



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, 15 June 2021

Subject	Page
ASSENT TO BILL	1771
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 2 June 2021, from His Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to a certain bill on 2 June 2021.	1771
SPEAKER'S STATEMENT	1771
Pegg, Mr D	1771
PRIVILEGE	1772
Speaker's Rulings, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House	1772
PETITIONS	1772
TABLED PAPERS	1773
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS	1776
Pegg, Mr D	1776
Coronavirus, Update	1776
Budget	1776
2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games	1777
Immigration Detention	1778
Queensland Jobs Fund.....	1778
Budget, Racing Industry; School Infrastructure	1778
Budget, Health.....	1779
Railways	1779
Renewable Energy	1780
Budget, Fire and Emergency Services	1781
Tourism Industry.....	1782
Renewable Energy	1782
New Economy Minerals Initiative; Queensland Coal Mining Board of Inquiry, Findings	1783
PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE	1783
Membership.....	1783


Table of Contents – Tuesday, 15 June 2021

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	1784
2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games; Infrastructure Funding	1784
Health System.....	1784
Major Events.....	1785
Infrastructure, Funding.....	1785
West Moreton, Health Services	1786
Sunshine Coast, Rail Infrastructure	1787
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article from AAP online, dated 11 June 2021, titled 'Qld funds health, cuts capital spending'	1787
Job Creation	1788
Bundaberg Hospital	1788
Capital Investment.....	1789
Toowoomba Hospital	1790
School Infrastructure	1790
Coomera Connector.....	1791
Health System.....	1791
Spanish Mackerel Fishery.....	1792
Railways, Personnel.....	1792
Callide C Power Station	1793
Skilling Queenslanders for Work.....	1793
Cairns, Social Housing.....	1794
Tourism Industry, Work in Paradise.....	1795
DEFAMATION (MODEL PROVISIONS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL	1795
Second Reading	1795
APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL	1813
Message from Governor	1813
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Message, dated 15 June 2021, from His Excellency the Governor, recommending the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2021.....	1814
Introduction	1814
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2021.....	1814
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2021, explanatory notes.....	1814
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2021, statement of compatibility with human rights.....	1814
First Reading	1814
BUDGET PAPERS	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Appropriation Bills.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Budget Speech—Budget Paper No. 1.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Budget Strategy and Outlook—Budget Paper No. 2.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Capital Statement—Budget Paper No. 3.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of the Premier and Cabinet.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Treasury.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Legislative Assembly of Queensland.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Education.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Employment, Small Business and Training.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Energy and Public Works.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Environment and Science.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Health.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Justice and Attorney-General.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Corrective Services.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Police Service, Public Safety Business Agency.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Resources.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning.....	1815

Table of Contents – Tuesday, 15 June 2021

<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Transport and Main Roads.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Brisbane and Redlands.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Central Queensland.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Darling Downs.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Far North Queensland.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Gold Coast.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Ipswich.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Logan.....	1815
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Mackay-Whitsunday.....	1816
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Moreton Bay.....	1816
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Outback Queensland.....	1816
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Sunshine Coast.....	1816
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Townsville.....	1816
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Wide Bay.....	1816
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Budget Highlights.....	1816
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Investing for Women.....	1816
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Queensland Budget 2021-22: Queensland's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan—Budget update.....	1816
APPROPRIATION BILL.....	1816
Message from Governor.....	1816
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Message, dated 15 June 2021, from His Excellency the Governor, recommending the Appropriation Bill 2021.....	1816
Introduction.....	1816
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Appropriation Bill 2021.....	1816
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Appropriation Bill 2021, explanatory notes.....	1816
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Appropriation Bill 2021, statement of compatibility with human rights.....	1816
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Charter of Fiscal Responsibility.....	1823
First Reading.....	1823
ADJOURNMENT.....	1824
ATTENDANCE.....	1824


TUESDAY, 15 JUNE 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 BILL

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from His Excellency the Governor a letter in respect of assent to a bill. 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 Bill, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, was assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on the date shown:

Date of Assent: 2 June 2021

A bill for an Act to enable the performance of registry and other functions by a declared entity, to amend this Act, the Acts Interpretation Act 1954, the Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980, the City of Brisbane Regulation 2012, the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act 1988, the Forestry Act 1959, the Land Act 1994, the Land Title Act 1994, the Local Government Regulation 2012, the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019, the National Injury Insurance Scheme (Queensland) Act 2016, the Police Service Administration Act 1990, the Property Law Act 1974, the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997, the Queensland Industry Participation Policy Act 2011, the South Bank Corporation Act 1989, the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, the Water Act 2000 and the legislation mentioned in schedules 3, 4, 5 and 6 for particular purposes, and to repeal the Building Queensland Act 2015, the Foreign Ownership of Land Register Regulation 2013, the Land Title Regulation 2015, the Public Safety Business Agency Act 2014 and the Queensland Productivity Commission Act 2015

This Bill is 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

2 June 2021

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 2 June 2021, from His Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to a certain bill on 2 June 2021 [\[801\]](#).

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT


Pegg, Mr D

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, as you would be aware, the member for Stretton, Duncan Pegg, sadly passed away last Thursday morning. Duncan was held in high regard by his colleagues, and the manner in which he faced cancer only lifted the esteem in which he was held by members and staff. As a mark of respect, last Thursday flags on the parliamentary precinct were lowered to half-mast and the external display lights were left dark on Thursday night. Duncan's membership of the House was always accompanied by a generous camaraderie which he extended to many members regardless

of party. Duncan, prior to his passing, requested that in lieu of flowers donations be made to the Queensland Cancer Council. On behalf of all honourable members, I offer condolences to Duncan's family.

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Rulings, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 11 June 2021 I tabled a ruling regarding a matter of privilege relating to a complaint by the member for Everton alleging that the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts deliberately misled the House on 24 February 2021. Also on 11 June 2021 I tabled another ruling regarding a matter of privilege relating to a complaint by the Treasurer and Minister for Investment alleging that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition deliberately misled the House on 23 March 2021. I ruled that both matters did not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee. I now refer to both matters so that if any member wishes to exercise their rights in respect of those matters under the standing orders they should do so immediately, identifying the matter in question.

PETITIONS

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

Breach of Bail

Mr Lister, from 2,800 petitioners, requesting the House to legislate to return the offence of breach of bail to Queensland law, and to proscribe sufficient mandatory penalties to ensure that the breach of bail by offenders is effectively deterred [[802](#), [803](#)].

Murphys Creek Road, Heavy Vehicles

Mr McDonald, from 203 petitioners, requesting the House to implement measures to control unlawful heavy vehicle movements on Murphys Creek Road [[804](#), [805](#)].

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

Sunshine Coast, Public Transport

3,859 petitioners, requesting the House to work with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to remove the light rail mass transit option along the beachfront and support a regional electric/hydro bus network connecting all towns and communities from the coast to hinterland [[806](#), [807](#), [808](#)].

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

Driver Education

Mr Crandon, from 1,312 petitioners, requesting the House to reduce the yearly road toll to 5% of current numbers of deaths by 2030 by implementing more driver awareness education [[809](#)].

Public Housing, Tenants

Mr Stevens, from 847 petitioners, requesting the House to review the existing conditions of placement of identified troubled tenants in the public housing system within short-term and long-term accommodation to ensure they are located in supervised appropriate accommodation [[810](#)].

Amazon Frogbit

Ms Boyd, from 646 petitioners, requesting the House to prevent the highly invasive plant known as Amazon Frogbit from being legally sold, propagated or traded in Queensland [[811](#)].

Rural Fire Brigades

Mr Andrew, from 693 petitioners, requesting the House to recognise the countless acts of courage and sacrifice of volunteers and undertake a range of measures to ensure all rural fire brigades are properly resourced and equipped for the upcoming bushfire season [[812](#)].

Rochedale, Mining Lease

Ms McMillan, from 437 petitioners, requesting the House to refuse the application seeking to renew Mining Lease ML1156 at 105-227 Gardner Road, Rochedale [[813](#)].

Gold Coast, Police Resources

Mr Langbroek, from 1,594 petitioners, requesting the House to provide the Queensland Police Service on the Gold Coast with additional personnel and associated resources to make communities safer [[814](#)].

Gold Coast Highway, Speed Cameras

Mr Langbroek from 592 petitioners, requesting the House to install permanent speed cameras along both inbound and outbound stretches of road into Surfers Paradise on the Gold Coast Highway [\[815\]](#).

M1, Exit 41

Mr Crandon, from 1,100 petitioners, requesting the House to provide a dedicated slip lane from the northbound Exit 41 to Norfolk Village at Yatala [\[816\]](#).

Ormeau-Pimpama, Bus Services

Mr Crandon, from 326 petitioners, requesting the House to provide a regular daily bus service to connect the transport hub of Ormeau and the Pimpama shopping precinct [\[817\]](#).

Ormeau-Beenleigh, Bus Services

Mr Crandon, from 169 petitioners, requesting the House to upgrade bus services between Beenleigh Railway Station and Ormeau Railway Station [\[818\]](#).

Ormeau-Coomera, Bus Services

Mr Crandon, from 254 petitioners, requesting the House to upgrade bus services between Ormeau Railway Station and Coomera Railway Station [\[819\]](#).

Allingham, Marine Access

Mr Dametto, from 404 petitioners, requesting the House to improve marine access at Forrest Beach and Cassady Beach, Allingham [\[820\]](#).

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

Recycled Plastic

1,477 petitioners, requesting the House to incentivise a circular economy by offering rebates on recycled plastic to businesses who choose recycled plastic that has been reprocessed in Australia from more than 50% locally sourced recycled materials [\[821\]](#).

State Parliament, Religious Observances

443 petitioners, requesting the House to amend sessional orders to remove prayers from the start of each sitting day and have the parliament comply with the separation of Church and State and the spirit of section 116 of the Commonwealth Constitution [\[822\]](#).

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—

31 May 2021—

[735](#) Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal: Review of base and additional salary levels of members of the Queensland Legislative Assembly 2021, Determination 25/2021, 31 May 2021

[736](#) State Development and Regional Industries Committee: Report No. 9, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 24 February 2021 and 20 April 2021

3 June 2021—

[737](#) Response from the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (Hon. Furner), to an ePetition (3515-21) sponsored by the member for Hinchinbrook, Mr Dametto from 5,650 petitioners and ePetitions (3499-21), (3501-21), (3526-21), (3530-21) and (3531-21), sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 1,300, 2,178, 728, 637 and 484 petitioners respectively, 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, ensure legislation includes mandatory codes for provision of species-specific shelter and consider each species' capacity to tolerate extremes in weather, amend the provisions of the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 that permit prolonged unsupervised confinement and/or tethering of a dog, 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, ban the use of pronged collars on dogs and ban the use of choke collars on dogs

4 June 2021—

[738](#) Legal Affairs and Safety Committee: Report No. 9, 57th Parliament—Defamation (Model Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021

10 June 2021—

- [739](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to an ePetition (3449-20) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) and a paper petition (3538-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(3), from 7,866 and 30 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to urgently address Queensland's palliative care deficit and to follow the usual Standing Orders when the 'voluntary assisted dying' bill is introduced to Parliament
- [740](#) Response from the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs (Hon. Scanlon), to an ePetition (3497-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 538 petitioners, requesting the House to declare a climate crisis and act to save our state and planet
- [741](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3444-20) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 111 petitioners, requesting the House to fast track construction of an exit ramp to Coal Road Chuwar from the Warrego Highway
- [742](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3458-21) sponsored by the member for Theodore, Mr Boothman, from 492 petitioners, requesting the House to implement harsher punishments for motorists who do not secure their vehicle loads
- [743](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3467-21) sponsored by the member for Mermaid Beach, Mr Stevens, from 87 petitioners, requesting the House to relocate the set-down / pick-up zones for Broadbeach State School
- [744](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3476-21) sponsored by the member for Glass House, Mr Powell, from 610 petitioners, requesting the House to conduct a state wide review of the Queensland School Transport Assistance Scheme to create a more flexible school transport scheme
- [745](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3482-21) sponsored by the member for Glass House, Mr Powell, from 215 petitioners, requesting the House to resurface Beerburrum Road between McDougall Road and Eaton Road and then return the speed limit to 100km/hr

11 June 2021—

- [746](#) Community Support and Services Committee: Report No. 6, 57th Parliament—Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021
- [747](#) Ruling by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Curtis Pitt—Alleged deliberately misleading the House by the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts
- [748](#) Ruling by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Curtis Pitt—Alleged deliberately misleading the House by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition
- [749](#) Response from the Premier and Minister for Trade (Hon. Palaszczuk), to an ePetition (3438-20) sponsored by the member for Mirani, Mr Andrew, from 940 petitioners, requesting the House to instigate a referendum on the reinstatement of the Legislative Council in the next term of the Parliament
- [750](#) Response from the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs (Hon. Scanlon), to an ePetition (3510-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 278 petitioners, requesting the House to ban all indoor and outdoor wood burning fires

14 June 2021—

- [751](#) Response from the Minister for Resources (Hon. Stewart), to an ePetition (3443-20) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 223 petitioners, requesting the House to class all land within three kilometres of waste handling facilities as valueless and apply no fees to the landholder; and that the waste industries pay local governments compensation for the losses in rates
- [752](#) Response from the Minister for Resources (Hon. Stewart), to an ePetition (3445-20) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 425 petitioners, requesting the House to legislate to give all Ipswich residents the same guarantee as 'the Collingwood Park State guarantee' which is a compensation guarantee for any damage caused by waste industries operations
- [753](#) Queensland Coal Mining Board of Inquiry: Report Part II, May 2021
- [754](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 9, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 24 March 2021 and 20 April 2021

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Gold Coast Waterways Authority Act 2012, Photo Identification Card Act 2008, Tow Truck Act 1973, Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995:

- [755](#) Transport Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 44
- [756](#) Transport Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 44, explanatory notes
- [757](#) Transport Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 44, human rights certificate

Criminal Code (Consent and Mistake of Fact) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2021:

- [758](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 45
- [759](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 45, explanatory notes
- [760](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 45, human rights certificate

Penalties and Sentences Act 1992:

- [761](#) Penalties and Sentences (Penalty Unit Value) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 46
- [762](#) Penalties and Sentences (Penalty Unit Value) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 46, explanatory notes
- [763](#) Penalties and Sentences (Penalty Unit Value) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 46, human rights certificate

Major Events Act 2014:

- [764](#) Major Events (Motor Racing Events) (Townsville 500) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 47
- [765](#) Major Events (Motor Racing Events) (Townsville 500) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 47, explanatory notes
- [766](#) Major Events (Motor Racing Events) (Townsville 500) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 47, human rights certificate

Acquisition of Land Act 1967, Fossicking Act 1994, Geothermal Energy Act 2010, Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009, Land Act 1994, Land Valuation Act 2010, Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014, Mineral Resources Act 1989, Petroleum Act 1923, Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, Stock Route Management Act 2002, Surveyors Act 2003, Valuers Registration Act 1992, Vegetation Management Act 1999:

- [767](#) Resources Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 48
- [768](#) Resources Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 48, explanatory notes
- [769](#) Resources Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 48, human rights certificate

Water Act 2000:

- [770](#) Water Plan (Mary Basin) (Postponement of Expiry) Notice 2021, No. 49
- [771](#) Water Plan (Mary Basin) (Postponement of Expiry) Notice 2021, No. 49, explanatory notes
- [772](#) Water Plan (Mary Basin) (Postponement of Expiry) Notice 2021, No. 49, human rights certificate
- [773](#) Water Plan (Mary Basin) (Postponement of Expiry) Notice 2021, No. 49, regulatory impact statement

Planning Act 2016:

- [774](#) Planning (COVID-19 Vaccination Service) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 50
- [775](#) Planning (COVID-19 Vaccination Service) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 50, explanatory notes
- [776](#) Planning (COVID-19 Vaccination Service) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 50, human rights certificate

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990:

- [777](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Notice 2021, No. 51
- [778](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Notice 2021, No. 51, explanatory notes
- [779](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Notice 2021, No. 51, human rights certificate

Civil Liability Act 2003, Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994, Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002:

- [780](#) Civil Liability and Other Legislation (Prescribed Amounts) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 52
- [781](#) Civil Liability and Other Legislation (Prescribed Amounts) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 52, explanatory notes
- [782](#) Civil Liability and Other Legislation (Prescribed Amounts) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 52, human rights certificate

Fisheries Act 1994:

- [783](#) Fisheries Quota (Reef Line Commercial Fishery) Amendment Declaration 2021, No. 53
- [784](#) Fisheries Quota (Reef Line Commercial Fishery) Amendment Declaration 2021, No. 53, explanatory notes
- [785](#) Fisheries Quota (Reef Line Commercial Fishery) Amendment Declaration 2021, No. 53, human rights certificate

Work Health and Safety Act 2011:

- [786](#) Work Health and Safety (Codes of Practice) (Scaffolding) Amendment Notice 2021, No. 54
- [787](#) Work Health and Safety (Codes of Practice) (Scaffolding) Amendment Notice 2021, No. 54, explanatory notes
- [788](#) Work Health and Safety (Codes of Practice) (Scaffolding) Amendment Notice 2021, No. 54, human rights certificate

COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020, Oaths Act 1867, Powers of Attorney Act 1998, Property Law Act 1974, Succession Act 1981:

- [789](#) Justice Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response—Documents and Oaths) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2021, No. 55
- [790](#) Justice Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response—Documents and Oaths) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2021, No. 55, explanatory notes
- [791](#) Justice Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response—Documents and Oaths) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2021, No. 55, human rights certificate

COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020, Powers of Attorney Act 1998, Succession Act 1981:

- [792](#) Justice Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response—Documents and Oaths) (Transitional) Regulation 2021, No. 56
- [793](#) Justice Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response—Documents and Oaths) (Transitional) Regulation 2021, No. 56, explanatory notes
- [794](#) Justice Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response—Documents and Oaths) (Transitional) Regulation 2021, No. 56, human rights certificate

Animal Care and Protection Act 2001:

[795](#) Animal Care and Protection (Codes of Practice) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 57

[796](#) Animal Care and Protection (Codes of Practice) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 57, explanatory notes

[797](#) Animal Care and Protection (Codes of Practice) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 57, human rights certificate

Forestry Act 1959, Nature Conservation Act 1992:


[798](#) Forestry and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 58

[799](#) Forestry and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 58, explanatory notes

[800](#) Forestry and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 58, human rights certificate

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Pegg, Mr D


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.37 am): On Friday, along with Minister Leeanne Enoch, Minister Bailey and the Deputy Premier, I visited the Masterpieces from the Met exhibit at the Gallery of Modern Art. As you enter down a long corridor, the very first painting you see is a masterpiece by Giovanni di Paolo. This work in vivid colours was painted in 1445 and shows many people in conversation with each other. It also depicts nuns and priests. On the top right-hand side of the painting, it shows a young man being escorted to heaven by a golden angel. The title of the painting is *Paradise*. I know how much strength Duncan Pegg took from his faith and the comfort he found in visits from nuns and priests at Canossa hospital. He told this to both me and the member for Logan. Seeing that painting on Friday, so soon after Duncan's death, made a tremendous impact—as did Duncan.

There will be another time for formal condolences but I wanted to put on record our sympathies to Duncan's parents, Lindsey and Graham, and to his brothers, Lachlan, Cameron, Grant and Graham. Since coming into this place in 2015, Duncan became one of the most admired and respected members of this House and his death last week, while not unexpected, is truly devastating.


I am glad Duncan knew how much he was loved in his community and how much he was loved by members of this House. Frances Whiting wrote a fitting tribute to him in a recent *QWeekend*. In it, constituents told of his compassion and understanding, his hard work and even his courage standing up to bullies bothering a girl in a local restaurant. He learnt Mandarin to better communicate with those in his community and was the common thread that linked one of the most multicultural communities in the state. To lose such a good man so young is terrible.

A life well lived is a legacy. The challenge Duncan Pegg left for us is to follow his example, celebrate our differences and truly listen to what each person has to say. The people of Stretton have lost a true champion and I believe we have all lost a friend.

Coronavirus, Update

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 am): In terms of our daily COVID update I can confirm that we have two new cases, both overseas acquired in hotel quarantine, and we have 20 active cases. There were 8,343 tests in the past 24 hours. This is a tremendous result and I do remind Queenslanders if they are sick they should stay at home and get tested. There have also been record vaccines: 12,163 vaccines have been given in the last 24 hours.

Budget

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.40 am): This afternoon, the Treasurer will bring down the 2021-22 Queensland state budget. This COVID-19 economic recovery budget will deliver for all Queenslanders. It will deliver for the hardworking businesses and industries who have continued to show great resilience against the challenges posed by the global pandemic. It will also deliver record health, education and roads and transport funding with a key focus on building infrastructure and creating jobs. It adds to the hard work already underway through our COVID economic recovery plan—\$11 billion in announced stimulus since the start of the pandemic to support our state's health and economic response.

Employment has increased by 253,200 persons since May last year—more than any other state or territory. Consumer and business confidence has rebounded, and our domestic economic growth has continued to outpace many of our neighbouring states. A total of 84,000 people are expected to move to Queensland over the next four years. However, we are still in the middle of this pandemic and

we are not letting our guard down. That is why this important budget will focus on securing the future of Queenslanders and businesses by continuing to focus on critical health services, creating more jobs and providing further support for our vital industries and regions.

Our record health budget will focus on providing the hospitals and services that individuals and families need across our state. We have already announced a partnership with Mater Health Services to deliver a new 174-bed public hospital in Springfield to cater for the rapidly growing population in this region. The new Springfield hospital is expected to create more than 700 jobs during construction and more than 1,000 new frontline health jobs once operational.

Our record education spend will add to the 18 new schools that our government has built since 2015 and the three more to open next year. This budget will include nearly \$1 billion towards 10 new state schools in 2023 and 2024 to respond to our growing communities.

Our government is also launching our flagship \$3.34 billion Queensland Jobs Fund to turbocharge job creation across the state. This fund brings together our key existing industry development programs as well as new programs such as the \$350 million Industry Partnership Program, which will increase private sector investment in Queensland to support economic growth and is expected to create at least 2,800 jobs.


As part of the Queensland Jobs Fund, last week in Townsville I announced a \$2 billion Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund for government investments in commercial renewable energy and hydrogen projects. This investment, a watershed moment in the economic development of Queensland, will encourage investment in renewable energy, hydrogen and manufacturing right here in Queensland and will provide cheaper, cleaner energy to power more jobs and more industries in Queensland.

For our businesses, which are the backbone of our economy, we are delivering Queensland's new small business strategy, Big Plans for Small Business Strategy 2021-23. The strategy will help small businesses to thrive and grow through a \$140 million commitment. We are also extending the hugely successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work program with an extra \$320 million and our Back to Work program to ensure small business owners not only have the capability to create jobs, but they can access a skilled workforce to fill them.

We are investing \$270 million to protect the Great Barrier Reef and \$60 million for the second round of the Land Restoration Fund to restore land, protect the environment and create new jobs and training opportunities.

To cement Queensland's reputation as a production powerhouse, we are investing more than \$70 million in our screen industry. Queensland attracted more international productions than any other state in 2020 and this funding will help us attract even more. This is important because it supports industry and jobs. Mr Speaker, you will be very happy to know that there is also funding for Cairns.

2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.44 am): The finishing line is in front of us. Next month the International Olympic Committee votes on who will host the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The recommendation before them is to announce the winner is Queensland. Even the IOC president describes the prospect of a Queensland Olympics as irresistible, and who could blame him?

Excitement about the games is only increasing. People are realising that the dream is very nearly a reality. Thanks to our master plan, they can picture going to the opening ceremony at the Gabba. They have imagined themselves hopping on board the new Cross River Rail to arrive at the swimming or equestrian events, the hockey or basketball. Fresh from the excitement of the State of Origin, the people of Townsville can look forward to attending events at their very own Country Bank Stadium or in Cairns or Toowoomba. In fact, Queenslanders can see themselves at Olympic events at dozens of venues, 84 per cent of which are already built.


However, it has never been about the few weeks of the games itself. We know wholeheartedly it is about the athletes. It is also about 10 years of accelerated investment in the roads and railway lines, bus lanes, housing and sporting facilities our growing population needs. It is about coordinating local, state and federal governments, all working towards a shared goal. It is about giving athletes the opportunity to perform at their very best. It is also about capitalising on having the world's attention focused on Queensland to make the most for tourism, exports and other industries right through until the middle of the 21st Century.

Although we started this process before COVID, securing the Olympics will turbocharge our post-COVID economic recovery. KPMG estimated the economic uplift to be over \$8.1 billion, creating 122,900 jobs, but it is not just the economics. What makes this irresistible to me is the thought that right now children doing laps of the school oval or the local pool are thinking it could be them one day on the world stage. It could be them going for gold at the Olympic or Paralympic Games cheered on by their families and their friends right here in Queensland. I hope the members of the IOC agree that this is our time and Queensland's new golden age is about to begin.

Immigration Detention

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.46 am): I welcome the federal government's decision to finally allow a family from Biloela out of detention. They are being allowed to settle in Perth. This is a long way from Biloela and the friends and neighbours who have campaigned for so many years for their freedom. Biloela is a community of 6,000. Everyone knows one another and they look after each other. I look forward to the day when this family will actually be allowed back to Queensland and come home to Bilo.

Queensland Jobs Fund

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning) (9.47 am): I would like to express my sadness at the loss of the member for Stretton. Duncan was a great mate and I know he will be greatly missed.


Last week the Premier, the Treasurer and I launched a new multibillion dollar flagship program to turbocharge job creation in Queensland. We now have a \$3.34 billion fund, leveraging opportunities to boost the state's industrial footprint, create jobs and strengthen our economy.

The Queensland Jobs Fund will support job-creating industries like renewable energy, hydrogen, manufacturing and catalytic infrastructure, and a new \$350 million industry partnership program will provide tailored assistance packages to strengthen local supply chains and grow the footprint of Queensland industries while creating at least 2,800 new jobs across the state. We already have a strong track record working with businesses to create jobs. This is going to make it even easier for them.

The Queensland Jobs Funds will be a one-stop shop for businesses looking for government support. State development will act like a concierge to help proponents navigate the different opportunities in the Jobs Fund, whether that is funding, help acquiring land or assistance with planning approvals. This new game-changing fund will make sure we leverage the opportunities that we have created in Queensland off the back of our world-class pandemic response and recovery to create jobs. It will boost jobs in priority industries such as advanced manufacturing, hydrogen, biofutures, biomedical, defence, aerospace, space, resource recovery and mining equipment technology and services. The Building Acceleration Fund will continue to drive co-investment in catalytic infrastructure projects around the state, creating more than 120 construction jobs.

I was pleased to join the Premier and Minister de Brenni in Townsville last Thursday at the energy jobs forum, where the Premier announced a \$1.5 billion boost that took the Queensland Jobs Fund total to \$3.34 billion. The Queensland Jobs Fund is providing a coordinated approach to doing business with business to create jobs. We are providing more dollars and financial incentives to create jobs. It will give Queensland businesses planning certainty, access to land and fiscal incentives such as payroll concessions, tax reimbursements and relief from fees and charges to create jobs. Queensland is leading the nation's COVID-19 economic recovery and jobs growth. We now have a fund to capitalise on the businesses moving here, growing here and employing more Queenslanders here.

Budget, Racing Industry; School Infrastructure

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.50 am): I join in acknowledging the loss of Duncan Pegg, who, after delivering one of the best speeches in this parliament, just seven weeks later lost his battle. Rest in peace, Duncan Pegg.

The Queensland racing industry provides more than \$1.6 billion to the state's economy, supporting more than 12,600 jobs, and the Palaszczuk government is backing this winner. In this budget, a new funding model will guarantee the racing industry receives 35 per cent of revenue from the state's point-of-consumption tax on wagering. This will deliver around \$41.3 million extra for the Queensland racing industry over the next two years, backing this important industry as part of


Queensland's COVID-19 economic recovery plan. That means every time someone places a bet in Queensland, as I did at Stradbroke Day on Saturday, a guaranteed portion of that money will go back into racing. I think they got quite a bit of my money on Saturday, too! These funds will continue major racing infrastructure projects already underway, including the \$38 million Gold Coast Turf Club redevelopment and the \$9 million Sunshine Coast synthetic track along with dozens of other projects throughout regional Queensland turf clubs.

As many members in this House know firsthand, country racing at non-TAB race clubs is a big part of the social and economic fabric of regional Queensland, and that is why this government continues to support country racing. Our \$35.2 million commitment over two years provides a purse for prize money and to maintain tracks and facilities at places like Barcaldine, where I had a great afternoon with the minister for tourism and locals at the Tree of Knowledge Festival races in May. Our investment in country racing is creating local jobs and improving facilities for jockeys, trainers, connections and racegoers from Cooktown to the Gold Coast and from Mount Isa to Birdsville.

While I am on the subject of jobs, there will be hundreds of jobs created in the 10 new primary and secondary state schools and extra classrooms we will be building. We will invest over \$1 billion to build these new schools, which will open in 2023-24, adding to the 18 we have delivered since 2015 and four others under construction or planned. This budget will also provide around \$541 million towards 300-plus new classrooms at 35 schools, as well as administration buildings and amenities, supporting 1,600 jobs and meeting the growing demand.

I also take this opportunity to wish our school cleaning workforce of nearly 4,800 a happy School Cleaners' Day. These essential workers are a big part of the effort to keep our students and staff safe during this COVID-19 pandemic by putting in an extra 16,500 hours a week cleaning our schools. It is thanks to the efforts of frontline workers like our hardworking school cleaners that we can now focus on Queensland's economic recovery by delivering world-class infrastructure for Queensland students.

Budget, Health

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.53 am): The Palaszczuk government continues to deliver record investment in Queensland's public health system, with \$21.8 billion for the 2020-21 year and even more on the way for the 2021-22 year. We are also delivering an extra 9,475 doctors, nurses, paramedics and health staff over the next four years, and our investment does not end there. Our massive investment in health infrastructure is delivering new and improved health facilities right across this state.


As I travelled throughout Queensland earlier this month I saw firsthand the great results our health infrastructure investment, worth \$1.6 billion this financial year, is delivering. I was pleased to join the Premier this month to officially open the \$116.6 million Roma Hospital—a redevelopment which marks the single largest investment in health care in South-West Queensland since 1987. The redeveloped Roma Hospital now includes 22 beds, two birthing suites and two operating theatres and is capable of accommodating families and people travelling long distances for day surgery.

The Palaszczuk government and Mater Health Services are also teaming up to deliver a new public hospital based in Springfield as part of an investment worth more than \$1 billion over the next decade. This is a huge win for the Greater Ipswich community, with this new 174-bed facility to include an emergency department, an intensive care unit, maternity and other services.

We are also forging ahead with our \$399.5 million Caboolture Hospital construction project to cater for the ever-growing demand for health services in this growth region. I also had great pleasure this month to officially open the expanded and refurbished paediatric treatment area in Townsville University Hospital's emergency department. This \$1.6 million investment from the Palaszczuk government will increase the number of beds from seven to 12 and create a separate waiting area for children and their families—children like 13-year-old Bohdi Campbell, an asthmatic who, unfortunately, is a regular visitor to the hospital's emergency department. Bohdi helped me cut the ribbon to this brand new, state-of-the-art unit that will benefit North Queensland children and their families for years to come.

These are just some of the new facilities our massive spend in health infrastructure is delivering, and I look forward to delivering even more quality infrastructure as the health minister as part of the Palaszczuk government.

Railways

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.56 am): More than 150 years ago the first railway was opened in Queensland. Today Queensland's rail network is made up of more than 6,500 kilometres of track and moves more than 15 million tonnes of freight. It is a

massive network. That is why the Palaszczuk Labor government has backed a \$46 million infrastructure project to upgrade 17 timber rail bridges between Townsville and Cairns. I am happy to report to the House that that infrastructure work is now complete, with the final bridge, at Meunga Creek near Cardwell, finished in the last few days. This project created more than 150 North Queensland jobs and provided a huge economic boost to communities around Townsville. It also supported North Queensland companies, which provided equipment and supplies for hire.

Upgrading 17 bridges has made the north coast line safer and more flood resilient. Stretching more than 1,400 kilometres from Brisbane to Cairns, the line is used by more than 6,600 passenger and freight trains every year. It is also home to the iconic *Spirit of Queensland* service, which supports regional tourism. There is no denying that North Queensland was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Infrastructure projects like this create regional jobs and build capacity on our state's key rail lines.

When it comes to regional rail, jobs and tourism, our work does not stop there. The legendary *Gulflander* train, which runs on the heritage listed Normanton-Croydon line in the Gulf Country, will undergo a multimillion dollar overhaul later this year. We have also committed a million dollars for a business case for Maryborough rail workers to build new carriages for the iconic *Westlander*, *Inlander* and *Spirit of the Outback* long distance services right here in Queensland.

There is also the commitment from this Labor government to build new trains in Maryborough as part of our \$1 billion pipeline of rail manufacturing work. This pipeline complements our election commitment to buy back the Rockhampton Railyards and use the site as part of our rail manufacturing supply chain. Maryborough workers are already fixing the trains that were ordered to be built overseas by those opposite, and I am pleased to update the House on our plans to build new trains to support the awesome Cross River Rail. Train manufacturers Alstom, CAF and Downer Rail have been shortlisted to manufacture the first 20 trains in a purpose-built Maryborough manufacturing facility for Cross River Rail. Queensland trains will be built in Queensland under this government. Their selection follows an extensive expression of interest process by the Department of Transport and Main Roads over the past six months.

My department will continue to work with all parties to ensure that Queenslanders get the best possible outcome from that process and I look forward to sharing more news about the Palaszczuk Labor government's plan to create regional rail jobs into the future. The Palaszczuk Labor government's record on infrastructure investment is creating manufacturing jobs in our regions—50 per cent more than when we came to office—supporting tourism and helping to drive Queensland's economy. This government is about infrastructure, not cuts.

Renewable Energy



Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (9.59 am): I, too, acknowledge the sad passing of Duncan Pegg. I also acknowledge the terrific contribution of cleaners on this International Cleaners Day.

Last week Queensland took a further big, bold and historic step towards the target of 50 per cent renewable energy generation by 2030. I acknowledge the leadership of the Premier and Deputy Premier on their job-creating initiative announced at the Energy Jobs Forum in Townsville on Thursday. The major jobs announcement for regional Queensland confirms that backing renewables will continue as a major feature of Queensland's COVID economic recovery plan. It was at this Energy Jobs Forum—joined by investors, unions and other levels of government and industry leaders, all key stakeholders—that the Premier announced the \$2 billion Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund. This targeted investment brings the Queensland Jobs Fund to \$3.34 billion. The Palaszczuk government will continue to invest to create new jobs across the state as we continue to deliver Queensland's plans for economic recovery.

This morning the Premier described the moment as watershed in the state's economic development. I agree. I think those of us on this side of the House all agree. This \$2 billion blue-collar jobs investment will support a transformational cycle of further investment in cleaner, cheaper energy via Queensland's publicly owned energy companies. Right now we are witnessing a worldwide renewable energy boom and this government—this Premier—has put Queensland right in the thick of it. Here at home and worldwide Queensland is right there.

It is Queensland copper, nickel and zinc being used to make batteries in the US and Japan. It is Queensland's alumina and silica going to places like Korea and China to make solar panels, but we have much more here than just those raw ingredients. As the Deputy Premier rightly pointed out at the Energy Jobs Forum, instead of sending energy and raw materials to port and on to ships to the same

places so that they can manufacture things to send back to us, why do we not export those things from Queensland? Why do we not make them here—the electrolyzers, the solar panels, the batteries and the wind farm components that we know we need here in Queensland and those things that we know will be in high demand worldwide going into the future?


Queensland has the skills. We have the workforce that can manufacture these components and technologies. The Minister for Education and the Minister for Training and Skills Development are making sure of that. The chair of Tesla, Robyn Denholm, said that it was on track to spend more than US\$1 billion a year on Australian mined minerals and metals needed to make batteries and cars. She also told Fairfax Media that if processed onshore here in Australia the value of those batteries would be more like US\$1.7 billion. It is clear we should make it here. Closer to home, Tritium is a perfect example of new economy manufacturing. Its electric vehicle charging stations are the highest selling fast chargers on the planet and they are made here—

Ms Farmer: In the electorate of Bulimba.

Mr de BRENNI:—in the electorate of Bulimba—I take the interjection from the member for Bulimba—and I have seen them roll off the production line just 12 kilometres up the road from here in the member's electorate.

A renewables boom means jobs in regional Queensland too. Just look at projects like Wambo in the Western Downs and the Kaban wind farm in the Far North. The developers of the 200 megawatt Wambo wind farm are already looking for opportunities with local companies to manufacture 35 steel and concrete turbine towers. Between Wambo and Kaban, we are talking about 450 more Queensland jobs. When it comes to large-scale renewable storage projects like pumped hydro, you can multiply that number many times. The 250 megawatt Kidston Pumped Storage Hydro Project that the member for Gladstone turned the first sod on just last week will generate 900 Queensland jobs, 2,000-plus at Borumba. This is just the beginning, because the Queensland Jobs Fund and our \$2 billion renewable energy and jobs fund will generate a pipeline of demand for local manufacturing across the entire renewable energy value chain, and that means more jobs for Queenslanders.

Budget, Fire and Emergency Services


 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.04 am): I join others in honouring Duncan Pegg and pay tribute to his service, friendship and character.

This government is delivering 357 additional firefighters over five years. We made this commitment in the lead-up to the last election, and this is a government which delivers on its promises. Queensland firefighters are resilient and always ready to swiftly respond when disaster strikes. They put their lives on the line to protect the lives of others and today's state budget will back in the work that they do to keep all Queenslanders safe. This budget is an investment in community safety. It is an investment in resources; frontline equipment; vehicles; bushfire mitigation; planning, response and recovery; predictive services; and bushfire management. Queensland experiences around 60 per cent of the nation's natural disasters every year and our first responders are being called on more and more to protect Queenslanders when disaster strikes. Their hours are not nine to five. Their job puts them in harm's way, and for that we owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

This budget will fund more new vehicles for our professional firefighters and our Rural Fire Service volunteers. In fact, we are more than doubling the budget for Rural Fire Service appliances. That is \$12.5 million for new yellow trucks for Queensland's dedicated volunteers. It marks the continuation of a six-year commitment from this government that has delivered more than 620 Fire and Rescue Service and Rural Fire Service vehicles—and, for the interest of the Prime Minister, every one of those vehicles comes equipped with up to three hoses and all the equipment required for protecting the community. That means that if the Prime Minister wants to hold a hose he can hold a hose here in Queensland!

As part of Queensland's plan for economic recovery, this budget supports the continued investment in vital infrastructure for Queensland's emergency services front line with projects including Gracemere, Rainbow Beach, Rosewood, Mount Cotton and Maleny, among others. This budget also backs our hardworking volunteers from the Rural Fire Service, Volunteer Marine Rescue, the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard and the State Emergency Service. Because this government values the role of all of our emergency volunteers, we are also progressing a body of work and have established a process to engage with key stakeholders about the next steps towards building a stronger, more resilient emergency services delivery framework. Safer and more secure communities are part of our government's plan for Queensland's economic recovery.

Tourism Industry

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism Industry Development and Innovation and Minister for Sport) (10.07 am): Mr Speaker, with your indulgence, I acknowledge Duncan Pegg's absence from our number and the loss being felt by so many that this represents.


As tourism minister I continue to work very closely with the tourism industry on the Palaszczuk government's economic recovery plan. The global pandemic's biggest impact in the Far North, Whitsundays, Brisbane and Gold Coast is the continuing absence of international tourists. The Palaszczuk government's Holiday Dollars is just one part of more than \$840 million in direct support for the industry. Tourism operators are overwhelmingly positive about Holiday Dollars. Greg Erwin from Sunlover Reef Cruises sums up the feedback as—

The timing and offer were ideally placed for maximum effectiveness.

Some 87,000 have registered—15,000 in the first hour, I should say—for 30,000 Gold Coast Holiday Dollars to be released tomorrow, with 144 accommodation or tourist experiences on offer. Captain Kerry Lopez at Brisbane Whale Watching was the first to take a Brisbane Holiday Dollars booking and now has more than 670. Many customers upgraded to the premium whale-watching package. So far, more than 17,000 Holiday Dollars bookings have delivered an extra \$5.3 million to operators offering great tourism experiences. Every dollar of government spending has returned between \$2.30 and \$3 to operators. That hardly qualifies as a 'Holiday Dollars fizzer', as one headline last week claimed. This is a targeted initiative to bridge the international dip in the tourist economy, and I note the member for Broadwater's Holiday Dollars endorsement on Nine News as 'a great idea, a great announcement'. That is what he said.

In South Australia, where a third of vouchers have been used, the Premier there called out what he describes as 'an obsession with redemption rates'. Nowhere in Australia have voucher initiatives had a 100 per cent take-up. In New South Wales, 44 per cent were redeemed, with multinational fast food outlets, cinemas and pinball parlours amongst the top beneficiaries. In Victoria we had 70,000 unused vouchers. In Queensland our focus remains on helping tourism operators and targeting that assistance. Queenslanders who have Holiday Dollars still have the opportunity to use them and assist Queensland tourism operators to secure local jobs and assist with our economic recovery.

Renewable Energy


 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.09 am): I take this opportunity to pay my respects to a really good friend and good mate of mine, Duncan Pegg.

Shovels have now hit the ground on a job generating renewable energy project in North Queensland thanks to the support of the Palaszczuk government. Last week I was proud to represent the Palaszczuk government at the sod turn for yet another renewable energy project in Queensland. At the start of last century, Kidston was a hive of activity following the discovery of gold on the Copperfield River and now renewable energy projects like this are bringing jobs back to the region. More than 900 construction jobs will be created by Genex Power's Kidston Pumped Storage Hydro Project, Queensland's first pumped hydro in almost forty years. Breaking ground at Kidston is a significant milestone and one we have been working towards since 2018. It is jobs for the north, it is jobs for our regions and it is another way we can secure our energy grid to bring the manufacturing jobs of the future.

It is also another important project as our government delivers Queensland's plan for economic recovery from the global COVID-19 pandemic. The 250-megawatt project was backed by the Palaszczuk government's \$147 million investment in transmission infrastructure. Our investment will enable publicly owned Powerlink to deliver the 186-kilometre transmission line required to connect K2-Hydro to the grid in Townsville. The Kidston Pumped Storage Hydro Project and its associated transmission infrastructure is expected to be completed and feeding into the National Electricity Market by early 2025. This project is one of many examples the Palaszczuk government is setting the right economic conditions for investment in our regional economies. With the Premier also announcing a massive \$2 billion Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund last week, Queenslanders can expect to see more projects like K2-Hydro and more renewable energy jobs in the future.

This project also represents another step forward in Queensland's charge towards its renewable energy target. Let us be honest, when it comes to real action on renewable energy and the regional jobs that the industry creates, Queensland is again doing the heavy lifting. We have to, because there is certainly no action, no direction and no policy coming from the Federal government.

New Economy Minerals Initiative; Queensland Coal Mining Board of Inquiry, Findings

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.12 am): I too acknowledge the passing of Duncan Pegg, or Peggy as he is affectionately known. He will be sorely missed by everyone in this House and in the broader community.

I rise to talk about the importance of new economy minerals and the opportunities they present going forward for Queensland and our economic recovery post COVID-19. Last week in my hometown of Townsville the Palaszczuk government announced we will expand our \$500 million Queensland Renewable Energy Fund into a \$2 billion Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund. That means more opportunities for Queensland to secure investment in our North West Minerals Province that has over half a trillion dollars in known resources. You cannot have a renewable energy industry without a strong resources industry. Queensland is blessed with fantastic deposits of minerals that will be required to power the clean energy revolution, including vanadium, copper, cobalt and rare earth elements, which is why the Palaszczuk government is investing \$13.8 million in our New Economy Minerals Initiative to help explorers discover new economy minerals and future jobs across North Queensland.

We back the resources industry for the 71,000 jobs it supports. It will be a crucial part of Queensland's economic recovery plan. However, we know the most important thing to come out of any mine at the end of each shift is its workers. On Monday I tabled in this House the final report of the Queensland Coal Mining Board of Inquiry that my predecessor, Dr Anthony Lynham, established to inquire into the explosion that occurred at the Grosvenor underground coalmine on 6 May last year seriously injuring five coalmine workers. I fully support the work the board has completed to identify improvements within Queensland's coalmining industry and I am committed to consulting with workers' representatives and industry to protect workers' safety.


The board of inquiry's report makes for some disturbing reading: about the consequences of placing coal production ahead of safety; about failing to recognise the gravity of precursor incidents and the failure to properly account for and report them both internally and to the regulator. In making its findings and recommendations regarding production and safety bonuses, the board highlighted what appears to me to be a potentially significant factor which can drive behaviours that put production targets ahead of the safety of workers. This is an issue our government intends to scrutinise further. As such, I am calling upon industry to fully investigate the extent and nature of these bonus schemes and whether they place appropriate focus on managing safety risks to workers.

Across its two reports the board makes findings and recommendations for industry, unions, Resources Safety and Health Queensland and other stakeholders, all of which must and will be given deliberate and thoughtful consideration and acted upon to protect our workers each and every shift. I am advised that work has commenced on recommendations from Part I relating to Resources Safety and Health Queensland. The government is continuously engaging with all stakeholders, including workers' representatives, when it comes to mine safety. At my direction, the Commissioner for Resources Safety and Health Queensland has worked with the Queensland Resources Council and mining companies on an industry action plan to address recommendations relating to industry. It is my full expectation this will occur for recommendations and findings in Part II of the report. I am advised the Queensland Mines Inspectorate's separate investigation into the nature and cause of the incident, led by the Deputy Chief Inspector of Coal Mines, is nearing completion.

I hope that the five injured workers continue to recover from their injuries and wish them the best in doing so. Anyone who saw the compelling evidence of Mr Wayne Sellars would know that what they went through is truly life-changing and something no one should go through in the workplace. That is why every effort must be made by industry, the regulator and us to protect workers from events like this ever happening again.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE

Membership

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.17 am), by leave, without notice: I move—


That the member for Hervey Bay be appointed to replace the former member for Stretton on the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

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

2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games; Infrastructure Funding

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.17 am): Mr Speaker, with your indulgence, can I pass on my condolences to the former member for Stretton on behalf of the opposition and indicate to his family how sad we are on his passing.

My question is to the Premier. Queensland's population will boom over the next decade as we prepare to host the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Where is Labor's plan to protect our lifestyle, given the Treasurer's admission of a \$4 billion infrastructure cut?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I will touch on a couple of things. First of all, the Minister for Sport and I were very pleased in the early hours of last Friday morning to hear that great news out of the IOC Executive that they are recommending Brisbane, Queensland to proceed to a full vote of the International Olympic Committee next month, around 20 and 21 July. This is fantastic news. People are now stopping me in the street saying, 'Are we really going to have the Olympics?' It is suddenly resonating with people.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, they are. They are, actually.

A government member: They don't stop him in the street; they don't know him.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take that interjection: no-one is stopping them in the street—

Honourable members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As we know, the Olympics presents a great opportunity. It is wonderful to secure that funding agreement with the federal government. Of course, that money will be profiled in budgets down the track once we have secured the Olympics, depending on the final vote of the IOC. I make it very clear that when it comes to infrastructure in this state we have always maintained our \$50 billion guarantee. In our COVID economic recovery plan it was \$51.8 billion. Over the life of a four-year plan we see projects actually conclude. Of course, one of the largest projects that will conclude over the four-year plan is Cross River Rail.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right: one side of the House supported building Cross River Rail and the other side was silent and cut it. As we know, Cross River Rail is absolutely needed for the Olympics. It is going to transform our city because on this side of the House we have a vision for the future. We have a vision that includes making sure that we have the infrastructure that we need, that we have the hospital care that we need, that we have the schools that are needed in our growth corridors and that we look after all Queenslanders no matter where they live in our great state.

(Time expired)

Health System

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. The government says that today's budget funds 500 new prison beds but not the 1,500 new hospital beds the Australian Medical Association says are needed to stop the ramping crisis. Will the Premier put patients ahead of prisoners and deliver the health system that Queensland deserves?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the Premier, members will listen to the question in silence.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. It is not long to go now until the budget. I cannot wait because I know it is going to be a really good Labor budget for the people of this state. I also know that it is going to be a record health budget because we acknowledge how important health is to Queenslanders. In fact, we have always known how important it is. It was the Forgan Smith Labor government that built the Roma Hospital.

Mr Dick: Who built the next one?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take that interjection. It was the Palaszczuk Labor government that completed the \$117 million Roma Hospital and the Minister for Health and I had the great privilege, with the local member opposite, of attending the ribbon cutting. She was there. I invited her. She came for the tour to admire that great facility. We know how important it is that, no matter where across our state families live, they have a good quality health system.

The man who sat at the cabinet table with Campbell Newman cut health staff. We had to restore the health services that they savagely cut. Campbell Newman's apprentice is over there. They are getting the old team back together. Campbell Newman is coming back to the executive. Lawrence Springborg is coming back to the executive.

Mr Crisafulli: Back to the bad old days—Queensland Health.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That was called the Newman government, Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Grace: He is embarrassed.

Ms PALASZCZUK: He is so embarrassed. They should hang their heads in shame this afternoon. They do not have long to wait to hear the record health budget. It is also a record education budget. I urge those opposite to take a long, hard look at themselves. We look forward to the reply from the Leader of the Opposition. We would like to know what they would spend money on. They are good at cutting, they are good at sacking and they are good at selling. We cannot wait for this afternoon. I am absolutely proud of the budget that the Treasurer will hand down for this government.

Major Events

Mr HARPER: My question is of the Premier and Minister for Trade. Will the Premier update the House on the importance of major events in the 'Queenslander!' economic recovery plan?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Thuringowa for that question. I know how supportive he was last Wednesday night—it has been such a big week—when he was calling out 'Queenslander!' so loudly that I am sure people in Charters Towers heard it. Events are really important as part of our economic recovery. Holding the State of Origin in Townsville showed that regional cities can host major events. There was a huge buzz in the town. I had the opportunity to walk down Flinders Street with the local members and meet people who had come from all around Queensland. We met people from Wujal Wujal. We met people who had driven up from Mackay. We met people from Mount Isa. It was fantastic for Townsville and the winner was Townsville. The team did not get there, although they have two more goes, but it does not matter because the winner was Townsville. We wish the team all the very best for the next game at the end of this month at Suncorp.

The very first infrastructure announcement that we made when in opposition was to build the Townsville stadium and I am absolutely delighted with that most beautiful stadium. I commend Minister de Brenni, the public works minister, for that. I think he was up there nearly every month to make sure that the stadium was delivered on time. That critical piece of infrastructure has really enlivened the city. Of course, Townsville will have the opportunity to host events as part of the Olympics, which will also showcase the city. Let us hope that in the future the NRL looks at holding more events in Townsville. My understanding is that hotels were booked out and I think Magnetic Island was booked out. It brought a lot of money into the economy.

A government member: There were 22½ thousand bed nights.

Ms PALASZCZUK: There were 22½ thousand bed nights, which is fantastic. It also helped small businesses such as the food trucks, the restaurants and the cafes. Everyone benefitted from having the State of Origin in Townsville. I thank the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer for supporting the investment to secure the State of Origin in Townsville. It was an opportunity to showcase Townsville across Australia with, on my understanding, over 2.7 million people tuning in to watch the State of Origin.

(Time expired)

Infrastructure, Funding

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to the Treasurer. The Treasurer says his \$4 billion infrastructure budget cut is caused by not building Cross River Rail twice. Where is Labor's plan for the next major congestion—

Dr Miles interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, you are warned under the standing orders. Questions will be heard in silence. Please continue your question, member.

Mr JANETZKI: The Treasurer says his \$4 billion infrastructure budget cut is caused by not building Cross River Rail twice. Where is Labor's plan for the next major congestion-busting project or are commuters consigned to sit in traffic forever?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for his question. I am very pleased to report to the House that the government's budget, which I will deliver this afternoon, will contain a \$52.2 billion infrastructure spend over the next four years. Unlike the members opposite, we are a party that keeps our promises: a \$50 billion infrastructure guarantee that we made to the people of Queensland when we delivered our economic recovery plan. We locked it into our budget last year. We will continue to deliver it now.

I will tell you what a cut is. An infrastructure cut is when you cut a project, like the LNP cut Cross River Rail. I challenge all members opposite: you tell me what project this government has cut? You will not find one.

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

Mr DICK: This comes from an opposition that cut the infrastructure funding in this state in every single budget they delivered when they were in government—every single budget—a party that never even got within cooee of \$50 billion over four years. Not only did they cut infrastructure; they absolutely revelled in it.

What did the member for Clayfield say in Budget Paper No. 3 in 2012? It stated—

... the capital program will be smaller than in previous years, reflecting the determination of the Government to restore the State's financial position...

They were willing to sacrifice jobs, infrastructure and projects across Queensland, including in regional Queensland. They were willing to sacrifice that for their fiscal position. That is something this government will never do. That is something we will never do. You will see projects announced today across the length and breadth of our state. The people of our state know that they can rely on us to deliver the infrastructure a growing state needs.

Mr Speaker, it would not surprise you—you would probably be the person least surprised—that the budget last year is different to the budget this year. The four-year profile changes. Cross River Rail comes off in 2024-25 and the budget next year will be different again. That is because we build; the LNP cuts. Labor delivers; the LNP dithers. We have an effective budget approach to deliver infrastructure to create jobs. More than 45,000 jobs will be supported by our capital program over this financial year. That is something that all members of the House can be sure of.

(Time expired)

West Moreton, Health Services

Mrs MULLEN: My question is of the Premier and Minister for Trade. Will the Premier update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is delivering for the Jordan electorate and the increased demand for services from the growing West Moreton region?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Jordan for the question. I was absolutely delighted to join her when we announced a great partnership with Mater to build a 174-bed public hospital in Springfield. When we are talking about growth corridors, we need to ensure we have the infrastructure that is needed. West Moreton is one of the fastest growing corridors in terms of health demographics and we are delighted to announce that funding which will mean people will be able to get services close to home. It is exactly what they need and is exactly what we will deliver for them.

It will also mean jobs will go with it—the frontline service personnel. I love going to different hospitals and meeting people across our state as I get to hear firsthand their experiences. A lot of the people who are currently working in the Mater live close by or live within the region. They are able to work there and quickly go home to their families in the afternoons and evenings.

As I said earlier, our government will deliver today a record health budget, ensuring that Queenslanders get the services they need. The capital infrastructure is there to cater for the growing needs of our state. We will also make sure that communities even in the most remote parts of our state will get the infrastructure that is needed. We have demonstrated that we are a government for all Queenslanders by building that brand new, state-of-the-art hospital in Roma. The expansion of Kingaroy is nearing completion. I look forward to going to Kingaroy in the near future to open that hospital as well. It does not matter where you live, we will deliver the services that are required.

I draw on what the Treasurer said earlier: this is in stark contrast to those opposite. I sat in this House for three years and listened to the member for Clayfield and former premier Campbell Newman and watched the decimation of our health system and the destruction of our regional communities across Queensland. I sat here for three years, each and every day. I travelled the state. I listened to what was happening. I met the people who Campbell Newman sacked. They attacked TAFE, they attacked the medical profession, they attacked lawyers, and they closed schools. That is the record of the Newman government, and those opposite have learned nothing.

When I took office, I promised a better way, and that is exactly what we are delivering—a better way for this state. Queenslanders have put their faith in our government by delivering us an increased majority each time.

(Time expired)

Sunshine Coast, Rail Infrastructure

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Premier. I refer to Labor's \$4 billion infrastructure budget cut and ask: where is Labor's plan to build passenger heavy rail for the Sunshine Coast?

Dr MILES: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. This is the third time in a row members of the opposition have made an unsubstantiated claim about what is in the budget. There is no \$4 billion budget cut. They are making it up.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, the Deputy Premier is seeking authentication of the question asked, so I ask that you can provide some basis for the question.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, in terms of your ruling, I table a copy of an article from AAP directly quoting the Treasurer where he says the budget has gone from \$56 billion to \$52 billion. That is a \$4 billion cut. Thank you.

Tabled paper: Article from AAP online, dated 11 June 2021, titled 'Qld funds health, cuts capital spending' [\[823\]](#).

Mr SPEAKER: The terminology 'cut' is not used in that. That is an interpretation. However, I will allow the question in the spirit of it being budget day. The Treasurer or the Premier, in answer to any questions, have the opportunity to refute such a claim, which is why I will allow it.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Kawana for the question. As those opposite know, it is the Palaszczuk government that is delivering for the Sunshine Coast. We are delivering new schools, we are going to deliver the infrastructure—

A government member: And two new members.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right—I take that interjection—we have delivered two new members, two new wonderful members to this House who are working really hard. I can advise the House that the Commonwealth and the Queensland governments have committed \$550.8 million towards the initial stage of the Beerburrum-Nambour rail upgrade. The upgrade will increase capacity, improve reliability and reduce travel times for passengers and freight in the growing Sunshine Coast region. The upgrade will be completed in stages to deliver community benefits while investigating funding for future stages.

The funding for stage 1 has been confirmed, and construction is expected to begin in early 2022. Stage 1 will deliver three new bridges, expand three park-and-ride facilities and duplicate the section of rail track between Beerburrum and Beerwah. A new bus interchange will also be created on the eastern side of the Landsborough station. We are also listening to the needs of the community through a range of activities as we complete the detailed design for stage 1 and gather input for future stages.

As the member for Kawana also talked about rail, I will talk about the trains.

Mr Dick: Where are we going to make the trains?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Where are we going to make those trains? In Maryborough, right here in Queensland. No more overseas production. Let's have our manufacturing here to make sure that we deliver the long-term secure jobs that Queenslanders need.

Dr Miles interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We will even fix those up.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr Bailey interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock! Premier, please resume your seat. Member for Kawana and the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, you are both warned under the standing orders. Bickering across the chamber and quarrelling is not acceptable. Premier, do you have anything further to add?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes. We are also building Cross River Rail and three new train stations on the Gold Coast. We know how important transport is for our growing state. It is our government that is going to continue to deliver for the people of this great state.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Buderim is warned under the standing orders. Comments will be directed through the chair. Premier, do you have anything further to add?

Ms PALASZCZUK: No.

Job Creation

Ms BUSH: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Can the Deputy Premier update the House on how the government is supporting projects that create jobs and safeguard Queenslanders' health? Is he aware of any alternatives?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Cooper for her question. I know that, like all members on this side of the House, she is committed to creating jobs for Queenslanders—jobs in our existing industries and jobs in the industries of the future. That is why I am pleased to advise the House today that the first recipient of the Palaszczuk government's flagship Queensland Jobs Fund will be the Translational Research Institute at Woolloongabba.

The Treasurer and I were joined by Professor Ian Frazer to announce that we will build the Translational Manufacturing Institute, with a \$20 million investment from the Queensland Jobs Fund. Our scientists at TRI are already inventing the treatments of the future and the vaccines of the future, and this investment will allow them to manufacture them here instead of sending them overseas. We will finally realise a local domestic vaccine manufacturing capability. TMI at TRI will support our startups and will allow us to do advanced commercialisation.

Professor Frazer spoke passionately about how in the past Queensland innovations had to be sent overseas for clinical trials and manufacturing. We are determined that the Gardasil of the future should be manufactured here in Queensland, just as it was invented here in Queensland. In the process, we will create 500 jobs over the next 10 years. Our biomedical sector continues to grow. It already employs 10,000 Queenslanders across 1,200 different companies.

We have been saying throughout this pandemic that we need to make more of our medical equipment here and more of our treatments here. We need to be able to make vaccines here, but there has been no progress whatsoever from the Morrison government to advance additional manufacturing capability in Queensland.

Opposition members interjected.

Dr MILES: While those opposite might not like it, we do not like it either. Australia and Queensland should be able to make our own vaccines here. We should not be running around the world begging for their leftovers. We should be able to make them here and deliver them here so that Queenslanders can get the vaccines they need, including for COVID. The Palaszczuk government is acting to create jobs and ensure we have sovereign manufacturing capability here in Queensland.

Bundaberg Hospital

Ms BATES: My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to Labor's \$4 billion infrastructure budget reduction and ask: where is Labor's plan to build a level 5 hospital for Bundaberg, as promised by the member for Bundaberg?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for her question. She might want to ask her colleagues the answer to this because they have written to me and have already been provided with answers on this, but I am happy to say it in this House. We have committed to level 5 services at that hospital. We have made—

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: As those on the other side again want to play semantics and politics, we have said in past that that is what we will deliver. In relation to this claim of a cut, let me try to explain, as the Treasurer has, as the Premier has and as the Deputy Premier has. This is how budgets—

Mr Dick: Don't worry, it's not worth it.

Mrs D'ATH: I will take that interjection. It is probably not worth it, but we have to keep trying, Treasurer. The rest of Queensland understands. It is about time the LNP tried to understand how budgets work. Each year the budget moves a year. When we look at the forward estimates, strangely enough that four-year plan changes each year as we move forward.

A government member interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I know. It is amazing. The figures change as we move along. Under the Palaszczuk government, that forward plan includes the completion of Cross River Rail. It would not appear at all in their budget papers if they were in government because it would not be there at all. In fact, those opposite made a virtue of cutting in their budgets. In 2012, the member for Clayfield wrote in Budget Paper No. 3

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: You might want to listen to this. He wrote in Budget Paper No. 3 that—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Bundaberg and Leader of the Opposition, you are having a long distance quarrel across the chamber. You are both warned under the standing orders.

Mrs D'ATH: I want the opposition to be able to hear this. In 2012 the member for Clayfield, the treasurer at the time, wrote in Budget Paper No. 3—

... the capital program will be smaller than in previous years, reflecting the determination of the Government to restore the State's financial position ...

They made a virtue of cuts. Press release after press release we saw their justification for cutting Skilling Queenslanders for Work and for cutting public servants despite their claim that public servants had nothing to fear from the LNP government. They can spend the whole of question time getting up and making claims about cuts, but the fact is that those who are reading the budget papers understand how it works. They understand how to read budget papers. The people of Queensland understand this.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I have answered the question already, member for Nanango—

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

Mrs D'ATH: She should have listened in the first five seconds.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. The member for Mudgeeraba will cease her interjections. I have been listening to the response and my judgement is that the minister has been answering the question or at least attempting to answer the question. You will cease your interjections or you will be warned. Minister for Health, you have nine seconds remaining.

Mrs D'ATH: We will deliver on all of our election commitments in health and we will deliver a record health budget under this Treasurer and under this Premier because that is what good Labor governments do.

(Time expired)

Capital Investment

Mr MELLISH: My question is of the Treasurer and Minister for Investment. Will the Treasurer please update the House on the Palaszczuk government's plan for the capital budget, including plans to finance capital investment into the future? Is the Treasurer aware of any other approach?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Aspley for his question. Our economic recovery plan locked in a \$51.8 billion guarantee for infrastructure for Queensland. We were elected on the basis of a \$51.8 billion guarantee. We said at the election that we would borrow to fund capital and fund recurrent deficits. At press conference after press conference during the election the Premier and I were often asked about funding and we always answered honestly. We were asked how we would fund it and we said from borrowings.

We made no apologies because our economy had been smashed by COVID-19. Unfortunately, our plans to borrow to support the economy have been opposed by the LNP every single step of the way. Who could forget the Leader of the Opposition's first budget reply. He said we were borrowing \$28 billion too much and that we should only borrow \$4 billion. He went on to whinge and complain about debt saying, 'We had rolled the dice on debt.' But on Sunday up in Rockhampton the Leader of the Opposition told 7 News that he now wants to 'borrow at record rates to fund infrastructure'. What is going on?

The Leader of the Opposition had an Emu Park epiphany, a Mount Archer moment, a conversion on the road to Rockhampton—\$28 billion is not enough. The Leader of the Opposition wants us to borrow more. Fast forward to yesterday, when the Leader of the Opposition was invited by journalists in Brisbane to repeat his call to borrow more but he would not do it.

The deputy whips up the questions. The Leader of the Opposition racks it up in regional Queensland but will not back it up in South-East Queensland. That is because everyone knows the Leader of the Opposition is a phoney. He will say anything he needs to say to any audience in Queensland. The LNP hate debt. They cannot stand it.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I believe that the Treasurer used unparliamentary language and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: I did not find the language that I heard unparliamentary. Please let me know what word you found unparliamentary.

Mr BLEIJIE: 'Phoney'.

Mr SPEAKER: It is within the realms. Treasurer, you have the call.

Mr DICK: The LNP hate debt. They cannot stand it. It makes them sick when they see the government borrowing to support infrastructure and jobs. The LNP would rather see the economy destroyed than borrow to support it. We saw that in their costings in the election. There was the fake Bradfield scheme. There was no money for that. There was the Bruce Highway hoax. What an absolute con job that was, flushed out on election eve with the most shameful costings in the history of this state. Their own costings would have demonstrated this if they had come into government—3,500 fewer health workers, 3,000 fewer teachers, 340 fewer teacher aides and 1,600 fewer police. This Leader of the Opposition is a complete phoney. He cannot be trusted. What he said cannot be believed. He will say anything to anyone for his own political purposes.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Treasurer, I am going to ask that you do withdraw that word simply because it was directed at an individual and not speaking about a policy.

Mr DICK: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the member for Toowoomba North. Welcome back to the parliament.

Toowoomba Hospital

Mr WATTS: My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to Labor's \$4 billion infrastructure budget reduction and ask: where is the funding for the Toowoomba Hospital?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. Stand by and wait to see the budget papers.

School Infrastructure

Mr MADDEN: My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Will the minister advise the House on how the Palaszczuk government is delivering new schools and is she aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member. If there is one thing on this side of the House we love doing, it is opening new schools. We have opened 18 new schools since we have been elected. They are not just any schools. Mr Speaker, if you go to any one of those schools that we have opened, you will see extraordinary, world-class, first-class facilities.

This budget will invest a further \$1 billion—around that amount of money—to deliver 10 new schools. I cannot wait for the budget to be delivered today so we can start working on those 10 new schools and delivering them just like we have done with the other 18—on time and on budget. They are amazing—for example, the Fortitude Valley State Secondary College and the Brisbane South State Secondary College. I know a journalist recently visited that school and they were absolutely gobsmacked at what is being delivered in these facilities.

There is the Foxwell State Secondary College, which is an outstanding new school at Coomera, just like the one at Calliope in the Gladstone region and the schools we opened at Palmview—the new secondary school which will be opening very soon, an outstanding special school and an outstanding primary school. They are in some of the fastest growing areas. There are the schools at Baringa and Caloundra that we have opened. They are wonderful. There is Mountain Creek. We were out there the other day seeing these schools growing. It is fantastic. Then of course there is Mango Hill. What a great school at Mango Hill. This is just a drop in the bucket when it comes to announcing new schools.

In addition, we have announced \$541 million in relation to new classrooms and new buildings. They are outstanding. I do not think there is an electorate throughout the whole of Queensland—not one on both sides of the House—that has not gained by some investment in its schools. It has been absolutely incredible.

When we talk about investment, an interesting piece of information is that \$541 million is actually more than the entire education infrastructure budget in 2014 under those opposite. Their entire infrastructure budget for schools was \$538 million. That was it. We are spending that amount just on new classrooms in this state. To compare the policies of this government to those opposite, just drive around the schools and have a look at what is being delivered. Have a look at the buildings. Have a look at the new schools. They are outstanding facilities. We are proud of our investment in education infrastructure. We will continue the good work and not cut, sack and sell.

Coomera Connector

Mr CRANDON: My question is to the Premier. After more than six years of planning with no business case and no contract signed, when will Gold Coasters finally be able to drive on the second M1, also known as the Coomera Connector?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. We have been working with the federal government on this at length and construction starts this year.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I will wait for silence, members.

Health System

Ms BOYD: My question is to the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. Can the minister outline how the Palaszczuk government is making health care more accessible for Queenslanders and describe any challenges currently confronting our health system?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Pine Rivers for her question. She understands the importance of investing in not just capital infrastructure but our people—our health workforce. I want to acknowledge the work that our health workforce are doing right now particularly around testing and vaccinations. We are having record numbers of vaccinations. It is our health workers who are stepping up and doing this work right across the state. I want to acknowledge the tremendous effort that they have been giving each and every day.

We are very proud of our health record in the Palaszczuk government. Since 2015 we have increased bed capacity with 1,137 additional beds. We will continue to invest and bring more beds online not just with the funding we have recently announced but also with the budget that is due to be handed down later today. While those opposite keep asking about delays in surgery and concerns about patients' welfare, what they are not talking about publicly is what the federal government is doing.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: They laugh. They always say, 'Stop blaming the federal government.' There is no-one else to blame for this. The federal government is attempting to sneak through more than 900 changes to the Medicare Benefits Schedule, with minimal public consultation. These changes are due to come in on 1 July. They have just been released. These changes are significant. They impact 594 orthopaedic surgery items, 150 general surgery items and 188 cardiac surgery items. These changes could create thousands of dollars in additional out-of-pocket costs for Queenslanders seeking medical assistance from private hospitals.

When they cannot afford their surgery, where are they going to go? They are going to go to our public health system. They will rely on us to provide these services. The national president of the AMA noted that these changes—

... will put significant financial and operational risk on health insurers and private hospitals ... We simply don't know what the rebates from the funds will be, as they haven't had the time to prepare and release them in advance—including for surgeries already booked for next month.

For surgeries booked next month they do not even know what they are going to charge and how much those patients are going to be out of pocket and whether those patients are going to end up having to cancel because they cannot afford their surgery.

This is on top of what the Morrison federal government did back in 2018. Patients were left out of pocket, spinal surgeries were delayed, and doctors could not provide patients with informed financial consent about potential gap fees. Those changes involved replacing 70 spinal surgery items and 60 new items, but this is 900 items out of 5,700 Medicare rebates. Where are those on the opposite side—

(Time expired)

Spanish Mackerel Fishery

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries. There are huge concerns that the Spanish mackerel fishery will close in 2022 because of flaws in the stock assessment model used by Fisheries Queensland. Considering that the annual commercial fishing quota has never come close to being reached in 17 years, will the minister intervene to ensure that any decisions on the fishery are not be based on false data?

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for Hill for his question. No doubt when the Palaszczuk government introduced the sustainable fisheries policy it was couched in a manner to ensure that we have sustainable fisheries in the future—not just for our children, but for our grandchildren. On this side of the House many recall the position the opposition took on this matter. They wanted to allow black marketers a five-day holiday to allow their produce to be delivered elsewhere so they could get rid of the sustainable fisheries that we on this side are trying to protect.

The Spanish mackerel fishery working group was established and met for the first time on 17-18 May 2021. They discussed the status of the fishery, reviewed the latest stock assessment results, discussed possible management options and discussed the timeline for the implementation of both the harvest strategy and required management changes. The most recent meeting communique is available online. The working group will continue to meet over the next year to develop a harvest strategy and consider management options to rebuild east coast Spanish mackerel stocks to sustainable levels ahead of the 1 July 2022 fishing season.

I am advised there has been no decision on management changes to the fishery. The first step will be to finalise and publish the stock assessment, which is being independently peer reviewed. The next step will be to look at management options to rebuild the stock. There will be an opportunity for public consultation on these matters before any decision is made. Following working group input, public consultation is planned to take place in late 2021, allowing the consideration of feedback and a decision on management action to be made ahead of the 1 July 2022 fishing season. I am also advised that no changes to recreational fishing have been made.

Railways, Personnel

Ms RICHARDS: My question is of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister update the House on what the government is doing to bolster Queensland Rail's train drivers and controllers as our population booms and we get ready for Cross River Rail?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the member for the question. The member for Redlands is a renowned supporter of rail in this state. We know how crucial our train drivers, guards and train controllers are to our network. I recently visited the train control centre at Bowen Hills. Our railway sector is in excellent shape. The world-leading pandemic response of this government has not only protected Queenslanders' health but also jobs and jobs in the rail sector. People who move to Queensland account for 88 per cent of net domestic migration gains, and that is a vote of confidence in this state. We have a plan for the future.

I recently visited the train control centre and met some of our new trainees. I am pleased to say that for the first time women make up the majority of new trainees. Six out of the 11 new trainees are women—the first time in Queensland Rail history. I was very pleased to meet with Kayla, who is one of those trainees. She is really keen. In terms of background experience there is a broad range of people coming in, some from the airline industry, who are getting new jobs in a fantastic system.

We all know that the Palaszczuk Labor government in Queensland invests in Queensland-made trains and expanding our network. We have 810 more services now than were ever offered under those opposite. We are seeing that level of commitment to manufacturing and customer service. What we do not see are the scorched earth, blowtorch policies of those opposite when they were in government and what they did to Queensland Rail. They sacked people. We saw the number of train drivers drop by 48.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr BAILEY: There we go! The member for Chatsworth, one of the gang popping up—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. It is becoming a bit of a habit, member for Chatsworth. Your use of titles is not appropriate. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr BAILEY: You will not see us with 'strong choices' flamethrowers like theirs, scorching earth wherever they go. We saw infrastructure cut under every single LNP budget. It was cut in 2012, 2013 and 2014 by those opposite, but what we are seeing is 50 per cent more infrastructure funding by this

government. Under the LNP the QTRIP allocation was just over \$18 billion; it is \$26.9 billion in the financial year from the budget in December. I am not going to steal any of the Treasurer's thunder—and there is going to be a lot of it—but I can say that QTRIP is going to be up.

Mr Boothman interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Theodore.

Mr BAILEY: Six record QTRIP budgets out of seven by this government is our commitment to infrastructure. Mr Flip-Flop over there, the member for Broadwater, first said we have too much borrowing, but six months later he said that we need more borrowing. On social media he praised Health staff, but less than a year ago he was abusing them for being punch-drunk bureaucrats. At least you knew what the member for Nanango stood for. I look forward to seeing him changing his mind and giving us something else next month—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Theodore, after I tried to give you some guidance, you are warned under the standing orders as well.

Callide C Power Station

Mr BERKMAN: My question is to the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen. Early estimates say that it will cost \$200 million and take a whole year to repair the busted C4 turbine at the Callide C Power Station, which is half owned by multinational corporation InterGen. Given that coal is increasingly expensive and unreliable, will the minister rule out wasting public money rebuilding the turbine?

Mr de BRENNI: There you have it, Mr Speaker: the Greens political party has called for the sacking of workers in Queensland's electricity companies. Well done to the LNP over there, who facilitated that question when they and the Leader of the Opposition ran out of questions on the budget. Again the Greens are lining up with the LNP, who of course are only focused on nuclear and gas. Between the Greens and the LNP over there, nobody in Queensland knows what either of them stand for except selling Queensland workers down the river. Here we have them on the record again calling for workers at Callide to lose their jobs. That is shameful!

On the day of the explosion the Palaszczuk government committed to job security for those workers there, and we continue to do that. Just last week and this morning we made the importance of the diversification of our energy sector very clear. That is why under the Queensland Jobs Fund the Premier and Deputy Premier have committed \$2 billion to a Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund for companies like CS Energy, Stanwell, CleanCo and others to invest in their businesses to ensure they can deliver a diversified future. Everybody in this state understands that thermal generation plays a significant role in making sure that we have dispatchable energy. We are not about to come into this place or any other forum and be encouraged by the Greens to sack workers at Callide.

I can update the House as well that I have been advised that the CS Energy board has determined its arrangements into the investigation of that incident, including that it will be led by forensic engineer Dr Sean Brady. He will be working alongside Workplace Health And Safety and the Australian Energy Market Operator to conduct an investigation into that. We will not only see that those workers are not sacked; we will make sure that their health and safety is put first. It is important that these investigations be allowed to run their course with integrity, something which the member for Maiwar might not know a lot about. We will be patient in awaiting their findings.

In the meantime, I can confirm that work is well underway to restoring the Callide Power Station to operation because we think those workers play a valuable role in delivering cleaner and cheaper electricity, and that supports our job creation agenda. We will always stand by the workers in the energy industry.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

Mr TANTARI: My question is of the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development. Can the minister please update the House on how Skilling Queenslanders for Work is helping to skill disadvantaged Queenslanders to get into jobs and if there are any alternatives?

Ms FARMER: I thank the member for his question and also for his passion for skills and training and for Skilling Queenslanders for Work in particular, or SQW as we call it. It is fantastic that there are almost 570 people from his electorate who have been supported by the program. Since we reinstated

this program in 2015, it has supported nearly 60,000 disadvantaged Queenslanders. It is so successful that 73 per cent of its participants go on to jobs or further training. That is almost 37,000 Queenslanders. However, the statistics are not the whole story; it is actually the human story of this program that really speaks to us about giving people a hand up. It is almost impossible to go to a SQW graduation without being deeply impacted by the stories that participants tell about the way it changes their lives.

I met a young man called Cody on the weekend who had done a six-month SQW course and he has now started a four-year contract with an IT company that has clients including Centrelink. He said that it has completely transformed his life. He said, 'I used to be on Centrelink and now I work for them.' What a great story and it is why I was so delighted to be with the Treasurer and the member for Nudgee the other day when we announced \$320 million going to SQW and that it is going to be made permanent.

I had to do a bit of a double take when I heard that the Leader of the Opposition had said after this announcement that it was a good start. I thought, 'Oh?' Did he mean it was a good start for a program they can cut if they ever get back into government? Although they love being in photos with SQW participants—and there was a photo the other day of the member for Oodgeroo with a participant—the fact is that when they got into government they cut this program almost as soon as their feet hit the ground. Go figure! Why would you cut a program that is one of the most successful of its kind in the country, but that is what they did. Going to the election, I thought they might see the error of their ways in relation to Skilling Queenslanders for Work, but there was not a skerrick.

I want to point out that just this program alone—the one they cut; the one they did not factor in if they got into government this time—has created more jobs than the LNP did in the entire time they were in government. They do not care about jobs. They do not care about people. They do not care about skills and training. Forgive me when the Leader of the Opposition patronisingly calls our announcement 'a good start'—just absolutely spare me. The Premier always says that the best form of welfare is to give a person a job. We will always back Queenslanders when it comes to jobs, and Skilling Queenslanders for Work is going to help us do just that.

Cairns, Social Housing

Mr MANDER: My question is to the Premier. I refer to Labor's \$4 billion shrinkage of its infrastructure budget and ask—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my right! The House will come to order.

An opposition member: Cold weather!

Mr SPEAKER: Yes, it is cold weather.

Mr MANDER: My question is to the Premier. I refer to Labor's \$4 billion shrinkage of its infrastructure budget and ask: where is Labor's plan to build the new social housing that Cairns desperately needs?

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: I might encourage the member for Everton to think about the terminology that he is using in his questioning. I do not know who wrote the question. Maybe it was Jarrod.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, correct titles will be used.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Sorry—the member for Kawana. Did you write the question for the member for Everton?

Mr SPEAKER: Comments will be directed through the chair.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Premier, will there be an answer to the question coming any time soon?

Ms PALASZCZUK: What I am going to say to the member for Everton is that there is not too long to go until the budget is delivered, and there will be a great announcement when it comes to housing in this state.

Tourism Industry, Work in Paradise

Ms LUI: My question is to the Minister for Tourism Industry Development and Innovation and Minister for Sport. Can the minister provide an update to the House on how many potential workers have registered for the Work in Paradise initiative, and is the minister aware of any alternatives to assist the North Queensland tourism industry to secure more workers?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, you have one minute to respond.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I want to thank the member for Cook for the question. I know how passionate she has been about supporting tourism operators in her electorate. The Palaszczuk government's economic recovery plan—including Holiday Dollars, as I mentioned earlier, and our Good to Go campaign—is encouraging more holiday-makers to visit the Far North.

The tourism recovery is actually revealing a perfect storm. The shortfall of around 4,000 tourism workers in the outback and on the coast from Mackay to North Queensland has been revealed, and that is why we announced our \$7.5 million Work in Paradise program. Distance can be a barrier to taking up a job in paradise, so we are offering a \$1,500 sweetener and \$250 in travel support as well. Work in Paradise has struck a chord with job hunters. I can report that two weeks from the program's opening there have been 14,320 people who have registered their interest in a slice of workplace paradise. Half are Queenslanders and half are from interstate seeking an outback or Tropical North Queensland working adventure.

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired.

DEFAMATION (MODEL PROVISIONS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 20 April (see p. 926).

Second Reading



Hon. SM FENTIMAN (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.18 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I would like to thank the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for its consideration of the Defamation (Model Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The committee's report No. 9 tabled on 4 June 2020 made a single recommendation—that the bill be passed. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those who made submissions to the committee's inquiry. The bill includes amendments to the Defamation Act 2005, the Limitation of Actions Act 1974 and the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019.

The heavy vehicle national law amendments will repeal provisions from the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019 to prevent unintended consequences for the heavy vehicle industry. Minister Bailey will speak in more detail to these amendments during the course of the debate.

The amendments to the Defamation Act and the Limitation of Actions Act are about protecting Queenslanders. The amendments will allow for freedom of expression; they will allow for modern media reporting, open and transparent reporting, in our state; and, especially, they will protect individuals from reputational harm. These amendments are such a critical step in protecting Queenslanders when they speak out. By ensuring that Queensland is in line with the national approach, defamation laws will now provide greater clarity to the courts, the community and the media.

The amendments to the Defamation Act and Limitation of Actions Act closely mirror the model defamation amendment provisions approved by the former Council of Attorneys-General in July 2020 following a two-year review of the model defamation provisions undertaken by the Defamation Working Party. As I have previously advised the House in my introductory speech, passage of these amendments will ensure continued uniformity of defamation law in Australia with all jurisdictions committing to commencing the provisions on 1 July 2021 or as soon as possible thereafter.

The decision to achieve and maintain uniformity of defamation law is based on the fact that it is commonplace for the same matter to be published in more than one Australian jurisdiction and individual and corporate publishers should not need to consider the potential impact of different state

and territory defamation laws before deciding whether to publish material. Also, given that the changes to the uniform laws may be considered more or less favourable to a party depending on the circumstances of their claim or defence, there is potential for forum shopping until the legislation of all jurisdictions becomes uniform.

I will take this opportunity to remind members of the more significant reforms contained in the bill. The bill will introduce a single publication rule, similar to section 8 of the Defamation Act 2013 (UK). Under the current provisions in the Limitation of Actions Act, an action for defamation is to be brought within one year from the date of publication, although the court could extend the limitation period by up to three years if satisfied that it was not reasonable in the circumstances for the plaintiff to have commenced an action in the one-year period. Currently, publication occurs when it is received in a communicable form, or downloaded, by at least one third party and each publication constitutes a separate cause of action. For internet publications, publication occurs each time a webpage containing defamatory matter is downloaded, even though the content is the same, and a plaintiff could rely on later publications, in some cases years after the initial publication, to avoid the strict application of the limitation period.

In contrast, the single publication rule will apply where there are multiple publications of the same defamation matter by the same publisher—or an associate of the publisher—so that the one-year limitation period for each publication starts running from the date of the first publication; and, for an electronic publication, from when it is uploaded or sent to the recipient. The bill enables the court to extend the limitation period for a maximum of three years where the plaintiff satisfies the court that it is just and reasonable to do so in all the circumstances.

The bill will also introduce a serious harm element, like section 1 of the UK act, which requires the plaintiff to establish that the publication has caused, or is likely to cause, serious harm to their reputation. If the plaintiff is a corporation, the corporation must also prove that serious financial loss has been caused, or is likely to be caused, by the publication.

The bill includes a procedure for the court to determine whether the serious harm element is established. For instance, the relevant judicial officer is to determine the issue as soon as practicable before the trial commences unless there are circumstances justifying postponement. The serious harm threshold is aimed at encouraging the early resolution of defamation proceedings by enabling the issue to be dealt with as a threshold issue. As a result, the defence of triviality will be abolished.

The bill contains a number of amendments to the pre-litigation process in part 3 of the Defamation Act, including: making it mandatory, rather than optional, to issue a concerns notice prior to commencing defamation proceedings in court; formalising the requirements of a concerns notice; and providing further clarity around the offer to make amends process, including the required content and the time frames.

The bill will also introduce two new defences. The first is a public interest defence based on the defence of 'publication on matter of public interest' in section 4 of the UK act, which applies where the defendant can prove that the statement complained of was, or formed part of, a statement on a matter of public interest and the defendant reasonably believed that publishing the statement was in the public interest. Unlike the UK provision, the defence sets out a list of non-exhaustive factors the court may take into account when considering the defence, for example: the seriousness of the defamatory imputation; whether the matter published relates to the performance of the public functions or activities of the person; and the importance of freedom of expression in the discussion of issues of public interest.

As a result of the creation of this new defence, the bill amends the factors the court may take into account when considering the existing defence of qualified privilege—section 30 of the Defamation Act—to ensure that there is no overlap between it and the new public interest defence. The second defence, similar to section 6 of the UK act, applies to the publication of a defamatory statement in a scientific or academic journal provided an independent review of the statement's merits has been undertaken, for example, by an editor with relevant experience. This new defence can be defeated if the plaintiff proves that the statement was not published honestly for the information of the public or the advancement of education.


Finally, the bill clarifies that the cap on damages for non-economic loss sets a scale of damages with the maximum to be awarded only in a most serious case—as was originally intended—and applies regardless of whether aggravated damages are awarded.

I have previously reflected on the importance of balanced defamation law in this House. Defamation laws provide an important avenue for defamed persons to correct the record and seek redress for harm caused. It is important that Queensland's defamation laws keep pace with modern

technology. That is why this government has joined every other jurisdiction in the country to progress these laws. These amendments to the Defamation Act and Limitation of Actions Act are aimed at protecting reputations from serious harm while encouraging responsible free speech.

In summary, the amendments will: discourage and prevent expensive litigation for minor or insignificant claims; otherwise encourage the early resolution of defamation claims; ensure that the law of defamation does not place unreasonable limits on the freedom of expression by encouraging open and transparent reporting and public discussion here in Queensland; and modernise provisions to apply more appropriately to digital publications. Subject to passage, the bill concludes the first stage of the national review of the model defamation provisions noting that the Defamation Working Party is undertaking a second stage focussed on responsibilities and liability of digital platforms for defamatory content published online as well as defences applying to disclosures of criminal conduct and misconduct in the workforce. Public consultation on the Stage 2 discussion paper recently concluded and I am advised that submissions are currently being considered by the Defamation Working Party. I commend the bill to the House.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Before I call the next speaker, I would like to inform the House of people on a warning: the Deputy Premier and the members for Kawana, Miller, Buderim, Bundaberg, Nanango, Chatsworth and Theodore.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (11.27 am): In 1976 when addressing a gathering of the New South Wales Law Society at Thredbo, Justice Michael Kirby, then chairman of the Law Reform Commission of Australia, claimed—

Defamation actions show up Australian law at its worst. The substantive law is complex. The procedures are dilatory. The remedies are elusive and problematical. When obtained, they are generally not apt for the wrong that has been done. Above all, there are eight systems of law operating in a nation where modern mass communications media render fine local distinctions confusing and on occasions mischievous.

Now, with the possible exception of the claim about eight systems of law operating in our nation, many people might feel like little has changed in the 45 years since that statement was made. Indeed, Professor David Rolph, one of Australia's current leading academics in the law of defamation, has made a similar claim that—

Australian defamation law, in its present form, is the product of historical accident, piecemeal reform and comparative neglect. The hold of its history needs to be loosened in order for it to be modernised properly.

Recently the former president of the Victorian Bar Association, a noted defamation barrister, Dr Matt Collins QC, said 'we inherited the English common law and then made it worse'.

There is a long history of civilisations setting in place rules or laws to protect reputations. Over the years, plaintiffs have used the various laws of defamation to air their grievances and to seek reparation for injury done, speaking broadly, to their reputations. Successful and unsuccessful suits have ranged from the serious, such as the damage caused by allegations of theft, murder or sexual harassment, to the seemingly more trivial, such as suggestions that a plaintiff stunk of brimstone or the publication of internet memes inspired by a plaintiff's mullet hairstyle.

Where did all this mess come from and why are we still trying to fix it all up today? Ancient Sumerian, Babylonian and Israelite laws punished wrongful accusations, while Roman law criminalised defamatory statements and publications. The early sixth century compilation of the laws of the Salian Franks—a Teutonic tribe up in Germany—the Lex Salica, imposed monetary penalties for particular language; for example, calling a man a wolf or a hare or making false imputations of unchastity. False assertions of being a thief or a manslayer in Norman law would result in the payment of damages and the additional punishment of publicly confessing the lie whilst holding one's nose. In the days of Alfred the Great, the King of Wessex in the ninth century, slander was punished harshly, by removing the source of the problem—the speaker's tongue.

In England, the laws of defamation developed in ecclesiastical courts, manorial courts, the Star Chamber and the Royal Courts of Justice. As far back as William the Conqueror, ecclesiastical courts dealt with defamation based on the biblical requirement 'you shall not bear false witness against your neighbour'. Punishment included excommunication, which in those days was of course a serious and compelling punishment, as well as other acts of penance, and the focus of these ecclesiastical courts was on the trustworthiness of the defamer and whether they had sworn, on a Bible of course, truly. So the focus was on the defamer and the punishment of their sin, rather than on the reputation of the plaintiff. It is interesting that by the 16th and 17th centuries the vast majority of suits in this jurisdiction were related to sexual slander, and it is reckoned that about 60 per cent to 70 per cent of the plaintiffs

were women. From about the 16th century onwards to the 19th century there was a battle between the jurisdictions—that is, the ecclesiastical jurisdictions and the temporal jurisdictions—that was finally resolved in favour of the temporal courts of royal justice in 1855.

Add to this mix the Star Chamber, which operated by exercising the royal prerogative and which also developed defamation law, particularly criminal libel and seditious libel. The Star Chamber, while used primarily for political purposes and for the suppression of political pamphlets, could also make awards for damages and often did so. In one celebrated instance it ordered a Sir Richard Grenville, a political opponent of the Earl of Suffolk, to pay a £4,000 fine and £4,000 in damages and locked him up as well. Today that might be worth something in the order of \$2 million to \$3 million. Abolished in 1641, nevertheless it made a contribution to the laws of defamation after its jurisdiction was subsequently taken up by the royal courts.

The cumulative effect of these various sources was an English law which, rather than existing as the result of deliberate and defined efforts, grew in a piecemeal fashion and was shaped by particular conditions. The law was described in the early part of the 20th century—even at that stage—as absurd in theory and very often mischievous in its practical operation. Of course, this ‘absurd in theory and mischievous in its application’ law was the very law inherited in the colony of New South Wales and developed in Australia as a result.

The first court in early colonial New South Wales was the Court of Civil Jurisdiction, presided over by judge advocates who were required to apply British law but who also adapted it to the particular conditions facing the colony. Between 1788 and 1809, 18 out of the 292 cases heard by the Court of Civil Jurisdiction had defamation as the cause of action. Members might be interested to know that one early defamation case heard in that court—

Ms Boyd: We're not.

Mr NICHOLLS: You may not, but you are going to anyway. Use it as an opportunity to enhance your knowledge about the history of Australia.

One early defamation case heard in that court concerned one Maria Lewin. According to gossip, Mrs Lewin had been sexually involved with two men as she travelled from England to Australia on a different ship to her husband. The defendant claimed to have witnessed Mrs Lewin and one of the men ‘criminally connected on the steps of Captain Raven’s door’. Her case was successful and the court awarded £30 of damages. The case was also significant for the way the result diverged from English law. As a so-called moral issue and without a claim for special damages, no common law action should have been available; nor should damages have been awarded, according to orthodox English law. However, the nature of the court, coupled with the possible legal ignorance of those involved, resulted in an outcome many would say suited the circumstances.

Having been reformed in 1847 in New South Wales; codified in Queensland in 1889; modified in 1899 by the Queensland Criminal Code—a code adopted by New South Wales in its 1958 Defamation Act; and subsequently replaced again in New South Wales in 1974, by the second half of the 20th century in Australia there were eight different jurisdictions with different laws, all of which might apply to publication of the same material. All of this was founded on the foul witch’s brew of the previous thousand years of English common law.

Recommendations for reform were made by Michael Kirby and the Australian Law Reform Commission in 1979 after a three-year review but were not taken up until the Commonwealth threatened to introduce its own laws in 2004. Philip Ruddock was the attorney-general at the time. The states at that time had to be drawn kicking and screaming to finally act, and that occurred in 2005 and resulted in the uniform laws being introduced in 2005 and 2006. Members will be pleased to know that it is those laws and the changes to those laws that we are dealing with today. That is how we got here. I might say that we are also dealing with the weight of history and the burden of precedent of the last thousand years.

Is it any surprise, then, that our defamation laws are held in such low esteem? Those laws and their reputation are not helped by the fact that we are here today at the last gasp, as it were, passing amendments to the Defamation Act 2005 in the shadow of a budget and on the last possible date before the revised nationally agreed commencement of the amendments set for 1 July this year, in just on 14 days time. Despite these amendments being agreed to following 18 months of review by the Council of Attorneys-General in July 2020, despite agreement at that time to enact the model provisions ‘as soon as possible’ and despite New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia all having passed their legislation last year, Queensland has lagged. What reason there is for this is not explained anywhere, leaving the only reasonable conclusion—

Mr Stevens: Incompetent.

Mr NICHOLLS:—the incompetence of this government; I take the interjection of the member for Mermaid Beach. Certainly it cannot be COVID this time around. It might be for the budget—we might be spinning the wheel there—but not for this. The excuse of an election does not hold water either, given this parliament was able to continue sitting throughout the pandemic and given the same conditions applied in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Indeed, the *Australian Financial Review* in January this year reported—

NSW has warned its patience is running out with states that have not passed uniform defamation laws, and that it is ready to commence the new regime on July 1 ...

New South Wales was the first to pass the laws last August, with South Australia following suit in October and Victoria in December. Given the tardiness of other states, including Queensland, the planned start date of 1 January had to be pushed back to avoid forum shopping by plaintiffs, in fact making the situation worse. It is no wonder, then, that the New South Wales Attorney-General, Mark Speakman, said in the same article that the laggard states should just 'get on with it'. He went on to say—

This should be very easy—it's simply a matter of copying and pasting the model provisions to which each jurisdiction agreed last July.

He also said—

There's no excuse for delaying beyond July this year a new defamation regime that encourages public interest journalism.

At that time—in January this year—Queensland and Western Australia offered no timetable for implementation. The Attorney-General was quoted as saying—

Defamation reform is one of the three priorities on the CAG [Council of Attorneys-General] agenda this year and we're progressing implementation in Queensland.

Finally, it gets here. In fact, the situation becomes so concerning that in March this year at another meeting of the states' attorneys-general a communique was issued saying—

Attorneys-General agreed that New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and all other jurisdictions that are able to do so will commence the Model Defamation Amendment Provisions 2020 on 1 July 2021, and remaining jurisdictions will commence those provisions as soon as possible thereafter.

Obviously there was frustration from those that had got on with the job and passed the model defamation provisions with those that had not, including, at that stage, Queensland. That is the history of how we got here today, the delays that have been experienced and the lengthy failures to bring this bill before the House and why we are now passing it at the deadline.

What evil are the changes addressing? Again, a look at the figures is useful. In 2018 the Centre for Media Transition at the University of Technology Sydney published a report titled *Trends in digital defamation: defendants, plaintiffs, platforms* which reviewed defamation cases heard over the five-year period to 2017 and made the following findings. New South Wales was the preferred forum for defamation actions and more matters reached a substantive decision in New South Wales than in all other jurisdictions combined, so 95 cases for New South Wales compared with 94 cases in all other jurisdictions. As well as those 189 cases with substantive decisions located through the searches that it undertook, there were 609 related decisions—for example, separate rulings on evidence. There were also 322 other matters in the system, including appeals from earlier decisions and preliminary decisions on new matters. The report acknowledged—

A complete picture of legal action on defamation would include other matters that were the subject of summary dismissals, and the many matters that are settled before a claim is filed in court.

It went on to say that, of the 189 cases, 51.3 per cent were digital cases, only 21 per cent of the plaintiffs in judgements could be considered public figures and only 25.9 per cent of the defendant publishers were media companies. One might ask: why are those figures important? What does that signify? What that shows is a genuine transition in the way defamation actions are being conducted and who is taking those defamation actions and where the defamatory material is allegedly being published.

More than half of the cases were digital cases, indicating that technology is overtaking the written word in terms of a printed document or a spoken word in respect of radio or TV as the main source for defamation complaints. With only 21 per cent of the plaintiffs in judgements considered public figures, the reality is it is not MPs or sports stars or other people who might be considered to be public figures

who are bringing these cases. What is occurring is that neighbourhood disputes are increasing. The prevalence of Facebook and other digital platforms, allowing more people to have their say more permanently, more rapidly and with less consideration online, is driving more and more ordinary folk to go about defamation proceedings.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: I beg your pardon?

Government members interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: It is rare that I do not get a response to an interjection, particularly when I am polite about it. In any event—

Government members interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: They are totally lost for words. I think the rapture with which they are listening to this dissertation on the history of defamation law—

An opposition member: Mesmerised!

Mr NICHOLLS:—has members on the other side mesmerised. I can reliably inform members that when I printed my speech out it was 29 pages; the bill itself is only 27 pages, so it is going to be an interesting morning. It is certainly going to be more interesting than the budget!

What these figures do highlight is the transition away from traditional defamation where people who felt they had a public reputation or public standing would take action for defamatory statements made in newspapers or on TV or on radio to ordinary citizens having a grudge or something nasty said about them on Facebook or on Twitter or on some other platform taking that action in court, and that is what we are dealing with. Overall, about a third of plaintiffs were successful and of the 87 awards for damages 38 were \$100,000 or more and the number of defamation cases—that is, the matters for which there was a substantive decision—in that year was almost the same in 2017 as it was in 2007 with 30 compared to 29 and the number of decisions was the same in each year.

These numbers are part of the discussion paper put out by the New South Wales government in terms of considering these reforms. It is no wonder that Australia has been called the defamation capital of the world and in Australia New South Wales is the defamation capital. Defamation issues considered by superior courts in New South Wales are said to happen 10 times more frequently on a per capita basis than in the UK and the amount of damages and the costs incurred in both—that is, bringing and defending actions—in defamation continue to mount. The recent case involving a record payout to Geoffrey Rush, a well-known actor, highlighted the problems with the 2005 laws and highlighted the fact that despite it all no-one, as both Mr Rush and the complainant, Ms Norvill, stated afterwards, came out winners.

The changes in this bill attempt to address some of the problems identified over the last decade and a half. By introducing a single publication rule based in large part on section 8 of the UK Defamation Act 2013 and requiring an action to commence between one year of publication, in the main, the changes require a complainant to take positive action promptly. That is commensurate with both issues arising from technology and also with the policy that an aggrieved person should seek a remedy quickly to protect their reputation. If you claim you are defamed, you should not wait two years to take action to seek a remedy. You should move promptly and quickly to do so.

Issues in relation to the multiple publication rule have become more prominent in recent years as a result of the development of online archives. The effect of the multiple publication rule in relation to online material is that each hit on a webpage creates a new publication, potentially giving rise to a separate cause of action should it contain defamatory material. Each cause of action has its own limitation period that runs from the time at which the material is accessed. As a result, publishers are potentially liable for any defamatory material published by them and accessed via their online archive—which we all have access to from a phone, iPad, laptop or other tablet device—however long after the initial publication the material is accessed and whether proceedings have already been brought in relation to the initial publication. That means that many actions would be available at any time without this amendment to the defamation law.

This is also the case with offline archive material—for example, a library like the State Library or a council library—but the accessibility of online archives means that the potential for claims is much greater in respect of material accessed online just because it is much more readily able to be accessed and, clearly, this is not suitable for the modern internet age. A major problem is that the current law

creates the potential of open-ended liability for online publishers who store information on their archives and thereby undermines the basis of the limitation period in defamation proceedings. There is no point having a limitation period if the cause of action continues to roll on forever.

As the Attorney mentioned, the bill also introduces a serious harm element in a cause of action for defamation and this is modelled, again, largely on section 1 of the Defamation Act 2013 in the United Kingdom. That serious harm element can be determined early on application by one of the parties in the process and it then becomes incumbent on the plaintiff to show that they have suffered serious harm in order for their case to proceed. This is an attempt to reduce the number of actions particularly on social media and technology platforms arising from comments and minor grievances.

If someone calls you a nasty name on Facebook or publishes something on Twitter, before you can proceed with your defamation action the test has to be that that actually caused you serious harm. That is not now a requirement. This is an attempt to reduce the number of actions particularly arising on social media and technology platforms, as I have said, from comments and minor grievances. As a corollary, the defence of triviality, which, according to my research, has never been successfully applied, is to be abolished.

Rather than going through the process and getting to the end of a trial and the defendant saying, 'This is a trivial matter. There should be no award of damages', the matter can be determined at the front end by the plaintiff having to show serious harm thereby negating the need for the triviality defence. As I said, it has been in place in the United Kingdom since 2013 and it has taken six years for serious harm to be finally judicially considered in the United Kingdom.

In 2020 the Supreme Court in the United Kingdom handed down a decision on an appeal in the case of *Lachaux v Independent Print Limited and Another*, which I think was the Huffington Post. The UK Supreme Court unanimously held that the Defamation Act 2013, which contains the same clause, altered the common law presumption of general damages and defamation. It is no longer sufficient for the imposition of liability for a statement complained of to be inherently injurious or have a tendency to injure a complainant's reputation, which was then the law in the UK. Instead, the language of section 1 of the act, which is similar to the proposed section 10A being introduced in this legislation, requires a statement to produce serious harm to reputation before it can be considered defamatory. This was after a decision from the UK Court of Appeal which in fact found differently.

In the UK section 1 has been upheld but its impact still remains uncertain. Lord Sumption, who was one of the Law Lords who delivered the judgement, commented that the changes to the common law are 'no revolution in the law of defamation'. That comment was given in the context of considering whether section 1 had a knock-on effect on other provisions in the 2013 act. However, the statement may hold true more broadly at least as far as the numbers of claims and the practice of litigating defamation claims are concerned. That is, it may not necessarily change the number of claims being made or the manner in which those claims are litigated.

The explanatory notes to the 2013 UK act state that the serious harm provision raises the bar for bringing a claim so that only cases involving serious harm to the claimant's reputation can be brought. However, a number of commentators have noted that, setting aside a spike in 2018 following the Court of Appeal judgement, there has been no significant drop in the average annual number of defamation claims issued following commencement of the act. It is important to note that because one of the claims made in relation to these changes is that they will reduce the number of claims being made. The experience in the UK since 2013, with one spike in the year 2018 following a court decision which was subsequently reversed, is that the numbers are relatively unchanged. It will be interesting to see whether the changes we are debating today will have the desired effect of reducing the number of claims and winnowing out the trivial and unmeritorious.

Provisions for concerns notices are also included, again seeking an earlier and less costly resolution and allowing for early identification of the alleged defamatory material. Clause 16 of the bill also introduces a new public interest defence, again largely based on section 4 of the UK Defamation Act. As in the UK act, this proposed clause sets out a non-exclusive list of factors the court may, but is not compelled to, take into account. There may be some interest in this clause, if there has not been so far in relation to this bill, for parliament and MPs given the sometimes contentious issues of qualified privilege and the repetition or republication of statements made in this place. Proceedings in parliament, including statements made in the House, committee or otherwise made in the course of or for purposes of or incidental to parliamentary proceedings, are, of course, protected absolutely by parliamentary privilege. However, the repetition of such statements or republication of proceedings outside of this place is not protected by absolute privilege and may have to rely on the defence of qualified privilege.

Under the old defamation law, malice removed qualified privilege. If something was said outside of this place that was said previously inside of this place but was done so with malice, then the defence of qualified privilege did not apply and the defendant would become liable. I believe it is the case that under section 24 of the Defamation Act 2005, defences under division 2, which will include the new section 29A, can be defeated by malice. Malice is almost always present in repetition/republication cases.

The question of what constitutes repetition or republication and the extent to which reference may be made to a protected statement—that is, parliamentary privilege—to establish the meaning of an unprotected statement is always the question. There have been a number of references to parliamentary proceedings in a way that seeks to impeach or question it, but it is prohibited by the Bill of Rights Article 9 protections and there have been many cases in relation to that in Australia and New Zealand, including here in Queensland. In Queensland in the case of *Erglis v Buckley* reference to the protected statement—my friend the member for Mermaid Beach will be interested in this and I am sure he is listening—was allowed to enable damages to be increased.

Some questions for the Attorney are can the Attorney confirm that nothing in the Defamation Act affects the defence in section 54 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 in respect of publication of fair report and can the Attorney confirm that new clause 16, which establishes the public interest defence in the new section 29A, applies to republishing proceedings in parliament and what factors in section 29A(3) would be enlivened by such a republication. I am sure clarity on these issues will be appreciated, if not immediately then certainly no doubt in the future.


In passing, I note the current defence of qualified privilege is being changed to avoid overlap with the new public interest defence and it removes, via new section 30(3B), the obligation on a defendant to prove the matter complained of concerned an issue of public interest to establish the defence. The final matter adopted from the UK act is in relation to clause 18 that inserts a new section providing a defence for peer reviewed scientific or academic papers. It is important that scientists and academics are free to express their views freely in such peer reviewed academic and similar journals. There are a number of other changes made in relation to the defence of contextual truth which allows pleading back and changes to the cap on damages. There are also amendments to the Heavy Vehicle National Law which the opposition will support.

In conclusion, these laws are welcome and seek to improve the operation of the law of defamation, a law often bewildering in its complexity and frustrating in its application—a law that is less the result of considered position than it is a patchwork of cases and legislation framed over the centuries and applied with degrees of inconsistency and confusion. Even today we see high profile cases and small claims of local disputes and personality differences play out in the courts—just have a look at the papers. Often there are no winners, the damage complained of is repeated ad nauseam and, as Justice Kirby said, the remedies when obtained are generally not apt for the wrong that has been done. More is underway and I note a second stage of reform dealing with digital platforms is proposed. This is to be applauded, but let us hope it does not take another 15 years.

Fundamental questions remain. As Chief Justice Bathurst of the New South Wales Supreme Court in a recent address said—

To what extent should defamation oppose a fetter on free speech? What is the cost of balancing the right to free speech with the right to reputation? How revolutionary should reforms be, or how much more do they need to be? Is the law truly bound up in its history, or can we detangle and simplify where needed?

No doubt parliaments and courts will have to continue to grapple with these fundamental questions. It is boring. It is complex. It is arcane. Not many people are interested in it until it affects them and that is why it is important we get it right. Let us hope we do not allow the past to constrain the development of a better law for the future. We will be supporting the bill.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (11.57 am): I would like to speak today in support of the Defamation (Model Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The objectives of this bill are to amend the Defamation Act 2005 and the Limitation of Actions Act 1974 to implement the Model Defamation Amendment Provisions 2020 which have been adopted by each state and territory. It also proposes to repeal sections 10 and 11 of the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019 as the issues addressed through these provisions will instead be resolved as part of the Heavy Vehicle National Law Review.

It was in 2004 the attorneys-general of the states and territories agreed to support the enactment of the uniform model provisions in relation to the law of defamation. These provisions were enacted in Queensland in the Defamation Act 2005. In June 2018 the former Council of Attorneys-General agreed

to reconvene the Defamation Working Party to consider whether the policy objectives of the model defamation provisions as they were previously agreed to remained valid and whether the provisions remain appropriate to achieve their objectives. It is a policy intent that the defamation laws are to protect and balance the fundamental rights of an individual in a democracy. Defamation laws should seek to balance competing rights of members of the public. The bill we are debating today is the result of that review and seeks to introduce the reforms contained in the Model Defamation Amendment Provisions.

On 20 April the bill was referred to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee. The committee subsequently invited stakeholders to make written submissions on the bill and in total the committee received six submissions. The Department of Justice and Attorney-General provided the committee with a public briefing on the bill and further provided written advice to the committee in response to matters raised in the submissions. It should be noted that the committee's inquiry was in addition to an extensive public consultation process that took place over a two-year period and that included the public release of a discussion paper, background paper and draft amendments for comment, four stakeholder roundtables and the engagement of an expert panel comprised of judges, academics, defamation practitioners and the New South Wales Solicitor-General. The heads of jurisdiction and legal stakeholders in Queensland were consulted during the consultation process. Additionally, information about the consultation process was uploaded onto the department's webpage and the community consultation page. Extensive and full consideration was given to the review, the existing legislation and whether these reforms were needed.

The department clarified to the committee why it is important that jurisdictions achieve and maintain defamation law uniformity. The department stated that it is 'based on the fact that it is commonplace for the same matter to be published in more than one Australian jurisdiction and it is important for potential plaintiffs and publishers to know their rights and limitations under defamation law, without having to consider differing state and territory laws'.

In her introduction to the bill, the Attorney-General stated that the amendments to the Defamation Act and the Limitation of Actions Act are 'aimed at protecting reputations from serious harm whilst encouraging responsible free speech'. The Attorney-General continued—

The amendments will discourage and prevent expensive litigation for minor or insignificant claims; otherwise encourage the early resolution of defamation claims; ensure that the law of defamation does not place unreasonable limits on the freedom of expression by encouraging open and transparent reporting and public discussion here in Queensland; and modernise provisions to apply more appropriately to digital publications.

The defamation law amendments proposed for implementation include introducing a single publication rule for multiple publications of the same defamatory matter by the same publisher or an associate of the publisher. Some of the more significant model defamation amendment provisions in the bill include the introduction of a single publication rule; a serious harm element; changes to the pre-litigation process and awards for aggravated damages; new defences relating to public interest; and journalism and peer reviewed material published in academic or scientific journals.

Under the current provisions in the Limitation of Actions Act, an action for defamation is to be brought within one year from the date of publication, although the court could extend the limitation period by up to three years if satisfied that it was not reasonable in the circumstances for the plaintiff to have commenced an action in the one-year period. The rule is based on section 8 of the UK's Defamation Act 2013. It will apply if a person publishes or uploads, in the case of internet publications, a statement to the public—the first publication—and subsequently publishes or uploads that statement or a statement that is substantially the same. The date of the first publication is the start date for a limitation period for all publications unless the subsequent publication is materially different from the first. The court will be empowered to extend the limitation period if the plaintiff satisfies the court that it is just and reasonable to do so in all of the circumstances of the case. LawRight expressed the view that the bill appropriately balances the protection of a plaintiff's reputation with the need to reduce the risk of 'endless limitation periods caused by digital publication and online archiving.'

The department advised that during their consultation stakeholders expressed concern that defamation law was becoming 'increasingly used for trivial, insignificant and vexatious claims'. In this regard, the bill introduces a serious harm element that provides that a statement will not be defamatory unless its publication has caused, or is likely to cause, serious harm to the reputation of the plaintiff, with the onus on the plaintiff to establish serious harm. This is similar to section 1 of the UK act. If serious harm is raised, the relevant judicial officer is to determine the issue as soon as practicable before the trial commences unless there are circumstances justifying postponement. LawRight stated that the 'introduction of a serious harm threshold ... will hopefully discourage spurious or trivial claims and allow for a mechanism for such proceedings to be resolved promptly.'


The purpose of the proposed amendments to part 3 of the Defamation Act is to clarify and refine pre-litigation processes and procedures 'to better facilitate resolution of defamation disputes without litigation'. The bill introduces, in clause 1, a new public interest defence, which is section 29A of the Defamation Act, to protect reasonable public interest journalism, based on section 4 of the UK act. It will apply where the defendant can prove that the statement complained of was, or formed part of, a statement on a matter of public interest and the defendant reasonably believed that publishing the statement was in the public interest.

The bill proposes to replace section 26 to make it clear that in order to establish the defence of context truth a defendant may rely on, or plead back, substantially true imputations originally pleaded by the plaintiff. LawRight expressed support for clause 19 of the bill, which amends section 31 of the Defamation Act, which is defences of honest opinion, particularly the clarification for the purposes of this section as to when an opinion is based on proper material.

Submitters were generally supportive of the proposed amendments to defamation law. The Queensland Law Society particularly welcomed the objective to achieve consistency across Australian jurisdictions but noted that 'some of the reforms introduce significant changes to this area of law' and further stated—

The effect of these changes in Queensland and elsewhere across Australia should be monitored to ensure that any unintended consequences arise can be identified and addressed.

The committee received a late submission containing several matters relating to the national model provisions for defamation. The submission was received too late for the committee to consider it fully, incorporate it into the report or ask for the department's response. The bill also introduces amendments to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (12.07 pm): The Defamation (Model Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 is an important reform because it maintains uniform defamation legislation across all states and territories. I note the contribution of the shadow Attorney-General and member for Clayfield in which he set out the history of defamation laws in Queensland and the history of how this bill has come before the parliament, including the significant delay by this lazy state Labor government in introducing these reforms into the House. When all other jurisdictions enacted uniform defamation laws last year, this lazy government is only now bringing reforms before the parliament. One of the main reasons this reform is necessary is because, in this day and age, it is typical for the same matter to be published in more than one jurisdiction, including in more than one state, so it is important that publishers and potential plaintiffs are subject to consistent rights and limitations under uniform defamation laws across all states and territories.

After a comprehensive review of the Defamation Act and Limitation of Actions Act, it is clear that there are limitations that should be refined. In her introduction to the bill the Attorney-General stated that the proposed amendments are to ensure that these acts can more effectively fulfil their policy objectives, namely, to protect reputations from serious harm whilst encouraging responsible free speech. It is hoped that these amendments will discourage and prevent expensive litigation for minor or insignificant claims, otherwise encourage the early resolution of defamation claims, ensure that the law of defamation does not place unreasonable limits on the freedom of expression by encouraging open and transparent reporting and public discussion, and modernise provisions to apply more appropriately to digital publications.

To this end, the bill addresses the widespread national concern about the operation of defamation law and attempts to overcome the deficiencies identified through the review process. This includes amendments that will introduce a single publication rule for multiple publications of the same defamatory matter and provide flexibility to extend the limitation period by up to three years from the date of publication, when it is reasonable to do so. Further, before defamation proceedings can commence, a plaintiff will be required to give a concerns notice to the publisher of potential defamatory content.

The bill also introduces provisions to count certain individuals as employees of a publishing corporation for the purpose of determining whether the corporation can sue for defamation. Further, the bill clarifies the law around imputations to ensure that the defence of contextual truth operates as it was intended.

The bill also recognises the special role played by professional academics and the fluid nature of academic inquiry and opinion which often relies on emerging or incomplete sources of information. Because of this, the bill provides a defence in respect of peer reviewed matters that are published in academic or scientific journals.

Lastly, this bill also amends the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 to ensure that vehicles operating under the Performance Based Standards Scheme will not be subject to higher penalties for traveling off route. Without this amendment, a vehicle may get away with being overweight, wide or long if it is reaching certain performance standards, yet could be pinged for not taking the right route, or even getting lost. This can result in inconsistent and often unfair penalties for PBS vehicles, and can even result in the initiation of court proceedings instead of the issue of an infringement notice. In an effort to ensure that such issues are dealt with more reasonably, the bill repeals the offending provisions from the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012.

As the deputy chair of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, the committee that was tasked with considering this bill, I would like to thank the committee secretariat for all of the work they have done, and also acknowledge and thank all of the stakeholders who made submissions which were particularly helpful to the committee in considering the amendments to the Defamation Act and the Limitation of Actions Act.


The Queensland Law Society, in their submission, highlighted the importance of the defamation amendments to 'achieve consistency across the Australian jurisdiction'. This was the aim of the attorneys-general of each state and territory back in 2004, when agreement was made to enact uniform model provisions.

Of particular note, the introduction of section 29A, the public interest defence, and the amendments to section 30, qualified privilege defence, are vital in ensuring free speech and free and fair journalism. The Queensland Law Society raised that, for over a century, Queensland defamation law has had reference to the defence of public interest, so the reintroduction of this defence is good to see. However, at this point I have to echo the concerns of stakeholders that monitoring and oversight will be needed to ensure that any unintended consequences of these amendments can be identified and addressed.

Stakeholders have also expressed concern regarding the introduction of 'serious harm' as an element of the cause of action and the effects that this may have on parties in practice. Earlier this year, the Attorney-General outlined that one of the purposes of these amendments is to 'discourage and prevent expensive litigation' and to 'otherwise encourage the early resolution of defamation claims'. However, it must be noted that a number of the submitters to the committee practising in the defamation space have expressed concern that the serious harm provision may not in fact achieve this objective. Instead, concern was expressed that defamation cases are likely to get tied up in court because of the poorly drafted legislative amendments. The concern of submitters was that this is not just time spent in court; this is extended legal fees, further delays in our justice system, and increased risk for small businesses that get caught up in these cases.

4ZZZ, an independent community radio station here in Brisbane, submitted to the committee that the payable level of damages under the legislation is two-thirds of their annual operating budget. With such a high level of damages payable, businesses like 4ZZZ are concerned that they may need to go to court to protect themselves against possible claims. I sympathise with the submitters in this regard. As a former prosecutor and from my time spent as a lawyer in private practice, I have spent time in the courtroom and I have experienced firsthand the damage that unclear and unmoderated legislation can wreak on our justice system.

Whilst most of the amendments in this bill are positive, this should not overshadow the dangerous path taken to introduce significant changes without proper oversight. To this end, I note that the reform of defamation law in Queensland is an ongoing process, a process which Queensland is lagging behind in. Nevertheless, because I am a positive person, I look forward to seeing the continued involvement of stakeholders in the reform process to ensure defamation legislation in Queensland performs as it should. Let's hope it does not take another 15 years to achieve it.

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (12.14 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Defamation (Model Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. This amendment has been aided by six submitters, including, but not limited to, 4ZZZ radio, LawRight and the Queensland Law Society. In April of this year, the committee invited these stakeholders and subscribers to make written submissions. The committee also received a public briefing from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

By way of background, in 2004 the attorneys-general of the states and territories agreed to support uniform model provisions in relation to the law of defamation called the Model Defamation Provisions, or MDPs, and as a consequence, these were subsequently enacted into the Queensland Defamation Act. In 2018, the Model Defamation Working Party reviewed the MDP and the idea that the objectives of same were still valid. The review was conducted across 2019 and 2020.

The DWP recommended that, based on the work of the Australasian Parliamentary Counsel's Committee, Model Defamation Amendment Provisions be enacted as soon as possible. Queensland's commitment to the Model Defamation Amendment Provisions helps ensure a continuity of defamation laws in Australia. Because it is common for subject matter to be published in more than one Australian jurisdiction, it is vital that plaintiffs and publishers know their rights and limitations under defamation law without complications arising from potential differing state and territory laws.

The state Attorney-General has quite correctly identified that the amendments are aimed at protecting reputations from serious harm while encouraging responsible free speech. The Attorney-General further clarified that the amendments will discourage and prevent expensive litigation for minor or insignificant claims; otherwise encourage the early resolution of defamation claims; ensure that the law of defamation does not place unreasonable limits on the freedom of expression by encouraging open and transparent reporting and public discussion here in Queensland; and modernise provisions to apply more appropriately to digital publications.

The bill proposes to implement the MDAPs and includes amendments to introduce a single publication rule for multiple publications of the same defamatory matter by the same publisher or an associate of the publisher so that the start date of the one-year limitation period for each publication runs from the date of the first publication. For an electronic publication, the start date runs from when it is uploaded for access or sent to the recipient, rather than when it is downloaded or received. It will provide flexibility to extend the limitation period by up to three years running from the date of publication where it is just and reasonable to do so and enable pre-trial processes to be concluded.

The bill will introduce a serious harm element for an action for defamation, coupled with the abolition of the defence of triviality so that a statement will not be defamatory unless its publication has caused or is likely to cause serious harm to the reputation of the plaintiff, with the onus on the plaintiff to establish serious harm and, if the plaintiff is a corporation, that serious financial loss has been caused or is likely to be caused by the publication. If raised by a party, a judicial officer is generally to determine whether the serious harm element is established as soon as practicable before trial.

The bill will provide for certain individuals to be counted as employees of a corporation for the purpose of determining whether the corporation can sue for defamation. It will require a plaintiff before defamation proceedings are commenced to give a concerns notice to the publisher of potential defamatory matter subject to some exceptions, for example, if the court is satisfied it is just and reasonable to grant the plaintiff leave to commence despite noncompliance.

It will make various amendments with respect to the form, content and timing for concerns notices and offers to make amends. It will clarify that a defendant may plead back imputations relied on by the plaintiff, as well as those relied on by the defendant, to establish the defence of contextual truth, ensuring the defence operates as was originally intended.

The bill will provide for a defence for the publication of defamatory matter concerning an issue of public interest where the defendant can prove that the statement complained of was or formed part of a statement on a matter of public interest and reasonably believed that the publishing of the statement was in the best public interest which includes a non-exhaustive list of factors the court may take into account when considering the defence.


It will make consequential amendments to the existing defence of qualified privilege to avoid overlap with new public interest defence. It will provide a defence in respect of peer reviewed matters, published in academic or scientific journals. It will clarify when material is sufficiently identified in a publication of defamatory matter for it to be treated as proper material on which to base the defence of honest opinion. It will confirm that the maximum amount of damages for non-economic loss specified by the MDPs operates to a set upper limit of a scale or range of damages that applies regardless of whether aggravated damages are awarded.

The bill will require leave of the court to commence defamation proceedings against certain associates of the defendant previously sued for defamation in respect of the publication of the same matter. It will provide that an election to have defamation proceedings trialled by a jury can be revoked only with the consent of all parties or with leave of the court on application of a party. It will allow a court to determine costs in respect of defamation proceedings that end because of the death of a party if it is in the interests of justice to do. Finally, it will allow notices and other documents to be sent to an email address specified by the recipient for the giving or service of documents. While the Queensland Law Society noted that the changes should be monitored to ensure that any unintended consequences can be identified and addressed, they were also pleased that there was an objective to achieve nationwide consistency.

It should also be noted that, whilst serious harm is not defined in the bill, DJAG advised that, as the amendment is based on the UK provision, it is expected that the Australian courts will look to the jurisprudence developed in the UK when considering whether serious harm is established. DJAG also advised that there was a leading case of *Lachaux v Independent Print Ltd and Evening Standard Ltd* in which they considered that the serious harm threshold must be determined by reference to the actual facts about the impact rather than the meaning of the words having any presumption of reputational damage. This is dependent on an assessment of the actual consequences resulting from the publication and may include the size and characteristics of the relevant audience and the quality of the publication and whether the claimant had any reputation to begin with.

The inherent tendency of the words 'to cause harm' is not on its own enough. Instead, the plaintiff is required to show that, through a combination of inherent tendency of the words and their actual impacts on those to whom they were communicated, harm is or is likely to have been caused to reputation. In that particular case, the finding of serious harm was actually based on the scale of the publication and the fact that the defamatory statements had come to the attention of at least one other person in the UK known to the claimant, that the publications were likely to come to the attention of others who knew the complainant and would come to know him in the future and the gravity of the statements themselves. DJAG concluded that establishing serious harm under the bill would be on a case-by-case basis as it will not be defined in the provisions.

In so far as the amendments to the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Act are concerned, the bill seeks to repeal sections 10 and 11 of the aforementioned act as it was identified that they would have unintended and inconsistent mass and enforcement outcomes for PBS—performance based standard—vehicles detected off route compared with other heavy vehicle classes. Repealing these sections prior to their commencement will retain the status quo in relation to PBS vehicles detected operating off-road and provide time for the issue to be addressed in a more fundamental and holistic way as part of the Heavy Vehicle National Law review currently being led by the National Transport Commission. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (12.23 pm): The most significant changes to defamation law over the past decades and into the future will arise from the impact of electronic publication. These publications are not only instantaneous; they are continuous in nature and can result in a new cause of action each time the publication is accessed or downloaded, with recurring impacts. As more people rely on the easy accessibility of online news publications and the digital sharing of material, laws must be enacted to ensure people's right to protect themselves while still being able to contribute to widely designated information. That is why defamation law is so important to get right. At its heart, it allows people to take action against those who say or publish false and malicious comments, including on social media.

The Defamation (Model Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 amends the Defamation Act 2005 and the Limitation of Actions Act 1974 to implement the model defamation amendment provisions as agreed to at the Meeting of Attorneys-General on 31 March 2021 to provide a large degree of uniformity across Australia. I also acknowledge the bill amends the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019. It is to the defamation issues that I wish to speak.

The enactment of the legislation in 2006 and the model defamation laws to date aim to eliminate discrepancies between the states and territories and bring increased, but not complete, uniformity to defamation law in Australia. Australia's defamation laws were not originally written with social media in mind, and the ramifications of this will be assessed during the stage 2 review as it is these platforms that make it all too easy for damaging and misleading comments to be published. I am sure the wider community will be keen to see this review progressed and implemented as part of reducing the angst that results from often malicious content.


This bill proposes amendments that introduce a single publication rule for multiple publications by the same publisher or an associate of the publisher, which is a sensible inclusion. Equally, for the same defamatory matter, the start date is from the first publication, when it is uploaded electronically for access or sent to the recipient, rather than when it is downloaded or received. The amendments introduce a serious harm element for an action for defamation, coupled with the abolition of the defence of triviality, as we have heard and have noted. Defamation laws must protect reputations from serious harm whilst encouraging responsible free speech and ensuring access to accurate and true information. The bill provides that the statement will not be defamatory unless its publication has caused or is likely to cause serious harm to the reputation of the plaintiff, with the onus on the plaintiff to establish serious harm.

Defamation, like privacy, is an important and complex issue. It is not reasonable to expect editors, producers and journalists to know and apply eight separate defamation laws in publishing newspapers and magazines circulating throughout Australia and in selecting material for transmission on national broadcasting and television programs. Equally, it is important for these same publications and indeed all publications to put in place mechanisms that allow for the fact checking of information before publication to prevent harm to people and their reputations. I want to do a call-out to our local media that do this and are fantastic.

Submitters to the committee—submitters such as the Queensland Law Society—acknowledged the changes are significant and want them to proceed to achieve consistency across Australia, but with the proviso that the effects of the changes, once implemented, are monitored and unintended consequences are addressed. I acknowledge the late submission to our committee by a group of New South Wales legal professionals, many with expertise in defamation law, who provided an insight into the New South Wales legislation. They drew attention to the act's well-intentioned amendments but suggested it would benefit from some modernisation, particularly around the ability of the proposed changes to provide a disincentive to small or trivial defamation claims and a consideration of the significant issue of the awarding of costs.

While I support this bill, I question if this legislation will achieve the desired consistency and consider the issue raised by some submitters regarding whether a future process should be done through the Commonwealth to ensure uniform and appropriate defamation laws throughout Australia. Queensland's amendments propose to encourage the early resolution, which is really good, of defamation claims and discourage and prevent expensive litigation for minor or insignificant claims. I note the suggestion that amendments to defamation acts in other jurisdictions will not lead to an appreciable reduction in the amount of defamation litigation or disputes and may increase legal time and costs. Therefore, caution should be exercised and continuous review of its impacts should be supported.

In closing, I thank my fellow committee members on the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, our secretariat, submitters and attendees at public hearings for their examination of this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (12.29 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Defamation (Model Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. As a member of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee that looked at the bill, I start by thanking the secretariat and my parliamentary colleagues for their support on this. The Defamation (Model Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 amends the Defamation Act and the Limitation of Actions Act to implement the model defamation amendment provisions. This fulfils Queensland's commitment to introduce defamation reforms to ensure continued uniformity with other Australian jurisdictions.

This bill also amends the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Act to repeal sections 10 and 11 before their commencement. As we have heard from other speakers, the amendments have been proposed after considerable consultation, including a two-year review process undertaken by the Defamation Working Party. Additionally and recently the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee sought and received submissions from interested parties within Queensland. Generally, submitters were supportive of the proposed amendments to defamation law, with most welcoming the objective to achieve consistency across Australian jurisdictions. In summary, the amendments are aimed at protecting reputations from serious harm while encouraging responsible free speech.

The bill proposes a number of changes, and I am sure that everyone in the chamber today has closely studied the committee's final report and is across the findings and recommendations. However, I would like to unpack a few of the key changes introduced through the bill. The bill will introduce a single publication rule for multiple publications of the same defamatory matter by the same publisher or an associate of the publisher. Currently, under the Limitation of Actions Act, an action for defamation is to be brought within one year from the date of publication, with courts having power to extend the limitation period by up to three years if satisfied that it was not reasonable for the plaintiff to have commenced an action in the one-year period.

Currently, each publication of a defamatory matter is a separate cause of action, and publication occurs when it is received in a communicable form by at least one third party or, in the case of internet publications, when a third party downloads the webpage. Each time a webpage containing defamatory matter is downloaded, a separate cause of action arises even though the content may be the same. What this creates in practice is that a plaintiff can avoid the strict application of the limitation period—that they create these 'endless' limitation periods through digital publication.

This bill introduces a single publication rule which applies if a person publishes or uploads a statement to the public and then subsequently publishes or uploads either that statement or a statement which is substantially the same. In this scenario, the single publication rule will apply so that the date of the first publication is the start date for the limitation period for all publications, unless of course the subsequent publication is substantially different from the first publication. This rule is based on section 8 of the Defamation Act 2013 in the UK, and courts will still be empowered to extend the limitation period for up to three years from the date of publication if the plaintiff satisfies the court that it is just and reasonable to do so.

The bill will also introduce a serious harm element for an action for defamation, coupled with the abolition of the defence of triviality which responds to concerns raised by stakeholders that the existing defamation law was becoming 'increasingly used for trivial, insignificant and vexatious claims'. Currently there is no obligation on the plaintiffs to prove that harm was caused by the defamatory imputation. The onus is instead on the defendant to rely on defence of triviality where they can prove that it was unlikely the publication would cause the plaintiff any harm.

This bill introduces a serious harm element which provides that a statement will not be defamatory unless its publication has caused or is likely to cause serious harm to the reputation of the plaintiff. This provision will place the onus on the plaintiff to establish serious harm and should encourage the early resolution of defamation proceedings by enabling the issue of serious harm to be dealt with as a threshold issue.

Serious harm is not defined in the bill. However, the amendment is based on the UK provision and it will be defined by case law, including jurisprudence developed in the UK, rather than defining it in the provisions of the bill. Submitters to the committee were generally supportive of this. LawRight made the observation that they often see trivial claims commenced for ulterior or improper reasons and were hopeful that this provision will limit the number of these matters that progress through the court. Community broadcaster 4ZZZ stated—

In the rare case our collective work may be considered to be defamatory, it would be challenging for an organisation of our size to mount a significant legal defence, given our limited resources. This would be especially frustrating in cases where the perceived harm is trivial to the complainant. The problem with using a defence in a court case for us would be the significant time and resources that would go into mounting such a defence.


The bill also proposes changes to the pre-litigation process under part 3 of the Defamation Act. The purpose of these changes is to better facilitate resolution of defamation disputes without litigation. This bill will make it mandatory to issue a concerns notice prior to commencing defamation proceedings in court. The purpose of the concerns notice is really to encourage a plaintiff to turn their minds to the serious harm element early in the proceedings and to give sufficient detail and opportunity to the publisher of the defamatory material to make reasonable offers to make amends. This might include removing the material, issuing an apology or offering compensation. All of those things combined are designed to try to assist people in resolving disputes before things get to court. Having spent quite a deal of time in the courts myself, yes, there are people who want their day in court, but overall parties usually on both sides just want a satisfactory outcome, delivered efficiently and with minimal stress. Again, submitters to the committee inquiry were generally supportive of this.

The bill will introduce new defences—most notably a new public interest defence to protect reasonable public interest journalism based on section 4 of the UK act and will apply where the defendant can prove that the statement complained of was, or formed part of, a statement on a matter of public interest and the defendant reasonably believed that publishing the statement was in the public interest.

The bill also contains amendments to repeal two uncommenced provisions from the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019. Sections 10 and 11 of that act were intended to harmonise penalty provisions within the heavy vehicle national law to ensure that performance based standards, or PBS, vehicles travelling on general access roads do not breach general mass and dimension limits. However, prior to the commencement of these sections, concerns were raised by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, and stakeholder consultation found that commencement of these sections would cause adverse and inconsistent mass and dimension enforcement outcomes for PBS vehicles found off route compared to other heavy vehicle classes.

Due to the complexity of the access arrangements in the act, it was determined that there was insufficient time to develop a nationally agreed policy approach that would ensure that further unintended consequences were not created and would also allow for the provisions to be amended prior to their automatic commencement on 27 September of this year. The legislative approach to repeal sections 10 and 11 prior to their commencement is supported by industry and will retain the status quo

in relation to PBS vehicles detected off route and provide time for the issues to be addressed in a more fundamental and holistic way as part of the heavy vehicle national law review, currently being led by the National Transport Commission. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (12.37 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Defamation (Model Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. At the outset, I acknowledge the LNP's shadow Attorney-General, the member for Clayfield, for his well-articulated, erudite and very professional contribution to this debate. We are very fortunate to have the member for Clayfield in the House.

On 20 April this year, the Queensland Labor Attorney-General and Minister for Justice introduced the Defamation (Model Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 to the Queensland parliament. This legislation was subsequently referred to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for further consideration. On 4 June 2021, the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee tabled its report in the Queensland parliament with the sole recommendation that the bill be passed. The principal objective of this legislation is to amend the Defamation Act and the Limitation of Actions Act 1974 in order to support the enacting and implementation of the Model Defamation Amendment Provisions 2020.

By way of brief background, as per the legislation's explanatory notes, over the course of two years the Council of Attorneys-General facilitated a review of the Model Defamation Provisions, led by New South Wales. In July 2020 it was agreed that certain amendments would be enacted in order to update the unified approach to defamation law across jurisdictions in Australia. As the Department of Justice and Attorney-General articulated to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, ensuring and maintaining uniformity of defamation law in Australia is important 'based on the fact that it is commonplace for the same matter to be published in more than one Australian jurisdiction and it is important for potential [plaintiffs] and publishers to know their rights and limitations under defamation law, without having to consider differing state and territory laws'.

In brief, the amendments that are proposed in this legislation are expressly designed to: firstly, discourage and prevent expensive litigation for minor or insignificant claims; secondly, encourage the early resolution of defamation claims; thirdly, ensure the law of defamation does not place unreasonable limits on freedom of expression; and finally, modernise provisions to apply more appropriately to digital publications. To achieve these outcomes significant reforms will be enacted, including the introduction of a single publication rule for multiple publications of the same publisher or an associate of the publisher.

Further, this legislation will also introduce a serious harm element for an action for defamation alongside the abolition of the defence of triviality so that, as stated in the explanatory notes—

... a statement will not be defamatory unless its publication has caused or is likely to cause serious harm to the reputation of the plaintiff, with the onus on the plaintiff to establish serious harm and, if the plaintiff is a corporation, that serious financial loss has been caused or is likely to be caused by the publication ... a judicial officer is generally to determine whether the serious harm element is established as soon as practicable before the trial ...

In addition, other amendments will be enacted with respect to the clarification of defences, damages and costs as well as for the providing of documents and other consequential or related amendments.

I note that, given the importance of ensuring a national approach to defamation law, considerable community and stakeholder consultation has been undertaken prior to the introduction of this bill, including stakeholder roundtables and the use of an expert panel consisting of judges, academics, defamation practitioners and the New South Wales Solicitor-General. I also note that the heads of jurisdiction and legal stakeholders in Queensland were similarly consulted during the two-year process.

With respect to the stakeholders who contributed to the Queensland parliament's Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's consideration, I note in the committee's report that submitters were generally supportive of the proposed amendments. I would, however, like to stress the contribution provided by the Queensland Law Society that, whilst recommending the importance of maintaining a nationally consistent approach, advised the committee that the significant reforms that will be implemented 'should be monitored to ensure that any unintended consequences that arise can be identified and addressed'. This is certainly a sensible contribution, and I encourage the Palaszczuk state Labor government to ensure that such monitoring takes place and actions are taken where appropriate to rectify any such consequences.

It is important that unified national reform is implemented with respect to our defamation laws, particularly in view of the ever-evolving landscape of digital technology and digital publication. To that end, I welcome the Attorney-General's recent update via this bill's introductory speech that attorneys-general across Australia have approved the release of a discussion paper focusing on the responsibilities and liability of digital platforms for defamatory content which is published online. It is


vitaly important that Commonwealth, state and territory jurisdictions seize this opportunity to implement comprehensive policy reform, particularly with respect to the severe damage that can be caused by—and indeed, enabled through—cyberbullying via social media and online channels.

As the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for education, and as a parent myself, I am all too aware of the vicious behaviour that is cyberbullying and the devastating consequences that are seen through constant trolling and harmful comments delivered through online means and what this can mean for students, young children and even teenagers. However, such insidious behaviour is not confined to children. It is an unfortunate reality that all too often it is grown adults, the keyboard warriors, who dedicate significant portions of their time hiding behind the anonymity that social media and other online platforms provide simply to get their toxic, offensive and often defamatory views across. I am sure that every elected representative in the Queensland parliament has had to endure at times—or even continues to endure—persistent online trolling and defamatory conduct.

In my electorate of Moggill there are social media pages that are solely administered by—and with contributions from—fixated individuals who are more interested in pursuing their own bias and poisonous political agendas at the expense of facts, decency and open debate. There are regular contributions to pages such as the 4070 not the LNP Facebook page, the Ryan federal election 2021 Facebook page—which was previously the Moggill state election 2020 Facebook page—that agencies such as the federal government's eSafety Commissioner, the Australian Federal Police and other statutory agencies, as well as the Queensland Fixated Threat Assessment Centre of the Queensland Police Service, should be reviewing, assessing and evaluating given the harm that such conduct and content by some individuals can cause amongst the broader community. I also have serious concerns that some contributors are in need of psychiatric assessment and treatment. I take this opportunity to thank e-safety organisations and law enforcement agencies as well as health services for their work locally and across Queensland and Australia in looking into these matters.

What is important and frequently forgotten in online contributions to these pages are facts, decency, courtesy and open debate. Online platforms and social media organisations have enabled these four pillars of society—facts, decency, courtesy and open debate—to be significantly reduced, curtailed or even eliminated. Instead, these online and social media platforms merely rely on the goodwill of users to regulate their own behaviour. If the defamatory, discriminatory, deceptive and quite frankly dangerous behaviour of contributors online was replicated publicly in a town square, on television or radio, or even in print, there rightly would be severe legal consequences and even punishment. The online space should be no different, and that is why I champion reform in this area and acknowledge the important release of stage 2 of the attorneys-general discussion paper by the New South Wales Department of Communities and Justice. I very much look forward to seeing how this legislative reform progresses.

As part of examining this legislation I have noted the heavy vehicle amendments contained in the legislation, and these are supported by the Liberal National Party. In closing, I thank all members of the 57th Parliament's Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, including the Liberal National Party members, the deputy chair and member for Currumbin, the member for Glass House, as well as the assistance and support provided by the committee secretariat. Finally, I thank all stakeholders for their contribution to the consideration of this bill.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (12.46 pm): I would like to place on record my condolences to Duncan Pegg's family. Duncan was a great friend to many. He is sadly missed, but he is remembered with great fondness.

I would like to add my support to the Defamation (Model Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The bill fulfils Queensland's commitment to introduce the model definition amendment provisions as well as Queensland's obligation under the Model Defamation Provisions Intergovernmental Agreement and ensures the continued uniformity of defamation laws in Australia. This is a timely bill. Around Australia we are seemingly becoming more litigious. We are seeing more high-profile cases in the media of celebrities—and most recently a federal politician—suing for defamation. On some days our newsfeeds are clogged with overseas cases about defamation. People are less likely to take a hit on their character without seeking redress. We need consistency across Australia for fairness for all parties.

Work on the bill commenced in 2004 when the attorneys-general of the states and territories agreed to support the enactment in their respective jurisdictions of uniform model provisions in relation to the law of defamation called the Model Defamation Provisions, or MDPs. The MDPs were subsequently enacted. Each state and territory is a party, not the model defamation provisions intergovernmental agreement.

In Australia it is common to see the same printed material across a number of publications across a number of states. Some weeks, *Media Watch* on the ABC devotes a whole episode to the very fact that some articles are re-headlined using the same content with different by-lines. Based on the fact that it is commonplace for the same matter to be published in more than one Australian jurisdiction, it is important for potential plaintiffs and publishers to know their rights and limitations under the defamation law without having to consider different laws in states and territories.

It is important as a society that we are able to have robust discussions and respectfully promote freedom of speech. In saying that, some people do not know when they are stepping over the line of what is acceptable to our community with their expressions and do not understand the consensus of common decency. A person's reputation can be the most valuable possession they own. All of us here would want our reputations protected from harm and would want to be able to take action when required to protect them.

The amendments will discourage and prevent expensive litigation for minor or insignificant claims; otherwise encourage the early resolution of defamation claims; ensure that the law of defamation does not place unreasonable limits on the freedom of expression by encouraging open and transparent reporting and public discussion here in Queensland; and modernise provisions to apply more appropriately to digital publications. The implementation of the amendments in this bill will keep Queensland's laws consistent with other jurisdictions in Australia. A national approach to defamation laws will provide greater clarity to the courts, the community and the media. It is important that people know their rights and limitations under the law. Uniformity of law will give corporations and individual publishers confidence they will no longer need to consider the potential impact in each state or territory before publishing materials.

The bill proposes to implement the MDAPs and includes amendments: to introduce a single publication rule for multiple publications of the same defamatory matter by the same publisher or an associate of the publisher so that the start date of the one-year limitation period for each publication runs from the date of the first publication, and for an electronic publication the start date runs from when it is uploaded for access or sent to the recipient rather than when it is downloaded or received; to provide flexibility to extend the limitation period by up to three years running from the date of publication where it is just and reasonable to do so and to enable pre-trial processes to be concluded; to introduce a serious harm element for an action for defamation, coupled with the abolition of the defence of triviality so that a statement will not be defamatory unless its publication has caused or is likely to cause serious harm to the reputation of the plaintiff, with the onus on the plaintiff to establish serious harm and, if the plaintiff is a corporation, that serious financial loss has been caused or is likely to be caused by the publication; to require that, if raised by a party, a judicial officer is generally to determine whether the serious harm element is established as soon as practicable before the trial; to provide for certain individuals to be counted as employees of a corporation for the purpose of determining whether the corporation can sue for defamation; to require a plaintiff, before defamation proceedings are commenced, to give a concerns notice to the publisher of potential defamatory matter, subject to some exceptions, for example, if the court is satisfied it is just and reasonable to grant the plaintiff leave to commence despite noncompliance; to make various amendments with respect to the form, content and timing for concerns notices and offers to make amends; and to clarify that a defendant may plead back imputations relied on by the plaintiff as well as those relied on by the defendant to establish the defence of contextual truth, ensuring the defence operates as was originally intended.

This bill will allow robust debate. It will give protections to parties for their reputations and it gives consistency and uniformity. I commend the bill.



Mr WEIR (Condamine—LNP) (12.53 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Defamation (Model Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The Defamation (Model Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 was introduced into the chamber and referred to the committee on 20 April 2021, and the committee was to report to the House by 4 June 2021. In regards to consultation on the Defamation Act amendments proposed in the bill, the explanatory notes state—

In reviewing the MDPs, the DWP—

which is the model defamation working party—

undertook an extensive public consultation process over a two year period which included the public release of a discussion paper, background paper and draft amendments for comment, four stakeholder roundtables and the engagement of an expert panel comprised of judges, academics, defamation practitioners and the NSW Solicitor-General.

The attorneys-general of the states and territories agreed in November 2004 to support the enactment in their respective jurisdictions of uniform model provisions in relation to the law of defamation, called the model defamation provisions. The MDPs were subsequently enacted. In Queensland the MDPs were enacted in the Defamation Act. The bill fulfils Queensland's commitment to introduce the model defamation amendment provisions as well as Queensland's obligations under the Model Defamation Provisions Intergovernmental Agreement and ensures continued uniformity of defamation law in Australia.

It is worth noting that this legislation needs to be passed by 1 July this year—in just two weeks time. If this parliament had been labouring under a heavy legislative workload, you could understand it but, given that we have been debating no more than two bills at best per sitting week and only one for the entire last sitting week, this is nothing less than incompetence by this lazy Palaszczuk government.

The bill introduces a range of amendments including: to introduce a serious harm element for an action for defamation, coupled with the abolition of the defence of triviality so that a statement will not be defamatory unless its publication has caused or is likely to cause serious harm to the reputation of the plaintiff, with the onus on the plaintiff to establish serious harm and, if the plaintiff is a corporation, that serious financial loss has been caused or is likely to be caused by the publication; to require that, if raised by a party, a judicial officer is generally to determine whether the serious harm element is established as soon as practicable before the trial; and to provide for a defence for the publication of defamatory matter concerning an issue of public interest—where the defendant can prove that the statement complained of was, or formed part of, a statement on a matter of public interest and reasonably believed that publishing the statement was in the public interest, and includes a non-exhaustive list of factors the court may take into account when considering the defence.

Submitters were generally supportive of the proposed amendments to defamation law. The Queensland Law Society particularly welcomed the objective to achieve consistency across Australian jurisdictions but noted that—

... some of the reforms introduce significant changes to this area of the law ...

and—

The effect of these changes in Queensland and elsewhere across Australia should be monitored to ensure that any unintended consequences arise can be identified and addressed.

DJAG advised that during their consultation stakeholders expressed concern that defamation law was becoming increasingly used for trivial, insignificant and vexatious claims. DJAG advised—

Currently there is no obligation on the plaintiffs to prove that harm was caused by the defamatory imputation; however, a defendant can rely on the defence of triviality where they can prove the circumstances of the publication were such that the plaintiff was unlikely to sustain any harm.

In this regard, the bill introduces a serious harm element which provides that a statement will not be defamatory unless its publication has caused or is likely to cause serious harm to the reputation of the plaintiff, with the onus on the plaintiff to establish serious harm.

All of us have seen an increase in the number of defamation cases in our society. Some of these are high-profile public figures, and there has been one very public case in the Toowoomba region. If somebody feels that they have been deliberately defamed, they should have the right to prosecute and have the record corrected. Unfortunately, we are seeing an increase in cases that are based on little evidence and are intended to inflict public humiliation and embarrassment to the intended victim. Even if these cases are found to be baseless, the reputational damage done is often irreparable. Anything that can be done to lessen the number of frivolous cases without restricting free speech is to be supported.


I note that there is a minor amendment to the national heavy vehicle legislation which is non-controversial. We will be supporting the bill.

Debate, on motion of Mr Weir, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (2.00 pm): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.

Mr SPEAKER: The message from His Excellency recommends the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2021

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PAUL de JERSEY AC, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled-


A Bill for an Act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for the Legislative Assembly and parliamentary service for the financial years starting 1 July 2021 and 1 July 2022

GOVERNOR

Date: 15 June 2021

Tabled paper: Message, dated 15 June 2021, from His Excellency the Governor, recommending the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2021 [\[824\]](#).

Introduction

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (2.00 pm): I present a bill for an act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the Consolidated Fund for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for the financial years starting 1 July 2021 and 1 July 2022. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights.

Tabled paper: Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2021 [\[825\]](#).

Tabled paper: Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2021, explanatory notes [\[826\]](#).

Tabled paper: Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2021, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[827\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2021. The bill provides appropriation for the 2021-22 financial year as well as interim supply for 2022-23 to allow normal operations of the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service to continue until the 2022-23 Appropriation Bill receives assent.

The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2021 will provide necessary funds to ensure the continued operations of the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service. In particular, the bill provides funding for the operation of the parliament and the Parliamentary Service, including to support 93 members.

One of those 93 members was our dear friend Duncan Pegg, whom we lost last week. Duncan loved this parliament, he loved politics and he loved representing his community. Duncan also loved the annual budget sitting week. Duncan participated fully and vigorously in all budget debates during his time in this place and his contributions on the appropriation bills were always outstanding. I know that Duncan would have loved to be here with us to see this budget. I hope the 2021 state budget would meet Duncan's expectations: a Labor budget, a budget for all Queenslanders and a budget that Duncan would have been proud to help deliver in his community.

While I am on my feet, I should thank officers of the Treasury who have supported the government in this process. While our last budget was produced in record time following the state election, it was delivered in December. It means that this budget cycle has been particularly compressed, meaning that we have worked officers in the Treasury very hard this year. I want to thank the acting Under Treasurer, Leon Allen; and Deputy Under Treasurers, Graham Fraine and Michael Carey; Head of Economics, Dennis Molloy; Head of Fiscal, Will Ryan; from the budget office, Kath Begley; Head of Commercial, Sarah Amos; Head of Policy and Performance, Drew Ellem; and all other Treasury officers who have contributed so much to this important process.

I also wish to acknowledge Rachel Hunter, who was the Under Treasurer when we started this process and was instrumental in setting our budget strategy. Rachel is a lifelong servant of the people of Queensland and is now leading Queensland's Public Service as the first female director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (2.04 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.

Mr SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 177, the bill is now set down for its second reading.

BUDGET PAPERS

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (2.04 pm): I table the budget papers for 2021-22.

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Appropriation Bills [\[828\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Budget Speech—Budget Paper No. 1 [\[829\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Budget Strategy and Outlook—Budget Paper No. 2 [\[830\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Capital Statement—Budget Paper No. 3 [\[831\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of the Premier and Cabinet [\[832\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Treasury [\[833\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Legislative Assembly of Queensland [\[834\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Agriculture and Fisheries [\[835\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs [\[836\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy [\[837\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Education [\[838\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Employment, Small Business and Training [\[839\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Energy and Public Works [\[840\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Environment and Science [\[841\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Health [\[842\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Justice and Attorney-General [\[843\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Corrective Services [\[844\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management [\[845\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Police Service, Public Safety Business Agency [\[846\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water [\[847\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Resources [\[848\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships [\[849\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning [\[850\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport [\[851\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Transport and Main Roads [\[852\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Brisbane and Redlands [\[853\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Central Queensland [\[854\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Darling Downs [\[855\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Far North Queensland [\[856\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Gold Coast [\[857\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Ipswich [\[858\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Logan [\[859\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Mackay-Whitsunday [\[860\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Moreton Bay [\[861\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Outback Queensland [\[862\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Sunshine Coast [\[863\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Townsville [\[864\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Regional Action Plan—Wide Bay [\[865\]](#).


Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Budget Highlights [\[866\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Investing for Women [\[867\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2021-22: Queensland's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan—Budget update [\[868\]](#).

APPROPRIATION BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (2.04 pm): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.

Mr SPEAKER: The message from His Excellency recommends the Appropriation Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

APPROPRIATION BILL 2021

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PAUL de JERSEY AC, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled-


A Bill for an Act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for departments for the financial years starting 1 July 2021 and 1 July 2022

GOVERNOR

Date: 15 June 2021

Tabled paper: Message, dated 15 June 2021, from His Excellency the Governor, recommending the Appropriation Bill 2021 [\[869\]](#).

Introduction

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (2.05 pm): I present a bill for an act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the Consolidated Fund for departments for the financial years starting 1 July 2021 and 1 July 2022. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights.

Tabled paper: Appropriation Bill 2021 [\[870\]](#).

Tabled paper: Appropriation Bill 2021, explanatory notes [\[871\]](#).

Tabled paper: Appropriation Bill 2021, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[872\]](#).

The budget that I present today demonstrates that Queensland's COVID-19 economic recovery plan is working. This plan, endorsed by the people of Queensland just eight months ago, recognises the issues that are important to Queenslanders in a time of unprecedented global uncertainty. It recognises the importance of better hospitals in giving Queenslanders the confidence that they will be cared for should they need it, it recognises the importance of smarter schools in educating our children for the jobs of tomorrow, it recognises the importance of safer roads in creating jobs and driving economic growth, and it recognises the importance of social and community support that Queenslanders know our government will deliver and always protect.

Our plan, and the budget, have at their heart the fundamental lesson that COVID-19 has taught every one of us: when you protect the health of your people, then jobs will grow. That is what we see in Queensland today—an economy that is roaring back to life, not in spite of our disciplined focus on getting the health response right but precisely because of it. Fighting COVID-19 is not the binary choice that some would have us believe, with health on one side and the economy on the other. Our economy is succeeding only because we have protected the health of Queenslanders. The right health response enables our economy to recover and grow with confidence. This is a budget that invests in growth—growth in jobs, growth in services including health, growth in vital infrastructure, growth across Queensland.

Our health response stands as a testament to the tenacity, sacrifice and determination of Queenslanders, and the result of that health response is our strong economic recovery. To some, the fact Queensland was able to avoid a depression or prolonged recession would be an achievement in itself, but today Queensland's economy is bigger than it was before the pandemic.

On almost every indicator we have seen this year, Queensland is outperforming the rest of Australia. Household spending is growing faster than the rest of Australia. Dwelling approvals are growing faster than the rest of Australia. Dwelling investment is growing faster than the rest of Australia. Construction starts are growing faster than the rest of Australia. Our domestic economy is growing faster than the rest of Australia.

We have created more jobs since the depths of the pandemic than anywhere else in Australia. These are not just numbers on a budget paper or a computer screen; they represent workers getting paid, Queenslanders putting food on the table, families getting a fair share of wealth and, through their spending, reinvesting in our economy—reinvesting in other Queenslanders. The best part is that our economic recovery is only just getting started.

At the heart of any Labor budget lies our party's enduring mission—a mission 130 years young just last month—and that mission is delivering better, higher paying jobs for Queensland workers. Today I can announce that the 2021 budget sets a trajectory towards more jobs and stronger economic growth. This financial year, Queensland's economy will grow by 3¼ per cent—more than double the national growth rate. By the end of the forward estimates, our economy will still be growing faster than the national average.

That economic performance will drive employment growth, with 200,000 jobs predicted to be created over the next four years. This will drive unemployment lower. By the end of the forward estimates, unemployment is forecast to be five per cent, down from an estimated 6¼ per cent in the current quarter.

We will deliver this improved jobs performance while facing the challenge of the highest interstate migration in the country. Our high interstate migration means that other states are exporting part of their unemployment to Queensland. This reduces the participation rates of other states and increases ours. For our government, migration presents a challenge and an opportunity. We must still provide jobs for Queenslanders graduating from school or completing training, but we must also provide jobs for tens of thousands of interstate migrants over the next four years. This is a challenge we will meet head-on. We will continue to invest to ensure that these new Queenslanders can find jobs, that they can enrol their children in a great local school and that they can get access to the hospitals that they need.

Queenslanders have surpassed every expectation of them during the pandemic. In facing down COVID-19, everything that was asked of Queenslanders they did. Our government aims to deliver to Queenslanders a budget that rewards this achievement. Queenslanders deserve a budget with new investments in frontline services, a budget with more infrastructure spending and a budget that delivers one of the strongest financial positions of any major government in Australia. That is exactly the budget that I am delivering today.

Investing in health

2020 presented an unprecedented challenge to Queensland's health system. The Palaszczuk government responded with an unprecedented investment in health. Our government knows that protecting the public health system protects Queenslanders. Under our government, Queenslanders have confidence that if they become unwell care is available.

As the vaccine rollout finally suppresses the threat posed by COVID-19, some would expect us to roll that record investment back. I place on the record that, unlike previous Queensland governments, there will be no cuts to health. In fact, I can announce that all of that COVID-19 boost will be retained within the system.

This year, we will once again increase health funding to deliver another record health budget. This means that operating funding for Health will increase by more than 13 per cent over two years. I can also confirm that, in the coming financial year, operational funding will continue to be provided through the Queensland Health funding model, with no additional savings applied.

Frontline health services

Our operational investments will help to deliver the frontline services that our health system needs. Since our government was first elected in 2015, we have overseen a 30 per cent increase in the strength of our nursing workforce. That means an additional 8,400 nurses and midwives. Queensland has 2,841 more doctors, 4,291 more health practitioners and 858 more ambulance personnel reinforcing our frontline health response.

More hospitals

An effective health system needs high-quality infrastructure. That is why I announce today that the Palaszczuk Labor government will establish a \$2 billion Hospital Building Fund to address growth pressures across the health system. Initial investments will be made from the fund for the Toowoomba Day Surgery—a two-theatre day surgery to be built at the Baillie Henderson campus.

We are ensuring that healthcare infrastructure and equipment are delivered to the right place, at the right time, for the benefit of Queenslanders. In South-East Queensland, our record health investment means 174 additional beds and a new emergency department at the Mater Public Hospital Springfield. We are continuing the redevelopment and expansion of Caboolture, Ipswich and Logan hospitals. As part of our Satellite Hospitals program, satellite hospitals will be delivered at Bribie Island, Caboolture, Brisbane South, Pine Rivers, Gold Coast, Ipswich and the Redlands.

Our government is equally committed to high-quality health care for regional Queenslanders. We are continuing our investment in new and upgraded regional hospitals at Roma, Atherton, Cairns, Thursday Island, Hervey Bay, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Sarina and Proserpine.

The budget also provides \$70 million for the Building Rural and Remote Health Program to upgrade health infrastructure at Camooweal, St George, Morven, Charleville and Blackwater. It provides \$12.5 million for the Woorabinda Multipurpose Health Service to increase its capacity from four residential aged-care beds to 14 and it provides \$12.4 million to replace the Windorah Primary Health Centre.

More infrastructure

It will not just be new hospitals that this budget is delivering. Queensland is a growing state—growing more strongly than the rest of Australia. A growing state needs infrastructure.

Infrastructure investment is the foundation of any Labor budget. Infrastructure grows the economy, infrastructure connects communities and infrastructure creates valuable construction and maintenance jobs. That is why the hallmark of the Palaszczuk government has been a strong spend on infrastructure across the board. Since we were first elected we have delivered—and will continue to run—an extensive infrastructure program.

It has also been a sustainable infrastructure program. Investment in infrastructure has been funded primarily through recurrent revenues. However, when the pandemic struck and our revenues were crushed, we faced a choice. We could have cut infrastructure spending to improve the state's financial position. That was, in fact, the decision made in the 2012 budget delivered by the previous government. The Newman LNP government announced—

... the capital program will be smaller than in previous years, reflecting the determination of the Government to restore the State's financial position ...

The Palaszczuk government has made a different choice. We have enshrined our \$50 billion Infrastructure Guarantee as a cornerstone of our COVID-19 economic recovery plan. We made the deliberate decision that a temporary reduction of revenue was no reason for a permanent reduction in infrastructure. That is a decision that we carry forward into the budget today.

I am proud to announce that we are keeping our \$50 billion commitment to the people of Queensland. Over the forward estimates, our capital program will deliver \$52.2 billion in infrastructure. This investment will support around 46,500 jobs next financial year. Over the 10 years to 2024-25, the Palaszczuk Labor government will have supported over \$110 billion in infrastructure for Queenslanders. When it comes to infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, roads, rail and renewables, we are keeping our pedal to the metal, and it is reflected across the portfolios that deliver for Queenslanders.

Education and new schools

In a resource-rich state, Queensland Labor governments know that our most precious resource is the next generation of Queenslanders. We know that a well-resourced, quality education system enriches us all. We believe that, regardless of background, wealth, gender, ethnicity or upbringing, all of Queensland's children deserve a chance to achieve their dreams. That is why this budget will deliver \$16.8 billion for education. Our government will ensure that Queensland's next generation can access the highest quality schools, skills and training, from preschool to graduation.

The Palaszczuk Labor government knows that the foundations of a strong education must start early. That is why we are locking in four years of funding to provide ongoing universal access to kindergarten for Queensland children—an investment of \$202.9 million.

Education will be the foundation of our state's long-term economic prosperity. Our government has already opened 18 new schools since 2015. The budget includes more than \$900 million to build 10 new primary and secondary schools in high-growth areas of our state, and it commits another \$500 million for additional and renewed infrastructure across our existing state schools. This includes \$309.2 million in the coming financial year to improve and upgrade schools in regional Queensland.

Housing investment

All Queenslanders deserve a place to call home. One of the flagship initiatives in this budget is our timely investment in housing and homelessness services. Today I am pleased to announce that our government will commit \$1.9 billion over four years to increase the supply of social housing, upgrade the existing stock of dwellings, and deliver critical housing services to vulnerable Queenslanders. To support this investment, our government will establish a \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund, with its returns to be used to drive new housing supply to support housing needs across the state.

Transport infrastructure

Our government recognises the need to continually strengthen our transport networks—to build the road and rail corridors that get Queenslanders quickly to work and take them safely home. That is why our government is redoubling our investment in roads, with \$27.5 billion over four years supporting 24,000 jobs for Queenslanders.

Our capital program includes a range of investments in Queensland's 1,700-kilometre backbone, the Bruce Highway. We will improve the safety, the capacity and the resilience of the Bruce Highway, from Brisbane to Cairns. We have locked in an \$883 million jointly funded boost for the Bruce, to build four lanes at Tiaro, north of Gympie, and upgrades between Gladstone and Proserpine and north of Townsville. And we will take trucks off the Bruce, rolling out a jointly funded \$500 million upgrade to the Inland Freight Route between Charters Towers and New South Wales.

Our program of works on the Gold Coast is delivering major upgrades, including our signature \$1.5 billion Coomera Connector, to provide a second M1. This year we will deliver \$188.9 million for Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3, as part of this \$1 billion project. Cross River Rail is full steam ahead, with \$1.5 billion next financial year to help deliver four new CBD stations and support 7,700 full-time-equivalent jobs.

Regional infrastructure

In Queensland, more of our people live outside the capital city than do in any other mainland state or territory. We must support this population as well as the new residents and visitors our regions attract. That is why 61 per cent of our \$14.7 billion capital program next financial year will be spent in the regions. Our infrastructure investment will support nearly 30,000 regional jobs.

The budget allocates \$350 million to meet our government's election commitment to continue the Works for Queensland program and the SEQ Community Stimulus Package. These are programs that fast-track investment, creating jobs and delivering more stimulus. We will provide an additional \$70 million for local government infrastructure projects through the Building our Regions program, taking our total funding to \$418.3 million.

Skills, training and jobs

Across Queensland, many businesses are facing labour shortages. This is a challenge that would have been inconceivable at the start of the pandemic but one that reflects the growing strength of our economy. Our government is meeting this challenge.

The Labor Party believes that one of the best things a government can do is to provide its people with the skills, the training and the confidence to get a job. That is why the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program will be given secure, long-term funding. This budget commits \$320 million over four years—and \$80 million each year ongoing—to continue this vital program. To date, Skilling Queenslanders for Work has seen three out of every four participants go on to secure employment or further training.

Our Back to Work program, which has already helped more than 25,000 Queenslanders find a job, will receive \$140 million over four years.

Investing in Queensland

Our traditional industries helped create the wealth of Queensland. Those industries, like agriculture and mining, have been key to our economic recovery from COVID-19, keeping Queenslanders working and our economy moving through the depths of the pandemic. Their resilience and tenacity meant that Queensland fared better than other states and economies more heavily reliant on service industries.

The wealth of Queensland was not created by standing still. Our economy will grow faster and create more jobs as we further diversify our industrial base. Earlier this month the Premier, Deputy Premier and I announced the Queensland Jobs Fund, now worth \$3.34 billion, including \$350 million in new funding for industry partnerships. The Queensland Jobs Fund will build on the suite of programs introduced by our government to bring new industries and jobs to Queensland. Part of our \$3.34 billion commitment is \$2 billion towards the Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund.

Reliable, affordable, renewable energy

When the Palaszczuk government was elected, there were no large-scale wind or solar projects underway in Queensland. With all of the incredible renewable resources available to our state, the cupboard was bare. Since our election in 2015, 44 large-scale projects have been committed, commenced or constructed in Queensland. This represents more than 5,000 megawatts of large-scale renewable generating capacity and almost \$10 billion in investment. These renewable projects have created almost 7,000 new construction jobs, largely in regional Queensland. Our 50 per cent renewable energy target sent industry the clear policy signal that we are open for renewable business.

We established CleanCo to deliver affordable, low-emissions power across the state. We provided CleanCo with \$250 million to build, own and operate the Karara Wind Farm on behalf of the people of Queensland.

Through our government owned energy corporations, we have developed partnerships with private companies seeking to power their businesses from renewables. These partnerships give our renewables sector the certainty of demand it needs to grow even faster, and we are not done yet. Our \$2 billion investment in commercial renewable energy and hydrogen projects will build on our commitment to providing cheaper, cleaner energy to Queenslanders.

Supporting the arts

The appeal of Queensland is based on our natural beauty, our diverse landscapes, our resilient health and quality education systems and our unmatched lifestyle. We will continue to invest in the industries that make the Queensland way of life the envy of the world. We will invest \$71 million to support the Queensland screen industry, which has kept caterers, carpenters and countless other tradespeople employed through the pandemic, as so much production has ground to a halt elsewhere in the world.

In the thriving heart of Brisbane's arts precinct, we will commit \$36.1 million to renew critical infrastructure. Across the state, we will deliver priority investments in arts and cultural venues owned by Queenslanders through a \$13.1 million Arts Infrastructure Investment Fund. For the music industry, which continues to face challenges in a COVID-safe world, we will deliver \$7 million in support for live venues next financial year.

Protecting our environment

Our state's Land Restoration Fund is supporting farmers and traditional owners to develop new income streams while reducing their carbon footprint, building healthier waterways and increasing habitat for threatened species. To ensure the ongoing viability of this fund, this budget establishes a \$500 million Carbon Reduction Investment Fund. The proceeds of the carbon fund will provide certainty for land restoration projects now and into the future.

When our government reintroduced the waste levy, we successfully stopped the tide of interstate trucks looking to use Queensland as their dumping ground. Resource recovery is creating new industries and new jobs by diverting waste away from landfill and into new uses across our economy. We will continue to implement the Queensland Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy through a commitment of \$93.6 million over four years and \$24.2 million each year ongoing. This budget also commits \$160 million to ensure the success of the waste levy does not increase costs for household domestic waste.

As custodians of the Great Barrier Reef, we will invest \$270.1 million over five years to maintain the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program at current levels.

Supporting our communities

Queensland is home to two of the world's oldest continuing living cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As we continue along the Path to Treaty with our state's First Nations people, it is vital that we provide funding security to support our shared pathway. To that end, through this budget I am proud to announce today that the government will establish a \$300 million Path to

Treaty Fund. The proceeds of this fund will provide funding certainty for the Path to Treaty into the future. The Path to Treaty actions will be informed by the government's consideration of the report of the Treaty Advancement Committee, which is expected to be received later this year. The budget also commits \$27.6 million to continue the work of managing native title compensation claims in Queensland.

As we have learned through the harrowing stories of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, it is essential to ensure that Queenslanders living with a disability know that their voices will be heard. We are investing \$22.7 million to continue to support peak and representative bodies and advocacy services for Queenslanders with a disability and the Queensland Disability Advisory Council. The budget will also provide \$7.3 million to ensure continuity of support for former Disability Services clients who have been determined ineligible for the NDIS.

Our government knows the financial pressure that COVID 19 has placed on many Queenslanders. It is also why earlier this year our government announced the lowest indexation rate in a decade. Fees and charges now grow at less than half the rate they escalated under the previous government. It is why our government is delivering \$6.1 billion in discounts, rebates, subsidies and other concessions this financial year. Most Queenslanders benefit from at least one concession, be it a public transport discount, rental assistance, drought relief assistance or an electricity bill rebate. Our near-record \$6.1 billion of concessions in this budget will continue to help Queenslanders manage their own household budgets.

Titles Registry

When I announced our intention to transfer the Titles Registry to the Queensland Future Fund, our preliminary valuation estimate was at least \$4 billion. This valuation is an important number for Queensland, because every dollar of value in the Titles Registry reduces our net debt. Lower net debt means we are better able to respond to future shocks, such as natural disasters, with additional spending. Lower net debt means we have greater capacity to invest in the infrastructure we need. Lower net debt means a healthier budget position for Queenslanders.

Today I can announce more good news for Queensland. I can confirm that the independently assessed valuation of the Queensland Titles Registry has been revised—upwards—to \$7.8 billion. This valuation is the result of detailed due diligence undertaken by the Queensland Investment Corporation and Queensland Treasury. QIC obtained advice from four independent firms; financial advisory services from Bank of America; macroeconomic forecasting from BIS Oxford Economics; financial, tax, accounting and information technology due diligence from Deloitte; and legal advice from Allens Linklaters. The valuation was approved by QIC's independent investment committee and was then subject to a further independent peer assessment by two global accounting firms—PwC on behalf of QIC and EY on behalf of the state.

We always knew that Queensland was the best, and this valuation is no exception. The Queensland Titles Registry is the most valuable titles registry in the nation, and there is good reason for this. Our Titles Registry has been the best run in the nation, and it should remain in public hands. The hard-earned wealth of Queensland should remain in Queensland, to work for Queenslanders.

Consistent with the announcements I made last year about the Queensland Future Fund, the majority of the Titles Registry value—\$6 billion in total—will be contributed to the Debt Retirement Fund. By restructuring the Titles Registry, as we have done, and by recognising the full financial value of this asset, Queenslanders will reap the benefit of the state's net debt being reduced by nearly \$8 billion.

Fiscal outlook

Before I became Treasurer, every budget that our government handed down delivered a net operating surplus. The last budget deficit delivered in Queensland before that was delivered by the Newman LNP government. As you might expect, Mr Speaker, those of us on this side of the House are not comfortable with a budget deficit. While none of us likes budget deficits, Labor will always back jobs. Jobs must come first, and our Premier has backed that choice every day.

Our government made the deliberate decision that we would put our budget into deficit. We made it clear during the election campaign that our budget would stay in deficit until our economy had recovered. There would be no reckless rush to surplus within the forward estimates, or within three years, or within some other arbitrary time frame. When I delivered last year's budget, we did not back down from this.

Our message is clear: health and jobs come first. Today's budget demonstrates that our choice has paid off. Our deficits are narrowing because jobs are coming back, our debt is falling because jobs are coming back and our budget will return to surplus because jobs are coming back.

The four largest governments in Australia—the Commonwealth government, the New South Wales government, the Victorian government and the Queensland government—all went into deficit to respond to COVID-19. Today, only one of those four governments is returning to surplus: the Palaszczuk Labor government.

Queensland was the first to announce a stimulus to respond to COVID-19. Queensland was the first to return all of the jobs lost due to COVID-19. Now Queensland is the first of these jurisdictions to return to surplus. We had forecast that this year and last year we would see the biggest deficits in Queensland's history. While last year's deficit remains the largest, this year's deficit will now be smaller than that in the Newman LNP government's first budget.

Those smaller deficits have, axiomatically, had an impact on Queensland's debt. As our economy has improved, the need for increased debt reduces. Today I can announce that in this financial year our net debt will be reduced by \$9.7 billion compared to the forecast in December last year. That is the single biggest reduction in net debt ever recorded by the Queensland government.

Reducing debt, reducing deficits, returning to surplus—these are things that I know many on our side of the House are pleased to hear, but the part they want to hear the most is that we have done all of this without cutting services, without sacking public servants and without selling public assets.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I apologise for having to interrupt. Member for Southern Downs, welcome back. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr DICK: Others may talk about debt reduction or reducing budget deficits, but only our government has delivered—and we have done it the right way: by growing jobs and growing the economy.

While we are proud of this achievement, we on this side of the House do not engage in debt reduction for its own sake.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Sorry, Treasurer. Member for Burleigh, and all members to my left, there is a convention in this place when Treasurers are delivering the budget speech. Out of courtesy for the Leader of the Opposition's budget reply, it will be heard in relative silence without continuous interjection. Member for Burleigh, you are warned under the standing orders.

Mr DICK: We will reduce debt because doing so creates the future capacity to invest in the services and infrastructure that our state needs. In this budget we are reducing debt because our economy is growing strongly, because jobs are coming back and because it makes sense to rebuild our borrowing capacity. In future, debt may well rise again, to respond to another crisis, to deal with a disaster or to build the infrastructure of our state.

Just as we did in the pandemic, we will make no apologies for using debt to defend the health, the jobs and the livelihoods of Queenslanders. As we see the Commonwealth government engaging in a borrowing spree that dwarfs anything the state might do, it is my hope that those opposite, and those in the media, finally come to grips with the fact that debt is not a dirty word.

Queensland does not have a debt problem. By any measure, in absolute and proportional terms, Queensland's debt is lower and more affordable than the debt owed by New South Wales, by Victoria and by the Commonwealth government. If you think Queensland owes too much, with net debt at \$25 billion, then take it up with the New South Wales government, which owes \$68 billion. If you think Queensland will not be able to service our borrowings, which represent 102 per cent of revenue, then take it up with the New South Wales government, which has a debt-to-revenue ratio of 130 per cent. Today the debt double standard stops.

Charter of Fiscal Responsibility

The Financial Accountability Act 2009 provides that, from time to time, the Treasurer must prepare and table in the Legislative Assembly a Charter of Fiscal Responsibility giving details of the government's fiscal principles. The government's new charter includes renewed fiscal principles that support our strategy to drive recovery, address fiscal repair and restore the state's fiscal buffers.

The renewed fiscal principles provide objective measures that support the government's post-COVID-19 fiscal repair strategy, including a return to operating surplus. The principles will ensure that debt remains sustainable, expenses do not grow faster than revenues and capital is prudently funded by surplus operating cash. Queensland will maintain its highly competitive tax environment. Our government's longstanding commitment to fully funding its liabilities, such as superannuation, will continue.

To maintain consistency between budget documentation and the official charter, I table the revised Charter of Fiscal Responsibility.

Tabled paper: Charter of Fiscal Responsibility [\[873\]](#).

Economic update

As nations around the world have learned, the heart of any economic recovery from COVID-19 must be a strong and effective health response and so it has been for Queensland. Our state has recovered earlier and stronger than we anticipated in the budget delivered barely six months ago.

Economic growth

Growth for this financial year is now forecast to be 3¼ per cent—13 times faster than the ¼ per cent estimated in last year's budget. This significant economic growth is driven by strong household consumption and dwelling investment. It is this economic growth that underpins our ability to deliver essential services, create jobs and protect those who need help the most.

Our measured economic growth will continue, with the 3¼ per cent growth in this financial year to be followed by 2¾ per cent growth in each subsequent year of the forward estimates. Our growth is more measured than the Commonwealth because our recovery started earlier than states like Victoria. By June 2025, our economy is forecast to be 15 per cent larger than it is today.

Unemployment

Consistent with the recovery delivered by our health response, unemployment is forecast to peak lower and fall further than was estimated in last year's budget. It is forecast to fall from seven per cent this financial year to five per cent by the end of the forward estimates. In each year, that is an unemployment rate at least one per cent lower than forecast in December. While unemployment will be challenged by net interstate migration, it is a challenge we welcome.

Conclusion

This budget comes a little over a year after the Premier appointed me as Treasurer. Along with my colleagues, I have had the privilege of witnessing something extraordinary and powerful—the people of Queensland rising to the challenge of COVID-19 so brilliantly. Because of their hard work, the people of Queensland will continue to receive the dividend of their strong health response to COVID-19 for many years to come: more jobs, more economic growth, lower debt, more infrastructure and better government services.

Queensland has long been called the Sunshine State. I like to think of it as the Sunrise State, because Queenslanders take each day as it comes and we back ourselves every step of the way. Every Queensland family photo album tells the story of generations who saw a brighter future and built it, and now we are backing ourselves to host the greatest event in the world: the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This one event will fire the starter's gun on the biggest infrastructure building program our state has ever seen: new roads and railway lines, bus lanes, housing and sporting facilities—all of it creating a \$17 billion economic uplift and almost 123,000 full-time jobs. The games will get projects off drawing boards faster, with the benefits and opportunities right there for the taking, right across Queensland.

We will move early to chase new dawns, to capture the opportunities of every day. This is a budget that prepares us for those new days and new opportunities ahead, and it sets Queensland up to make the most of our state's bright future. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Investment) (2.43 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.

Mr SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 177, the bill is now set down for its second reading.

ADJOURNMENT



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (2.44 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 2.44 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyce, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Camm, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gerber, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Janetzki, Katter, Kelly, King A, King S, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lister, Lui, MacMahon, Madden, Mander, McCallum, McDonald, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Perrett, Pitt, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Skelton, Smith, Stevens, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Watts, Weir, Whiting