian Brusasco AO, who chaired WorkCover from 1998 to 2012. I give my condolences to Patsy and their family. Under Mr Brusasco's stewardship, WorkCover did the heavy lifting and achieved full funding in 2000 and brought average premiums down to their lowest rate of \$1.15. This was from a high of \$1.85. We continue providing ongoing stability for businesses in this state. That is more important now than ever.

Earlier the Premier talked about apprentices. Since 2017 in this state, WorkCover premiums have not been paid in relation to apprentices. That has gained employers an average of \$105 million in savings. Our discount rate has provided a discount of over \$209 million, making a total since 2017 of \$314 million in savings. It is no wonder the number of apprentices in this state is going up.

We have also restored the workers' common law rights taken away and cut by those opposite. We have provided additional benefits for workers suffering from mental health and psychological injuries and also provided Australian-leading benefits to workers with silicosis and coal workers' pneumoconiosis. It is an incredible feat for us in terms of announcing these WorkCover premiums.

(Time expired)

Coronavirus, Vaccine

Mr MOLHOEK: My question is to the Premier. In February the health minister said 'the Premier, the Chief Health Officer and I will be getting the vaccine as part of phase 1b', which was available from 22 March. Given this three-month delay, why did the Premier not get vaccinated as soon as possible to promote confidence in the vaccine rollout?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my right will not interject while questions are being asked.

Ms PALASZCZUK: My understanding is that back then the vaccine was for those aged 70-plus. In fact, I think when Zoe was getting her second dose they said they could vaccinate us then, and I said, 'It's not our turn.' We are waiting our turn, like everyone else. Those aged over 50 only became eligible about a week ago. Dr Young, the Deputy Premier and I had our flu shots yesterday—feeling good! I encourage everyone who has not yet had their flu vaccine to get it.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Good. Just like other Queenslanders, we will get our vaccine when it is our turn.

Coronavirus, Vaccine

Mr SAUNDERS: My question is to the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. Will the minister update the House on the latest developments in Queensland's vaccine rollout?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. Due to the changes we have seen in the TGA advice about the use of AstraZeneca for those aged 50 years and older, Pfizer is predominantly now being used by the Queensland government in our administration of the vaccine to all frontline workers. Yesterday we also announced that to increase the numbers—I am very pleased that we are now getting more Pfizer into the state—we can now broaden that out to more of the general public.

Yesterday, along with the Chief Health Officer and me, the Premier announced that we will invite 40- to 49-year-olds to get vaccinated in our community based hubs. This is the next step: moving beyond our hospital clinics for our frontline workers into the community in larger venues so that we can offer it to 40- to 49-year-olds. We ask anyone in that cohort to visit the COVID vaccination website and use the eligibility checker. Unless they are a vulnerable person between the ages of 40 and 49, it will say that they are not eligible in the current phase but that they can register their interest. We ask those people to register their interest so that when a community based hub opens up near them we can notify them and invite them to come forward.

We already have four sites set up. I am very glad that the member for Maryborough asked me the question, because Maryborough City Hall is already being used, as are Bundaberg TAFE, Hervey Bay TAFE and Central Queensland University city campus at Mackay. We will open up 14 hubs by the end of July. We already have four open, there will be another three in South-East Queensland shortly and there will be a further seven across the state. This is an important step forward. As we get the big delivery of Pfizer from the Commonwealth later in the year, around October—that is the latest announcement we heard from the Commonwealth—we will look at those mass vaccination centres as well.

We heard that South Australia is looking at offering the vaccine to everyone in regional South Australia aged 16 and older. I give a shout-out to the Central West Hospital and Health Service, which has been doing this for two months already. They go into remote communities right across Queensland and have been offering vaccinations. In fact, they have already given 3,405 first doses. Some 70 per cent of all people aged over 70 are already done and 45 per cent of all eligible adults in the HHS have already been vaccinated—Aramac, Muttaborra, Barcaldine, Jericho, Alpha, Longreach, Isisford, Blackall, Tambo, and the list goes on.

(Time expired)

Limes, Importation

Mr KNUTH: My question is to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities. Is the minister aware that the federal government is preparing a recommendation that will allow Mexican limes to be imported into Australia? As the majority of limes are grown in Queensland, will the minister act to protect our local producers and stop this potential biosecurity threat?

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for Hill for his question and acknowledge his ongoing support not only for this particular produce but also for agriculture in general. As the member quite rightly points out, Queensland is the largest producer of limes in Australia—558 hectares of mature lime orchards in fact, representing more than half of Australia's total lime production.

The importation of agricultural products into Australia is a federal government responsibility overseen by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. The role of my department as a stakeholder, among many stakeholders, is to review and provide input throughout the biosecurity import risk assessment process.

Australia currently permits the importation of limes for human consumption from the Cook Islands, Egypt, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Samoa, Spain, Tonga, the United States of America and Vanuatu. Queenslanders will be shocked by the fact that they need to be cautious every time they enter a supermarket looking for a lime as there is an increasing likelihood of picking up an imported lime instead of an Australian one. Right now, David Littleproud's department of agriculture has consultation open in relation to a review of biosecurity import requirements for fresh Persian lime fruit from Mexico.

What is surprising is that David Littleproud's department seems more supportive of Coronas with Mexican limes rather than homegrown 'Milton mango'. While we need to have international trade, we need to be aware of the biosecurity risks. We have a state free of many pests and diseases, yet there are risks—funguses, viruses, mites and scabs—as a result of any threat coming into our state.

My department's scientists raised technical and scientific concerns with their federal counterparts at a meeting on 5 May 2021. DAF personnel also attended the citrus industry consultation meeting convened by DAWE in Mareeba on 19 May 2021. What have we seen from the LNP when it comes to protecting us at the border? Failure after failure. White spot risks from imported prawns were not reported to Queensland by the federal government. Even its own budget highlights that as a risk.

There are other potential risks, and if there is a fail at the border it is Queensland growers who will suffer. I thank the member for Hill for this very important question. Like him, I will stand shoulder to shoulder with our agricultural producers right throughout this state. A meeting of the federal LNP left biosecurity off the original terms of reference, but we will make sure that we reinforce that and discuss that at an upcoming—

(Time expired)

Renewable Energy, Job Creation

Ms KING: 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 Queensland's renewable energy credentials and how the Palaszczuk government is supporting job-creating renewable projects?

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for Pumicestone for the question because she is one of the state's greatest advocates for publicly owned renewable jobs and publicly owned renewable energy infrastructure. As we have heard today, in just the last week two more renewable energy announcements have reinforced Queensland's position as a renewable energy superpower: the financial close of the Kidston pumped hydro project, with 250 megawatts and 900 construction jobs on that project alone, and the green light for the Kaban wind farm project, with 157 megawatts and 250 Queensland jobs enabled by \$40 million of investment in publicly owned infrastructure—publicly owned infrastructure delivered by this government.

The last fortnight has also underscored just how hopelessly divided the Morrison government is on renewable energy jobs. We know it is hopelessly divided. We know this because Morrison government minister Keith Pitt personally vetoed the Kaban wind farm project. That is right: he stepped in for the very first time in NAIF history—to do what? To prevent the creation of 250 Queensland jobs; to block 250 renewable jobs in Queensland. In his statement of reasons he claimed that Kaban did not have dispatchability or storage—which is probably a little bit technical for the bloke who could not explain how a battery works—yet the record shows that at the same time he issued his big veto due to stated storage concerns the Kidston pumped hydro project was getting the go-ahead from NAIF. That is dispatchability and storage. The reasons that he gave to the Commonwealth parliament do not add up. What we have with the coalition member for Hinkler is ‘Captain Veto’, flexing his job-destroying muscles. But fear not: the state executive of the LNP has finally shown some leadership on renewable energy. In fact, last week a tweet emerged which says—

Time to end the nuclear ban. If it stacks up commercially, then let it happen.

It is telling that Campbell Newman—now known as ‘Nuclear Newman’—is still so taken by a dangerous, outdated technology—a power source that costs five times the amount of renewable energy and so dangerous that countries like Japan and Germany are shutting down their nuclear programs. I have just one question though for ‘Nuclear Newman’: where in Queensland do he and the LNP propose to dump their nuclear waste? Which Queensland community will be the receptacle for the LNP’s nuclear waste? Queenslanders know they can only rely on Labor for renewable energy jobs because the LNP is hopelessly divided. It is making up excuses on renewables. It is toying with nuclear. We have ‘Captain Veto’ and ‘Nuclear Newman’. We do not need Comic Book Guy from *The Simpsons* to tell us that this is the worst comic book ever.

Budget, Taxation

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is directed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer rule out any new or increased taxes, royalties or charges in the budget?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Kawana for his question—174 days since the shadow minister for finance asked me a question. I remember that when he was appointed the shadow minister for finance he said he was going to take it up to the government and he was going to hold the government to account. That was 174 days ago. That was last year, so he has asked his question. He asked a question in 2020 and he asked one in 2021—feet up, job’s done, don’t have to worry about it! The members opposite do not seem to be paying attention. We had an election seven months ago and during that election campaign I said that we would deliver our plan for economic recovery and our election platform without introducing new or increased taxes, and we are a government that honours our election commitments.

It does not surprise me that the LNP does not take election commitments seriously. It has a criminal disregard for election commitments. Remember when those opposite said, ‘No public servant has anything to fear from the government I lead’ and then they promptly sacked 14,000; on electricity they said, ‘My pledge to Queensland’—the member for Kawana was there signing it with ‘Nuclear Newman’—‘is that electricity prices will not go up’ and then they promptly went up 43 per cent; and then we had the fake Bradfield Scheme, the Bruce Highway hoax and the worst costings debacle in opposition history delivered by the member for Everton? That was a genuine train wreck—a genuine risk of increased taxes from the opposition—and that is just the reality.

Mr Minnikin: ‘Debt is a tool.’

Mr DICK: You ask the question, member for Chatsworth—

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair.

Mr DICK:—and I will give you a detailed answer.

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair.

Mr DICK: We were up-front with the people of Queensland, unlike those members opposite who talked about their bold, big vision for Queensland which had absolutely nothing in it in their costings. They conned Queenslanders and went up and down the length and breadth of Queensland misleading Queenslanders about election commitments. When it came to the costings, they were as hollow as the member for Broadwater. That is what the costings demonstrated. They would have cut, sacked and sold their way to fund their election commitments and drop their anvil of austerity.

Remember that they wanted to get back to surplus come hell or high water. They wanted to get back, and they would have cut, sacked and sold to get there. The first thing they would have sold would have been companies like CleanCo and electricity generators because that is what the LNP does. It is exactly what the member for Broadwater did when he sat around the table with his mentor, 'Nuclear Newman', selling assets, shutting down electricity supply and sacking electricity workers, and it would be exactly the same if they got their hands together. We will stick to our election commitments and deliver for Queensland.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: A warning to all members who are on warnings already to cease their interjections.

K'gari

Mr TANTARI: My question is of the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs. Will the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is supporting jobs, economic recovery, the environment and regrowth on K'gari, Fraser Island?

Ms SCANLON: I thank the member for the question. I know he is a strong advocate for K'gari and the jobs that are created on that island for his community. Today I am really pleased to update the House that in just this financial year alone we have seen on K'gari more than 257,000 camper nights at this World Heritage listed icon. That is 38,000 more than the previous financial year. We know that thousands of families across Queensland and across the country are coming to K'gari to experience its natural wonders, spend money in that community and also support the dozens of tourism operators there, and that is no different to the many other national parks. We know that our national parks throughout Queensland contribute \$2.6 billion annually in terms of the spend of people coming to Queensland.

K'gari of course is one of the jewels in the crown in terms of our national parks in Queensland. We know that it has been a difficult time for K'gari particularly over the last year dealing with COVID and the bushfires, but we are seeing some strong signs of regrowth thanks to the work of Queenslanders and the multiagency response. I want to update the House on some of the work that our rangers have been doing around the clock to make sure that K'gari does rebound. We have had specialists responding to impacts of native wildlife. We have had staff eradicating potentially harmful weeds that are emerging. Recently we had some of our rangers inspect the island from the air to see new growth emerging from the ashes in areas like Moon Point swamp and the four dunes at Happy Valley.

This comes on top of our investment. We have spent around \$10 million annually on K'gari to make sure that we are working with the traditional owners to manage that World Heritage listed island. We are also investing around \$50 million across the state to upgrade infrastructure, creating 800 jobs. On K'gari that includes \$4.8 million in some new tourism opportunities. We are working with the Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation on those new experiences. Recently I announced \$2 million for additional dingo fencing to protect the Orchid Beach township.

We contribute \$10 million annually in comparison to the Commonwealth which only invests around \$145,000. It is shameful. When one considers the fact that K'gari is 166,000 hectares, that works out to be less than a dollar per hectare. I did a bit of research and had a look at what 87 cents can actually buy. Looking online, line trimmer for a whipper snipper is certainly more than a dollar. You cannot buy shoelaces for our rangers for a dollar. You cannot buy sunscreen for our rangers for a dollar. It is shameful that the federal government does not value these World Heritage listed sites as it should. We know that it creates jobs, but it is important that we are protecting the environment. I call on the opposition and the federal MP to demand more funding for this World Heritage listed icon.

Police Service, Patient Transport

Mr LAST: My question is to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. How many hours have police officers spent in the last six months transporting patients to hospital to pick up the slack from overstretched ambulance officers instead of keeping Queenslanders safe and secure?

Mr RYAN: What a ridiculous question to ask without notice. That requires much consideration of the QCAD data containing police response times and all of the other information. It should really be a question that is put on notice. Last week the commissioner addressed the issue of support right across

emergency services. The Queensland Police Service works alongside the Queensland Ambulance Service and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to keep the community safe and to respond to people in need. From time to time each agency helps another agency. In fact, there are instances where, when police respond to incidents, they ask for the help of the Ambulance Service. In fact, there are partnerships between the Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Ambulance Service and Queensland Health around mental health co-responders where they respond together.

It is not out of the question to have emergency services, comrades in arms, responding to multiple incidents together. They help each other. That is what they dedicate their life and service to. I pay tribute to them helping the community, helping those in need, providing a strong response to anyone who requires assistance. I commend the Queensland Police Service for what they do in not only helping the Queensland Ambulance Service when the Queensland Ambulance Service needs that assistance but also going above and beyond to ensure fellow Queenslanders are kept safe and provided the assistance that they need.

I am particularly reminded about the work that is done during natural disasters, where all agencies pull together and all agencies respond to different events. There was an instance during Cyclone Debbie only a few years ago where there was a poor man who had his arm almost severed off which required the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and the Queensland Ambulance Service to respond together to help that man in the middle of a cyclone.

Mrs D'Ath: Yes.

Mr RYAN: The health minister remembers that. Quite extraordinary. There was another case where a lady was in labour during that same cyclone where multiple agencies responded together. It is not uncommon for this to happen. It is what we actually expect of our emergency services: to work together, to collaborate and to respond in the best interests of Queenslanders to keep them safe.

Social and Affordable Housing

Mr KELLY: My question is to the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts. Will the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is partnering with the community housing sector to deliver more social and affordable housing for vulnerable Queenslanders and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for Greenslopes for his question and for his commitment to assisting vulnerable Queenslanders. I know he does a lot of work outside of his role as a member of parliament to support vulnerable Queenslanders. The Palaszczuk government is doing the heavy lifting when it comes to investing in social and affordable housing. Whether that be through our \$1.6 billion Housing Construction Jobs Program, through the \$100 million Works for Tradies program that was introduced as a response to COVID, or through the very innovative Partnering for Growth program which has already seen some 1,121 new social and affordable dwellings approved, supported by some \$136.9 million of government investment. That is a massive investment from the Palaszczuk government for social and affordable housing.

When one looks at the Partnering for Growth program, there is one particular program that sets a milestone for Queensland. Earlier this month I officially opened a new housing complex that very much marks this very important milestone for our state. The 342 new affordable homes in Woolloongabba are the first project delivered by Brisbane Housing Company under the Palaszczuk government's Partnering for Growth initiative with the community housing sector. We contributed \$6.4 million towards the construction of this \$12.1 million complex. It is a fantastic complex. Recently I got to meet some of the residents. I met the wonderful Frankie, one of the first tenants. She told me how grateful she and her husband were to find an apartment that was thoughtfully constructed and fit for purpose.

This project was the first to be delivered through the Brisbane Housing Company's five-year development plan. BHC, as it is known, will invest some \$222 million in 682 new affordable homes in South-East Queensland with a \$32 million government contribution.

As I have said, the Palaszczuk government is doing the heavy lifting when it comes to investment. What did we see in the federal government's budget when it came to social and affordable housing? Absolutely nothing! There was no new investment whatsoever in social and affordable housing from the federal government. They have vacated this space absolutely. They have walked away from the National Rental Affordability Scheme putting at risk over 10,000 properties in this state. They have walked away from remote Indigenous housing. We did not see any indication that they were coming back to that in the last federal budget.


Last week the Prime Minister said that if the federal government invests more states will do less. He is absolutely wrong on this. We have hundreds of millions of dollars worth of proof that that is not true. He has walked so far away from social and affordable housing that he cannot even recognise it anymore. That is an absolute disgrace. We will continue to fight and—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired.

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (11.17 am): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. In an answer to a question by the opposition the Premier indicated to the House that she was eligible for the COVID vaccine last week. I table two documents showing those in phase 2a, 50- to 59-year-olds, were actually eligible for the COVID vaccine on 4 May, some three weeks ago. I believe the Premier has misled the House and I will be writing to you with respect to that.

Tabled paper: Article from ABC News online, dated 4 May 2021, titled 'Coronavirus vaccination rollout phase 2a begins in Queensland: Here's what you need to know' [\[703\]](#).

Tabled paper: Australian government document, titled 'COVIDSAFE: Australia's COVID-19 vaccine national roll-out strategy' [\[704\]](#).


Mr SPEAKER: I will give that due consideration.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I believe that the Manager of Opposition Business may be misleading the House. I will be looking at the information he has provided. Although the announcement was made at that point, what was announced is that GPs will be available to deliver the vaccine on 18 May.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, you are debating the point of order. I will take on board any correspondence I receive from the member for Kawana.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Further Answer to Question, Health System

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (11.18 am): In answering one of the questions today I advised that there were no code yellows across HHSs. I want to clarify that. I was advised that as of 8.30 this morning there were no code yellows across South-East Queensland hospital and health services.


Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left. If I am calling the House to order you will come to order or members will start being warned and leave the chamber.

DEBT REDUCTION AND SAVINGS BILL

Resumed from 25 March (see p. 834).

Second Reading

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (11.19 am): I move—
That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Economics and Governance Committee for its inquiry into the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021 and for its report on the bill, which was tabled on 14 May 2021. I also take this opportunity to table an erratum to the bill's explanatory notes.

Tabled paper: Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021, explanatory notes to Hon. Cameron Dick's amendments: erratum [\[705\]](#).

I thank each of the organisations and individuals who provided written submissions to the committee regarding various aspects of the proposed legislation. I especially acknowledge those individuals who gave up their time to appear before the committee to answer questions and share their positions on the bill. Organisations that provided representatives for the public hearing included the

Queensland Law Society, Together Queensland, Consult Australia, Engineers Australia, the Queensland Country Press Association, the Australian Medical Association of Queensland, the Professional Tattooing Association and the Australian Tattooists Guild. As members will see from this list, the bill has had interest from an extremely wide range of parties. I place on the record my thanks to officials from within Queensland Treasury; the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning; the Queensland Police Service; Queensland Health; and the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel for the work they have done to support the legislative process.

This bill is important to Queensland. All Queenslanders know that when it came to the health challenge of COVID-19 the Palaszczuk Labor government kept us safe. Because of that strong health response we have been able to focus on getting our economy going earlier and more strongly than other states, territories and countries. To make that happen we have invested very heavily in the economy with more than \$11 billion, including \$1.2 billion in supporting the health system, \$1 billion in payroll tax and other relief for small business, \$1 billion in jobs support loans, \$400 million in household utility bill relief and \$200 million in business adaptation grants.

Our investment is equivalent to 2.2 per cent of the size of the Queensland economy. In contrast, states such as the Liberal state of New South Wales are failing to invest as much as we have. As the New South Wales budget papers show, an amount of only 1.9 per cent of their gross state product is dedicated to direct COVID stimulus and support. As a result, New South Wales has seen a slower recovery, with 33,000 fewer jobs now than before the pandemic. In contrast, Queensland has 55,000 more jobs.

As we said during the election campaign, our new commitments would be funded from borrowings. As we said during the election campaign, the Queensland budget would go into deficit so that Queensland people could stay afloat. As we said during the election campaign, borrowings would rise over the forward estimates to spare Queenslanders from increased taxes or savage cuts to services. As our budget makes clear, borrowings are affordable, particularly in the context of the lower interest rates available globally. This is also the position of the Morrison government.

However, unlike the Morrison government, we are not going to ignore fiscal responsibility and sustainability. We are not going to project never-ending deficits with no plan to address them. Unlike the Morrison government, we are not going to borrow money simply to give it to high income earners. We are going to ensure that the budget is responsible and sustainable, and focuses on the frontline services on which Queenslanders rely. That is what this bill does. It aims to increase the efficiency of government by reducing the number of statutory authorities, improving the way that fees and charges are set and reducing the cost of government advertising. In doing so, the bill secures \$3 million in direct savings.

The bill also reduces debt. By establishing a new structure for the Titles Registry, the bill helps the state to secure the full value of that function on our balance sheet. This measure will improve the net debt position of the state and reduce our debt burden. By placing the Titles Registry and other assets in the Future Fund, we will receive recognition of their values from ratings agencies while keeping assets in public hands. This is important because, according to ratings agency S&P Global, Queensland's credit rating is the strongest of any state.

As I said in budget estimates last year, under the Palaszczuk government Queensland is at the top of the tree and we intend to stay there. I encourage members to look at what is happening in other states. Victoria and New South Wales have already suffered credit rating downgrades and the Commonwealth is on a negative outlook. Of the major jurisdictions, only Queensland has kept its secure position. Queensland's fiscal strength under Labor contrasts sharply with its weakness under the Newman LNP government when our state was put on a negative outlook by Moody's after the LNP's first budget in 2012. That was a black mark on Queensland's credit rating, but can members guess which government got it removed? It was the Palaszczuk Labor government!

Let us be clear for the record: in the last decade the only material change to Queensland's credit rating occurred when the member for Clayfield was the Treasurer in the LNP Newman government and Queensland was put on a negative outlook. Our stability was restored only by the hard work of the Palaszczuk Labor government. One could not get a clearer contrast between the Newman LNP government and the Palaszczuk Labor government. For all of the cuts and the chaos, the commission of inquiry and the thousands of lives ruined by their austerity policies—let me say that again—for all of the LNP's cuts and chaos, the commission of inquiry and the thousands of lives ruined by their austerity policies—for all of that—the LNP delivered a credit rating negative outlook for Queensland.

Not only did our government avoid a deterioration in Queensland's credit metrics; the Palaszczuk Labor government removed the member for Clayfield's black mark. The Palaszczuk Labor government has rebuilt Queensland's fiscal capability, restored our credit metrics and kept them strong. We have steadied the fiscal ship despite a pandemic, despite massive outlays to support the economy and through a massive restoration of frontline services and infrastructure.

I had the misfortune to read the statement of reservation by the LNP members of the committee. It is a rambling and embarrassing night-before-the-exam effort that would not pass a plagiarism detector. This statement is so bereft of original insight that fully one-third of it is liberally borrowed block quotes. Those opposite should be grateful that the economic Titans they have appointed to the committee have such large signatures because that is the only way their dissenting report squeaked it to three pages. Before their report ran out of steam, the members for Mermaid Beach—he was somebody once but look at what he has become—the member for Coomera and the member for Ninderry did sneak in a few zingers. None of them landed, of course, but it is worth putting them beyond doubt. The statement of reservation claims—

The Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021 may have the most misleading title to ever pass through this Parliament.

That is a bold claim for the LNP when their own so-called Fiscal Repair Amendment Act 2012 still stains the parliamentary record. The LNP's alleged 'repair' bill increased taxes on housing, pared back the eligibility for the first home owner grant, abolished the Training Ombudsman, abolished the Queensland Liquor and Gaming Commission and was rolled into cognate debate with the Newman government's horror 2012 budget, which included the sacking of 14,000 hardworking Queenslanders. That is what fiscal repair looks like to the LNP.

When the dissenting committee members lazily lob up the line, 'There is no real debt reduction proposed nor is there any significant savings to be identified', what is the LNP really asking for? Where are they finding efficiencies instead of cutting? Why are they not sacking workers? Why are they not selling assets? One would have thought that, at the start of this term, with an election more than 3½ years away, on a bill focused on sustainable public finances, the LNP might have for a moment thought to be bipartisan in their contribution to reduce debt and deliver savings. However, on a moment's reflection I see it would have been naive to think that; when I think about who the LNP are and what they want to do to Queensland it is no surprise at all. Let us be clear: the LNP do not like governments that make sensible savings. The LNP hate it. When they say they want savings, what they mean is they want cuts.

Everybody knows what would happen if the LNP ever got back into power in Queensland. They would call up Peter Costello, Joe Hockey or some other Liberal has-been to run another fake commission of audit and away they would go. The LNP's record once again: 14,000 Queensland workers sacked; 4,400 health workers sacked, including 1,800 nurses and midwives; and cuts to employment programs, grants to community organisations and infrastructure funding. Everything they did before they would do again, as sure as I am standing in the parliament today.

The Newman LNP government claimed that they did all those terrible things because it was about the money. It was never about the money. If they needed the money, why did they cut stamp duty by \$500 million before they even issued their first budget? It was about the LNP's vindictive hatred of public services and their determination to destroy the services that ordinary Queenslanders rely upon—for the benefit of the member for Chatsworth, ordinary Queenslanders who live in electorates like Woodridge. I will fight for them every single day.

The people of Queensland wised up to the LNP. They worked them out and they voted them out. Our government is not going to let the LNP say 'savings' and deliver mass sackings ever again. We are not going to let them twist and pervert the meaning of the word 'savings' to fit their ideological agenda to destroy public services in this state. This bill and our government's plan for savings make it clear that the budget can be made sustainable without cuts. In fact, it means the opposite. Making responsible savings means that we have more money for services.

We see in the LNP committee members' statement of reservation their contempt for the improvements we are making to the Titles Registry. Again, it would have been naive to expect that the LNP would have seen this reform on its merits because we all know that the LNP want to privatise every public asset in the state. Once again, despite what they have said, the LNP's privatisation agenda was never about the money. Why would you want to sell a business that was making money and delivering dividends to the Treasury? I will tell you why. The LNP wanted to sell these assets because they do not believe in public ownership. Even though it makes money and reduces the need for taxes, the LNP still

hate it. They would rather give up the money for the taxpayer so that they could line the pockets of the LNP donor class—the consultants, the stockbrokers and the spivs. That is why they inflated Queensland's debt figures by always incorporating debts held by government owned corporations, even though other LNP governments do not. They include the value of debt held by government owned corporations to advance their ideological argument for asset sales. That is what they want to do to the Titles Registry. They want to sell it off. That is why LNP committee members cast doubt on the valuation of Queensland's Titles Registry, given that the registries in New South Wales and Victoria were worth up to \$1.5 billion less before they were privatised.

The LNP has learned nothing about the folly of asset sales and the folly of asset sales during an economic crisis driven by a pandemic. If the superior value of Queensland's Titles Registry proves one thing, it is that if an asset looks worth privatising then it is worth keeping in the hands of Queenslanders. Of course the LNP would oppose this bill, because it will make asset sales much harder for the LNP. This bill will ensure that the Queensland taxpayer enjoys the full asset value of the Titles Registry while retaining it in public ownership. This bill will make crystal clear, in words that even the LNP could understand, that the Titles Registry does not need to be sold and should be retained in public hands.

If the LNP want to be seriously considered as the alternative government of this state, the first thing they should do today is support this bill. They should support this bill as it is about genuine savings. The second thing they should do in the course of this debate—a more important move, in my opinion—is get their leader to stand up and say in the parliament that the Newman LNP government was wrong. It was wrong to sack 14,000 Queensland workers. It was wrong to sack 4,400 health workers, including 1,800 nurses and midwives. It was wrong to cut the infrastructure spend and to brag about it in their budget papers. It was wrong to oversee a downgrade to our credit outlook. It was wrong to sell assets and it was wrong to try and sell more, wasting more public money on the go. It was wrong to camouflage brutal cuts by pretending they were savings. The Leader of the Opposition ought to stand up and admit these fundamental errors. He ought to apologise for the cuts that he supported, and the suffering he caused to Queenslanders, under the guise of savings.

I will now turn to the substance of the bill, which, as the committee's report highlights, has several related objectives: first, to support the state's contribution to the Queensland Future (Debt Retirement) Fund, established under the Queensland Future Fund Act 2020, by providing for the transfer of the Queensland Titles Registry to a newly formed company that will be contributed to a trust within the Debt Retirement Fund structure; second, to introduce a fee unit model to streamline the annual process of indexing regulatory fees; third, to abolish Building Queensland and the Building Queensland board, and integrate Building Queensland's staff, assets, records, resources and liabilities into the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning; fourth, to change the governance structure of the National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland by abolishing the board and appointing the insurance commissioner as chief executive officer responsible for the management of the National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland; fifth, to repeal the Public Safety Business Agency Act 2014 so that machinery-of-government changes can reintegrate the Public Safety Business Agency into public safety entities including Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and the Queensland Police Service; sixth, to abolish the Queensland Productivity Commission and integrate its functions into Queensland Treasury and the Queensland Competition Authority; seventh, to mandate that legislation that requires or authorises print advertising or publication by government agencies shall be satisfied by online advertising or publication, subject to a range of appropriate exemptions; and eighth, to make technical amendments to the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019 to clarify head-of-power issues and to improve the operation of proposed regulations and requirements for the use or provision of tattoo ink, noting I will be moving amendments during consideration in detail to remove the provisions relating to the requirement to have a compliant analysis certificate for the supply or use of a tattoo ink.

I am pleased that the committee has recommended that the bill be passed by the parliament. As members would be well aware, the Queensland government announced in early July 2020 the implementation of a savings and debt plan to support economic recovery. This plan had a target of achieving \$3 billion in savings over four years. The suite of initiatives announced were all about focusing on government's core business, delivering essential government services and the recovery of the Queensland economy, particularly sustaining, supporting and creating jobs. It also, importantly, allows a fairer reflection of our balance sheet and debt profile through the creation of the Debt Retirement Fund within the Queensland Future Fund.

Key measures in the plan include: maintaining non-frontline Public Service positions within approved caps; reinforcing frontline services; placing a six-month hold on non-essential new ICT projects; reducing senior executive service roles through natural attrition; reducing the use of external

consultancies and contractors; and assessing agency functions and activities to ensure they are fit for purpose. These savings will be achieved without cutting frontline services, sacking public servants or selling Queensland assets.

Work on the program commenced immediately and was further detailed as part of the COVID-19 Economic and Fiscal Review released in September. By December, following the state election, the government was able to detail in the 2020-21 state budget that \$367 million in savings had already been achieved, including through reductions in agency expenditure on travel, contractors and consultants, and other supplies and services. Of this, \$352.2 million was in 2020-21, representing 47 per cent of the 2020-21 target. A further update on this program will be provided when the 2021-22 state budget is presented to parliament in mid-June.

On top of this \$367 million in savings, the measures outlined in this bill seek to deliver further savings of up to \$3 million in direct savings each year and significant further indirect savings. Importantly, the changes will also set a foundation for further reform to the Public Service to deliver ongoing savings.

On the debt reduction side, the bill we are debating today continues to support the government's action taken to establish a Queensland Future Fund. The bill provides for the transfer of functions, assets, liabilities and employees from Queensland Titles Registry to a new entity which will be contributed to a QIC managed investment trust to seed the Debt Retirement Fund. Modelled off similar funds in New South Wales and Quebec, the Debt Retirement Fund will be structured to offset debt when credit agencies assess Queensland's debt burden for ratings purposes. The contribution of over \$5 billion in investments into the Debt Retirement Fund, including the Queensland Titles Registry, will improve our debt-to-revenue ratio by approximately nine per cent when ratings agencies assess Queensland's debt burden for ratings purposes.

Investments in scope for contribution to seed the fund by 30 June 2021 also include \$1 billion from the defined benefit fund and other investments. The defined benefit scheme remains fully funded and Queensland remains the only state that has a fully funded defined benefit scheme. The Queensland Future Fund is a clear demonstration to the ratings agencies that Queensland has a measured and responsible plan to manage state debt. The Queensland Future Fund Act ensures that any investments and returns in the fund can only be used to reduce the state's debt.

The bill abolishes the Queensland Productivity Commission and enables the integration of the commission's economic policy experts into the new Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction within Queensland Treasury. The new office will provide an enhanced focus on productivity and regulatory reform as part of the government's economic recovery policies. The new office will combine an in-depth and longer term focus with the core Queensland Treasury capability of expert economic policy advice and the development of innovative policy solutions.

The bill also changes the governance structure of the National Injury Insurance Agency Queensland by amending the National Injury Insurance Scheme (Queensland) Act 2016 to abolish the board of the agency and reassign the board's functions to the Insurance Commissioner. Upon commencement of the bill, the Insurance Commissioner, who oversees Queensland's compulsory third-party insurance scheme, will become the chief executive officer, with future appointments to the role to be made by the Governor in Council.

These structural changes to the statutory body overseeing the National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland can be implemented without compromising the treatment, care and support services provided to NIISQ participants or infringing on their existing rights and entitlements. The savings and efficiencies can be achieved while ensuring NIISQ remains focused on helping seriously injured people to recover, as much as possible, from the trauma and debilitating effects of motor vehicle accidents.

This bill also repeals the Building Queensland Act 2015, giving effect to the government's decision to abolish Building Queensland and the board and to integrate Building Queensland's functions, staff, assets and resources into the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning. Announced as part of the COVID-19 Fiscal and Economic Review, integrating Building Queensland into central government provides a more coordinated strategic infrastructure advisory and assurance function within government, while continuing to support robust, evidence based investment decisions.

The Queensland government remains deeply committed to thorough infrastructure assessment and good quality decision-making. The Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning will provide a centralised and expert function to help achieve robust infrastructure assessment that supports making the right investment decisions at the right time. The government wishes to acknowledge and thank Building Queensland staff for their contribution to

rigorous infrastructure decision-making in Queensland, which will now continue in the department, in particular the positive impact of Building Queensland's stewardship of infrastructure proposal development.

This bill provides a clear opportunity to further enhance efficiency and effectiveness of government infrastructure planning, assessment and investment. Combining the expert knowledge and capabilities of Building Queensland with the existing infrastructure planning and strategy functions of the Deputy Premier's department will support good investment decisions and optimise long-term infrastructure outcomes.

This bill contains a number of elements that will lead to savings and to more efficient ways of doing business. A prime example is the repeal of the Public Safety Business Agency Act 2014 which enables machinery of government changes to fully integrate the Public Safety Business Agency, PSBA, into the Queensland Police Service, the QPS, and the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, the QFES. There are multiple benefits for these frontline agencies. Reintegrating the functions of the PSBA into these departments eliminates the waste created through a duplication of services and prevents escalating costs by streamlining business processes. I can report that, even as these agencies prepare for the transition of PSBA functions, they are already benefiting from the changes that are about to come. PSBA staff are now fully embedded into these agencies through the formation of discrete QFES and QPS employee groups. Future planning is already underway, including reviews of business functions, to improve efficiencies and realignment of FTE positions to promote service capabilities.

Our frontline agencies play a critical role in our communities. Our frontline workers undertake tasks and accept responsibilities that can be difficult, demanding and sometimes dangerous. They work within complex environments. These workers deserve our support. This bill enhances the efficiencies and effectiveness of frontline agencies and, as a consequence, will assist police, firefighters and other emergency services personnel in the performance of their duties—to the benefit of all Queenslanders.

The bill also amends the Financial Accountability Act 2009 to provide that where a state law requires or authorises government agencies to publish information in print, this is now satisfied by publishing online. The practical effect is that government agencies must publish certain information online rather than in print. This is a modernisation, cost-saving and red-tape reduction measure. These amendments are subject to appropriate exemptions. Importantly, one such exemption is that print publication or advertising can continue to take place in regional print newspapers. This reflects the special role that print newspapers play in regional Queensland communities. The non-government statement of reservation to the EGC report in respect of the online publication aspects of the bill said—

The Treasurer stated several locations that no longer had a newspaper in print. This was his supposed justification for government announcements to no longer be published in print.

This statement is incorrect. I said—

... in many parts of Queensland, people now have no alternative. News Corporation, for example, made the decision to cease the publication of daily newspapers in Mackay, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Bundaberg and on the Fraser Coast. Thousands of Queenslanders now have no daily newspaper available to them ...

The statement of reservation also relied on the comments of the Queensland Country Press Association, which it quoted as follows—

The entire purpose of public notices regarding important decisions made by governments or mining companies or developers that impact the lives of ordinary citizens is that those notices need to be published in a public space.

The online publication measure does not apply to mining companies or developers, only to government entities. In respect of lease applications by mining companies, the newspaper notice requirements in the Mineral Resources Act 1989 are that the lease applicant places a newspaper notice about the proposed mining lease.

Public notices of a property development application under the Planning Act 2016 and the Development Assessment Rules are made by the applicant entity applying for development approval or their assessment manager. Under planning law, they will continue to be published in printed newspapers where they are available. Where not available in printed copy, these are required to be in an online newspaper. To reflect the unique role which local print newspapers play in regional communities, notices required to be placed by government will continue to be placed in regional print newspapers at the discretion of the government entity involved.

The bill includes amendments to the Acts Interpretation Act 1954 to introduce a fee unit model which will streamline the annual process of indexing regulatory fees and reduce administrative inefficiencies for agencies and the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel. Government indexation seeks to maintain the value of the fee over time relative to the anticipated increase in

associated costs. The principles for fees and charges policy outlines the government's indexation policy and applies to fees set by agencies—that is, departments and statutory bodies—except for specified exceptions.

Currently, annual indexation requires agencies to amend hundreds of pages of regulation each year to reflect the new dollar value of their fees. This process is resource intensive, taking up to three months for some agencies to implement these changes for hundreds of fees and charges. Additionally, associated time is required each year for the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel to prepare the necessary fee regulations. The fee unit model will streamline this annual process providing for indexation of the fee unit rather than the amendment of hundreds of pages of regulation.

Under this legislation, from 1 January 2022 all in scope agencies will be required by government policy to display their regulated fees as a fee unit, not a dollar amount, unless they have received an exemption. This will require all agencies with regulated fees to amend their relevant regulations to reflect the change ready for when the next fee indexation is due to occur, being 1 July 2022 for most agencies, or, for those with an alternative indexation date, their first occurrence post 1 July 2022. Removing these administrative inefficiencies for agencies and for the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel will realise productivity gains across government, as staffing effort can be redirected to focus on service delivery and higher value priorities.

In addition to savings measures, the bill also advances a key initiative of the government's plan to responsibly manage state debt. The bill provides the mechanism for the Queensland Titles Registry to be included in the first Queensland Future Fund, the Debt Retirement Fund, which will be structured so that credit ratings agencies recognise the value of contributions to the fund as an offset to state debt for ratings purposes.

The Palaszczuk government has already announced a \$5 billion contribution to the Debt Retirement Fund by 30 June 2021, which includes a preliminary valuation of \$4.2 billion for the Titles Registry. The bill provides for the transfer of functions, assets, liabilities and employees from the Titles Registry to Registry Co, the new titles registry operator, owned by the state through the Queensland Future Fund structure.

In the course of the committee process, the Clerk of the Parliament, on behalf of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, requested that an amendment to the Property Law Act be considered as part of this bill. This amendment would provide for all copies of acts of parliament to be sent directly to the State Archive, in place of the existing arrangements that copies of acts be registered with the Titles Registry. I thank the Clerk for this suggestion. As the object of the bill is simply to allow for the transfer of Titles Registry functions to Registry Co, in the current form, any amendment to Titles Registry functions will not be progressed as part of this bill. Any changes to the arrangements for the Titles Registry to retain copies of acts of parliament may be considered as part of any future review of the Property Law Act.

I acknowledge the feedback that stakeholders have provided in relation to the manufacture or supply of tattoo inks to have a compliant analysis certificate before supplying a tattoo ink. This will be addressed by the health minister in her contribution. I commend the bill to the House.

(Time expired)

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Before I call the member for Kawana, I will remind the House of the following members who were issued a warning earlier this morning until midday.

Mr Bleijie: That's me.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are correct, member for Kawana. It does include yourself. The members for Mudgeeraba, Scenic Rim, Kawana, Gregory, Nanango and Broadwater are still issued with warnings under the standing orders.

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (11.49 am): The Treasurer ran out of time and did not get to all his facts and figures because he made a political speech in the first half of his diatribe with respect to this bill. The shadow Treasurer, Mr Janetzki, is unwell today. He will be delivering his response at some stage. Hopefully tomorrow he will back in the House and well enough. In the meantime we will let the debate proceed.

There are 264 pages in a bill called the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill. I put it to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that there is not too much debt reduction in this bill and there are very minimal savings. The Treasurer in his political diatribe offered a series of questions that members ought to ask themselves. I have developed my own set of questions that the Treasurer should answer. He picks dates very carefully. When he talks about asset sales and all of that sort of thing, he fails to mention what happened between 2009 and 2012.

There are a lot of differences between this Treasurer and me. One of the fundamental differences is that he has sat around a cabinet table that actually sold Queensland assets. He sat around a cabinet table that went to an election saying that there were going to be no asset sales and then he sat around a cabinet table that actually sold Queensland assets, but he conveniently forgets the period when he sat around the Bligh cabinet table between 2009 and 2012.

He talks about the loss of the AAA credit rating. He even mentioned the AAA credit rating and made allegations about certain downgrades between 2012 and 2015. What he again failed to mention was that Queensland lost its AAA credit rating in 2009 when he sat around the Bligh cabinet table. It was because of the Labor economic mismanagement that Labor lost the AAA credit rating. With this bill he is trying to prop up the balance sheet which has been severely negatively impacted by Labor government policies for the last six years. He is trying to prop up the balance sheet for the ratings agencies. He is trying to get the AAA credit rating back by doing some dodgy accounting and a con job. That is what this bill is about. It is not a debt reduction and savings plan; it is a con job on the people of Queensland.

As he said, he wanted the LNP to give bipartisan support to this bill. Of course he wanted that because Queenslanders know that finances and the economy run a lot better under an LNP government than under a Labor government. He wanted the LNP endorsement of his bill, but Queenslanders see through it. Queenslanders see that this is nothing more than tricky accounting work. It is nothing more than a con job and it will not reduce debt.

How on earth can this bill reduce debt when he went to the election saying that the debt is going to increase by this amount and then straight after the election and the government was returned we know that debt in the forward estimates is going to be over \$130 billion? He would have people believe that this bill is going to reduce debt. He went to the election promising that debt would only increase slightly but then we have had this blowout—nearly \$28 billion on top of what they said. They misled Queenslanders.

This bill misleads Queenslanders. He talks about savings. I have read the 264 pages of this bill. Where are the savings? The only mention of savings is in the committee report where the Deputy Under Treasurer said, 'Yes, we have found some modest savings'—\$3 million out of \$3 billion promised! The Treasurer said we are going to have \$3 billion worth of savings. When asked where the savings are at in this phase of the debt reduction and savings plan, we have identified a modest \$3 million. This is Labor economics 101—they have achieved \$3 million in savings.

We are not going to endorse this bill today. We are not going to support this con job of a debt reduction and savings plan because it does neither. It neither reduces debt nor saves Queensland taxpayers any money. In consideration in detail I will be moving an amendment to the title of this bill so Queenslanders can be assured of what this bill means and what it actually does. I will be moving that the bill be renamed the 'Debt Non-Reduction and Minimal Savings Bill' because that is what it does. Bill titles should reflect what they do. This is a minimal savings bill and a debt non-reduction bill. That is what it does. He can wave the 264 pages around all he wants.

The Treasurer posed some questions that he said members in this House should answer. Here are some questions to the Treasurer that he should answer. Why did he sit around the cabinet table in 2009 and vote to sell Queensland assets? If he wants to talk about selling assets, he voted to sell assets when he sat around the cabinet table. What about the health crisis we have at the moment? He sat around the cabinet table that said Queensland Health is a basket case and Anna Bligh promised to split it into two.

Mr Nicholls: Take a meat axe to it.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. They were going to take an axe to Queensland Health. This Treasurer sat around that cabinet table that said Queensland Health was a basket case and they were going to take an axe to it. Then he wants to lecture people about health. He cannot because his record is clear: the fake Tahitian prince and not paying nurses and doctors. That is the record of the Labor Party. If he wants to ask questions, how about answering a few questions of his own?

Mr Nicholls: That was their debt reduction plan.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. That was their debt reduction plan. Here are some questions the Treasurer ought to answer. Was it wrong not to know the debt level when he became Treasurer? Was it wrong to lose the AAA credit rating? Was it wrong to hide the SPER debt which he did when he was the Attorney-General? He hid the SPER debt from Queenslanders. Was it wrong to hide the SPER debt? Was it wrong to sell assets between 2009 and 2012 as he did when in government? Was it wrong to lock out his department from his office with the electronic buzz code required to get into his office?

Was it wrong that they had the fake Tahitian prince ripping off Queenslanders? Was it wrong not to pay doctors and nurses what was owed to them? Was it wrong to mislead Queenslanders about the debt level after the election?

The answer to all of those questions is, of course, yes. It was wrong for the Treasurer and the Premier to look Queenslanders in the eye and say, 'The debt level will rise by this much,' and then get elected and hit Queensland taxpayers with \$28 billion in additional debt. That is his legacy. He may want to wipe that legacy from the Bligh era. He should be so ashamed of that legacy. I can understand why he wants to wipe it.

He talks about red tape in the bill. Labor do not know how to reduce red tape; they create red tape and they create green tape. When we were elected in 2012 we got rid of the sustainability declarations. We got rid of 20 per cent of property law paperwork—we got rid of 20 per cent of the paperwork to buy and sell property in Queensland. We got rid of 3,000 directors' liabilities to make sure people can invest in Queensland.

Ms Grace: 14,000 public servants!

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. We made the lowest premium and best workers compensation scheme in the nation which this minister now copies.

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members to my right!

Mr BLEIJIE: That is the fact of the matter and the minister cannot deny it. We substantially reduced red tape in the liquor industry. Community liquor permits were abolished. We reduce red tape; the only thing Labor know how to do is increase red tape and increase green tape. Take it with a grain of salt whenever a Labor treasurer gets up and says, 'We're going to look at red tape,' because that means that red tape is going to increase, and when red tape increases it increases the cost to do business in Queensland. It increases taxation costs in Queensland. That is the legacy of this Treasurer.


He would have us forget all of his failures when he sat around the Bligh cabinet table, but we will ensure Queenslanders know the legacy of this Treasurer. We will ensure that Queenslanders know that this bill has nothing in it about debt reduction. Debt has increased. How on earth can they reduce debt? All he is doing is trying to plead with and con the ratings agencies into giving our AAA credit rating back. The ratings agencies will not be conned. Madam Deputy Speaker, if I had more time I would get to elements contained in the legislation, but I have responded to the diatribe of this Treasurer—the worst treasurer this state has ever seen.

(Time expired)

Debate, on motion of Mr Bleijie, adjourned.

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING BILL

Message from Deputy Governor

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (12.00 pm): I present a message from Her Excellency the Deputy Governor.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): The message from Her Excellency the Deputy Governor recommends the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING BILL 2021

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, CATHERINE ENA HOLMES AC, Deputy Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intitled—


A Bill for an Act about access to voluntary assisted dying and related matters, and to amend this Act, the Coroners Act 2003, the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000, the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019 and the Powers of Attorney Act 1998 for particular purposes

DEPUTY GOVERNOR

Date: 25 May 2021

Tabled paper: Message, dated 25 May 2021, from Her Excellency the Deputy Governor recommending the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 [\[706\]](#).

Introduction

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (12.00 pm): I present a bill for an act about access to voluntary assisted dying and related matters, and to amend this act, the Coroners Act 2003, the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000, the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019 and the Powers of Attorney Act 1998 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Health and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 [\[707\]](#).

Tabled paper: Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021, explanatory notes [\[708\]](#).

Tabled paper: Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[709\]](#).

Today I take enormous pride, as the Premier of Queensland, in introducing the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 into this House. This bill is fundamentally about people—people who are going through the deeply personal experience of dealing with dying and death and their loved ones who are supporting them through what is a very difficult time. The bill implements my government's commitment to introduce a bill into parliament to give people the choice of voluntary assisted dying in Queensland.

I have travelled around Queensland and listened to people's views on this issue. In the past year I have had the very real and personal experience of losing both my Nana and my Uncle Joe. This has caused me to reflect long and hard on a lot of things, and I honestly feel that the time is right for this bill. Thousands of families across Queensland have had similar experiences to mine. I say to everyone across Queensland that we have listened and today we act.

It is a bill about empowerment. It is about giving people choice. It is about giving people autonomy to make their own decisions about their end of life. Most importantly, it is about compassion in the face of suffering, and it is about Queenslanders supporting individuals to make these choices for themselves. Each year many Queenslanders die of a life-limiting condition. Once one of our fellow Queenslanders reaches the point where their death is inevitable and imminent and their suffering is intolerable they deserve choice about how, when and where they die. The bill introduced today achieves this.

This bill does not detract in any way from our obligation to provide caring and comprehensive palliative care. My government is committed to high-quality palliative care and wants to ensure that people continue to receive the compassionate care they need at the end stages of life. This is why we have committed an additional \$171 million to 2025-26 to palliative care. Voluntary assisted dying is not a substitute for palliative care, but for some Queenslanders suffering from a life-limiting condition palliative care is unable to effectively manage their pain, symptoms or suffering. This bill is about offering an additional and complementary end-of-life option.

High-quality palliative care is a service every Queenslanders should expect, and every effort should be made to ensure all Queenslanders have access to this care if and when they need it. For people whose suffering is intolerable and they wish to hasten their death, the only options currently available are to refuse medical treatment, refuse food or hydration, palliative sedation or suicide. Under the current legal framework aiding or counselling another person to commit suicide is unlawful under the Criminal Code. It is also a crime to unlawfully kill a person, even if the person consents. Consequently, loved ones are legally unable to assist a person in Queensland to end their life. This takes an inevitable toll on all involved—the individual, their loved ones and the health practitioners who are supporting them.

Legalising voluntary assisted dying in Queensland will alter the operation of the Criminal Code in defined circumstances, providing people with access to more options at the end of life. This will afford them dignity by empowering them to exercise greater choice in the timing and manner of their death. Across Australia and across the world there is growing community support for, and acceptance of, voluntary assisted dying. A number of other Australian jurisdictions have enacted voluntary assisted dying legislation in recent years: Victoria's scheme has been operational for nearly two years; Western Australia's scheme will commence in the middle of this year; and Tasmania has just passed their End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act, which will commence in 18 months. Legislation is also currently before the South Australian parliament.

Queensland has not rushed into this decision. To get us to this point, where we are introducing a bill about voluntary assisted dying, the issue has been considered extensively. The former health committee considered voluntary assisted dying as part of its wideranging inquiry into aged care, end-of-life and palliative care and voluntary assisted dying between November 2018 and March 2020.

The committee accepted almost 5,000 written submissions as part of its inquiry, which just shows the extent of public interest in this issue. No-one could say they have not had the opportunity to be heard. The committee conducted 34 public and private hearings and briefings for that inquiry and heard evidence directly from 502 witnesses. These included public hearings in regional centres along the state's east coast as well as Mount Isa, Longreach, Mossman and Palm Island.

In March last year the committee tabled its report on voluntary assisted dying and made 21 recommendations. The key recommendation was that the Queensland government introduce a legislative scheme for voluntary assisted dying. In order to make sure that the basis for the scheme is robust, the Queensland government asked the Attorney-General to refer the preparation of an appropriate legislative scheme for voluntary assisted dying to the Queensland Law Reform Commission in May last year.

The commission is an independent statutory body. Its role is to review areas of Queensland law referred to it by the Attorney-General. The commission plays a very important role, and its members and secretariat looked at the issues thoroughly and objectively. In developing the legislation the commission was also asked to consider a range of relevant issues, such as: who should be eligible; what the process for accessing voluntary assisted dying should be; and the inclusion of appropriate safeguards and protections. The commission has undertaken an extensive 12-month review. In October last year the commission published a consultation paper and called for submissions. In total, 126 submissions were received from a range of stakeholders and considered in detail.

On 10 May the commission submitted report No. 79, *A legal framework for voluntary assisted dying*, to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, which included a draft bill. Last week on 18 May the Attorney-General tabled the commission's report and report summary in this House. The report is almost 900 pages in length, reflecting the substantial number of complex issues the commission needed to consider in recommending the best legal framework for people who are suffering and dying to choose the manner and timing of their death in Queensland.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the commission members and secretariat for undertaking this significant review and delivering such a comprehensive report. You only have to look at the report to see how much effort and expertise has gone into developing this scheme for Queensland. Each aspect of the bill has been justified in detail. I urge Queenslanders to take the time to view the report and see the work that has gone into the bill.

In developing the best scheme for Queensland, the commission considered the legislation that has been developed in other jurisdictions. The report details laws in other places and how they are working in practice in Victoria. The commission recognised the desirability of achieving reasonable consistency with other jurisdictions but was focused on best serving the needs of the Queensland community and our unique conditions, including geography, population diversity and access to health care and practitioners in rural and remote areas. The commission has aimed to develop a draft law for Queensland that is compassionate, safe, practical and accessible.

The bill being introduced to the House reflects each of the components of the bill as prepared by the commission, except for the period of time before the scheme commences. The commission proposed that the scheme commence 18 months after assent of the bill. However, the bill proposed today outlines the scheme commencement after a period of 15 months. This timing reflects the public commitments given by my government that we would commence such a scheme, if passed by parliament, on 1 January 2023. I will now outline some of the key features of this bill.

The bill takes care to provide wideranging safeguards throughout the scheme to ensure the process is accessed only by persons who have been assessed as eligible and to protect vulnerable people from coercion and exploitation. This includes strict eligibility criteria. Voluntary assisted dying laws allow eligible people who are dying to choose the timing and circumstances of their death. It gives an option that can limit suffering at the end of life. It is not a way to end life for those who are not dying.

To be eligible under the draft Queensland law, the person must have been diagnosed with a disease, illness or medical condition that is advanced, is progressive and will cause death. The person's condition must also be expected to cause death within a 12-month time frame and be causing suffering that the person considers to be intolerable. The time frame of 12 months makes it clear that voluntary assisted dying is an option only for those who are at the end of their life. The scheme will be limited to adults. There will also be a residency requirement to ensure Queenslanders, first and foremost, can access the scheme.

A key element of the eligibility criteria is that the person must have decision-making capacity for voluntary assisted dying at the time of administering the substance. Their decision-making capacity is assessed at multiple stages throughout the process. This concept of 'decision-making capacity' is not unknown in Queensland law, and it applies in a variety of other areas, such as will making. The person must also be assessed as acting voluntarily and without coercion. A person is eligible only if they satisfy each element of these eligibility criteria.

To avoid any doubt, the bill provides that a person is not eligible for voluntary assisted dying only because the person has a disability or mental illness. This is an important safeguard. However, the bill also provides that such a person may be eligible if they meet all elements of the eligibility criteria. This makes it clear that people who have a disability or mental illness have the same rights and protections as other members of the community and should not be denied access to voluntary assisted dying if they meet the eligibility criteria.

Another key safeguard of the bill is that to access voluntary assisted dying a person must complete a staged request and assessment process. This ensures that the person's decision is enduring in nature. The person must be assessed against the strict eligibility criteria by two suitably qualified and trained doctors. Practitioners are not eligible to act as a person's doctor if they are a family member of the person or may benefit financially or in any other material way from the person's death. The doctors must independently form a view about whether the person meets the criteria, including whether they consider the person has decision-making capacity and is acting voluntarily and without coercion. If either doctor is unsure about whether the person has decision-making capacity or whether they are acting voluntarily and without coercion, the doctor must refer them to another practitioner with the appropriate skills and training to make a determination.

The person must make three separate requests for access to voluntary assisted dying. The requests must be clear and unambiguous. The second request must be made in writing and signed in the presence of two witnesses. To be eligible as a witness, a person must be an adult and cannot be a beneficiary under the will of the person making the request or stand to benefit financially or in any other material way from the death of the person. If the person is assessed as meeting the eligibility criteria, both doctors must provide the person with information, including about: their diagnosis and prognosis; the treatment options available; the palliative care and treatment options available; details of the voluntary assisted dying process; and that, at any time, they may decide not to continue with the process. This will ensure the person makes an informed decision about whether voluntary assisted dying is right for them. Requiring both doctors to provide this information ensures the person has multiple opportunities to discuss and develop their understanding of the information. The person must meet a waiting period of at least nine days between their first and final request.

The staged request and assessment process, together with this waiting period, ensures that the person's decision to access voluntary assisted dying is enduring and not a fleeting decision made in a moment of pain or suffering. It ensures the person has had time to reflect on their choices and has given the matter careful consideration. After the person has made their third and final request, the consulting doctor must certify that the request and assessment process has been completed in accordance with the act and that they are satisfied that the person has decision-making capacity and is acting voluntarily and without coercion. There is absolutely no obligation to continue with the process; the person can change their mind at any time.

After the request and assessment process is complete, the person can make an administration decision. Administration of the voluntary assisted dying substance may occur through a person taking the substance themselves, known as self-administration, or by a qualified health practitioner administering the substance, known as practitioner administration. The person is required to make an administration decision in consultation with and on the advice of their coordinating doctor. The commission considered that offering the option of self-administration gives individuals who are suffering and dying autonomy and control over the timing of their death. Self-administration demonstrates that the person is acting voluntarily.

The commission also concluded that practitioner administration should be available in certain circumstances. Practitioner administration may only be chosen if the coordinating doctor advises the person that self-administration is inappropriate, having regard to the person's ability to self-administer, the person's concerns about self-administering and the method that is suitable for them. This approach will allow a person to discuss their wishes and concerns with their doctor and make an informed choice about the method of administration that is best suited to them. This maximises the person's autonomy while ensuring the method is clinically appropriate and consistent with good medical practice.

Additional safeguards apply to practitioner administration. The administering practitioner must only administer the substance in the presence of a witness, and only where the practitioner is satisfied at the time of administration that the person has decision-making capacity and is acting voluntarily and without coercion. After administering the substance, the administering practitioner must certify that the person made a practitioner administration decision and did not revoke the decision, and that they were satisfied the person had decision-making capacity and were acting voluntarily and without coercion.

An administering practitioner may be a doctor who is eligible to act as the person's coordinating doctor, a nurse practitioner or a registered nurse who has practised in the nursing profession for at least five years. To be eligible, the practitioner must have completed training and meet any other requirements set by Queensland Health. This will ensure that administering practitioners have relevant and current experience and expertise. Allowing nurse practitioners and registered nurses to act as an administering practitioner will facilitate access to voluntary assisted dying, particularly for those Queenslanders residing in rural and remote areas where there are fewer medical practitioners. A practitioner will not be eligible to act as an administering practitioner if they are a family member of the person or may benefit financially or in any other material way from the person's death.

Another safeguard included in the scheme is the prohibition on healthcare workers from initiating a discussion with a person about voluntary assisted dying or suggesting voluntary assisted dying to the person. The prohibition applies to anyone who provides health services or professional care services to a person. This is a really important safeguard to ensure that someone in a therapeutic relationship with the person who is likely to be influential and trusted by the person, but may not be clinically skilled or sufficiently qualified to adequately discuss end-of-life options, does not initiate a discussion about voluntary assisted dying. This could include, for example, a personal care worker in an aged-care facility.

A medical practitioner or nurse practitioner may initiate a discussion about voluntary assisted dying if, and only if, at the same time the practitioner also informs the person about the treatment options available to the person and the likely outcomes of that treatment and the palliative care and treatment options available to the person and the likely outcomes of that care and treatment. This approach will protect the vulnerable from being informed about only one option—voluntary assisted dying—while respecting a person's autonomy and right to make informed choices about end of life.

People hold a range of strongly held views about voluntary assisted dying. This includes health practitioners. The bill carefully balances the rights of health practitioners to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief with the rights of the individual to access voluntary assisted dying. No-one will be forced to participate in this process if it does not align with their values or beliefs. We respect in Queensland that people hold a range of views.

The bill provides that registered health practitioners who have a conscientious objection to voluntary assisted dying have the right to refuse to participate in the process. To balance this with people's right to access a lawful end-of-life option, the bill also sets out what an objecting practitioner must do to ensure the person's access is not hindered. A practitioner who conscientiously objects will be required to inform the person of their refusal and the reason for their decision. They must also provide the person with information to assist them in accessing the scheme. Conscientious objection provisions are also included for speech pathologists who are not registered health practitioners but who may play a role in facilitating communication between a health practitioner and a person seeking access to voluntary assisted dying.

The bill also recognises the rights of entities not to participate in the scheme. As we know, many private hospitals and residential aged-care facilities are run by faith based organisations. These organisations have the right to choose whether or not to provide voluntary assisted dying. However, residents or patients of facilities run by private entities should also have a right to access the scheme. The commission has given careful consideration to how best to balance these competing rights and the process that should be followed if a person who is a patient or resident of a private facility wants to access voluntary assisted dying and the entity does not agree.

The bill provides that an entity is not obliged to provide voluntary assisted dying and sets out requirements to ensure that entities do not hinder an individual's access to the scheme for each stage of the process, from requests for information to administration of the substance. This will ensure that everyone involved understands what needs to happen if this situation arises. This is a complex issue requiring careful consideration of competing views and interests. The issue will be closely examined throughout the committee process to ensure that we have this balance right.

Given the significance of this new scheme, the bill provides for the establishment of an independent voluntary assisted dying review board. The board will provide oversight of the scheme to ensure transparency and accountability, and to monitor compliance with the legislation. The board will conduct a retrospective review of each completed voluntary assisted dying request but will not have a role in approving individual requests. This is appropriate to ensure the process is not overly bureaucratic or cumbersome, and that people are not delayed in accessing the scheme by an additional administrative process.

Practitioners participating in the scheme will be required to provide information to the board at various points throughout the process. This will provide an additional safeguard, ensuring thorough documentation and transparency of the process.

The bill also provides for the establishment of a statewide care navigator service. The care navigator service will support the scheme by: providing information, education and support about the process, helping individuals connect with appropriate practitioners and services, and providing holistic advice and follow-up. This will help people and their loved ones to navigate the process at what is a very trying time in their lives.

The bill also includes offence provisions and protections from liability to support the scheme. The commission considered that specific offences should be included in the legislation in order to secure key safeguards, including: to ensure that a request for access to voluntary assisted dying is free from coercion and exploitation, to ensure that a voluntary assisted dying substance is administered only in accordance with an authorisation under the act, and to ensure relevant documentation is provided to the board.

A range of offences are included in the bill to capture unlawful conduct, including: unauthorised administration of a voluntary assisted dying substance, inducing a person to self-administer a voluntary assisted dying substance, and giving the board false or misleading information. These offences will operate alongside existing offences in the Criminal Code to protect the integrity of the scheme.

Protections from liability are included in the bill to give peace of mind to health practitioners and loved ones supporting a person through voluntary assisted dying so that, if they act in accordance with the legislation, they are not subject to civil or criminal liability. The commission considered that this would provide clarity and certainty for those who may act under, or interact with, the legislation.

The commission considered that there is uncertainty and significant concerns around whether providing information and advice about voluntary assisted dying via a carriage service would contravene the Commonwealth Criminal Code. The Commonwealth Criminal Code makes it an offence to use a carriage service such as a telephone, videoconference, email or other form of electronic communication to publish or distribute material that counsels or incites committing, or attempting to commit, suicide. The commission considered that the uncertain application of the Commonwealth law particularly affects individuals who are suffering and dying in regional, rural and remote areas of Queensland and that access to voluntary assisted dying may be greatly impaired if these forms of communication cannot be used to access information and advice.

Given Queensland's geography, it will be difficult for any voluntary assisted dying scheme to ensure equity of access for people in rural and remote areas while the Commonwealth Criminal Code provisions remain in place. Because Commonwealth laws take precedence under section 109 of the Constitution, the only way to definitively resolve this issue is for the Commonwealth to amend the Commonwealth Criminal Code to expressly exclude participation in state government voluntary assisted dying schemes. For this reason, I have written to the Prime Minister requesting the federal government urgently amend the Commonwealth Criminal Code so it does not impede the operation and availability of Queensland's proposed voluntary assisted dying scheme.

In developing this bill, the commission has carefully balanced the right of Queenslanders to access this additional end-of-life option with the need to ensure the bill includes safeguards to protect our most vulnerable. The bill achieves this delicate balance and gives effect to the underlying principle that a voluntary assisted dying scheme gives individuals who are suffering and dying an additional end-of-life choice and enables people to choose the timing and circumstances of their death.

I want to reiterate my public thanks to the commission members and secretariat for their hard work and dedication in producing this bill and their reports, which will ensure that the parliament and Queenslanders are able to give this bill well-informed consideration. Particular thanks must be extended to Justice Applegarth, the chairperson of the commission, who graciously accommodated the time

requests of the government, which I recognise added to an already complex task. I also want to thank officers from the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel who drafted the bill and officers from Queensland Health, Department of Justice and Attorney-General and other agencies who have facilitated the bill's introduction. I want to thank the Deputy Premier, the health minister and the Attorney-General for their support and advocacy. We have worked collaboratively across government on this, reflecting the importance of the issue. I also want to commend my caucus, the government, for the way in which they are dealing with this conscience vote in being very respectful in this debate. I thank each and every one of them.

Facing dying and death as a result of a life-limiting condition is a deeply, deeply personal experience. This bill will elicit strongly held views and the bill will be scrutinised closely, as it should be. My government briefed a range of key stakeholders when the report and the bill were tabled, including health practitioner peak bodies and faith groups. We are keen to ensure that all interested stakeholders are across the detail of the proposed scheme and have the opportunity to comment.

As I have mentioned previously, the government has committed to an extended committee process of 12 weeks to allow for further extensive consultation on, and consideration of, the bill. We want to hear from Queenslanders on this bill because this affects all of us.

The dying and death of loved ones has touched all of our lives and everyone has a right to have their say. Once the committee has concluded its inquiry, debate of the bill will occur in September. We will dedicate the majority of the September sitting to this issue because it is critical that every member of parliament has their say. Members of the government will have a conscience vote; that is the right thing to do.

I have already told Queenslanders that I hope we can all have a respectful, nuanced debate about this issue, giving it the serious consideration that a law of this significance deserves. This is a substantial piece of legislation supported by a comprehensive, detailed report, and members of parliament should take the time to consider the material closely in forming their own personal view. If passed, the scheme will commence on 1 January 2023, ensuring Queenslanders have access to the scheme following a 15-month implementation process.

I am proud to support this bill. Its introduction today represents an historic step forward for Queensland—a step towards compassion, towards choice and autonomy, and most importantly, towards dignity. I commend this bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (12.28 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Health and Environment Committee


Mr SPEAKER (Mr Pitt): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health and Environment Committee.

DEBT REDUCTION AND SAVINGS BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1510, on motion of Mr Dick—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (12.28 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. I would like to turn, firstly, to the elements of the bill which fall within my ministerial portfolio. The bill makes amendments to the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019 to clarify heads of power for the supporting regulations and makes other technical changes to improve the operation of the proposed regulations.

In particular, I acknowledge the feedback provided by the Australian Medical Association Queensland, the Australian Tattooists Guild and the Professional Tattooing Association of Australia on the Medicines and Poisons Act amendments during the committee process. The bill proposed amendments to require the manufacturer or supplier of tattoo inks to have a compliant analysis certificate before supplying a tattooing. The amendments would have required a tattooist to use as a tattoo ink for tattooing to be reasonably satisfied that, before using the ink, a compliant analysis certificate had been prepared for the ink.

Our intention has been, and will always be, to ensure that the inks being used for tattooing are safe for Queenslanders. These amendments were based on the best health advice and were designed to protect tattoo artists and their clients from harm; however, I acknowledge that the tattoo industry had concerns about the complexity of complying with the proposed amendments. It is important to ensure we strike the right balance between supporting industry and protecting the safety of Queenslanders. Therefore, after careful consideration, I have instructed Queensland Health to undertake further consultation with industry stakeholders before any amendments are progressed. I also am supportive of seeing if we can get uniformity on this important issue at the national level.

The bill also includes amendments to the Medicines and Poisons Act to allow the chief executive to delegate their functions under the act for the monitored medicines database to an appropriately qualified person. The monitored medicines database is an electronic real-time prescription monitoring database, known as real-time reporting. The database will be used to record information about the prescription and supply of certain prescription medicines prone to high-risk use.

All states and territories have committed to progressing real-time prescription monitoring systems which will interface with a Commonwealth system to achieve a national solution. To achieve this, Queensland's monitored medicines database, QScript, will need to interact with equivalent databases in other states and territories. This may require some responsibilities related to QScript to be delegated to third-party providers. For example, the responsibility for collecting information about monitored medicines dispensed in other states or territories may need to be delegated to a third party. The amendments in the bill will facilitate this delegation.

The chief executive will not be able to delegate regulatory and compliance responsibilities outside of Queensland Health. The chief executive may only delegate functions to an appropriately qualified person. Before delegating functions, the chief executive will consider all circumstances, including the scope of the power to be delegated, the expertise or experience needed to exercise the power, and any training and qualifications required to ensure the delegate is appropriately qualified.

The Medicines and Poisons Act will also be amended to provide greater clarity about which practitioners are required to check the monitored medicines database. The regulations will specify the practitioners required to check the database. It is expected these practitioners include dentists, medical practitioners, pharmacists, intern pharmacists, nurse practitioners, endorsed midwives and endorsed podiatrists.

The provisions about which practitioners are authorised to prescribe, dispense or give a treatment dose of a monitored medicine may change over time. Therefore, it is appropriate that this be specified in the regulations, rather than the act, to ensure this can be readily updated to reflect any changes to the arrangements for prescribing, dispensing or the giving of treatment doses.

The bill also extends the offence for disposing of waste from a 'schedule 8 medicine' to disposing of waste from a 'diversion-risk medicine'. Diversion-risk medicines will be prescribed by regulation and will include medicines with a higher risk of being diverted for illicit use. It will include all schedule 8 medicines and some schedule 4 medicines. Examples include anabolic steroidal agents, growth hormones, codeine and barbiturates. The offence will not apply to a person who discards waste by giving it to a person authorised to dispose of waste under the Medicines and Poisons Act. This may include, for example, returning the waste to a pharmacist for disposal or if the person discards or destroys the waste under another law. Improper disposal may allow a person to collect residual amounts from used containers and use it for unauthorised dealings. Ensuring that waste from diversion-risk medicines is disposed of correctly helps to prevent it becoming available for sale illegally and being used inappropriately.

Indicative drafts of the supporting regulations and departmental standards were distributed to key stakeholders to enable them to consider the scheme holistically. Consultation on the regulations and departmental standards began in late April 2021 and runs until 26 May 2021. The bill will enable the drafting of the supporting regulations to be clearer and make it easier for stakeholders to understand and comply with the medicines and poisons framework.

The bill implements a range of measures identified as part of the Palaszczuk government's savings and debt plan. These include: establishing the legislative mechanism to transfer the Queensland Titles Registry to the Queensland Future Fund; abolishing or restructuring a number of public entities; and implementing public sector efficiency and modernisation measures. The bill provides the mechanism for the Queensland Titles Registry to be transferred to the Queensland Future Fund through the Debt Retirement Fund. The taxpayer will continue to own the value of the Titles Registry as an asset that can be offset against debt, thereby reducing our net debt.


The bill also abolishes and restructures a number of public entities as part of the Palaszczuk government's ongoing commitment to deliver savings and improve the efficiency of government. These include integrating the Queensland Productivity Commission into Queensland Treasury as the Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction and integrating the staff, assets, resources and records of Building Queensland into the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning. Building Queensland and the Productivity Commission have served Queensland well, but now it is time for their work to continue inside government agencies to help support our economic recovery and to save money.

The bill also repeals the Public Safety Business Agency Act 2014 so that the agency's functions are integrated into the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. The amalgamation and restructure of public entities into existing government departmental structures means their specialised expertise, roles and responsibilities will be transferred to relevant departments to better drive outcomes for the community and the public sector. Importantly, these measures have been undertaken after extensive consultation with government agencies, the Public Service Commission and respective unions.

The bill also includes amendments to the Acts Interpretation Act to introduce a fee unit model which will streamline processes and reduce costs for Parliamentary Counsel as they go through the annual fee unit indexation. Queenslanders will remember how the LNP set indexation of fees and charges at 3.5 per cent regardless of inflation, meaning fees and charges rose in real terms. Over three years, Queenslanders saw an 11 per cent increase in the cost of interacting with government under the LNP. In contrast, the Palaszczuk Labor government has adopted the position that fees and charges are only indexed in line with inflation. The range of measures proposed by the Treasurer in this bill provides for \$3 million in direct savings, a part of the Palaszczuk government's broader \$3 billion savings agenda. These are sensible savings that do not hurt Queenslanders, unlike the LNP's cuts when in government.

What we heard from the member for Kawana in his response to this bill was plenty of looking backwards but conveniently skipping over the time his party were in government, which those opposite tend to do very often. The fact is that I am very proud of this government, the work of the Treasurer and this bill. Why? It is because we are making savings that are not leading to cuts in public servant numbers. We are not sacking doctors, nurses, teachers or child safety staff. We are not cutting services from various portfolios and agencies across government. We are not cutting funding out of non-government organisations. We are not scrapping Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which supports trainees and skills.

We are doing this in a sensible way that finds savings within government and retains the expertise and skills we need but gets rid of some of those overheads. We need to do that because our budget, like every other budget in the country and globally, is under strain from the impact of COVID. There are two ways of doing that: cut, sack and sell; or find efficiencies within the system and savings that are sensible and proportionate but do not lead to further economic damage and the consequence of people losing their jobs. I still have people come up to me and tell me that they lost their job under the LNP and the Newman government. They still remember the damage. We know—we certainly did not hear from the member for Kawana—what those opposite took to the last election. We do not have to look back to 2012 to 2015. We know what they took to the last election. Cuts to services were proposed. I am very proud of this bill and the work the Palaszczuk government is doing to provide efficiencies in the system.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (12.38 pm): I rise to speak on the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill, which would be more aptly named the 'avoid a ratings agency downgrade bill' which would result in a politically damaging blow for the Palaszczuk government and a financial embarrassment for the current Labor Treasurer. The Treasurer may have made a great Attorney-General for Tuvalu—wherever that is—but as Queensland's Treasurer he is a fiscal incompetent if he believes anyone will swallow this pea and thimble trick of shifting a Queensland income-generating Public Service department from a government branch to a non-independent corporation not subject to an asset sale.

As anyone enrolled in Economics 101 would know, an asset only has a definitive determinable valuation when market forces can determine that valuation. Anyone hypothesising about their asset worth—whether it be their own home which they believe is worth \$1 million and the market valuation when it is actually sold makes it worth \$800,000, or a Treasurer fantasising that the Titles Registry is worth \$4.2 billion when New South Wales sold its much larger Titles Registry for \$2.6 billion—is either delusional or deliberately hiding their real asset worth for other nefarious reasons. Anyone can pay for friendly valuations that will deliver a valuation amount that suits the purchaser of that valuation's particular outcomes, particularly when that valuation will never be held to account by the real market. In other words, if you are not actually selling the Titles Registry, there is no chance of finding out the real market value on the open market.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Logan, your interjections are not being taken. You will cease interjecting.

Mr STEVENS: That is a perfect blind for the unwary financial investor. This bill is all about hiding the real position from Queensland taxpayers and is a deliberate and unabashed attempt at hiding the dismal economic performance of the Palaszczuk Labor government before the pandemic crisis hit Queensland 14 months ago and the ensuing financial incompetence over the 14 months of Queensland's economic stagnation since. This is the first flashing red light of the economic pain descending on Queensland that this government and indeed this woeful Queensland Treasurer have inflicted on Queenslanders through their profligate spending and their incomprehensible financial mismanagement. Debt and spending are the cornerstones of their financial DNA, and the welfare of future generations of Queenslanders long after I have left this House is a frightening concept. I have no idea what burdens and pains this Labor government has wreaked upon future generations of Queenslanders.

There is \$130,000 million on the debt scoreboard today, and with more to come for an Olympic Games, a health system begging to be fixed by their own health minister's admission and a mining industry—the backbone of Queenslanders' wealth—in dire straits because of market pressure and an obstructionist left-wing Labor government asking miners to reskill, and the audacity of raiding public servants' defined benefit superannuation scheme again for \$1,000 million, when the Auditor-General has advised the scheme is already in deficit for a billion dollars, beggars belief.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr STEVENS: This Labor government has already raided that scheme for several billion dollars and seems completely comfortable with an unfunded superannuation scheme for public servants that they dream the tooth fairy will top up again one day at some dreamtime date in the future when everything will be rosy again economically. That is in stark contrast to one of the better Labor treasurers of years gone by in Terry Mackenroth, who I am told transferred several billion dollars from the Queensland taxpayers' budget to top up the public servants' defined benefits superannuation scheme, probably because he was worried about it sustaining his own retirement. If I was a Queensland public servant in the defined benefits superannuation scheme, I would be very worried about this Palaszczuk government's management of my retirement fund.

As the world is still reeling from the global pandemic and countries are diving deeper into the black economic abyss, even the world's best economic minds cannot predict what long-term outcomes will be the result of this catastrophic worldwide health crisis. As the Governor of the Bank of England said, this is the worst financial disaster Britain has suffered in 300 years. To be shuffling the economic deckchairs on the Queensland economic *Titanic* while we are accelerating towards the fiscal iceberg is chicanery at its best—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members, I have asked you to stop interjecting and to please stop the conversations across the chamber.

Mr STEVENS: It is chicanery at its best and downright deceitful at its worst. I cannot believe the ratings agencies will fall for this three-card monte trick and, even though they are paid by the government for their appraisals, I would expect and in fact demand on behalf of Queensland taxpayers that they give an honest and ironclad defensible opinion as to the serious debt position this government has deliberately put itself in. As governments around the world print more money to solve their fiscal imbalances and record-low interest rates attract false—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Bancroft and member for Logan, I just warned you a second ago. You are both warned under the standing orders.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, member for Logan, but are you reflecting on the chair's decision?

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mermaid Beach, you have the call.

Mr STEVENS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your protection. It is only a matter of time before economic reality starts to bite and poor-performing institutions such as this Queensland government will feel the brunt of economic hardship which they can only exorcise on the Queensland taxpayer through more taxes and higher charges.

To make matters worse about this bill, the Economics and Governance Committee was reliably informed that the new regulations with regard to tattoo ink—and I understand the minister has made adjustments to the bill, but this was still in the consideration of the bill at the time—will result in the tattoo parlour industry going underground because of the heavy fines involved on tattooists for the use of inks that they have no control over. They make no ink in Australia. All tattoo inks are produced overseas, so to threaten the big-stick approach over people who have no involvement in the manufacture of the inking product is like blaming the Labor Party for the sins of Bill D'Arcy, Gordon Nuttall and their former leader Keith Wright. Yes, they were criminals—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Logan, you are next to speak, so I am very hesitant about sending you out of the chamber. I will not warn you again.

Mr STEVENS: Yes, they were criminals, but you could not fine the Labor Party for employing them. Forcing tattoo parlours underground will undoubtedly invite criminal bikie gang involvement again and, because this government is soft on criminal bikie gang crime, we will see the rise and rise of more public affray from these groups who are the same criminal culprits now wearing designer clothes rather than their club's colours or their traditional leathers.


Mr Millar interjected.

Mr STEVENS: I take the interjection from the member for Gregory. There is big money in drugs, prostitution and protection scams, and the tattoo parlours are a convenient way to launder illicit drug money into clean corporate money for their legitimate investments.

The third disappointment in this scrambled-egg legislation is the alienation of regional community newspapers—even though I understand that that has been changed as well—of important government notices which will severely financially impact those regional weeklies and will also disenfranchise regional populations of full and open disclosure of government decrees and notices. Burying important government declarations on a website under a tonne of government propaganda may be a convenient and cheap way for governments to disseminate their information, but it is disingenuous to any government fair dinkum about its commitment to open and accountable governance to honestly raise their right hand and say that this is in the best interests of regional communities. It is not and should be repealed at the first opportunity if it goes through in any form.

In conclusion, this bill is a hotchpotch of hastily concocted brain fades that will neither help Queenslanders face their increasing financial burdens nor ease any of their social dilemmas. Why we have to hide from scrutiny of the ratings agencies is beyond my comprehension as the ratings agencies have an important role to play in guiding financial institutions such as the Queensland government on the security of their financial position.

What government would not want to know if they are sailing close to the wind financially so that they could take the appropriate steps to correct their financial malaise? The answer to that question is the Queensland Labor government, which does not care about financial responsibility and makes every effort to hide its financial incompetence.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (12.49 pm): In 2020 this House created the Queensland Future Fund to secure Queensland's economic future and reduce the debt profile of our state to those entities that analyse and rate the economic position of our state. We have a strong economic position. We have a fully funded defined benefit scheme. I was deeply disappointed that the member for Mermaid Beach misled the House and did not report the actuary's comment that we had a fully funded defined benefit scheme. It is the only one in the county. We have significant state assets, such as our electricity network.

This bill builds upon the Queensland Future Fund Act to transfer the ownership of the Titles Registry to the Debt Retirement Fund. It is a mechanism to ensure that the strong state ownership of our assets, such as the Titles Registry, gets the recognition it deserves from ratings agencies. This is the smart option and it stands in stark contrast to the LNP's plan to cut, sack and sell.

The Economics and Governance Committee was referred the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill on 25 March. The committee invited written submissions, received a written briefing and held a public briefing from departmental officials. We also held a public hearing with stakeholders on 27 April. The list of stakeholders is available in the committee's report. We also released a report that recommended that the bill be passed.

To summarise the bill to the House, it adds to the Queensland Future Fund established under the Queensland Future Fund Act 2020. It introduces a fee unit model to streamline the annual process of indexing regulatory fees; integrates Building Queensland's staff, assets, records, resources and liabilities into the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning; and winds up the Building Queensland board. It makes a vital change to the governance structure of the National Injury Insurance Agency; fulfils the government's commitment to reintegrate the Public Safety Business Agency into public safety entities, which gives our emergency services more direct control over the physical assets that they need to serve Queenslanders; integrates the functions of the Queensland Productivity Commission and the Queensland Competition Authority into Queensland Treasury; and ensures that our government advertising and official notices are updated by removing legislation that mandates that these notices must be in print. It further, as the Minister for Health has spoken about, makes technical amendments to the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019. I note the response from the Minister for Health to feedback from a particular business in relation to tattoo ink.

The committee moved to urge the House to pass this bill because it makes it clear to outsiders how strong our economic position is, but at the same time—and this is vital—keeps our assets in public ownership. The rating agencies refused to recognise the state ownership of our titles office. We held this vital service in state ownership but ratings agencies, with their particular accounting of the assets that this state holds, would misleadingly advise those who were looking for bonds that we did not own these assets. In a perverse way this acted as a reward for those states that had made the mistake of selling off their titles office. They were rewarded by the sell-off, but our ownership was not recognised.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr POWER: I note giggling from those opposite. The Treasurer is committed to keeping the titles office in public ownership—but also determined that ratings agencies recognise that we own it. That is why this government has made the decisive step to change the structure of ownership—still keeping it firmly in public ownership—by transferring the ownership to the Queensland Future Fund through the first fund, the Queensland Debt Retirement Fund.

It is important to note that in other states this was not the approach that their governments had taken. They noted the problem instead of the far more innovative solution taken by the Palaszczuk Labor to get recognition of ownership by ratings agencies but maintain control and keep faith with the people of Queensland. Queenslanders do not want to sell assets, they want to keep them. We are taking this step to gain a benefit for Queenslanders by ensuring that the ratings agencies recognise the value of the Queensland Titles Registry while keeping the Queensland Titles Registry in public ownership. Because of this, the people of Queensland can, on the recommendation of ratings agencies, receive lower interest rates. That is a clear benefit to the people of Queensland, a benefit to the government—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Member for Mermaid Beach, I gave you protection from the member for Logan. I expect the same thing back, please.

Mr POWER: I appreciate the consistency of the chair. It is a benefit for public ownership, a benefit for reducing the interest rate, a benefit for the people of Queensland. I am sure that the deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach, recognises this clear benefit. However, some on the other side may choose not to acknowledge this clear benefit. This is, of course, curious. Why would those on the other side attack what is simply and clearly a benefit? Why would they attack the valuation? Why would they undermine this keeping of a public asset? Why would they make bizarre accusations in the rant masquerading as a non-government statement of reservation?

To be honest, I am expecting this bizarre rant to continue from those opposite. Those listening upstairs and online would be asking, 'Why are they ranting like this?' The clear answer is the policies of the LNP. We know that on these issues their policy is clear. The Strong Choices policy makes it clear

that the LNP intends, as a policy of debt reduction, to sell off our state assets. The embarrassing non-government statement of reservation makes it clear that the Strong Choices sell-off is still the policy of the LNP. They are positively angry that in this bill the Treasurer has protected the titles office by keeping it in public ownership, making it harder to sell by legislating its protection, but, further, has removed any justification that the LNP might claim in the future to sell it off because its value is now to be recognised by ratings agencies as the important state asset that it is. Those opposite are ropeable that they cannot go ahead with their plans and that their justification is being removed.

It is also worth noting what is not part of the opposition's embarrassing rant that is masquerading as a non-government statement of reservation. There is no mention whatsoever in the two-page document of the Public Safety Business Agency. Indeed, there was not a question from the opposition about the Public Safety Business Agency. Why is that? Why did the LNP create this organisation just a few years ago only to slink away from its existence now? The answer is fairly simple. The Public Safety Business Agency was not about better administration of police, ambulance and fire assets, instead it was all about creating an institution to own all the properties of these emergency services and then sell them off to the highest bidder. The opposition report reveals that they now want to hide their desire to privatise our police stations and to have a fire sale of fire stations. This bill rightfully returns the management of these vital emergency assets to the departments that know best how these properties can be used to serve the people of Queensland. The LNP see these as something to be sold off. This government sees them as a service that should be best managed not for a private landlord but for the Public Service.

I warn the people of Logan that if the LNP ever get another go they will try again to sell off our fire stations—like the new one we are building at Yarrabilba; there is the risk they will sell off our police stations—like the expanded stations serving Yarrabilba and Logan Village; and they will sell off our ambulance stations—like the new one we have built in Munruben. This bill means that these new investments will be managed by those organisations that are focused on service delivery to our growing suburbs. The LNP should apologise to Queenslanders for its plan to ready public emergency properties for sale through the PSBA. They will not and their silence in the statement of reservation, instead of full-throated support, speaks volumes about their dangerous future plans for privatisation.


I also note that the bill updates those acts that specify the manner in which governments make announcements that are relevant to the public. Often a department might make an announcement in a few lines in a single day of a print newspaper, often in the not-as-often-read back section of the paper. Of course, if one did not read the paper that day or did not actively read the government notices section of the paper one could often miss it. This act modernises the act and recognises that permanent publication, accessible not just for a single day but throughout the relevant period required, is vital. The role of newspapers in Queensland has changed since these statutory requirements were added to acts—in some cases in the 19th century. We recognise that we can keep the Queensland public better informed. I also note that departments are encouraged to continue to advertise in regional newspapers. I hope they use this ability to creatively engage with the Queensland public in relation to government decisions and consultations. The Debt Reduction and Savings Bill strengthens the public ownership of our assets, reducing debt, and strengthens communications with the Queensland public. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Power, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): The government is losing control of Queensland Health because the Premier is not being transparent. The government is losing control of Queensland Health because the minister is not across her brief. Today in question time we asked some very simple questions. We asked for details of a proposal, put forward on behalf of Queenslanders, for an alternate system of quarantining. They were not gotcha questions. They were not tricky. They were straightforward questions looking for straightforward answers.

The government submitted a 15-page report looking for support from the Commonwealth. We are told that nearly two-thirds of those pages are either diagrams or pictures. After the Premier said that there was a far more detailed analysis and detailed submissions, media sources requested access

to that information but have been blocked. Today we asked whether or not Queenslanders could see what is in that proposal and we were told it was commercial-in-confidence. I contrast that with Victoria's submission. The Premier always seeks to portray Canberra as being political and as wanting to pick a fight because the government in this House is a different colour to the one in Canberra. I ask: why is it that Victoria's Labor government has managed to put forward a submission that is being analysed—a submission that has detail to go with it?

The Minister for Health was not just lacking in transparency; she was not across the detail of the brief that she seeks to oversee. To see her attempting to answer questions without any knowledge about the proposal or about the situation that is going on around her was a little embarrassing. It started with a straightforward question about the transport of patients out of quarantine. We want to know what the plan is. If somebody flies into a regional quarantine facility, what is the plan to get them to a hospital? Where will that hospital be located? If the plan is to use an ambulance, where will the ambulance come from? Currently in this state police officers are acting as *de facto* ambos. Where will the extra resources come from?

The member for Ninderry asked a pretty straightforward question about elective surgery being cancelled. The minister was clueless. Later she gladly came back in to say that only a few elective surgeries were cancelled. However, for the minister to not know that when she walked into this House for question time shows that she is not across her brief. When you have a portfolio as serious as health, you have to be across your brief. Then at the end of question time we heard that there were no code yellows in the south-east at 8.30 am.

Mrs Frecklington: What happened at 9.30?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I take the interjection: I am not sure what happened at 9.30 or 10.30, but I would like to know what is going on with the system that the government is losing control of, because honest Queenslanders are being affected. During question time the member for Nanango summed it up very cleverly when she asked us to think about the families, many of which have come from other places. They have fasted and gone without work. They have packed up to come here for elective surgery, only to have the rug pulled out from underneath them because the government is losing control of the system.

Today we are hearing about the outbreak in Melbourne, which shows how important it is that we fix the system of quarantining. Before the government talks about where, we want to know how they are going to fix quarantining in this state. We want them to give people clarity. While I am on the subject of clarity, we need a bit of clarity in messaging. It needs to be open and transparent. The government has no plan for the vaccine rollout. The Premier had no plan for her own vaccine schedule. The greatest gift that we in this House can give to the community is confidence. The only way to heal our economy and to heal broken families is to ensure that people understand that vaccines save lives and that vaccines are a step towards normality. Confidence also means that businesses will be willing to invest. People are looking to this state as a place to hold events and the opposition will be outlining more about that. It is through confidence that people will be willing to invest in this state, creating jobs into the future.

A lack of planning is something that we see right across the government and not just in the health system. We see a lack of planning with our housing supply. There is a lack of social housing. There is a lack of infrastructure to open up new housing opportunities. We see it in law and order with crime out of control on the streets of North Queensland, where people are frustrated and scared. They want a government that can take control of law and order in this state. As I said, we also see it in our health and hospital systems.


We also see evidence of that lack of planning only a matter of metres away. According to the *Notice Paper* there is one bill to be debated. The government has no plan. There is no agenda. I contrast that with a similar sitting in 2018 when there were 14 government bills on the *Notice Paper*—and they weren't breaking records back then, I can tell the House that! What has changed? Has the government run out of puff? Is it because nearly half of those bills were introduced by ministers who no longer sit in this place? Is this current crop even worse than the last one? Is that what we have come to?

People were willing to cut this government some slack because when they were elected in 2015 it came as a surprise, probably even to themselves. However, it has been six years. They cannot keep trading on fear. They cannot keep trading on a scare campaign. They cannot keep trading on nothing more than gutter politics. At some stage the community wants to see an agenda. At the opening of this parliament, His Excellency the Governor said 'no-one presumes to expect perfection, but they expect the highest endeavour, a positive focus and an unselfish purpose'. Is no agenda honest endeavour? Is no agenda a positive focus? Is no agenda unselfish purpose?

The government does not understand why it wants to be in power. There is no strategy to give certainty to agriculture, not just to maintain what we have but to allow it to expand. There is no plan for a water strategy to give people hope, encouraging them to invest in their communities. There is no strategy to ensure a balance between a mining industry that knows that it can be productive for generations to come and the highest environmental standards on the globe, which will ensure that people will want to invest. There is no strategy for tourism in terms of opening up our natural wonders and doing that in a respectful manner. There is no strategy for infrastructure delivery in the south-east. There is no strategy for business relocation to encourage people to move to Queensland not just because of affordable housing or our magnificent lifestyle; but to move to Queensland as the land of opportunity where businesses will want to be headquartered, where people can invest, where people are able to earn a living in whatever profession they wish and in whatever part of the state they wish to live. There is no agenda for innovation. There is no agenda for a modern economy. There is no agenda whatsoever from those sitting on the other side of the chamber.

We have heard a lot about this government. We have heard a lot about the scare campaigns, but they have continued to drift along. Sadly for Queenslanders, they get another 3½ years of this drifting. At the end of it, the scare campaigns will not cut it anymore. The fearmongering after a decade will be old hat. We will hear the same names, they will try to dig up the same ghosts, they will try to talk about an asset sale agenda that was never tested—the denial of a lack of purpose will be gone. What they know, because they are living it now, is that when a government does not focus on service delivery, when a government has people who are out of their depth, when a government does not believe in transparency, it starts losing control of what matters to Queenslanders.

Liberal National Party, Performance

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (2.10 pm): Well, there is hypocrisy writ large! What an extraordinary statement from the LNP: 'You cannot keep trading on fear.' That is the only way they know how to trade. That is what they do each and every day. They prey on people's fears and prejudices, and they feed those things in the community. They divide the community. During the election we saw fear campaigns around crime. It was atrocious. I saw the big billboard in my area. I think it talked about armed robbery being up 80 per cent or something. That is quite interesting when the base figure per month was zero, so if you had one armed robbery the next month it was up by 100 per cent. These are the sorts of fear they prey on and feed.

I would love to hear from the Leader of the Opposition what scare campaign he thinks we have been running for the last few months. Would that be COVID? Do those opposite think COVID is a scare campaign? Are the LNP still so ignorant about what is going on around the globe that they refer to it as a scare campaign? The only scare campaign I have seen going on is those on the opposite side over the last 18 months and the way they have behaved around COVID and our response.

One would think that would have settled down after the election, recognising that the people of Queensland had put their trust and confidence in the Palaszczuk government, in the way we had responded and kept them safe—but no. Those opposite have doubled down and keep talking about the way we are managing health. They keep saying that it is this government's fault, in the way we are dealing with pressures on the health system and where the pressures have come from, without any recognition whatsoever that every state and territory in this country is facing disruptions to their health system. Those opposite refuse to talk to their colleagues in Canberra about the long-stay younger patients—

An opposition member interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I hear the groaning from those opposite. When the LNP members stand in front of cameras or talk to people about any delays in their health care, are they also saying that there are 575 beds being taken up by long-stay patients? Are they having that honest conversation with them? I suspect not. If they did, they would be acknowledging what is happening and what could be done by their mates in Canberra. Not once have we heard that they have picked up the phone to Greg Hunt or Scott Morrison and said, 'We need to fix this issue with long-stay young patients and also our older patients, including short-changing them in relation to aged-care packages in the budget this year.'

We also heard comments from those who believe the Premier misled the parliament today with regard to the vaccine. To be clear, the Australian government website says—

We are currently vaccinating people in Phase 1a and Phase 1b. States and territories will begin vaccinating people in Phase 2a in May, starting with all adults 50 years and over.

- From 3 May 2021, people 50 years and over can receive the AstraZeneca vaccine at ... state and territory vaccination clinics.

The state and territory vaccination clinics were for frontline workers. This was the state's responsibility. It goes on to say—

- From 17 May—

I will correct the record; today I said 18 May—

people 50 years and over can receive the AstraZeneca vaccine at a participating general practice.

The Premier said that she could get her vaccine last week. It can be through GPs. You could not go to your GP before last Monday if you were aged 50 to 69.

Mr Bleijie: We never said 'through a GP'.

Mr Mander: There is no excuse.

Mrs D'ATH: I will take that interjection.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Time has expired.

Mr Bleijie: You can't. It's my time.

Mrs D'ATH: Don't tell me to—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Neither of you is the Speaker. I ask you to resume your seat.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (2.15 pm):** I feel sorry for the health minister. I have a lot of time for the member for Redcliffe, but I feel sorry for her. When Deputy Premier Steven Miles was the health minister he knew that Queensland Health was going off a cliff. He hospital passed it to her and just said—

Mr Mander: 'I'm outta here!'

Mr BLEIJIE: 'I'm outta here!' I take the interjection. He said, 'I'm outta here!' He handed this basket case to the member for Redcliffe and said, 'Here you go. Good luck!' I feel sorry for the health minister: she has been handed this hospital pass with all the issues that the Deputy Premier caused when he was the health minister. His only priority was changing the name of a hospital. That is his only legacy. It is a left-wing legacy he is very proud of: taking a pioneering woman's name off the hospital. He completely trashed the health system.

Mr Mander: And then handed it over to the other faction.

Mr BLEIJIE: Then he said, 'The left-wing faction have done the best they can. They have completely wrecked it. Here we go, colleagues. Now it will be the right-wing faction's fault.' That is what has happened. I feel sorry that the health minister has been handed all these problems because they were not caused by her; they were caused by the Palaszczuk Labor government, Steven Miles and health ministers before him.

We have a budget coming up in a couple of weeks. This will be a new test for the government. Will it be the normal Labor budget of higher taxes? Look what they are doing in Victoria: payroll tax, land tax—tax, tax, tax. The Treasurer stood up in this place this morning and said, 'We committed to no new or increased taxes at the election.' That is interesting, because they also committed at the election to increase debt by \$4 billion but then it blew it out to \$28 billion after the election. You cannot trust anything this Labor government says. You cannot trust anything the Treasurer says. We know that at some point in the future—the higher the spending, the bigger the debt—someone has to pay for it. Just like Labor treasurers do, like former health minister Steven Miles did with health, the Treasurer will get it to a stage just before it falls off a cliff and will hand it to one of his colleagues. That is what Labor governments do. Do not trust a Labor government to manage the state's finances. Businesses pay for it. Businesses are calling out for a vision in the state. There is no vision in the state of Queensland at the moment.

Premier Palaszczuk said last week, 'This year is the year of action.' What has she been doing for six years?

Mr Mander: Nothing!

Mr BLEIJIE: Six years of nothing. I take the point the Leader of the Opposition made with respect to the lack of an agenda. At the back of the chamber, where the bills that are ready for debate get displayed, there is one bill. Only one bill is up for debate. I table the *Notice Paper* for Tuesday, 15 May 2018.

Tabled paper: Notice Paper for Tuesday, 15 May 2018, of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, pp 1-8 [710].

That is roughly five or six weeks after the 2017 election. There were 14 bills on the *Notice Paper* on that day. Today there is one bill on the *Notice Paper* and now, with the VAD bill, there are three bills before parliamentary committees. That is it! They have completely run out of things to talk about and do.


Usually I would say this is a bad thing, but considering that when they do things they wreak havoc on Queenslanders perhaps we should be thankful that the Labor government is not doing anything in the chamber. When they do things they wreak havoc on businesses and on people's lives. It means red tape and green tape. Perhaps we should be thanking the Labor government for being so lazy and incompetent that they do not have an agenda. Unfortunately, people will suffer over the next 3½ years. There is an agenda the business community want, but unfortunately they are never going to get it out of the Labor Party.

The opposition leader also talked about those opposite being in power for six years. The only power Labor ministers care about is their own power and their own jobs. Do we really think that Treasurer Cameron Dick worries about the plight of his constituents in Woodridge? I think not. Just as he did not worry about the plight of the people of Greenslopes when he left the seat of Greenslopes and went for the seat of Woodridge. He is only interested in his own job. We hear that discussions are already underway around when he is going to do a shuffle, as in the old song *Time Warp*—one step to the right—to take on the Premier's job. For years now he has been creeping seat by seat. He wants that job. We hear the factions are already trying to do this.

There is no agenda in the state of Queensland. The people are suffering. The test will be the budget. I suspect it will be the same sort of Labor budget—more taxes, bigger debt, no agenda, no infrastructure, more infrastructure cuts—we have seen from every Labor government in the history of this state.

(Time expired)

Bundaberg Electorate, Sport and Recreation

 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (2.20 pm): I am very happy to report that Bundy is the sporting and recreation capital of the Wide Bay. Over the last few weekends our hotels have been home to a host of travelling sporting teams across a range of ages and from a number of regions. Our cafes and restaurants have been doing a roaring trade and have been bringing people back into work. What a fantastic job they do.

At the beginning of May we had a jam-packed weekend of sporting and recreational activities. It started with Agrotrend. That was two days of celebrating the agricultural and horticultural industries. In Bundaberg we celebrate them because there is no Bundaberg without our agricultural and horticultural industries. How great it was to walk around and speak to locals who enjoyed not just their days but also the great entertainment on the Friday night. It was a real credit to Ainsley Gatley, the event manager, and the Rotary Club of Bundaberg that brought the event together and rolled up their sleeves and did the tough jobs.

On the same weekend the Veterans Cricket association held the Bundy Cup. We had 14 teams from across Queensland come along to play a bit of cricket over the weekend. I am happy to note that there were two women's teams that participated. It is the first time women's teams have participated in the Bundy Cup. What a great effort.

We also had a team from Melbourne playing. I give a big shout-out to the Keilor Cricket Club for coming up from Melbourne. Everyone enjoyed the two days of competition. Being the natural athletes that veteran cricketers are, they made sure they stayed well hydrated. In Bundaberg we make sure our superior athletes hydrate responsibly. Well done to Mike McLellan, Kev Pratt and the whole team. It was a special two days.

On the same weekend we had the 47th Battalion Rugby League competition—its 50th anniversary. We had footy teams from Toowoomba, Wide Bay, Rockhampton, Bundy, south-west Queensland and the Sunshine Coast playing. Well done to Mike Ireland and the whole Bundaberg Rugby League association. There was strong representation of women's teams as well. That means we have role models not just for the young girls in Bundy but also the young boys. I thank all those teams for coming up.

On the same weekend we had the speedway as well. Engines were roaring. They even fired up the monster trucks and got them out. They are on again this Saturday so I extend the invitation to anyone who wants to come along. Mr Deputy Speaker, if you want to come along, I am more than happy for you to do that.

Government members interjected.

Mr SMITH: Anytime. The great thing about all of this is that it puts money into our region. It is boosting our economic recovery. Given the Palaszczuk government's strong health response, we can deliver a strong economic recovery plan. That is getting Bundy back on track. This is also because of the hard work of business owners and volunteers. I want to make sure we recognise our volunteers because they are not just putting on events but stimulating our economy and presenting our community to the rest of Queensland in the best way possible.

I thank the organisers from the Early Holden Club and Vintage Car Club who, over the last two weekends, put on car shows. They brought in people from the regions and showed off the best of Bundy.

A big thank you goes to the organisers of the Queensland state school netball titles in Bundy. Over 1,000 people came along to either watch or participate in the competition. Teams came from 12 Queensland regions. It was great to see some of them on the plane on my way back to Bundaberg after the last sitting week. The plane was full of young netballers and their families. They loved their time in Bundaberg. A big thank you to all of them and the organisers as well.

I said that we are the sporting capital of the Wide Bay. The following week we hosted another netball event.


Government members interjected.

Mr SMITH: Nothing but netball. Absolutely. I will take that interjection. The Bundaberg Netball Association put on another fantastic event. Over 60 regional junior teams participated. All the money went back into their representative pathways. That was a fantastic event for young people getting into sport, enjoying our community and showing off the great Bundaberg region.

I have to say that I had a favourite event. After the last sitting week I got off the plane and went out to the Transition 2 Success league tag competition. This is a competition for young people who are at risk or are assessed as being at risk. The Transition 2 Success team played against the Burnett Youth Learning Centre team. There were some kids there who have had some tough things going on in their lives, but they pulled together and had a great day. The smiles were amazing.

The best part of my job is getting off the plane after parliament, which is always a bit of fun, being there and seeing those kids enjoying themselves. It was a day when they did not have to worry about all of the dramas in their everyday lives. Well done to Transition 2 Success. Well done to Bundy—the sporting and recreational capital of the Wide Bay.

Townsville, Youth Crime

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.25 pm): 'We are going to have anarchy on the streets soon.' Those are the exact words of Mr Bill McCulloch today when he called my office in desperation. I will not reveal Mr McCulloch's age, but it is safe to say that he is a long-term resident of Townsville. He is a polite, well-spoken gentleman who is proud of the city and state he lives in. He fears for the future of that community and he is not alone. While Mr McCulloch sees possible anarchy on the streets of Townsville in the future, others see the streets resembling a computer game or, as some describe it, a war zone. What an insult to every resident in Townsville that their city is being compared to a war zone. Sadly, it is not new.

Back in 2019 when parliament sat in Townsville, a man named Kim, who served this country, said he felt safer on the streets of Mogadishu than on the streets of Townsville. Yet in the same week, the member for Thuringowa said, 'Those people who pose a serious risk to themselves or the community will not be released on bail.' He went on to accuse the LNP of a beat-up when it came to youth crime in the city. During that sitting of parliament, then minister for child safety, youth and women spoke of the implementation of 'key elements of Queensland's first youth justice strategy' and how it was part of 'Townsville's best response to youth crime'.

Just a few weeks later, the son of the current member for Mundingburra said he had his house broken into and his car stolen. The member himself said, 'We need to work with the police to catch baddies and lock them up.'

Mr WALKER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I have never had my house broken into as claimed by the member.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): What is the point of order?

Mr WALKER: I take personal offence.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Burdekin, did you mention the member personally?

Mr LAST: I mentioned the son of the current member for Mundingburra.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence and asked for it to be withdrawn. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr LAST: I withdraw. Where are we 628 days later after this parliament sat in Townsville? No doubt Kim feels like Mogadishu would be even safer compared to Townsville now. Young offenders who pose a clear threat are still receiving bail. What was touted as the city's best response to crime has proven to be an abject failure, and the baddies the member for Mundingburra referred to are still being released as quickly as they are locked up. Right now, in Townsville we have people signing petitions calling for the sacking of the three local Labor MPs. We had residents contacting His Excellency the Governor asking for the Palaszczuk government to be sacked. Every day my office is contacted by numerous Townsville residents who just want to be heard, yet the three Labor Townsville MPs refuse to listen.

Townsville is now descending into the Dark Ages. Cars are stopping at green lights to check for young offenders terrorising the streets in another stolen car, and families are refusing to go out after dark for fear of being yet another victim of crime.

Government members interjected.

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

Mr LAST: They do not like to hear it, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please use correct titles.

Mr LAST: What I am saying here today is what is coming through my office. In the same week that the Townsville district chief superintendent described the Townsville police as 'stretched', we had a 16-year-old offender who broke into a house, stole a car and spat on a police officer let out on bail without a GPS tracker. Meanwhile, the member for Thuringowa talks about refurbishing a pub to increase Woolworths' profits.

The people of Townsville are sick of being prisoners in their own homes. They are sick of living in fear and they are sick of bearing the financial burden when their car is stolen or their house is broken into. They are sick of their local shopping centre being treated as some sort of amusement park for young criminals. They are sick of cars being torched on the side of the road and, most of all, they are sick of the inaction of this Labor government.

The three local members based in Townsville are mute on this issue, but I will not be silenced. I will continue to stand up in this place and be the voice for all those victims in Townsville who are calling for something to be done. Townsville residents want their city back. They want to feel safe in their homes and on the streets and, most of all, they want this crime epidemic to stop.

What we have witnessed in that community in recent weeks is nothing short of mayhem, chaos and outright dangerous behaviour. We had knives and machetes being stolen from a disposal store on the weekend. We had the recent case of 10 stolen motor vehicles simultaneously being driven around the streets of Townsville. Is it any wonder people are saying, 'Why are we seeing the chopper flying around Townsville every single day chasing these young offenders?' It needs to stop and it needs to stop now.

Mount Ommaney Electorate, Infrastructure



Ms PUGH (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (2.31 pm): Locals were incredibly excited last year when Milton Dick and I announced the upgrade of the Centenary Motorway at the Jindalee bridge for two reasons. Firstly, this project means hundreds of jobs working on the construction of the bridge over the four years of works required. Secondly, it will get traffic moving again on this bridge, which has been essentially untouched since it was constructed about 50 years ago. It requires a \$112 million investment from the Palaszczuk government, and that is matched by the federal government. It is a much needed project for the south-west corridor, which is growing at a rate of knots.

Right now the commute into the city is up to an hour for people living in my electorate and it does seem to be getting worse every single day. This means people are struggling to get to work on time and then home again at the end of the day to their families and loved ones. That is hundreds upon

thousands of hours of work and play time that will be saved by this upgrade. We are an area with many young families, including my own. I cannot count the number of parents who have contacted my office because it is a mad rush to pick up their kids before the 6 pm after-school or early education facilities close.

When I told my community last year that we would be upgrading the bridge, they were thrilled. However, there were a number of young people who had some concerns. Just next to the bridge is a very popular skate park at Jindalee. It is right next to the motorway. You can see when you drive along just how popular it is. When I drove by last weekend there would have easily been 50 kids at the park. During the election last year many young people heading into the polling booth took the time to ask me about that skate park. They were adamant that we needed to protect it from resumption.

I took that case to the minister and said, 'We have to retain this facility in the community.' It is so popular and we need these facilities for our young people. With the introduction of skateboarding as an Olympic sport, we could well have some Olympians in training for 2032 right in the heart of Jindalee. The minister has always given our community a good hearing, whether it is about the Len Waters overpass, the Ipswich Motorway upgrade or the Darra park-and-ride, and this time was no different. The minister agreed that we needed to keep this vital piece of community infrastructure and has confirmed that the design will not require the resumption of the skate park.

Thanks very much to the team in the minister's office and to TMR for their fantastic work in ensuring that we could keep the skate park while upgrading the bridge. Places for young people to gather are incredibly important. The department fully recognised the importance of this skate park to the young people in my community. I thank the young people in my community who took the time to raise this issue with me. There were a lot of them. I hope this shows young people in all of our communities that their voice absolutely makes a difference. By speaking with your local member you have made a difference and you have played a part in saving this skate park for our community. Well done!


Milton Dick and I want to hear more from the community about their thoughts on the Centenary Motorway upgrade. We have community consultation starting soon with the department. Milton and I will also be doing additional mobile offices to talk to the community, show them the designs and ask for their feedback. Our community has waited 50 years since this bridge was constructed for this upgrade, so we want to get this project right. Community feedback was vital in shaping the final product of the Len Waters Sumners Road overpass. We need to hear from the members of the Mount Ommaney community so that this bridge serves us for a generation to come.

Finally, I will update the House on the other infrastructure achievements in my electorate over the last few months. A few months ago the Premier and I opened the Len Waters overpass, the Sumners Road overpass—an \$80 million state funded project which has completely transformed the morning commute for Darra and Centenary residents. Now that it has been open for a month, I am very happy to say that, while previously the Sumners Road overpass was so congested that it could take up to 20 minutes to cross the Centenary suburbs into Darra, that is no more thanks to the 100-plus workers on this fantastic project. Traffic is now moving through really well. It takes about five minutes, and that is critical to the business parks in Sumner and Darra.

It is also critical to the commuters who use the Darra train station and its park-and-ride, which is currently being extensively upgraded to allow for over 180 new car parks, bringing the total new number of car parks for commuters to more than 400. It is just 22 minutes into the city from Darra on an express service. It is a wonderful option for city workers. Thanks to the Sumners Road upgrade, it is now less than 10 minutes drive for Centenary residents.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would love to tell you a bit about the newly opened Ipswich Motorway, but what can I do—I only have five minutes! Let me just say that it is an exciting time to live in Mount Ommaney.

Taxation, Developers

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (2.36 pm): Before the end of this term of parliament, the government will need to sign off on a 10-year review of the Brisbane City Plan. This will no doubt result in the rezoning of some big blocks of land across the city for higher density. When that happens, a few big developers will get windfall profits.

Here in Queensland, this 'upzoning', as it is called, is effectively a massive transfer of public wealth to private hands. There is no requirement that developers give anything back from these profits, and they do literally nothing to earn them. All they have to do is be rich enough to buy the land and sit on it until the value jumps.

While local schools, hospitals and public transport are underfunded, how is it that developers make nearly \$2 billion each year from land rezonings? Research shows that it is predominantly the richest and most 'well-connected' property developers—the ones who go to the LNP's special lunches or are connected to Labor lobbyists—who get these massive gifts.

The Greens have been going on about this for a while, but we are not the only ones. The ACT has had a developer tax for 50 years. I acknowledge that the ACT is a much smaller and different property market from ours here in Queensland, but last week this government's own Labor colleagues in Victoria announced that they will also introduce a similar tax in their state budget. I rise today to ask the question: why can't this government do the same? With an increased demand for property, low interest rates and the potential for Brisbane to host the 2032 Olympics, it is very likely that another big property boom is coming in South-East Queensland. Greater density and growth can be a great thing—but not if it is all about developer profits.

Planning for growth requires more public services and infrastructure—more buses, schools, parks, health care and energy. As the government is always keen to remind us, that all costs money. But the developers are not going to build it themselves. Instead of allowing them to continue making billions building massive apartment towers without paying their fair share, we should introduce a levy on upzoning profits.

A 75 per cent developer tax on increases in land value as a consequence of rezoning would bring in an estimated \$1.8 billion per year. That is an extra \$7.2 billion over the four years of the upcoming budget. That could pay for more schools and hospitals, better public transport and more social housing. A couple of years ago I surveyed around 330 residents in my area to see whether they would support a developer tax like this. Three-quarters of respondents said yes.

A developer tax would apply to any land that is rezoned to a higher use, levied at 75 per cent of the difference between the officially assessed land value before and after the rezoning. Land owners would not need to pay the tax until a development application is approved which takes advantage of the new zoning. The beauty of this is that it directly targets the fat cat developers who make big profits building in our communities but give almost nothing back.


Honourable members interjected.

Mr BERKMAN: I will give an example for the interjectors. An ordinary individual, let's call her Sue, owns her home in Indooroopilly. It is an old Queenslanders worth \$600,000. The council rezones the whole street from low density to medium density residential. Her land is worth \$1.6 million after the rezoning, an improvement of about \$1 million. That improvement in value is noted on her land title, but Sue does not have to pay anything because she is not redeveloping her land. A few years later Sue moves to another suburb and a developer buys the land. When their DA is approved by the council they need to pay \$750,000—75 per cent of the uplift in value when the land was rezoned. That money is then returned to the public to help fund the things we all need to live a good life.

The last year has been tough for a lot of people. Billionaires and big corporations are good at convincing the government that it has been tough for them too. They will cry poor. They will tell us they could not possibly afford to pay this. They will threaten to pick up, take their bat and their ball and leave if we get them to pay their fair share. I do not buy it, because while ordinary Queenslanders have struggled with low wages, job insecurity and unaffordable housing, property developers are getting richer. Meriton CEO Harry Triguboff, who has significant property holdings here in Queensland, grew his wealth by \$1.7 billion last year alone.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic Queensland is still a wealthy state, but too much of our state's wealth is going into the hands of mining billionaires, property developers and big banks and too little is going into funding schools, hospitals and public infrastructure. There is big money for developers here in Queensland and this levy alone would not change that. All a developer tax means is that less is going into their massive pay cheques, their huge profits, and more is going to the people of Queensland.

Ipswich Electorate, Federal Budget

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.41 pm): Two weeks ago the Morrison government handed down a disappointing budget that yet again failed Ipswich. Considering COVID's impact on the economy, this budget could have been a great opportunity to pump some much needed funding into the Ipswich region

to support transport infrastructure, housing or public hospitals. Instead, the Morrison government opted for a stingy budget that short-changed our community. The federal Treasury estimated that Queensland will gain 84,600 new residents over the next four years. Most of those new residents will end up in South-East Queensland and a sizeable number of them will move to Ipswich. Over the past six months I have seen almost 1,500 people move into my electorate of Ipswich. Many of them are moving into the rapidly growing suburbs of Ripley and Deebing Heights. A week ago the Ipswich City Council reported that during the 2019-20 financial year 7,000 people moved into the Ipswich local government area and just under 3,200 people moved to Ipswich in the second half of 2020. Ipswich is growing at an unprecedented rate, but the federal government's budget has chosen to ignore us yet again.

The Palaszczuk government has instead been left to do the heavy lifting while the federal government delivers most of their infrastructure funding to New South Wales and Victoria—states that are losing just as many residents as Queensland is gaining. Ipswich is crying out for rail and road infrastructure that will keep up with our growing population. The Ripley Valley is the fastest growing PDA in the state, with an estimated 120,000 people living there by 2040. Without a rail line between Ipswich and Springfield, catastrophic congestion on our roads will cost the economy millions.

Before the state election last year the Palaszczuk government committed a million dollars towards a strategic business case for the Springfield to Ipswich rail line and sought a matching co-contribution of a million dollars from the federal government and \$500,000 from the Ipswich City Council. Earlier this year the Ipswich City Council committed \$500,000 towards the strategic business case subject to the federal government stumping up a million dollars, but that million dollars was nowhere to be found in Morrison's budget. This was despite the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael McCormack, coming to Ipswich and seeing for himself the massive growth underway in the Ripley Valley. I thank the Ipswich City Council for hosting our Deputy Prime Minister and stressing to him the importance of the Ipswich to Springfield rail line. Unfortunately, Mr McCormack's thoughts—if he has any—must have been elsewhere that day, because he certainly did not deliver that message to Morrison.

The federal coalition government have been in power for eight long years, and each time they hand down their budget Ipswich is ignored, forgotten and taken for granted. There were also hopes that the Morrison government might stump up their fair share of funding towards the desperately needed Cunningham Highway-Yamanto interchange to Ebenezer upgrade, but again this was ignored. The Cunningham Highway is a National Highway and the section from Yamanto to Ebenezer is a key interstate freight corridor that sees 2,700 heavy vehicle movements a day. Congestion on the road has become so bad that it is costing our economy an estimated \$45 million a year. An increasing number of vehicle crashes are leaving a devastating human toll.

Mr Krause interjected.

Ms HOWARD: I suggest that the member for Scenic Rim talk to his federal colleagues if he is concerned about the congestion.

Mr Krause interjected.

Ms HOWARD: Not their fair share. The Cunningham Highway also services the Amberley RAAF base, the largest Air Force base in the country, which employs 5,000 people. You would think the federal government would care about—

Mr Krause interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Scenic Rim, you are warned under the standing orders.


Ms HOWARD: A number of my constituents who live in Deebing Heights and Flinders View work at the base, and their daily commute is routinely marred by horrendous congestion. I just hope that a national emergency does not happen at morning peak hour when our service personnel are stuck in traffic. The failure to deliver funding for the Cunningham Highway upgrade is a major oversight of the Morrison government.

Another oversight in their budget is the lack of federal funding for social housing. Almost every day my office is contacted by people who desperately need social housing or who are paying over half of their income for private rentals of substandard quality. Homelessness services in Ipswich tell me that they are seeing more families calling on them for help. The Palaszczuk government has done all the heavy lifting on social housing and in Ipswich alone has committed \$103 million to build 383 social housing properties by 2022. The federal government need to recognise there is a housing crisis in this

country and stump up more cash for social and affordable housing. The \$124.7 million they allocated in their budget was a pittance. On top of that, they are winding down the National Rental Affordability Scheme with no replacement in sight.

The Palaszczuk government is also doing the heavy lifting managing the increased pressure on public hospitals. We are seeing an increase in emergency admissions. The LNP love to slam us on that, but they forget that across Queensland 600 beds are being used by patients who are still waiting on federal aged-care and disability packages.

Social Housing

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (2.46 pm): The member for Ipswich is right: there is a housing crisis in this state, and it has nothing to do with the federal government because housing is the responsibility—

Government members interjected.

Mr MANDER: I am going to prove that in a moment. There is a housing crisis in this state, and it is because of the inaction of a government that has been in power for 25 of the last 30 years. These crises do not happen overnight: they happen over a period of time when there has not been an appropriate investment in infrastructure. There are 26,000 households on the social housing waiting list. In the last 18 months to September the very high needs list rose by 82 per cent in this state—82 per cent. That is totally and utterly unacceptable and an indictment on this government.

We now have one of the worst rates of rental stress in the country. I was in Cairns last week; Cairns has the second-highest rental stress rate in the country. People are struggling. Construction is not keeping up with demand. In fact, if social housing construction kept up to date with population growth, we would have 6,000 more social housing properties in this state. They are so desperately needed. Mr Deputy Speaker, let me give you some evidence. Last week, along with a few other shadow ministers I spoke with the Community Housing Industry Association, the peak body for community housing. They told me something which at first I found hard to believe. They said that over the last five years the number of social houses has increased by 0.6 per cent—0.6 per cent. I thought that surely after all the crowing from the Minister for Housing about the construction that is supposedly taking place that cannot be true.

I went back and checked a few questions I noticed. In 2015 when the Labor government came into power there were 66,939 houses managed by the government and community housing sector. At the end of 2020 that number increased to 68,719, so that is an increase of 1,780. That is what they crow about all the time. What is the missing figure? The missing figure is how many have been sold in that period of time. Over the last five years the number of blocks of land and properties that have been sold is 2,000. That is actually more than have been built, so that 0.6 per cent is correct. That is a disgrace and this government has been found out.


They speak up a big game with regards to what they are doing in social housing, but they betray the people they claim they represent. They betray them. They are not putting roofs over the heads of the people who are vulnerable. In fact the other figure we are looking forward to seeing is how many people are applying for social housing now but are being ruled ineligible. They do not even get on the list; they are ruled ineligible. I am getting many anecdotal stories of people, particularly older people, who cannot even get on what they now call the register of need.

However, it gets worse. That is the situation now but this government are going to make it worse with the policies they are planning to introduce. They are planning to introduce minimum accessible housing standards that the Minister for Public Works has championed at the national level. This means that every house will have to be built to a particular standard for the disabled. On the face of things, that sounds great but the cost of construction for every house will increase by at least \$6,000, when we are trying to make housing more affordable. Then we have the best practice principle, which is basically the reward for unions to make sure they increase the construction cost by 30 per cent, and that is what the consumer has to wear.

I now get to the final one—and I am really looking forward to seeing if they are game enough to bring this forward—and it is the rental reforms which are going to be a further disincentive for people to invest in houses to rent. They will be told that they must have a pet in their property, even if they do not want it, and that the tenant can do minor alterations and minor renovations to the property without seeking permission. They will also be told that leases will basically mean nothing, that they cannot

move somebody on at the end of the lease. That is Bill Shorten's negative gearing campaign all over again. I do not think they are game enough to come before the people of Queensland and make our housing crisis even worse because of their ridiculous left-wing policies.

Torres Strait Islands, Health Infrastructure

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.51 pm): How wonderful it is to represent a government that is listening and delivering to Queenslanders right across this state. The Torres Strait would have to be one of the most unique and typically one of the most complex regions in Queensland, affected by remoteness and isolation. When it comes to health, we must consider the unique geographical make-up of the region to ensure we are reaching those living in the most vulnerable communities in Far North Queensland.

The Torres Strait Islands spread across some 48,000 square kilometres, with Saibai Island being just four kilometres away from Papua New Guinea. I say that again because I want to highlight how vast Queensland really is. We share an international border with Papua New Guinea, and we are the only state in Australia to face those challenges. I have mentioned that before for two reasons: because I want us to always remember the vastness of the region and because any investment in remote communities in Queensland is vital as we are addressing the social outcomes for First Nations people right across this state. Any investment that is put into communities is used to work with those communities to alleviate some of the pressures that come with remoteness and isolation in this state.

The further north you travel, the more the impact on social outcomes widens and this directly contributes to the health outcomes. I know people already know this. There are vast challenges for all of our communities. I will always stand in this parliament to advocate strongly for the challenges of my communities because, like I said, remoteness is always going to work against any outcomes in my communities. Investing in the right infrastructure to make health care more accessible is something I am really passionate about. Coming from the Torres Strait and having lived and grown up on one of the outer islands, I know firsthand how challenging it is. I have seen the effects it has had on people. It is about listening and delivering to the needs of all people, whatever challenges they face.

When it comes to health, I am proud to represent this government because we are out there listening to the community and delivering on the demands of communities. Last year the Palaszczuk government announced a \$46 million investment for the redevelopment of Thursday Island Hospital as part of this government's commitment to addressing the social outcomes for people in the region. This was on top of the \$17 million we already committed to redevelop four outer island primary healthcare centres in the region. Further out in the Torres Strait on the outer islands, there is only a clinic to support the vast health needs of the people in those regions. I am really excited about this investment into the hospital. I know the benefit that it will have for people in the region. It will mean a lot for people from the outer islands of the Torres Strait, as we have only one hospital in the region to cater for all the different needs of people throughout the region.


The redeveloped TI Hospital will have 31 inpatient beds, seven emergency department spaces, an operating theatre with four recovery spaces, a birthing suite, a birthing pool and additional procedural space that can also be used for emergency birthing. I cannot express enough how excited I am by this. I cannot express enough how proud I am of a government that is looking to address inequity across the board but more so inequity related to remoteness. We know how challenging it can be because the services they need are usually away from their homes and people have to make the big sacrifice of leaving their home and family behind. This investment will bring services closer to home and increase our service capacity at the hospital. We want people to stay in communities so I am really excited about this.

DEBT REDUCTION AND SAVINGS BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1522, on motion of Mr Dick—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (2.56 pm): I rise to make a short contribution on the ill-named Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. I note the member for Kawana suggested that the 'Debt Non-Reduction and Minimal Savings Bill' could be a more appropriate name. Perhaps another name for the bill could be 'Treasurer's Tool to Fool the Ratings Agencies'. I did note in the Treasurer's

contribution that he made the point that the non-government members commented on the naming of the bill in their statement of reservation but he did not reject the comment. He did not reject what we said; he simply waffled on a bit about a few other bits and pieces.

I note the bill does not achieve what the title of the bill sets out. There is no effort to reduce debt. It further reduces transparency and oversight, with the closure of two of the few remaining independent bodies to provide economic oversight and advice—Building Queensland and the Queensland Productivity Commission—and is based on heavily inflated valuations of the titles office to create a new entity to prevent a further credit rating downgrade. I note the comparison of the valuations given to titles offices in other states, with New South Wales being given \$2.6 billion and Victoria being given \$2.85 billion. Somehow or other the Queensland entity is valued at \$4.1 billion.

I also note that the supposed \$3 billion suggested by the Treasurer as somehow being a savings or a benefit to the people of Queensland is a little bit out of whack. I think the Deputy Under Treasurer was somewhat supportive of that view in his contribution in the committee hearings. I asked the question several times about where the savings were coming from, what they were and so forth. The Deputy Under Treasurer went on to outline \$600,000 a year over five years—I think it was something like that—equating to \$3 million. When I questioned him I said, ‘Sorry, Deputy Under Treasurer. That is \$3 million. We are actually talking about \$3 billion in savings, so where are they?’ I think he said words to the effect—and I do not want to misquote him terribly—‘That’s government policy.’ In other words—

Mr Power interjected.


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Order! Pause the clock. Member for Logan, you are interjecting directly at the member on his feet. I ask that you cease your interjections.

Mr CRANDON: Thank you for your protection, Madam Deputy Speaker. The non-government statement of reservation states—

By moving the “\$4.1 bn” into the Queensland Future Fund the government then proposes to use the “assets” to invest and get returns to pay down interest. Given Queensland’s interest bill is north of \$3bn per annum then the return on these assets must be going in to one of the greatest get-rich schemes of all time.

In that regard I recall the Treasurer’s contribution in which he suggested that a two-page document with our signatures on the third page was a little bit light on in terms of a statement of reservation. However, I would suggest that the explanation from the Treasurer in relation to where the \$3 billion is coming from is a little bit light on too, particularly given the Deputy Under Treasurer was only able to come up with around \$3 million.

There are many other aspects to the bill that I note the deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach, and the member for Kawana made comment on in their contributions. In relation to the \$3 billion over four years promised by the Treasurer in his first reading speech, I note the committee was told it was only \$3 million. It should be noted that no-one from the business and economic community spoke to the committee at the hearing. This demonstrates what little impact the bill will have on the Queensland economy. Those on this side of the House oppose the bill.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (3.02 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. This bill will implement a range of debt reduction and savings measures which will deliver benefits in relation to state debt. These measures include the transfer of the Queensland Titles Registry to the first Queensland Future Fund through the Debt Retirement Fund and restructuring a number of other entities. This bill provides the mechanism for the transfer of functions, assets, liabilities and employees from the Titles Registry to the new entity Registry Co. The Queensland Titles Registry provides an essential service to Queenslanders and the property and development sector, processing over 600,000 lodgements and over \$2.3 million in paid title services just in 2020. Registry Co will be owned by the state through the Queensland Future Fund and will form part of a trust managed by QIC.

This bill does not in any way alter Queensland’s system of indefeasible title once the title’s registry functions have transferred to Registry Co. The bill provides the state with the power to protect the registers and ensure the delivery of services under the new operating arrangements. The state will still continue to guarantee title to land on registration and compensate where required.

Under the new arrangements, Registry Co will have the power to set title registry fees for each financial year. However, the bill does ensure that fees can only increase each financial year up to a cap linked to increases in the consumer price index. This bill also provides that the fees for the financial year must be published on the website at least 30 days before the start of each financial year. This fee-setting provision of the bill provides the public and industry with certainty and transparency.

The inclusion of the Queensland Titles Registry in the Debt Retirement Fund will improve the state's debt-to-revenue ratio when it is assessed by ratings agencies. Along with the Palaszczuk government's contribution to the Debt Retirement Fund of \$5 billion, as outlined in the COVID-19 Fiscal and Economic Review, the inclusion of these investments will improve Queensland's debt-to-revenue ratio by approximately nine per cent as assessed by rating agencies calculating our debt burden.

More importantly the passage of this bill, which enables the transfer of the Titles Registry into the Future Fund, will mean that it is not an asset that can be sold. The roles and responsibilities of that function will be secured in public ownership. We know that if there is a body or agency that is performing well, the opposition will eye it off for sale. They will not be able to put together justification for selling it, which usually results in further dollars in donor pockets. The Queensland taxpayer will continue to own the value of the Titles Registry as an asset that can be offset against it, thereby reducing our net debt.

Some of the savings outlined in this bill relate to the restructuring of public entities in order to improve the efficiency of government. The amalgamation or restructure of public entities into existing government departmental structures means that their specialised expertise, roles and responsibilities will be transferred to relevant departments to better drive outcome for communities and the public sector.

The bill abolishes the Queensland Productivity Commission as a statutory entity, allowing for the integration of the commission's functions into the Queensland Treasury as the Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction. This new office will be focused on the current and future economic challenges facing Queensland. It will have a role in developing policies to promote economic recovery and productivity growth. With this inclusion into the Treasury, the advice provided by the new office will be more practical in nature when aligned with the government's economic strategy.

The other restructure I would like to touch on is the abolition of the Public Safety Business Agency, or PSBA. This will be enacted by the repeal of the Public Safety Business Agency Act 2014. This is one government agency I have had my fair share of dealings with. The agency was initially created with the aim of consolidating and delivering shared corporate services for agencies such as the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and the Inspector-General Emergency Management. Although the aim was to reduce waste and duplication, what actually occurred, as determined by a number of reviews into the agency since its inception, was an increase in complexity of governance and service delivery, which resulted in increased inefficiencies and lack of responsiveness to customer agencies. This in turn led to increased risks and rising costs across the various portfolios. Despite the stated objectives and benefits extolled by the Newman government when it was established and despite constant refinement, augmentation and adjustment, despite the dedicated energy and expertise of PSBA staff, that organisation failed to achieve these objectives and benefits.

Prior to the 2017 election, we announced our plan to disestablish PSBA, and I can tell the House that this announcement was roundly supported by QPS members. Having dealt with HR matters prior to the establishment of PSBA and after its establishment as a service delivery agency, I can say that it failed to meet some of its most basic levels of customer and consumer satisfaction. Efficiencies in consolidation of services did not result in efficiencies for the end user.


Previously in the QPS, an officer could approach a district or regional HR officer to discuss the best way of managing or processing a HR matter—quite a regular occurrence in an occupation with complex rostering and leave provisions and high rates of worker rehabilitation. A game plan could be worked out and correct applications with the required data could be submitted. With PSBA, no-one had any idea who they could speak to regarding a complex HR issue other than calling a 1300 number. Nine times out of 10 the person on the other end of the line had little to no idea about how to respond to such complex matters and occupation-specific inquiries. When advice was given and an application submitted, it would inevitably be rejected and have to be applied for again. It caused a great deal of unnecessary stress for people who were on leave for a range of health reasons to have their leave cut short or for some to have to return to work in order to recomplete paperwork. This loss of expertise within the original owning agency and subsequent failure to meet the needs of staff within those agencies created an underlying lack of faith and confidence in PSBA. It is interesting to note that PSBA considered the supported agencies as their customers, not the end users of their services.

The just under 1,100 PSBA employees delivering services will return to government departments that the agency supported. The QPS and QFES will absorb all PSBA functions. Staff and functions will be reintegrated based on demand workload, the needs of receiving frontline services, the legislative

requirements of the departments and individual employee considerations. Queensland Government Air will transition to the QPS and will continue to meet service delivery requirements. ICT services will be primarily centralised within the QPS as its largest client, with critical service delivery aspects of ICT remaining unchanged.

Years after the LNP's last shot at government in this state—they were unceremoniously dumped—fear and distrust are still felt and acknowledged, even at my local police station. After a stint in the comms room, I remember being in the meal room when the conversation turned to the staff loss that occurred at the station. Between the PSBA realignment, the Public Service purge and the commissioned officers cuts, the station had lost a significant number of staff—sworn and unsworn. Everyone else in the station, mostly the uniformed staff, had to pick up the slack for these cuts. One of the senior officers referred to it as 'the night of the long knives', having to come into work the next day to tell people that they were no longer required when clearly the evidence and workload of the staff pointed to the opposite.

The measures contained within this bill are sensible savings measures that do not cut frontline services and do not hurt Queenslanders. I know that the opposition will complain that the \$3 million in direct savings foreshadowed in this bill is not enough, but that kind of money is welcomed in my community if those opposite want to beg off. That kind of money, or even a portion of it, would be welcomed by the Centre for Women & Co. providing domestic and family violence counselling in Logan. It would be welcomed by the Beenleigh Housing & Development Company working to make homes affordable for local Indigenous families. It would be welcomed by our junior sporting clubs that are valiantly struggling to provide adequate sporting pathways in facilities that are over 50 years old. It is outrageous that members of the opposition would turn up their noses at such savings when in other instances they are calling on everyone else to tighten their belts and save money where they can. I support this bill. I commend it to the House.

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (3.11 pm): As a member of the Economics and Governance Committee, I rise to speak to the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021, which is arguably Labor spin doctors' finest work. Last September, as part of the COVID-19 Fiscal and Economic Review, the Queensland Treasurer told Queenslanders that \$3 billion would be saved over four years via the Queensland Future Fund and a review of whole-of-government resource and agency functions. At a public briefing on the bill the committee heard the truth from the Deputy Under Treasurer that just \$3 million worth of savings has been identified—a far cry from the \$3 billion the Treasurer had spruiked. This was not the only shock for the committee. In fact, the public briefing gave the committee less than 50 minutes to consider the amendment or repeal of 18 acts of parliament. It is just like Labor to rush, to not meaningfully consult and to ram through a raft of cover-ups.

Even though Jackie Trad's brainchild, the Queensland Future Fund, is just 18 months old, it already needs a financial makeover in light of asset losses. The Treasurer's hope to make some cash following a government resource and agency review can only be described as a complete farce, considering that the result was the proposed abolition of the state's independent economic review body, the Queensland Productivity Commission.

Queenslanders do not need any more evidence that this Labor government misled and misrepresents them. Here we are again, listening to more outrageous claims about economic recovery when, in reality, there is nothing in this bill that will actually reduce Queensland's debt or deliver significant savings to the public purse.

The hallmarks of this bill simply show Labor's capacity for financial manipulation, commonly referred to as 'cooking the books'. This bill is not about the Queensland economy. That is a tale Labor would have you believe. The mere fact that not one Queensland business or economic community spoke to the committee about the bill is one of the many red flags.

Let us go back to where the deception began. When introducing the bill the Treasurer trumpeted the following words of wisdom—

Those dollars mattered, hard work matters, prudence matters and savings matter. That is a lesson that I am now applying as the Treasurer of Queensland. It is a lesson that lies at the heart of this bill.

That is ironic. I put to the Treasurer that his money lesson is not at the heart of this bill and suggest that instead the matter at the heart of this bill looks a lot more like 'deception matters'. In his speech the Treasurer's words of wisdom morph into a delusional claim. He said—

This bill represents a comprehensive reform of the business and the balance sheet of the Queensland government.

I put to the Treasurer that misrepresenting the truth is not reform; it is a cover-up. Finally, the delusional claim transcended into a scam, one embodied in the very title of the bill. The Treasurer said—

The Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021 is designed to do exactly what the title says: reduce the burden of debt and deliver savings.

As a member of the committee that reviewed the bill and considered 15 stakeholder submissions and attended public hearings, I can say that it does absolutely none of those things. This is just another meaningless, lofty claim from this deceitful government. This bill simply demonstrates that the Palaszczuk government has no idea how a balance sheet actually works, which is also why its members cannot reconcile fact and fiction. The fact is that at the hands of those opposite the state's revenue was \$12.3 billion lower than predicted and the state's debt is forecast to reach \$130 billion in just two years.

This omnibus bill is Labor's way forward to get Queensland out of the economic mess it put us in. What is the plan? Assign an arbitrary value to the Queensland Titles Registry of \$4.1 billion and not explain how? Transfer what was once a fiscal liability, the Queensland Future Fund, as Registry Co and list it as an asset? The committee did not hear the basis for the inflated value of the Titles Registry, despite asking. When compared to New South Wales's and Victoria's leases on their titles offices, at a value of \$2.6 billion and \$2.8 billion respectively, \$4.1 billion simply does not stack up.

Labor's plan is that the establishment of Registry Co is then used to offset debt—not pay down debt—so as to improve the revenue ratio in order to satisfy the credit rating agencies but, with an annual interest expense in excess of \$3 billion, the returns on a \$5.7 billion fund would not contribute significantly to pay this expense. Once again, it does not stack up.

AgForce Queensland submitted that the proposal to transfer the Titles Registry would alter longstanding and proven management arrangements and that commercial imperatives to shareholders will increasingly drive decision-making, potentially over the interests of the public good. AgForce submitted that secure title arrangements are so important to the Queensland economy that they should be directly managed by the government.

Together Queensland emphasised its strong opposition to the partial or complete privatisation of any government service such as the Titles Registry, expressed concern that existing corporate knowledge may be lost without careful transition planning and said that assurances must be made that staff are protected from civil litigation.


Turning from the creation of the Queensland Future Fund to another Labor PR stunt, I refer to the Queensland Productivity Commission, the QPC. It has gone from being a Labor election commitment in 2015 to the scrapheap. Why? It is because Labor needs to hide its poor governance record. In fact, following a number of investigations into government business, the QPC released a damning report that demonstrated government productivity had declined since 2015 under Labor. The QPC has been an independent voice raising important public policy issues over the past five years. It has led important reviews in relation to the NDIS, imprisonment and recidivism, red-tape reduction and electricity pricing. Now more than ever, Queensland needs independent voices challenging policymakers on all sides of parliament and at all layers of government.

The Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021 also amends the Financial Accountability Act 2009 so that the government is not required to pay to publish public notices in print newspapers; rather, it allows each department to share a notice on their social media page. As if the death knell for print media in isolated regional communities were not deafening enough, removing free access to information is simply a human rights concern. All of the locations listed by the Treasurer as places where government advertising would not be placed in fact boasted locally printed independent newspapers. This is yet another unfounded and lazy claim from out-of-touch Labor as to the real nature of life in regional towns.

The Country Press Association stated at the public hearing that important decisions made by government, mining companies or developers must be shared with impacted citizens and therefore must be published in a public place. It went on to say that the loss of transparency as a result of the amendments is a new liability, not a new asset—indeed, a retrograde step.

In its misguided and deceptive approach to reduce debt and increase savings, other changes proposed in this bill include abolishing Building Queensland, BQ, which was established by the Palaszczuk government in 2015 to improve governance and accountability on major infrastructure projects such as the Gabba and Cross River Rail. Like many other initiatives of this government, BQ was just another PR stunt designed to offer a false sense of confidence. The repeal of the Public Safety Business Agency Act sees the movement of the operations of this agency to QPS and QFES. In a controversial proposal, this bill also sought to make technical amendments to the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019.

Labor has assured Queenslanders many times that it would facilitate the continued functioning of Queensland's institutions and economy 'to the extent possible' in response to the pandemic. It seems it missed 'the extent possible' by about \$2.97 billion. Its glossy, much touted economic recovery plan has completely disappeared. It broke its election promise to borrow \$4 billion and instead increased borrowings by \$2.8 billion which is merely servicing debt and keeping the lights on. The Queensland economy is consistently the worst performing economy in Australia and the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021 cements this position for the foreseeable future. The title of the bill is a farce and I support the amendment circulated by the member for Kawana. This more accurately should be titled the 'Debt Non-Reduction and Minimal Savings Bill'.

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (3.21 pm): I rise to speak on the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. This bill shows that the Palaszczuk Labor government is focused on ensuring that prudent fiscal responsibility continues to be the hallmark of this administration. We have heard from those opposite about their doom-and-gloom forecast for our state and we on this side of the chamber accept that it is pretty hard to have to stare into the electoral abyss delivered upon them by the people of Queensland—we get that—but really?

Those opposite ask why the people of Queensland made the choice at the last election, but the people of Queensland saw that it was only this side of the House that had an eye on the threat unfolding around us. It was the Palaszczuk Labor government that showed leadership at a time of great need and gave the people of Queensland—in particular the regions, including the electorate of Hervey Bay—the direction needed to take us through one of the worst crises this state and indeed this country has had to face for generations. It showed that this government wisely set about ensuring that, where possible, the government kept itself flexible, nimble and dynamic and it continues to keep government lean and mean to respond and recover for the coming years.

The bill outlines several measures to maintain this responsible fiscal management. With the measures outlined in the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021, the government is continuing to set out a path that makes certain that, coming off the back of a strong health response to COVID-19, we pivot towards a strong economic recovery, and the proof is in the results. The recovery in Queensland has been impressive. Queensland has bounced back stronger and faster than any other state within Australia.

Let us put this into perspective. International countries are still locked down. We have seen horrendous scenes of despair from countries like India and Brazil. We see the USA and the UK struggling to get on top of COVID-19, damaging their citizens and their economies. Other states are recovering, but the Palaszczuk Labor government has put Queensland at the top of that list. Because of the Premier's leadership, we are safer and stronger.

We are in no way totally secure from further outbreaks, but the Palaszczuk government led the way in making sure the borders were closed when needed—a sensible and safe approach. This is in stark contrast to the opposition, which wanted the borders open. That is just shameful and has proven to be plainly wrong. Let us contemplate what those actions, if taken, would have done to Queensland. It would have brought Queensland to a stop. Queenslanders would have been more seriously ill, their businesses closed and our hospitals overrun with the sick and potentially the dying. This government's safe and strong management has succeeded. It has succeeded in ensuring that all Queenslanders benefit from the economic recovery underway here and bills like the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021 will enable Queensland to remain strong.

The objectives of the bill are to support the state's contribution to the Queensland Future (Debt Retirement) Fund; to abolish Building Queensland and the Building Queensland board and integrate Building Queensland staff, assets, records and resources into the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning; to change the governance structure of the National Injury Insurance Agency; to repeal the Public Safety Business Agency Act so that machinery-of-government changes may reintegrate the Public Safety Business Agency into public safety entities; to abolish the Queensland Productivity Commission and integrate its functions into Treasury Queensland; and to mandate that legislation that requires or authorises print advertising or publication by government agencies will be satisfied by digital electronic advertising or publication, subject to appropriate exemptions.

As mentioned, the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021 will implement a range of debt reduction and savings measures identified as part of the Palaszczuk government's savings reduction plan. This legislation provides the mechanism for the Queensland Titles Registry to be transferred to the

Queensland Future Fund through the Debt Retirement Fund. The inclusion of the Queensland Titles Registry in the Debt Retirement Fund will improve the state's debt-to-revenue ratio when assessed by ratings agencies and demonstrates the Palaszczuk government's measured and responsible plan to invest today to pay down state debt into the future.

This bill does more on this front. It ensures that a public asset like the Titles Registry is secured in public ownership and that it will not be sold off by a future LNP government to satisfy its privatisation and asset-selling agenda that always appears and will definitely reappear with Campbell Newman and Lawrence Springborg back behind the scenes. Yes, the puppet-masters are back to get their hands on our assets with the full support of the Leader of the Opposition, who has form on this when he sat around the cabinet table ruling lines through the livelihoods of decent, hardworking Queenslanders, many in the Hervey Bay electorate.

That is why those opposite hate the bill, because with this bill the Titles Registry is placed, rightly so, into the state's Future Fund—working for all Queenslanders and making sure that the Queensland taxpayer will get the full value of the Titles Registry on the people's balance sheet for all Queenslanders and not for one of its LNP corporate mates who are hankering to get their private hands on the funds. Sorry, guys. It will be on our balance sheet offsetting debt, not being sold off under some fake argument for asset sales and privatisation. The people of the Hervey Bay electorate remember the cutting, the selling and the sacking of those opposite. They will never forget. I worked in one of those departments at the time as I watched in horror—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Order! Pause the clock. Cease your interjections, members. I cannot hear the member on his feet.

Mr TANTARI: I worked in one of those departments at the time as I watched in horror as those opposite, particularly the now opposition leader, the member for Broadwater, and his mates, slowly privatised everything in sight, destroying the fabric of regional communities by sacking government workers, slashing government-run employment programs and removing millions of dollars out of community groups.

I watched as good men and women were left waiting every day, mute from fear, hoping that they would not be tapped on the shoulder, that the fabled 'box man' would not turn up at their desks and stand over them, giving them 15 minutes to clean out their stuff as they were escorted out the door—disproportionally, I might add, of those who had union membership, particularly of the Public Service Together union—destroying their career of service and loyalty to the Queensland people. It was shameful, just shameful.

We will not forget the health workers—the nurses, the midwives and the administration officers like Jason and Wendy. I will never forget what the LNP reaped on them—lost jobs, careers and families destroyed, regions decimated. For them I stand here and fight to keep the LNP from ever doing that again—union strong, union proud.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr TANTARI: Did they care less? No. In the pursuit of their privatising agenda, the list of destruction—


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Member for Mudgeeraba, cease your interjections across the chamber please.

Mr TANTARI: Did they care less? No. In the pursuit of their privatising agenda, the list of destruction to regional Queensland by those opposite was endless and they did not care what that meant to jobs and livelihoods. Thankfully the voters of Queensland said that enough is enough and removed one of the worst governments in living memory from being in charge of our future. It is important to realise that this bill is to make sure that government is reducing those overall costs of what is considered now to be outdated and needing modification.

Another area of the bill that will increase savings for Queenslanders is to allow digital advertising to replace print advertising. The measure is intended to reduce the quantity of print advertising and publications by government agencies and to reduce associated advertising and publication costs to government agencies. Governments need to move with the times and the reality is that people are increasingly getting their news online. Some notices will still be exempt from the advertising changes and they will include public health and safety matters, communities served by regional newspapers, matters related to courts and tribunals, firearms amnesties and matters relating to specific locations or people.

The Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021 implements public sector efficiency and moderation and is a sensible and measured way to ensure public assets work harder for the people. The bill restructures several public entities as part of the Palaszczuk government's ongoing commitment to deliver savings and provide efficiency in government. The amalgamation and restructure of public entities into existing government departments means that their specialised expertise roles and responsibilities will be transferred to develop relevant departments and to better drive outcomes for the community in the public sector.

That is right: they will continue to build a vibrant and resilient public sector—those dirty words that those opposite shudder to say. Let me repeat: public sector. These are the men and women who, on a day-to-day basis, deal in the currency of public betterment and service, not profit and greed. The Palaszczuk government values these individuals and what they do to make this state a better place to live and grow. This bill will ensure that there will be job security; it is about protecting jobs and building community. I congratulate the Premier for her strong leadership and ensuring that prudent fiscal responsibility continues to be the hallmark of this administration, along with growing jobs, building assets and keeping Queenslanders and the Hervey Bay electorate safe and strong. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (3.31 pm): It is very obvious that the member for Hervey Bay has not been here long and has already drunk the Kool Aid and cannot wait to get home to the local meeting and sing *Solidarity Forever*, with Bob Hawke in the background.

Mr Saunders: We stand for something; unlike you.

Mr MANDER: I take the interjection. The member for Maryborough stands for bad dress. This is a Clayton's bill. This is the debt reduction bill you have when you are not having a debt reduction bill. This is a great con job that the Treasurer is trying to pull on the people of Queensland. He has conned his backbenchers. They all think this is actually going to make a difference. To think this has anything to do with debt reduction is the greatest con that has been brought into this parliament for some time. If those opposite believe that, those opposite will believe anything.

As has already been signalled, the appropriate name of the bill should be the 'Debt Non-Reduction and Minimal Savings Bill'. I think the name 'questionable savings bill' is even better. This is a joke of a bill. This is smoke and mirrors. This bill has absolutely no credibility. In fact, it has as much credibility as the Treasurer's economic recovery plan, that 60-page document that had a few words and a lot of pictures. Does a document with a lot of pictures and a few words sound familiar? We have recently heard about another one of those. It is entertaining reading. One page is dot points about what they are going to do going forward. The Treasurer's economic recovery plan is absolutely entertaining. It does not get any better than that.

This is a con job that the Treasurer is pulling on the people of Queensland which the backbenchers in the Labor Party have been sucked in by. This is from a Treasurer who had the hide to come in here and talk about broken promises. Who can forget the Bligh government, the government that had Minister Hinchliffe and Minister Dick around its table? They said there would be no asset sales. What happened a couple of weeks after the election? Asset sales! What happened to that money? It was washed down the drain and we went into further debt. There was absolutely no benefit to the economy whatsoever. The LNP decided to do something novel. We sought a mandate. We did not get it and we did not sell one single asset. It was the Bligh government that sold the assets of this state.

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): I am prepared to allow some latitude with the debate given the topic and subject matter, but when I can no longer hear the member on his feet I will ask you all to cease your interjections and I will start issuing warnings.

Mr MANDER: Thank you for your protection, Madam Deputy Speaker. The hypocrisy of this mob knows no end. They have the gall to come in here and lecture this side of the House about economic management and performance when they have absolutely zero plan. The Treasurer is telling the truth—and I could not believe it when he did it—when he told the House what motivated this bill, and that was to maintain the credit rating. Who was responsible for the last downgrade of the credit rating? Some of the blow-ins who have just come in will not be aware of that. It was the Bligh government.

Dr Rowan: Andrew Fraser!

Mr MANDER: I will take that interjection from the member for Moggill. It was the Bligh government with Andrew Fraser. It was under the former administration that our credit rating was downgraded. This Treasurer is panicking that the same will happen again. For the benefit of the backbenchers on the Labor side of the House, this is shuffling money from one side and putting it over

to another side. It is smoke and mirrors. It will make not one ounce of difference to our debt reduction. In fact, it will probably be worse because the revenue we used to have on the profit and loss is not gone; it is on the balance sheet. It will make absolutely no difference whatsoever. This is from a government that supposedly has an economic plan.

We have the second worst unemployment rate. We vary between the worst and the second worst unemployment rate in the country. This government blames JobKeeper. Nobody else blames JobKeeper. In fact, everybody else's unemployment went down. This government has to blame someone. They blame Canberra. If it is not Canberra, it is COVID. If it is not COVID, it is Campbell. They have to blame somebody seven years afterwards, even when they have spent 25 out of the last 30 years in government. That is what is important and the people of Queensland know it and will not be conned by this.

This bill is ironic. It is about debt reduction and better economic management. We are getting rid of the Queensland Productivity Commission, one of the very good initiatives of the previous treasurer, Speaker Pitt, to make sure that we are efficient in relation to economic issues and the implementation of programs. This government is getting rid of it because they do not like bad news. They do not like it when the Productivity Commission comes back and says they are doing it wrong, wasting money or stuffing it up. They started referring less and less to the Productivity Commission because they do not want bad news.


It is the same situation when it comes to Building Queensland. It was the brainchild of another treasurer, Jackie Trad. It was a ship in the night that has passed. This government is getting rid of it because they do not like programs being analysed or proper business cases being implemented. In fact, now when we ask those basic questions everything is commercial-in-confidence. If the returns are that great for the state why is the public not allowed to know? If you let us know and we think it is a great idea, we will support it. How can we support it when we have no details? The Productivity Commission is another example. It will become part of the department. Do members think it will be independent? It is an absolute waste of time.

This is part of the con job. When it comes to the valuation of the titles office, again there is no detail whatsoever. If the layman sees what New South Wales and Victoria were valued at and that Queensland has a value of at least \$1½ billion, are they to believe that the activity in New South Wales and Victoria is less than Queensland? It defies logic and common sense. Whatever the backbenchers who have been here for a few moments are told in the party room to do they will do. They read the speech they are given that day without any idea about what they are reading. It is embarrassing.

The fact that there were no submissions from anybody in the economic sector—an issue that has already been brought up by a couple of speakers—is a very valid point. That is the contempt they had for this bill. They can see that this bill is exactly what we are saying it is: a con job. That is why we cannot support the bill. If we thought this bill would make one bit of difference to debt reduction then we would support it, but we cannot support a con job. This is a facade and we are not going to play along with it. We have to speak against this bill and we will vote against it because it is plainly wrong.

This government does not have an economic agenda. As has been mentioned already, this week there is only one bill before the House. Isn't it amazing that we now have unlimited time to debate a bill? There is no business motion before the House. When there were three or four bills on the *Notice Paper* they talked about how important that was, to make sure that we did everything efficiently, but now we can speak for as long as we like. Everyone opposite will speak because they have to drag out the debate for the whole week. Tomorrow some nonsense motion will be moved to indulge in a bit of Canberra bashing and that will waste 1½ or maybe two hours, depending on how the time is going. The address-in-reply will be dragged out for the rest of the year to fill in wherever it is needed. It is embarrassing. I had school kids in here today and they asked what was on the agenda this week. I said, 'We've got one bill that they will drag out for so long as they can because they have nothing else to do.'

The government has no economic agenda. The Treasurer has no economic credibility and this bill is evidence of that. Eventually this government will run out of cover. Eventually people will see them for what they are—that is, a government that works on false pretences. And the tsunami is coming: the Bligh tsunami is coming and I cannot wait for that day.

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (3.41 pm): The member for Everton has taught us quite a lot about wasting time. I rise to speak in support of the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. The LNP has always had a slash-and-burn mentality when it comes to economic management. Their agenda of cuts, sackings and selling the state's assets has hurt Queenslanders in the past. I support the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill because it is all about protecting Queenslanders from the LNP's hard-line agenda.

Two weekends ago I had a stall at the Ipswich Show and last Sunday I had another stall at the Gathering Festival, which was held at the Ipswich Turf Club. The Ipswich Show saw about 30,000 people walk through the gates over three days and the Gathering Festival saw around 8,000 people walk through the gates in one day. As members can imagine, that gave me ample opportunity to speak to many people from my electorate and surrounding areas, including Brisbane and Toowoomba. Even at those recent events people came up to me to recount their experiences of losing their jobs under the Campbell Newman LNP government. The 14,000 cuts to the Public Service had a devastating and long-ranging impact on people's lives. People have not forgotten.

When I was elected, Ipswich was hurting because of the LNP's mass sackings. People told me they wanted to see good frontline services restored and when the Palaszczuk government was elected in 2015 we committed to restoring those frontline services. However, the LNP does not seem to have learned their lesson from their brief time in government. They have not reflected on the incredible impact their cuts had on people's lives and the experiences of those people, whose lives were turned upside down by the LNP's sharply ideological agenda of cuts, sackings and the selling of public assets. It is pretty clear that there is no change to those views. I think they are quite content to be on that side of the House.

Only Labor can be trusted to make sensible and prudent savings in a way that does not hurt Queenslanders. The savings that are being made through this bill will support frontline services and ensure that they are sustainable and focused on the public's needs. Of course, the LNP say these savings do not go far enough but what they really mean and what they really want to see is hard cuts. Investing in our frontline services is not in the LNP's DNA, just like when they were in government and sacked 14,000 public servants, including 4,000 health workers and that included 1,800 midwives, and cut infrastructure spending to record lows. We know that they would be ready to do it all over again. At the Ipswich Show and at the Gathering Festival what I heard loud and clear was that people have not forgotten.

Mr Harper: They've never apologised.

Ms HOWARD: They have never apologised. They just want to stay in opposition. People have not forgotten the LNP's slash-and-burn agenda under Campbell Newman. Ipswich has not forgotten Campbell Newman's cuts to 124 hospital and health jobs at West Moreton Hospital and Health Service, including 92 nurses and midwives. Ipswich cannot forget that under the LNP we saw a massive spike in unemployment as a direct result of the slashing and axing of government services and programs such as Skilling Queenslanders for Work, despite an independent economic assessment of the program. It was not just a mean-spirited thing to cut it; it was economically stupid.

Ipswich has not forgotten that Campbell Newman cut vital community services such as the Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service, including IRASI, the Ipswich Regional Advocacy Service. Ipswich has not forgotten when the LNP closed down the Barrett Adolescent Centre in Wacol to make way for health budget cuts. Those cuts have left a devastating human toll and sometimes have had tragic consequences.

The LNP's agenda of privatising Queensland's public assets is another reason why Queenslanders cannot afford to trust the LNP. For instance, the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill provides a mechanism for the Queensland Titles Registry to contribute to the first Queensland Future Fund, the Debt Retirement Fund, which will improve our debt-to-revenue ratio by approximately nine per cent when assessed by ratings agencies.

The contribution of the Titles Registry to the Debt Retirement Fund provides for the transfer of functions, assets, liabilities and employees from the Titles Registry to a new entity, Registry Co. This is a sensible action that will demonstrate that we have a measured and responsible plan to invest today to pay down state debt into the future. Queensland taxpayers will be getting the full value of the Titles Registry on our balance sheet, but the LNP complains about the Titles Registry being put into the Future Fund. Why? Because that means they cannot sell it off! Having the Titles Registry on our balance sheet means that the LNP can no longer make up disingenuous arguments about the need to privatise the registry and can no longer waste taxpayers' money on consultant fees to churn out phoney reports recommending that it be sold off.

The people in my electorate of Ipswich are vehemently opposed to privatising the state's strategic assets and will not fall for the LNP's sneaky privatisation agenda again. They will not forget that it was the LNP that sold Queensland Motorways, that tried selling our electricity assets and ports, and that wasted \$70 million in consultant fees in the process.

Another thing that the LNP do not like about this bill is the repeal of the Public Safety Business Agency Act. The LNP is angry that the PSBA is being abolished because they want to sell it off if they ever get back into government. The PSBA was set up by the Campbell Newman government, ostensibly to cut waste and reduce the duplication of services, but their main intention was to sell it. Privatisation is in their DNA. Since being established, the PSBA has undergone several reviews and has actually added more complexity to governance and service delivery management, and that has led to more inefficiencies, increased risk and added costs. Creating a new agency that only leads to waste, inefficiencies and increased costs to taxpayers is not what sensible economic management looks like.


This bill will also see Building Queensland and the Productivity Commission abolished as statutory entities and integrated into government agencies. They have both served Queensland well, but now it is time for them to continue their work in government agencies to help support our recovery and save money.

Another way we are making sensible savings through this bill is by making changes to the way that the government advertises public notices. More and more people are now getting their news online and there is a real risk of people not finding government notices if they are advertised only in print newspapers. We need to publish notices where people are and most people are now online. I add that the current amendments in this bill recognise that there are still many newspapers in print circulation, especially in regional Queensland. As such, an exemption is provided for print publications in regional areas where local newspapers continue to play a key role in the life of the local communities.

The LNP talk about debt and deficit as if it is some sort of disaster of biblical proportions, but I really have to hand it to them for their great capacity for cognitive dissonance on this issue. The LNP are an outrage machine when it comes to deficit, but when it comes to the Morrison government's trail of deficit, which the country will be living with for the next 10 years with no surplus in sight, the LNP are very quiet. The LNP are the experts when it comes to complaining about debt, but on Morrison's trillion dollars worth of debt there is not a peep to be heard. The LNP only use debt and deficit as a justification for cutting, selling and sacking. Their fearmongering gives them a useful excuse to scare the public into thinking that we need to cut government services and sack frontline workers.

The \$3 million in sensible savings that we are making through the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill will make a world of difference to my community when it is invested. Those savings may not sound like much to the LNP, but they can go far in places such as Ipswich. I will outline some of the things our government can do with \$3 million of savings. In the lead-up to the state election last year, the Palaszczuk government committed a million dollars towards the Ipswich-Springfield rail line strategic business case and another \$400,000 towards a transport and mobility study for Ipswich. Already that is \$1.4 million invested in supporting the future transport needs of Ipswich. Also in the lead-up to the election last year, the Palaszczuk government delivered \$900,000 to Raceview soccer club to build a new clubhouse, change rooms and a canteen, and a further \$500,000 for the Ipswich BMX Club to build a new clubhouse and canteen. There we have another \$1.4 million invested in our community which will make the world of difference to our local sporting clubs and create jobs in the process.

The savings made in this bill are sensible and necessary. Furthermore, they show that only Labor can be trusted to manage the economy and save money without hurting Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (3.50 pm): I rise to speak to the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. According to the Treasurer's introductory speech on the bill, Queenslanders will 'realise substantial financial savings' and see evidence of the Palaszczuk Labor government's 'measured and responsible plan to invest today to pay down the state debt into the future'. Nothing could be further from the truth.

When asked at the committee hearing to provide a detailed breakdown, Treasury listed the cost savings it expects to gain from the bill's measures. The savings given include: \$300,000 from the integration of the Public Safety Business Agency within QPS and QFES; \$700,000 per annum from integrating Building Queensland functions into the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning; a vague 'hundreds of thousands' from changes made to public notice advertising; and \$1.6 million from the integration of the Queensland Productivity Commission function into Treasury and integrating the NDIA into the Insurance Commission.

Treasury told the committee that direct savings would equate to \$3 million per year. Every tenet of best practice accounting and sound economic decision-making has been tossed overboard with this bill—and for what? A paltry \$3 million per year over four years when Queensland's interest bill on its debt is \$3 billion and rising. Nothing in this bill makes sense, but the government's figures around this whole business make the least sense of all.

I am very concerned with many of the measures included in the bill. My biggest concern relates to chapter 1 of the bill which will convert the operations of Queensland's Titles Registry Office into a newly formed corporate entity known as Queensland Titles Registry Pty Ltd, ACN 658 568 101. The registry will be bundled up into the Debt Retirement Fund structure and managed as a trust as part of Queensland's Future Fund.

In this bill there are many delegations, subdelegations and transitional provisions to wrap your head around. My one real takeaway from it all was that nothing about the whole deal will provide either transparency or accountability to the people of Queensland. Clause 40 of the bill in particular specifically abolishes one of the core democratic principles of our system of government: the right to judicial review. Loss of the right to judicial review is of serious concern to anyone who holds dear democratic principles in this state, as I do.

Under clause 40(3)(b), any decision of an official in accordance with the subdelegated powers they will exercise under clause 33 'can not be challenged, appealed against, reviewed, quashed, set aside or called in question in any other way, under the Judicial Review Act 1991 or otherwise (whether by the Supreme Court, another court, a tribunal or another entity)'. This is an extraordinary delegation of the Crown's power to a non-government entity—an entity operating completely outside the usual checks and balances of our democracy.

Several conveyancing lawyers I have spoken to about this bill have expressed concerns about increased risk of fraud and threat to personal data security under the corporatised monopoly geared towards making a profit. Under corporatised ownership, the information will be subject to persons employed under immediate security classifications and guidelines, working and residing at an unknown place, possibly beyond our legal reach. This is very frightening. Such blended datasets are a major area of business growth in many areas. Property information is a prime example of blended datasets. The richness of data and potential retail opportunities of the data generated by the registry will be a goldmine. The database is currently held in safe hands—protected by authorised public servants within the many arms of government, committees of parliament, the law and the judiciary, and OIC may audit or investigate any suspicious behaviour or activity with or without recourse to the courts. Ownership of the registry should remain with the government. The data in the registers is Queensland Crown copyright and must stay in public hands. It is key data for government, citizens and the economy generally.

Another concern I have is that the corporatisation of an essential service like the registry could easily lead to a significant increase in costs around buying and selling property in Queensland, despite what the government claims. The government has said that prices of regulated services will only go up in line with the consumer price index and that the government will have step-in powers. However, some of the peak bodies have their doubts, with one survey respondent saying—

We have seen with the gas industry that it is easy to get increases beyond CPI. The private operator can also introduce new products or re-brand existing products and in which cases price increases will be able to exceed CPI.

We only have to look at what has happened since essential public utilities like electricity and water were corporatised to see how quickly the profit motive trumps public interest. Big questions need to be asked about what resources, services, infrastructure and enterprises should be in public hands and what should be at the mercy of international markets and large foreign multinationals and banks. More generally, the corporatisation of Queensland public services goes to the central function of the state. It undermines the legitimacy of democratic government by handing over state powers to corporate profiteers.

It pays to remember that this is not the first time valuable assets have been transferred to the QIC. Queensland's toll road portfolio was sold to the QIC by the government about 10 years ago for \$3 billion, only to see the QIC cash in and sell it to the Transurban consortium for more than \$7 billion a few years later. Who is to say that a similar flip will not be on the cards down the track, especially given the extremely lucrative nature of the state Titles Registry office with all its rich datasets?

Other provisions in the bill remove the requirement for statutory advertising and notices to be placed in printed newspapers and allow the advertising to be placed on websites. Again there is a lack of transparency behind the decision. This will diminish even further the public's knowledge of what government is doing, especially given the increasing restrictions on access by the general public to Queensland newspapers' online sites.

For those in regional areas there is a major concern with these provisions, particularly over government transparency around sensitive area-specific decisions on land use, mining leases and other planned projects. Under the new online laws, departments and corporations could easily opt to

bury the notices online in some obscure government website or behind a paywall that will mean they remain hidden from general view. The so-called exemption from advertising in regional publications is in fact nothing of the kind. The clause simply allows regional publications to place the ad in print publications in addition to the mandatory online requirement.

I also oppose the proposed amendments to the Medicines and Poisons Act in relation to tattoo inks and pigments. There has been no credible science or evidence presented that warrants the bill's proposed action. There are no peer reviewed studies over a prolonged period that indicate any public health risks. No departmental standard has been presented to the industry. Nor has there been an explanation of how to comply with the vague compliant analysis certificate. The ramifications for the economy and the community are likely to be massive and are a clear breach of fundamental legislative principles.


The potential for these changes to push a legitimate regulated industry underground cannot be ignored either. One small business operator from Brendale said that he had significant concerns that the tattoo industry in Queensland will be destroyed as a result of the provisions in this bill. Another previously thriving small business in Queensland is to be destroyed on the whim of a technocratic state that has provided no evidence or peer reviewed studies to substantiate its claims that tattoo ink is now considered a deadly poison and should be banned.

I am also very concerned with the bill's proposal to abolish the Queensland Productivity Commission and the Office of Best Practice Regulation and integrate their functions into Queensland Treasury and the Queensland Competition Authority. The bill's proposal to abolish and re-form these agencies under Treasury will restrict greatly their commissioners' ability to undertake independent reviews and provide frank and even critical advice to the government on policies and practices post implementation. In the process, once again transparency will be the loser.

Debate, on motion of Mr Andrew, adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Callide C Power Station, Fire

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (3.59 pm): At 1.44 this afternoon there was a fire at the Callide C Power Station affecting units 3 and 4. All workers were evacuated and I am advised that there are no injuries. The fire is under control.

The sudden loss of 2,000 megawatts of generated electricity has caused outages across the state. As many as 400,000 customers initially lost power, but a short time ago supply to 300,000 of those had already been restored, with more being restored as we speak. There is a process in place to gradually and safely increase supply from other power stations. These scenarios are planned for and our recovery plan is already in place.


Families returning home tonight could find traffic signals down. If your power is off, our message is that every effort is being made to restore it. We will continue to update the public as more information comes to hand.

DEBT REDUCTION AND SAVINGS BILL

Second Reading

Resumed, on motion of Mr Dick—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (4.00 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill. It is important that we put sensible measures in place to ensure communities are protected from the cutting of services, job losses and the threat of the sell-off of our publicly owned assets while reducing government debt. Labor knows how to make prudent savings in a way that does not hurt Queenslanders. The savings in this bill will ensure our frontline services are sustainable and focused on the needs of the public.

When those opposite were in government my community was doing it particularly tough. There was a downturn in the resources industry. Mackay is a service centre for this industry. There were job losses and on top of that there were jobs that were shed by the LNP government. When the then

government should have been supporting my community they sank the boat in with sackings. They cut public sector jobs that could have kept our community bubbling along until the economy turned around. There is dignity in work and as a government we should be doing everything in our power to ensure we provide the opportunities for communities to be able to build their economies and grow jobs, not take them away.

An example of funding slashing by those opposite compared to our approach is the LNP's slashing of RoadTek funding of more than \$98 million. The Mackay Vines Creek bridges were literally crumbling. Their solution was to cut load limits and close one of the two lanes. This may seem reasonable to some, but it left the Port of Mackay, a vital piece of the transport supply chain for exports and imports into our region, in shambles. It hit our sugar industry. Trucks could only be partly full when delivering sugar to the port. This was a huge expense to industry. All of the other commodities faced the same fate. Our fertiliser and fuel trucks could only be partly full to meet the new restrictions on weight limits. A further 10 jobs were slashed at NQBP managed ports under the LNP. The very first Palaszczuk government budget allocated \$28 million to replace the Vines Creek bridges. There is a stark contrast in how we do business.

Over the next four years about \$1.371 billion will be spent on transport and roads in the Mackay Whitsunday district, estimated to support 1,250 local jobs. Some of the key projects that will be delivered or have already been delivered by the Palaszczuk government include: the \$497 million Mackay Ring Road; the \$120 million Mackay Northern Access Upgrade; the \$150 million Walkerston bypass; the \$39 million Bruce Highway safety upgrades between Mackay and Proserpine; \$39 million for the Bruce Highway safety upgrades between Proserpine and Bowen; \$25 million for the Proserpine-Shute Harbour Road duplication and intersection upgrades; \$80 million dollars for the Peak Downs Highway upgrade between Eton and Mackay; and \$377,000 to design a much needed new bus station on Mangrove Road. We are also trialling two bio-ethanol buses in partnership on the urban and school bus networks in Mackay. These buses are expected to be on the network and up and running fully by the middle of this year. There is much more being done. All of these are employment enhancing projects. These projects are engaging as many locals as possible.

We can all remember the great school sell-off. Instead of building schools like the Labor government is doing, under the LNP we faced the sell-off of our schools. I remember, morning after morning, standing outside Stuart State School with parents and students who were begging to keep their school open. The school had over 100 students and was growing, but they had to flog it off. We need to remember that we need to keep our assets in our hands for our local people.

Those opposite make a lot of noise about health. The question the LNP has never answered for Queenslanders is: if they are so invested in health why in government did they sack 4,400 health workers? To deliver services we need to have trained health workers, including nurses and midwives, which those opposite sacked. It is extraordinary to think that during a worldwide shortage of qualified nurses the LNP were sacking them in Queensland.

The Palaszczuk government has invested in health in my region. Then health minister, Cameron Dick, opened the brand new build of the Mackay Base Hospital. The heart catheter lab has been extended to be a 24/7 service, saving local lives and improving the ongoing health of heart patients. We saw the establishment of a dedicated orthopaedics ward with specially trained nurses. Patients are benefitting from dedicated care in these areas of need. Planning for the rebuild of the brand new, modern Sarina hospital is well underway.

Preventative medicine and care is also vital to our communities. It is most beneficial for communities to intervene in the health journey of people to give advice and assistance before a person becomes so ill that they need to be admitted to hospital. That is why it was a great tragedy that the LNP removed \$120 million in funding to community groups from Queensland Health. Delivering quality health care, no matter where people live in Queensland, is a priority for the Queensland government.

The privatisation of our public assets is not a way to protect our future assets. We have seen in other states the pain inflicted on everyday families with the sell-off of electricity assets as an example. They are facing huge hikes in their utility prices. Labor will maintain our assets for the future benefit of our communities.


That is why this bill will see the Titles Registry placed in the Future Fund. This will secure publicly owned assets in the hands of Queenslanders. Queensland's taxpayers will reap the benefit of the generated income by seeing state debt offset. Queenslanders, and in particular my community, have told me that they do not want to see state owned assets being sold—not their ports, not their power

assets. They were angry that those opposite wasted \$70 million before the 2015 election on consultant fees to develop their plan for privatisation. My community has said loud and clear: no thanks to privatisation.

The bill provides for \$3 million in direct savings which arise from savings in board costs, office accommodation and ancillary costs. In my community \$3 million could realise three palliative care beds or be a down payment on the Mackay Regional Council's Pioneer Valley mountain bike trail or works on the Mackay PDA waterfront. It could also see seed funding for new industries to diversify manufacturing from the sugarcane crop by-products. All of these projects could grow and build my region.

Families and the average working person need a model for government fees to be set so they are not hit with uncertainty and fees they are unable to pay. Under the LNP we saw fees continue to bounce up an incredible 3.5 per cent. Over three years this would equate to a staggering 11 per cent. The Palaszczuk government is bouncing fees in the opposite direction. We have brought them down to 1.7 per cent—the lowest index rate in a decade. To give the community certainty, charges will only be indexed in line with inflation.

As I said at the start of my contribution, there is dignity in work. That is why I am so pleased that as a government we have increased our government notifications to a mix of online and print for regional papers where they still exist. I want as many of my local companies and employers to be abreast of all opportunities to engage in state government contracts. I support the bill.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (4.10 pm): I rise to address the debate on the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. I have been listening intently to the contributions of many Labor members opposite. If we look back to the Beattie and Bligh years, it is the Labor governments that have sold assets here in Queensland. Do members remember the Queensland Motorways, \$3 billion in 2011; the Port of Brisbane, \$2.1 billion in 2010; and the Brisbane Airport, \$289 million in 2008? There is a long list that we could go through. Time will not permit us to go through all of the asset sales under those Labor governments—under the failed Beattie and Bligh years. Now we are here looking at a bill that will not achieve what its title is to be.

On 25 March this year, the Labor Treasurer introduced into the Queensland parliament the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. This legislation was subsequently referred to the Queensland parliament's Economics and Governance Committee for further examination, with the committee's report tabled on 14 May 2021.

This omnibus legislation before the House seeks to amend or repeal 18 separate acts and regulatory instruments across multiple portfolio areas. Ostensibly, the Labor Treasurer wants Queenslanders to believe that by merely including the words 'debt reduction' and 'savings' it will somehow deliver on its title, whereas this is simply not the case. The specifics of this legislation merely entrench Labor's failed voodoo economic strategy for Queensland. As I have said a number of times in this House, often in budget-in-reply contributions, the Palaszczuk state Labor government's only economic strategy for Queensland is one that is merely a strict exercise in smoke and mirrors.

It is an exercise that this state Labor government has implemented since it first came to office where, in their 2015-16 so-called fiscally responsible state budget, Labor raided \$3.4 billion from Queensland public servants' long service leave entitlements, withheld paying \$2 billion in contributions to public servants' superannuation and shifted over \$4 billion of debt on to government owned corporations. This was certainly a sleight of hand. It was a shameful decision that has continued throughout the tenure of the Palaszczuk state Labor government, and I am disappointed to say, as previously highlighted by the LNP's shadow Treasurer, Labor has raised over \$12 billion from public servants' superannuation and government owned corporation balance sheets.

This is not sustained economic reform and neither is it genuine debt reduction for Queensland or the taxpayers of Queensland. The measures contained within this legislation have less to do with debt reduction and more to do with debt offsetting. As articulated by the Liberal National Party members for Mermaid Beach, Coomera and Ninderry in their statement of reservation, Labor's legislation shows its own inability to grasp the fundamentals of Queensland's economy.

Continuing in the tradition of previous state Labor treasurers, the current Labor Treasurer, the member for Woodridge, is once again attempting to use a sleight of hand when it comes to Queensland's balance sheet. The so-called debt reduction strategy of the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021, merely amounts to the assigning of an arbitrary value of \$4.1 billion to the Titles Office, with that multibillion dollar value then being moved into the Queensland Future Fund, where it will be used

to offset debt rather than pay down debt. Incredibly, but not surprisingly, Labor is not being transparent with Queenslanders as to how this \$4.1 billion valuation of the Titles Office was determined. Queenslanders have every right to be sceptical of the Palaszczuk state Labor government and its Treasurer given that the titles offices of both New South Wales and Victoria are valued at \$2.6 billion and \$2.85 billion respectively.

As for the supposed savings that are to be delivered through this legislation, the total savings that have been identified to date by Labor would be laughable if it were not so serious. In the Labor Treasurer's introductory speech on this legislation, the Treasurer proudly boasted that the state Labor government was doing its part to restore Queensland through its savings plan, which would target \$3 billion in savings over four years. It was later revealed in evidence presented to the Economics and Governance Committee that so far only \$3 million in savings could be identified.

It is simply not good enough for the state Labor government to suggest that the \$3 million in identified savings sends a strong signal to Queenslanders and the Public Service that the state Labor government is serious about saving Queenslanders' hard-earned taxpayer dollars. It is unbelievable and particularly in view of Labor's history of wasted taxpayer dollars in pursuit of its own agenda, as we saw during the last term with the wastage and money involved in renaming the Lady Cilento children's hospital and also through the Labor state government's sheer mismanagement of various IT project rollouts across various departments.

Even before the 2020 Queensland state election, the Queensland state Labor government wanted honest Queenslanders to believe that they were genuine about debt reduction and savings and that modest borrowings would also be required. Yet, as soon as they were re-elected, despite promising Queenslanders \$4 billion in additional borrowings, that figure had blown out sevenfold to \$28 billion. Two-thirds of that new debt is being used to cover the day-to-day operational expenses of the state Labor government rather than being invested in the vital infrastructure that local communities desperately need. Queenslanders need to understand that the government is borrowing to keep the lights on, to pay for recurrent day-to-day operational expenses, and is not investing in the vital infrastructure that we need.

Nowhere is that more acutely seen than in the western suburbs of Brisbane and in the electorate of Moggill. Local residents are still waiting for the Palaszczuk state Labor government to deliver an integrated road and public transport plan with funded solutions to bust the increasing traffic congestion throughout the western suburbs of Brisbane and to provide for better public and active transport and pedestrian infrastructure.

Government members interjected.

Dr ROWAN: I hear members opposite interjecting, but they know that the western suburbs of Brisbane are not getting their fair share from the state Labor government which is refusing to invest in the vital road and public transport infrastructure that is needed. They are interjecting because they are ashamed of that legacy of failing the people of the western suburbs of Brisbane, and not only the western suburbs of Brisbane but also right across Queensland—rural and regional Queensland and various other areas in Brisbane. They certainly need to do a lot better.

Mr Minnikin: Eastern suburbs.

Dr ROWAN: All of those Brisbane suburbs—I take the member for Chatsworth's interjection. He understands that in his area as well the state Labor government is failing to invest in infrastructure, likewise when it comes to our local state schools.


In the electorate of Moggill and across the western suburbs of Brisbane we are still in desperate need of additional and enhanced educational infrastructure, particularly at Kenmore State High School, with the state Labor government consistently failing to deliver modern, dedicated purpose-built learning environments for local students, teachers and staff. This includes a new library and student services administration hub, a sports centre, as well as a performing arts auditorium and a new school hall facility. A new high school is needed to deliver for the residents of Karana Downs, Mount Crosby, Karalee and surrounding suburbs. I know that the member for Ipswich West believes that that infrastructure is needed and must be delivered by his own government for residents in his electorate but also in my electorate.

In my remaining time I would like to address another significantly flawed measure contained within this legislation. Not content with continuing its exercise of smoke and mirrors and pretending to undertake serious reform when it is in fact doing the opposite, the state Labor government is also

seeking to go further and abolish the Queensland Productivity Commission. This independent economic review body was first established by the Queensland state Labor government as an election commitment in 2015. It was established for the benefit of all Queenslanders so that it could review complex economic and regulatory issues and propose sound policy reforms to the state government.

Despite investigating important policy reforms, including electricity pricing, state regulation improvements and the delivery of services in Queensland's remote and discrete Indigenous communities, the Palaszczuk state Labor government has shown by its own actions that it has no interest in genuinely achieving productivity reform in Queensland. If the current state Labor government was serious about finding greater efficiencies in public service delivery and reducing Labor's level of state debt, then surely it would embrace the expert analysis and recommendations of an independent Queensland Productivity Commission rather than abolish this important reform body. With the Labor Treasurer advising that the Queensland Productivity Commission will be abolished and its functions transferred and integrated into the Queensland Treasury, the independence that this body once had will now be lost.

The Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021 is perhaps one of the most misleading titles of legislation ever introduced by the Palaszczuk state Labor government. The LNP will obviously be moving an amendment that it be renamed the 'Debt Non-Reduction and Minimal Savings Act 2021'. That would be a much more appropriate title for this legislation, which has been introduced by Labor. The people of Queensland understand that Labor is failing them economically and that this Labor government has no vision and no plan when it comes to the economy in Queensland, let alone delivering the vital infrastructure that all Queenslanders need, including those residents who live in the western suburbs of Brisbane.

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (4.20 pm): I rise in support of the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. This bill contains sensible debt reduction and savings measures and is just one initiative under Queensland's savings and debt plan, which targets \$3 billion in savings over four years. Under this bill up to \$3 million in direct savings will be made each year and there will be substantially more indirect savings. This will put Queensland in the right place to face down significant financial turbulence as we exit the worst pandemic event in more than a century.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Ms LINARD: I do not know if I said something wrong, member for Chatsworth.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Pause the clock. Member for Nudgee, direct your comments through the chair.

Ms LINARD: The measures in this bill, coupled with the more than \$350 million in savings this government has already achieved through targeted measures, will allow us to spend more and spend responsibly on the things that matter, such as our child protection and youth justice systems. Thanks to this government's sensible economic management, I was able to announce in March that my department would employ an additional 150 new frontline child safety workers to help keep Queensland children safe. This is on top of our record investment of \$1.4 billion in our child safety system in the 2020-21 financial year alone.

The government has been effective and responsible economic managers, and we are making savings in ways that maintain the support that is so necessary to vulnerable people in our community. During the time of the Newman government my community suffered due to their agenda of cutting, sacking and selling, including making cuts to vital local services such as the Pyjama Foundation, which was then based in my electorate. They tried to sell local school playing fields like those at Earnshaw State College. Hardworking public servants were sacked. The Metro North HHS lost 1,431 hospital and health jobs, including 731 nurse and midwife positions. The total numbers across Queensland were even more bleak: 14,000 public servants including 4,000 health worker, affecting 1,800 nurses and midwives.

Our communities fought back against these indiscriminate cuts through rallies and petitions, but residents spoke loudest at the 2015 ballot box when they sent the clear message that reckless cuts of this scale and magnitude were not acceptable. They voted for a Palaszczuk Labor government that would govern responsibly via measured initiatives such as the ones this bill aims to implement. The people of Queensland do not want to see a return to those dark days when the Newman government

cut funding to NGOs that work with some of the most vulnerable families and children in the state. NGOs working in portfolio areas are treated as valued partners by the Palaszczuk government. NGOs such as Act for Kids, the organisation that provides free therapy and support services—

Mr STEVENS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118. The speaker is straying way off the long title of the bill. I would like her to be brought back to the long title of the bill.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will hear the point of order in silence! I will allow the member some latitude, but I will ask the member to come back to the long title of the bill.

Ms LINARD: The Newman government thanked them for their valuable work with a \$470,000 funding cut. The Newman government cut \$330,000 from the Queensland Indigenous Alcohol Diversion Program. They cut \$291,000 from the Triple P Parenting Program, which equips parents with the skills to raise healthy and well-adjusted children. They cut \$240,000 from Foster Care Queensland, now Queensland Foster and Kinship Care.

We on this side value their contribution, so when it comes to recruiting and supporting foster and kinship carers I was pleased that their executive director, Bryan Smith, could join me on the Speaker's Green on Saturday to launch our latest foster and kinship carer recruitment program. Then there is the \$46,000 they cut from Bravehearts. This is the same LNP that dares to come in here and try to lecture us about child protection matters. Finally, to come back to a local service, there is the \$100,000 they cut from the Pyjama Foundation. Those opposite cut \$100,000 from the wonderful people who volunteer their time each week—

Mr STEVENS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The matters being raised by the speaker have no relevance to this bill whatsoever. I ask that you bring the speaker back to the long title of the bill.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, I will allow you the opportunity to explain how what you are saying relates to the long title of the bill and then I will make a ruling.

Ms LINARD: This bill allows us to continue funding these programs.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has the call.


Ms LINARD: As I was saying, finally there is the \$100,000 they cut from the Pyjama Foundation. But we were able to fund the Pyjama Foundation to continue the wonderful work that their volunteers do each time a child comes into care to read, play, do educational games and help them with their homework.

Contrast the LNP with the Palaszczuk government. As the Treasurer said in his introductory speech, we seek savings and debt reduction so we can invest in the services that matter to Queensland. We do not cut nurse and midwife numbers, we do not cut teacher numbers and we do not cut police officer numbers. That is the difference between us and those opposite. We make sensible savings that do not cut frontline services and hurt Queenslanders. They cut, sack and sell. Since coming to government in 2015 we have restored the funding to organisations those opposite saw fit to cut.

In my department alone we have allocated more than \$850 million since 2015 and funded more than 550 new staff to the end of 2019-20 in child safety. In youth justice we have invested more than half a billion dollars on new detention centre beds and new programs to reduce youth offending. There are other reforms in this bill which will make a real and significant difference to the lives of Queenslanders. Productivity is the key driver of economic growth in Queensland and, more importantly, is critical to increasing wage growth in our state. Bringing skill, expertise and knowledge from the Queensland Productivity Commission into the Queensland Treasury will help the government make meaningful strides to improve the productivity of Queensland workers and the efficiency of government services.

This bill will also introduce a system to index government fees to inflation—a promise to vulnerable Queenslanders which means that government fees will not put price pressures on the poorest of Queenslanders. These changes will mean that the price of a loaf of bread and a litre in milk in 2021 will be indexed so they are worth the same amount in 2041. This is about fairness and consistency and not taking advantage of vulnerable Queenslanders so the government can make a quick buck.

That was the strategy of the Newman government when those opposite set indexation at 3.5 per cent per annum. That may not sound like much, but it meant that the price of renewing your driver's licence increased by 11 per cent over three years. It meant that under the LNP's approach the cost of urgently registering a marriage or requesting a simple commemorative certificate—\$145 today—would increase over 10 years by more than 41 per cent even if prices only rose 10 per cent over the same period. That policy was designed to hit the poorest in our community the hardest. It was a structural measure designed to inflict maximum pressure on those Queenslanders struggling to make ends meet. Every day families were set up to suffer. This bill is about savings our way. These are fair and sensible measures that will help Queensland recover from COVID without hurting the most vulnerable in our community. That is the difference between a Palaszczuk Labor government and those opposite. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (4.28 pm): I rise to speak on the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. As a representative of a remote regional area, what I often observe in this place from both parties in government is a lot of smoke and mirrors around budgets. The modus operandi often seems to be to not inform people of what the reality is on the ground. I would like to share my observations of what I see on the ground and how that falls hopelessly short of fulfilling the intentions of the title of the bill—being debt reduction and savings.

Firstly, to take an academic or philosophical approach, you might say governments are shackled by neoliberalism—trying to solve all these things without getting their hands dirty, effectively. The economy has to sort itself out; it is the role of private industry to solve those things and you just create the right conditions for them—that is garbage. Most of the things that have been built in regional areas have been driven by the government, invested by the government, built by the government. Quite frankly, I am sick of hearing the debate from both sides about asset sales. Both sides have indulged in it.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr KATTER: The Liberals did not do it, but you certainly signalled your intention, member for Coomera, and Labor did sell. I am now picking up the pieces in my electorate from selling off Queensland Rail. We still have job losses in Cloncurry, Hughenden and Charters Towers. Right now with Aurizon we are fighting to keep some of our workers in Cloncurry because they were sold off, so I know very well the long-term implications. Anyone who lives out there and has been trying to deal with broadband or telecommunications since Telstra was sold off knows what privatisation offers if you live in a remote area. It does not matter what service delivery statement you have got, it will never account for the adversity that is found in remote regions. I am sick of hearing that debate in this place. If you subscribe to those neoliberalism philosophies, you must indulge in that, there must be an end point that you must consider.

Another point I will touch on is advertising. This is another policy coming out of this place that drives straight at the heart of regional areas. I am not saying that newspapers do not mean anything to people in metropolitan areas, but they certainly mean a hell of a lot in small towns. For a lot of old people in Julia Creek, Richmond or Hughenden, it is their only source of information. They are not connected via the internet in the way others might think. That is a big thing. It is not just the fact that they will not see a development application notice going in the paper; it is the viability. We are trying to rebuild some of these newspapers out there. There is a good business case for them if they have that support. Saying that the government has amended the bill to allow for it is a lot different to forcing the government to do it. There is no real relief for me when it is said it is still included in the bill. It is included but it is not forced, which really defeats the whole purpose in the first place or any benefit when you talk about that. We get knocked once again in the regions in terms of removing that opportunity to have those advertisements and the income derived from that for our remote area papers.

Another point is the Future Fund and putting the titles sales into that. It is probably worth mentioning that I spent 15 years working as a property valuer. You bought those property search engines. Revenue is collected through that for real estate valuers who purchase that information through software packages that in turn purchase it from the Titles Registry. That is a really good business. There is the Future Fund and putting it in there, but I would much prefer to see the Future Fund full with assets that are industry building and job creating. They are words that are thrown around a lot these days, but I do not see anyone living up to the reality of what that means.

When talking about debt reduction and savings, I think the bill completely misses the point because there is so much opportunity in this state. From my little part of the world, my observations are that there is no will and no real drive to take advantage of the wealth creation we could have in the state. Let me go through a few examples.

The first relates to CopperString. We are now talking about a solar plant that could completely pull the rug out from under CopperString. Everybody loves using CopperString and saying, 'We're going to build it and build the north-west.' That is great as a catchcry but you have to mean it if you are going to say it. That could mean the \$1.5 billion price tag could sit comfortably in the Future Fund and be a beautiful asset for the state of Queensland to own and derive revenue from and produce jobs and industry. This could be an economic benefit worth billions of dollars to Queensland from making sure that asset was invested in by the state, but that is not what we are talking about here. We could be talking about a biofuels industry that creates jobs essentially by taking them off the large multinational oil companies, but we do not drive a mandate on that so we do not have a biofuels industry. That is how you pull down debt.


We have got Hells Gate Dam and strategic roads like the Ootann Road taking freight and cattle triple road trains out of the cape. They are the sorts of things that generate industry and jobs to help pay down debt. In this low interest rate environment, debt can be a good thing if it is used for industry enabling infrastructure—not a Cross River Rail tunnel in Brisbane. That is not industry enabling infrastructure. That is social infrastructure which is nice to have. If you have the money to pay for it, that is good but you do not build that to create jobs. That is not a job creator. The Olympic Games is not an industry enabler. That is something you do if you have made the money from something else—and the something else is the biofuels industry, where we are producing our own fuel in Queensland for the rest of Australia. It is doubling the size of our agriculture by building water irrigation schemes right throughout the north-western gulf and through the cape. That is how you build industry and jobs and pay down debt.

The accounting methodologies we use on all of our utilities—be it water, rail or electricity—are turned all around from where it used to be. It does not go off cost; it goes off how much money can be milked out of these assets until it hits a price point where it is destroying industry. We have just about hit that price point with Queensland Rail, and the track fees in North-West Queensland are a great example. That has nothing to do with the running costs of that rail; it is how much profit can be extracted from these assets before they are going to kill industry. That is the philosophy that is embedded in the accounting methodologies that are used to own all of these assets.

If you are not going to treat the assets like an industry enabler, you may as well sell them because they are of not much benefit to you. They are crippling industry. I do not for a minute think we should be selling these—you never sell them—but if you are not going to sell them, do not keep ripping off the customers. We are trying to enable industry by owning those assets. That was the whole point and that is what we are definitely not doing.

We could have a government development bank, enabling all of these remote areas where we cannot get loans to engage in industry and development. No-one seems to want to recognise that as a problem. When I am talking about government development banks, I am talking about something that takes a first mortgage. There is an essential difference between something that takes a second mortgage and one that takes a first mortgage. There are plenty of instruments out there that would take a second mortgage, but it is fundamentally different to something that will take a first mortgage and take the full risk of the loan. We do not have that in Queensland and that would be a wonderful thing. It would make money. The QIDC sold for \$1.5 billion. That was another asset sale we had. The state owned that and it made a profit to the point where it was sold for \$1.5 billion. That is something that would enable and grow jobs. It would grow industry in the regions and it would not cost a cent in the long term. That is what we should be talking about in this bill, but we are not. They are really important things that we should have been talking about in this bill but we are not.

I want to finish by saying that with this debt reduction we have increased the size of the Public Service. Newman made the cuts and Labor has come back in and brought them all back. If I use Transport and Main Roads in Cloncurry as an example, the people never went back to Cloncurry. The public servants never went back to Mount Isa to work in the public health sector. There is still an absence of public servants in the remote areas. A lot of these jobs might have been filled but not in my patch.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (4.38 pm): I rise to support the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill. The Palaszczuk government has a savings and debt plan to support economic recovery. This is good economic management and the target is \$3 billion in savings over four years.

We can talk about the number of things that this bill will allow us to do—even the issues raised by the member for Traeger. I acknowledge his contribution because we can speak about addressing the different issues that members in this House are raising because of this bill.

Whether those opposite like it or not, in this bill we have a plan and it will allow the government to pursue the following priorities. Our No. 1 priority that we went to the election with is creating and supporting jobs. I listened to the member for Traeger, and he is right; it is very difficult to unscramble the egg. Once you lose some of these jobs from regional areas, they are very hard to put back again. It is very difficult. Once the move is made it is very hard to unscramble. We are about creating jobs and asking: what are the jobs for the future; how do we support those jobs; what are those industries going to be going forward? This Debt Reduction and Savings Bill is about looking further at those organisations that we are now amending in this bill and thinking about what are the jobs of the future and how do we support them?

Just because we support one thing does not mean we may not support another. It is about saying how best we can cut the cloth, and this bill will enable good economic management. In this bill we will also focus on the priority of building essential infrastructure. It could be the CopperString line, it could be a wind farm, it could be supporting a number of things right throughout Queensland. This is no more evident than in my portfolio of education. I do not think there is one electorate in this House that has not seen significant funds spent on education infrastructure in one way or another, and I will talk more on that later in my speech.

We want to deliver those frontline services that were decimated by those opposite, and it does take a while to do that. We may never get back to where we were in some of these areas, but that is what the plan is prioritising. It is prioritising jobs, jobs and jobs through building essential infrastructure and delivering on the frontline services decimated by those opposite. We have heard speaker after speaker talking about the decimation, particularly about the promise that was made that people had nothing to fear. Then after they came in, that changed. We hear time and time again about the level of cuts, sacking and selling that went on.

Our savings and debt plan focuses on harnessing innovation and ensuring productivity improvements to drive the Queensland economy into the future. It was no good building stagecoaches when cars were coming on to the market. I am sure the last stagecoach built was the best one ever seen, but the future was cars and the stagecoaches have now gone. We have to have a plan about what the future industries are going to be. It is all right to bury your head in the sand and say this is not happening, but that is why we have a plan for hydrogen, energy and renewables. That is what this is all about. The world is changing. We are in a world health pandemic and we need to look forward, and this bill enables us to do so.

This is the Labor way: creating the savings, maintaining effective frontline services and driving jobs, not the alternative, which is the LNP's cut, sack and sell plan. The bill protects against the LNP cuts by setting out sensible savings instead of damaging cuts like the LNP wants to inflict on Queensland. This bill protects the Titles Registry against privatisation by a future LNP government, just as Labor protected our publicly owned assets from privatisation. When it comes to debt and deficit—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms GRACE: We hear those opposite yelling and moaning. However, the people of Queensland have spoken and they have rejected their plan of cutting, sacking and selling since 2015. Those opposite whittled away one of the biggest majorities that any government had ever held in this state. In one term they were out of government—

Mr Tantari: Why is that?

Ms GRACE: 'Why is that?' the member for Hervey Bay asks. I take the interjection. It is because they had no idea about what they were doing. All they were interested in was cutting, sacking and selling. Time and time again the Queensland electorates have rejected those opposite.

Those opposite are growing older in opposition. Some of them were in the cabinet with 'Nuclear Newman', as we have come to know him. That is the future, isn't it—nuclear energy! They put him into the leadership role in the LNP; they are always looking back to the future. Here we are in Labor with a bill that is looking to the future. We are talking about the new industries. We are talking about the new innovation. We are talking about the new jobs and the training and the schools that go with them, yet time and time again all that those opposite can do is go back to 'Nuclear Newman'. They will bring him back into the LNP hierarchy and here we go again. They will not learn, but Labor has a plan. We were elected to deliver on our election commitments and this plan is all about doing that.

An opposition member: You sold all the assets.

Ms GRACE: Those opposite can interject as much as they like because they just do not like hearing it. They do not like the truth. They cannot handle the truth. I love that movie where Jack Nicholson said, 'You can't handle the truth!' Let me tell honourable members, that is exactly those opposite.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms GRACE: They are yelling out across the chamber little bits and pieces worried that they are under scrutiny.

Mr MICKELBERG: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118. The minister is quoting nebulous references to *A Few Good Men* and is not talking to the long title of the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Walker): Take your seat, Minister, for one moment, please. I will not take the point of order.

Ms GRACE: It is good that the member for Buderim knows the movie, *A Few Good Men*. I thank him for enlightening me that that was where the line came from; I had almost forgotten. I knew who delivered it, but I did not know the movie. Those opposite would know all about that line because it is very applicable to them.

When it comes to infrastructure, we are spending a record amount this financial year alone. There is \$1.9 billion allocated to education as opposed to when we came in, when there was only \$550 million from those opposite. What an outstanding achievement by this government.

There is no better contrast between what this savings and debt plan will allow us to do with good economic management and what those opposite did to schools. They had a hit list of 50 schools that they were going to close and there is no starker example than that of the Fortitude Valley State Secondary College. They closed that school and put up a big 'for sale' sign at the front, but look what Labor built. Honourable members should come to my electorate and look at that school. It is outstanding as, too, is the Foxwell State Secondary College in Coomera. They are two outstanding schools; that is the contrast between what we do in education and what those opposite do.

Those opposite also sold off the distance education building at West End in a fire sale for \$12.6 million. They sold that building. Unbelievable! Then there were all those schools that were earmarked for closure. The other day the member for Pine Rivers and I went to Bray Park State High School for the launch of the P&C Awards and it was fantastic. I drove past Everton Park State High School and what a school that is now. Under the opposition it was earmarked to be sold and closed. I say to the member for Everton that we saved the school for him. When driving past my jaw dropped to see the outstanding buildings that have now been located at that school which has growing numbers—delivered by Labor. All the member for Everton needs to do is say thank you.

Then we drove past Albany Creek State High School and saw another magnificent building on the corner there. There was also the land for sale in Gladstone at Calliope but now we have a fantastic high school located there. I could go on forever about what we have achieved as a Labor government. This savings and debt plan is about good economic management. I commend the bill to the House.



Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (4.49 pm): Getting a lecture from a fake Harvard graduate over there is just a little bit much!

Ms GRACE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Walker): Member for Maroochydore, take your seat.

Ms GRACE: Be very careful.

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

Ms GRACE: I take offence and I ask that the comments be withdrawn.

Ms SIMPSON: I withdraw. We know that there are ministers who want to lecture people about the truth yet their CVs claim they have a masters degree from a university in the United States—no less than the name of Harvard—

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

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

Ms SIMPSON: At least the heroine of the movie *Clueless* went to Harvard Law School and did the work, but there are ministers of this government who are not just clueless; they are also hopeless! The title of this legislation—Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021—indicates that it could be a comedy,

but unfortunately it is not even a drama; it is probably a tragedy. We see this Labor government doing a bit of a switcheroo on some of the policies it announced only a few years ago that were supposed to save buckets of money, make efficiencies in government and drive the infrastructure program.

A number of the initiatives that this Labor government introduced into this parliament only a few years ago are now being wiped out. Suddenly it is reborn—like a rewrite of a bad script. We saw the establishment of the Productivity Commission—it had a lot of merit—by the now Speaker, then the treasurer of Queensland. It was to be an independent authority that would bring a statutory independence to productivity issues here in Queensland, but it wrote some reports that this Labor government did not like so they wrote it out of the script. They thought it was not giving them the answers they wanted. It was an independent voice providing insights into the way government should be run, but they did not like it so it is going. It is out the door—cut.

What about Building Queensland, established only a few years ago? It was such a great idea, brought in by a previous Labor treasurer. It was hailed as an independent body to progress business cases for infrastructure projects in Queensland. When it was introduced exactly six years ago, the then deputy premier and planning minister, Jackie Trad, hailed it, saying it was a pre-election promise to create ‘an independent statutory body to ensure a whole-of-government perspective is brought to major infrastructure planning, prioritisation and investment’. Now they are getting rid of that! Somebody must have given them an independent report they did not really like and now that body is being written out of the script. The government can try to change the story and pretend it did not happen, but that happened under this government.

People in industry have spoken about what they believe were the benefits of Building Queensland. One was to ensure business cases were independently presented and able to withstand rigor and scrutiny, but rigor and scrutiny are not exactly strong points of this Labor government. They create the statutory or independent bodies but then get answers they do not like so they get rid of them. The story goes on.

I want to address the issue of the need for timely, effective and efficient investment in infrastructure. We now know that the backlog alone on maintenance of Queensland roads is topping \$6 billion. The government wrote previous treasurers out of the script, and when he became Treasurer of this state Minister Dick could not answer a question about Queensland’s debt level. When we consider that the Premier did not know Queensland’s GST rate, he is in great economic company.


This Labor Treasurer now presides over Queensland debt heading towards \$130 billion. Perhaps the ratings agencies are getting a bit nervous, because they do not read Hollywood scripts; they read the numbers. In Queensland they see a ballooning debt with lower service levels and a lost opportunity for investment in timely and efficient infrastructure. It is a waste in regard to the opportunity to really fire up economies throughout Queensland.

Last week I attended at the Western Queensland Alliance of Councils. In those large parts of Queensland there is opportunity for economic development, but they need the infrastructure to unlock that economic opportunity. That is true in other parts of Queensland as well. There is a need for proper business cases, a pipeline of works and a steady stream of projects being brought to fruition. Tragically, because of the way that debt has been mismanaged and not used effectively, with the right infrastructure, there are lost opportunities. As I stated, there is a backlog of over \$6 billion worth of maintenance just on our roads in Queensland. It snowballs and it goes on. Our state has amazing resources and people who want to see it flourish, but they have been served by an economically inept, clueless and hopeless state Labor government.

I want to address an issue raised by my colleagues in their statement of reservation—that is, the move to make it harder for papers, particularly newspapers in rural and regional areas, to be financially viable by not requiring departments to advertise in them. I recognise that there has been a shift to a lot of digital online platforms. As a former newspaper journalist I do have a soft spot for them. More than that, I have a belief and a passion about the need for journalists to operate throughout all our communities in Queensland and not necessarily be employed by government. These days there are more journalists working for government than in free enterprise media. We need a diversity of journalists working throughout the regions. The fact that this legislation will remove the requirement for advertising in printed newspapers is a backward step, particularly in areas where there still is a desire to maintain print based newspapers to ensure accessibility by a wide range of community members. Not everybody lives in the digital age. A variety of people in our state want to access their news on a variety of platforms. I think this provision is a backward step. It does not save a lot of money but it removes access.

I have addressed Building Queensland. It is an example of this government's lack of consistency in how it will truly have a pipeline of infrastructure built to service all areas of this state, be it the great west, the east coast, the north or the south. The lack of a pipeline of works has really been exposed during this time when we want infrastructure to stimulate the economy. There was a lack of a pipeline of works throughout the state to take the opportunity to move that forward. That is a great shame, because Queensland was already behind the eight ball in regard to timely investment.

We need more than just a few 'hero' projects with PR statements from ministerial offices. The figures have shown that the Queensland state government has underinvested state dollars in state infrastructure. The government picks a few hero projects that have a tendency to blow out in terms of cost. Their so-called best practice principles are just an excuse to deliver a 30 per cent hike in revenue for the government's union mates rather than to provide the Australian based civil construction industry—mum-and-dad businesses in local communities throughout the state—with a pipeline of works. We should ensure that not only are multinational companies drinking from the trough but also a variety of small to medium sized civil infrastructure companies can access that pipeline of infrastructure wherever they are based in Queensland.

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (4.59 pm): I rise to support the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill. I firstly commend the committee for its hard work on this bill, particularly the member for Logan in his chairing of the committee and delivering the report that has been handed down.

It is difficult to think of a starker contrast between the Palaszczuk government and its LNP predecessor than in the area of economic management. While this government chooses to invest and enable Queenslanders, the LNP chooses to slash, burn and sell the farm—

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr FURNER: Here we go, member for Gregory. Those opposite would have sold the farm no doubt and everyday Queenslanders would have suffered over and over again.

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr FURNER: I hear the harping from the member for Gregory. He is sitting on the Ernst & Young report about the sale of the QATC colleges. Those opposite were going to sell them lock, stock and barrel but never had the intestinal fortitude to come into this chamber during that short period when they were in government and table that report. It cost taxpayers thousands and thousands of dollars and those opposite never had the decency to come into this place and table what they were going to do with the QATC colleges—that is, sell them lock, stock and barrel. It is about time the member for Gregory tabled that Ernst & Young report, but no doubt he lacks the intestinal fortitude to do so.

Those opposite were proud of the damage they did to the people of Queensland and the fabric of the communities that once trusted them in government. They were proud when they sacked the nurses and the doctors from our health system. They were also proud that they cut through the agencies that helped domestic violence victims, the homeless and the most vulnerable people in the state of Queensland. The opposition leader was around the cabinet table at the time signing off on every heartless cut, every sacked frontline worker, every dagger to the heart of the fabric of Queensland. The facts speak for themselves: 14,000 public servants—4,000 health workers; 1800 nurses and midwives—were sacked. More than 600 positions in the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries were cut under their watch. That is what their legacy stands for in this place. The Leader of the Opposition still stands by it—every word, every dollar. Like his predecessor as opposition leader and like her predecessor, he has never once apologised for the hurt and the harm the Newman government caused in its reign through that reckless period of the 2013-14 budget.

The bill currently before us represents a continuation of the Palaszczuk government's strong track record of economic responsibility to this state. We know that the LNP does not like to hear this, but the Palaszczuk government delivered five consecutive surplus budgets before the global coronavirus pandemic changed economies right across the world. We are still dealing with that fallout, but Queensland's economic recovery plan is setting our state up for the future to come out of this pandemic even stronger. The plan has us investing in the critical industries and opportunities that will help more Queenslanders into jobs and will allow export and manufacturing industries to strive to new heights.

Deficits and increased debt are a reality for every government—and one only needs to look at the massive deficits being run by the Commonwealth government at present—yet the LNP complains about the deficit even when its federal counterpart, the Morrison government, has deficits for the next

10 years. There is no sign of a surplus for the next 10 years but rather a trillion dollars worth of deficit. The New South Wales Liberal government also has higher debt than Queensland and those opposite are out of step with their colleagues around the country and out of step with governments around the world. We know we need to run a tight ship, and that is exactly what the Palaszczuk government is doing, and we will continue to do it.

The work of the Queensland Productivity Commission and Building Queensland will continue within the processes of government while no longer being standalone agencies. We know—and Queenslanders know this—that we cannot pretend it is business as usual in the wake of this pandemic. Unlike the LNP when it was in government, we are putting downward pressure on the costs that impact on Queensland households. The LNP's approach of blanket annual fee increases of 3.5 per cent was a hammer blow to Queensland families. Under Labor, we have seen fee indexation fall first to 2.25 per cent and then 1.9 per cent and now 1.8 per cent.

I note from the opposition's statement of reservation in the committee report that it has taken exception to the measures recommended by the committee and undertaken through the actions in this bill. It is just like the LNP to throw every obstacle it can in the path of the Palaszczuk government's efforts to maintain budget discipline. What hypocrisy from those opposite. When in government they ran budget deficits, but in opposition they object to measures aimed at fiscal responsibility. Their objections to the functions of the Queensland Productivity Commission continuing within government show that they have not read the bill and nor do they understand it. The new Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction will still be able to make public inquiries, including stakeholder or public consultation. It will continue to be the government's primary regulatory review provider and it will do that in a way that is transparent to the wider public.

The LNP's objection to modernising the provisions around public notice advertising are just comical. Newspaper businesses are evolving all around the world, but the LNP wants to reimpose the advertising practices of the 1970s and the 1980s as if a glorious past of abundant and wealthy newspaper businesses could be resurrected just by wishing it so. Unlike the LNP, the Palaszczuk government moves with the times. More and more people are getting their information online, whether it is here in the city or in the bush. That is where we need to put public notices. It is not good enough for a government to put a notice in a newspaper and hope it is read. I am, however, pleased that there is an exception in the bill so that notices can still be made in newspapers in regional communities where appropriate. All of us in this place remember the horror of the LNP budgets of the Campbell Newman era. Members of the opposition do not like to talk about it much, but in their heart of hearts they yearn for a return to their cut, sack and sell agenda. When they were in government they sold Queensland Motorways. They tried to sell electricity assets and ports and they wasted \$70 million in taxpayers' money on consultants to try to do this.

Their cynical approach even extended to education. One of the first bills we dealt with when I was chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee was that dealing with the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority in competition with TAFE. The LNP wanted to privatise TAFE immediately but instead did it in 2014. It was set up to run down TAFE campuses and open them up for other training providers—privatisation by stealth. The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee's examination of the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority Repeal Bill in 2015 clearly demonstrates the LNP's DNA—that is, privatisation by stealth. One of the submitters to the hearing was the Queensland Teachers' Union and in its submission it indicated that TAFE would be wilfully handicapped and placed at a commercial disadvantage by the QTAMA legislation. For example, at both the Toowoomba and South Bank campuses, TAFE Queensland was forced to make space available for private providers in spite of a preparedness and ability to pay rent on the facilities. Subsequent renovations were wasted when private registered training organisations did not proceed with rental arrangements. That is a clear demonstration of their path should they ever form government again in terms of privatising and selling the assets wholesale. Queenslanders know that under Labor we will always keep our assets.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Walker): Order!

Mr FURNER: Listen to the oxygen thieves opposite. Once again the member for Gregory will not table his Ernst & Young report. He lacks that intestinal fortitude and always will. He was the media adviser to the then agriculture minister and spent thousands on the Ernst & Young report and has not even had the ability to table it. Getting back to the bill—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Stop the clock. Minister, I ask you to take your seat for a moment please. Member for Gregory, you are now warned under the standing orders.

Mr FURNER: Those opposite cannot be trusted. They cannot change their spots because behind the curtain of the LNP organisation they are bringing back the former premier to lead them through this. They pretend to shy away from the LNP's slash-and-burn legacy, but then they bring back its architect to help them do it again. The people of Queensland are not buying it. They are not falling for Campbell Newman and his friends again. It will be a tragedy at the end of this Leader of the Opposition's crusade when the Campbell Newman inspired LNP gets found out once again. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MOLHOEK (Southport—LNP) (5.09 pm): The contribution from the member for Ferny Grove is exactly what we would have expected to have heard in this House: another retelling of history. It was another giant fairytale from Minister Furner. How dare he talk about the need for transparency. There is nothing transparent about those on that side of the House. From the beginning of this term in our committees across all the portfolios we have seen a very deliberate attempt to shut down transparency through the lack of public hearings. That is just one example of the lack of transparency.

Ms Pease: We have had plenty of public hearings!

Mr MOLHOEK: We have had some public hearings, but we have had lots of private meetings in committees right across the board here in this parliament. We know full well that the intent of the committee process is to hold the government to account, to have open and transparent meetings and to provide the public with an opportunity to make submissions and open a window into what is going on here in government. I digress. Let me come back to this bill. The fundamental question on this bill is: can you trust Labor to save money?

Mr Hart: No.

Mr MOLHOEK: I take that interjection from the member for Burleigh. Members, can we trust Labor to save money?

Mr Boyce: No.

Mr MOLHOEK: I take that interjection from the member for Callide. Labor's track record in this respect is absolutely appalling. What we heard from Minister Furner was another fairytale, another wonderful story of how good Labor is, and a complete and absolute denial of the fact that it was a Labor government that sold off Queensland assets and then squandered those finances by inflating the Public Service when they could have been creating assets such as more public housing, hospitals and hospitals beds which Queenslanders would actually benefit from.

This bill says 'trust us'. We heard from the Treasurer in budget presentations late last year—very rushed budget presentations, I might add, prior to Christmas—that we are going to have to borrow another \$130 billion over the forward estimates. How do you save money when at the same time you are borrowing money? That is just simple maths.

Mr Hart: Labornomics!

Mr MOLHOEK: I take that interjection from the member for Burleigh. It is classic Labornomics to promise that we are going to save money. The other question I would like to ask the House, and I would love to hear from the Treasurer later on, is how much will this cost us? This would be one of the thickest pieces of legislation we have seen brought to this House this term—not that we have had a lot of legislation to consider so far. What will the establishment of this debt reduction and savings body cost the taxpayers of Queensland? Will it be another one of those failed entities that we have seen Labor set up?

Mr Hart: Jobs for their mates!

Mr MOLHOEK: I take that interjection from the member for Burleigh also: more jobs for their mates. This is about more jobs for their mates.


Mr Power interjected.

Mr MOLHOEK: I am not taking your interjection. We have heard so many promises from this Labor government. We heard the announcement by Minister de Brenni under the previous government when he was looking after housing that we were going to make this incredible commitment to more public housing and more affordable housing across Queensland: a 10-year plan to spend \$1.8 billion.

Mr Power: Relevance!

Mr MOLHOEK: It is relevant in so much as it goes to the heart of integrity and transparency. What he failed to tell Queenslanders is that it was actually a reduction on the real spend on public housing over the last 10 years. We have heard the current housing minister talk about record spending since World War II. Those on that side of the House might be surprised to learn that the record spending on public housing in terms of grants and acquisitions and new housing stock was in the final year of the previous Labor government. We have seen consistently low levels of spending over a number of years that has not kept pace with our growing population and the demands of a growing Queensland.

I will not be supporting this bill because I do not trust Labor to manage our money. I do not trust Labor to get this right. We have seen asset sales and money squandered. We have seen our state government employees' superannuation fund raided to prop up the state budget. We have seen millions, if not billions, of dollars of increased income from power dividends, from selling electricity to the southern states, prop up and underpin state budgets. We have seen more royalties come in than expected and all of those opportunities have been squandered. There is no way I could stand in this House and support this legislation as proposed.

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (5.15 pm): I rise in support of the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021 as a measure to defend Queensland against the usual LNP solution of cutting services to the public, sacking family breadwinners and strategising to sell off most of Queensland while innocently calling such plans Strong Choices. 'Strong for who?' was the question posed by thousands of mums and dads sacked by the LNP last time around. Conversely, this bill aims to support the state's contribution to the Queensland Future (Debt Retirement) Fund; introduce a unit model to streamline an annual process of indexing regulatory fees; abolish Building Queensland and the Building Queensland board and integrate Building Queensland staff, assets, resources and records and liabilities into the Department of State Development; change the governance structure of the National Injury Insurance Agency Queensland; repeal the Public Safety Business Agency Act 2014 so that machinery of government changes may reintegrate the Public Safety Business Agency into public safety entities; abolish the Queensland Productivity Commission and integrate its functions into Queensland Treasury and the Queensland Competition Authority; and mandate the legislation which requires or authorises print advertising or publication by government agencies shall be satisfied by digital and electronic advertising or publications subject to appropriate exemptions. Even the impending transfer of registry staff includes safeguards around wages and conditions and ensures they will not be the target of another strong choice. My community on the Sunshine Coast has not forgotten what debt reduction or strong choices means to the LNP.

Mr Molhoek: You weren't even here when that was around.

Mr HUNT: I will take the member's interjection. I was, however, in the public sector the last time the opposition was in government and I was neck deep in those changes so thank you very much. We have not forgotten the 39 QBuild staff sacked from the Sunshine Coast directly before Christmas 2012. Merry Christmas from the LNP! We have not forgotten, nor will we ever forget, the 80 hospital and health workers sacked from Caloundra, Maleny, Nambour and Gympie. Indeed, I think of those Sunshine Coast nurses and midwives every time I hear the LNP pretend to care about Queensland Health because apparently nothing improves health faster than sacking nurses.

The Palaszczuk Labor government makes sensible and considered savings in a way that does not hurt everyday Queenslanders. The bill ensures that frontline services are protected and can continue to provide for the needs of the Queensland public. Compare this to the approach offered by the LNP when last they had the chance to show what they could do. It was essentially a case of drawing swords, shouting tally-ho and charging into the public sector, slashing and burning their way through the livelihoods of thousands of Queensland families. This is what the LNP means by saving. They never met a Queenslanders they could not sack and they never met a 'for sale' sign they did not instantly fall in love with, but apparently it is all forgiven if you call it a strong choice.

There are sensible savings that can be made under this bill without recourse to the cut, sack and sell mentality. The LNP seem intent on complaining about the Titles Registry going into the Future Fund—and small wonder. It would mean it would be secure in public hands and safe from the strong choices of the future. It means our communities will get full use of the registry as it provides value on the state's balance sheet. It will provide an offset for debt and destroy the childish narratives around debt and privatisation, allowing the registry to be used as an asset to offset against debt and reduce the net debt of Queensland. Of course, this is alarming for the opposition who will not be able to siphon off millions of dollars of public money to consultants in an attempt to sell state assets. They will have to make another strong choice, as I am sure they plan to do.

Speaking as someone who was a public servant and an employee of Corrective Services during the LNP's last term, I along with many of my mates well remember the contestability managers, the tyre kickers and the fruit squeezers whose job it was to select the ripest and lowest hanging fruit for the privatisation chopping block. We all know what was in store for Borallon Correctional Centre and it would have been called a 'strong choice'. I particularly remember the LNP's answer at the beginning of the crowding issue in Queensland jails: close a jail. Yes, in one of the most bizarre examples of problem solving in the lead up to Strong Choices, the LNP's best remedy to a lack of bed space in jails was to close a jail, and I am not even kidding! Under this government we are building a 1,000-bed jail at Gatton because that is what is required. This government is not crippled by a cut-slash-and-sell mentality. We build things; we do not tear them down.

When it comes to debt and deficit, the myopic approach of the LNP is simply breathtaking. They complain of deficit when their federal counterparts in Canberra have just laid out a plan for decades of the same. They are horrified by debt yet their federal counterparts have just cracked the trillion-dollar debt mark. We all remember the debt truck; now under the federal LNP we will need a debt freight train. While the New South Wales government racks up a higher debt than Queensland by every measure, actual and proportional, our local LNP simultaneously argue against Queensland's much lower debt while complaining that a particular piece of infrastructure needs improving—all without a hint of irony. While it is certainly true that Building Queensland and the Productivity Commission have had a role to play in Queensland, they will certainly be able to function from within our government agencies to strengthen our COVID recovery and contribute to savings measures.

We also remember the ramifications of the LNP's decision to set government fees at 3.5 per cent and then we watched as they rose to almost 11 per cent during their term of government. Under Labor those same government fees are now sitting at 1.7 per cent indexation and fees and charges only index in line with inflation. That is a fairly stark contrast.


As we watch the slow and steady decline of newsprint, not only is it prudent to re-examine government printing practices but also it is a much more efficient way of targeting important government information to where it will do the most good. In this day and age, that medium is most certainly online and in an electronic format. In the same way, where most regional papers do exist there is still the capacity to utilise them for government notices.

The \$3 million in savings provided by this bill is a significant amount of money for most communities and Caloundra is no exception. In Caloundra \$3 million would mean a new school hall for Caloundra State School. \$3 million could refurbish the Golden Beach State School tuckshop 10 times over. \$3 million could put lights at the AFL ground of the mighty Caloundra Panthers and build a clubhouse for the Caloundra Little Athletics. \$3 million would refurbish the amenities block at Caloundra State High School. \$3 million would go most of the way towards installing traffic lights at Ridgewood Road, which was delayed for 17 years by the LNP—but I am sure they were just about to act on it. \$3 million would be more than double the way towards the new extensions of the Beerwah library and community centre. Fortunately, I am part of a government that has pledged to deliver all of those things and more in Caloundra. Let us be very clear: for my community, \$3 million could make a great deal of difference, especially when compared to the stultifying lack of activity over the past century or more.

In closing, there is one last but very telling comparison that needs to be told in this House because the retelling of history is important. In 2012 I was rostered on duty at the Woodford Correctional Centre. The shift started routinely enough, if any shift in a jail can be called routine. However, just after lunch Dominic Fitzgerald, the other union delegate on duty, and I were called to the general manager's office. It seemed that some of our staff were being called down to the office and a union delegate was required in case any of them asked for a support person. All of the staff who were called down asked to have a delegate attend the meeting with them. It was one of the worst days I ever had as a union delegate.

That was the day I saw what 'savings measures' really mean to the LNP. One by one the staff walked in, sat down and were told they no longer had a position within Corrective Services. That morning they were fully employed and productive members of the team at Woodford, sharing the danger and helping to keep our community safe. That afternoon they had to go home and tell their families that they were unemployed. Two of them were single parents. One of them—who just a week before had received a commendation—had to go home and tell her special-needs daughter with the news. I will never forget their faces as they were handed those white envelopes. Every one of them—male and female, young and old—burst into tears before they had even started to open them, knowing what was inside: families destroyed, jobs in tatters, mortgages in ruins. Mums, dads and their children were all

starring down the barrel of an uncertain future. I saw it all play out firsthand, although I wish that I had not. I will never forget it and nor will the rest of Queensland. I commend this bill to the House to ensure that it never happens again.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (5.24 pm): Debt is indeed a tool. This bill does not achieve what the title of the bill sets out; in fact, it is almost diametrically opposite. There is no substantial effort to reduce debt. Moreover, the bill further reduces transparency and oversight with the closure of two of the few remaining independent bodies to provide economic oversight and advice—Building Queensland and the Queensland Productivity Commission—and is based on heavily inflated valuations of the titles office to create a new entity simply to prevent a further credit ratings downgrade.

The current member for Woodridge, who was the former member for Greenslopes before he cut and ran after being turfed out of office at the 2012 state election, knows that he must reshape the balance sheet in order to avoid a damaging and embarrassing credit ratings downgrade. As we all know, he has form on credit ratings downgrades because he, like a couple of other members across the chamber from me, sat around the former Bligh government's cabinet table when they lost Queensland's AAA credit rating. In December 2019, with much fanfare the then member for South Brisbane announced the establishment of a Queensland future fund, the QFF, worth \$5.7 billion. It was to be seeded by diverting \$2 billion from an existing debt retirement plan, supplemented by the reallocation of \$3 billion from a surplus in the defined benefit scheme. The assets of the defined benefit scheme have now dwindled, as identified recently by the Queensland Auditor-General.

Consequently, the initial funding of the QFF has been restructured and the decision was made to assign a value to the Queensland Titles Registry, as Registry Co, and bring that asset value to the QFF. The value of the Titles Registry has been estimated at \$4.1 billion. However, tellingly, there has been no basis for that valuation. It has not been provided. In comparison, as previous speakers have said, in New South Wales and Victoria they lease their title offices at the value of \$2.6 billion and \$2.85 billion respectively. No details—none—have been provided as to why Queensland's valuation is so much higher. Yep, move along; there's nothing to see here.

As a qualified valuer I know that when undertaking a business valuation the profession is guided by common market practice and valuation methodologies recommended in the ASIC Regulatory Guide 111. A number of valuation methods can be used to value a business and some of the more common methods include: one, the discounted cash-flow method, which is an income based approach; two, the capitalisation of future maintainable earnings methods, which is an income based approach; three, asset based methods, which is an asset based approach; and four, a fundamentally industry specific rule of thumb using a market based approach. Each of those methods is appropriate in certain circumstances and often more than one approach is applied, at least as a secondary crosscheck to a primary method.

The choice of method depends on factors such as the nature of the business being valued, the return on the assets employed in the business, the valuation methodologies usually applied to value such a business and the availability of the required information. The capitalisation of earnings method is a commonly used valuation methodology that involves determining a future maintainable earnings figure for a business and multiplying that figure by an appropriate capitalisation multiple. That methodology is generally considered a short form of a discounted cash flow where a single representative earnings figure is capitalised rather than a stream of individual cash flows being discounted.

The capitalisation of earnings methodology involves the determination of a few essential ingredients, and we would like to know: firstly, the level of future maintainable earnings; secondly, an appropriate capitalisation rate or multiple; and, thirdly, surplus assets and liabilities and net borrowings. What was the income stream amount which was capitalised in order to come up with a figure of \$4.1 billion? What was the market capitalisation rate adopted for this calculation? What risk-free rate of return was used to establish the market capitalisation rate?

Let's be very clear here: the Treasurer's establishment of Registry Co is being used to offset debt rather than pay debt down in order to improve the debt-to-revenue ratio, in order in turn to satisfy the credit rating agencies. QTC has indicated that any returns from the fund would be used to pay interest. However, with an annual interest expense in excess of around \$3 billion, the returns on a \$5.7 billion fund would be unlikely to contribute significantly to paying this expense. There is simply no real effort to reduce debt. This is the sort of smoke-and-mirrors routine we have come to expect from the member for Woodridge, who is more interested in vain social media photo ops than in getting on top of his portfolio.

In relation to savings, in his introductory speech the Treasurer stated there would be \$3 billion in savings over four years. He did not state what the savings would be measured against. It is extremely telling that at the public briefing the Deputy Under Treasurer could only commit to \$3 million in savings to date. With respect to the comments by a previous speaker, I sincerely doubt that \$3 million in savings—out of 93 electorates—would be going to one seat in exclusion. It is just lunacy. Is this a comedy skit from a *Seinfeld* episode? 'Let's shove a reference to 'debt reduction and savings' in a bill and use words and marketing spin rather than use meaningful numbers on a balance sheet.' It is no wonder the seat-swapper Treasurer probably preferred English rather than maths in high school. I say to the member for Woodridge—he was the former member for Greenslopes before being defeated at the 2012 election—that the problem is that the credit rating agencies will be zeroing in on the state budget to be handed down in the coming weeks.


These changes do nothing to fix the current structural issues facing the Queensland economy. Queensland's debt continues to grow under Labor and will reach almost \$130 billion over the forwards. It increased from \$72 billion to \$102 billion before COVID. These figures just roll off the tongues of those illiterate democratic socialists opposite. It means nothing. \$3 million is nothing in terms of debt reduction when you are staring into an abyss of \$130 billion over the forwards.

Let's not forget that Labor broke their recent election promise only a matter of seven months ago to borrow only \$4 billion. Instead, they will increase borrowings by \$28 billion. They must have forgotten to mention that extra \$24 billion somewhere as the Treasurer was ridiculously filmed carrying his little folder around with him everywhere on the campaign trail. He took that little folder everywhere.

Borrowings are being spent on operational expenses—essentially to keep the lights on. Two-thirds of Queensland's new debt is being used to cover day-to-day operational expenses and not for capital investment. This will not make a solitary dent on the balance sheet. In fact, this is seriously embarrassing and will only promote continued intergenerational debt, for years to come.

We also note that the Queensland Productivity Commission, which was established by Mr Speaker, the Hon. Curtis Pitt, back in 2015, will be rolled in so its independent voice and authority will be completely denuded and muted.

The simple fact of the matter is: if people read *Hansard* tomorrow or the day after or listen to some of the contributions from those opposite, they will realise that government members have literally been given their speaking notes and have rattled off exactly the same state of affairs. The reality is: in 2012 we inherited a huge challenge. We admit that we went too far. We paid the price and we got kicked out. Those opposite have had two terms to get things right. Each budget year they balance the books by saying, 'May we have another?' and continuing to borrow. If you borrow for income-producing assets and assets that have multigenerational life spans then that is fair enough, but this is a wasted opportunity—wasted!

 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (5.34 pm): I rise today in support of the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill. I commend the Treasurer on this legislation and I thank him for his fiscal responsibility and clear plan for Queensland's future. I thank the Premier for her clear guidance in this direction. I thank the committee chair, the member for Logan, and the committee members who brought this to the House for passage. Most importantly, I thank the people of Stafford and the people of Queensland more broadly who endorsed a sensible, just future for the management of Queensland finances in the by-elections of 2014 and in the general elections in 2015, 2017 and, more personally, 2020. I am proud to stand and support this bill as a member of the Labor Palaszczuk government because approaches to finance, approaches to public administration and the priorities of government go to the heart of our values as a government and, indeed, to who we are as a Queensland community.

I know that those opposite do not like to hear about it, but the modern Queensland we enjoy and live in today is utterly unrecognisable in contrast to the corrupt and backward-looking state we were under National-Liberal rule before 1989. Those opposite do not like to talk about it, but the people in my community talk to me all the time about the utter horror that were those almost three years of LNP rule under Campbell Newman. It appears that the Leader of the Opposition learned so much from his master's knee that he had to bring him back into a senior leadership role in the LNP.

Those opposite do not like to talk about it, but my community remembers. Doctors, nurses, wardies and cleaners at the Prince Charles Hospital remember. They remember a government that went to war against them. That government promised that our workers had nothing to fear, but they were targeted just moments after those opposite took the reins of government. The same can be said of workers from the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. That hospital is just outside my electorate,

but many who make up its workforce of doctors, nurses, allied health staff, admin staff, operational staff and many more proudly call the Stafford electorate home. In my short time in this place I have thanked each and every one of them for their commitment to our community and for their true public service, and I do so again today, both from a public policy perspective and from a personal perspective for the service they have given to my family.

When I talk about our government's commitment to those who choose to commit their extraordinary skills to public service, I genuinely mean it. The Premier and Treasurer have shown that you can deliver important social and legislative changes and be fiscally responsible. Importantly, when we on this side say 'fiscally responsible', we mean growing the economy and creating jobs. This is diametrically opposed to the approach of the LNP, who are champing at the bit to do what they do best—the same old habits of cutting workers, sacking and selling.

Locally for the people of Stafford, that is not theoretical. It meant serious cuts to our services and staff. I am talking about more than 1,400 health staff sacked across the Metro North region alone, more than 700 of them nurses and midwives. I repeat: the LNP view of fiscal management is to sack 1,400 health workers across the north side, including 731—I think that is the number—nurses and midwives.

As I said as early as my first speech in the House, I am absolutely proud to be standing here representing the people of Stafford, but I also have a big enough heart and hopefully a big enough brain to care for Queenslanders right across the state. We recognise that those sorts of cuts to health workers happened across the length and breadth of this great state. This is what I am talking about when I say that our fiscal priorities in reducing debt are fundamentally a statement of our values.

Those opposite mock the savings in this bill. We have heard it a lot just this evening. When I talk to people in my electorate about what \$3 million would mean, that is a master plan for increased services at the Prince Charles Hospital. That is what they understand.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Order! Members!

Mr SULLIVAN: This bill represents Labor's approach to the budget—sensible, responsible and prudent savings in a way that strengthens the Queensland community as well as supports the Queensland community. What we have not heard in this debate is anyone on the other side explain how sacking 14,000 workers across the state created certainty in the economy or did anything other than people not putting their hands in pockets and absolutely contracting the economy.

The LNP oppose this legislation because they have not given up on their dream—the Newman and Crisafulli dream. The plan that was laid out in clear terms—in black and white—by none other than Peter Costello. This government is determined to protect Queenslanders from that extreme approach. While the LNP want to cut, we want to ensure important organisations like the Titles Registry cannot become the plaything of the LNP. This legislation makes it clear that the Titles Registry is to stay in public hands—transferred to the Future Fund. Is it any wonder that those opposite are diametrically opposed to this bill?


I want to again thank the Treasurer for this legislation. I want to go back eight months or so and also thank the Treasurer for coming out to Rode Road, with Prince Charles Hospital in the background, to launch the infamous 'cuts bus'. When those opposite say, as we have heard in this debate on many occasions, that they want to see more so-called savings, we know what they are actually saying.

I know that the legacy and appalling outcomes of the LNP's disastrous decision to shut the former Barrett centre are a personal point for the Premier, the Minister for Health and former ministers for health in the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer. I am so proud that the Labor government reversed the ills of those Newman times and promised—and since delivered—Jacaranda Place, co-located at the Prince Charles Hospital, serving not just young people on the north side but also young Queenslanders who need the most help. I have been privileged to be in this place for a short time, but from my vantage point as an elected member, and as a lifelong member of my local community, I am absolutely gobsmacked that those opposite have never apologised for what they did with the Barrett centre. I invite the Leader of the Opposition to do so in this debate.

This is a member who served in the cabinet with Campbell Newman, who was an acolyte and trainee of Newman. This is someone who supported three of Newman's budgets of cuts and sackings. This is someone who supported the Strong Choices campaign—setting up the LNP for more privatisation. I think it is important to reflect that it was the people of Queensland who made sure they did not get a fourth budget.

I remember the arrogance of that regime. Jeff Seeney, as the deputy premier at the time, tried to stand over the member for Inala, the now Premier, saying, 'You lot are going to be over there for decades.' I am not usually one to give free advice to the Tories, but the arrogance they showed in government in those days is being repeated in today's debate. They are seriously trying to say to everyday Queenslanders that they did not care that Queenslanders voted clearly and definitively in three elections in a row now. The LNP is saying to Queenslanders, 'You got it wrong. We are not listening.' This bill is another example of the Palaszczuk government being committed to Queenslanders—delivering for them and delivering on election commitments that support them and are focused on them.

I also support the other elements of the bill. I thank both the chair of the committee and the health minister for addressing the concerns around tattoo ink that were in the community. I am sure the minister, her office and her department will come to a long-term solution in that regard. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (5.43 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. I love reading, which is just as well given the job we in this House have. We do a lot of reading, whether it is reading emails, bills, committee papers and so on. I particularly like reading fiction at night to take my mind off what I have been reading during the day. I have to give it to the Labor government today because for not the first time but for the first time in some time they have brought together my pleasure of reading non-fiction during the day and fiction at night by producing a bill that is complete and utter fiction—that is, the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill. There is not an ounce of truth in anything that is written in this piece of legislation and it starts with the title—that is, implying that somehow this piece of legislation is going to achieve debt reduction and/or savings. Let me unpack that.

Before I do, I will touch on the slogan that we constantly hear thrown around by those opposite. It is something they are good at. We will give them that. They often talk about asset sales. They need a reminder, as do the people of Queensland, that the LNP government between 2012 and 2015 did not sell any assets—none. In 2015 we went to the election with a plan to put to the people around what we would do to reduce debt, grow infrastructure and build the economy throughout the state. Yes, that involved asset sales if we were elected in 2015. We did not sell, we did not lease—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr POWELL: I take the interjection from the member for Clayfield. The proposal was to lease, not sell. We did not do either between 2012 and 2015.

However, in 2006 the Labor government sold Allgas. In 2006 the Labor government sold Sun Retail. In 2007 the Labor government sold Sungas. Also in 2007 they sold Power Direct, Golden Casket, gas assets and Enertrade, and wind energy assets. In 2008 they sold the Brisbane Airport as well as the Cairns and Mackay airports. In 2010, my second year as an MP, they sold Forestry Plantations Queensland. I can tell the Labor government that the people of my electorate of Glass House have not forgotten that. They also sold the Port of Brisbane and QR National. In 2011 they sold Abbot Point port as well as Queensland Motorways. Let me disavow the people of Queensland of that little piece of fiction from the Labor Party. The only party that has sold assets is the Labor Party. Do not believe what they try to tell you.

Let us turn to debt reduction. A big part of this debt reduction revolves around transferring the Titles Registry into the Queensland Future (Debt Retirement) Fund. For starters, I want to know who the government has as their valuer. I think Queenslanders as a whole would love to know who that valuer is because we would all love to get our properties valued by them. They are proposing that they will transfer it for over \$4.1 billion. If we look at similar entities in New South Wales and Victoria we find that they were actually leased at a value of \$2.6 billion for New South Wales and \$2.85 billion for Victoria—

Mr Nicholls: By Labor.

Mr POWELL: I will take that interjection from the member for Clayfield. They were leased by a Labor government. Again, they have form—asset sales and leases. They were leased at a value of \$2.6 billion and \$2.85 billion in states that we would have to say are far busier when it comes to titles than the state of Queensland. The government has put a value of \$4.1 billion on the Titles Registry.

We are currently experiencing a housing affordability crisis. That means most of us, particularly those of us on the Sunshine Coast, are seeing our properties increase in value. That is what happens in a market. Those opposite cannot tell me that the Queensland Titles Registry is valued at \$4.1 billion.

That is the first piece of fiction. If we transfer that along with a number of other things into the Queensland Future Fund we end up with \$5.7 billion. Our current debt is over \$100 billion and is tracking to \$130 billion. The interest bill on that is more than \$3 billion. They are telling me that somehow the interest on \$5.7 billion is going to pay down an annual debt bill of more \$3 billion. No, that simply cannot happen.

If we look at the savings, the Deputy Under Treasurer could only commit to \$3 million in savings to date. If we listen to members opposite, all 52 them, they have managed to spend that \$3 million 52 times over.

Mr Nicholls: \$156 million.

Mr POWELL: They do not have \$156 million to spend. They only have \$3 million to spend. They are each standing up and saying \$3 million could do this, that or the other. It cannot when 52 members are telling us how they are going to spend it. I understood that the idea was all about paying down debt and not spending the money elsewhere.

This bill is a complete and utter piece of fiction. It is not designed to reduce debt and it is certainly not designed to uncover savings. The bill also provides for the abolishment of the Queensland Productivity Commission. I will give credit where credit is due.

Mr Millar: Go easy.

Mr POWELL: I will not give too much credit. The Speaker, the then treasurer, Curtis Pitt, in 2015 established the Queensland Productivity Commission. The reason I will give some credit is that Labor governments need productivity commissions because they need to be held accountable to make sure that what they are doing actually produces outcomes. What we will see with this abolishment is probably what we are seeing in this House and what we are seeing across this state. Let us face it: this is the most unproductive government we have seen in decades. As the Leader of the Opposition said, one only needs to go and have a look at the bill rack—one bill. We are here for three days and we are debating one bill—this bill. It is unbelievable.

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Members to my right, please cease all interjections.

Mr POWELL: I have never in my 12 years—

Mr Nicholls: They probably think that is a lot of work.

Mr POWELL: Perhaps one bill a week is a lot of work for the Labor Party, but the LNP is quite happy to sit here as long as necessary to get more than one bill through each week. We are seeing a level of unproductiveness there. We often hear the health minister talk about record health investment. Clearly it is not working and is creating a level of unproductiveness. Look at what is happening with ramping and the fact that we cannot get patients out of ambulances and into hospitals to be treated. We are seeing a level of unproductiveness when it comes to record federal investment in infrastructure in this state. Quite frankly, if it were not for the Morrison federal government, no infrastructure would be being built in Queensland. Talk about being unproductive.

Mr Harper interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Thuringowa, you have now been warned.

Mr POWELL: No wonder they are getting rid of the Queensland Productivity Commission: it might tell them a few too many home truths. 'Let's bring it back in-house—integrate it into Treasury and put it in an office of productivity and red-tape reduction because at least then we can manipulate the figures and make sure they are telling us what we want to hear rather than what we need to hear.'

Mr Nicholls: Like an episode of *Yes Minister*.

Mr Millar: A bigger bureaucracy than was originally there.


Mr POWELL: I will take both of those interjections. It is like an episode of *Yes Minister*—produce a hospital with no beds or no patients and, yes, a bigger bureaucracy because that is exactly what this government needs to produce anything.

I want to touch on the changes to public advertising. In this bill we see an amendment that removes the need for government to publish public notices in print newspapers. It is proposed that public notices be published on the social media page of the relevant government department instead. They justify this on the basis that we have seen a slashing of regional newspapers. Try telling that to the three independent newspapers in my electorate that have operated for the last 12 years that I am

aware of and will continue to operate—the *Sunshine Valley Gazette*, the *Glasshouse Country & Maleny News* and the *Kilcoy Sentinel*. They have not been slashed. If anything, they have been going gangbusters. They welcome the investment from the government in terms of putting in advertisements.

I think it is foolhardy and not respectful of those press organisations that are continuing to provide that vital service in our communities. The Country Press Association also raised issues in relation to this and said that it would create a loss of transparency. I believe that regional Queensland businesses and communities ought to be supported by the government, so this amendment is also not supported.

I go back to where I started. This bill is a piece of pure fiction—so much so that I understand the member for Kawana, the shadow minister for finance, will be moving an amendment that proposes the title be changed to the ‘Debt Non-Reduction and Minimal Savings Bill’ because that more accurately reflects what it will achieve. Queenslanders cannot be conned by this Labor government nor this piece of legislation. It needs to be rejected.

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (5.53 pm): I rise to support the proposed Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. This bill implements a range of savings and debt reduction measures that include identified public sector efficiencies and modernisation measures necessary to ensure the economic health of our state into the future. A number of these measures will be relevant to the Queenslanders I am responsible for under my ministerial portfolio. For example, one of the elements in the proposed bill is to move from traditional print advertising and publishing to online advertising and publishing.

The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 and the Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003 both include provisions relating to the publication of notices. My department has noted that online publication in rural and remote regions may not be readily accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I am pleased that the bill identifies a specific exemption provision to allow for print publication to continue to take place in regional communities. As such, the provisions in the cultural heritage acts will be covered by this exemption provision.

The Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021 provides for the transfer of Titles Registry functions to the new entity Registry Co. The Queensland Titles Registry provides an essential service to Queenslanders and the property and development sector, processing over 6,000 lodgements and over 2.3 million paid title services in 2020 alone. This service is important to my ministerial portfolio, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and traditional owners accessing the Titles Registry to support their engagement with native title and land rights systems.

Whilst Registry Co will deliver Titles Registry services going forward, the bill provides the state with the power to protect the registers and ensure the delivery of Titles Registry services under the new operating arrangements. The implementation of a fee unit model with the amendments to the Acts Interpretation Act 1954 will streamline the annual process of indexing regulatory fees and reducing administrative burden for agencies.

Saving considerable time, a fee unit model for regulatory fees will enable these fees to be indexed in the same manner as penalty units. Under the current fee structures, annual indexation requires agencies to amend hundreds of pages of regulation to reflect the new dollar value of their fees. The current process is resource intensive, taking up to three months for some agencies to implement these changes for hundreds of fees and charges. Additionally, this process takes more than 800 hours each year to prepare the necessary fee regulations by the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel.

Streamlining the annual process, the fee unit model will provide for indexation of the fee unit rather than the amendment of hundreds of pages of regulation. Removing administrative inefficiencies for all agencies and OPQC will realise substantial financial savings across government, as hundreds of hours of staff time and effort can be fully redirected to focus on service delivery.

I also note that the integration of the Queensland Productivity Commission into Queensland Treasury will not impact the commission’s inquiry into the National Disability Insurance Scheme market in Queensland. The Queensland Productivity Commission provided its final report to the Treasurer on 30 April 2021, and a Queensland government response will be provided within the six-month time line.

Additionally, I note that the bill reintegrates the Public Safety Business Agency, or PSBA, with the Queensland Police Service, or QPS, and the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, or QFES. As the former minister for fire and emergency services, I know that there are several staff in specific roles who will be very pleased with this reintegration.

When I was the QFES minister, I had a number of delegations come and see me—mainly the mechanics. They were highly skilled mechanics who work on the full fleet of QFES appliances—pumpers, tankers, airline appliances. They have very specialist roles. Because they were employed as mechanics working for the PSBA, they could not easily explain to people at the pub what they did for a living. When they said, ‘I’m a mechanic for the PSBA,’ people would not know what that was. They always saw themselves as mechanics for the fire service, and they feel very proud of that. I want to mention Rohan Webb from the AMWU and his delegates who came and saw me a couple of times in response to being able to get the mechanics back into QFES from the PSBA.

We can speculate all we like about why the PSBA was set up. It was an experiment that certainly failed. Perhaps it was set up to sell. We do not know. We are not really sure. But it did not work and we need to get those people back—

Mr Nicholls: If you had read Mick Keelty’s report, you would know the reason why. It was pretty clear.

Mr CRAWFORD: I take the interjection from the former treasurer, the member for Clayfield.


Mr Nicholls: Did you read Mick Keelty’s report?

Mr CRAWFORD: I did read Mick Keelty’s report.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Member for Clayfield, cease all interjections.

Mr CRAWFORD: As I said, the experiment failed. It did not work. Perhaps the former treasurer was planning on selling it off to the highest bidder. I am not sure, but that is not the strategy of this government. We will now bring those people back to the departments where they belong. They belong in the emergency services; that is where they have always been. That is where they are going to come back to. They are going to come back to the police, back to the ambulance and back to the fire. They will wear those badges with honour. Their pay sheets will once again say they are an employee of that respective emergency service.

I want to take this opportunity to highlight the good work that my department is undertaking to ensure that savings targets will be achieved without affecting any frontline service delivery for some of the most vulnerable Queenslanders, particularly our seniors, our people with disability and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I support the bill.

 **Mr BENNETT (Burnett—LNP)** (6.00 pm): The good people in my electorate are concerned about making a living and providing security for their families. We are now entering a very dangerous budgetary period. Budgets are very important to our great state. We are seeing more and more people becoming dependent on Labor’s free-spending policies. Whether that be Queensland Labor or federally, others can make their assessment about that. There has been a lot said about that in this House over the last day.

The Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021 is a classic and tragic example of a Labor government in crisis. This bill will repeal 18 acts and regulatory instruments, but it does nothing to reduce debt and saves nothing. This is a real deceit of hard-working Queenslanders. This bill does not achieve what its title sets out. There is no real effort that I can see to reduce debt. We know that unprecedented raids on funds like the defined benefits scheme have occurred over several years and have resulted in no debt reduction or savings. Worse still, as the Auditor-General has reported the defined benefits scheme has significant issues.

In Queensland the way in which we earn our living is under attack. Issues with China mean that we will never go back to the economic relationship we enjoyed even five years ago. There is growing domestic opposition to core industries like coal and agriculture. The consistent attacks and regulations targeting our agricultural sector are resulting in significant constraints to sustainability and profitability. The International Energy Agency is telling us not to develop more fossil fuel, and in Queensland that is a problem. Our physical exports are overwhelmingly dominated by minerals and agriculture, which are both subject to sustained attack by Labor and the greens. We earn significant export income from only two service industries, tourism and higher education, and they have both been suspended during COVID. The only way we can cope with the kind of debt we are accruing is through sustained growth. Growth comes from higher productivity and immigration. There are no signs of higher productivity or immigration in the near future, as all of Australia has been shut down for the duration of COVID.

Why would Labor want to eliminate the state’s independent economic review body, which was established by Labor after its 2015 election commitment? Why abolish the independent Queensland Productivity Commission, which has carried out landmark inquiries into: the NDIS; service delivery in

Queensland's remote and discrete Indigenous communities; manufacturing; and solar feed-in tariffs and electricity pricing? I guess it is about what it means when those reports are tabled and how we in this House determine them—or how the government in particular wants to deal with some of those reports. I mention that because back in this House we do have to particularly reflect on the report that the Productivity Commission did on discrete Indigenous communities.

A tragic example more recently is the community of Mornington Island, which according to senior leaders has been abandoned and forgotten. Only the desperate pleas from senior leaders of the island have forced the government to action, if action is a commitment to visit, and we all welcome that involvement. You cannot have a three-year-old report with the QPC's 22 recommendations lingering and gathering dust and expect that questions about accountability or the scrutiny of those most vulnerable will be addressed. To shut down another integral independent process in Queensland democracy and transparency certainly raises questions for me. I read those Productivity Commission reports with due diligence and respect because I believe they are produced in good faith for the purpose of independence and accountability in Queensland.

The bill further reduces transparency and oversight with the closure of two of the few remaining independent bodies to provide economic oversight and advice—Building Queensland and the Queensland Productivity Commission—and is based on heavily inflated valuations from the titles office to create a new entity simply to prevent a further credit rating downgrade. I suggest that the Auditor-General and the CCC, as the last line of defence in auditing this government, need to watch themselves. If we continue to see reports that expose issues in this state, it will not come out of the blue when they come after them as well.

Another Labor government failure is Building Queensland. The Burnett electorate has a personal interest in this. I was never a fan of the questionable entity that is Building Queensland. As a state, we never realised a pathway of infrastructure projects or credible business cases to drive investment. What we saw was delays and cost blowouts. Delays and stalling from Building Queensland are having an effect in my region with the ever delayed progress of the promised new Bundaberg hospital, which is now 12 months overdue. We are waiting for a business case, and I note that changes in the government narrative may be the cause. With much hype about a promised level 5 hospital to deal with our failing health system, to now talking about services and some questionable health frameworks that are also being changed, I get it why Building Queensland has delayed this whole sorry state for another year.

The people of Bundaberg certainly will not forget when they review the promises that were made last year during the election. I have to raise the issue of the Bundaberg Hospital because it is important, but Paradise Dam is also important because we are waiting for an options paper. We are going to abolish this organisation when these key projects are right in the middle of this important work, but the Burdekin Falls Dam and the Somerset improvement project are sitting on the books of Building Queensland. As slow and inept as they have become, these projects were going to come before government and hopefully budgetary allocations would have seen these projects reach maturity. It will be a sad day when we wind them up. We can only guess how long these projects will take to reach some sort of maturity.

We are faced with the daunting task of recovering from a global pandemic, but with \$130 billion in state Labor government debt our economy was already suffering from record unemployment and a lack of investment in critical infrastructure. In my region the future of Paradise Dam will rely totally on the LNP, which has committed to fix the dam because there were no other commitments coming in that space. This area supports 25 per cent of Australia's fresh produce, and water security issues continue to be a real concern. We talk about debt levels being low, but why are we not doing things with the Bruce Highway and duplicating lanes?


Government members interjected.

Mr BENNETT: We can talk about an 80-20 split all we like, but commitments need to be made. If those opposite are going to continue to interject, I have not interjected on one of their speeches today, Madam Deputy Speaker. You would expect a bit of mutual respect, but I will continue. But we are going to wipe Building Queensland, so the business case will not materialise and the Bruce Highway will continue to be a goat track everywhere north of Noosa. Funding is well overdue on road networks in rural and regional Queensland. We want to travel safely and freight transport needs to be delivered effectively. Bundaberg farmers are battling unscientific reef regulation and vegetation management restrictions while our national parks are at an ever-increasing risk of being decimated by bushfire due to mismanagement and neglect. There is nothing being spent in that space. Borrowings are being spent

on operational expenses—that is what is important to Queenslanders—to keep the lights on and not infrastructure investment to grow the state. Two-thirds of Queensland's new debt is being used to cover day-to-day operational expenses and not capital investment.

Prior to COVID-19 Queensland had the highest rate of unemployment in Australia at 6.4 per cent, with 170,000 Queenslanders looking for work. Our power prices have doubled in the past 10 years. We have not dealt with that and we continue to see ripped-off consumers in Queensland.

Despite those opposite selling off all of the family furniture, Labor has still racked up \$130 billion in debt. I will go on the public record and say that in 12 months we will be back here reviewing Labor's debt. I make a very strong prediction that there will not be any debt reduction in 12 months. I stand by my community and say that this bill is a complete farce. I say to the people in my community that I hope we get our fair share in the budget that is due next month.

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (6.09 pm): I rise in support of the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021. This bill helps the Palaszczuk government deliver on our plan for economic recovery. Quite simply, it allows us to do the things that we need to do to take Queensland into economic recovery. It was great to hear the Treasurer make reference today to the S&P global credit rating, saying that Queensland has the strongest credit rating of any state in Australia. That is a fantastic position to be in. We are unashamedly focused on keeping our promises to Queenslanders—to fund frontline services, to keep people safe, to create jobs. We are still cleaning up after the LNP's cuts even after all of these years. We made the promise to Queenslanders that we would actually do something about that and that is what we are doing.

It is because we have sensible and prudent savings that are outlined in this bill that we can actually move forward with those very important features of our economic recovery plan. Two of the six main focus areas of that plan are in my portfolio—skills and training and small business. We are delivering on those and they are getting Queenslanders into jobs. Since 2018 we have supported over 32,000 young Queenslanders through our free TAFE and apprenticeships for those aged under 25, we have supported more than 25,000 jobseekers into jobs through Back to Work, we have created over 36,000 jobs through Skilling Queenslanders for Work and we are partnering with small business owners across our state providing financial support, training and expert advice. That is what people want us to be doing. They want to get into work.

I am listening to all of those opposite whinge, whinge and whinge. How could anyone be opposing a bill that reduces debt, delivers savings and creates jobs for Queenslanders? I do not understand it, and particularly coming from that lot over there. They made an absolute debacle of the three years they were in government and we are still cleaning up after that. It was a debacle. There is not a single person or community in Queensland that was not affected by those three years of absolute horror, especially if you were a doctor, a nurse, a teacher or a public servant—you name it. If you even mention Campbell Newman or some of those other key players over there, there are people who still get a physical reaction. They still have those really strong memories.

I think I heard the member for Chatsworth say, 'We learned our lesson,' but I do not know if any of the rest have. Sometimes they say that, but if they had learned their lesson they would have gone into the last election with some plans for economic recovery. It was a COVID election. What were people worried about? Health recovery, economic recovery, getting back to some sort of stability, but there was absolutely nothing. They are raving on today about all of the things that are wrong with this but they are yet to come up with anything that resembles a plan.

I can tell the House that in my portfolio of small business they released a sort of a small business plan in May 2019—well, it was not a plan; maybe just a statement is a more accurate description—and then there was a thing called COVID that hit, but they had no small business policy going into the last election. A million people are employed by small businesses in Queensland. You cannot talk about jobs in Queensland and job creation if you are not talking about small business owners. They make up 44 per cent of private sector employees. They went into the election with no up-to-date election policy that reflected the fact that we have just been affected by a pandemic.

I was excited to be given this portfolio by the Premier. At the beginning of this year, I thought we would go out and speak to small businesses about where they are at now in the COVID and the post-COVID economy and what they needed from the government to support them. We went to 17 locations across the state. Madam Deputy Speaker Lui, it was wonderful to be in your electorate last week talking to your small businesses. We got the most magnificent feedback from small businesses

about what they need. Everything we do in the way we are spending our Big Plans for Small Business package is guided by that feedback. It would have been a great opportunity for the shadow minister to hear from businesses everywhere across the state. He came to two of those roadshows. I do not think they are even interested in small business.

An opposition member interjected.

Ms FARMER: Just to take that interjection, the roadshows were very publicly and widely promoted. There are some other things about small business. This bill establishes the Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction because we want to continue to make it easier to do business in Queensland. That is the integration of the Queensland Productivity Commission with Queensland Treasury so there will be greater productivity and economic growth. The Queensland Small Business Commissioner has already started working with that office and they have big plans. We want to really make things easier for business through regulatory reforms. Under the LNP, red tape actually got worse. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry said in their 2015 survey report—

The burden of red tape has intensified over the past two years and continues to adversely impact the performance of Queensland businesses.

The report found that one in four businesses felt growth was hindered by red tape and were disappointed the LNP government had let them down. One would think they were the red-tape reduction experts the way they go on, but I can tell the House that when they were in government small businesses did not think that at all. There are so many things I could tell the House about how they ripped the guts out of small businesses when they were in.

I want to talk about skills and training, and this is another example where the LNP absolutely annihilated the vocational education system. It was a cut, sack and sell exercise like we have never seen—selling off TAFE campuses, sacking teachers, cutting courses, increasing costs astronomically with no notice. You would think, having learned their lesson, that they would go into the last election realising that skills and training are an absolutely critical part of our economic recovery, but what did they do? They cut Skilling Queenslanders for Work when they were in. That was basically showing an economic return of nearly \$8 for every \$1 invested in it.

Mr Millar interjected.


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Pause the clock. Member for Gregory, I remind you that you are on the list of members warned in the chamber.

Ms FARMER: They are happy to knock off Skilling Queenslanders for Work when it returns \$8 for every \$1 invested in it. Why keep a program that is doing so well and is the most successful in Australia? All they really took to the last election was that they were going to bring back their skills task force. The skills task force was actually the very body in the last term that they put up to engineer all of their cuts, all of their sackings and all of their selling off. They did not have any funding we could see for Skilling Queenslanders for Work and they did not have any funding for Back to Work, so we can only assume they were gearing up for that. They just do not like vocational education.

There are so many good stories I could tell about how people's lives have changed. We have an economic recovery plan that is already delivering for Queensland. Through this bill, we are being so prudent and setting ourselves up so we can prioritise the things that will move Queensland forward. They are whingeing, whingeing, whingeing—'You didn't do this. You didn't do that. You didn't do something else'—but they have no forward plans themselves.

Before I finish, I need to talk about something they did in my local patch. They tried to sell off the playing oval at Balmoral State High School. Well, we were not having a bar of that in our community. Thousands of people turned out. We were not going to let them sell that. They gave it away to council for free. Now we really need that land back, but we are stuck with this situation. We need the land back because the school is growing. It is the most magnificent school. I think nearly a thousand people signed a petition for the council to give that land back. They got it for free but they will not do it. That is just the LNP way: mean, spiteful and tricky.

The Palaszczuk government has a positive way forward for Queenslanders and that is what this bill is going to deliver.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (6.19 pm): It is fantastic to follow the minister in this debate. I would like to ask the minister: where was she at the time of the closing of the Longreach Pastoral College by the minister for agriculture? Where was this minister when they closed down the Emerald Agricultural College? You talk about vocational training and supporting it, but where were you when it came to rural school training? Where was the minister—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Pause the clock. Member, I ask you to direct all comments through the chair.

Mr MILLAR: Where was the minister when it came to the Emerald Agricultural College? There was not one mention in her speech about supporting the Emerald Agricultural College. The minister was sitting around the cabinet table with the minister for agriculture and did not support the Emerald Agricultural College or the Longreach Pastoral College staying open. Where was that mentioned in that speech?

The words 'debt reduction, savings and the Queensland Labor Party' should never be used in the same sentence—not today and not ever. The Labor government is hooked and addicted to debt and cannot save. Putting a Queensland Labor Party in charge of debt reduction and savings is like putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank.

We are debating an economic bill at a time when the Queensland economy faces serious structural challenges: our outgoings are greater than our income. Unsurprisingly in these circumstances, our borrowings keep growing. Yes, interest rates are currently low, but we all know that will change. Yes, I know other states are taking advantage of these lower rates to increase their borrowings, but they are borrowing to invest and grow their economies. They are borrowing to build things which will pay for themselves and more. We are borrowing to keep the wheels from falling off. We are borrowing to pay for the pens and the paper, for government expenses. The Labor government likes to gloss over this.

In March this year the Queensland Auditor-General urged the Palaszczuk government to be more transparent about its plans to pay down debt. This came as the Treasurer confirmed total government debt would hit \$130 billion by the 2023-24 financial year. The Auditor-General said that for the first time in eight years the Queensland government was forced to use borrowings to pay for operating expenses and to fund its day-to-day activities in 2019-20. That is borrowing to pay for the pens and the pads and to keep the lights on over at 1 William Street.

The Treasurer announced a \$3 billion savings drive with cost-cutting targets. Such cost-cutting target drives should be looking for waste so any cost cuts are sustainable. Just picking winners and losers by setting departmental efficiency dividends is not responsible government. I sense this may be what is happening when I look at Queensland Health.

An answer to question on notice 301 asked by the member for Mudgeeraba suggested that funds for patient travel from the regions is down across the board. The way the Labor government runs these funds gives country Queenslanders no transparency. They are often just refused or given a decreased amount and there is no real avenue of appeal. While the Palaszczuk government builds seven new hospitals in the south-east corner, it appears to be actively manoeuvring to roll the North West Health and Hospital Service in to Cairns and Townsville as an efficiency measure. If this is so, it is darkly ironic that Mount Isa should be offered up as an efficiency dividend while also contributing vastly to Queensland's royalties and earnings.

I believe that the Treasurer has found \$3 million of the \$3 billion. No wonder the scramble is on. If the Treasurer's cost cutting is ever to make our outgoings more sustainable, this bill is supposedly about the other big issue: paying off debt. However, there is nothing anywhere in this bill that will actually reduce Queensland's debt. Although it is called the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill, I note there was not a single submission by an economic or other business representative, and that is a strong statement in itself.

In December 2019 the then treasurer, Jackie Trad, announced the establishment of the Queensland Future Fund. The fund, essentially an investment fund to pay down Queensland government debt, was to be seeded with funds from the existing debt retirement schemes plus \$3 billion of the defined benefit scheme's so-called surplus. As recently identified by the Auditor-General, these assets have now dwindled away. Surprise, surprise!

This bill is about funding rescues for the Queensland Future Fund by changing the Queensland Titles Registry into an asset. It will now be a business called Registry Co with an estimated value of \$4.1 billion. This is a bit of a puzzle in itself. New South Wales has estimated the value of its title office at \$2.6 billion and Victoria puts theirs at \$2.85 billion. Why would Queensland's Titles Registry be worth so much more? We do not know; we have not been told. It is just throwing a bone to the credit rating watchdogs in the hope it fools them into not downgrading Queensland's credit rating further. Regardless, the Queensland Future Fund will struggle to earn enough to reduce the debt. It may pay the interest payments.

Moving on, the bill abolishes the Queensland Productivity Commission. It will be rolled into the Treasury department. Queensland will lose the benefit of the independent economic review body that tells the truth about important issues from electricity prices to delivery of services to remote Indigenous communities such as Mornington Island. In a similar vein, the bill also abolishes Building Queensland.

One thing I would really like to talk about—and it is something that is certainly very important to people in Western Queensland—is the bill's provisions regarding printed notices, which is a good way to communicate to people in Western Queensland. The Treasurer has justified the move of no longer requiring such notices to be printed by citing a recent move by one media company to close some regional and rural newspapers and move mastheads completely online. Rather than leading to a complete loss of printed newspapers in Queensland, new newspapers have been established in the seat of Gregory such as the *Highlands Leader*. We also have the *Longreach Leader* and the *Barcoo Independent* as well as *CQ Today*—local newspapers reporting local news, be it state or local. I would ask that the Treasurer reconsider supporting these regional newspapers.


Finally, I would like to put some information on the record and correct some of the assertions made by the minister for agriculture earlier on in this evening's debate about the agricultural colleges. In 2012 when the LNP came into power we found the agricultural colleges in disrepair, wracked with \$7 million of debt. Dalby's agricultural college had already been sold by the Labor government. The Burdekin agricultural college had already been closed by the Labor Party and machinery was getting ready for a clearing sale. The Longreach Pastoral College and the Emerald Agricultural College were barely alive with students numbers at the lowest ever seen.

When the LNP were in power between 2012 and 2015 we wanted to fix this. We established two local boards for the Emerald Agricultural College and for the Longreach Pastoral College to make sure we had local content and local people involved in running those colleges. Instead of those colleges being directed by people in Brisbane, we had local enthusiasm to increase the numbers. We invested in bursaries at both the Longreach Pastoral College and the Emerald Agricultural College and we built those numbers up. Those numbers were going up and up in 2015. We re-established the Emerald Agricultural College and the Longreach Pastoral College to make sure we had rural training skills in Queensland because the LNP sees the importance of rural training skills and the fundamental need to have these rural training skills continued in Queensland.

What has happened here and what Minister Furner will not admit is that he was the one who closed down the Longreach Pastoral College and the Emerald Agricultural College during the last term. The minister even went up to the gates of the Longreach Pastoral College and allowed the *Longreach Leader* to photograph him bolting the gates shut. The Emerald Agricultural College and the Longreach Pastoral College have been institutions for rural training in Queensland for well over 50 years.

Of course, the Longreach Pastoral College recently celebrated their 50-year anniversary. I think it was in 2019 or 2018 and well over 300 people descended on Longreach to admire and rejoice and absolutely celebrate rural skills training. Soon after that the Labor government here in Queensland closed down the Longreach Pastoral College and sacked the staff. We are talking about such well-known staff at the Longreach Pastoral College as John Arnold, well known in the horse industry.

Of course, the Emerald Agriculture College has been shut down. Talking about selling assets, only last week the Labor Party sold the Emerald Agricultural College's beef property Berrigurra, just west of Blackwater, for \$32 million. When it comes to selling assets, it is the Labor Party in Queensland that has form. The Labor government is still selling assets in rural and regional Queensland and its members should be ashamed of themselves.

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (6.30 pm): This evening I am proud to rise in support of the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill. This is an important piece of legislation as Queensland deals with the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic. No economy in the world has been immune to the impacts of this pandemic, but Queensland is in a good position because of this government's management of our economy. We will not rest either, as we know there is more work to be done.

A key part of this legislation is the transfer of the Queensland Titles Registry to the Queensland Future Fund through the Debt Retirement Fund. This is an important part of this multifaceted bill and one I have a keen interest in, given my portfolio. The Titles Registry is an important and efficient service for many people in Queensland. Just last year the Queensland Titles Registry processed over 600,000 lodgements and over 2.3 million paid title searches. It provides an essential service to Queensland

home owners as well as to the property and development sector. I can reassure Queenslanders that, following the transfer, all current services people expect from the Titles Registry will be preserved and performance requirements will be put in place.

The Debt Reduction and Savings Bill provides the mechanism for the Queensland Titles Registry to be transferred to the Queensland Future Fund through the Debt Retirement Fund. The inclusion of the Queensland Titles Registry in the Debt Retirement Fund will improve the state's debt-to-revenue ratio when assessed by credit rating agencies and demonstrates the Palaszczuk government's measured and responsible plan to invest today to pay down state debt into the future.

There has been consultation on these changes with employees and the Together union to ensure everyone is kept informed of the process. Importantly, there will be no forced redundancies as part of these reforms. Consultation with other stakeholders—including the Queensland Law Society, the Queensland Audit Office and rating agencies—has been conducted to inform the structure and legislative arrangements for the creation and operation of Registry Co. This investment base will be used to improve our debt-to-revenue ratio when assessed by credit agencies. As the Treasurer has stated, this is expected to reduce the state's debt-to-revenue ratio by about nine per cent and is a clear demonstration that the Queensland government has a measured and responsible plan to invest today to pay down state debt in the future.

With the LNP's track record, I am not surprised that they do not want to put the Titles Registry into the Future Fund. Do members know why they are against this? It is because they will not be able to sell it off. It is in the LNP's DNA to privatise, as we all know. Queenslanders will get the full value of having the Titles Registry on our balance sheet.

People in Townsville and people throughout Queensland do not support privatisation of our strategic assets. In my home town, the LNP wanted to sell the Port of Townsville. They wanted to sell the Mount Isa rail line and the Townsville police academy. Shame on them. This is critical infrastructure for Townsville, our state, our resources sector and all Queenslanders. Also in Townsville, the LNP closed Stuart State School. These are just some examples in my home town alone. The only thing the LNP does is cut, sack and sell. Under the Palaszczuk government, assets are not for sale.

The Debt Reduction and Savings Bill represents a comprehensive reform of the business and balance sheet of the Queensland government. The Palaszczuk Labor government seeks savings and debt reduction so it can invest in the services that matter to all Queenslanders. We do not cut frontline workers like nurses and midwives, we do not cut teachers and we do not cut police officers. These people provide vital services. If there is one thing this pandemic has shown us, it is how important all of these people are in the community.

In October the people of Queensland trusted this government, the Palaszczuk Labor government, as we will always back frontline services. We were elected on that platform and we will deliver 5,800 nurses and midwives, 1,500 doctors, 475 paramedics, 2,025 extra police personnel, 357 extra firefighters, 6,190 new teachers and 1,139 new teacher aides. We have invested in frontline services throughout our term in government and we will continue to do that in this term of government.

In North Queensland there will be an extra 150 police officers, more than 350 new teachers and over 60 new teacher aides and more health staff, including 352 nurses, 103 doctors and 100 health professionals. The roles these people play are incredibly important for everyone in Townsville, North Queensland and the rest of the state. That is why we are continuing to back them in, not just with extra people but also with extra facilities and equipment.

This is in stark contrast to those opposite, who cut the equivalent of 671 people in Townsville alone. In North Queensland, 398 hospital and health jobs, including 156 nurse and midwife positions in the Townsville Hospital and Health Service, were slashed. There were 28 Queensland Rail jobs cut, including safety inspectors; six jobs gone from the Port of Townsville; the WorkCover office closed—five jobs gone there too; 10 jobs cut from North Queensland Bulk Ports, which operates facilities in Mackay, Hay Point, Abbot Point and Weipa; and seven QBuild workers sacked in Townsville as part of the first wave of 322 statewide QBuild job cuts announced just before Christmas 2012. That is quite a list from those opposite! As this House can see, we back them and they sack them.

Backing workers and businesses are our top priorities as we deliver Queensland's plan for economic recovery. The Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021 will help us get there. Productivity is a huge part of growing our economy and keeping costs in check. The government is continuing to look for opportunities to improve our efficiencies across all areas of government.


It is no wonder the LNP is so indignant about us abolishing statutory bodies, because one of those bodies was set up so it could do more privatisation! Everybody knows that the Public Safety Business Agency, PSBA, was set up so that the LNP could privatise and outsource critical government functions. The LNP just wants to be able to sell off the PSBA if it ever gets back into government—just like it wanted to do with Queensland's other services, agencies and infrastructure.

This bill will also mean the integration of the Queensland Productivity Commission into Queensland Treasury, including the establishment of a new Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction. The underlying aim is to provide an additional focus on productivity and regulatory reform as part of the government's economic recovery policies. We will continue to pursue debt reduction strategies but also invest in growth. That is what this government does and why this bill is so important for people throughout Queensland.

This bill delivers the government's ongoing commitment to economic recovery—creating jobs, building essential infrastructure and delivering frontline services. This is important throughout Queensland, and that includes my home town of Townsville. This bill provides for \$3 million in direct savings which arise from savings in board costs, office accommodation and other auxiliary costs. For anyone on that side of the chamber who says it is not enough, that sort of saving is so important for many people and groups in our communities. For example, \$3 million was allocated in the last state budget for road upgrades on Magnetic Island. Just ask Townsville City Council how much difference that will make to the jewel in Townsville's crown.

Importantly, the \$3 million in direct savings is only one part of the government's broader \$3 billion savings agenda. These are sensible savings that do not harm Queensland or Queenslanders, unlike the LNP's raging cuts agenda. For those opposite to ridicule any savings measure is pretty poor form as the investments the Palaszczuk government makes are important for many people and countless businesses.

All of the measures contained in this bill will contribute to the government's savings and debt plan and, importantly, will be delivered without cutting frontline services, sacking public servants or selling Queensland assets. We need to ensure that every dollar of taxpayers' money delivers the greatest possible benefit to taxpayers and I therefore commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (6.39 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill and thank the members of the committee from both sides of the House for their consideration of this legislation. However, at the outset I will quote the second paragraph of the non-government members' statement of reservation—

The Debt Reduction and Savings Bill 2021 may have the most misleading title to ever pass through this Parliament.

I note that the member for Coomera also proposed a different name for this bill—'the Treasurer's tool to fool ratings agency bill'. I note that the member for Kawana has some amendments for the title as well—the 'Debt Non-Reduction and Minimal Savings Bill'. Those words from the member for Kawana better describe the content of this bill. When one delves into the content, it does not take long to form the view that the intent of the bill does not reflect the title. The bill does not significantly reduce debt or significantly reduce the interest payments on state government debt. I again refer to the statement of reservation from non-government committee members. They were working very hard. It states—

There is no real debt reduction proposed nor is there any significant savings to be identified.

The statement also highlights the Labor government's failure to understand the balance sheet, or maybe Labor was just trying to create some smoke and mirrors to avoid a credit agency downgrade.

The debt reduction amounts to assigning an arbitrary value to the titles office of \$4.1 billion. The statement of reservation also says that the assumptions behind the figure have not been made available. Non-government members advised that during questioning in the public hearing the response received from the Deputy Under Treasurer was that it was based on earnings. That is not a very detailed explanation. Given that the New South Wales titles office was valued at \$2.6 billion and Victoria's at \$2.8 billion, it begs the question: how did the government arrive at that \$4.1 billion figure that has been calculated for Queensland?

By moving that \$4.1 billion figure into the Queensland Future Fund, the government then proposes to use the assets to invest and get returns to pay down interest. Given that Queensland's interest bill is north of \$3 billion per annum, the return on the assets is very questionable. In relation to the \$3 billion over four years promise by the Treasurer in his first reading speech, the committee was told there was only \$3 million identified so far. There is a big difference between \$3 billion and \$3 million.

Let me come back to assets and put on the record who actually sold assets in Queensland. Labor was the one that sold the assets. In 2011 the Labor government sold Queensland Motorways for \$3 billion. Labor sold the Abbot Point port for \$1.8 billion. In 2010—and I remember it well—Labor sold QR National for \$4 billion. Labor sold the Port of Brisbane for \$2.1 billion. Labor sold Forestry Plantations Queensland. Labor sold the Cairns and Mackay airports. Labor sold the Brisbane Airport. Labor sold the wind energy assets. Labor sold the gas assets and Enertrade. Labor sold Powerdirect. Labor sold Sungas and Sun Retail and also Allgas. That is billions of dollars worth of Queensland assets sold under Labor governments. How short the memories of those opposite are. Although Labor sold assets—and successive Labor governments have sold assets—Queensland debt continues to grow under Labor and will reach \$130 billion over the forward estimates.

It is disappointing that this bill will reduce the transparency of oversight bodies, with the closure of two of the few remaining independent bodies to provide economic oversight and advice to government—that is, Building Queensland and the Productivity Commission. The Queensland Productivity Commission was established by former treasurer Curtis Pitt in 2015, and the former treasurer should be thanked for establishing this strong independent voice. The QPC is the state's independent economic review body established to review complex economic and regulatory issues and to propose policy reforms to government. It regulates prices and terms of access for monopoly infrastructure in Queensland.

The QPC has reported on regulatory pricing principles for the water sector. It has also reported regularly on regional electricity prices, and I might add that those reports are well worth a read. Queenslanders will lose a lot of transparency on electricity pricing with this change in this legislation. The QPC has also reviewed service delivery in remote Indigenous communities and most recently improving regulation. The government has advised that the functions of the QPC will be integrated into Treasury through the establishment of the Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction. A department within Treasury is a long way from the independence of the QPC which will be lost.

The bill also repeals the Building Queensland Act which was introduced by the Palaszczuk government in 2015. The act established a body to provide governance on infrastructure projects along with the associated business cases. The effectiveness of Building Queensland as a sound driver of infrastructure investment at best is questionable. Its existence has not stopped the government from committing to significant infrastructure investments without a business case—for instance, the Gabba redevelopment—or prevented cost blowouts from the Southern Queensland corrections facility or led to the development of a credible business case for Cross River Rail.

The bill also removes the need for the government to publish notices in print newspapers. The explanatory notes state that the publication by government agencies will be satisfied by digital or electronic advertising or publication to reduce costs and red tape. That is okay if people actually have internet access. Many people in regional Queensland do not have internet access and do not have internet access that will enable them to find those things on those particular websites. This is a cruel cut by the Labor government to local regional newspapers. The Labor government is withdrawing the very advertising that helps pay the wages of local journalists and local regional jobs.

The Queensland Country Press Association submitted that the proposed wording of the legislation be amended to mandate that in regional areas where a printed newspaper is published statutory public notices be placed in that publication, with the option to advertise notices online should there be no relevant print publication available. I have had many a conversation with James Clark at the *South West* newspaper in my electorate about the lack of government advertising in his newspaper. He is appalled—absolutely appalled—as an independent business at the lack of advertising that he receives. He will be further appalled when he reads what the government has put forward and these amendments to go online with public notices. The Country Press Association has thought about this and I believe that it has found a balanced outcome.

The proposed changes to 'digital advertising' lack any detail about what that means. It ignores the fact that news websites or government online portals do not have dedicated public notice sections. It is hard enough for members of the public to find the relevant information they need now on state government websites. This change will only make that more difficult for them. The principle behind advertising important government and corporate public notices sections of newspapers is to bring those decisions to the attention of the public, not to bury them away in some newly created, hard-to-find, hard-to-download section of a website.


Mr McDonald: Have some real consultation.

Ms LEAHY: I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer: there should be some real consultation. This is a time when the Labor government should be supporting diversity of local independent newspapers and publications in regional areas.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order, members. The member has taken your interjection. It would be good to listen to what she has to say.

Ms LEAHY: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your protection. All this Labor government is doing is continuing the slippery slope of a shutdown rather than embracing the positive resurgence of those independent newspapers such as the *South West* and another magazine in Dalby. This bill really is the 'Debt Non-Reduction and Minimal Savings Bill'.

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (6.49 pm): What a passionate contribution from the member for Warrego—and for the sake of *Hansard*, that was sarcasm. I rise to contribute to the Debt Reduction and Savings Bill. I acknowledge the Economics and Governance Committee for all its hard work in providing its report on the bill and, of course, all those who contributed to that report.

This bill is about reducing the burden of debt for our state and delivering savings for Queenslanders. The Palaszczuk government makes sensible savings decisions that do not hurt Queenslanders. The savings that this bill supports will ensure our frontline services are sustainable and responsive to the needs of the public. This is critically important. Being responsible economic managers means that when the world hits tough times, as it did last year with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our government is in a position to support Queenslanders and that is exactly what we did.

Last year as part of the Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs initiative, we announced a \$100 million Works for Tradies package to build 215 new homes and support 240 jobs in construction. We announced nearly \$60 million worth of initiatives, including a \$22.5 million Arts and Cultural Recovery Package to help sustain the arts and cultural sector, a sector that each year injects \$8.5 billion into the state's economy and supports more than 92,000 Queensland jobs. In fact, Queensland was one of the first jurisdictions to act when it came to supporting the arts and cultural sector, knowing how hard the sector was hit by COVID. Also as part of our COVID-19 economic stimulus we invested \$8.9 million in a National Parks Works and Jobs Boost to support jobs and infrastructure in these tourism drawcards. Being good economic managers means governments can support jobs and businesses when times get tough.

The LNP oppose this bill because the only savings measures they know how to employ are cuts—cuts to frontline services, cuts to Public Service jobs—and the sale of public assets. During their time in government under Campbell Newman, with the member for Broadwater sitting around the cabinet table, the LNP showed Queensland their ideas about how to save money and it gutted our state. It is no surprise to see them here today opposing the bill with its measured and responsible plan to invest today and pay down state debt into the future.

I think it is important to remind the House how the LNP tried to save money in the housing portfolio when it was in government. They cut investment in social housing construction and they tried to off-load housing assets. The member for Everton, as the former housing minister, oversaw a huge reduction in social housing construction.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order!

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your protection. In fact, construction ground to a halt in places like Logan, Redland City, Rockhampton, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and Ipswich where, in 2013-14, at the height of the member for Everton's leadership in housing, not a single new social housing project commenced construction. Not one social housing project commenced construction in that year alone in all of those locations. That is how the LNP save money: they cut essential government investment.

They also cut funding to the Tenancy Advisory and Advocacy Service, the service that provided valuable advice and support for vulnerable tenants. In the worst move, they introduced a three-strikes policy that treated social housing tenants like second-class citizens and created new rules for them that no-one else had to abide by. Their policy did not result in a drop in antisocial behaviour or an increase in evictions; it just told social housing tenants that the LNP thought they were a burden. On top of that, they set out to off-load 90 per cent of Queensland's social housing off the government books and, of course, the public servants who went along with the support of that work, walking away from government's responsibilities to vulnerable people. They continue to spruik that same policy, making it

clear to Queenslanders that that is exactly what their plans are for the future: to off-load social housing and to walk away from the responsibility of governments to protect and serve vulnerable Queenslanders.

There are still many Queenslanders today who remember all too well the cut, sack and sell approach of the LNP. There are plenty of people who rely on social housing who still remember how they were treated by the LNP and how they are still being treated. These are the kinds of savings measures we saw from the LNP when they had their time in government. When you put that alongside the policies being put in place by the Palaszczuk government it is like chalk and cheese.

Our \$1.6 billion Housing Construction Jobs Program represents the biggest investment in social housing since World War II and will deliver 5,500 social housing and affordable homes by 2027. We know how to put in place responsible savings measures while still being able to invest in what vulnerable Queenslanders need, such as a safe place to live and a roof over their head. The LNP's cut, sack and sell agenda saw them cut 14,000 public servants, including 4,000 health workers and affecting 1,800 midwives. They cut the infrastructure spend to record lows. Cut, sack and sell is all they know how to do. It is not responsible government. It is not how Labor governments on this side of the House operate.

The bill also includes other measures that are relevant to the communities, housing and digital economy portfolio. This bill makes a minor amendment to the Retirement Villages Act 1999 in relation to registration fees. When a retirement village scheme is registered, the Retirement Villages Act 1999 provides that a statutory charge is created over the retirement village. A statutory charge is a way to register an interest over property. Schedule 3 of the bill makes an amendment to section 126 in part 6 of the Retirement Villages Act 1999.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order, members to my left!

Ms ENOCH: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. This section exempts the chief executive of the department administering the Retirement Villages Act 1999 from paying registration or other fees under the Land Title Act 1994 to record a statutory charge, or release a statutory charge, on the title in relation to a retirement village. There is a proposed minor amendment which clarifies that the chief executive of the department administering the Retirement Villages Act 1999 will continue to be exempt from the payment of title registry fees when statutory charges are recorded or released under the Retirement Villages Act 1999.


Unlike the LNP, the Palaszczuk government makes sensible savings that do not cut frontline services and do not hurt Queenslanders. The LNP's agenda to cut, sack and sell was devastating for our state. This bill is a strong defence against that kind of reckless behaviour. When the LNP were in office in this state we saw what they did to housing and we saw what they did to public servants. Every single person on this side of the House knows people in their own electorate who have been impacted by those cuts. Even today there are many people who are more than willing to tell their story about how they were impacted by the cuts of the LNP government.

Tonight those opposite have shown over and over again in their contributions to this bill that they have not changed and that they have no intention of changing. They have not learnt the lesson of the past. They continue to see that the only way to manage the economy is to cut, sack and sell. The Labor government and this bill represents a sensible way forward to manage what we have seen as an impact of COVID. Our approach is to be sensible economic managers to make sure that Queenslanders are protected. Responsible debt reduction and savings measures are good for Queensland and I support the bill.

Debate, on motion of Ms Enoch, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Sunshine Coast, Small Business

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (6.59 pm): Small business is the backbone of the Australian economy and nowhere is that more true than on the Sunshine Coast. There are more than 38,500 small businesses on the Sunshine Coast and, when considered as a percentage of the population, more small businesses reside on the Sunshine Coast than in any other region in Australia. The past 12 months have presented challenges to small businesses unlike any most Australians have ever experienced before. That is why it was great to see amazing Sunshine Coast businesses King IT, FarmRak, jpg signs and Murray's Cafe recognised for their success and commitment to our community

at the inaugural Rotary Club of Mooloolaba Small Business Awards Presentation Night. The night recognised those four unique Sunshine Coast businesses and I too would like to acknowledge them this evening.

Calling the revolutionary Buderim business FarmRak a fish and chip shop seems akin to calling the Pacific Ocean a puddle. Chef and owner of FarmRak, Nattapon Chumchujan, is committed to improving the diets of Sunshine Coast locals by providing fresh organic food at an affordable price. FarmRak have built an aquaponics farm that uses wastewater from growing fish to fertilise more than 20 types of spray-free vegetables, which are harvested daily for consumption by many repeat customers at their restaurant. For Nattapon and his wife, Bella Kim, FarmRak is a labour of love, which is reflected in the name of their restaurant as the word 'rak' means 'love' in Thai.


jpg signs is another amazing Buderim based business that, since being established in 1989, has grown into a trusted local mainstay. Over the years, jpg signs has evolved and changed names as owner Jeff Patterson has tweaked jpg's business offering to keep pace with opportunities and changes in technology. jpg signs is a business built on teamwork and strong links to the broader Buderim community.

Murray's Cafe is another business that has survived the test of time, offering a family environment with a focus on genuinely caring for their many repeat customers. Aptly named after owners Kylie and Gav Murray, Murray's Cafe takes pride in providing sustenance for the body and soul. It is a recipe that has seen Murray's Cafe become the preferred local haunt for hundreds of Sunshine Coast locals.

The final recipient was Sunshine Coast IT retailer King IT. Only a couple of weeks ago I stood in this place and spoke about King IT and their partnership with DV Safe Phone, an amazing local charity that is doing tremendous work to support the victims of domestic violence. It is a testament to the strength of our local community when we have businesses such as King IT partnering with local heroes such as the founder of DV Safe Phone, Ashton Wood, to make our community a better place.

On behalf of the entire community I thank Mooloolaba Rotary for hosting their inaugural small business awards. Again I congratulate recipients Farm Rak, jpg signs, Murray's Cafe and King IT for their resilience, commitment to customer service and support to our entire community.

Jordan Electorate, National Volunteer Week

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (7.02 pm): Last week marked National Volunteer Week, which was an opportunity to thank the over 700,000 Queenslanders and six-plus million Aussies who volunteer their time. And it is a lot of time. According to Volunteering Australia, 600 million hours were dedicated to supporting others. In one week in my own electorate of Jordan I was able to see the extraordinary impact that volunteers are having on individuals, the community and the environment around us.

Early in the week I attended the first birthday of the Flagstone Community Centre. The centre, established by Uniting Care and run by the wonderful Susan Hawke, has provided a much needed local space for our government health services, community service providers, local community groups and individuals seeking support. The birthday party was an opportunity to thank the many volunteers who contribute to the community centre, from wonderful individuals and businesses to organisations including the Flagstone Community Association and Jimboomba Quota.

On Wednesday night I was really pleased to host a special event for all of our P&Cs and P&Fs in the Jordan electorate. Those are the amazing parents on the school executives who make the decisions, do the fundraising and manage the projects. They host the events and they advocate for their school communities. Our schools cannot do without them.


On Saturday morning I was back in Flagstone visiting the incredible Daniel, who is establishing the Flagstone Foodbank. Daniel runs his charity, Beyond Barriers. He walked me through their new space, which is currently being renovated by amazing tradies who have volunteered their services and donated many of the building products to get the food bank up and running. It is incredible. Daniel has a dedicated group of people who are volunteering their time to help set up the food bank and accompanying op shop. I am looking forward to spending some time there helping out as well.

Later that day I was proud to be invited to represent the Minister for Multicultural Affairs at the Bengali new year celebrations. The dedicated volunteers of the Bangladesh Association in Brisbane had spent months organising that wonderful event and they welcomed over 1,000 people to our community. Just as with the recent Indian new year celebrations organised by the Varnam Cultural Society, the Congo Flavours Festival organised by AusCongo and our Greater Springfield RSL, which organised a moving Anzac Day Service, dedicated volunteers spend months preparing, planning and ensuring COVID safe events can go ahead for the enjoyment of our community.

On Sunday I had breakfast with the incredible volunteers of our Springfield Lakes Nature Care Group. It is a wonderful group of locals who do so much to support and protect our natural environment, whether it is planting trees, collecting rubbish from our parks or catching those dreaded cane toads in our lakes.

I finished the week with the Springfield Christian Family, which celebrated 25 years as a church. Through their charitable arm, Westside Community Care, and their many volunteers, they continue to support many local community members. I am so grateful for their service and care. It has been a week to celebrate our incredible volunteers in the Jordan electorate, but as we know they are there not only during National Volunteer Week; they are there every week. For that we say thank you!

Smoky Creek Solar Farm; Callide C Power Station, Fire

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (7.05 pm): While the government focuses on shutting down coal-fired power stations in Queensland, pursuing their 50 per cent renewable target by 2030, they are missing the bigger picture, which is that Queenslanders need jobs. The Callide C Power Station at Biloela, a mere 20 minutes from my office, employs 260 workers, supplying 1,500 megawatts of baseload 24/7 power, which is 16 per cent of the state's needs, and that supports the local economy.


How does the proposed Smoky Creek solar farm near Biloela, which the proponents Edify Energy are now calling the 'Smoky Creek power station', stack up against those figures? Its installed capacity will be only 450 megawatts of intermittent unreliable power, which is not even one-third of Callide's production. Let us not forget that its deliverable capacity will be in the range of only 20 per cent of its installed capacity, because when the sun does not shine it does not work. At completion, it is projected to employ just five people.

The size of the proposal in comparison to its output is also astounding. We are talking about 36 square kilometres, which is nearly half the size of the environment minister's electorate of Gaven or almost as large as the Treasurer's electorate of Woodridge. The development of the solar farm defies logic. Not only is it located in good agricultural grazing land but also there are no environmental impact statements applicable to its development. The local council can impose conditions on the development but the damage will be done. The council's hands are tied by the Planning Act 2016, limiting their ability to restrict the development application and forcing them to impose conditions to mitigate any problems that develop.

Has anyone considered the impact on the Great Barrier Reef with the impending reef legislation? According to the Department of Environment and Science, their guidelines will be adequate to manage those risks. While farmers bear the burden for increased record keeping, permits and applications for environmentally relevant activities, the solar farm can avoid them entirely.

This afternoon at Biloela, Callide C Power Station suffered a generator turbine failure that resulted in a power outage and caused the closure of the entire plant. All of the staff were evacuated and everybody has been accounted for. No injuries have been recorded. However, that has caused a catastrophic failure in the energy supply grid in Queensland, with many thousands of homes going without power. People have been stuck in elevators. There has been widespread traffic chaos as traffic lights have been out and so on. Another problem is that in Queensland power spiked to \$15,000 a megawatt hour at 6 pm today, which reiterates the fact that we need baseload power.

Manger, Ms PF; Redlands Electorate

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (7.08 pm): Our Redlands Labor family has lost a much loved member, a stalwart of the Labor Party and one of my biggest supporters. Patricia Florence Manger, affectionately known as Paula, was a champion of the Australian Labor Party from the 1960s through to her passing last Thursday. She was a member of the Labor Party for many years. Initially she lived in Sydney where she had the absolute pleasure of meeting Gough Whitlam, Jim Cairns and many others of the era of the late-sixties and seventies. Paula worked tirelessly for the Labor Party. She was a humanist. She belonged to the Women's Electoral Lobby. She rallied against the Vietnam War. She fought for social justice and for women to have the right of choice over their bodies. Paula was extraordinarily proud of the legislation that the Palaszczuk Labor government passed in the last term of government.

Paula moved to the Redlands in 1995. She was always the first to buy a raffle ticket and the first to buy a ticket to a fundraiser. I will fondly remember our last gathering last month, when we had a lunch with Terri Butler together. Besides supporting the Labor Party, Paula loved spending time with friends and was also involved with helping social groups at Lake Sherrin, one of our aged-care facilities in the Redlands.

Paula spent the last few weeks of her life in palliative care. In this National Palliative Care Week, I thank the staff who cared for Paula. I thank each and every palliative care worker across Queensland for the incredible work they do in caring for Queenslanders at their end of life. As this year's theme states, it is so much more than you think.


I also had the opportunity last week to visit Redland Hospital with the member for Capalaba. We attended the Quandamooka traditional smoking ceremony with songman Josh Walker and the Yulu Burri Ba Dancers in preparation for construction works about to get underway on our new \$50 million hospital car park. While we were there we also had the chance to meet with many of the executive of the hospital and some of our new interns, which was fantastic. We also had a really interesting conversation with some of the executive team in regards to one of our general medicine wards that has been converted into a dementia ward to care in part for some of our most vulnerable. That is because there are no beds available in aged-care facilities, where these people should be being cared for with their specific needs. This is an absolute failing on the part of the federal government and it is putting pressure on our hospitals.

It was also interesting to hear about Friday's workload that comes through the emergency department. Quite frequently our paramedics receive additional patient loads from aged-care facilities just before the weekend. Again, this shows an absolutely fundamental failing of the federal government when it comes to delivering high-quality aged care for our most vulnerable.

Our federal member this week raised the issue of hospital ramping of which I can say we saw none on our visit last week. I suggest to him that he should use his time, his energy and his efforts to secure more aged-care funding for the Redlands. More beds in aged care means more beds freed up at our hospital.

Finally, I thank all of our volunteers. Last week was National Volunteers Week. We have so many incredible volunteers right across Redlands. We could not do it without you. Thank you, Redlands volunteers.

Burleigh Pavilion

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (7.11 pm): In 1953, there was a rock pool built at Burleigh, right in front of where the Burleigh Pavilion is now. It was there for 30-odd years and lots of people used it—

Mr Langbroek: That's where I learned to swim!

Mr HART: I take the interjection from the member for Surfers Paradise. He learned to swim there. It was a great facility, but unfortunately it caused some environmental issues and it started to cost a lot of money to operate. In 1987, along came a developer who said, 'Let's move that rock pool. Let's put a beach pavilion in there. We will build a pool. In return for providing that community service in the form of a pool and a gym, please allow us to operate some restaurants there.' That was negotiated with the department of natural resources and for the last 40-odd years or so, that has happened down in Burleigh.

Recently and very disappointingly, the newest owner of that facility has decided to remove the swimming pool and is seeking a hotel licence. I do not support the removal of the swimming pool and I definitely do not support a hotel being in that location. I have had conversations with the proponent about the original deal that was made with the government and specified that the wording of the lease must be complied with, namely—

The lessee must use the leased land for commercial business purposes, namely for a swimming pool, kiosk, restaurant and associated health facility purpose and for no other purpose whatsoever.

It is really disappointing to see that the latest development takes away the original major swimming pool and leaves what is basically a splash pool. I am not going to stand for it.


In the past I wrote to the former minister for natural resources, Anthony Lynham. I will table his response that the government would enforce the lease. I also table a story about the rock pool that was there previously.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 17 February 2020, from the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, Hon. Dr Anthony Lynham, to the member for Burleigh, Mr Michael Hart MP, regarding the Burleigh Beach Pavilion [711].

Tabled paper: Article, undated, titled 'The Burleigh Rock Pool' [712].

I say to the proponent: leave the swimming pool there and do not apply for a hotel licence. The people of Burleigh do not want to lose the swimming pool. My grandchildren learned to swim there and, as we have heard, the member for Surfers Paradise learned to swim in the rock pool before that. It is an important piece of infrastructure for the people of Burleigh and we want it to stay there.

Nudgee Youth Advisory Council

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (7.14 pm): One of my favourite parts of being a local member is engaging with young people across my electorate and listening to their thoughts on current issues, the challenges they are experiencing and their hopes and dreams for the future. So often these conversations are made possible by the regular contact we have as local members with local schools and community groups, but when young people finish school and head off to work and study—an intensive period in their lives—I have noticed that this is often when I and my office do not hear as much from young people in the 18-25 age group. It is when people buy a house, start a family and start accessing services such as local schools, healthcare and early childhood services that they are more likely to reach out to their local member for assistance or to share their views.

It has always been a pleasure to engage with young people in my electorate at community events and through initiatives such as the YMCA Youth Parliament, but it was recent conversations with respect to youth justice, respectful relationships and consent laws that led me to put the call out for nominations to form the Nudgee Youth Advisory Council, or NYAC as I now affectionately call it.


The purpose of the youth advisory council is to amplify the voices of young people across my local community on issues of importance to them. Never has this been more important. In the 2020 Voices of Hope: Growing Up in Queensland survey, carried out by the Queensland Family and Child Commission, just 23 per cent of young people said that adults in their communities listen to young people. This finding matters.

Young people's thoughts and feelings matter and surely we need to better harness them, so I put the call out on social media for interested Nudgee locals between the ages of 16 and 25 who wanted to have their say to nominate to join my inaugural youth advisory council. The response was fabulous. Young locals from the three high schools in my electorate—Earnshaw State College, Nudgee College and Mary MacKillop College—put their names forward. Young locals studying at TAFE or university, those looking for work and those working casual, part-time and full-time jobs put their names forward. From social housing to the environment, disability services, consent law reform and respectful relationships, foster care and youth justice—each nominated key issues of importance to them. I wish I could have accepted all nominations, but there were too many.

On 28 April I met with 18 fabulous young people from across my community who put their names forward to be a voice for youth in our community. From Boondall to Banyo and from Nundah to Nudgee, all were represented. All are impressive, all have a clear view of what issues matter to them and all have a desire for their voices to be heard.

To Al, Alexandra, Alyssa, Andrew, Annabel, April, Caitlin, Emily, Harry, Jennifer, Mahalia, Megan, Olivia, Owen, Scott, Taylah, Thomas and Zachary, I look forward to working with you in the year ahead, to listening and hearing your voices, and to you amplifying the voices of young people across our community.

Emergency Management Levy

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (7.17 pm): September marks two years since my local community came face to face with a potentially life-changing and devastating event when a bushfire broke out in the national park adjacent to a major residential estate. That this bushfire, which destroyed hundreds of hectares of native vegetation, did not cause more damage or result in more severe consequences is nothing short of a miracle.

On that fateful evening of 9 September 2019, it was the swift and rapid response of our fires and emergency services personnel that saved dozens of homes and hundreds of lives in and around Peregian. At the fire's peak, more than 100 crews were on the ground battling to protect homes and livelihoods as the fire threatened. Understandably, the outpouring of community gratitude for the actions of the first responders in the aftermath of this near tragedy was significant. Locals rallied together and raised thousands of dollars to support the efforts of the volunteer fires who stood shoulder to shoulder with their paid colleagues on the front line.


With this event firmly etched in the minds of locals, it was a bitter blow to find out recently that the state government intends to hit residents and businesses with a massive increase to the fire levy in a month's time. Dozens of residents and business owners have contacted my office after receiving advice that the emergency management levy, which is collected on behalf of the state government via council rates, would increase by 112 per cent on 1 July due to a decision to reclassify the local area's zoning from class D to class A.

There was no consultation, no warning and no explanation as to what services will be improved, just a one-page letter outlining the increase was due to five permanent staff now being stationed at Coolum. Of course our community and I are grateful for the services of the local Coolum firies, but how this extra service equates to such a massive hike in fees has left locals reeling and struggling to comprehend.

As we all navigate our way through the post-COVID economy, the last thing business and home owners need is another sneaky tax grab by the debt ridden, lazy Labor government. This is not the time to target businesses that are driving the economic recovery and providing much needed jobs for locals. This is not the time to target home owners, when housing affordability and homelessness in this state have reached crisis point. Surely it would be smarter to first consult with the community and work towards to an incremental increase.

On behalf of the hundreds of home owners and businesses in the Coolum and Peregian Springs area, I strongly urge the state government to show some common sense and compassion and support an urgent review of this decision.

Townsville University Hospital, Paediatric Cardiology Service


 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (7.20 pm): As the member for Mundingburra, I rise tonight to talk about a very important announcement made last week at the Townsville University Hospital which I attended. It was a very important announcement that will see \$1.4 million invested in a new paediatric cardiology service for our young people—young people who live in North Queensland and are experiencing serious cardiac health issues. This new facility will be built at the Townsville University Hospital, the largest facility within the Townsville Hospital and Health Service and the only tertiary referral hospital in Northern Australia. Recruitment for a paediatric cardiologist, paediatric registrar, bookings officer, clinical nurse and cardiac scientist to run the North Queensland Paediatric Cardiology Service will start from 1 July.

It was a very important announcement, but it is also extremely important that we acknowledge the hard work of Ms Amanda Stones who strongly advocated for this service to be established in Townsville. Amanda has a three-year-old daughter, Emily, who needs this vital service. Whilst at the announcement of the new service, Amanda also shared with me her family story about the negative impacts of travelling south to Brisbane with young Emily for her important medical treatment. Amanda explained how disruptive it was to the whole family and the impacts on her and her husband Stephen's employment. Amanda also stated that this new service will make life so much better for her family and the families of another 150 young people who need this vital paediatric cardiology service in the north.

This is a very important investment for the region and helps many young people and their families to stay at home where they are able to work, be more comfortable and have the vital support from extended family and friends. This important investment is supported by a further \$1.6 million investment in a paediatric emergency services department, which is currently under construction at the Townsville University Hospital. This clearly demonstrates that the Queensland Palaszczuk government is serious about investing in vital health services for the region and, furthermore, helping improve the health and lifestyle of so many North Queensland families.

As we all know, the Queensland Palaszczuk government led the country when it came to managing COVID-19. This strong leadership kept Queenslanders safe during the world pandemic. This same strong leadership was a first mover when it came to leading with a strong economic COVID recovery plan for the people of Queensland. Now the Palaszczuk government is clearly demonstrating that it is investing in important core services just like this right across the state. It is investing not only in important jobs, but investing in vital services for North Queenslanders.

National Volunteer Week


 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (7.23 pm): As we have already heard in the House this evening, last week—17 to 23 May—was National Volunteer Week. On Thursday I had the pleasure of hosting JPs and ViPs—that is, Volunteers in Policing—from the Coomera Police Station to present certificates and pins. Ten hardworking volunteers came along. The JPs who came along for the morning were: John Richardson; Don Bollard, Steve Elston, Terry Jones; and Ian Alexandre. Some of those had been JPs for upwards of 40 years. The ViPs who came along were: Brian Glazebrook; Ron Barton; Jeanette Williams; Sue Minett; and Phillip Porter. It was a real pleasure to have them there. We also had along Acting Senior Sergeant Groves, officer in charge of the Coomera Police Station, and Constable Bella Wilson. It was a very pleasant morning.

I have to say a little about the statistics on volunteers in Queensland. These statistics are included in a report entitled 'State of volunteering in Queensland' produced by Volunteering Queensland. A staggering 900.4 million hours per annum of volunteering is undertaken in Queensland. If we value that as a cost of labour replacement it amounts to over \$37 billion in 2020. The value to the community is costed at \$84 billion. We simply cannot afford to have the wonderful society we have without our wonderful volunteers.

A real treat was having young Agnes and Teresa Joy there. Agnes and Teresa are amazing young ladies. I will talk a little about them now. Agnes is in year 12 at Calamvale Community College, Brisbane. Her sister, Teresa, is in her third year studying a Bachelor of Psychology and Criminology at Griffith University, Queensland. They are on a mission to sing the national anthem of every nation of the world to promote world peace. That is their mission.

I was talking to them a little earlier. Amazingly, 195 countries are accepted by the UN as countries of the world. They can sing every one of the national anthems of those countries. There are 247 anthems around the world and they can sing every single one of those. They can now sing the Australian national anthem in Yugambah language. I am looking forward to them singing at our citizenship ceremony on 6 June. They are going to sing a few bars of it themselves. I am looking forward to hearing them singing in a few different languages at the citizenship ceremony on 6 June. We are looking forward to inviting 100 new Aussies to take the oath of allegiance to Australia on that day.

Brusasco, Mr I

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (7.27 pm): I rise to pay tribute to the late Ian Brusasco AO, a Queensland Great and legend within the Labor Party, an Ashgrovean and a Cooper local. To give a comprehensive account of Ian's lifetime achievements certainly is not possible in the time permitted. In sport, Ian first excelled at Rugby, playing for the Nudgee 1st XV, both the Queensland University and Brothers Rugby clubs, and in the Queensland representative side. As Ian told me when we last spoke, he would have played for Australia had illness not gotten in the way.

True to his character, this setback did not deter Ian from further involvement in sport, this time in soccer. Ian served first as secretary of Azzuri, which later became Brisbane City FC, after which he served as an Australian delegate to the FIFA Congress, leader of the Australian under 16 soccer World Cup teams between 1985 and 1989, chairman of the Australian Olympic Football Task Force and chairman of the Trustee Management Group of the Brisbane Strikers. For these contributions, Ian was inducted into the Australian Soccer Hall of Fame in 1999 as an inaugural member. More broadly, Ian was an inaugural member of the Queensland Academy of Sport in 1989, serving on the board until 1997, and was chairman of the Brisbane World Masters Games from 1993 to 1994.

In business, Ian practised his profession as a pharmacist. He qualified in 1955 and married fellow pharmacy student Patsy Wilson in 1956. Together they opened several pharmacies in Brisbane. Some short years later, in 1960 he would join the Ashgrove branch of the Labor Party. By 1970 Ian would turn his full-time career to politics, serving as a council alderman for 14 years, chairing both the health and planning committees.

However, in perhaps his greatest contribution, Ian worked behind the scenes, integrating business acumen with political strategy through his crucial role in running and revitalising the 4KQ radio station. As we know, the sale of 4KQ in 1986 provided the capital to establish Labor Holdings, the investment fund to which we owe much credit for Labor's electoral dominance in Queensland over the past 30 years. For these exceptional contributions to our party, both Ian and Patsy were awarded life membership.

Finally, I turn to Ian's legacy of philanthropy. In 1993 he founded Foodbank Queensland alongside former lord mayor Clem Jones AO and solicitor David Muir. With Patsy he also seed funded the Foodbank Queensland Foundation to ensure Foodbank Queensland's long-term viability. Ian considered this achievement his proudest and the most satisfying of all his work.

It is said that behind every great man is a remarkable woman, and there is no truer personification of this than Ian's wife, Patsy, who has herself been awarded an OAM for her community work. Patsy is not able to be here tonight. However, I did seek her permission to give this speech. I would like to offer my most sincere condolences to her, along with their three children, Mark, Tim and Linda. Vale Ian Brusasco.

The House adjourned at 7.30 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Andrew, 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, Katter, Kelly, King A, King S, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lui, MacMahon, Mander, McCallum, McDonald, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Skelton, Smith, Stevens, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Weir, Whiting