

## FRIDAY, 16 JULY 2021

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### ESTIMATES—ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE—QUEENSLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

#### Estimate Committee Members

Mr LP Power (Chair)  
Mr RA Stevens  
Mr MJ Crandon  
Mr CG Whiting  
Mr DG Purdie  
Mr A Tantari  
Mr DJ Brown

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#### Members in Attendance

Mr JP Bleijie  
Mr MC Berkman  
Mr DF Crisafulli  
Ms FS Simpson  
Dr A MacMahon  
Mr RI Katter  
Mr DC Janetzki  
Mr SSJ Andrew  
Mr TL Mander  
Mr ST O'Connor

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#### In Attendance

Hon. CW Pitt, Speaker  
Mr G Hasanakos, Executive Officer  
Mr N Laurie, Clerk of the Parliament  
Mr M Ries, Deputy Clerk of the Parliament  
Mr C Atkinson, Director Corporate Services and Electorate Office Liaison  
Mr S Johnson, Director Property and Facility Services

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#### The committee met at 9.00 am



**CHAIR:** I declare this hearing of the Economics and Governance Committee open. I would like to begin today's proceedings by respectfully acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay my respects to elders past and present. We are extraordinarily fortunate to live in a country with two of the oldest continuing cultures, those of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whose lands, winds and waters we all share.

My name is Linus Power, the member for Logan and chair of the committee. With me today is Mr Ray Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach and the deputy chair. Other committee members are Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera; Mr Dan Purdie, the member for Ninderry; Mr Adrian Tantari, the member for Hervey Bay; and Mr Chris Whiting, the member for Bancroft, who is substituting this morning for Mrs Melissa McMahon, the member for Macalister. The committee has granted leave to non-committee members to attend and ask questions at the hearing today so other members may be present during the course of the proceedings. We note the member for Kawana and the member for Maiwar are already present today.

Today the committee will consider the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2021 and the Appropriation Bill 2021 and the estimates for the committee's areas of responsibilities. I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at my discretion as chair or by order of the committee. The committee has authorised its hearing to be broadcast live and televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcast of proceedings are available from the secretariat. While mobile phone use is prohibited in the public gallery, an exemption has been made for staff assisting our witnesses here today who have been permitted the use of their devices for this purpose. I do, however, ask all those present to ensure that phones and any other electronic devices are switched to silent mode if not turned off. I remind you that food and drink are not permitted in the chamber.

This year the House has determined the program for the committee's estimates hearings. The committee will examine the portfolio areas in the following order: the Queensland Legislative Assembly from 9 am to 9.45 am; Premier and Cabinet and Trade from 10 am to 1.30 pm; Treasury and Investment from 2 pm to 6 pm; and Tourism and Industry Development, Innovation and Sport from 6.30 pm to 9 pm. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2021 for the Queensland Legislative Assembly. The committee will examine the portfolio area until 9.45 am.

I remind those present today that the committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and are subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament also apply in this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings today so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members of the committee.

On behalf of the committee I welcome the Speaker, the Clerk and parliamentary officers and, of course, any members of the public who are joining us through the telecast or upstairs. For the benefit of Hansard I ask officials and advisers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the Speaker or the Clerk. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio administered by the Speaker open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Mr Speaker, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you to committee members for being here and undertaking this very important part of our parliamentary democracy. I am pleased to be here as the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting today on the land of Aboriginal people and pay my respects to elders past and present. I join the chair in saying how fortunate we are 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.

I also acknowledge that we have with us at the table today the Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie, and my executive officer, George Hasanakos, from the Office of the Speaker. Of course we have others, such as Craig and Michael, but I am sure that questions will be coming fast and furious towards the two in the centre here.

First of all, like all institutions, the parliament has had to deal with a number of challenges as it relates to COVID-19. However, while we deal with these challenges we are also focusing on where we are headed as well, not just the problems of today. The 2021-22 budget for the Parliamentary Service focuses on these challenge to ensure that MPs are able to fulfil their duties to the voters that they represent now and into the future.

The Parliamentary Annexe is a facility which is quite unique in terms of the Australian context. Unlike other states and the Commonwealth, a single building is used to provide not only facilities for the operation of parliament and offices for members, but also accommodation for all ministers and

members who reside outside the city of Brisbane. The facility, initially built in the mid to late 1970s, reflects Queensland's decentralised population and the institution of parliament really has to ensure that it is meeting the expectations and servicing all parts of Queensland. The work needed to repair the annexe is not a question of aesthetics—I think it is important to make that point very clear—it is a matter of workplace health and safety. Commencing from the 2022-23 financial year, stage 2 of the critical infrastructure and services upgrade will deliver and repair the external facade of the Parliamentary Annexe to address increasing safety risks, together with replacing carpets, soft furnishings and painting of members' offices and bedrooms from floors 9 to 23. Planning for stage 2 of the critical infrastructure program has already commenced and will continue throughout 2021-22 ahead of the commencement of work in July next year.

I thank the government for its commitment towards ensuring the facilities that parliamentarians use are fit for purpose and are safe. I also extend thanks to the opposition for its support for the refurbishment of the annexe, ensuring that this project has bipartisan support. I believe this project can deliver value for the money and extend the life of the annexe at a fraction of the cost of replacing the building. When finished the annexe will be able to continue to provide members, especially those outside of the city of Brisbane, a facility fit for their needs.

I want to turn briefly to the 2021-22 estimates for the parliament. The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill provides the funding for the salaries and allowances of members of the Legislative Assembly as well as funding for the Parliamentary Service which provides administrative and support services to the Legislative Assembly. The total appropriation sought for the parliament in 2021-22 is \$103.25 million which is an increase of \$1.5 million over the approved appropriation provided in the 2020-21 budget. The increase is due primarily to the provision of staff enterprise bargaining increases, changes to members' allowance rates approved by the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal and funding indexation for electorate office leasing increases.

Major capital works to be undertaken include the final year of a major three-year program to upgrade critical infrastructure of the Parliamentary Annexe, which is in stage 1, which includes fire and sprinkler services, air conditioning upgrades and renewing mechanical and electrical systems. Completion of this project will deliver the modern services and infrastructure necessary to support the larger refurbishment of the Parliamentary Annexe stage 2 which I have previously outlined. These works are part of the total planned 2021-22 capital expenditure for the Legislative Assembly of Queensland of \$7.9 million. Other projects included in this capital funding are the ongoing electorate office accommodation improvement program and replacement of information technology and infrastructure items. Planning will also continue for commencement of a program to upgrade and restore Parliament House's heritage perimeter fence.

In closing this opening statement, I would like to say that I am very pleased and honoured to appear before this committee today. As many members would know, I have a particular penchant for the estimates process no matter what role it is that I have undertaken, either asking the questions or answering them. It is a very important part of our parliamentary democracy and it is important that scrutiny is applied, particularly as it relates to appropriation. Thank you very much.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Deputy Chair, do you have any questions?

**Mr STEVENS:** Thank you, Chair. I will defer to the member for Kawana.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, Mr Clerk and officers, thank you very much for coming today—not that you had a choice, but thank you. In terms of the building upgrades, you will note that in this estimates last year I spoke about the workplace health and safety of not only the members but also the over-200 parliamentary staff who work at Parliament House and in the Annexe, the visitors and the school kids. When I made those comments and asked about the building upgrades that were necessary, we then had concrete falling off the sides of the building so I am very thankful that the government has now funded the upgrades to the Annexe for workplace health and safety reasons. Can you advise, Mr Speaker, whether the money that is going to be expended on the upgrades will include things for the parliamentary staff? Walking through a lot of the parliamentary staff offices, you see that some offices are not fit for purpose, especially considering that a lot of our public servants are operating in a 2021 building at 1 William Street. Can you advise whether it will include that? Also for the media, particularly the TV area, will the upgrades fix those rooms as well as provide functioning office space for the parliamentary staff?

**Mr SPEAKER:** In broad terms, I think it is important to note that, as I said earlier, this is a necessary series of upgrades particularly related to workplace and safety, which includes for all members of the Parliamentary Service. I think it is important also to note that, when we are looking at the primary purpose of these upgrades, we are looking at floors 9 to 23. However, as you can

appreciate—and I will defer to the Clerk to go into some more detail—there will be a period of dislocation and that includes staff. Of course, it also means that we will have to consider what works will need to be happening at particular stages as to how that dislocation affects either members or staff. Through that process we are trying to take a very proactive approach to ensure that not only do we deal with the works themselves and sequencing those works but also we make sure that we think about when the works will be finished what will be occurring. By that I mean looking at the permanent relocation of some staff and trying to look at other opportunities, including how we manage our committee rooms and the like. I will defer to the Clerk, Neil Laurie, to answer the remainder of the question.

In broad terms, member for Kawana, absolutely when it comes to people who work on this precinct—whether they be staff, members of parliament or members of the media—all deserve an opportunity to have good arrangements in place. I can say most certainly from the print media's perspective that we have upgraded facilities as I have outlined at previous estimates hearings. When it comes to those in the electronic media, we will be continuing those conversations. I will defer to the Clerk to respond.

**Mr Laurie:** Mr Bleijie, the primary focus in Mr Speaker's answer before was obviously on the Parliamentary Annexe upgrade, which will essentially occur in the year 2022-23 and is what we have been calling stage 2. There are two other stages that we are internally calling stage 1A and stage 1B. Stage 1A is essentially the planning component for the upgrade that will occur next financial year. That is essentially making sure that the procurement process is in place. It gives us a good year to make sure that all of those designs and procurement are in place so that when we start in the next financial year we can get moving straightaway.

Stage 1B is about planning for the dislocation of members from the tower for what will be approximately a year. That involves some of those components that you were talking about with staff relocations as well. At this point in time, our plan is to essentially reduce the physical holdings of some of the Library material at the moment on level 6. We are going to be relocating pretty well most of the staff—almost all of the staff—who are currently located on level 3, and some staff on level 5, will be relocated to level 6 over the course of the next year. When that relocation takes place there will also be a refurbishment so that they will have more modern meeting and desk facilities. It will be a much nicer atmosphere that they will be working in. Level 3 will then essentially be vacant as will some offices on level 5, which we will use to give members office accommodation during the relocation of members out of the tower during the refurbishment in 2022-23.

After the refurbishment of the tower is completed and after members relocate from level 3, our longer term plan is to build purpose-built committee rooms on level 3 that are a little larger and probably provide more amenity than the ones currently on level 6. They will have better public access because they will be on the bottom level of the Annexe. That is what we have in our longer term plan. Stage 3 or stage 4 is to have our meeting facilities for committees predominantly on level 3. In terms of your question about the amenity to staff, yes, during this current financial year there will be relocations of staff and prior to those relocations there will be refurbishments of areas so that they will be moving into better digs than they are in at the moment.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, I made statements last year about the workplace health and safety issues with the building falling down, the moth infestation, water tanks exploding, air conditioners catching on fire and those sorts of things. Thank you for your assistance in getting the money for that upgrade. When I made those comments, the Treasurer made some negative remarks about the expenditure in relation to a speech I made in parliament about this. Was it your great negotiating skills, Mr Speaker, that got us the money or was the Treasurer rolled in the CBRC meeting?

**Mr SPEAKER:** I do not believe the question is particularly helpful for anyone at this point. I would say that there is a very clear decision from government to provide support for this refurbishment. That in itself should be taken at face value, that is, there is a recognition that there are genuine safety issues on the precinct. We cannot talk about a building that was completed in the late 1970s, really looking at half building life, without managing those issues so I congratulate the government for making that decision. I think also, as is always the case, people must be armed with all of the information in order to understand the comments that they are making. I think the Treasurer was responding to statements made without necessarily at that time being armed with all of the information. I believe the Treasurer is absolutely armed with that information and has supported this endeavour.

I think it is very important to continue in the spirit that we have on this. This is a workplace. It is one that must be a safe environment for all concerned. As we have already canvassed, that includes opportunities for people to conduct their regular parliamentary business here, whether they be members of parliament, staff or members of the media. Another very important thing, and as a regional member

of parliament I can say this with a great deal of experience, is that in our unique situation the Parliamentary Annexe provides an enormously great benefit, particularly to regional and rural members of parliament. It is one that is not afforded to any other parliament in either a state or territory jurisdiction or the Commonwealth. Therefore, these matters, as I see them, are very important matters. They are very serious matters and, as I say, they should be welcomed in terms of the investment and we should be continuing along the path of having very strong bipartisan support for this, to the exclusion of none.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Clerk, the telephone system that was rolled out last year was a spectacular fail, which you have acknowledged publicly.

**Mr WHITING:** Point of order, Mr Chair. I hate to be the first one to bring up a point of order but we have heard some long preambles—

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It is a fact. This is the start of them wasting time.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It is a fact.

**Mr WHITING:** I have listened to your preambles. You want to talk about wasting time?

**CHAIR:** We will slow down here. The member for Bancroft has asked for a point of order. Member for Kawana, in the last two questions I have allowed extensive commentary. The member for Bancroft will put the point of order and we will have due decorum on this process of estimates where if points of order are put, they will be heard, and I do not wish to see any interjection.

**Mr WHITING:** My point of order was that that question so far contains an inference and is also argumentative. Perhaps the member for Kawana may want to recast his question.

**CHAIR:** It did seem to be leading this way. I urge the member for Kawana to as much as possible address firstly the expenditure in the budget before us and also to minimise those things as much as possible.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Clerk, last year a telephone system was rolled out which has cost the Queensland taxpayer lots of money, as is recorded in this budget, leading many Labor MPs to demand that the telephone system be rolled back to the old system. Mr Clerk, can you advise the committee how the department has gone with recouping some of the lost funds or expenditure from Microsoft?

**Mr Laurie:** I can probably authenticate that the system was not a good system for our purposes, so we need not—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Mr Clerk, can I just say that the use of the term 'fail' in this particular incidence is warranted. I think it is worth getting on the record that it was not a good process and in this particular instance I think that the use of the term 'fail' is correct.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, but as much as possible we want to keep the language as the member for Kawana did in his second iteration and leave those comments rightfully to the witnesses before us and, in this case, the very frank comments by the Speaker.

**Mr Laurie:** The Microsoft Teams telephony product may have been at the time a very good product for what we call soft phones where you are using essentially computers to use your telephone system. But the requirements of electorate offices in particular was that they be able to use a traditional hard phone and also all the associated things that go with those sorts of phones, and not unreasonable things, like call waiting, for example. The Microsoft Teams system was not fit for purpose because there was a problem somewhere between their soft phone system and the hard phones. We used one of their suppliers and we used their recommended phone systems as well; we followed all of Microsoft's guidance in that respect.

We were able to recoup the costs for much of the hardware through the third party provider, Datacom. My experience with Datacom was that they responded very well and they assisted us a lot in recouping much of the costs associated with the hardware.

We did not recoup anything from Microsoft. I had a full and frank discussion with executives of Microsoft here in Queensland. We provided data to Microsoft about some of the failures of their system and why we had to roll back that system. We have been unsuccessful in getting any sort of recoupment from Microsoft as a result of their product.

Microsoft was very slow in giving support when we were having the difficulties. We extended the system for quite a while to try and apply fixes that they were giving us. That support was very slow at the beginning. They then offered a lot more support when we were going to withdraw, but by that time

all faith in the system had been lost, so we withdrew the product. Once we withdrew the product, I got the impression that Microsoft did not want to hear from us anymore. I have had meetings with Microsoft. I have sent them material. I am still waiting for an answer.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Clerk, with respect to committee meetings, I have had a look through committee reports tabled in parliament and I see there are not many minutes of meetings that are tabled. Could you give the committee your understanding in terms of other jurisdictions? Is it best practice for other jurisdictions in the Westminster system to regularly table minutes of meetings? We are about to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the new committee system of which the Speaker has organised a panel forum, and one of the reasons we set up that system was the openness and transparency of getting as much information out there. However, I see now there is a tendency for committees not to have as many open meetings but also not tabling in parliament their minutes of the meetings.

**Mr Laurie:** Standing orders at this point in time only requires, I believe, one committee to table their minutes and that is the Ethics Committee. It is stated in the standing orders. There was a practice pre the portfolio committee system for some committees, I believe—and I will stand to be corrected here—I believe it was the Public Works Committee and the Public Accounts Committee which used to regularly table minutes of their meetings on their inquiries. Of course, the Estimates Committee used to table their minutes as well. There was never a practice in Queensland for the other functional committees to table their minutes and that carried on into the vast majority of portfolio committees. There is no requirement in standing orders for portfolio committees to table their minutes and there is no practice for them to do so.

In terms of other jurisdictions, I would say that a mixed bag of that occurs and that there are some jurisdictions where minutes are regularly tabled and there are some jurisdictions where they are not.

**CHAIR:** I want to clarify that. Was that the same requirement and practice during the period from 2012 through 2015 where committees would not regularly publish their—

**Mr Laurie:** Yes. Nothing has changed.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** We had our meetings in—

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, do you have a question?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** No, I am referring to your interjection. We had open meetings, Mr Chair, so that the public could see everything that was happening. The minutes were there because the public could see it. Have a look at the stats now. Everything is behind closed doors.

**Mr WHITING:** Have you got the right state?

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, you know that that was grossly out of order. We had started so well this morning. I counsel you. You may have thought that your time had finished, but we have a brief time left. Do you have any questions?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, with respect to an answer to question on notice No. 19, with respect to complaints made by members in terms of misleading and the process where a member makes an allegation that a member has misled, it goes to you for decision, whether you refer it to the Ethics Committee or not. There were 32 complaints in the last year—19 from Labor MPs and 13 from LNP MPs. Two out of the 32 you referred to the Ethics Committee. I have noted in your last couple of statements not referring matters you have talked about frivolous complaints. Thirty-two in one year seems a fair amount when only two were referred to the Ethics Committee—

**CHAIR:** There is a lot of commentary here. Is there a question to be put?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, what processes or advice are you putting in place or to members to limit the amount of frivolous and vexatious complaints from members under the standing orders and misleading the House?

**Mr SPEAKER:** As a father of three children, behavioural change is difficult. It is very important to note that when we have matters raised in the House, whether or not they be the statements that are actually made, ultimately we have people who have a difference of opinion. Frankly, one of the most difficult parts of my job as Speaker is to rule not only fairly but also consistently across the complaints that are made. Many things will be said in the House as it relates to the cut and thrust of our democracy, and some of those things are more of a personal nature than they are sometimes related to factual statements being made, so I take a dim view of anything that I see to be particularly frivolous. I stand on the statements that I have made in the House. I believe I have given very clear instruction to members as to how they should be approaching this.

Those complaints are not limited to misleading the House, which is the most common complaint that is made. Those things can also relate to questions on notice. There has been a deterioration in both the asking and answering of those questions, which is something that I am paying particular concern to. We are very lucky that we have a parliament that has, under its standing orders, an opportunity for any member of the House to ask a question of the executive. The asking of the question must be done through the proper process. Equally, it must be answered properly with the seriousness that it deserves.

In relation to the question about the number of complaints and what we are doing to try to limit frivolous complaints being made, I stand by the statements I have made in the House. I have started—and members may have noticed this and I make no apology for it—making rulings out of session to deter members from having the opportunity to re-prosecute the argument or have the statements remade in the House in responding to complaints. I do not believe that the parliament is a place for grandstanding. It is a place for serious parliamentary business to be done.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I agree.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Kawana, you may take exception to that last statement. However—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I have never grandstanded in the House. I withdraw; that is misleading.

**CHAIR:** Mr Speaker, the mask is covering my smile underneath it, but really—

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am sure it is a like the Cheshire cat, Mr Chair. In all seriousness, I do not believe that frivolous complaints should be rewarded nor should any further attention be made to those which I believe probably are borderline. I do undertake procedural fairness in terms of the complaints made. In nearly every case—unless it is very obviously a frivolous complaint—I will afford the person who is the subject of the complaint the opportunity to provide a response because the time has been taken to prepare the allegation. In terms of how many have been sent to the Ethics Committee, again I make no apologies for those being very limited. I do not believe that, by and large, there are significant breaches of our standing orders. Most of it is by way of the politics being played out in the democracy.

**CHAIR:** As a member of the Ethics Committee I note that. I will withdraw all of my frivolous complaints against the member for Kawana now that he will not be grandstanding anymore.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I appreciate the opportunity to ask a question or, hopefully, two. To the Clerk first of all: these hearings effectively account for two weeks worth of activity on the precinct compared to the ordinary 12 sitting weeks and then the budget week on top of that. Can you tell the committee how much it costs parliament to hold these estimates hearings each year as a round figure or as a proportion of the parliament's total operating budget?

**Mr Laurie:** I do not have those figures at hand. They are a little difficult to calculate. It is a little bit like the cost of an additional sitting week, or anything of that nature. So many of the costs are essentially sunk costs. For example, for the two weeks of estimates there will be a cost in terms of labour for all the people who attend the chamber, set up the chamber and all the rest of it. Most of the costs are sunk in that sense. There will be additional costs for things like electricity and travel for members to come down to parliament that can be isolated, but the vast majority of costs are sunk costs.

We have done that exercise from time to time for extra sitting weeks and things of that nature. It is very difficult to extract the exact cost of an extra sitting week or a couple of weeks of sitting and to come up with what it actually costs because so much of that is sunk costs. If this were not occurring that cost would be accruing in the main anyway. There would be components of overtime and members' travel and allowances that would be expended because we have estimates, but the overall proportion of costs would be sunk costs.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Obviously that does not account for the departmental costs in preparing for estimates?

**Mr Laurie:** No, it does not account for the departmental costs. One of the things I like to emphasise continually is that it is very wrong, I think, to judge the value of the estimates process by the hearings. That might seem an odd statement to make, but, in my opinion—and this is now the 25th estimates hearing that I have appeared at—the value of estimates is not in the 45 minutes or one hour that the Parliamentary Service, for example, may have before the estimates committee, but it is preparing for the estimates and the self-reflection that goes on.

I know for my organisation that the value is in self-reflection. It is about reflecting upon what actually went well and what actually did not go well—what are the things that we can boast about and what are things that we are really scared people are going to ask questions about; I am not going to tell you what they are.

**CHAIR:** I am sure there is nothing, Mr Clerk.

**Mr Laurie:** I would hope that that self-reflection pervades the entire public sector. Do not judge the value of this process simply by the hearings; the value of the process is in all the preparation that goes on. Departments may moan about the preparation and the resources that go into it, but if they were not doing that then there would be, I would suggest, bigger problems.

**Mr BERKMAN:** A very brief follow-up, if I might, to Mr Speaker.

**CHAIR:** We have gone well over time for opposition members' questions.

**Mr BERKMAN:** It is a very brief question that I was hoping to ask of Mr Speaker.

**CHAIR:** Member for Maiwar you have the call.

**Mr BERKMAN:** In your opening comments you have acknowledged the importance of the process, and no-one disputes that. I am curious whether the CLA or any other parliamentary body is actively working on or has recently done any work on how the estimates process could be improved as a mechanism for accountability and scrutiny of government spending?

**Mr SPEAKER:** In terms of the estimates process per se, not particularly. I say that because I do not believe the process is fundamentally broken. I believe that it is a very beneficial process. As always, it is a process that works best when all members who are participating take it seriously and ask important questions. I go back to the point I made that it is not about the politics. It is not about the theatre. It is about scrutiny. In my experience from answering questions and asking questions, the best outcomes of an estimates process always happen as result of that.

I believe that it also comes down to respect. I do not infer anything on this chair, but all chairs of the committees have to ensure that the process is done in a fair way. That is what I have experienced in terms of my hearings. As you can see there is a demonstration here that non-government members of this committee are being afforded more time to ask questions, such as the one you are asking now. I fundamentally believe that the process is a good process.

Everything can always be improved. Sometimes that is about additional time. Sometimes it is about the process and how the time is adjudicated. Ultimately, it is very important. Without the estimates process Queensland would be the poorer—recognising that this process did not always exist in Queensland. We undertake it each and every year not only for its primary purpose of looking at appropriations and scrutinising appropriations but also all of the things that come out of the appropriation process—all of the things that are funded—and making sure that at all times we are striving to get the best value for the public money that is expended.

**CHAIR:** Reflecting on what Mr Clerk said, we thank all of the public servants, whether within the Parliamentary Service or in the broader departments, who do all of the hard work in thinking about how they are accountable to the public for all the areas of expenditure within the Parliamentary Service or any other departments. A lot of hard work goes into that. Asking the question about how they are accountable is very valuable for the running of government in Queensland. I apologise to government members for running a little over time. I believe the member for Hervey Bay has a question.

**Mr TANTARI:** My question is to Mr Speaker. I refer to the SDS and particularly page 1 which identifies a Parliamentary Service objective being to promote and strengthen the institution of parliament. I am aware that during your term as Speaker the parliament has introduced a number of initiatives to encourage greater public access to the parliament's catering facilities. Could you advise on this initiative and its broader purpose?

**Mr SPEAKER:** I thank the member for his question. I have always been one to not want to overuse the phrase that this is the people's house, but ultimately that is exactly what it is. It is not a private members' club. It is a place where all members of the public should have an opportunity to engage in an appropriate way. I have always been of the view that we should have as open a parliament as possible. That has extended through the fact that we have a whole range of things that are quite unique to this place. Those include the heritage listed parts of the old parliament building that we are currently undertaking this hearing in—the former Legislative Council chamber—and the Strangers' Dining Room.

When you look around the landscape of Brisbane there are other venues which provide similar types of decor, but there is something very special about coming here as a member of the public to undertake a meal or business. From that point of view, we are very proud that we have been able to improve access to the public.

To put the operations that we have at parliament into some context, in any given year there are normally more than 40,000 guests who attend onsite functions across various parts of the parliamentary precinct. Prior to 2018 the focus of these events have been functions and events hosted by MPs. Those, of course, do continue. We have been working on not only making it more open but also ensuring that we are able to play our part when it comes to the expenditure of public money to look at creating own-source revenue from within the Parliamentary Service itself. We have a great product; that is probably the most important point I can make. It is a unique and wonderful product that we have here.

We have expanded our strategy in terms of public access to the catering experiences that we do offer. Those have included: onsite cooking classes run by in-house chefs; chef's table dining experiences; increasing the offering of high teas that are held in the Strangers' Dining Room; and various special day events such as Mother's Day, Melbourne Cup and the like. Venues for those special events are in demand, but if the parliament is seen as being a more accessible venue then we know that there will be a much greater appetite for people—pardon the pun—to come to the parliament to undertake their events here.

It has been particularly interesting to look at our Strangers' Dining Room and its accessibility to people for lunches and dinners—our 'sometimes strangers' concept. The term 'stranger' is not necessarily the most appealing, and I will talk a little bit about whether we need to shift our marketing around that. We have recognised that parliament plays a very important role, and having people being able to come through is important. We have also escalated our engagement with stakeholders in terms of having showcase events such as the client roadshow, which we held in 2019 for more than 150 people. It had a direct and reasonable impact on the forward bookings we were getting as well.

Unfortunately, like everyone we have had to deal with a number of limitations relating to COVID-19, but that does not change the overall approach we are taking. We believe that we have done great things in terms of having very, very good offerings not only to members internally but also to the public. I have to say that, whilst some may have seen it as an exercise in vanity, we have expanded our range of gift offerings to include Speaker's Gin. Anyone who has had a drop knows that it is a good drop. It has won a silver medal and it sold out last term.

**Mr STEVENS:** It is a Queensland gin.

**Mr SPEAKER:** It is a Queensland gin. It is produced by Kalki Moon in Bundaberg. I know there are plenty of members from that part of the world who are very excited. What it comes down to is trying to modernise or contemporise the parliament. That includes our offerings internally as well as externally. I am very pleased to say that the feedback has been extraordinarily positive. We will continue to do more of that to allow parliament to be accessible to as many people as possible.

**Mr WHITING:** We have spoken briefly about the upgrade of critical building infrastructure in relation to the Parliamentary Annexe. Mr Speaker, can you outline any planned works to improve the outdoor areas within the parliamentary precinct?

**Mr SPEAKER:** As part of the precinct maintenance strategy we have put in place, we have identified a number of outdoor areas in the precinct that do need to have further works done. First, as I have previously mentioned, is the refurbishment and strengthening of the perimeter stone fence. The replacement or repair of a fence in any other part of Brisbane would be a fairly easy thing to do, but given that it is heritage listed we have had to go through a number of exercises to ensure we meet heritage standards, that it is the appropriate size and that it is fulfilling its purpose as a perimeter.

All of that being said, we have had 18 months of design works and negotiation with the Heritage Council. Approval has been granted for minor design changes. When it comes down to the overall cost, we will continue to discuss those with government because some of the potential variations around cost will be related more to the scale of works and the heritage elements than the initial suggestion of cost. I will leave my remarks there. I am cognisant of the time, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I note there are no issues that you need to respond to or any information that you need to provide, as you dealt with all of the issues contemporaneously. Do you wish to comment on staff and the general process?

**Mr SPEAKER:** As always, with the indulgence of the chair I would like to thank the committee for having us before you today and giving us the opportunity to respond to the questions asked. I do want to thank and totally endorse the comments made by the Clerk, Neil Laurie. The preparation of this information is a very, very important exercise that we undertake. I know that, as a former minister, the work that the departments do is critical as well. It is very important to have that self-examination prior to being examined publicly, and that is a very useful exercise. In that vein, I would like to thank all of

the members of parliamentary staff who put together information for this hearing: I thank Stewart, I thank Craig, I thank the Deputy Clerk, Michael Ries, and George Hasanakos for their information and support.

I particularly want to wish all of the committees well through the estimates process. As I said, I see this as a very important part of our parliamentary democracy, so I hope that people will be kind and that they will ask important questions. I do hope that people will value the support and effort provided by Hansard and all of the committee secretariats over the period that will be estimates in 2021.

**CHAIR:** On behalf of the committee, especially the deputy chair, I would like to extend our thanks to the parliamentary officers. We know what an important job you do. It has been quite demanding this morning. I thank all those for the accommodations that have been made to ensure this process works well and very safely. Thank you Mr Speaker, Mr Clerk and parliamentary officers.

We will now adjourn for a break. We will resume at 10.00 am with the examination of estimates for the portfolio area of the Premier and Minister for Trade. Given that we have only have a short time before the next session, I would ask witnesses for their indulgence in vacating the chamber quickly in order to keep to the hearing schedule determined by the House.

**Proceedings suspended from 9.48 am to 10.00 am.**

## ESTIMATES—ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE— PREMIER; TRADE

### In Attendance

Hon. A Palaszczuk, Premier and Minister for Trade

Mr J Murphy, Chief of Staff

#### **Department of the Premier and Cabinet**

Ms R Hunter, Director-General

Mr M Cridland, Deputy Director-General (Policy)

#### **Integrity Commissioner**

Dr N Stepanov

#### **Trade and Investment Queensland**

Mr P Martyn, Chief Executive Officer

#### **Queensland Audit Office**

Mr Worrall, Auditor-General

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 **CHAIR:** Good morning. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2021 for the portfolio areas of the Premier and Minister for Trade. My name is Linus Power, the member for Logan and chair of the committee. With me is Ray Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach and deputy chair. The other committee members are: Mr Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera; Mr Dan Purdie, the member for Ninderry; Mr Adrian Tantari, the member for Hervey Bay; and Mr Chris Whiting, the member for Bancroft, who is substituting this morning for Mrs Melissa McMahon, the member for Macalister. The visiting members present are: Mr David Crisafulli, Leader of the Opposition and the member for Broadwater; Dr Amy MacMahon, the member for South Brisbane; and Ms Fiona Simpson, the member for Maroochydore.

The committee will examine the Premier's portfolio areas until 1.30 pm and will suspend proceedings during this time for a break from 11.45 until noon. I remind those present today that the hearing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament apply to this hearing. I refer especially to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion.

In respect of statutory authorities, standing order 180(2) provides that a member may ask any question that the committee determines will assist it in its examination of the relevant Appropriation Bill or otherwise assist the committee to determine whether public funds are being efficiently spent or appropriate public guarantees are being provided. I intend to guide the proceedings so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members. A reminder that officers are permitted to use their mobile phones and electronic devices but they should ensure they are switched to silent mode. Also, I remind you that food and drink are not permitted in the chamber.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the Premier, the director-general, officials and departmental officers, and members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials and advisers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the Premier or the director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of Premier and cabinet and trade open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Premier, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you, Chair and members of the committee. Queensland's strong health response to COVID-19 has meant our economic recovery is well underway. It is clear, however, that uncertain times remain ahead of us as our nation contends with a new highly infectious strain of

COVID-19. That is why throughout the course of this global pandemic I have not hesitated to accept the health advice and take the decisions needed to keep Queenslanders safe. Not only has this helped protect Queensland's way of life, it is also supporting our ongoing economic recovery.

Just yesterday we saw further evidence of this with our unemployment rate falling to 5.1 per cent—the lowest it has been in over 12 years. As part of this, 16,700 new jobs were created in the month of June, and there are now over 101,000 more jobs in Queensland than there were pre COVID. These are not just numbers. These are regular pay cheques putting food on the table and keeping roofs over our heads. This budget also shows Queensland roaring ahead, with economic growth of 3¼ per cent, double the national average. This growth, our 5.1 per cent unemployment rate and our overall COVID-19 response are achievements all Queenslanders can be proud of, so today I welcome the opportunity to detail further the 2021-22 state budget, the economic recovery plan it supports and the people it provides for.

When we last met for estimates in December, I said the past year was nothing like we were used to. Perhaps since then in some ways as a state and a nation we have become more used to dealing with COVID, but still we must be clear that the past 18 months have been like no other period in our memories. Today as we sit here our thoughts are with New South Wales and Victoria as they grapple with a new phase in the pandemic as we see the highly infectious Delta variant in Australia and also across the world.

In our state, I remain immensely proud of the way Queenslanders have responded. Not only have they followed the health advice but they have supported each other. As I have travelled around the state listening, I have seen Queenslanders backing Queenslanders—such as grey nomads supporting regional and western tourism—but, make no mistake, there is more to be done before the pandemic is over. More Queenslanders need to be vaccinated. Until then, we know how important it is to contain the virus. We have learnt the benefit of short, sharp lockdowns when necessary.

If you focus on the virus first and keeping Queenslanders safe, then the economy can recover. That is why this budget maintains the flow of additional resources to health and emergency agencies for the health response to COVID-19. Our record \$22.2 billion health budget is a 3.4 per cent increase on last year. Importantly, this record health budget is allowing for the construction of seven new satellite hospitals in high-growth areas. In an Australian first, these satellite hospitals will help take the pressure off hospital emergency departments and provide care closer to home.

Our five consecutive surpluses before the pandemic enabled Queensland to respond to COVID-19 with health funding and economic support and stimulus measures for Queenslanders when they needed it most. We have worked with and supported business to keep operating with employing workers, and we will consult with them further as they continue their vital contribution.

Now our economy is surging back. Forecast debt is falling, jobs are coming online in record numbers and we are on track to return the budget to surplus in 2024-25. Jobs are at the heart of our seventh budget. Our \$52 billion infrastructure program will support 46,500 jobs across Queensland in the current financial year alone. Most of this investment is in regional Queensland. We know backing jobs is also about preparing future workers. That is why this is a record \$18.3 billion budget for education and training. That includes skills funding to extend the jobs recovery with the Skilling Queenslanders for Work and Back to Work programs. We are ensuring that help is available now for those who need it, with over \$6 billion in concessions and rebates. This is a budget looking to the future industries for our growing state. Our \$3.34 billion Queensland Jobs Fund includes a new \$2 billion Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund to stimulate job creation and industry development.

In education, almost a billion dollars will see 10 new primary and secondary schools open in growth areas of the state by 2024. We are making the largest concentrated investment in social housing in Queensland's history, with a \$1.9 billion commitment over four years towards social housing and a \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund to help boost supply. The budget continues our investment in Queensland roads, with over \$6 billion on upgrades to the Bruce Highway from the Far North to Brisbane. This year's budget I am proud to say includes a statement on investing for women because now more than ever women are looking to government to invest in programs that address inequality, promote respect and support their economic recovery.

Funding for the environment to protect the Great Barrier Reef and the tourism jobs they rely on includes \$270 million over the next four years to limit run-off and another \$60 million for the Land Restoration Fund. As we strive to continue improving our relationship with our First Nations people, this budget also allocates \$300 million for our Path to Treaty. The budget continues funding for our highly

successful Works for Queensland and Building our Regions programs, which means working with councils for more regional infrastructure. The budget backs our frontline emergency services, including more than \$800 million to support the Fire and Emergency Services, Rural Fire Service volunteers and State Emergency Service volunteers.

Finally, as we approach the finish line, in just days we will hopefully secure the 2032 Olympics. Strategic investments to support our bid include \$189 million to deliver Gold Coast Light Rail, and of course Cross River Rail will receive \$1.5 billion this year. I look forward to making our case with the Australian Olympic Committee president, John Coates, the federal sports minister, Richard Colbeck, and of course the Lord Mayor, Adrian Schrinner.

While we are here today to consider the 2021-22 budget and the COVID economic recovery plan it supports, this budget and everything our government does is about people: making sure everyone has access to quality schools and health care; skilling our young people up for a rewarding career; supporting our senior citizens; building the roads and infrastructure our growing, vast state needs and supporting jobs; investing in police, ambos and firefighters to keep Queenslanders safe. As I said earlier, this is a Labor budget. It is a budget about people and the exciting future ahead for Queensland.

**CHAIR:** Now I turn to opposition questions. Deputy Chair?

**Mr STEVENS:** I will defer to the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** My first question is to the Auditor-General, Mr Worrall. In your report No. 16 of 2021 you found Queensland Health asset funding is failing to keep up with need, saying—

The recurrent funding allocations are insufficient to meet Queensland Health's forecast replacement and refurbishment needs. How did you arrive at that finding that Queensland Health has insufficient funding to replace and refurbish its health assets?

**Mr Worrall:** Thank you for the question. We arrived at that based on Queensland Health's own records in relation to their asset management plans, the useful life of those assets that are contained in those plans, the remaining useful life of those assets, and the maintenance and refurbishment spend on those assets.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Also, Mr Worrall—

**CHAIR:** Member for Broadwater, do you have a follow-up question?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I do. Mr Worrall, at the time of finishing that report what was the quantum of that underfunding?

**Mr Worrall:** I would have to take that on notice as to the actual quantum.

**Mr WHITING:** I raise a point of order, Mr Chair. I appreciate the role of the Auditor-General, but in relation to looking at the quantum of money needed, does that stray into asking for an opinion?

**Mr STEVENS:** I raise a point of order, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** In this case I do not think so. I do note that—

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** There are further questions, so if we could allow the flow to continue, that would be great.

**CHAIR:** Member for Broadwater, hold on. I do note that taking questions on notice is at the prerogative of the minister according to the standing orders. If it is wished that that be taken on notice we will have to note that.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Also to Mr Worrall, have you reviewed the new budget for Queensland Health and has the insufficient funding allocation—the missing money—now been allocated in the budget?

**Mr WHITING:** I raise a point of order, Mr Chair. Again, it comes back to my earlier point about framing a question that is asking for an opinion. It certainly would be outside the remit of the Queensland Audit Office to forecast future budget needs.

**CHAIR:** I will have to listen to the question again. Could the member for Broadwater ask the question again?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I will go to another question because this will be bogged down in interactions and interjections from Mr Whiting.

**CHAIR:** With respect, member for Broadwater—

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Mr Chairman, may I go to the next question?

**Mr STEVENS:** I raise a point of order, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** No, member for Broadwater. I have asked you to restate the question because I—

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Mr Chairman, I am moving to the next question if that is okay.

**CHAIR:** It is very unusual, member for Broadwater, if you wish to put a question and not have an answer. This is a highly irregular process.

**Mr STEVENS:** I have a point of order, Mr Chair. There is a very—

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** You are running down the clock, as you did last year, because accountability and transparency do not matter to this government. May I put a question and could it please be answered?

**Mr WHITING:** I am not even going to take a point of order for that. I am just going to ask you to keep on track.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Member for Broadwater, I find those comments deeply, deeply offensive. I simply did not hear the question and I wish to allow the decency of an answer to the question. I find it offensive that you would question my chairing. I have not disallowed any of your questions. I find that quite offensive.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Mr Chairman, may I ask a subsequent question?

**CHAIR:** The Speaker spoke to us before and asked us to do this with kindness. It is not in the standing orders, but I think there needs to be some decency about this process. I simply ask you to restate the question. Member for Broadwater, do you have a question?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I do, Mr Chairman. Mr Worrall, your report considered a recommendation from an expert panel's advice about Queensland Health's governance framework. They recommended the minister provide leadership to Queensland Health and the HHSs by providing a statement of expectations to each board chair. Your review did not find this had occurred. Mr Worrall, has the leadership failure led to the current crisis in Queensland Health?

**CHAIR:** I do note that the question may actually be characterising the report in ways that the Auditor-General may or may not agree with. These preambles are quite long. That being said, Auditor-General, I ask you to try to address the question. I do counsel the member for Broadwater to take some care with the framing of the questions.

**Mr Worrall:** The governance arrangements of Queensland Health are quite complex. You have a department and 16 HHSs. Each has a statutory body board in relation to those HHSs. A lot of the employees are actually employed by Queensland Health and not by the HHSs. I think in terms of governance that does create complexities where you have a central department with some responsibilities and independent statutory bodies with responsibilities in delivering. For them to be effective, they really need to work together within those arrangements.

**CHAIR:** Member for Broadwater, I counsel you regarding your questions that you are straying into making a speech rather than getting directly to the question. Also given the answer of the Auditor-General, your characterisation was not reflected in the Auditor-General's answer. I do ask you to take care and to follow the standing orders.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I have a final question, Mr Worrall. You found Queensland Health does not have a clear definition of a 'sustainable health system'.

**CHAIR:** Member for Broadwater, you are definitely straying away from the instructions that I gave you.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** It is a direct quote, Mr Chairman.

**CHAIR:** With respect, member for Broadwater, you had not yet put a quote. You are characterising something and this has a lengthy preamble, which is outside the standing orders.

**Mr STEVENS:** I raise a point of order, Chair. There is no lengthy preamble to this question. I am reading here, and there are about 12 or 13 words that the leader has offered before he was cut off and prevented from finishing his sentence on the matter. Please let the questioning process flow.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, member for Mermaid Beach. I will do so as much as possible within the standing orders. I do, though, counsel you, given that we have just counselled you on this issue, to take that into account.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Mr Worrall, should Queensland Health develop a clear view about what a 'sustainable health system' looks like?

**CHAIR:** Auditor-General, is there an answer you can give to that?

**Mr Worrall:** I am happy to answer that. That is consistent with what I stated in our report on sustainable health services that there was no agreed common view of what a 'sustainable health service' is and how the local priorities throughout those HHSs complement each other within a sustainable framework. So yes.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much. Are there any further questions?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Yes, Mr Chairman.

**CHAIR:** Are you finished with the Auditor-General at this stage?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I have a question for the Premier. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Certainly.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Premier, the Auditor-General has revealed Queensland Health has a lack of planning, a lack of data collection and a lack of leadership. Premier, who is responsible for this?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I have been listening to some of the line of questioning of the Auditor-General and I think we need a reminder that the HHSs were actually set up under the Newman government of which the member for Broadwater was actually a member. If there is any criticism of the way in which the boards have been established in this state I would be a little bit wary of your—

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** That is drawing a long bow.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You have been making some comments about that.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Okay. You might want to answer about the current crisis.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Let me say—

**CHAIR:** Hold on, Premier. Member for Broadwater, you have been a member of the parliament in this place far longer than I have been.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Just wind down the clock. We have seen it before.

**CHAIR:** Sorry, member for Broadwater?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** The Premier is answering the question and rather than wasting time on your interjections over the Premier now, can we allow the Premier to speak? Is that possible? Will we continue to waste time so that the Premier cannot be quizzed and grilled in the only opportunity the opposition has to keep the Premier accountable? Can we please ask questions without your time wasting? Please?

**CHAIR:** Member for Broadwater—

**Mr WHITING:** That is reflecting on the chair.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Here we go: more time taken up.

**CHAIR:** Member for Broadwater, this behaviour is quite extraordinary. It is quite outside the standing orders. I simply ask that you not interject and allow the Premier to answer the questions. This is totally disrespectful of our estimates process of which you are a guest, member for Broadwater. I call the Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you very much, Mr Chair. I add, too, that each year our government has been increasing steadily the budget towards health. We know how important health is to Queenslanders right across the state—a record \$22 billion. Part of that goes towards health infrastructure. We know that over the next three to four years, from memory, around an extra 1,000 beds will be created. We also have the satellite hospitals. We will also be seeing the upgrades completed in Logan, Caboolture and Ipswich. We also know up in Cairns that we have finalised that land agreement to make sure that we can do the expansion of the Cairns Hospital but, not only that, we know how important it is to make sure that we have hospital services right across the state. There is a whole list of the ones that we are doing right across regional Queensland as well, including: on the Torres Strait, out west, and the Nambour General Hospital redevelopment project to be completed this term as well. We have the Gold Coast secure mental health unit coming online. I mentioned Ipswich. We also announced that we are doing a partnership with the private sector for Springfield. We have identified land for Bundaberg. I notice the member for Hervey Bay is here. We will be putting more money into more expansion of Hervey Bay. We opened the emergency department before the member was elected. This is a big state. We have to make sure that we provide the health services.

I know the opposition also understand that we have been going through a global pandemic. I now want to publicly thank all of the staff out there who are doing an incredible job. Not only are they involved in contact tracing; they are doing all the testing. We are seeing some great numbers with testing at the moment, because we know of those minor clusters that have been happening. Then of course there is the testing. Not only that, there is vaccination. The vaccination rates have also been increasing. Before the opposition come in and talk down the health system, let me say that I know that every single worker in our hospital and health services wants to do the very best by Queensland families. That is absolutely their priority. We are looking now and doing the detailed planning about where the growth areas are—especially in the south-east of our state—about where those pressures will be in the future to identify land and about putting in place the business cases that are needed to build the new and expanded hospital services. With the satellite hospitals, we are doing the planning.

**Mr STEVENS:** I have a point of order, Mr Chair. We have more questions. If the Premier has answered that original question, can we move on to the next question?

**CHAIR:** Premier, I notice your passion for the delivery of health and things for the future, but members of the opposition say they wish to move on from this. Is there anything else that you wish to add? I do note that the answer is relevant in terms of the standing orders.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I make this point: we are such a decentralised state. The fact is that all of this detailed planning is happening; the construction is happening. I know that the Health Minister is working very proactively with the chairs and the CEOs of the health boards across this state. We do recognise that recently there have been pressures in our hospital system, but these are not unique to Queensland. The Leader of the Opposition can talk to the Premier of South Australia. They are experiencing exactly the same kinds of pressures. Victoria is experiencing the same kinds of pressures, and so is Western Australia. There is a body of work that needs to be done here about being in the midst of a global pandemic. Why now are there more presentations happening at our emergency departments following periods of either lockdown or people not going and seeing their GP during the pandemic? We have asked for that work to be done. We are doing some work ourselves to make sure that we can address those issues.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Thank you, Premier.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Premier. Committee secretary, can we pause the opposition's time and go into non-question time? I find it grossly disrespectful when the member opposite interjects on the Premier. My job as the chair is to counsel you not—this is completely within the standing orders—to go into that behaviour. It is reflecting on the role of the chair to tap your watch and to make those interjections. If you interject on the Premier, any other witnesses—or indeed if any of the other members interject on the witnesses they have asked a question of—I will enforce the standing orders. I do not wish to see any of that tapping of watches or other kind of behaviour. It is really unbecoming and not within the standing orders. Can I move the time back to opposition questions, please?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Thank you for that, Mr Chair. It has been revealed that the minister failed to show leadership to her department in the HHSs by not setting expectations to the board as recommended by a panel of governance experts. Premier, who is responsible for the lack of leadership in Queensland Health?

**Mr WHITING:** I have a point of order, Mr Chair. The member referred to a 'failure'. Can the member authenticate that? Is he referring to the Queensland Auditor's report, or is that a just a general inference?

**CHAIR:** I am having trouble counselling the member for Broadwater about these questions. It seems to be that his process is to ask questions on the borderline of being in order, but in this case it is best to just move on, because obviously the member for Broadwater is pushing the edge of the boundaries. With respect, member for Bancroft, you might be technically correct. We will put the question and I might ask the Premier to respond.

**Mr WHITING:** Thank you, Mr Chair. I just wanted to know whether or not the question referred to the Queensland Auditor's report.

**CHAIR:** That seems to be the reference.

**Mr STEVENS:** I have a point of order, Mr Chair. The member for Bancroft is asking questions when the questions are not directed to him; they are directed to the Premier. The member keeps interrupting and wasting time. He can ask those questions in government time.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, member for Mermaid Beach.

**Mr WHITING:** On a point of order, Mr Chair. If you have a go, Ray, so am I; thank you very much. I am here on this panel listening to the answers and I want to know if they refer to the SDS or can be authenticated. I do not need to hear any more comment.

**CHAIR:** I think the member for Bancroft is technically correct, member for Mermaid Beach, in that any assertions should be authenticated. We just note the atmosphere in which these questions have been answered. In this case, I will not go back and enforce that. I put the question to the Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** My advice is that the minister, as I said previously, has regular meetings with the chairs and the chief executives. I think that probably applied when Lawrence Springborg was the minister. I am quite sure he would have done exactly the same.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Premier, it has been revealed through the Auditor-General that there is no clarification on what a sustainable health system is. With ambulance ramping across the state nearly at 40 per cent, is this what a sustainable system looks like?

**CHAIR:** I do note that that made reference to the questions to the Auditor-General. I think the Premier can answer this question. Member for Broadwater, I do note that, in between questions where obviously you are within the standing orders not to make interjections, we should put our masks back on. It is important to take them off for the clarity of your question.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Sure.

**CHAIR:** Premier?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. As I said, this is not a situation unique to Queensland; I said that it is actually occurring in other states. In fact, health ministers have also been meeting about these very issues in terms of why this is happening in the midst of a pandemic. In relation to that, we have put in a \$100 million funding package to support increased capacity as well as to assist Queenslanders to access care in the most appropriate settings outside of hospital.

I might just detail a bit of the \$100 million package. There is \$19.6 million for additional beds at Ipswich Hospital in West Moreton Health and at the QEII Hospital, \$20 million for winter bed funding to open beds in areas with the most demand and \$15 million to permanently expand the Hospital in the Home Service. We have also called upon the Prime Minister to free up those beds where—from memory, currently there are just under 600 in our hospitals that are either aged care or disability packages. They really should not be in our hospitals. If you think about that, around 600 is a lot of people taking up beds. We really want to be proactive and work with the federal government on how we can exit these people from the hospital to free up more beds.

We have also committed an additional \$482.5 million in this year's budget to address the pressures in emergency patient flow, elective surgery and specialist outpatient waitlists and to support the opening of the Nambour General Hospital redevelopment. We are also delivering an extra 60 paramedics on top of our commitment of 475 paramedics over the next four years, taking the total to 535, and investing \$25 million for the urgent expansion of acute beds.

**CHAIR:** With reference to pages 4 to 13 of the Service Delivery Statements, has the COVID health response kept Queensland safe and, almost as importantly, kept our economy moving?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I might just give a little bit more detail about what I was speaking about earlier. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have absolutely prioritised keeping Queenslanders safe, which means of course the economy can actually open up faster. Like I said earlier, we were initially thinking that our unemployment rate was going to be heading towards seven per cent but it has actually come right down to 5.1 per cent. This is absolutely phenomenal considering what we have been through over the past 18 months.

Our budget is very much focused on our economic recovery plan. The next stage, I believe, is to make sure that every Queenslanders is offered that opportunity to get the vaccine. That is going to be absolutely critical. Of course, that does depend upon the supply coming from the federal government. We have done some projections. The federal government is saying that the large batch of that supply is going to be due in the last quarter of this year. The Prime Minister made an initial statement about people getting their first doses in October. That will probably be pushed through to December. It is really vital that, when that supply comes, we encourage people to get that vaccine.

As we know, what we are seeing now is something we have not seen before with this mutation of the COVID strain—this Delta variant, which is even more infectious. If we remember the UK strain, which is now called the Alpha strain, back then we thought that was more contagious. With the Delta variant—we are seeing the impacts in Sydney and now in Melbourne—if it gets away from you, it can cause longer periods of lockdown.

We want to make sure that people also continue to use our Check In Qld app. I have some interesting statistics here that I thought I might share with the committee. Since going live in February, more than 129,556 businesses have signed up to the app, with more than 1.3 million check-ins across the state. I take this opportunity to thank all of the businesses that have been doing that. Everywhere I have gone I have seen—I am quite sure the opposition has seen it, too—people using that, which is fantastic. That is one of the best methods our contact tracers can use, if there is an outbreak, to contact people quickly and get them into isolation. It has been fantastic.

I also mention that the data is deleted after 56 days. I think that is good for people to know because I think there were some concerns about that. While penalties can apply for failing to meet the requirements around using the app, we are trying to work with people to try to enhance compliance. I think those two methods—getting people vaccinated and using the check-in app—are important. In fact, our Check In Qld app is the No. 1 free app on the Apple App Store across Australia this week. There you go: Queenslanders are doing the right thing.

**CHAIR:** It is reflective of the times, isn't it, that that is the top app? We look forward to a time when more frivolous apps are No. 1.

**Mr WHITING:** Premier, as indicated on page 1 of the SDS, which references the government's objective of supporting jobs, can you outline how the key initiatives in the government's economic recovery plan are creating jobs to support Queensland's economic recovery?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As we said earlier, there is great jobs growth data for Queensland. The Treasurer and I had a meeting about that this morning—talking about how much our jobs market has bounced back, considering everyone thought it was going to be going in a different direction. Our strong health response does lead to a strong economic response. Of course, we have a lot of projects happening across Queensland—a lot of infrastructure, whether it is in North Queensland with upgrades to bridges—as well as new businesses and new opportunities.

Recently we took the cabinet to the Rheinmetall facilities at Redbank. The opportunities there are great, linking in with the schools. We are trying to make sure we look at the regions and the opportunities for those particular regions and match up the industry working with the local schools on the skill sets needed, whether it is TAFE or apprentices, to make sure they can thrive in their environment. A lot of work has been happening in that and also to support the whole supply chain.

There is more than \$14.2 billion under our economic recovery plan to support Queenslanders, drive the economy and create jobs. As I said, we have created 354,000 extra jobs in Queensland since January 2015, with 16,700 of those being created in June this year alone. These are incredible statistics.

Our state final demand growth is double the rest of Australia. Our population growth is outpacing all other states and territories. You cannot blame people for wanting to move here. There are such beautiful parts of Queensland. You cannot blame people for wanting to move here. That is also good for trade and investment. People want to invest here because they are less likely to fear a workforce being shut down if the health response is working well.

I mention the \$2 billion Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund. We have to look to the future. We have to look at where Queensland can go in the future. Part of that is making sure we seize opportunities, and one opportunity is the development of hydrogen. We are seeing investments happening here for that. Of course, with renewable energy, with Queensland having such a strong energy mix of coal, gas and renewables, we have it all. That sets up the state for the future, especially with our 50 per cent renewable energy plan by 2030.

**Mr TANTARI:** Premier, with reference to page 1 of the SDS and the government's objectives for the community, can you outline the investment in bushfire and disaster preparedness?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Hervey Bay for that question. We have some good news today in relation to the large aerial tanker. People would remember that that aerial tanker was secured for the last bushfire season. The member for Hervey Bay knows the impact that fire had on K'gari island. In relation to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, I am happy to report that the Queensland government response has been completed and I can table that report. One of the recommendations of the royal commission was for a national aerial firefighting fleet. Initially, the federal government did not want to commit to that. We were very happy to see a shift later on. We went out and we contracted our own large aerial tanker, a Bombardier Dash 8 Q400AT, to be in Queensland for our bushfire season. That was a \$15 million commitment over five years. That LAT is such an important tool when it comes to fighting bushfires in Queensland.

As the member for Hervey Bay knows, it dropped more than 300,000 litres of suppressant during the K'gari bushfires alone. The LAT was used a number of times with great effect during the last bushfire season. I am able to announce today that the LAT will not only return to Queensland this bushfire season, but that we have entered into a co-sharing arrangement with Victoria so that the LAT will remain onshore in Australia all year round. This was great news. I met with the Minister for Emergency Services. He was very excited to tell me that this agreement had been reached. That means if there is an issue in Queensland it can return to Queensland and, likewise, from Queensland it can go down to Victoria. It is a co-share arrangement. It is a fantastic agreement and we are very happy to secure that for Queenslanders' safety.

**CHAIR:** The Premier sought to seek leave to table this document. Leave is granted. Member for Bancroft, did you have a question?

**Mr WHITING:** Premier, with reference once again to page 1 of the SDS and the government's objective of investing in skills and also bearing in mind the importance of sport in our society and the economy, can you tell us what the government is doing to support our athletes of the future?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** In relation to developing the skills of our future athletes, we have seen Ash Barty do such a tremendous job of taking out the women's Wimbledon and we want to make sure that we are giving all of our athletes the best opportunity so today I am proud to announce to the committee that my government will invest more than \$29 million over the next two years to establish a transformational, high-performance strategy at the Queensland Academy of Sport. It will ensure that potential medal winning athletes are systemically identified and supported with the right expertise to win on the world stage.

Today's announcement is not just about winning medals, it is about growing our sport industry. Each year this sector delivers \$5 billion for our economy and supports around 67,000 Queensland jobs. We are building our sport industry as an important part of our COVID-19 economic recovery plan. In order to grow this sector for the future, it is important that we support our athletes to reach their full potential. There has been a long history of producing some of Australia's greatest athletes, such as Leisel Jones, Susie O'Neill, Anna Meares, Mark Knowles and Sally Pearson.

The Queensland Academy of Sport is integral to supporting athletes to achieve their best. We know that they make considerable sacrifices to hopefully get to represent our state and our country. Today I can also confirm that our government will deliver \$3,000 grants to all eligible Queensland Olympic Games athletes in recognition of their efforts as they are embarking on their journey to compete at Tokyo. By backing the Queensland Academy of Sport we are investing in the future of thousands of Queensland athletes and we wish them all the very best. This is about endeavouring to set us up for the future.

**CHAIR:** With reference to pages 4 to 13 of the Service Delivery Statements, what benefits can we expect within Queensland as a whole and in South-East Queensland if we are to be awarded the 2032 Olympic Games?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** This is very exciting. Next Wednesday in Tokyo will be the final presentation to the International Olympic Committee. My understanding is that the presentation goes for between 60 and 80 minutes. It is my understanding that we will actually find out that night whether or not Brisbane Queensland will be awarded the 2032 Olympics. This is something that I never thought was possible in my lifetime. When you bump into people on the street they cannot believe that this could possibly happen. I honestly believe that it goes back to when we delivered a world-class Commonwealth Games and the eyes of the world were focused on what we could do here.

The member for Mermaid Beach will know how successful that was down on the Gold Coast. There is no bigger world event than the Olympics. It will transform this state and this city. It will firmly make Brisbane an Olympic city and it means decades of investment for Queensland. Fingers crossed the time is ours. There is one final pitch to convince the entire International Olympic Committee that they should go for us. I thank John Coates. He has been a driving force for this. The future host commission was very pleased to recommend us to the International Olympic Committee, but it is that final pitch to the whole International Olympic Committee that will finally determine whether or not we are given the go-ahead. Very exciting times,

**CHAIR:** Indeed they are. When I asked my question I should have taken my mask off to make sure that there was clarity for people at home. That was remiss of me. I encourage people to use that clarity to take their mask off.

**Mr TANTARI:** My question is to the Premier. Noting page 1 of the SDS in which you have a number of great objectives for the community—and I referred to one earlier and I would like to refer to one again now—can the Premier outline investment in frontline staff and how that investment assists our health recovery as well as delivering critical services?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Hervey Bay. He knows how important health is, especially in his community. The emergency department in Hervey Bay is amazing. It is state-of-the-art and there is room for expansion. I remember getting the tour and they showed us upstairs where there is the possibility of expansion in the future.

Our frontline workers do an outstanding job supporting our communities each and every day. We know the tireless efforts of our doctors, nurses, paramedics and health professionals—they have done an incredible job—as well as our police who have managed our borders and our quarantine. I forgot to add earlier that the amount of resources going into hotel quarantine to protect Queensland is phenomenal from all the different people who work there. Our frontline workers have dealt with all the challenges COVID-19 has presented and they are absolutely world class.

Our government recognises the need to support the workforce and not cut it. Therefore, in the 12 months to March 2021, we employed an additional 1,069 nurses, 806 corrective officers, 392 doctors, 339 teachers, 142 health practitioners, 125 police, 101 ambulance officers and 70 firefighters. Our government is committed to continuing investment in frontline services and ensuring all Queenslanders have access to quality services regardless of their postcode.

From the coast to the cape we are committed to serving our communities. To match the population's needs, almost half—47 per cent—of all public sector workers are located outside of Greater Brisbane and the vast majority—96 per cent—of these workers located outside the Greater Brisbane area are in frontline and frontline support roles delivering services in their communities. That means over 75,000 people working as doctors, nurses, health practitioners, ambulance officers, teachers, teacher aides, TAFE tutors, police, firefighters, youth workers, disability support workers, correctional officers and child safety officers serving our regional communities.

**Mr TANTARI:** In reference to the government's objective of safeguarding our health, on page 1 of the SDS, what investment does the budget make in our health system?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Expanding on what I said earlier, we have our record health budget of \$22.2 billion. This year's budget is a 3.4 per cent increase on last year, including \$1.35 billion for new and upgraded health infrastructure. I go to the point that, as the Leader of the Opposition was questioning the Auditor-General previously, I think everyone here needs reminding of the stark contrast that under the Newman government savage cuts did happen across our health system. I can only imagine how our health system would be struggling now due to those cuts if our government had not restored those savage cuts and put back those front-line services. We know when you invest in people you invest in communities. If you cut services out of regional communities you decimate those services and those people end up leaving the communities. That has a huge impact on those communities. I can come back to that later if you want to transfer over.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Premier. I note there is some excessive noise as the answers are being given. I counsel opposition members in that regard. Does the member for Broadwater have a question? Sorry, Deputy Chair?

**Mr STEVENS:** Chair, I now defer to the member for Maroochydore, the shadow integrity minister for the opposition. I call the Integrity Commissioner forward to take the seat of Mr Worrall at the front desk.

**CHAIR:** I note that when I asked the member for Broadwater had he finished with the Auditor-General, it was in order to do this process. Obviously we have to wipe down the chairs. All of that could have happened before. I was not attempting to do anything else.

**Ms SIMPSON:** My question is to the director-general. Has the investigation into former director-general Dave Stewart's actions in the appointment of Frankie Carroll as Under Treasurer been completed?

**Mr WHITING:** How does that relate to the expenditure and the appropriations, Mr Chair?

**CHAIR:** I note that the question we put at the beginning is about our investigation into the expenditure in this budget. Member for Maroochydore, it is the forward expenditure that we are looking at. Can you give us guidance as to how this—

**Mr STEVENS:** Chair, money is expended in the investigation involving the former director-general. Has that finished or is it continuing?

**Ms SIMPSON:** Mr Chair, with respect, the administration of government is integral to the budget estimates process. To cut out administrative and governance issues is to cut out a lot of scrutiny of government.

**CHAIR:** I appreciate that, member for Maroochydore. However, we still have to keep within the standing orders. As a former Speaker, I am sure you understand the job I have—

**Ms SIMPSON:** I certainly do and that is why—

**CHAIR:** Member for Maroochydore! As a former Speaker, you would appreciate not interrupting the chair as they are speaking. Director-General, is there anything that you could add to that question?

**Ms Hunter:** That is a question that should properly be put to the CCC.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Director-General, are you or have you been subject to any investigation over the past 12 months by the Crime and Corruption Commission or an investigation by any other entity?

**Mr WHITING:** Mr Chair, point of order. There are so many points of order being breached that I will not list them. Certainly not only should the member for Maroochydore think about reframing that question; but is it actually in order and does it have any relation at all to expenditure?

**CHAIR:** Member for Maroochydore, perhaps you could rephrase the question to give a clearer indication of the forward expenditure that the committee is examining.

**Ms SIMPSON:** As governance and accountability are an integral part of the estimates process and directly relate to how government is being administered, I ask the Director-General: are you subject to any investigation or have you been over the past 12 months by the Crime and Corruption Commission or any other entity?

**CHAIR:** I will allow the question but, in general, the guidance would be that you associate it with the forward expenditure that we are examining. The question does not clearly do that. Seeing that there was a reference to ongoing, I will stretch the boundaries and allow it. However, I do counsel the member for Maroochydore that we have to examine the expenditure ongoing in this budget.

**Ms Hunter:** Certainly not to my knowledge.

**CHAIR:** Member for Maroochydore, I hope you have taken on board my previous guidance when asking any further questions.

**Ms SIMPSON:** My question is to the Integrity Commissioner. Dr Stepanov, can you detail what you submitted to the Yearbury review?

**CHAIR:** Again, it would help if you could attach it to the forward expenditure—

**Mr STEVENS:** Point of order, Chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Point of order, Chair. It may help the committee—

**CHAIR:** With respect, Premier, there is a point of order from the deputy chair.

**Mr STEVENS:** The Integrity Commissioner is an integral part of the budgetary process for the year following. I believe that it is important that the Integrity Commissioner can answer matters in terms of the financial outcomes and aspects of the moneys committed to her portfolio for the year ahead.

**CHAIR:** I think that that is reasonably correct in that the review is ongoing. Premier, did you have a point of order?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Chair, I spent a number of years as opposition leader.

**Mr STEVENS:** Not long enough.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is correct; it was a short period. The reality is that we used to have to stay up all night and write questions that were within the standing orders—all night. I think the expectation at this estimates hearing—and the member for Maroochydore as a former Speaker should know this because she used to rule our questions out of order in the parliament—

**Ms SIMPSON:** Not in the estimates process. Mr Chair, what is the point of order?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:**—is that they should be within the standing orders.

**Ms SIMPSON:** This is winding down the clock, Mr Chair. What is the point of order?

**CHAIR:** Order! Member for Maroochydore, you well know that you raise a point of order if you wish to raise a point of order. Premier, I do insist that all of the questions be within the standing orders. I ask for that discipline from the opposition. Did you have a point of order, member for Maroochydore?

**Ms SIMPSON:** No. My question to the Integrity Commissioner—

**CHAIR:** Member for Maroochydore, for the good order of the committee—

**Ms SIMPSON:** Mr Chair, this is an ongoing review. It is clearly within the framework of estimates.

**CHAIR:** With respect, member for Maroochydore, I have made that ruling. You put the question to the Integrity Commissioner.

**Mr STEVENS:** Thank you. Move on.

**Dr Stepanov:** At the moment, the strategic review into the functions of the Integrity Commissioner is underway. That is being undertaken by Kevin Yearbury. I can confirm that I was consulted around the terms of reference and I was also consulted about the appointment of Mr Yearbury and I am satisfied with both of those components. In terms of information that I provided to Mr Yearbury, I have received a number of requests. My office and I have been working with Mr Yearbury to make sure that he has any material that is relevant to him performing his strategic review, including quite detailed analysis of the activity in the office.

**CHAIR:** Obviously we have an ongoing independent review. I do not know that applies to the standing orders, but of course we should let Mr Yearbury do his work. Is there another question?

**Ms SIMPSON:** Yes. Dr Stepanov, you are on the record saying, 'In a fast-changing landscape—such as during a pandemic—fit-for-purpose governance arrangements are paramount.' Are you confident that there are fit-for-purpose governance arrangements across government and could you elaborate on the risks you have identified?

**Mr WHITING:** Point of order, chair. That is very much asking for an opinion. I am not sure that the Integrity Commissioner's role is delivering opinions. I think it is very clearly set out what they are to do. I point out the inconsistency to the standing orders of that question.

**CHAIR:** The question was quite wide-ranging about a view of the Integrity Commissioner about whole-of-government arrangements. Given that the statutory officer deals with certain statutory things, it seems like that was a wider question. Knowing that the Integrity Commissioner knows the rules of the areas that she works under, I put it to the Integrity Commissioner.

**Dr Stepanov:** I am happy to answer on a very general basis, taking into account my background in governance. Whilst COVID-19 has affected the working environment, the main issues remain the same and that includes things such as conflicts of interest and managing for those conflicts of interests, the risks in the kinds of environments that happen with pandemics, including when there is not a robust and well documented assessment process for the potential new suppliers, whether an adequate process is in place to monitor for, disclose and to manage any conflicts of interest of related parties, where external consultants are involved in making key decisions and where the terms of agreements are more favourable to the supplier than usual; for example, if we are paying money upfront, including whether it is 50 per cent to 100 per cent expected upfront. When all those risks occur together in any environment, there is the greater chance of corruption being present and it is definitely necessary to put any safety mechanisms in place to reduce the risk of corruption eventuating. That includes such things as fitness for purpose of policies and processes, training and awareness, effective record management et cetera. My office is often involved in providing advice around those kinds of things. With our secrecy provisions, however, I am unable to make reference to any particular advice that I would have provided.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Integrity Commissioner, have you submitted that your office should be given authority and resources to commence investigations into unregistered lobbying?

**Mr WHITING:** Point of order, chair. This goes to Cabinet-in-Confidence. We have established previously that asking members of the Public Service if they need more money that there is a number of precedents about how that should be treated as a question.

**CHAIR:** I am not certain that we have knowledge of that. Obviously if it was, Dr Stepanov would be careful about those issues.

**Dr Stepanov:** The aspect of gearing up or scaling up an office like mine to do investigations is something that is particularly vexed because it would fundamentally change the role of the Integrity Commissioner. I have no doubt that Mr Yearbury is considering these issues as part of the strategic review. I am interested to see the outcome of that review. I have not provided a public opinion about whether I think our office should be geared up to do investigations because I feel that Mr Yearbury is well placed to make that decision after he has done his independent review and assessment.

**CHAIR:** I note that there is an independent statutory review that is determined by statute. We all have the ability, as this committee has done, to give advice. There may be a very limited range that Dr Stepanov can properly give to these answers.

**Ms SIMPSON:** My next question is to Dr Stepanov. At the last estimates hearings, the Premier promised to have you brief cabinet directly. How many cabinet meetings have you attended?

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr Crandon** interjected.

**CHAIR:** Did you have a point of order?

**Mr CRANDON:** It appears that the member to your right wants to take over your role.

**Mr WHITING:** What else do you want to know that is going on in cabinet?

**CHAIR:** If you have a point of order, raise a point of order.

**Mr WHITING:** I apologise, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** Order! Member for Coomera, that is completely out of order.

**Dr Stepanov:** Thank you very much for that question. My understanding is that if I were invited to appear before cabinet, it would be covered as a Cabinet-in-Confidence matter, so I am not able to provide any detail about that.

**CHAIR:** Director-General, is that correct? There seems to be some uncertainty from Dr Stepanov on that. Is that correct?

**Ms Hunter:** I am sorry, could you reframe the question? Are you asking me—

**CHAIR:** We will move on.

**Ms SIMPSON:** I note that we do not know whether that commitment of the Premier has been met from last year's estimates. Premier, can I ask you whether you have kept your commitment in that regard?

**CHAIR:** Member for Maroochydore, I note it is out of order to make exclamations like this. If you have a question to put—

**Ms SIMPSON:** I will reframe the question.

**CHAIR:** Order! Also to critique the Westminster process of Cabinet-in-Confidence is out of order and inappropriate.

**Ms SIMPSON:** With respect, it was mentioned in last year's estimates and it was not out of order then. Can the Premier answer the question?

**CHAIR:** Is there a question for the Premier?

**Ms SIMPSON:** Has the Premier kept her promise at last year's estimates to have the Integrity Commissioner brief cabinet directly?

**Mr CRANDON:** And how many times?

**Ms SIMPSON:** And how many times?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I would love to know how many times the Integrity Commissioner briefed the Newman government.

**CHAIR:** Order! Member for Coomera, that is the second time where there have been interjections like this. Please restrain yourself.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** My understanding is—I will double-check—that the Integrity Commissioner did come to a cabinet meeting.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Integrity Commissioner, I ask you to confirm or otherwise to this committee whether you have been the subject of any investigation during the past 12 months, or whether there are ongoing investigations by the Crime and Corruption Commission or any other entity?

**Mr WHITING:** Mr Chair, I will ask you if that should be ruled out of order, full stop.

**CHAIR:** I think that obviously if the Crime and Corruption Commission was undergoing some kind of activity, then the Integrity Commissioner—

**Ms SIMPSON:** Or any other entity.

**Mr STEVENS:** Point of order, chair. We have just had the same question to the director-general who answered it clearly and concisely. I think it is important to the administration of the financial budget that we have for the Integrity Commissioner that she answers the question and it can be simple, as the director-general has already answered her question.

**CHAIR:** That is a reasonable point, member for Mermaid Beach. Integrity Commissioner, you might wish to consider your answer and to do it carefully within the constraints you have.

**Dr Stepanov:** I am not sure what you mean by reference to 'other bodies', but I can confirm that I have not been investigated, to my knowledge, by the Crime and Corruption Commission or Queensland Police or the DPP. I have not been the subject of an investigation, to my knowledge.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Integrity Commissioner, are there any other bodies that the Integrity Commissioner is under investigation from?

**CHAIR:** With respect, that question has been put and really clearly answered by the Integrity Commissioner, Member for Maroochydore. Do you have any further questions?

**Ms SIMPSON:** I was seeking clarification as the Integrity Commissioner said she was not sure.

**Mr WHITING:** That is not what I heard.

**CHAIR:** No. This is simply repetitive because the Integrity Commissioner's answer was absolutely clear. You may not have listened to the answer. Perhaps going back to the transcript, which will be available quite soon, will make that clear.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Integrity Commissioner, are you concerned about unregistered lobbying in Queensland?

**Mr WHITING:** Mr Chair, the member is asking for an opinion, inferences—you name it. I am concerned about the disregard by the member for Maroochydore for our standing orders. That is all I will say.

**CHAIR:** While the question may have been framed in a way that was leading towards an opinion, the Integrity Commissioner has been on the record about her role with lobbyists and her statutory role, and I am sure could add to the committee's examination of her full ongoing role with regard to this.

**Dr Stepanov:** I am happy to speak about our efforts in the lobbying arena. In relation to lobbying matters, when I first started as the Integrity Commissioner there were relatively few complaints that were referred to us and there were relatively few requests for advice. There has been a substantial increase in requests for advice about lobbying. For the last financial year that rose to 38 advices. As well, there has been a significant increase in lobbying activity over the past two financial years. For example, in the 2020-21 financial year there were 988 contacts recorded by lobbyists on the lobbyist register in comparison to, on average, only 239 for the financial years commencing 1 January 2013 to 30 June 2020. This shows a recent fourfold increase in recording lobbying contact.

As well, each year I undertake an annual audit. As part of our audit we have had reported to us 46 reports of discrepancies between the records held by chief executives of state government departments and the lobbyist register and a further 57 reports of discrepancies between the records held by chief executive officers of local governments and the lobbyist register. Of the 103 discrepancies recently reported to me, 101 relate to possible failures by lobbyists to record any contact at all on our government register. Therefore, obviously I am very concerned about unregistered and unlawful lobbying and we are introducing processes such as our annual audit so that we have a better understanding of the extent of the issues.

**Ms SIMPSON:** I have one last question to the Integrity Commissioner. Are you under any formal investigation at this time?

**Mr Whiting:** Mr Chair, that question is tedious repetition and contains inferences. I ask for your opinion on whether that should be ruled out of order.

**CHAIR:** I took careful note of the Integrity Commissioner's answer which was reasonably unequivocal. Member for Maroochydore, with respect to the point of order raised, a direct question has been asked and it has been answered quite clearly. I now turn to government questions.

**Mr WHITING:** My question is to the Premier and once again refers to page 1 of the SDS and the delivery of innovative and effective policy. Could the Premier outline the investment in state schools and how the investment in schools actually lifts economic productivity and improves student outcomes?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. I know everyone in this room values how much education can transform young people's lives, how important it is make sure that our educational facilities keep up with new technology and how important it is that people have access to good quality education. Once again, I thank our teachers, teacher aides, cleaners, administration staff and everyone else involved in our school communities.

That is why we have opened 18 new schools since coming to office in 2015. We opened five new schools in 2021: Brisbane South State Secondary College, Gainsborough State School at Pimpama, Baringa State Secondary College, and Palmview State Primary School and Palmview State Special School on the Sunshine Coast. Many of those areas are huge growth areas of our state. We are keeping up with the increase in population and making sure we have the required educational facilities.

In 2020 we opened eight new schools, including the Fortitude Valley State Secondary College. I think members would be well aware that that was a site that the former government had up for sale. It has now been transformed into such a wonderful school. Is the member for Mermaid Beach nodding?

**Mr STEVENS:** No, my mask is chafing.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thought you were nodding saying it is good school. We also opened Calliope State High School, Foxwell State Secondary College in Coomera, Mango Hill State Secondary College, Yarrabilba State Secondary College, Ripley Valley State Secondary College and Lee Street State Special School in Caboolture.

In 2018 we opened four new school. They were Yarrabilba, Picnic Creek, North Shore and Baringa. I know the chair is very familiar with the growth in his area at Yarrabilba. In 2017 there was one new school opened—the Cairns State Special School. This year we opened the Palmview State Special School. Next year we begin construction on a new special school at Coomera. In fact, Coomera will see the construction of stage 2 of the Gainsborough State School and the Foxwell State Secondary College. With additional learning spaces to be constructed at other schools, there will be investment of over \$84 million this year alone.

Parents of children with special needs can be assured we have your children's best interests at heart in all of our decision-making. This year's budget includes an additional \$913.7 million to expand our Building Future Schools Program to deliver 10 new state schools to open in 2023 and 2024 in high growth areas of our state. This investment boasts total funding for the Building Future Schools Program to \$2.6 billion.

Four new schools will open in 2023, including primary schools in Yarrabilba, Ripley and the Augustine Heights-Redbank Plains area and a secondary school in Palmview. Six schools will open in 2024, including primary schools in Redland Bay, Bellbird Park and Logan Reserve—the Crestmead-Park Ridge area—and secondary schools in Springfield, the Collingwood Park-Redbank Plains area and the Logan Reserve-Park Ridge area. A further new primary school in Brisbane's inner west funded in 2021 will also open in 2024. I know that the Minister for Education's department is consulting with the community now about where that will actually be.

Our \$1 billion Great Schools, Great Future infrastructure commitment will continue to provide existing Queensland schools with new classrooms and facilities to accommodate growing enrolments, new or upgraded school halls and performing art centres and renewal and refurbishment of school infrastructure. On a visit to Cairns at the beginning of year, I inspected the Centennial Hall sports and arts complex at Cairns State High School, which is absolutely phenomenal. It will be great for sport, but they will also use it for their fantastic orchestra. The \$12 million state-of-the-art facility will support the school's focus on wellbeing as well as the existing centres of excellence in basketball, music, dance, drama and visual arts. It will be a great community asset.

The education minister will probably during her estimates hearing go into further detail about the \$61 million to build and upgrade school halls as part of our \$235 million program. This is fantastic. Many of the schools have either grown or do not have a hall which can be used for their performing arts or school sports. What we are also seeing is the community—outsiders—utilising these halls. They are becoming a community asset. It is great to see that interchange that is happening across the state. In this year's budget we are also maintaining and improving infrastructure across the state. There is going to be some refurbishment on Thursday Island. We will be upgrading amenities at Darnley and Thursday Island primary campus. We will refurbish the library up there as well.

Finally, we will spend \$39.3 million to upgrade and install solar energy and energy efficiency measures in Queensland state schools as part of the Advancing Clean Energy Schools program. I know a lot of the schoolkids are happy about that. Our Advancing Clean Energy Schools program is helping to reduce energy costs across more than 870 state schools through the installation of solar panels and other energy efficiency measures. As at 30 June, 619 schools have received their solar and energy solutions, with the program set to be completed by June 2022.

**Mr TANTARI:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, I refer to page 1 of the SDS where reference is made to the department's objective of ensuring a strategic advantage to Queensland. Can you advise the committee of examples of initiatives funded in the budget that deliver a strategic advantage to our tourism sector?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member from Hervey Bay very much for his question. We know how important tourism is for his region. With the start of the whale watching season coming up, depending on what happens with the pandemic hopefully I will be able to get up there sometime before the end of the season.

This year's state budget confirms another \$270 million to help protect our Great Barrier Reef and support more than 60,000 tourism jobs. This includes \$8.6 million for national parks and includes better infrastructure and visitor experiences. The budget builds on our significant investment to support our tourism industry since the global pandemic struck, with more than \$860 million for tourism and events. We know that tourism has taken a big hit, especially with the decline of international tourism. We hope that, one day once everyone is given the opportunity to take a vaccination, we will see tourists return. Hopefully, after the Olympics Queensland will stand out as a great destination for people to visit. We know that the pandemic has had a big impact on our tourism operators, and we have been working very closely with them right across the state. I know that the minister for tourism has also travelled the length and breadth of the state to meet with tourism operators.

In your electorate of Hervey Bay, member, the Department of Environment and Science is investing \$480,000 on the K'gari land and sea ranger program budget statement and \$4.8 million in the Central Station day-use area upgrade for new tourism opportunities. Each year the department invests \$10 million into K'gari for its ongoing management, together with traditional owners. There is \$1.2 million spent each year on marine park management on the Fraser Coast Regional Area, and \$1 million will be spent in 2021-22 out of a \$2 million total to commence construction on additional dingo fencing to protect visitors and residents. We have also committed \$5 million over four years and \$1 million ongoing to implement actions from the Inspector-General Emergency Management's K'gari Bushfire Review report, and \$24,000 out of \$99,000 will be spent to assist the Fraser Coast Regional Council deliver programs to address and prevent illegal dumping—part of the Local Government Illegal Dumping Partnerships Program.

We were just talking about whale watching. Hervey Bay is recognised as a pioneer in the industry and is the first-ever World Whale Heritage Site, which is a great accomplishment. This recognition is awarded for the region's commitment to conservation and protection. It is also very important to the local tourism industry, which has been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019 more than 83,000 tourists enjoyed a commercial whale-watching trip to see the humpback migration, so it an important tourism driver for our state. I hope that continues this year. At one stage when we were trying to book accommodation there it was essentially booked out, so we are seeing a lot of Queenslanders support Queenslanders, especially through our Good to Go campaign. At Hervey Bay in July last year we announced that our government would waive commercial whale-watching permit fees for the 2020 season, so I think that helped those operators during that time.

**CHAIR:** Premier, page 1 of your department's Service Delivery Statement really highlights innovative and effective policy. Can you advise the committee on how the record funding for public housing announced in the budget delivers on that objective?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We have a demonstrated track record when it comes to public housing. We are investing in more social housing because we believe that every Queenslanders should have access to a safe and affordable home that meets their needs and enables them to participate in the social and economic life of our state. In 2017 we launched the Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027. We know how important it is for people to have a home for their family.

In the 2021-22 financial years we constructed and completed nine four- and five-bedroom homes in Yarrabilba. Construction has commenced on a four-bedroom home in Park Ridge, and there is planning for two four-bedroom homes in Regents Park and two-, three- and four-bedroom homes in Yarrabilba. That is 14 new homes in Logan, and that is wonderful.

Our new Housing and Homeless Action Plan commits \$1.9 billion to Queenslanders' housing needs and continues the delivery of our 10-year Housing Strategy. Over four years we will invest \$1.8 billion to increase social housing supply, delivering 6,365 new social housing commitments across the state by June 2025. To support this we have launched a \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund, the returns from which will be used to drive additional social housing supply. We are retaining \$1 billion

from the transfer of Titles Registry operations for the establishment of a long-term Housing Investment Fund. This fund is anticipated to generate annual returns of up to \$40 million from 2021-22 to drive new supply and support current and future housing needs across the state.

We also know that the first thing victims of domestic and family violence need is a place to stay and crisis support. I know there has been very strong and bipartisan support to ensure we prioritise domestic and family violence. In this budget we have allocated \$20 million to domestic and family violence housing assistance and support, \$20 million for homelessness support and close to \$55 million to continue vital housing and homelessness services launched under the First Housing Action Plan. This builds on the 2,480 new social housing commencements and 1,599 completions we have delivered in the first four years of our Housing Strategy. We will implement the action plan through collaboration with our community, council and private sector partners. The action plan includes a range of measures that, while not requiring new funding, will deliver positive housing outcomes.

**Mr WHITING:** Premier, with reference to page 17 of the SDS, can you outline what the trade outcomes for Queensland have been in the period we are looking at?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The last year has been tough for global trade. I might just call up Paul Martyn from Trade and Investment Queensland. I will say a few things and then I may ask him to expand on them.

We know that it has been tough for Queensland exporters. Our exporters are a resilient bunch, and with our support they are adapting to this new environment. The most recent data shows that our exports were valued at \$57.5 billion over the year to May 2021. This is still more than New South Wales and Tasmania combined, but we have taken a bit of a global hit. From May to April 2021 our goods exports rose \$800 million. In comparison, New South Wales' exports rose \$14 million and Victorian exports rose \$440 million, so we still have market dominance. Through Trade and Investment Queensland we continue to offer our Queensland businesses a great service. I will get Paul Martyn, CEO of Trade and Investment Queensland, to address the committee about the new offices we are opening and some of our pro-active measures. We have grants programs and we are still doing Zoom conferences to make sure we still keep in touch with our market opportunities. There could also be some trade announcements when I go to Tokyo next week, but we are working on that and we will not discuss those today.

**Mr Martyn:** Thank you, Premier and Chair. Good morning, members of the committee. My name is Paul Martyn. I am the chief executive officer of Trade and Investment Queensland.

As the Premier pointed out, this last year the global environment has been extremely difficult because of COVID-19 and a range of other factors that have impacted on Queensland's trade. I would say that our trade network around the world—16 offices in 13 markets—has never been more relevant to Queensland's exporters. As they have been unable to travel and visit their buyers and connect with new buyers, our overseas offices have been almost the front door for Queensland. In line with national policy and around the country, we have realised the urgent need to diversify.

The Premier has flagged and approved the opening of two new offices, the first of which is in Vietnam. Vietnam is our fifth-largest trading partner and accounts for \$2.351 billion worth of exports. We forecast that South-East Asia in particular and Vietnam will become an increasingly important market for Queensland in the coming years. That presence, led by our commissioner to South-East Asia, Mr Tom Calder, will be very important. We already have a range of Queensland exporters in areas like food and beef who are very keen to go to Vietnam.

The second office that we will be opening is in Germany. Members will be aware that with Brexit the UK and the EU have parted ways, so for the first time Queensland will have a presence in continental Europe. Germany is the obvious place for us to locate given the significant investment by Germany in Queensland, including, for example, by Rheinmetall. We think there are huge investment opportunities coming out of Germany in areas like advanced manufacturing and health care but also in critical minerals and hydrogen. This comes on the opening of our office in New Zealand. New Zealand was one of those countries that, fairly or unfairly, we perhaps took for granted before COVID, but now it is one of the first places we are able to travel to and we have opened a presence there.

In terms of new programs, the Premier has approved a couple of new grant programs. One is in relation to new markets that enables our exporters and supports them to enter new markets in pursuit of that diversification. The second one is in relation to ecommerce. As the Premier indicated, in this day and age, our exporters have to find new channels to market, and ecommerce has been dramatically accelerated by COVID. We are supporting exporters to use ecommerce to get their product to market,

particularly in North Asia, and that is fantastic for small exporters. We have had the experience in Korea, for example, where using ecommerce has reduced the time taken to get to market from 18 months to three months, which is great news.

As the Premier also indicated, Japan is one of our most important markets, particularly in terms of investment in a range of projects in Queensland. The Japanese are long and true friends of Queensland in trade, and the Premier is a regular visitor to Japan and will be there again next week. We have been liaising with our office in Tokyo and our commissioner, Mr Adachi, around potential opportunities there and we will continue to pursue that.

All through this period—even though our offices have been in lockdown—we have been able to use digital technology to pivot how we connect exporters with buyers and investment proponents with projects to use digital technology with Zoom calls, et cetera. It will never truly be a substitute for face-to-face, can I say to the committee, but we have seen some notable successes and we will continue to innovate over time to do that.

**CHAIR:** Premier, we are moving on, but is there anything you want to conclude with for trade outcomes?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No. I would like to thank Mr Martyn for expanding on that. I think there are going to be some great opportunities that we will be able to tell the Queensland people about next week as well as part of my portfolio of trade.

**CHAIR:** I appreciate that you wound that up quickly because we are moving to opposition time, although diversification is very exciting. I turn to the opposition.

**Ms SIMPSON:** I would like to ask a question of the Integrity Commissioner. You said you were not aware of any investigations from the DPC, the CCC or the Queensland police. Are any other bodies investigating you?

**CHAIR:** With respect, I think when the transcript comes—and I conferred with the secretariat—that question has been put—

**Ms SIMPSON:** No. You cut us off last time, with respect, Mr Chair, so that question has not actually been answered. The Integrity Commissioner said she was not aware of any investigation from these bodies. My question is whether any other bodies are investigating the Integrity Commissioner. If she could have the time to be able to answer this without being cut off, that would be great.

**CHAIR:** I invite the Integrity Commissioner to give the answer that I thought she had given.

**Dr Stepanov:** I can confirm that I have no knowledge that I am under investigation by any body or entity.

**Mr WHITING:** Mr Chair, I am going to raise a general point of order here. We have had question after question of officials asking them, 'Are you under investigation?' This is obviously intimidating as well, but any link to expenditure is pretty tenuous and probably pretty soluble under any questioning for that. I understand the opposition have said this is about expenditure of money, but I really cannot see any strong link or even a weak link.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, member for Bancroft.

**Mr STEVENS:** Point of order, Chair. I think you are doing a great job chairing and the member for Bancroft needs to remember his invited position here today.

**CHAIR:** Let the *Hansard* record note that I am clearly doing a great job. My problem was more that that question had now been put for the fourth time. There is a point where it is unbecoming to put this. My memory is that Dr Stepanov was absolutely clear the first time and it was out of order to put it four times. I simply put the question because I am sure the Integrity Commissioner, after this had been put in this method a further three times, would have once again given the clear answer.

**Mr PURDIE:** Point of order, Mr Chair. I recall the Integrity Commissioner saying in answer to Ms Simpson's first question that she was unsure of what bodies the questioner was referring to. Now we are more broadly asking the question: is the Integrity Commissioner under investigation or has she been under investigation by anyone?

**CHAIR:** With respect, that is not a point of order. I also feel that when you see the transcript you will see that is not what the answer gave in the final sentence, where the Integrity Commissioner was absolutely clear in the first one, and now for the fourth time it has been put. I finally allowed the question to give the Integrity Commissioner an opportunity to say clearly what was put the first time, which the Integrity Commissioner did. Are there any further questions from the opposition?

**Ms SIMPSON:** I have a question in respect to the Premier. Is the Premier—

**CHAIR:** Is the question addressed to the Premier or in respect of the Premier?

**Ms SIMPSON:** My question is to the Premier. Are you aware if there have been or are any investigations into the Integrity Commissioner from any entities?

**CHAIR:** I am just warning the opposition that we are hoping to fit in the member for South Brisbane, so someone may want to make space so the member for South Brisbane can come forward to a microphone at some point.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** My only recollection is that there was a referral to a committee so I do not think I can comment any further on that. Whilst I have the floor, can I correct the record. The Integrity Commissioner had been to a previous cabinet. The Leader of the Opposition asked on 7 December, and I said, 'We are trying to make that a regular feature as well,' meaning the Integrity Commissioner coming. The Integrity Commissioner has not come this year but the year has not been completed. I can also confirm that the Integrity Commissioner wrote to me and said that she wished to advise that all ministers and assistant ministers have complied with the obligation of the code of conduct during the current financial year. I want to put that on the record. There has not been the need but the year has not ended, so I just wanted to clarify that for the record.

**CHAIR:** The member for Broadwater has a question.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I have a question for the Integrity Commissioner. The Fitzgerald report says—

The only justification for press secretaries and media units is that they lead to a community better informed about Government and departmental activities. If they fail to do this then their existence is a misuse of public funds, and likely to help misconduct to flourish.

Dr Stepanov, do you share Fitzgerald's concern about government media units hiding information and denying scrutiny helps misconduct to flourish?

**Mr WHITING:** He was doing so well until the end—

**CHAIR:** No. It is really disappointing that the quote you gave to someone of such honour in Queensland made no such inference that you drew from it. Dr Stepanov, there is a general question put about the role of media offices within ministerial offices. I find the question possibly put for provocation rather than to elicit information, but do you have any commentary about the role of people communicating with the media in ministerial offices?

**Dr Stepanov:** I thank the opposition leader for the question. I can only speak in general terms and with relevance to my office. I do have a public awareness function. When I am able to find the time I do like to provide as much information to the media as I can about our activities within the office, noting of course the secrecy provisions. I do think that the media play an important role in making sure that the public are kept informed of any activities, for example, within my office. I am not really able to comment further. I would need to take that matter into consideration.

**CHAIR:** It was a tenuous thing in terms of how that was attached to integrity offices.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Mr Chair, I have a question. My question is to the Premier in regard to a previous question I asked. You said you were aware of a referral but you were not sure about the details of the referral with regard to the Integrity Commissioner. Could the Premier advise us what was that referral?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, I cannot.

**CHAIR:** Member for South Brisbane, I welcome you. Do you have any questions?

**Dr MacMAHON:** My question is for the Premier. While other cities around the world have held people's votes to determine community consent for hosting the Olympics, what community consultation has been held with respect to the 2032 Olympics and what resources are being allocated to community consultation going forward?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for South Brisbane for the question. I think there has been a lot of public awareness that Queensland is on the cusp of securing the Olympics. I think it has been broadly in the media: it has been through newspapers, it has been through radio, it has been through television. There have been a number of steps. When I accompanied a delegation to Lausanne where we met with Thomas Bach, the president of Olympic Committee, to hear exactly what Queensland was offering and it was received quite favourably, that received a lot of publicity back here.

As to the second part of your question in terms of post Olympics, I cannot pre-empt the International Olympic Committee. We will have to wait till next Wednesday night to see that final vote. If we are successful, then I want all of Queensland to share in that Olympic glory. I want it to be a games

for all of Queensland. Of course part of that would be by way of our Buy Local program, as much local procurement as possible and to really make sure that every part of Queensland—regional and Western Queensland—gets to share in what the Olympics would mean. We saw how it transformed Sydney. It has transformed other world-class cities like Barcelona. I think it has the opportunity to firmly put Queensland on the international world stage.

**Dr MacMAHON:** Can I ask a follow-up question?

**CHAIR:** Sure. Member for South Brisbane, we do not have long, so perhaps you could put your question quickly.

**Dr MacMAHON:** What modelling is the government planning to conduct on the cost of housing, rent and rates for existing residents in suburbs neighbouring the Gabba stadium including Woolloongabba, Kangaroo Point and East Brisbane?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** If we are successful in hosting the games—it is over a decade away—I think what you will see is the transformation of the city, the transformation of the plans that we have preliminarily released for the Gabba. Shortly we will be releasing the plans for the Brisbane Live in terms of what that could potentially look like. I think there will be a lot of uplift probably around those areas. You would envisage that if Brisbane and Queensland are successful in getting the hosting rights.

In terms of housing, I think you have seen our government's commitment to ensuring that we do have adequate housing for people and that people be given an opportunity to have a roof over their head, which is why we have announced so much funding in our housing plan in the budget.

**CHAIR:** On our schedule we had the opportunity to address any issues, but I note we also have that opportunity later and we want to keep to the timetable. We might stop you from addressing some of those issues now and give you more time at the end of the session because we have not given you time for that yet. With that—

**Mr STEVENS:** There was just one matter in terms of the Auditor-General.

**CHAIR:** There was. We have noted the Premier is coming back. The deputy chair is raising the issue that they sought information from the Auditor-General, which you may have noted.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I think the Auditor-General took that on notice.

**Mr STEVENS:** That is what we are asking.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is fine. That will be on notice.

**CHAIR:** The standing orders are that the relevant minister has to be the one to take it on notice rather than any officer.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Sure.

**CHAIR:** We will also have the opportunity, if there are answers to give, at the end of the session because we have not given you the chance to address those yet. With that, the committee will now adjourn for a break and the hearing will resume at 12 noon continuing its examination of the estimates for the portfolio areas of the Premier, cabinet and trade. Thank you very much.

**Proceedings suspended from 11.46 am to 12.00 pm.**

 **CHAIR:** I welcome you back, Premier, and of course the many officials who have done so much hard work preparing for this. The committee will now resume its examination of the proposed expenditure of the portfolio areas of Premier and Cabinet and Trade. The CEO of Trade Queensland spoke about the diversity of trade partners and the diversity of products. How have the Premier's department's objectives of stewardship, innovation and change on page 1 of the SDS been delivered in the budget in respect of the hydrogen economy in Queensland and its potential for the future?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Of course, we know that this is a huge opportunity for Queensland and for Australia. We want Queensland to be right at the forefront of that, which is why I believe that minister de Brenni is the first hydrogen minister in the world. It really is saying to the world that we really believe in this and that we want something to happen. It also means that by 2030 our Queensland hydrogen industry could be worth about \$1.7 billion a year in exports if the technology comes online and is developed. There is a race around the world at the moment to develop that technology, and we want to be front and centre about that. We have already committed \$60 million to support hydrogen projects and training facilities, including for hydrogen training centres of excellence, another step towards ensuring Queensland emerges as a global hydrogen superpower and has a significant investment in the skills and jobs of the future.

We are investing in state-of-the-art training facilities to attract new workers to the industry as well as to meet projected demand from existing apprentices and tradespeople. We need trainees and apprentices to start developing these skills now so they are ready when these jobs come online. Our Queensland Hydrogen Industry Strategy 2019-2024 is focused on developing the hydrogen industry to create jobs, which is a vital part of our plan to unite and recover for Queensland jobs. Four training centres worth more than \$50 million will help skill up a hydrogen workforce, enabling the state's future economic development. The opportunity to grow jobs in manufacturing and resources needs cheaper, cleaner energy. The future demand for hydrogen is being anticipated by us. The investment also complements our \$145 million commitment to establish three Queensland renewable energy zones. Already, Queensland's renewables industry is worth \$8.5 billion. With our abundance of solar and wind capacity, Queensland is the ideal candidate to produce hydrogen for domestic and international use.

Renewables are a critical part of the picture for delivering clean hydrogen. Since 2015, 44 large-scale renewable energy projects commenced operations, became financially committed or are under construction, representing about 7,000 jobs. Once all projects have completed construction, Queensland will have more than 9,100 megawatts of renewable energy capacity, which is absolutely huge. Due to this substantial level of investment, excellent progress towards the 50 per cent renewable energy target is being made. In the fourth quarter of 2020, Queensland achieved its highest-ever quarter of renewable energy generation, reaching more than 21 per cent. If you remember when we first came into office, it was at seven per cent. It has actually scaled up dramatically. That \$2 billion that we are committed to for renewables will ensure that we will be able to get to that 50 per cent by 2030.

Our publicly owned generators are supporting more than 2,000 megawatts of renewable energy capacity. CleanCo is delivering on its 1,000 megawatt mandate, including its ownership of the 102 megawatt Karara wind farm and support of the Western Downs Green Power Hub project which will be Australia's largest solar project. Stanwell is finalising arrangements to support the Clarke Creek wind farm. CS Energy has completed offtake agreements with the Columboola and Moura solar farms. The establishment of the \$2 billion renewable energy and hydrogen jobs fund will allow energy GOCs to increase ownership of commercial renewable energy and hydrogen projects along with supporting infrastructure with the current renewable energy fund mandate of \$2 billion. My government knows that development of renewable energy in a hydrogen industry offers substantial economic growth opportunities for our state. Our investments will help secure these opportunities for Queenslanders.

**Mr WHITING:** Page 1 of the SDS refers to the delivery of innovative and effective policy. How will the \$300 million Path to Treaty Fund progress reconciliation and healing within Queensland?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I add to that that the work we are doing in treaty plus the work that we are doing in renewables and our commitment to the Great Barrier Reef is being considered as part of our presentation to the International Olympic Committee, because it very much has a focus on sustainability but also on reconciliation. The work that we are doing here puts Queensland in a really good position when we look at everything that is happening across our state. Of course, we are committed to reframing our relationship with Queensland's First Nations people and have taken significant steps towards a new way of working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Our Path to Treaty is Queensland's journey towards acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander injustices, truth-telling and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

We have taken the first of many steps along the path to treaty. We know our journey will take time but is time well spent and investment in the future of our First Nations people and their future. One of the first meetings I took as Premier when elected was with Dr Chris Sarra. We talked about what treaty could mean for Queensland. Now he is the director-general. That was very early on in the piece. My government is committed to reframing our relationship with Queensland's First Nations people and has taken significant steps towards a new way of working in partnership.

In the first half of 2020 an eminent panel tasked with advising government about what a treaty-making process might look like proposed a staged approach to implementation due to the impact of COVID-19, including establishment of a treaty advancement committee. Comprised of highly respected and knowledgeable leaders, the Treaty Advancement Committee, co-chaired by Dr Jackie Huggins and Mr Mick Gooda, is currently working on options for progressing the treaty through a co-designed process with community research in partnership with third parties. Emeritus Professor Michael Lavarch, former Brisbane lord mayor Sallyanne Atkinson, Dr Josephine Bourne and the co-chairs are meeting fortnightly to develop options and provide independent advice on how to progress treaty-making for all Queenslanders. In fact, I ran into Mick Gooda just the other day and asked him to come and talk to me in August to give me an update about how that is going. The committee held community meetings in

Cairns in late April. They went to Charleville and Cunnamulla in early June, followed by Townsville where Professor Gracelyn Smallwood lent a hand chairing the meeting, Mount Isa in late June, and Coen and Napranum so far in July.

Path to Treaty is a critical tool in promoting reconciliation and setting the foundation for a new and just relationship, one that acknowledges the ongoing disadvantage that First Nations people experience and provides a platform for justice, equality and opportunity. This will not happen overnight but require ongoing commitment from all Queenslanders. The establishment of a \$300 million Path to Treaty Fund that will support Queensland's path to treaty over the next 10 years through the return on investments from the fund demonstrates our commitment. I am confident that this fund will provide a much welcomed, solid and reliable foundation as Queensland travels down our pathway to treaty over the next 10 years.

**Mr TANTARI:** Premier, with reference to page 4 of the SDS, particularly about our great, dynamic, growing regions, can you advise how the government is contributing support for regional Queenslanders?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. Of course, we have had the opportunity to inspect a number of projects in his electorate. We saw another Works for Queensland project completed in November with a visit to the botanic gardens in Hervey Bay which was wonderful. What a beautiful place! I am quite sure it is getting utilised a lot for weddings and functions. There was a \$365,000 grant to build accessibility for the new bush chapel and links to the orchid house and the gardens. I look forward to dropping in the next time I am up there. The member was there, as was Minister Hinchliffe. This was a great opportunity to see how Works for Queensland can support Hervey Bay with local attractions that residents can enjoy year round—and tourists can, too.

I am sure the member also recognises that the local business owners we met with and talked to—we continue to talk to them—feel very strongly about how the economic recovery plan is helping them, especially with the small business grants that went out. I remember visiting one place in particular. They said that without the grant they would have had to basically shut, but it meant they were able to continue and keep on the workforce—as well as the assistance that was provided with the federal government.

This year the budget invests the majority of our infrastructure—61 per cent—outside Greater Brisbane. In Far North Queensland we have \$98 million towards duplicating the Bruce Highway from Edmonton to Gordonvale and—this is very exciting—\$73.6 million for the expansion and refurbishment of the \$176 million Cairns Convention Centre. That will be completed, I think they said, from memory, early next year. We are looking at holding parliament in Cairns. We are working with the Speaker and the Clerk—and of course we will talk to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly—on having that sometime next year when we can book into the convention centre. Those conversations are happening at the moment. I think it is always good to take the parliament out to regional Queensland. I have now had a couple of inspections of the convention centre. It is going to be world class. They already have so many bookings coming in.

In Townsville there is \$85 million towards the \$195 million Haughton pipeline stage 2 for Townsville's water security. In Central Queensland there is \$140 million for Rookwood Weir and the roads and bridges, and \$44 million to continue upgrading the RG Tanna Coal Terminal at Gladstone port. In Mackay-Whitsunday there is \$42.5 million towards the Mackay Northern Access Upgrade project on the Bruce Highway, working with the Commonwealth. In Wide Bay there is \$13.7 million for the Bruce Highway Maryborough-Gin Gin upgrade—bridges and floodways—with the Commonwealth. There is also \$8.4 million for the \$14 million Kingaroy Hospital redevelopment. That should be ready to open soon. I look forward to going out there.

In Outback Queensland there is \$18 million for the Flinders Highway, Julia Creek-Cloncurry, to strengthen pavement and widen the floodway, working with the Commonwealth. On the Darling Downs there is \$144.9 million for the Karara wind farm development, out of a total of \$250 million, and \$24.55 million for the Kogan North gas field. That is just a snapshot of some of the investment in regional Queensland.

**Mr TANTARI:** Premier, with reference to pages 1 to 5 of the SDS, can you provide an update on the delivery of the government's commitment to support our veterans?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am very proud to be involved with the veterans community. I know that the Leader of the Opposition is also involved with our Anzac Day committee, which is great. We know that the past year has been a challenging one for veterans. In a year when traditional Anzac Day and

Remembrance Day events were cancelled or altered, the ongoing need of support for our veterans has been heightened—among the response to the Brereton report and now the announcement of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

Queensland is a Defence state. We have a large Defence family here. Our commitment to our veterans community remains steadfast and is reflected by our increased investment in support for veterans. In the 2019-20 state budget we announced an additional \$2.7 million over five years and \$2.4 million per annum thereafter to establish the Office for Veterans and to provide the curation and oversight of Anzac Square. In October 2019 I announced the new Office for Veterans would be established in Ipswich.

As outlined in the Service Delivery Statements, the Office for Veterans provides a single point of contact for veterans matters and coordinates the delivery of my government's commitments to support veterans and their families. The Office for Veterans oversees and provides funding for the curation of the undercroft galleries of Anzac Square. In addition, the Office for Veterans has delivered major commemorative events—for example, to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. In August last year the Office for Veterans delivered a commemorative event at Anzac Square, held a vintage aircraft flyover and coordinated a bell-ringing event across the state.

Anzac Day was very special this year. Light Up the Dawn was a great initiative in 2020, but this year it was tremendous to be able to return to Anzac Square for the dawn service and to watch the Anzac Day parade. It was wonderful to see a number of members observing that. So many veterans spoke to me on Anzac Day to tell me how important and how wonderful it was to be able to get together with their mates and to commemorate the day publicly.

We also have the Anzac Day Trust program. We are providing \$1.415 million under this program in 2020-21 to assist organisations that support veterans and their dependents. Last year I also announced additional funding of \$1 million over four years for the Anzac Day Trust, and the new \$4 million Queensland Remembers Grants Program is due to open in the coming weeks.

Of course, we have our veterans employment pathway. Some 105 veterans have been employed within the Queensland Public Service between July 2018 and June 2021. I am very proud of that because I believe that veterans should be given an opportunity to continue in a valuable work space after their service. Just recently I was in Townsville opening the Oasis, which is incredible. That serves as a template, working with the federal government—from memory it was around \$5 million each—to have something like that set up in other parts of the state. I think that could be a process we put in place for the future. It not only serves as a hub for veterans and their families to get together but also engages with the community. They have a coffee shop that veterans work in. This enables the local community to come in and share a cup of tea and a story with a veteran. I think it is a standout success. I applaud everybody who has been involved in that process.

**Mr WHITING:** Premier, I refer to page 1 of the SDS and the objective of backing small business. Could you outline the investment this budget has made to support small businesses?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We know how important small businesses are to our economy, with more than 452,000 across the state. This year's budget confirms our commitment to supporting them and builds on our extensive support during the COVID pandemic. In June we launched our new small business strategy, Big Plans for Small Business Strategy 2021-2023. The strategy outlines our \$140 million investment over two years to help set the right operating environment for small business to have the confidence to grow and employ. It includes a \$100 million Business Investment Fund, \$30 million to increase small business skills and capacity, and \$10 million to make it easier to do business with government, including making the Small Business Commissioner role permanent.

We have already announced three new small business grants programs under the strategy, worth \$25 million over two years: business basics, business boost and business growth. Major support for small business during COVID included the wonderful adaptation grants. They were so wonderfully received that we increased it. They were up to \$10,000. More than \$180 million out of that \$200 million has been provided to more than 20,000 businesses across Queensland including \$1.16 million to 130 small businesses in the Bancroft electorate. The member will be happy to know that.

We also committed \$1 billion in jobs support loans, providing Queensland businesses with low-interest loans of up to \$250,000. They have been provided to almost 7,000 businesses. There has also been substantial payroll tax relief, land tax relief and electricity bill relief during COVID-19.

We are also making it easier for small business to do business with government. In April we released the Business Launchpad, a new digital tool that will make it easier to start a small business and help reduce red tape. Government procurement is a substantial spend and I want to see small

business get a larger slice of that pie. Government agencies are now required to spend at least 25 per cent of their procurement dollars with Queensland's small and medium businesses. We have exceeded this target and put \$2.57 billion back into the pockets of Queensland small businesses. That is good news for our diverse and decentralised economy.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. Deputy Chair?

**Mr STEVENS:** I defer to the member for Maroochydore.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Premier, you mentioned a referral in regard to the Integrity Commissioner. What role have you or your department played in this referral?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I cannot comment any further on that.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Premier, there has been an issue with lobbyists having access to government and being involved in campaigning. Your Integrity Commissioner has an important role in scrutinising the issue of lobbyists, but the Premier is not coming clean about what part her department or she has played in regard to referring the Integrity Commissioner.

**CHAIR:** I would counsel you to rephrase that question.

**Ms SIMPSON:** The question is what is the referral?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I cannot comment, as I said. It was referred to the committee and I am not at liberty to discuss what the committee did.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** You can. If you referred it you can talk about it. You can talk about it.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, I can't.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Of course you can. You can talk about it.

**CHAIR:** With respect, that is not correct, member for Kawana.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I have a question.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, do you have a question? Please, member for Kawana, do not interject. You can put questions—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Can I put my question, please?

**CHAIR:** I have given you the call.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** But then you are interjecting when you have given me the call.

**CHAIR:** Hold on.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Here we go. Here we go again. You have given me the call, Chair. I am going to ask my question and I do not need your interruption and I do not need your filibustering and I do not need help in asking my question. Thank you. Question to the Premier.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I have a question to the Premier.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, order! I do not want you to filibuster yourself either. Member for Kawana, I give you the call.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair, I have a question to the Premier. You have given me the call. I am going to ask it. Premier, you fly out to Tokyo on Sunday. Can you please tell this committee that on your return you will be quarantining in a Queensland government quarantine hotel at your own expense in the same type of room as other Queenslanders and eating the same food as provided to other Queenslanders in Queensland government hotel quarantine?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I do not think that relates to the budget.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Point of order. Are you going for free? Is it costing taxpayers nothing to send you to Tokyo?

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, the Premier had just begun her answer and you—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The Premier asked me a rhetorical question: what has it got to do with the budget? I am responding that the expense to the taxpayer of sending the Premier to Tokyo has a lot to do with the Queensland budget because the taxpayers are funding it.

**CHAIR:** Hold on. Order!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thought we were in bipartisanship for the Olympics. I am sorry.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Premier, are you going to be in the same hotel quarantine eating the same food?

**CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair, I will not be bullied by you in getting these answers to the question.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, I call you to order. The Premier started the second sentence and you interjected twice. I call you to order. The standing orders still apply to this committee. I appreciate that you are passionate about this issue, but give the Premier an opportunity to answer without interjecting.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Let me start by saying that I am not going to let anyone stand in the way of Queensland's opportunity to secure an Olympics for this state. Secondly, one of the biggest things that is standing out for President Bach and the International Olympic Committee is the cooperation and collaboration of all three levels of government. I know the member for Kawana does not attend the meetings that I go to with the local government and the federal government, but we have had over a dozen of those meetings and we all work together. I do not want to see this bid fail because of a lack of bipartisanship that has been the cornerstone of this bid.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Point of order, Mr Chair. My question related to the Premier's trip to Tokyo and my question was—

**CHAIR:** I understand the point of order.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair, I have not finished my point of order so it is hard for you to understand my point of order if you do not give me the courtesy to put my point of order.

**CHAIR:** I know where you are going, member for Kawana.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair, the question was about the hotel quarantine expense. Is the Premier paying for it? Is she getting provided the same food as other Queenslanders or does she have special privileges attached to her hotel quarantine that other Queenslanders do not? That is the question.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, that is totally out of order. It is really disappointing—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** So is not answering the question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Put it this way, I am not staying at the Lodge.

**CHAIR:** No, Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am doing hotel quarantine.

**CHAIR:** We do not want to be lowered to the lack of disorder that the opposition is determined to—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Who is paying for it? Are you paying for it?

**CHAIR:** Order! This is obviously a huge issue. The Premier is answering the question. There is no point of order and I will not be bullied or badgered into doing this by continual interjections, especially when I am answering a point of order.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Let me say that the exemption granted by Border Force to travel to Tokyo is in the national interest. I will also be travelling with the Lord Mayor—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I asked about quarantine—the cost. Are you paying for it personally?

**CHAIR:** Order, member for Kawana!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The Premier is not answering the question. Are you paying for this personally? It is a yes or no. Who is paying for it?

**CHAIR:** Order! Member for Kawana, this is really disappointing. The question has been put and the answer is being given.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** No, it is not. Who is paying for it? The Premier cannot answer who is paying for it.

**CHAIR:** Order!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** In other states, and I think this applies to federal ministers, and you can check it with the federal government, my understanding is that they are allowed to quarantine at home. In Queensland we have a standard; we believe that everyone should quarantine in hotels. I am going over to Tokyo to represent this state as Premier of Queensland. The people of Queensland expect me to go and represent their best interests. John Coates has said if I do not go the whole bid could fail.

**An honourable member:** Oh yeah, sure.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** So rude.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** So answer the question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am answering the question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Who is paying for it?

**CHAIR:** This is extraordinarily disappointing.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It is. It is a disappointing estimates, Chair. For the cover-up provided by Labor members it is disgraceful.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The Lord Mayor is travelling as well, can I say?

**CHAIR:** Of course.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** And we have both made the commitment that we will be hotel quarantining on the way back. That is going to be 14 days away from family. We will do what is required of everyone else who does the 14 days.

**CHAIR:** I believe the Leader of the Opposition has a question.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Premier, have ambulance delays seen Queenslanders' lives lost during the health crisis?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** First of all I want to reject the premise of that question. The Leader of the Opposition continues to talk about the health system in negative terms. The Leader of the Opposition knows that perhaps the worst three years that this state faced was under the Newman government when he sat around the cabinet table and they decimated health in this state. They axed nurses, they axed midwives, they had fights with doctors. The member for Kawana has gone, but he had fights with the lawyers. It is still the same people running the show over there. We had to rebuild those frontline services.

As I said at the beginning of this hearing and I will say again, we are facing some unprecedented pressures on our emergency departments, as are other states. Queensland is not unique. We are putting on extra paramedics, we are putting extra money in to create more bed spaces. We want to work with the federal government to remove people who are in aged-care and disability services out of our hospitals, back into the community to free up even more bed spaces, but it needs the cooperation of everyone to do that.

**Mr PURDIE:** Premier, it has been reported that the CHO's emails sent to you cannot be released under RTI because they have been corrupted. Experts warn that sometimes this can be the first sign of a cyber attack. Are you concerned by the apparent failures in this IT system?

**Mr WHITING:** Point of order, Mr Chair. Once again, how is this connected to the expenditures and the appropriations in front of us? I know there is the point about the efficiency of government, but I have not seen them demonstrate this at any point.

**Mr PURDIE:** Mr Chair—

**CHAIR:** Member for Ninderry, you have a point of order?

**Mr PURDIE:** I want to respond to that. This is about a corruption in the government's IT systems, which I think we have seen historically is often a big impost to the state's budget.

**CHAIR:** We can definitely characterise this one as a cyber-phishing exercise.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** My understanding is that that is a matter for the Department of Health. The health minister is appearing at estimates. You can ask that question of them. If you want to talk about health advice, I will say this: the health advice provided by the Chief Health Officer has stood Queensland in really good stead. You can ask any Queenslander what they think about the way in which we have conducted our health response to the COVID pandemic and you will not see Queenslanders fault that.

Secondly, I draw the member's attention to the fact that his party called for the borders to be opened 64 times. I know that is something that they do not want to talk about, but they were out there publicly wanting the borders to be opened and they would have let the virus in to this state.

**Mr STEVENS:** Point of order, Chair.

**CHAIR:** Sorry, Premier—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Do not come at me about health advice when Dr Young is perhaps the most respected chief health officer in the nation.

**CHAIR:** I understand, Premier, but there is a point of order.

**Mr STEVENS:** The point of order is in relation to the relevance of the Premier's answer.

**CHAIR:** The Premier's answer is relevant.

**Mr STEVENS:** The member has another question to follow.

**CHAIR:** I understand that and I noted the interjection. It was out of order. The Premier's answer is relevant.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Because of our strong health response our economy has been able to recover. Do you not think the International Olympic Committee is going to look at our strong health response? The fact that we have been able to grow jobs, lower the unemployment rate, see investment coming to Queensland, see people moving here—those are solid signs that confidence is back in Queensland and our unemployment rate has dropped dramatically.

I will always take the advice of Dr Young. I say this to the members of the opposition: there was a High Court case about whether or not people can close their borders due to the health response and it was found that they can. Queensland was a party to that case in Western Australia to keep people safe. Those opposite should think long and hard about criticising the health advice that is provided and that has kept every single person in this room safe and their communities.

**Mr PURDIE:** Mr Chair—

**CHAIR:** I want to give some counsel. If you have a point of order, you can raise it. Getting my attention while another member of the House, in this case the Premier, has the call I will not acknowledge. It is simply an interjection. Do you have a question?

**Mr PURDIE:** I do have another question. I go back to the corrupted emails and my initial question. The emails were sent to the Premier. Did you receive those emails and are you in a position to release them, particularly around the advice that you have just spoken about from the CHO that underpins the decisions around funeral attendee limits, lockdowns, face masks and border closures?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** My understanding is that these are matters for an RTI officer and I have nothing to do with the RTI officer.

**CHAIR:** This is really the same question that has already been put. The question has been put and answered again. Is there a further question?

**Mr PURDIE:** Premier, can you explain how the reasons for lockdown decisions are recorded if the health advice that underpins those decisions and that is relied upon is not saved and cannot be provided under an RTI?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Member for Ninderry, are you saying that you do not support the lockdowns that have kept Queenslanders safe?

**CHAIR:** Order, Premier.

**Mr PURDIE:** No.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is what you implied.

**Mr PURDIE:** I asked a pretty clear question: can you release the information underpinning those lockdowns?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is what the member was implying. You were implying that you do not support the strong decisive action that this government has taken to protect the community that you represent.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** No, that is not what he has said at all.

**Mr PURDIE:** That is not the question that I asked.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is exactly what he is saying.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** No, it is not.

**Mr PURDIE:** I am asking you to release the information.

**CHAIR:** Order!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** And there has been a High Court case.

**CHAIR:** Premier, I do counsel you that when you put rhetorical questions like that you need to do it using correct titles. Those rhetorical questions can be interpreted as direct questions, which are out of order, of course. I thank the Premier. Are there any further questions?

**Mr STEVENS:** Yes. My question is to the director-general in relation to these matters. How does the director-general explain that there is a failure to keep proper minutes and reasons for decisions that cover the public, which is basically a serious failure of basic governance? Those minutes et cetera justify all these decisions that have economic ramifications for the 2021-22 budget going forward.

**Ms Hunter:** As the Premier has said, these decisions are informed by the advice of the Chief Health Officer. The impact of the decisions are reflected in the road maps that are published.

**Mr STEVENS:** Further to that, obviously there are decisions given by the Chief Health Officer in consultation with the government on these matters. Surely it is the director-general's responsibility in these situations to make sure all those matters are directly minuted, covered and recorded so that the Queensland public has confidence in why those decisions are made and where they are going to end up in terms of the economic outcomes?

**Ms Hunter:** With respect, I am not the Chief Health Officer.

**Mr STEVENS:** I understand that the director-general is not the Chief Health Officer. I do appreciate her advising me of that matter. Certainly good governance and proper recording of the government's decision-making would be the director-general's responsibility, I am sure.

**Ms Hunter:** As I said, outcomes of those decisions are reflected in the road maps, which are published soon after the advice is communicated. As you would know, where necessary there is a regular media conference where the Premier, the Chief Health Officer and the health minister outline the outcomes of those decisions.

**CHAIR:** Perhaps I could get greater clarity by using government time. Premier, with the almost daily questioning through press conferences, is there greater transparency of the decision-making process? What are the general outcomes of those decisions in terms of our economy and our health?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I think Queenslanders know that when we have something to communicate with them we go out there, when it is required, and we communicate to them the advice that has been provided that morning from the Chief Health Officer to myself, the director-general and usually the Commissioner of Police or the Deputy Commissioner of Police. We go out and inform the community. I think that Queenslanders also know that, because we take decisive action, that strong health response has led to a very strong economic recovery. That is what we are discussing here today. We are discussing the budget that is based on our strong economic recovery.

I might mention this too, Chair: I do not think the opposition realises that overseas there are countries coming out of a seven-month lockdown. People have not been able to see their friends. They have not been able to go to work. They have not been able to travel. We have taken strong decisive action and that has enabled our economy to basically flourish so people are able to travel within our state with minimum restrictions. If the minimum restrictions are checking in, wearing a mask and also if you are sick getting tested, Queenslanders are responding to that. The result is, for Queensland, the fact that we have done such a great job and I commend every single person in this state.

**CHAIR:** I am informed by the deputy chair that the member for Coomera has a question.

**Mr CRANDON:** My question is to David Stewart, the Director-General.

**CHAIR:** Is it to the Director-General, member for Coomera? Dave Stewart is not—

**Mr CRANDON:** My apologies. I have been doing a little—

**CHAIR:** We might move to the government members and then we can come back.

**Mr CRANDON:** It will only take me a moment. Director-General, is your salary less than, the same as, or more than your predecessor, Dave Stewart? My apologies for my faux pas.

**Ms Hunter:** Thank you for the question. It is the same.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I hope that was not implying that a woman should get paid less.

**CHAIR:** I do not think that was—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Just checking, that a woman should get paid the same as a man.

**CHAIR:** I do not think was put into the question, Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I think that was the implication. Shameful.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**CHAIR:** Order, members. I have a question. Premier, referring to page 1 of the Service Delivery Statements and the government's objectives of safeguarding our health and supporting jobs—and this is really one of the crux questions about our future economy and the budget going forward—when will Queensland have regional quarantine facilities for all overseas travellers including returning Australians?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I think it is really important. I have said for quite some time that we need to have regional quarantine facilities. We have seen recently the Delta strain escape from hotel quarantine in Sydney and come up to Queensland with the family. We know that there are issues with hotels; them

not being the places to contain infectious diseases. I have long maintained that we need to have regional quarantine facilities. We had a very good proposal for Toowoomba which we submitted—a very comprehensive plan. We have also had correspondence from the Prime Minister about exploring a site at Pinkenba. We are working with the Commonwealth government in relation to that. If we have both facilities, it would mean that we would not have to rely solely on the hotel facilities. I mention to the committee that South Australia is undertaking a trial at the moment with fully vaccinated people in home quarantine. They are working out the terms of that and they will update.

**CHAIR:** For vaccinated people?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** For vaccinated people. Do not forget, too, as we saw recently with the person at the international terminal, you can be fully vaccinated and still have the virus and you can still transmit the virus. There is a lot more work to be done there. You would have to have very strong enforcement to make sure that the person did remain at their home and not go elsewhere. That is the first point to be made.

Secondly, we are seeing changing variants of this virus. Each new strain seems to be more infectious. Our hotels were the last line of defence, but they are not anymore because the virus is escaping out of the hotels. I believe hotels are still considered to be somewhat of a risk in terms of this new Delta variant. I know our authorities are working very closely on that. I once again thank everyone who works in hotel quarantine.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Premier. I think it is one of the most important challenges we have.

**Mr WHITING:** Premier, as indicated on page 1 of the SDS, can you outline or provide examples to the committee of how the strategic engagement with partners has been achieved in this budget?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** With regard to engagement with stakeholders and business partners in the community, I always say to people that you have to engage with everyone and always have an open door. I think that is absolutely crucial. I know the member understands the importance of this. The renewable sector is critical to the future of Queensland's economy and its low-carbon future, and partnerships with industry is a key element to delivering this. With the member's support, we have been working to drive renewable and hydrogen investment right across the state. We are investing \$145 million, as I said earlier, in the three Queensland Renewable Energy Zones and currently we have 32 large-scale operational solar farms and three operational wind farms. We do not want to see the momentum or investment stop. We need a clear plan for the future. We must continue to leverage our competitive advantage to support further investment and economic growth and to underpin the transition to a sustainable energy future.

We want our GOCs to increase investment in commercial renewable energy and hydrogen projects along with supporting infrastructure, including in partnerships with the private sector. This will also advance progress towards the renewable energy target and create jobs. We know that the development of this sector is going to mean so much to our state.

**Mr TANTARI:** Premier, in reference to page 2 of the SDS, how does your government investment in the screen and film industry boost employment and provide unique opportunities for Queenslanders?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The screen industry is going from strength to strength. We know that in other parts of the world this industry has either had to scale back or, in a large number of places, it has actually stopped completely. In this economic recovery plan, we have injected \$71 million to continue to grow Queensland's booming screen industry. The additional funding will confirm Queensland as the production powerhouse of Australia. Our strong response has ensured Queensland is the place to go for film investment in the world. In fact, we are already speaking with proponents about some expansion of film studios on the Gold Coast, we are looking at new film studios in Cairns, and we turned those old cotton storage sheds into studios at Hemmant.

We are seeing major productions still on the Gold Coast, from Baz Luhrmann's *Elvis* to recently Ron Howard's *Thirteen Lives*. There is a pipeline of productions to go ahead. That means jobs for everybody who is involved in the screen industry. It is not just the actors; it is everyone behind the scenes—the people who build the sets, the people who do the lighting, the people who provide the catering, and the people who make the costumes. Those people stay in hotels, then go and spend money locally, so it is really good for the economy. I am quite sure the member for Broadwater and the member for Mermaid Beach would be very supportive of our screen industry.

Also, the production *Bluey* has gone from strength to strength, winning an International Emmy Kids Award and is the most watched program in the history of the ABC. That is wonderful to see. You like that Jim?

**CHAIR:** Jim watches it.

**Mr STEVENS:** Maybe he is Bluey.

**CHAIR:** He does the voiceover.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is very popular with children. He has got a grandchild. \$4 million over four years for the North Queensland region.

**CHAIR:** Premier, talking about something much more serious and a change of tone, referring to page 1 of the Department of Premier and Cabinet Service Delivery Statements, reference is made to engagement with strategic partners and stewardship of innovation and changes. This is one of the most difficult societal changes we have to make. Can the Premier provide an overview of the work being done to address domestic and family violence and the work of the Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** This is a really important issue. Community safety is very important. Since 2015 we have invested more than \$600 million into domestic and family violence services, programs and strategies. We are investing more to support the services that help domestic, family and sexual violence victims. I recently announced that we would invest an extra \$7.5 million each year for the next four years. This year's budget includes more than \$138 million to respond to domestic, family and sexual violence, including crisis responses, perpetrator interventions and support services.

In addition, \$160.9 million has been committed to provide housing support and specialist homelessness services to vulnerable people, including those experiencing domestic and family violence. Another \$20 million has been provided over four years to expand domestic and housing services. While a lot of positive progress has been made, our government will continue to explore possible avenues of reform to ensure a safer Queensland for all.

We are listening to the voices of survivors and the families of the women who have been killed. They have called for legislative changes. To this end, we have established an independent Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce to recommend how best to legislate against coercive control as a form of domestic and family violence and to undertake a wideranging review into the experiences of women across the criminal justice system. Our government brought the issue of domestic and family violence out from behind closed doors. Through our 10-year reform agenda we have now implemented all the 140 recommendations from the *Not now, not ever* report.

The Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Council continues to provide valuable support in raising awareness of our reform agenda. I would like to acknowledge the work and contribution of Kay McGrath and welcome Vanessa Fowler, current Chair of the Allison Baden-Clay Foundation, as the new co-chair of the council along with Bob Atkinson. I was very pleased to announce that appointment.

Working in partnership is the only way to truly create lasting cultural change. The council continues to play a critical role in building momentum for corporate and community-led action to prevent domestic and family violence across Queensland. The prevention council has engaged regional Queensland communities and statewide audiences to raise awareness of the Queensland government's domestic and family violence reform, embed cultural change and foster partnerships to enhance community-led action. The prevention council has met with a range of stakeholders to hear their views on important issues, including the strengthening of legislation and providing guidance to government on improving responses to housing, frontline service delivery and communication and awareness campaigns during the pandemic.

In 2020 the prevention council delivered two regional engagement programs—one in Moreton Bay and one in Townsville—engaging over 300 individuals and organisations, and conducted eight digital and three face-to-face council meetings. There was a great focus on digital meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The prevention council has identified three priority areas for regional engagement in 2021—Toowoomba, Emerald and Woorabinda and the Sunshine Coast. It will be focusing on the behaviour and attitudes of young people, improved engagement with the business sector and enhancing outcomes for key demographics most vulnerable to domestic and family violence.

Our government remains focused on changing Queenslanders' culture and attitudes, improving integrated service delivery, strengthening justice system responses and delivering our shared vision of a Queensland free from domestic and family violence.

**Mr WHITING:** Premier, I refer to page 1 of the SDS where it states that one of the objectives is investing in skills in our communities. Could you please advise how programs like Skilling Queenslanders for Work is supporting our youth into work through training?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Bancroft for the question because we know how important these initiatives are for giving young people a great start in life. Skills are absolutely needed. We need to make sure that we are setting up our young people for a bright future, especially in the new industries we have been talking about today.

That is why in the 2021-22 state budget we have committed more than \$1 billion towards training and skills. We are going to continue with the highly successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative. Since we reinstated it in 2015, after it was savagely cut, it has assisted more than 60,000 Queenslanders, 37,000 of whom have found work as a direct result of their participation. This highly successful program sees more than 73 per cent of participants getting a job or going into further training. This program provides targeted training programs designed to equip disadvantaged jobseekers with the skills, qualifications and experience they need to enter and stay in the workforce.

I know that the member for Bancroft is very passionate about this. I understand that to date more than 2,100 people in his electorate have been assisted by Skilling Queenslanders for Work, with roughly 1,200 gaining employment and a further 220 going on to further training or returning to school. All of this goes into making sure that our unemployment rate comes down. It is programs like this and Back to Work that definitely make a big difference.

I was thrilled that in this budget we announced additional funding of \$320 million over four years for Skilling Queenslanders for Work. Furthermore, we are making this program permanent with \$80 million per year ongoing. That is how much we are committed to it. This commitment ensures secure, long-term funding for this vital program and gives confidence and certainty to the sector and its participants. Under the revitalised program up to 15,000 Queenslanders will be assisted each year. This continues the outstanding track record of this program.

**CHAIR:** We now move to the member for Coomera for a question.

**Mr CRANDON:** My question is to the director-general. Dave Stewart has been appointed to take Linda Apelt's former role. Is Mr Stewart's salary package less than, the same as or more than Ms Apelt's former salary package? When does Mr Stewart take up the role of agent-general in London?

**Ms Hunter:** The salary package will be the same and he will be taking up the role at the end of the year.

**Mr CRANDON:** Could you be more specific about when at the end of the year?

**Ms Hunter:** The date is to be negotiated and agreed.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I have a question for the Premier. What is the total value of the contingency fund in this budget to support small and family business and their staff in the event of a further lockdown?

**CHAIR:** Could you restate the question?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am happy to talk about this. I can answer part of the question. I thank the member for the question. I do not think the member saw the press conference. What we know very clearly is that support has been provided to New South Wales for their lockdown by the Commonwealth and state governments. I understand that an agreement has now been reached between the Commonwealth and the state for support for the five-day lockdown in Victoria.

This issue is going to be raised at national cabinet later today—not long after this hearing finishes. I think we need consistency because my concern is this. The three-day short, sharp lockdown works. My concern is that if you do not get any payments until five days then it may be that you do two days that you do not possibly need. These issues are going to be discussed.

I thank you for your question. It is a good question. It is going to be discussed later on today. It has to be an agreed hotspot arrangement between the Commonwealth and the state is my understanding, but there will be further discussions this afternoon.

**CHAIR:** Apologies, member for Broadwater, I did not understand the context of the question. I misheard it.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** My question is to the Premier and is specifically of the state government. How much have you set aside in this budget for business support for small and family business and their staff in the event of a lockdown? How much has the state government set aside in the budget?

**CHAIR:** Is that the same question?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** It is very different; it is extremely different. This is about the state.

**CHAIR:** But that is what you said last time.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** In terms of what we have provided to date, I discussed a bit of that earlier. In 2020-21 the support for small businesses totalled around \$1.78 billion. That included those adaptation grants that I spoke about, the \$1 billion in job support loans, the \$500 million in payroll tax relief and the \$100 million in electricity bill relief. Like I mentioned to you, there are going to be issues discussed at national cabinet that I cannot talk about in the context of this. I hope you appreciate that.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I understand that. With respect, I am not asking about matters of national cabinet. I am just asking specifically if this budget has allocated contingencies in the event of future lockdowns.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It depends on the agreed circumstances, but we will—

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** No. A budget has details of how much is set aside. I am just asking how much has been set aside for a contingency.

**CHAIR:** Member for Broadwater, the question was put. The Premier was undertaking an answer. Let the Premier finish her answer.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** If hypothetically we had to do a five-day lockdown at some stage in the future and it was agreed with the federal government, we would find that funding. Governments have the opportunity to do that, just as if there was a cyclone or natural disaster. We work out those arrangements, CBRC meets and we allocate the funding that is required.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Ms Hunter, what modelling was done to determine that Queensland should not have money allocated in the budget in the event of this? The Premier said we would find it, but what modelling was done to suggest that it should not have been allocated during the budgetary process?

**Ms Hunter:** I am not absolutely clear about the question. I think it is possibly a question that would be better put to the Under Treasurer and Treasurer.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I will ask a follow-up question to the director-general. Queensland is the only state that does not have a small business support package in the event of lockdowns. Has the department done modelling or has it investigated other opportunities in other states to see if we could come up a similar package?

**Ms Hunter:** I believe I am correct in saying that other states have provisions because they have had extended lockdowns, and I think that goes to the Premier's response earlier. Our budget assumes no widespread or sustained lockdown.

**CHAIR:** We had the supplementary appropriation process, but we are obviously addressing appropriations in this budget.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I have a follow-up question for the director-general. To date, how much direct cash assistance has there been for small and family businesses linked to the lockdowns?

**Ms Hunter:** I will take advice on that.

**Mr WHITING:** Obviously, part of this would be under the previous financial year. Is that what the member for Broadwater—

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** The Premier has spent a large portion of the time talking about 2012, so with your indulgence, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** I understand. My assumption is that that is in the 2021 budget. Director-General, do you have something to add?

**Ms Hunter:** As was previously confirmed by the Premier, the government certainly has provided support, both in 2020 and 2021, totalling over \$1.78 billion in direct response to the impact of COVID-19, including: Small Business COVID-19 Adaptation Grants of up to \$10,000, with more than \$180 million provided to over 20,000 Queensland businesses; and \$1 billion in Jobs Support loans, providing Queensland businesses with low-interest loans of up to \$250,000, provided to almost 7,000 businesses. The Premier also provided details on the \$500 million in payroll tax relief and \$100 million electricity bill relief during COVID-19.

**CHAIR:** Is that what you were after, member for Broadwater?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I will move on. Premier, nearly 20,000 people—mostly across North Queensland—have asked you to restore breach of bail to crack down on youth crime. Why won't you listen to them and restore breach of bail?

**CHAIR:** There is an inference in the question about the Premier's willingness to listen to Queenslanders. I will generally counsel that the member for Broadwater may have intentionally breached the standing orders in this way. I do not want him to re-state the question, which may be his aim, but I do note that he should refrain from doing that. This is not the first time I have warned him about this.

Premier, the question was about breach of bail and general bail provisions. Can you enlighten the committee with your answer?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We have said that we were not going to do that. From memory, we have put in over \$500 million in terms of youth justice initiatives, including early intervention programs and new detention centre capacity. This year's budget includes a total of \$290.6 million for youth justice services, including: additional funding of \$7.7 million over four years and \$2.5 million per annum ongoing for a new 10-bed drug and alcohol residential treatment program for young people; \$92 million over four years for programs and services to tackle youth offending, including co-responder teams; extended hours of supervision on weekends and at night for intensive monitoring of high-risk repeat offenders and intensive support for their families; \$5 million in infrastructure funding for a short-term remand centre; and \$5.7 million for a business case to investigate additional detention centre capacity into the future.

While this budget places a strong focus on interventions for young people to stop offending and reoffending, it also ensures that we continue to hold offenders to account. We passed strong youth justice reforms that target the repeat offenders responsible for a disproportionate amount of harm. The reforms are backed with a \$98.4 million funding package, including: an investment to monitor and supervise young offenders and provide more resources for frontline workers and courts to deal with repeat offenders; \$38.3 million to support the new measures; and more than \$60 million will be invested in support programs and services to steer young people. The funding will support the trial of electronic monitoring devices and the expansion of co-responder teams, and of course we look forward to Bob Atkinson's evaluation of these measures. As we know, 10 per cent of young offenders commit more than 40 per cent of youth crime, and that is why we are targeting that particular cohort.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Premier, on 23 March an RTI officer from QBCC wrote the following, 'I have spoken to Joan, and we agree that all that can be taken out has been taken out.' Later in the email the RTI officer said, 'If this were to go to OIC, more information would be released than what I have decided.' Is this the type of independence that RTI officers should abide by?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am not the RTI officer. The RTI officer decided that. They are independent from ministers.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I have a follow-up question. Premier, in 2009 Premier Bligh said that information is to be released administratively unless there is a good reason not to, with applications under the legislation to only be an avenue as a last resort. Earlier this year the government refused to release information in relation to how many high-paid senior executive appointments it had approved since the state's internal austerity measures because 'readers may be misled'. Premier, can you explain why the government should be making decisions on what information people are smart enough to understand?

**Mr WHITING:** I have a point of order.

**CHAIR:** I take it that the member for Bancroft's point of order is that there is an inference in the question as to why independent decision-makers have made a decision. I counsel the member for Broadwater that his question should not contain those sorts of inferences, of which the information provided gives no factual basis. Premier, I will give you some leeway to answer that question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As I said, I am not an RTI officer. In relation to the specifics of that question, I might get the director-general to expand on that.

**Ms Hunter:** Again, these are matters that are determined by independent RTI officers.

**CHAIR:** I note that the member for Traeger and the member for Maiwar have joined us and they intend to ask questions, as I am sure the deputy chair is well aware.

**Ms SIMPSON:** My question is to the director-general. Director-General, are you aware of the reasons behind the refusal of the shareholding ministers of Gladstone Ports Corporation to endorse the unanimous board recommendation to appoint a CEO?

**CHAIR:** This would seem to be something that could be put to the shareholding minister. I do not know whether the director-general has this, but it would seem that directly this is a question of the shareholding minister and the shareholding minister is going to appear. I do not know if the director-general has much to add but I call the director-general.

**Ms Hunter:** Again, thank you for the question. That is probably a matter for shareholding ministers.

**CHAIR:** I think in general it is best if we put the estimates questions to the person directly rather than a third party. Member for Maroochydore, do you have another question?

**Ms SIMPSON:** Mr Chair, the department would be aware, and that would have been a briefing received by the department—

**CHAIR:** Which department? The DPC?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Yes.

**Ms SIMPSON:** My question to the DG is this: has an investigation been commenced into this decision?

**Ms Hunter:** I understand a letter was previously tabled in the House that made reference to a matter involving a shareholding minister and the corporation. That matter, I understand, has been considered by the Crime and Corruption Commission and they have determined no further action is required. This department, in relation to other allegations involving the chief of staff, has taken an independent investigation and again found no further action is required.

**CHAIR:** Again, member for Maroochydore, it is probably best that we direct the question to the relevant shareholding minister, whose knowledge would be firsthand of these issues.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Mr Chair, my question is to the Premier. Recently, in a question on notice, you refused to provide details about the 18 people working in your office and DPC in the areas of media, public relations and social media. Can you confirm why there has been a 137 per cent increase in this category and why the word 'ministerial' has been removed from the category description?

**Mr WHITING:** Point of order, Mr Chair, and I have not said much in recent times. There are a couple of things in there. Obviously, what I would say is there is an inference because the question contains a conclusion that cannot be substantiated unless the member can give something that substantiates it. I would leave that in your hands to take direction on.

**CHAIR:** I think it is difficult when every question contains an inference. This is probably on the more minor side. I was going to counsel the member once again. Certainly, the Premier is able to answer the question. I do counsel the member for Maroochydore to not just draw inferences about which the information does not necessarily support. Apologies, member for Bancroft. I know this is an issue but it is perennial.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am just checking the question on notice.

**Mr WHITING:** Just for clarification, Chair: does this refer to a matter that is contained in a question on notice?

**CHAIR:** It might have a new aspect of it. I call the Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I think the member for Maroochydore said 18 and that is not what is contained in the question on notice. It says there a total of 9.8. Where are you getting the 18 from? This could be misleading. I am wondering where the member for Maroochydore got the 18 from.

**Ms SIMPSON:** I am happy to crosscheck that question on notice and clarify if necessary. In respect of the increase in the number of public relations, social media and media operatives in the Premier's department, can you confirm why there has been such a level of increase in your office?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Are you speaking about in the department? You said 'department'.

**Ms SIMPSON:** In both the department and the Premier's office.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As Premier, I have a number of staff and those staff do a wide variety of jobs, just as they would have done under former premier Campbell Newman and as they do under the Prime Minister and the premiers across the country.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Mr Chair, I am happy to clarify the record.

**CHAIR:** With respect, member for Maroochydore—

**Ms SIMPSON:** A matter suddenly arising—

**CHAIR:** Is it a matter suddenly arising? This had better be a matter suddenly arising.

**Ms SIMPSON:** I think it is appropriate. I said that I would clarify. Those 18 people were actually I understand across the department and the Premier's office.

**CHAIR:** That is very disappointing that you phrase that as a matter suddenly arising. Premier, the member for Maroochydore has offered some clarification to the original question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am advised by the director-general that there has been a 13 per cent reduction in the department in communication, media and marketing staff since March 2015.

**Mr KATTER:** Premier, the budget makes reference to growing diversified exports. Whilst we are grateful of the support for CopperString so far, can the Premier outline how the government will ensure it fulfils its commitment for delivering the CopperString project, which is reported to be shovel ready in October?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for that question. I know how supportive he is of the project and what it can do for the region. We know that resources jobs have a long future in Queensland. That is why we are opening up the North West Minerals Province as part of our economic recovery plan. We know there is great potential in the province because the world needs the minerals there and they are critical to renewable energy.

To support the development, we are investigating ways to lower electricity costs and enable new projects. One approach we are taking is working with CopperString on their proposal to connect the North West Minerals Province to the National Electricity Market. This is very exciting work. They want to build a transmission line with an estimated construction cost of \$1.7 billion—transformational. CopperString estimate these works could support up to 750 construction jobs. I know the member is very keen to ensure that Queensland gets value for money.

To date, our government has provided \$16 million in grants to help CopperString develop this project. This includes \$14.8 million in our economic recovery plan in addition to further financial support and guidance through assessments and approvals. I know the federal government have also provided around \$16 million for initial work, but I encourage them to really get going on CopperString's loan from the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility. There are other options aimed at reducing electricity prices. Our government owned energy businesses are looking at renewable options, including Stanwell's Vast project in Mount Isa, with 50 megawatts across solar thermal, solar PV, battery storage and gas.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Premier. I now turn to the member for Hervey Bay.

**Mr TANTARI:** Premier, in reference to page 1 of the SDS, can you outline how the budget builds on the success of our economic recovery plan by investing in infrastructure, including my own electorate of Hervey Bay?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Hervey Bay for his question. Investing in infrastructure is a key role for the government to deliver benefits to communities, stimulate the economy and create jobs. That is why in 2021-22, there will be \$14.68 billion invested in vital infrastructure, supporting around 46,500 Queensland jobs. When COVID-19 hit, my government acted quickly and we brought forward investment last year. As part of the stimulus measures, capital works were fast-tracked to support economic recovery. I make no apology for bringing forward stimulus when our people needed it the most.

Last year the government committed to an infrastructure guarantee, and the \$52 billion committed over the next four years makes good on that promise. This will mean that over the next 10 years this government will have supported over \$110 billion in infrastructure works. Our investment in infrastructure translates into better hospitals, which the member well knows about, regional health facilities, new schools, transformational transport projects, better regional roads, new technologies and other catalytic projects. This is so important in our decentralised state, and that certainly includes important investment in Hervey Bay.

I know the member for Hervey Bay will be delighted to see investment in the Hervey Bay Hospital, including the \$11 million being invested in the new adult acute mental health unit. We should acknowledge that COVID-19 has actually brought about unprecedented demand when it comes to mental health because our whole lives have been turned upside down.

I know the member would also be delighted with the \$3.3 million in the budget for new classrooms at Hervey Bay State High School and investment in a new hall, fencing and canteen upgrade at Urangan State High school. There is also investment in the new Water Police facility at Hervey Bay, grid connected battery storage system at Hervey Bay and extensive funding for roads. These are just some examples of our ongoing investment in Hervey Bay and regional Queensland. Around 61 per cent of this year's budget is being invested outside of greater Brisbane, supporting around 29,800 jobs.

**CHAIR:** I think the member for Traeger, who was being too polite, has another question.

**Mr KATTER:** With reference to the expert panel chaired by Professor Ross Garnaut convened by the Premier to conduct a comprehensive government examination of the Bradfield scheme, can the Premier please advise what funding has been provided, how many times they have met and when the report will be made publicly available?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. I will have to take some of that on notice. Let me see what I have here. The expert panel was set up and chaired by, as you said, Professor Ross Garnaut and includes Dr Georgina Davis, the chief executive of the Queensland Farmers Federation, and Professor Allan Dale. The panel is looking at economic benefits to regional communities and agricultural production and any opportunities. I have written to the Prime Minister asking for his support. To design a long-term solution we need all the information and we need to work together.

The former natural resources minister Dr Anthony Lynham also met with Sir Leo Hielscher to be briefed on this proposal. The department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water advised the panel to make its report to the Queensland government later this year. That is good to know. I can assure the committee that our government will continue investing in Queensland's water security. I do not have how many times they met, so I will find that out for you. We are committed to water security. In this budget there is funding for projects such as Emu Swamp Dam, \$15 million; Rookwood Weir; the Haughton pipeline; and the Warwick pipeline.

**CHAIR:** Is that something the Premier will return to during this session?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I might have to take that on notice. I am just not quite sure how often they have met. The report is coming at the end of the year if the member is happy to take that as the answer.

**CHAIR:** We will confirm that at the end of the session.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I have a question for the Premier in relation to the federal LNP's plan to hand over \$175 million in public money through the NAIF facility to the \$9 billion private equity firm Denham Capital to build the Olive Downs coalmine. Premier, do you support the use of the NAIF for the Olive Downs coalmine, or will you use your legal power to veto that subsidy by the federal government.

**CHAIR:** With respect, this is not relevant to the appropriations in the question we have put before us. I am not sure whether the Premier—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I might have to take that on notice. Some of that is opinion. I would rather just get the facts, so I will take that on notice.

**CHAIR:** Premier, it is not actually the question that the committee has been charged to answer.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is not actually part of our budget, so it should perhaps be ruled out of order.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I will ask a follow-up question if I may. In relation to the assertions made, the Premier's decision-making power under the NAIF Act is in fact—

**CHAIR:** Hold on, member for Maiwar. You seem to be arguing the question. This is a question that might be perfectly adequate to ask in the House but it is not necessarily a question that fits within the standing orders—and I notice the deputy chair nodding—relating to the appropriations debate in estimates. With respect, do you have another question?

**Mr BERKMAN:** Yes, I do, Chair. I will preface it by saying that the exercise of the Premier's power under the NAIF Act clearly uses departmental resources to carry out that function. I will go back to the follow-up question. Premier, in 2015 you described the state LNP plan to loan Adani \$500 million for their railway line as gifting taxpayers' money. How would loaning a \$9 billion firm money to build their coalmine be any different?

**CHAIR:** Is this to do with the appropriations and the estimates expenditure in this—

**Mr BERKMAN:** Chair, as I explained just a moment ago, this is to do with the Premier's exercise of her legislated powers and the exercise of a power to veto loans that are proposed under the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility.

**CHAIR:** There are administrative powers that do not have to do with the estimates. There would be nothing wrong with the question if it was asked in the parliament per se, but it is not to do with the expenditure before the parliament. I do not know if anyone wants to correct me—

**Mr TANTARI:** I have a point of order, Mr Chair. Relevance.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Chair, the Speaker has been very clear about the latitude that is allowed in questions that are asked and answered in the context of estimates. I would suggest that this is a very flimsy line of defence you are running on behalf of the Premier.

**CHAIR:** Do you wish to take that back?

**Mr WHITING:** I think he should.

**CHAIR:** I do not think that is appropriate, member for Maiwar.

**Mr WHITING:** I would take that as a no, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** Is that a reflection on the chair?

**Mr BERKMAN:** I might reword it by saying that I feel the position that you have taken as chair is not consistent with rulings that the Speaker has made previously about the extent of questions that can legitimately be asked and answered in these estimates hearings.

**CHAIR:** Are you attempting to then move dissent from the ruling of the chair?

**Mr BERKMAN:** I am just asking the Premier to answer the question.

**CHAIR:** I know that. There is nothing wrong with the question; it is a worthwhile policy debate. However, we do have limits: within the expenditure that is in this budget. It seems to me this is clearly not. However, there might be something if the Premier attempts to connect this to the expenditure in the budget in giving an answer.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Chair, the Premier has indicated a willingness to take the first question on notice. I do not intend to waste any more of the committee's time arguing on these points.

**CHAIR:** I have given the call to the Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The issue is that it is nothing to do with the budget that is before us and before the committee. I am happy to find out where that matter is at. It might be more appropriate to ask the Treasurer. I think the correspondence would go to the Treasury not to the Office of the Premier. I am happy to clarify that for the member.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Thanks, Premier.

**CHAIR:** With respect to the member for Maiwar, this is an opportunity to ask questions about the expenditure of the budget. We announced in the beginning what we had as a limit to our discussion. An administrative decision, which is an important policy question, is not connected to the expenditure before us. I counsel you that there is a limit to how much was included.

**Mr BERKMAN:** These are administrative decisions made using the resources of—

**CHAIR:** Member for Maiwar.

**Mr BERKMAN:**—the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

**CHAIR:** Order, member for Maiwar.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Those are resources that are allocated under this budget.

**CHAIR:** Member for Maiwar! We have called order before. The ruling of the chair does not get argued each time. This is now the third time you have engaged in this argument. I have actually given you enormous latitude to put the question to the Premier; she has answered the question twice. We will move on. We only have a few minutes left. I might put a question to the Premier. Referring to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Service Delivery Statements in relation to delivery of innovative and effective policy and the funding for the wellbeing workforce for Queensland state schools, how will this funding help young Queenslanders?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Of course we are committed to safeguarding the health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders including our young people. We understand the challenges facing students and their wellbeing and that COVID-19 continues to present additional challenges and impact students' mental health. We talked before to the member for Hervey Bay about how mental health is having an impact on adults. We also realise that children are also feeling the effects as well.

Schools play a significant role in supporting the wellbeing and mental health of their students. Our government has a record of confronting issues affecting our young Queenslanders. Our government has highlighted and sought to address the issues of cyberbullying through a youth led task force, youth suicide, child protection, respectful relationships and informed consent in our schools. It is very important to me that our young people have a voice to government so that the issues which are important to them are front and centre of government priorities and decision making.

As our communities continue to experience the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting students' wellbeing and mental health is critical. Our young people are growing up in a world driven by new technologies and economic globalisation. Their future means they need a new set of cognitive,

social and emotional skills for success and we want to give them these skills. Healthy, confident and resilient young people who can successfully navigate a more complex world are vital for Queensland's future. We know that a supportive environment that combines a focus on wellbeing with a focus on learning is optimal. Without one, the other will not happen.

**CHAIR:** I have another question with reference to the Service Delivery Statements at page 1. Can the Premier outline achievements in relation to representation and economic participation of women in Queensland?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Of course, in September 2019 we met the target of 50 per cent of women on Queensland government boards, an increase from 31 per cent in July 2015. As at 30 September 2020, 54 per cent of the Queensland register of appointees are female, which is fantastic. It is great to have more women sitting around the table making decisions. We want to ensure that more women and girls are recognised in public spaces. The idea came from Malia Knox—and what a brilliant idea that was—and the Attorney-General has written to all local governments drawing attention to upcoming funding opportunities to develop and deliver initiatives that align with the Queensland government's priorities to address gender equality and domestic and family violence.

To promote gender pay equity across the state's largest workforce, this year's budget provides \$1.3 million over five years to support the Special Commissioner Equity and Diversity, to review the current public sector employment arrangements and conditions and to drive strategies. The Special Commissioner will lead the work for greater gender equity in Queensland. This year marked my government's sixth Women's Economic Statement with economic security and health and wellbeing at the front of our government's agenda. Of course, we had the women's economic statement.

While I am answering a question, I say to the member for Traeger that I am advised that the Bradfield panel has met 11 times.

**CHAIR:** Is there any additional information the member for Traeger wanted to take on board? I note the Premier said that the report would be coming out later in the year to address some of that. Is that sufficient, or is there part of the question that still needs to be taken on notice?

**Mr KATTER:** Is it going to be made publicly available?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Sure. I do not have a problem with its being publicly available. If I could correct one more thing, too? I said that I thought we had had around 12 Olympic task force meetings. It is actually 19 meetings, and I attended 18. There was one I could not make.

**CHAIR:** The committee secretary has just reminded that me that during a part of a question you obviously did not have knowledge of correspondence that had been entered into in regards to the member for Maiwar's question concerning the NAIF. I had sort of ruled it out of order, but I am trying to be tolerant. Is there any information that could be added, or is that best addressed to the Treasurer?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I should say for the record, in terms of the Olive Downs Mine, our government very much has been working, supportive and facilitating of the approvals through our government processes. In relation to that specific question about federal government funding, that would be best directed to Treasury.

**CHAIR:** Of course, it is best directed to the federal government during its estimates process?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Correct. It is not part of this budget.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Can I clarify, chair? The question that was asked and that I understood was taken on notice was: does the Premier support that NAIF funding, or will the Premier use the legal veto power in relation to the proposed loan?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Our government has been facilitating the processes.

**CHAIR:** With the enormous latitude I have given the member to express this—because you cannot frame questions that fit in with the budget—I have put that to the Premier and the answer has been given. Thank you very much. With that, the committee thanks the Premier. I know this is a big task for the staff in the Premier's office but also more generally in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. I wish to give you the opportunity to express thanks.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you, chair. I thank yourself and all the members of the committee for appearing today. I thank the witnesses. I want to thank the staff in my office who have worked very hard on this. It has been a big work effort for all of the departmental staff. I place on record my congratulations through to the director-general, the deputy director-general and the other deputies for all of their work plus, of course, Screen Queensland and Trade and Investment Queensland. Thank you very much for your time today. We very much appreciate these processes.

**CHAIR:** I also say 'thank you' to the many officers who do such hard work, including our statutory officers. I thank them, especially considering all of the roles they perform. As the Clerk said very well earlier today, there are so many questions that people prepare for which do not get asked but which are a really important part of considering the process of how we deliver services for Queensland. I thank you very much for that. The committee will now adjourn for a break and the hearing will resume at 2.00 pm with the examination of the estimates of the portfolio areas of the Treasurer and Minister for Investment.

**Proceedings suspended from 1.35 pm to 1.59 pm.**

## **ESTIMATES—ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE— TREASURER; INVESTMENT**

### **In Attendance**

Hon. C Dick, Treasurer and Minister for Investment

Mr B Kerdel, Chief of Staff

#### **Queensland Treasury**

Mr L Allen, Acting Under Treasurer

Mr W Cannon, State Actuary

Ms K Gould, Director (Cabinet Legislation and Liaison Office)

Mr M Jackson, Revenue Commissioner (Office of State Revenue)

#### **Queensland Treasury Corporation**

Mr P Noble, Chief Executive

#### **CS Energy Limited**

Mr A Bills, Chief Executive Officer

#### **Stanwell Corporation Limited**

Mr A Aspinall, Acting Chief Executive Officer

#### **QIC Limited**

Mr D Frawley, Chief Executive Officer



**CHAIR:** The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2021 for the portfolio areas of the Treasurer and Minister for Investment. My name is Linus Power. I am the member for Logan and chair of the committee. With me here today is Mr Ray Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach and deputy chair. The other members are Mr Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera; Mr Dan Purdie, the member for Ninderry; Mr Adrian Tantari, the member for Hervey Bay; and Mr Don Brown, the member for Capalaba, who is substituting this afternoon for Mrs Melissa McMahon, the member for Macalister. We also have some visiting members here today including Mr David Janetzki, the member for Toowoomba South; and Mr Jarrod Bleijie, the member for Kawana. Other members may come in throughout the hearing. The committee will examine the Treasurer's portfolio areas until 6 pm. We will suspend proceedings during this time for a break between 4 pm and 4.15 pm.

I remind all those present today that this is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament apply to this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not have lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. In respect of government owned corporations and statutory authorities, standing order 180(2) provides that a member may ask any question that the committee determines will assist it in its examination of the Appropriation Bill or otherwise assist the committee in determining whether public funds are being efficiently spent or appropriate public guarantees are being provided.

I intend to guide this afternoon's proceedings so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members. While mobile phones are not ordinarily permitted in the public gallery, an exception has been made for staff who are assisting our witnesses here today, who have been permitted to use these devices for this purpose. I do, however, remind people that all phones and electronic devices should be switched to silent to avoid any disruption to proceedings. I also remind you that food and drink are not permitted in the chamber.

On behalf of the committee I welcome the Treasurer, Under Treasurer, officials and departmental officers, and of course members of the public who are either upstairs or watching the broadcast. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials and advisers to identify themselves the first time they answer a

question referred to them by the Treasurer or the Under Treasurer. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of Treasury and investment open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Treasurer, if you choose to, you may make an opening statement of around five minutes.

**Mr DICK:** Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon to you, members of the committee and committee staff. So much has happened since the last time this committee held budget estimates hearings barely seven months ago. One of the biggest things that has changed is that Queensland has entered a jobs boom. There is no other way to describe it. I refer in particular to the release of the June employment data yesterday by the Australian Bureau of Statistics: Queensland jobs up by 16,700—the highest increase in the nation. The next highest was Western Australia, with 12,600 more jobs, while New South Wales and Victoria each lost 9,200 jobs in the month of June. In total, it means that 354,100 jobs have been created under the Palaszczuk Labor government since January 2015.

That strong job creation means that our unemployment rate is now 5.1 per cent, down by 0.3 percentage points on the previous month. The last time it was this low was in April 2009. To put that in perspective, in April 2009 the member for Broadwater was the newly elected deputy mayor of Townsville City Council. To put it another way, in April 2009 you could have bought a bitcoin for less than one cent. Today, a single bitcoin is worth about \$44,000. Forget bitcoin: the better investment has been Queensland jobs, going from strength to strength under the Palaszczuk Labor government.

That is not the only improvement we are seeing in our economy. In the last year Queensland has recorded faster domestic economic growth than the rest of Australia, the fastest jobs growth in Australia, the fastest growth in labour force participation in Australia, more interstate migrants than any other state or territory, faster consumption growth than the rest of Australia, faster dwelling investment growth than the rest of Australia and faster housing lending growth than the rest of Australia. The budget brings good news for Queensland.

There is a further matter I would like to touch on before we get into the questions. I know that members of the committee have a strong interest in the valuation of the Titles Registry. The valuation of \$7.8 billion that I announced at budget was made at a point of time, reflecting the circumstances that applied at that time. As COVID has reminded us, circumstances can change. In this case, circumstances have changed in Queensland's favour. Following financial close of the Titles Registry transaction, its valuation has been upgraded. QIC has advised that the valuation of the transferred Registry Co shares was \$7.986 billion, being the transfer value as at financial close. This is something that all Queenslanders can share in, further cementing our position as having the most valuable titles registry in Australia. The final valuation is based on the size and quality of its cash flows and the horizon over which the owners have control over those cash flows.

To give some context as to why our Titles Registry is so valuable, it is important to note that our registry turns over approximately \$350 million per year. This is higher than the revenue streams estimated by other jurisdictions which have privatised their registries. Because Queensland has retained the asset in public hands, we have included ad valorem fees in its valuation, which other states have not. Informed by several independent valuations and independent commercial advice, QIC has valued the registry on a multiple of 23 times earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation. That is quite a conservative multiple. Of the four titles registries that have traded in the last few years, only one traded at a lower earnings multiple, and that was the first one to be sold, when it was a novel asset in Australia. A concession period of 50 years was adopted, reflecting discussions with the Queensland Audit Office and agreed by the QIC steering committee. Having used a conservative earnings multiple and a 50-year horizon, QIC has arrived at the valuation of almost \$8 billion.

I am pleased to be updating the committee on this important valuation, this being the first opportunity I have had to inform the parliament since the transfer value was finalised. In due course we will announce how the higher valuation will be used for the benefit of the Queensland people. In addition to providing a mechanism to recognise Queensland's fiscal position, the transfer of the Titles Registry has supported the creation of the \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund, the \$500 million Carbon Reduction Investment Fund and the \$300 million Path to Treaty Fund.

Other highlights of this year's budget include: a record \$22.2 billion for health and \$16.8 billion for education; as part of our \$50 billion infrastructure guarantee, \$52.2 billion in capital investment across the forward estimates including \$14.7 billion in the current financial year; continued investment in skills, including locking in our Skilling Queenslanders for Work program; and our \$3.34 billion

Queensland Jobs Fund, which includes \$2 billion for the Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund and \$520 million for the Invested in Queensland program. There are many other initiatives in the budget for regional Queenslanders, for women and for First Nations people. I would be happy to take the committee's questions on these and other matters.

**CHAIR:** That is extraordinarily good news about jobs. Deputy Chair, is there a question?

**Mr STEVENS:** Yes, there is a question. I defer to the shadow Treasurer, if I may.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I direct my first questions to the Acting Under Treasurer, if I could, please. When asked what will happen to the budget if there is a COVID lockdown, the Treasurer said, 'Heaven forbid that there is.' Given the south-east and Townsville lockdown in early July, can you advise the impact of that lockdown on the budget?

**Mr DICK:** I raise a point of order, Chair. Could I ask for that quote to be clarified—where that quote came from and what the precise quote is?

**CHAIR:** I think obviously it was only two words. I think anyone listening, if they took that as the entirety of the Treasurer's words—but I do think it is somewhat misleading. Is there a method—

**Mr DICK:** I thought the question asked of me at a media conference was about a further pandemic outbreak, not a further lockdown. I may be wrong, but I seek to clarify what actually was said in the context because there is a difference between a further pandemic outbreak and a further lockdown. They are entirely different things. The question put to the Acting Under Treasurer was it was put to me that there would be a further lockdown and I said, 'Heaven forbid'. I do not recall doing that. I may be wrong, and am happy to be corrected, but I would not want the Acting Under Treasurer to be misled.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I will rephrase the question.

**CHAIR:** It might be useful to rephrase the question. Those little elements of colour do need to be verified. The deputy chair has alerted me to that fact.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I am happy to correct the record.

**Mr DICK:** Point of order, Chair. The member is, I think, misleading the parliament. The words that were used, if I look carefully at what was said at the press conference, were, 'What would happen if there was another outbreak?' The member for Toowoomba South is incorrect and I ask him to withdraw and apologise.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I withdraw.

**CHAIR:** In general we should always be careful to get those facts right. The member for Toowoomba South is rephrasing the question.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Acting Under Treasurer, I will go straight to the question: given the South-East and Townsville lockdown in early July, can you please explain the impact of the lockdown on the budget?

**CHAIR:** Before you answer, getting straight to the question is what I have been urging all day. It would be great if we could do that in the future.

**Mr Allen:** I thank the member for the question. In relation to the budget, there is a key assumption around no widespread or prolonged lockdown of a type we saw where the nation was locked down. What we have experienced in the South-East and in Townsville were short-term lockdowns. When we look to national accounts data and ABS retail data, what we have seen is some very positive recovery from those events, being short-term lockdowns. The economic impacts of short-term lockdowns has been very small. That is just a general summary there. I can go into some further detail to flesh that out.

In terms of labour force data, we saw very strong results, which the Treasurer has already highlighted, showing employment increasing. This strong jobs growth saw the unemployment rate drop, so we see firms are hiring into the current environment. ABS retail data and national accounts indicate that the first two short-term lockdowns had only marginal impacts an aggregate spending levels. The short-term lockdown in January likely contributed a small fall in Queensland's retail trade. However, retail spending bounced back strongly after the restrictions were lifted with growth of 1.1 per cent in February compared to a national fall of 0.8 per cent to be 12.1 per cent higher over the year. Aggregate household consumption in Queensland fell 0.3 per cent in the March quarter, however, it remains strong at 3.3 per cent above pre-COVID levels from the March 2020 quarter. It was the strongest annual growth of all states.

Although we do not have national accounts data for June, the retail data shows a rebound in consumer spending levels which unwound both January and March to provide very strong recovery from those periods. I can then highlight return to consumer confidence. In terms of the overall summary, in terms of the budget, the short-term lockdowns are not evidencing the economic impacts we see from the more longer, prolonged long-term lockdowns.

**Mr JANETZKI:** In respect of the potential for lockdowns, has Treasury scenario-tested the potential budget implications for three-day, five-day, seven-day or even longer lockdowns?

**Mr Allen:** As I was alluding to there, and apologies if it was not clear, our analysis of the evidence highlights that the shorter-term lockdowns are not having the same economic impact. Nationally we see balance sheets for both businesses and households very strong. That seems to translate into very strong consumer behaviour post short-term lockdowns. As I highlighted at the commencement of my previous question, the assumption in the budget is no prolonged or extensive lockdown.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Just to be clear, Treasury has, in fact, scenario-tested that and not just made observations on other jurisdictions—has actually scenario tested the three-, five- and seven-day lockdowns?

**CHAIR:** I know this is for clarity, but this is now the third time you have asked exactly the same question of the Acting Under Treasurer, which I guess he can answer in exactly the same way, but is there a distinction in the questions?

**Mr JANETZKI:** Let the Acting Under Treasurer answer the question.

**CHAIR:** I do not know that there is any distinction between the three questions that have been asked so far. That is why I was asking you to clarify the question. The Acting Under Treasurer has twice answered that they had done some analysis, from what he said—not to repeat what he said.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I am going to move on.

**CHAIR:** Certainly. I am happy to put that question again.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I do not want you filibustering, Chairman. Acting Under Treasurer, has Treasury undertaken any work on a COVID business lockdown support package to date?

**Mr Allen:** I thank the member for the question. We are always monitoring the situation as we see unfold in other states. Fortunately we have not had to manage or contend with a lockdown of duration that we have seen in other jurisdictions, over and above the original extended lockdown that effectively was a national lockdown. In terms of our work, it is to ensure that we use our national forums, so we are regularly meeting with other treasuries and understanding what is happening in terms of their lockdown programs. We are constantly reviewing that information and preparing for the event that if there is something that we need to support the government with then we can pull that information together.

**Mr DICK:** National cabinet is on today too.

**Mr Allen:** To incorporate that point, it has been an agenda item for national cabinet and I think the Premier has noted the state's commitment to join the Commonwealth in providing support for communities and business at a time when lockdowns extend beyond seven days. I know the federal government last night—I am advised, I have not seen the detail—put together a package with Victoria around a five-day lockdown that they are looking to implement at the moment.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Acting Under Treasurer, would you have presented to the Treasurer any draft small business COVID package related work and, if so, when would you have first presented that to the Treasurer?

**CHAIR:** This does seem enormously repetitive.

**Mr JANETZKI:** It is a completely different question.

**Mr DICK:** I am happy to answer the question, as I am the recipient.

**Mr JANETZKI:** No, we do not want spin, we want answers, please.

**Mr DICK:** The answer is no.

**CHAIR:** Mr Allen?

**Mr Allen:** As I alluded to in the previous answer, there is monitoring of what we are seeing by way of packages in other states and working in with national forums, including the Council on Federal Financial Relations where this is also discussed. The federal Treasurer has been talking about a nationally consistent approach and so that information is information we are constantly reviewing.

**CHAIR:** I do note that the answer Mr Allen gave was identical because the questions were so similar.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair, stop adding your commentary to the questions, please.

**CHAIR:** Member for Toowoomba South?

**Mr JANETZKI:** Acting Under Treasurer, to finalise, no proposals for a small business lockdown package have been presented to the Treasurer. I am interested to know has Treasury undertaken modelling with respect to what packages would be necessary to support small and family businesses for, say, three-, five-, seven-day lockdowns or longer?

**Mr Allen:** As I think I have highlighted, and apologies if it has not been clear, the information that we are able to interrogate from packages that have been designed in other jurisdictions provides us with the guidance that we would need if we were to pull together such a package. It would be an opportunity, depending on what the location is for a lockdown, which type of support would be most effective, the duration of a lockdown, whether, as we saw during the April-March lockdown, there was consideration for initiatives like payroll tax or direct business grants, are we dealing with shorter-term cash issues. There are a lot of variables that would go into the design of a package. That is more of a design rather than a modelling approach.

**Mr JANETZKI:** If a small business package was required, how much is available in the budget to support small and family businesses with respect to a potential seven-day lockdown?

**CHAIR:** I am happy to put the question but it seems to me—

**Mr JANETZKI:** This is a quantum amount, Chairman.

**CHAIR:** Given the answer to the previous question, I am happy to put the question but—

**Mr STEVENS:** Point of order, Chair. The member has asked a legitimate question. It is either yes or no. Please let the Acting Under Treasurer answer the question.

**CHAIR:** Certainly, but as chair of the committee I have a requirement to not allow repetitive questions.

**Mr STEVENS:** It was not a quantity question previously. If you could advise me, I was not aware of that.

**CHAIR:** Given that the answer made that clear, and I respect that the member for Toowoomba North is not doing this in a badgering or belligerent manner, which is usually what that addresses, I will allow the question to be put.

**Mr Allen:** Just as we would respond to any unforeseen event, the budget would then be able to make allowance for that. Reflecting on observations in the last hearing, the Premier provided a bit of guidance as to how the government would approach that in terms of the CBRC's consideration of that.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Acting Under Treasurer, I am interested to know who came up with the idea to corporatise the Titles Registry?

**Mr Allen:** I guess I joined the story a little after the government made the decision to establish the Future Fund. I think the original intention was to use the surpluses from the defined benefit scheme to create assets that would be provided as an offset for the operation of the Future Fund in line with the structure of funds that we had seen in the New South Wales government, the generation funds and also, I think, the original concept from Quebec where, working with rating agencies, that government created a debt offset as well.

The approach then we saw with the impact of COVID, which obviously has had a significant effect on the government's returns or the returns on the funds held within the defined benefit scheme. In the course of the pandemic and looking to where other assets could potentially be identified for contribution to the Future Fund to create that same funding debt offset, a list of a range of assets was reviewed and identified. Given that in other states there had been privatisations of registries, the proposal to corporatise the registry is well informed by other processes—I think that would be the answer there. That has been the genesis of the decision to corporatise or to have it then ultimately contributed to the fund.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Acting Under Treasurer, would Treasury foresee any other government department that would be corporatised and is Treasury undertaking any preparatory work in that regard?

**Mr DICK:** Point of order, Chair, firstly on relevance to the forward expenditure of the government. Secondly, it is not a matter for the Under Treasurer; it is a matter of government policy that would be determined by the government, that is, elected members of the executive.

**CHAIR:** The Treasurer is, of course, correct. I encourage you to put that policy question to the Treasurer if you wish to.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I will rephrase the question. Acting Under Treasurer, would Treasury provide advice with respect to the corporatisation of other government departments on an as-requested basis? In doing so, would Treasury see that as a valid policy position in respect to the budget into the future?

**CHAIR:** I am sorry, Treasurer; I think I know where you are going. Obviously 'if would, then, would' is the definition of a hypothetical question. You have the policy decision-maker right in front of you. Under the standing orders, Mr Allen cannot answer hypothetical questions about hypothetical policies that were put by the Treasurer, who is sitting right next to him.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Under Acting Treasurer, the Treasurer has made some comments already in respect of the increase to the valuation. I am trying to understand the assumptions underpinning that valuation. I know we have the ad valorem aspect and I know there are other aspects to the work that has been done with respect to the valuation. I am particularly interested in the change in the valuation assumption with regard to the 35 to 50 years. Can you explain why that particularly important valuation assumption was changed, conceivably between May when the titles office was valued at \$4.2 billion, June when it was valued at \$7.8 billion and now today at \$7.9 billion? Can you explain the justification for that particular change in assumption?

**Mr Allen:** You alluded to the Treasurer's comments in opening. He did make reference to the accounting advice and the consultation that was undertaken with officers of the Audit Office around the assumption underpinning the term being 50 years and to provide some insight into that discussion with the Audit Office. It ensures then that there is indeed, in an accounting sense, a movement of control from the general government sector.

**Mr JANETZKI:** With respect to the valuations and the process by which they were provided, can you note for the committee on what date the Bank of America was contracted to provide their particular titles office valuation?

**Mr Allen:** I am not aware of that date. I would have to endeavour to find that information for you.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Can we take that on notice, Chairman?

**CHAIR:** Obviously, if it is to be taken on notice and the question has been put to take it on notice—

**Mr DICK:** He does not know the answer.

**Mr JANETZKI:** He can get the answer

**Mr DICK:** He does not have to. He can say, 'I don't know.' On a point of order, Chair, any witness in this committee is entitled to give a direct relevant answer and if the Acting Under Treasurer does not know he can say, 'I do not know.' That is a sufficient answer.

**CHAIR:** Which is the answer that Mr Allen, the Acting Under Treasurer, has given.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Treasurer, will you publicly release the opinions with respect to this valuation, whether they be Bank of America, EY or PwC?

**Mr DICK:** No.

**Mr JANETZKI:** These valuations have been so vastly different from one month to the next, notwithstanding the best explanations for them. Why will the Treasurer not release those valuations for the public to see?

**CHAIR:** Treasurer, you obviously made some reference to this in the statement that you gave to the House.

**Mr JANETZKI:** The Treasurer can answer the question, Chairman.

**CHAIR:** He certainly can. I thought if there was clarification it needed to be in addition to that. I am happy for the question to be put to the Treasurer and Minister for Investment.

**Mr DICK:** I gave a comprehensive statement to the committee because I know their interest in the matter, but it is not unusual at all for assets to be revalued, and this is an example of that. The defined benefit fund, for example, is managed by the Queensland Investment Corporation—\$35 billion under management for the defined benefit scheme in Queensland. There are daily movements, I can inform the committee, in the value of that fund of between one and 1½ per cent. On a \$35 billion portfolio, this can equate to up to \$500 million in a valuation shift on a daily basis. In periods of market stress, you can imagine the volatility in valuation as well.

The increase in the valuation of the Titles Office of an additional \$200 million is frankly unexceptional when dealing with assets of this nature and value. We make no apology for using the assets of Queensland to the maximum benefit of Queenslanders. That is precisely what we have done with this transaction, one we are very proud of and one which will deliver dividends to Queenslanders through the investment of the Queensland Future Fund and also investment in the additional funds we have set up for many years to come.

**CHAIR:** I will move to government questions. I have a question myself that I would like to put. Treasurer, referring to page 55 of Budget Paper No. 2 and more recent information that may affect the budget, could the Treasurer please advise the committee on how Queensland's labour market recovery from COVID-19 compares with some of the other jurisdictions?

**Mr DICK:** As I said, yesterday we received great news from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and I think it shows Queensland's labour market has recovered rapidly from the COVID-19 downturn. It is worth recapping some of the key facts. Employment increased by 16,700 in the month of June, the highest increase in the nation. I also make the point that in the month of June, 30,000 jobs were created in Australia, so more than half of all of the jobs created in Australia in June were created in Queensland—16,700. Western Australia was the next highest, adding 12,600 jobs in June, while both NSW and Victoria each lost 9,200 jobs in June. Since the trough of unemployment in May last year, 300,000 Queenslanders have found work; that is more than any other state or territory. For comparison, it is about equivalent to two cities the size of Cairns chock full of jobs, and relative to—

**CHAIR:** Treasurer, can I interrupt? The New South Wales figure, that does not necessarily include some of the effects of the current health restrictions?

**Mr DICK:** That is right, so you can imagine the impact on employment that is now going to follow from this long lockdown in New South Wales.

**CHAIR:** Very serious.

**Mr DICK:** It is extremely serious, not only for the New South Wales economy but also for the national economy. It demonstrates that short, sharp lockdowns—chair, to take your point, we were criticised endlessly for our health settings last year. People wanted the borders open. Some called 64 times, if I recall correctly, for the borders to be opened, exposing us to that risk of long lockdowns. We avoided that and we are now leading the nation in economic recovery.

Relative to the pre-COVID period, Queensland is now 101,600 jobs above where we were in March 2020. All told, it means, as I said, 354,100 Queenslanders have found jobs since we came to office. That is around 12 times more jobs created by the Palaszczuk Labor government than the Newman LNP government. The good news does not stop there.

The unemployment rate is now 5.1 per cent, down by 0.3 percentage points on the previous months. Among the mainland states, our unemployment rate is on a par with New South Wales and Western Australia and below that of South Australia. As I said, Queensland's unemployment rate is now at its lowest level since April 2009. The unemployment rate means that finally we have been able to overcome and erase the unemployment legacy created by Campbell Newman when he dropped the anvil of austerity on Queensland.

There are many negative legacies left and I do not wish to downplay that, but I am so proud that we have finally rolled back the unemployment increases that the LNP government engineered.

The interesting thing about the improvement in Queensland's unemployment rate is that we have achieved this at a time when our participation rate has also increased. Participation increased by 0.1 percentage points in the month to be a half a percentage point higher than the national average. Since the trough in employment in May last year, Queensland's participation rate has risen at a staggering 5.1 percentage points. That is higher than any other state or territory. Notwithstanding the increase in participation rate, notwithstanding the fact that more people are actively looking for work in Queensland, we have been able to lower our unemployment rate, and that is always difficult for Queensland. We always have a higher participation rate than other states and yet we have been able to get unemployment down. There are more Queenslanders entering the labour market, more people from interstate moving here to join the labour market and we are effectively finding all of those new people jobs and delivering more jobs on top of that. It is really a very strong performance. In fact, the only real dip we have seen in our employment performance so far was when the Morrison government's premature withdrawal of JobKeeper came into effect. Unemployment fell by 7,400 persons in April 2021, suggesting that the end of the JobKeeper program contributed to the disruption in Queensland's post-pandemic employment growth, particularly in sectors and regions exposed to international travel and tourism.

The budget shows employment growing by 2.25 per cent in 2020-2021 and strengthening further to three per cent in 2021-22. Into the out years, we think employment growth will moderate to 1.75 per cent per annum. We think the unemployment rate will remain at or below 5.75 per cent through to the June quarter 2022, improving further to five per cent over the forward estimates. It will vary, it will go up and down, but Queensland is leading the nation, and we are heading in the right direction.

**Mr TANTARI:** I would like to refer you to Budget Paper No. 2, page 13. Can you advise how Queensland's debt position compares to other governments?

**Mr DICK:** I am pleased to confirm to the committee that net debt for Queensland in 2021-22 is \$25.5 billion. That represents a \$9.7 billion decrease in net debt relative to our forecast last year. That is the single biggest reduction in net debt ever recorded by the Queensland government. We have been able to achieve that reduction without cutting services, without cutting jobs and without cutting infrastructure. We have done it the Labor way—stimulating our economy, growing our economy and creating jobs along the way.

Lower net debt means we are better able to respond to future shocks, such as natural disasters, with additional spending. Net debt is the measure that all Australian governments and interstate news outlets use.

You asked me about comparisons with other jurisdictions. Compared to our \$25.5 billion net debt this year, we look at other jurisdictions. New South Wales net debt is \$67.8 billion, more than two times the net debt of Queensland. Net debt in Victoria will be \$102 billion; that is almost four times the net debt of Queensland. The Commonwealth Morrison government's net debt will be a staggering \$729 billion. This is not gross federal debt; this is net debt of \$729 billion racked up by the Liberal and National parties in Canberra.

In the final year of the forward estimates, if we even go forward four years, what does the debt profile for Queensland look like at this time? Net debt in Queensland will be \$42.6 billion. In comparison, New South Wales will be \$104.3 billion, about 2½ times Queensland's net debt. Victorian debt will be \$156.3 billion, about 3.7 times Queensland's net debt, and federal debt will have increased again to a projected \$980.6 billion, about 23 times Queensland's net debt. You can see that we are managing the finance of our state effectively to give us that capacity for any future natural disasters, for any future economic shocks to allow us to borrow for infrastructure if we need to in the future, to prepare Queensland for the decade ahead.

**Mr TANTARI:** Again in reference to Budget Paper No. 2, page 13, Treasurer, can you advise what is the basis for politicians and people in the media quoting a higher debt number than what you just did?

**Mr DICK:** I am very pleased to be able to put this on the record. Queensland is the only state—and I mean the only state—where the opposition remains fixated on the non-useful, non-informative non-financial public sector gross debt figure. It is simply not the right debt figure to use. The figure of \$130 billion is branded on the LNP's brain and unfortunately this tends to get a hearing in the media.

The only time we hear the equivalent debt figure for New South Wales, which is, can I say, \$205 billion, so \$70 billion more than Queensland, or \$201 billion for Victoria—so Queensland at \$130 billion, New South Wales at \$205 billion and Victoria at \$201 billion—is when our government points it out. Other states do not hide their gross non-financial public sector debt. It is in the New South Wales and Victorian budget papers—a Liberal coalition government and a Labor government. It is in their budget papers as it is in ours, but interstate oppositions, including LNP affiliates, do not mention their gross non-financial figures once. That is because in those other states the oppositions have the intelligence to report the correct debt figure—net general government sector borrowings. It is the only figure that matters and it is the only figure that counts.

For the benefit of committee members, the relevant debt figures are as follows. In the financial year of the forward estimates, net general government sector borrowings are \$426.6 billion for Queensland, \$104.3 billion for New South Wales, \$156.3 billion for Victoria and an eye-watering \$980.6 billion for the Morrison coalition government.

**Mr BROWN:** Treasurer, I refer to page 176 of Budget Paper No. 2. Can the Treasurer advise how Queensland's government owned corporations contribute to the total debt figure and what is their asset position?

**Mr DICK:** That is a really good question, member for Capalaba. The debt of government owned corporations is often highlighted, particularly by individuals who think the only way to reduce that debt is to sell government own corporations. As you know well, member for Capalaba, our government has taken a different position, which has supported the strengthening of the Queensland economy as a consequence of the pandemic.

What is not talked about of course is the total asset position and the net asset position of government owned corporations. Queensland retains ownership of significant businesses with government owned corporations and commercial statutory authorities. As you would know, member for Capalaba, Queensland Rail and Seqwater have a collective asset value of government owned corporations and commercial statutory authorities of \$70 billion. These businesses make up the majority of Queensland's public non-financial corporations sector. Because the government has retained its assets in public hands, the returns from these significant income-generating assets can be used to continue to invest in essential services and affordability measures to the benefit of all Queenslanders.

The debt held by these businesses is self-supported by their commercial activities and is used to renew assets, make capital investments and to maintain an optimal capital structure. I also note that the total borrowings figure includes derivative liabilities associated with hedging activities, usually undertaken by the energy generators which is a sound and standard practice to manage risk.

The businesses take a prudent and sound approach to debt management and the Queensland government has established borrowing arrangements that ensure that debt levels are appropriate to the business risk of the organisation. There is a useful table, table 9.1 on page 168 of Budget Paper No. 2, that puts all of that in context. What it shows is that, while debt of government owned corporations in total is stable at around \$41 billion over the forward estimates, this is against an asset value of \$75 billion by the end of the forward estimates. Basically, the GOCs are borrowing a little over half of their value. That puts paid to the idea that the taxpayer is on the hook for the GOCs' debt. They are worth substantially more than they owe. I want to repeat that: GOCs and commercially statutory authorities are worth substantially more than they owe. Their debt position is frankly irrelevant to any analysis of government debt that the taxpayer is responsible for.

**Mr BROWN:** Treasurer, I refer to page 34 of Budget Paper No. 2. Can the Treasurer advise how the budget is supporting positive economic conditions in the form of electricity pricing?

**Mr DICK:** Thank you, member for Capalaba. It is a good follow-on question from the ownership of electricity and power generating, distribution and supply assets by the Queensland government. Chair, can I ask how long we have before we conclude this session?

**CHAIR:** There is some flexibility about that.

**Mr DICK:** Thank you, Chair. I have a fairly comprehensive answer. What we have been able to do with power prices is significant. One of the roles that I am very proud to hold in the government is to be a shareholding minister in our publicly owned companies. It gives me as the Treasurer a lever that is unique amongst Treasurers of east coast states. Direct public ownership has meant that, after years of large and unsustainable price increases, the Palaszczuk government reformed the electricity sector to provide reliable energy and push prices down. Over the term of the Palaszczuk government to 2021-22, electricity prices for the typical Queensland household have fallen by 13 per cent. This compares to an average increase of almost 13 per cent per annum for the average household when the LNP government was in power.

Reducing the cost of living for people in regional areas in particular is a critical element of the government's economic plan. In 2021-22, retail electricity prices are set to fall for Queensland households and businesses for the fourth consecutive year. The average regional household is set to see their biggest cut in more than a decade. On 11 June 2021 the Queensland Competition Authority released its final determination for regional prices for 2021-22. The QCA's final decision will result in reduced electricity bills for typical households, small businesses and large businesses in regional Queensland. The typical household can expect to see a 7.3 per cent reduction in their electricity bill or a saving of \$101. This will be the largest household electricity price reduction in more than a decade.

Regional businesses will also benefit, I am pleased to say, with the typical small business expected to see a 3.7 per cent or \$79 reduction while large business customers are expected to benefit from reductions of between 2½ per cent and 3.7 per cent. This decrease in prices compared to 2021-22 is largely due to a decline in wholesale energy costs driven by the increasing supply of renewable energy to the market.

Customers in South-East Queensland can also expect reductions in 2021-22, which will please the member for Capalaba and the member for Logan, based on the Australian Energy Regulator's default market offer decision for 2021-22 which sets maximum electricity prices for South-East Queensland. For 2021-22, the AER determined bill reductions of around 3½ per cent for households and around 4.2 per cent for small businesses on a standing offer. As this is a maximum amount, customers can access even lower prices by shopping around between retailers.

The committee may also be interested in how the Palaszczuk government provided more than \$500 million in price relief through the COVID-19 utility relief package in 2019-20 and the \$100 asset ownership dividend in 2020-21. A further \$100 million relief package will be provided to households through another \$50 asset ownership dividend payment in 2021-22.

Under the uniform tariff policy, the government provides around \$500 million each year to offset energy costs and ensure electricity prices in regional Queensland do not exceed prices in South-East Queensland. The electricity rebate scheme also provides a rebate of up to approximately \$341 per annum to assist with the cost of domestic electricity supply to the home of eligible pensioner concession card holders, Queensland senior card holders or Department of Veterans' Affairs gold card holders.

The rebates will continue. We did that as part of our economic recovery plan. Not only did we provide a \$200 rebate off electricity bills in 2019-20 for householders, sole traders and small to medium sized businesses received a \$500 rebate. There were a further two asset ownership dividend payments of \$50 provided last financial year and a \$50 payment due this financial year. It is because we made a decision to keep assets in government hands. That allowed us to make that dividend as part of the COVID-19 economic recovery but also ensure that we continue to put sustained downward pressure on electricity prices for Queenslanders wherever they live in our state.

**CHAIR:** We will turn back to opposition questions.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Treasurer, in your answer to my last question with respect to the change in valuation you commented on the \$200 million movement most recently announced. Treasurer, I put it to you that there was an increase—a near 90 per cent; a near doubling—in the valuation between May, when the bill was before the House, of around \$4.2 billion to the announcement in the budget barely three or four weeks later of \$7.8 billion. Treasurer, can you explain that particular increase and the justification for the substantial change in that valuation over that three-week period?

**Mr DICK:** I provided a comprehensive explanation to the committee in my opening statement.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Treasurer, when were you first informed of the \$7.8 billion valuation?

**Mr DICK:** I have nothing further to add to the opening statement I made today and the statements I have previously made in the parliament, because we have been very clear and open about the process and the valuations and I have updated the committee and the parliament again today.

**CHAIR:** The Treasurer could give that statement again if it was not clear.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I will address my question to the under treasurer. Under Treasurer, was any due diligence performed by any third party on the valuation, or was the valuation primarily based on the assumptions provided to the third parties?

**Mr Allen:** I apologise and ask for clarification in relation to your question.

**Mr JANETZKI:** My question is: did the third parties who undertook the valuation undertake their own due diligence on the assumptions, or did those third parties undertaking those valuations simply rely on the assumptions provided to them?

**CHAIR:** Are you talking about things that are on the public record with regard to—

**Mr JANETZKI:** No, I am talking about the valuation of the titles registry office and the way in which it was calculated.

**Mr Allen:** Thank you for that clarification. I do not have that information with me, but I would highlight that this is a valuation process undertaken by the Queensland Investment Corporation. They regularly undertake due diligence processes when it comes to the acquisition of assets, and they have engaged the relevant expertise to provide for a valuation. I would not see that process yielding anything other than a very thorough and robust approach, and that would include an interrogation of the assumptions.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Turning now to the funds that the Treasurer was talking about earlier, Under Treasurer, with regard to the carbon reduction fund, what is the internal target for how much will be provided to the fund this financial year?

**Mr Allen:** The fund will be established with a \$500 million contribution as outlined in the budget, if the question is in terms of its establishment.

**CHAIR:** To some extent Mr Allen is constrained in that there may be other policy decisions being made forward.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I will continue on with the same line of questioning. Under Treasurer, what is the expected rate of return in relation to these funds?

**Mr Allen:** We have a general assumption across all of these funds that it is going to be greater than the government's cost of borrowing. We know that market cycles will see that ultimate return fluctuate, but as long as we ensure those funds are returning over and above our cost of borrowings, they are providing for positive outcomes.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I will return to the Treasurer. Treasurer, do you know what total amount was paid to the Bank of America for its services in relation to the preparation of this valuation?

**Mr DICK:** No, I do not.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I am going to turn now to the Productivity Commission, and I will address my first question to the under treasurer. Under Treasurer, obviously the Queensland Productivity Commission has now been abolished. I am interest to know what date the Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction was officially established.

**Mr Allen:** Mr Chair, 2 June is when the Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction commenced with Treasury.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Can you elaborate for the committee? Firstly, the FTE that was present in the Queensland Productivity Commission at its completion—I understand there would have been a large number of contractors within that particular workforce, but do you know the total number of FTE there compared to the FTE that will be present now in the new office that is being established?

**Mr Allen:** I do not have a breakdown of the staffing profile of the Productivity Commission with me, but the transfer was on the basis of those employees of the commission moving across to Treasury to be incorporated within our economics division. As for their use of contractors at that point in time, I would have to endeavour to find that information for you.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Under Treasurer, now that the Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction sits with Treasury, does the Treasury have any understanding of the total number of regulatory requirements that are in place in Queensland? I know it is a big question.

**Mr DICK:** I have a point of order, Chair. On what planet does the member live? The total number of regulatory arrangements is a question that is not capable of being answered.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Take it on notice.

**Mr DICK:** You had an opportunity to ask 10 questions on notice.

**Mr JANETZKI:** There has been an answer before, Treasurer.

**Mr DICK:** You could have asked them—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** You can take it on notice now.

**Mr DICK:** He cannot take it on notice. I am certainly not—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** You can.

**Mr DICK:** I am certainly not taking it on notice.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** We know that. We know that you do not want accountability and integrity. Of course you do not want to take it on notice.

**Mr DICK:** Point of order, Chair. It is not possible for the Under Treasurer to answer a vague, obtuse, ill-defined question like that.

**CHAIR:** Treasurer, my job is to ascertain whether the question is within the standing orders, not whether it is possible to be answered. Obviously, I have my own views about that.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I am happy to particularise.

**CHAIR:** Acting Under Treasurer, how many regulatory requirements are there across the entirety of the Queensland government?

**Mr TANTARI:** How would you know that?

**Mr JANETZKI:** It has been done before.

**Mr DICK:** Regulatory requirements? What is a regulatory requirement?

**CHAIR:** The definition is obviously—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** That is a bit scary. The Treasurer does not know what a regulatory requirement is.

**Mr DICK:** Do you know how many regulations there are? Do you have any idea? I thought you were a barrister.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Go to the Office of Parliamentary Counsel, click on 'regulation' and it will bring them up.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I will move on. Under Treasurer, does the office have any target for the reduction of regulatory requirements in Queensland in the coming year?

**CHAIR:** Member for Toowoomba South, is that a policy matter that would be better addressed to the Treasurer in that it is a policy target? It may not be. I will leave the question with the acting under treasurer.

**Mr Allen:** We have just incorporated that unit into our operations, and it will be a great asset for us when it comes to looking from a productivity perspective where we can support the economic recovery strategy of the government. That will include the review of regulation as it is presented and as it is also reviewed. We will look to work with agencies, who themselves are the ones who effectively have accountability for that regulation in great part, in seeing where there are opportunities to improve productivity, improve outcomes and improve competitiveness within the economy.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Under Treasurer, a gentleman called Jose Fajardo, head of liquidity and funding from QTC, stated in a recent video on the QTC website that QTC is 'supported by regular Queensland government updates to its fiscal position'. Can you confirm what those particular updates to its fiscal position would mean?

**Mr Allen:** I am sure from a QTC perspective they can provide some clarifications as well. They are the borrowing arm for the government. The extent to which we see movements in our borrowing requirement, then those updates would be of a fiscal nature. In undertaking a borrowing program in the course of a year, it is not surprising there would be information provided to QTC to guide them when it comes to the volume of borrowings that they would undertake.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Chair, can I ask the CEO of QTC to come to the table. Mr Noble, you would have heard the response to the previous question. I know it was not you who made the direct statement, but I am just trying to understand those updates as to the Queensland government's fiscal position. What is that? More particularly, how often is an update on that fiscal position given? What form does it take?

**Mr Noble:** The answer is twice yearly. Firstly, just post budget, we give a thorough breakdown to our global investors of the government's borrowing requirements and then QTC's borrowings requirements. It also happens in the midyear economic review.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Would all of those updates as to the government's fiscal position be made public? Is that all publicly available information?

**Mr Noble:** Correct, yes.

**Mr JANETZKI:** That is all, Mr Noble. Chair, can I call the State Actuary to the table please. Mr Cannon, were you consulted before \$1.5 billion was transferred to the Future Fund from the QSuper defined benefit scheme?

**Mr Cannon:** I do not get consulted on matters of that nature but I was asked to give updates of the funding position of the scheme.

**Mr JANETZKI:** How often would you be asked to provide updates in relation to the scheme? Would it be a set period of time, or would it be after a particular event like the transfer of \$1.5 billion?

**Mr Cannon:** Sometimes I might be asked on an ad hoc basis. As I have mentioned to this committee in the past, I maintain an ongoing model, like a preliminary estimate of the funding position that I am able to use for these interim positions so that we do not have to wait until the final valuation is available. I would give updates into the budget process and to the extent that there are any other things that might be on. The government had already announced a \$1 billion transfer to the Future Fund last year. I provided an update at that time and then there was some further work done on that I presume. I do not get to see everything that Treasury does of course, but I was asked at some stage as to what the latest position was and I provided that estimate.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Mr Cannon, I might gratuitously ask you a question, as I always do. I believe that the New South Wales and Victorian defined benefit funds are not fully funded in the way Queensland's is.

**Mr Cannon:** Yes, that is indeed true. Queensland maintains the only fully funded scheme in Australia, to the best of my knowledge. Both New South Wales and Victoria have long-term plans to reach full funding. From memory, I am going to say it is 2035 for New South Wales and 2040 for Victoria, but I may be corrected on those.

**CHAIR:** Would it be fair to say they effectively would do that at the point when they are beginning to exhaust their purpose as people move on to defined contribution funds?

**Mr Cannon:** That is a very difficult question for me to answer, I am afraid, because I do not know the member distribution, the profile of those funds. I apologise but I cannot comment on the way it works for those other schemes.

**CHAIR:** I understand, and that is very cautious and very actuarial of you, Mr Cannon. That reassurance is a great thing to have.

**Mr Brown:** I refer to page 8 of Budget Paper No. 2. Can the Treasurer advise how the business investment fund is supporting small and medium sized businesses to help transform the Queensland economy?

**Mr DICK:** I will just clarify a matter going to your question, Chair. The New South Wales Liberal National government delayed the delivery of full funding of their defined benefit scheme by 10 years in their budget, so you can see the comparison between what is happening. All of the jurisdictions in the country were tested. COVID was a time of trial for all jurisdictions, and New South Wales are struggling with their health settings which is now leading to more economic damage. They had to defer the delivery of a fully funded defined benefit scheme for another 10 years.

Not only do we have a fully funded scheme because of the prudent financial management of the Labor government; we have a surplus in that fund that was able to be used for other benefits for Queenslanders by transferring the surplus to the Queensland Future Fund, the Debt Retirement Fund. We get the benefit from that when that surplus was never taken into account by ratings agencies in determining our position. We maintained our rating in Queensland, when New South Wales and Victoria both had their rating dropped. I understand 2040 would be the earliest possible time. That is another 19 years before they would be within cooee of a fully funded defined benefit scheme, and one would question their capacity to do that given current events.

I go to the member for Capalaba's question, and I thank him for it. The committee would remember that as part of the *COVID-19 fiscal and economic review* released in September 2020 the government created the \$100 million business investment fund. The fund was established to drive investment and establish small and medium sized businesses to help them innovate, build scale, realise their potential and promote job creation most importantly—which is one of the fundamental principles that we are driving as part of our economic recovery. The funds are administered through the Queensland Investment Corporation, our globally recognised funds manager, and they have been working with many companies across Queensland towards the fund's objective.

Yesterday I was pleased to announce the very first allocation from the business investment fund to Gilmour Space Technologies on the Gold Coast. Our investment will help propel the next stage of Gilmour Space Technologies' path to orbit, so to speak, literally and figuratively, by supporting the business to invest in a number of areas. These include: funding the construction of Gilmour Space's unique Eris rockets featuring new and innovative hybrid propulsion technologies; building sovereign satellite and rocket manufacturing capabilities so 80 per cent of the launch vehicles are constructed in Helensvale on the Gold Coast, drawing on a localised supply chain; boosting the Gilmour Space Technologies team from around 70 employees to more than 100 by the end of the year and 120 by the end of 2022—and they are conservative figures because just yesterday the company announced they would be recruiting 10 more university graduates who could come online and be employed straightaway, which is great news; and, lastly, providing financial firepower to build 'roads into space', with larger government co-funded deals initiating new launch sites.

Importantly, the fund investment will be an equity position, which will mean the state will receive the benefit of that investment into the longer term. I am proud of that first investment of our business investment fund because it gives effect to the Queensland Space Industry Strategy 2020-25. Committee members may recall that I was proud to launch that on behalf of our government in February 2020 when I was the minister for state development. We were the first state to have a space industry strategy, if I recall correctly.

The plan aims to generate some 6,000 new high-paid, high-value jobs and generate \$6 billion annually by 2036. As I said at the time, when it comes to the space industry, we want to see Queensland boldly go where no state has gone before because we have a respected high-tech aerospace industry. Our state is renowned globally for civil and military aviation, advanced manufacturing capacity and associated industries.

The reality is the commercial space industry is not just for billionaires like Richard Branson, Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk; it is actually for homegrown companies and talent that we have in Queensland. The member for Logan knows well Black Sky Aerospace in his electorate of Logan, another great company, and Blake Nikolic, the CEO, another passionate Queenslander with a vision to drive the development of the space industry in Queensland. It was a great announcement yesterday and I fully anticipate James and Adam Gilmour will go from strength to strength as their company continues to expand.

**CHAIR:** Treasurer, looking at page 90 of Budget Paper No. 2, I have a question to do with revenues. Can the Treasurer advise how the government is delivering on its promise of no new or increased taxes and how does that compare with the approach of previous Queensland governments in managing state taxation and revenue?

**Mr DICK:** I said during the election campaign that we would deliver on our plan for economic recovery and our election platform without introducing new or increased taxes over the parliamentary term. This will keep Queensland lower than the national average when it comes to state taxation in line with our fiscal principle. This can be compared to the Newman LNP government, who really went on a budget-busting revenue-raising spree when they were in government, including: coal royalties, up by \$1.6 billion; insurance duty including on the family home, up by \$990 million; stamp duty, up by \$361 million; emergency management levy, up by \$187.6 million; penalty units, up by \$87.5 million; gaming machine taxes, up by \$15.9 million; health services levy, up \$22 million; taxes on casinos, up \$30.8 million.

Of course, fees, charges and levies are not taxes. Fees, charges and levies are indexed every year—this year at 1.7 per cent from the Palaszczuk Labor government. This follows 1.8 per cent last year, which if I am right are the two lowest rates of indexation on record. These two record low indexation rates compare with what occurred under the Newman government, which was frankly gouging of the public when the public was bilked at 3½ per cent irrespective of CPI or anything else.

We are proud we have delivered fee indexation in line with CPI. When it comes to levies, in this budget we are not adding any new levies. Not only are we honouring our election commitment of no new taxes; we are also not introducing any levies. For example, in Victoria they have introduced a new levy on payroll tax. We will continue to monitor the need for levies in future budgets, but in this budget we have not introduced any new levies, which I am sure will be welcomed by Queenslanders.

There is one new fee in the budget. We are introducing the interstate licence fee of \$78.75. This is a fee that interstate arrivals will pay when they change over their licence to Queensland. Western Australia has one; so, too, does Victoria. Principally, this is a fee to reflect the cost of licensing an individual. However, in my view, it is a small price to pay to become a Queenslander. We will work through the implementation to commence in 2022-23, but it will bring in \$17 million to help offset the cost of running the transport system. I think it makes sense; if we can get a contribution from new arrivals, that reduces the burden on Queenslanders who already live here.

**CHAIR:** It is a small price to pay to not be a New South Welshman!

**Mr TANTARI:** My question is to the Treasurer with reference to page 162 of Budget Paper No. 2. Could you advise how Queensland's settings for taxes, fees and charges compare with what is happening at the local government level?

**Mr DICK:** That follows from the question previously on state taxation. Our government, as you know, is committed to maintaining a competitive tax regime in line with the government's economic strategy and its priorities to support job creation and sustainable economic growth. As outlined in the 2021-22 state budget, ensuring the competitiveness of the state's taxation framework forms the basis of a key fiscal principle for our government to maintain competitive taxation by ensuring that on a per capita basis Queensland has lower taxation than the average of other states. Based on the latest available outcomes, Queensland's taxation per capita in 2019-20 was \$771 less than the average of other jurisdictions. On average, Queenslanders pay \$1,078 less tax than the tax paid by a resident of New South Wales to the Berejiklian Liberal National government there and \$761 less than Victorian residents. In addition, the government made an election commitment in 2020 to not introduce any new state taxes, as you have heard, or increase any state taxes during this term of government.

Our government also remains committed to providing relief for households and businesses in response to the pandemic. In the 2021-22 budget, as you know, we have reduced the indexation rate of fees and charges from 1.8 per cent to 1.7 per cent. Unfortunately, while we have restrained taxes and costs for the benefit of Queenslanders, I regret to inform the committee that some local governments have not been able to do the same. In particular, the LNP Brisbane City Council has

absolutely let rip on the ratepayers of Brisbane. If we look at the 2021-22 budget for Brisbane, ratepayers are suffering an average increase of 3.75 per cent in their rates bill this financial year compared to the 1.7 per cent increase in levy—that is 200 per cent, more than twice what the Labor government has indexed our levies to.

I think it is really disappointing at this time when we have heard that businesses are facing challenging operating conditions because of the pandemic and householders are doing it tough. I think it is really disappointing when our state is supporting householders and businesses that that effort is being undermined by Adrian Schrinner, the Lord Mayor, and the LNP Brisbane City Council. The interesting thing about the LNP Brisbane City Council is that while the state—and I will give credit there; the federal government have dug deep and we have done our best to support businesses and households—has gone into deficit, the Brisbane City Council has not gone into deficit. I understand it is a council that has never gone into deficit. This is a pandemic. This is the most serious economic crisis in our lifetime, since the Second World War and perhaps since the Depression, and the Brisbane City Council—the LNP at a local government level—thinks they should jack up rates at 3.75 per cent. It just puts what we are doing in context. We are carrying the load to help support businesses and householders and the Brisbane City Council thinks it is right to put their hand in the pocket of ratepayers in Brisbane and take out more cash.

Of course, the Brisbane City Council has a very stable revenue source in the form of rates, which they are continuing to enlarge at a record rate. However, I think it shows they have substantial capacity, and I will be looking for them to do more to help Queenslanders in the future.

**CHAIR:** Turning to page 9 of Budget Paper No. 2, could the Treasurer please advise the committee on the government's commitment to providing social housing for Queenslanders in need? I know that is something that is important in our area.

**Mr DICK:** That is right. I was thinking exactly the same thing. I thank you for that question. I was proud that in the 2021-22 Queensland budget we announced a new housing plan to deliver more social housing and increased funding for homelessness services to vulnerable people across Queensland. Our Housing Strategy action plan 2021 to 2025 is backed by a \$1.9 billion investment over four years and is supported by a new \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund. This investment will see a significant boost in housing supply and an increase in housing and homelessness support services across the state. Over the next four years I am pleased to report to the committee this investment will see the commencement of 6,365 new social and affordable homes, providing much needed support for the public housing system and at the same time a construction initiative that will support jobs.

Our government is aware that the current housing market is under significant pressure with the impacts of COVID-19 and interstate migration. This has made it challenging for people to find a home and is forcing many vulnerable Queenslanders into housing stress. That is why this investment will deliver immediate support to relieve the pressure on the housing market. Under the action plan, the government will deliver over 1,000 new dwellings over the first two years through head leasing and other short-term arrangements. This short-term boost to supply is in addition to the 6,365 dwellings to commence construction over the first four years.

I am pleased that this commitment by the government has been commended by key stakeholders. QCOSS CEO Aimee McVeigh has welcomed the investment, saying that that investment will deliver more homes and jobs and that the budget signals a new approach to housing and homelessness in Queensland. Karyn Walsh, CEO of Micah Projects, who has recently been named a Queensland Great—and I congratulate her on that great honour—welcomed the significant investment in social housing and the reduction of homelessness. To support the action plan, we are establishing a new \$1 billion housing investment fund that will deliver a long-term funding stream to continue investing in the social housing system. Returns from the fund will support new housing supply to be delivered through co-investment opportunities and financing arrangements with the private sector. This will drive investment in social housing over the long-term and represents the government's commitment to meeting the state's future housing needs—not new to Australia but something new to Queensland.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has always supported the state's social housing system. This new investment in the 2021-22 budget builds on the work already completed under the 10-year Queensland Housing Strategy launched in 2017. Under the strategy we have already achieved delivery or commencement of 2,480 new social and affordable homes. Our budget meets the immediate needs of the community while also setting up the state to continue delivering for vulnerable Queenslanders for decades to come.

**Mr BROWN:** I refer to page 7 of Budget Paper No. 2 which refers to the government's commitment to small business through the economic recovery plan. I am interested in the social enterprise part in particular. Could the Treasurer update the committee on how the government is supporting social enterprises? Is the Treasurer aware of any other approaches?

**Mr DICK:** Thank you, member for Capalaba. Our government is committed to supporting social enterprises across Queensland. I think the member knows that well. There are some really good social enterprises in the Redlands area and the broader bayside. It was the Palaszczuk Labor government that released Queensland's first statewide social enterprise strategy in 2019 alongside \$1 million to help develop the sector. The grants we rolled out were the first ever dedicated social enterprise grants in Queensland. It was the Palaszczuk government that provided funding to the Queensland Social Enterprise Council to develop the sector.

Our government made a record \$8 million investment into a social enterprise jobs fund. Notwithstanding this, I was very interested to hear the Leader of the Opposition announce his so-called 'social enterprise policy' in his budget reply speech. As I said in the parliament, this is actually not a new policy—even for them. They recycled it from the Newman LNP government. Whatever you think about the merits of recycling things that Campbell Newman did, it is really telling that, after the Leader of the Opposition and the deputy leader made it the big centrepiece of the budget reply—sorry, I shouldn't laugh—not one single member of their parliamentary party mentioned it again in the budget debate. Not one! We have not heard anyone comment on it again—not politicians, media, stakeholders or the LNP. Not one! It sank without a trace and no-one mourned its loss. It is no wonder, because it is simply not credible in coming from the LNP.

Queenslanders will never forget the LNP's cutting Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which supports so many social enterprises. The LNP axed \$368 million in community grants. These grants would have supported organisations which are social enterprises or which work with social enterprises to support Queenslanders in need of assistance. The LNP gagged community groups from speaking up and out on behalf of the people they represent. We will continue to get on with the job and will not be distracted by recycled Newman LNP government policy thought bubbles.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Treasurer. Now I turn to the member for Kawana.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My question is to the Under Treasurer. Can you confirm to the committee the status of your current employment?

**Mr Allen:** I am Acting Under Treasurer and I am contracted as the Deputy Under Treasurer.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Thank you. Mr Allen, here is where I am confused: in 2019 reports were floating around that there was a recruitment process for Under Treasurer and that you were recommended for the job. Then there were reports that you did not get the job and Frankie Carroll got the job. Then it looked like it went to the Crime and Corruption Commission. Now you are sitting in the chair as Acting Under Treasurer. What happened between 2019 where you were recommended for the job by an independent selection panel to now where you are acting in the role? Is it the case that you have applied for the role as Under Treasurer, or are you continuing in the role for a period of time as Acting Under Treasurer?

**Mr DICK:** I have a point of order, chair.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Of course you do.

**CHAIR:** Is this actually a question to which you want the answer, or is that just to put that question?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I want an answer. It is before the CCC. Of course I want an answer.

**CHAIR:** Treasurer, did you have a point of order?

**Mr DICK:** Two points of order: standing order 246 regarding quarrelling. Members are entitled to take points of order at any time during debate and not be criticised for that. The question asked by the member for Kawana is not relevant. I ask you to rule on relevance. The process for the appointment of the Acting Under Treasurer is not conducted by Treasury; it is conducted by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. If the member for Kawana had not stormed out, he could have asked relevant officers of that department about the selection process.

**CHAIR:** The standing orders, which I think apply to committees as well, do not allow for reflection on a member's presence or lack of presence in the committee. I do counsel the Treasurer on that front. In general, I agree with the Treasurer that this question should have been asked of the body that involved in the appointment process. I thank the Acting Under Treasurer for his diligence and professionalism at this hearing and for the role he is playing for Queensland. I rule that question out of order.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair, the role of an Under Treasurer—

**CHAIR:** Are you raising a further point of order?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** No, a question.

**CHAIR:** Sorry. My apologies.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The role of the Acting Under Treasurer, or Under Treasurer is substantial. It is in the budget. The salary is paid for, so it is quite relevant to budget estimates. Mr Allen, have you been contacted by the Crime and Corruption Commission with respect to the role of Under Treasurer?

**Mr Allen:** I thank the member for the question. I am aware that the matters you raised were raised by the former shadow Treasurer in the parliament. I think there was a question directed at the Premier, who I think made a comment around, 'If there is an issue, refer it to the Crime and Conduct Commission.' I understand from media reports that that has occurred.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My question, Acting Under Treasurer, was: have you been contacted?

**CHAIR:** With respect—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** With respect you did not let me—

**CHAIR:** The Acting Under Treasurer did not fail to understand the question and has addressed the question. This is not—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The question was not answered. Acting Under Treasurer, have you been contacted by the Crime and Corruption Commission about the appointment of the Under Treasurer of Queensland?

**CHAIR:** I understand, member for Kawana, that you wish to badger the witness and repeat the question, but that is not within the standing orders. I do counsel you—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The question remains unanswered. Has the Acting Under Treasurer been contacted by the Crime and Corruption Commission?

**CHAIR:** I still have this paper from when the committee secretary helped the member last time. Under the standing order 118(b), the minister, director-general or chief executive—they did a card for me—may answer a question in whatever way they see fit, but the answer must be relevant to the question. In that case, I call the member for Kawana to put a question, if the member for Kawana has a question to put.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Acting Under Treasurer, have you been advised whether the crime and corruption investigation into the appointment of an Under Treasurer of which you were a recommended candidate has been finalised yet?

**Mr Allen:** I thank the member for the question. If I were, I would not be at liberty to disclose that anyway.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Why is that?

**Mr Allen:** Because under the Crime and Corruption Act any matter relevant to an inquiry that could compromise that inquiry should not be disclosed.

**CHAIR:** Of course the member for Kawana has a full understanding of that! Do you have any further questions?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Of course. Thank you, Acting Under Treasurer. What is your process now? You are Acting Under Treasurer for how long?

**CHAIR:** I am not sure whether it is a policy question.

**Mr Allen:** Thank you, Chair and thank you member for the question. Until such time as the position is filled on a permanent basis or until such time as a decision is made to act someone else into the role, I will be acting in this position. It is at the discretion of the director-general of DPC who coordinates those sorts of appointments.

**CHAIR:** As the Treasurer put in the point of order before, the question is best addressed to the director-general of the DPC.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** That is not true, Mr Chair. The Acting Under Treasurer was recommended by an independent panel for the job of Under Treasurer. He did not get the job because Jackie Trad interfered. They gave it to Frankie Carroll and now we have the position where he is Acting Under Treasurer. It is highly relevant. Questions to the Under Treasurer are relevant to the treasury portfolio estimates.

**CHAIR:** There is a point of order.

**Mr TANTARI:** Relevance.

**CHAIR:** I have heard the member for Hervey Bay. You are being argumentative. My assertion was simply that the Treasurer had formerly put a point of order which was of facts. To be quarrelsome with me when I had simply repeated the point of order previously put by the Treasurer is highly unbecoming.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I agree: the appointment of the Under Treasurer before the Crime and Corruption Commission is very unbecoming of a government. I agree with you—absolutely.

**CHAIR:** Order! Member for Kawana—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair—

**CHAIR:** Order, member for Kawana! I am warning you that the committee has given you the privilege of being before the committee. We ask you to respect the standing orders. It is a requirement of all members of the House, and others have fulfilled that requirement admirably. Member for Kawana, do you have a question that is within the standing orders?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Yes. All of my questions are.

**CHAIR:** Order! Member for Kawana, I have given you warnings.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Yes, I know, and I have been here for 13 years. I know the standing orders. Thank you for your guidance. Acting Under Treasurer—

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Are we seriously going to continue this? I have questions to the Under Treasurer and I want them asked and I want them answered.

**CHAIR:** I am merely trying to maintain order. Member for Kawana, you are constantly undermining the good order of this committee. You are here as a guest. I am going to give you the call. I do not wish to have an argument about me giving you the call. Member for Kawana, you have the call.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Acting Under Treasurer, has Treasury funded any upgrades to the Treasurer's office, ministerial office—furniture, fixtures or anything of that nature?

**Mr Allen:** No, not that I am aware of.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Acting Under Treasurer, has Treasury provided any funding to the Treasurer in terms of media training, personal relations, public relations, media consulting—anything of that nature?

**Mr Allen:** Again, no, not that I am aware of.

**Mr DICK:** I am not the one who needs media training.

**CHAIR:** Hold on. Order! Treasurer—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I was going to say: if they have not then they should. Whoever is telling you to have that creepy smile on TV every time should stop.

**CHAIR:** Order! Member for Kawana! I had just gotten the member for Kawana where he was behaving—

**Mr DICK:** Sorry, Chair.

**CHAIR:** Treasurer, that was uncalled for.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Can you take your mask off so we can see the creepy smile that you have been told by a PR company to keep doing? Take it off.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana—

**Mr DICK:** I am very happy to do that. What about the cupboard? Where is the cupboard today? We are missing that one, too.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The budget cupboard is empty.

**CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr DICK:** Wasn't that the highlight of the budget week?

**CHAIR:** Treasurer, order!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The 'blame game' budget. We are playing bingo with you today—Labor's blame game bingo. Canberra, COVID, corona—everything.

**Mr DICK:** Bring out the chocolate wheel. A cut-price Baby John Burgess.

**CHAIR:** Order! Treasurer!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The cupboard is bare. There is nothing in the budget. What about for small businesses?

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana! Order!

**Mr DICK:** Have the guts to ask me a question.

**CHAIR:** No, Treasurer! Order!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Oh, I will. I will get to you in a minute. Don't you worry about that.

**Mr DICK:** Oh, your idol.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I will ask about the lack of small business, because you have given not a cent to small businesses.

**CHAIR:** Order! Order! I will not have bickering. Treasurer, that is not acceptable. Member for Kawana, I have given you warnings before and it is simply not acceptable. I know that there was some provocation. Let's just try and keep this civil and in order.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Under Treasurer, Queensland taxpayers are being bombarded with advertising on TV, social media and on news agencies about the budget. How much money is being spent on the campaign?

**Mr Allen:** I would need to just confirm whether indeed that is expenditure within the Treasury portfolio, but I will endeavour to get that information for you if I can.

**CHAIR:** I think he is referring to the COVID recovery—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** No, I am not; I am talking about the budget. It is a separate—

**CHAIR:** My apologies, member for Kawana.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The Acting Under Treasurer has said that he does not have it with him but he is happy to get it. I am asking the Treasurer to take it on notice so the Under Treasurer can come back with that figure.

**CHAIR:** I understand that. No doubt the Treasurer understands that as well.

**Mr DICK:** My practice has been—and the honourable gentleman knows—every time I have appeared before an estimates committee to be as helpful as I can to the committee and to get the response to the committee during the time the committee is conducting its hearing. If I cannot do it then, I will consider at that time whether I will take it on notice but, as the Acting Under Treasurer has said, we will try to come back to the committee this afternoon.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, it might be worth staying until the end, when the Treasurer will address this.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I know that.

**Dr MacMAHON:** My question is for the Under Treasurer. With regard to the \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund, Budget Paper 2 states that this will come from government retaining approximately \$1.8 billion from the transfer of the Titles Registry to support long-term government priorities, including this fund. How were the estimated returns of \$40 million per year calculated?

**Mr Allen:** With the establishment of the fund there is an assumed rate of return we will get from the operation of the business, which is the principal investment in the fund. Out of that, there is allocation that will flow through to housing that will allow then for investment into housing stock. That has been part of the creation of the fund itself.

**Dr MacMAHON:** Are those assumptions publicly available?

**Mr Allen:** Relying on the operation and management of QIC in that instance, no, they are not.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Under Treasurer, I refer to the \$3 billion savings plan announced by the Treasurer in July last year. Can you please advise: out of the \$3 billion savings plan, how much has actually been saved with respect to government agencies' advertising? Under the directive, advertising was banned.

**Mr Allen:** As you have highlighted, the savings and debt plan provides for the achievement of savings across a range of areas. We saw in the course of this budget the reporting of the first tranche of that \$3 billion savings plan in terms of the \$750 million in savings. That would be the product of a whole lot of decisions that are made within respective agencies. In terms of the aggregation of the information that you have, I do not have it in relation to the specific issue around the marketing. Can I clarify the term you asked about?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** When the Treasurer announced it, they talked about stopping government advertising—glossy brochures, Facebook, social media, Twitter and all that sort of stuff. With all of those agencies putting together those savings from stopping all of this advertising, what has it totalled, out of the \$3 billion?

**Mr Allen:** Just to build on my response, advertising spend will fluctuate over the course of a year, depending upon what the agencies had previously spent and what they are choosing not to spend this year in the achieving of agency savings targets.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Under Treasurer, with respect to the Treasurer's directive, as I said, the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority has been using billboard advertising at the Gabba. As this advertising has nothing to do with Queensland's unite and recover economic plan or public road safety, as the directive by the Treasurer indicated, should that be happening under the guidelines issued and the directive issued by the Treasury?

**Mr Allen:** Thank you for the question. Agencies are interpreting those directives and I think that is a question that is probably best put to the Cross River Rail or the transport minister, whoever has ministerial responsibility for that particular project.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** There is also TransLink social media advertisements promoting smart ticketing on the Gold Coast light rail. Incidentally, these were brought to my attention by a bus user in Brisbane, not a light rail user or even someone in the same city. Again, if this is banned advertising why is Treasury not stopping these agencies from still advertising when apparently this was meant to have stopped under the directive to cease this form of advertising? We have the TransLink advertising and we have the Cross River Rail advertising at the Gabba, which was all meant to have stopped.

**CHAIR:** I do counsel the member about the use of props. I notice he did it in quite a disciplined fashion, up and down quite quickly, so I thank him for that. With that, Mr Allen, I imagine the answer, given it is the same issue, is the same.

**Mr Allen:** Thank you for the question. I would refer to my prior answer that it is probably best directed to that agency.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** With respect, this is a directive from Treasury.

**Mr DICK:** Point of order. Just by way of clarification, the media release announcing the savings and debt plan which set out the detail makes no reference to advertising.

**CHAIR:** That is not really a point of order.

**Mr DICK:** It goes to the relevance of the question when the supposition behind the question is false.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Point of order. I have the press release the Treasurer issued and I have highlighted 'cease production of marketing materials'. Marketing materials is advertising materials and so forth and that is from the Treasurer himself.

**Mr DICK:** That is not true. That is untrue and you are misleading the committee.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** No, I am not. You are.

**Mr DICK:** Marketing material is not advertising.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** You are misleading the committee and you are misleading the committee on what you talked about in your press release.

**Mr DICK:** You have got form doing this.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** And you have been found in contempt by the Ethics Committee, mate, so come on.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, the Treasurer's point of order was peripherally a point of order, but your point of order was not a point of order at all, merely an argument, which was not asking me to address any of the questions. Member for Kawana, do you have any further questions?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Absolutely. In a press conference last week when the Treasurer was asked by a journalist about the lack of small and family business support by the state Labor government of which he is the Treasurer, he responded with a big smile on his face that we are seeing the economic benefit of short, sharp lockdowns.

**A government member:** We have.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Small businesses who are going broke will care to differ on that, I can assure you of that. In the last three-day lockdown we had there was government advertising, which I have screenshot from my TV, of the Unite and Recover plan with big symbols stating 'open'. Treasurer, why is the government spending money on Unite and Recover during a lockdown saying Queensland is open when these businesses were shut because of the state government lockdown?

**Mr DICK:** This gives me an opportunity to address a number of the falsehoods that have been perpetrated by the LNP both in this committee and previously. As the Acting Under Treasurer made clear, ABS national accounts data shows the first two lockdowns had only marginal impacts on aggregate spending levels. Short, sharp lockdowns work and we have seen that. We have seen that now with the lowest unemployment rate in Queensland for almost 12 years—more than 12 years: April 2009. I want to make very clear to members of the committee what the impacts of lockdowns are and what the impacts on businesses are individually and collectively of this sort of effective management of the pandemic.

Household consumption in Queensland fell by just 0.3 per cent in the March quarter 2021, but it remained 3.3 per cent above the pre COVID-19 levels of the March quarter 2020. March quarter 2020 to March quarter 2021, after we had a lockdown, up 3.3 per cent, the strongest annual growth of all states. Increases in retail spending since pre COVID February 2020 levels have been strong across all regions. In the week ending 18 June 2021, just before the latest lockdown, Greater Brisbane had experienced growth of 26.3 per cent since the end of February 2020 and in the rest of Queensland the increase was 28.1 per cent. Retail spending in mid-June was more than 20 per cent higher than pre virus levels across all regions and up more than 30 per cent in several regions. Most of the economic data after the latest lockdown is still to be published, but we have two pieces of information which I am pleased to share with the member for Kawana and other members of the committee. Firstly, the Westpac consumer sentiment index taken in the week after lockdown showed an increase in consumer confidence in Queensland in July. Secondly, an analysis by Queensland Treasury of near real-time consumer spending information—so the most accurate data we could obtain—shows that Queensland's spending is still 17 per cent higher over the year to Friday, 9 June than it was over the same period in 2019—that is, before COVID.

We will continue to monitor further data as it comes in, but we cannot deny that Queensland businesses are recovering thanks to the shortest possible lockdowns which enables them to do what businesses want to do and that is trade, which is get back to business, not be locked down for months in Victoria's case and weeks in the case of New South Wales. We are seeing the effective outcome. Just look at the unemployment data. Just look at the jobs we have been able to create in Queensland since the pandemic started. It is an exceptional outcome for Queensland. Why have we been able to do this? Because Queenslanders took the advice of the Chief Health Officer and did the right thing by themselves and their communities. If you take the pandemic head on and you deal with it head on then you see the economic recovery happen. What we have said is we will abide by the national cabinet rules after seven days—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Point of order, Mr Chair. Mr Chair—

**CHAIR:** Don't hold that up again.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** No, I am not. I am allowed to read a document. You are not going to tell me I cannot read a document.

**CHAIR:** I thought you were once again—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** You are making an assumption that is not correct. Let me read from my document.

**CHAIR:** With due respect, member for Kawana, you have done it twice before.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** But you are making assumptions.

**CHAIR:** I apologise profusely, member for Kawana.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My point of order is on relevance. I asked the Treasurer why the government were spending money advertising Unite and Recover during a three-day lockdown when the advertisement was Queensland is open for business and how do you think the small businesses feel when they are spending taxpayer money on advertising when they were shut down because of the state government lockdown. The Treasurer has not even gone near the advertising which was the heart of the question.

**CHAIR:** I took the answer to be that the short, sharp lockdowns meant that people could have the confidence that we would be open for business and they could have that growth. That is what the Treasurer seemed to be saying.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair, the standing orders do not allow the chair to debate or give an opinion on my question. My question to the Treasurer was about the advertising campaign in the middle of a lockdown that was saying Queensland is open for business.

**CHAIR:** I apologise, member for Kawana. I may not have stated that clearly. I was making a ruling on relevance and merely restating what the Treasurer had said and why I had found it relevant to the question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** You do not need to restate, just chair the meeting.

**CHAIR:** I make it clear that I do find the Treasurer's answer—and I will not restate it—clearly relevant to the question.

**Mr DICK:** Because, Chair, our economic recovery plan is working in the most fundamental and important way possible: economic growth leading the nation, jobs growth leading the nation, businesses back open, not subject to long, ongoing lockdowns. That is why we are promoting our economic recovery plan, because it is the best in the nation. As has been demonstrated time and time again, we got the health policy settings right, we have got the economic policy settings right and as a consequence Queenslanders are getting the dividend.

**CHAIR:** I have a question for the Treasurer. I refer to page 80 of Budget Paper No. 2. Treasurer, can you please advise the committee on Queensland's credit rating and how the rating agencies go about considering Queensland's economic outlook?

**Mr DICK:** As I said earlier, all jurisdictions have been through a time of trial—economic, social, health and otherwise—through the pandemic. I am pleased to report to the committee on the most recent credit opinions for Queensland: AA1 stable, affirmed by Moody's on 6 April 2021; AA-plus stable, affirmed by S&P Global on 21 October 2020; and AA with a stable outlook, affirmed by Fitch on 27 August 2020. Affirmation of a stable outlook reflects the expectation that the state's budgetary performance will improve as the local and national economies recover. Queensland's credit rating remains stable despite the economic and fiscal impacts of the pandemic.

In its April 2021 credit opinion, Moody's considered Queensland's credit strengths to be the mature and stable institutional framework and the state's large and diverse economic base. The stable outlook in Moody's credit opinion reflects their expectation that the state's large and diverse economy remains resilient to COVID-19 related disruptions and will continue to underpin the state's capacity to service debt over the next three to four years. Similarly, Moody's expects the broader Australian economy to remain resilient to COVID-19 related disruption, but we know how variable that is when we have seen the events of the last week unfold in New South Wales and Victoria. The stable outlook is also underpinned by Moody's assessment that Queensland will maintain a track record of sound public finance management and implement measures to manage debt.

In its 15 June 2021 commentary on the 2021-22 Queensland budget, Moody's noted that revenue recovery has exceeded their initial expectation, reflecting the stronger than anticipated domestic economic recovery despite the severe economic and revenue disruptions from the pandemic and border closures, again demonstrating the point—as Moody's has quite properly reported on—that if you get the health policy right then you get the economic benefit and that is what we are seeing in Queensland. In that commentary Moody's also outlined their expectation that Queensland will implement policies aimed at restoring an operating surplus while it implements a large capital spending program over the next few years. Of course, of the big four governments in Australia—the Australian government, the New South Wales government, the Victorian government and the Queensland government—we were the first government to publish a return to surplus. Moody's also observed that Queensland's borrowing requirements will be significantly lower than previously expected due to the revenue recovery.

Notably, S&P Global have downgraded other states in light of the pandemic, Victoria by two notches to AA and New South Wales by one notch to AA-plus. However, Queensland's rating is unchanged and S&P's outlook remains stable, meaning Queensland has the strongest rating of any state in Australia according to S&P Global. It is no wonder and I will quote another statement from S&P Global's June assessment which said—

The state's early success in containing outbreaks has supported a stronger economic and fiscal recovery than otherwise would have been the case.

That puts paid to the idea, promoted by the LNP in particular, that we have sacrificed economic growth to beat the pandemic. On the contrary, S&P Global's conclusion is that our actions in defending the health of Queenslanders have been the actual reason for our economic success. That builds on S&P Global's October 2020 credit opinion for Queensland, which noted the stable outlook reflects an expectation that Queensland will experience a significant COVID-19 induced hit to budgetary performance in the short term but this will improve as the local and national economies recover and the budget is effectively managed. In its 15 June 2021 commentary on the 2021-22 budget, S&P noted that the state's economic recovery is ahead of schedule and its fiscal balances are improving after the COVID-19 shock.

These are key factors continuing to support the stable outlook on Queensland's rating. In summary, it is good news for Queensland and a tick of approval from credit rating agencies for our work in managing the pandemic.

**Mr TANTARI:** I refer to page 153 of Budget Paper No. 2. Can the Treasurer please advise what he sees as the key risk to the budget forecasts?

**Mr DICK:** The federal government has a massive debt burden: \$980.6 billion in net debt by 2024-25. Underlying cash deficits of the Morrison coalition government will total \$342 billion from 2020-21 to 2024-25. When we get to 2024-25 the federal budget will still be in deficit by \$57 billion. Despite these ongoing deficits, the Morrison government plans to pursue stage 3 income tax cuts in 2024-25 for high-income earners. That presents a material long-term risk to all states. The way our federation has evolved, the federal government is meant to primarily collect tax for allocation to the states as service delivery agencies. The federal government collects approximately 70.9 per cent of tax revenue in Australia. Queensland will receive approximately \$31 billion in Australian government payments in 2021-22, that is, 50 per cent or thereabouts of the state's total revenue.

The real risk is that, after the federal election, the Morrison government will look to try to balance its books and payments to the states will be an expedient solution. We have seen this happen before. In the 2014-15 federal budget, the then federal coalition tried to cut funding to hospitals and schools by more than \$80 billion in the period to 2024-25. That was met with significant resistance from states, including from me as the health minister, and was eventually reversed.

It may try to apply generic cost benchmarks, ignoring a state's actual costs of service delivery as has been evident in recent negotiations on funding arrangements. Of course, we have a greater challenge in Queensland as ours is the most decentralised state in the Commonwealth and the second largest state by geography. Service delivery is a huge challenge for us. We see this in attempts at the moment around skills and training. Speaking for myself, and I know for other members of the government, we will put the LNP on notice: we will campaign hard against any possible cuts. They have done it before and they are likely to do it again; we have resisted them before and we will fight again if they seek to cut funding to states, including to our health system.

**Mr BROWN:** I refer to page 48 of Budget Paper No. 2. Could the Treasurer please advise the committee on Queensland's household consumption growth throughout the crisis and how household consumption growth and its forecast compares to other jurisdictions?

**Mr DICK:** I am pleased to report that household consumption in Queensland has rebounded more strongly than expected after the pandemic drove an unprecedented 10.2 per cent fall in the first half of 2020. As COVID-19 restrictions were progressively unwound due to the Queensland government's success in containing the virus and underpinned by significant government income support and stimulus measures, we saw a swift recovery in generic economic activity and household spending. Queensland's consumer spending rose a collective 14.5 per cent across the September and December quarters of 2020, to end the year above prepandemic levels.

Following that exceptionally strong growth, Queensland's household spending moderated slightly in the first quarter of 2021—down 0.3 per cent—but as I said earlier in the hearing it remained 3.3 per cent above the preCOVID-19 levels of the March quarter 2020. That 3.3 per cent growth over the year was the strongest annual growth of all the states. The member for Capalaba asked for a comparison: that was in stark contrast to the 0.6 per cent and 2.3 per cent falls experienced in New South Wales and Victoria respectively, and much higher than the growth over the year of one per cent in South Australia and just 0.1 per cent in Western Australia.

I am also pleased to note that the elevated levels of consumer spending and the associated economic activity and jobs it generates have persisted into the June quarter 2021. The latest ABS monthly data shows that Queensland's nominal retail spending was up 0.3 per cent in April and a further 1.6 per cent in May to be 13½ per cent higher than the preCOVID level of February 2020. Consumer spending patterns have continued to adjust over the past few quarters since the initial lockdowns and the composition of consumption expenditure is expected to continue to normalise as uncertainty related to health and economic outcomes diminishes. However, spending on some categories will likely continue to benefit from the substitution of expenditure away from overseas travel while international borders remain closed.

Reflecting the better-than-expected rebound in spending in the second half of 2020, in year-average terms, household consumption is now forecast to grow by 5.25 per cent in 2020-21. The substantial strengthening in dwelling construction and sustained growth in employment across the state are expected to support consumer spending growth of three per cent in 2021-22 before growth eases slightly to 2½ per cent to 2022-23.

Importantly, the recovery in consumer spending in Queensland has occurred earlier than nationally with the federal budget forecasting national household consumption to grow by only 1¼ per cent in 2020-21, compared with 5¼ per cent forecast in Queensland. The Australian government then forecast household consumption to strengthen further in 2021-22 and 2022-23 as spending patterns in New South Wales and Victoria return toward pre-pandemic levels. This much earlier and much stronger recovery in household consumption in Queensland reflects Queensland's success in containing the spread of the virus and highlights the importance of taking swift action to contain any sudden community outbreaks of COVID-19.

**CHAIR:** The committee will now adjourn for a break. The hearing will resume at 4.15 pm, continuing with the examination of the estimates of the portfolio areas of Treasury and Investment.

**Proceedings suspended from 4.01 pm to 4.16 pm.**

 **CHAIR:** I welcome back Treasury and officials. The committee will now resume its examination of the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of Treasury and Investment. Deputy Chair, do you have any questions?

**Mr STEVENS:** Treasurer, you mentioned earlier that you were going to raise \$17 million in licence fees. I understand from the *Brisbane Times* media article that that would be over three years at \$78 a pop. That means about 217,948 licensed drivers will be moving to Queensland. Including family members who do not have a licence and younger ones, that equates to between 300,000 and 400,000 people will be moving to Queensland over the next three years. Is that the correct figure or have you made an error in your calculations on this income-generating licence fee?

**Mr DICK:** I will clarify that for the committee before the end of the hearing.

**Mr STEVENS:** The Gold Coast City Council was due to pay \$7½ million in May of this year towards their commitment for the Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 3 starting by the end of this year. The council has been advised, and they have made it public, that their payment has been delayed until May 2022. Does this signal that the Light Rail Stage 3 will not be starting until the end of 2022 and does this make the government's promise to start work on the Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 3 this year another failed commitment?

**CHAIR:** This might be best addressed to the correct portfolio, but the Treasurer might have something to add as well.

**Mr STEVENS:** The Treasurer—it is finance.

**Mr DICK:** Naturally, being from the Gold Coast, the member for Mermaid Beach is very interested in that infrastructure project. I am not aware of those matters. That question should properly be put to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I have a question for the Acting Under Treasurer. What is the total cost of the budgeted advertising spend for the unite and recover program?

**Mr Allen:** That is not a program that is run from Treasury so I would not have that figure.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Acting Under Treasurer, the Treasurer sitting to your left held the program up before and every photograph he has he has the glossy brochure right up to his chin under his ear.

**CHAIR:** I counsel the member for Kawana that this is obviously not in order. I counsel the member to focus on a question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Under Treasurer, can you point me to the budget papers that provide the amount for the unite and recover economic recovery plan because I would have thought that the economic recovery plan of the state government would have something to do with Treasury? Can you please point me to where in the budget the money for the advertising is?

**Mr Allen:** As per my response before, the advertising campaign is not a campaign that is run from Treasury so it is not a decision that I am involved in.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Under Treasurer, can you advise the committee which department is responsible for the unite and recover economic plan if it is not Treasury?

**Mr Allen:** In my response I was differentiating between the responsibility for the plan and the responsibility for the advertising that you alluded to. My clear understanding is that that is a whole-of-government advertising campaign and also a whole-of-government plan. From the Premier down, accountability for the delivery of that plan belongs to the government.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Given we are at budget estimates and that now the Under Treasurer has confirmed that it is a whole-of-government responsibility, I suspect Treasury would know the amount. Are you saying to the committee that you are not aware of the amount of the advertising spend on the unite and recover plan despite the fact that you have said it is a whole-of-government plan? I would have thought Treasury would have been involved in the preparation of the advertising campaign. Is that case?

**CHAIR:** With respect, that questions has been put, but I am happy to put it to the Under Treasurer again.

**Mr Allen:** It is not a campaign that I have been involved in.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Chair, I struggle to see how the Treasurer—

**CHAIR:** I understand you are struggling. I understand that you asked the question twice.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It has been confirmed that the Treasurer had nothing to do with the unite and recover economic recovery plan of Queensland. That is unbelievable.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, I know there was commentary on the general circumstance, but our job here is to put questions to officers and the minister so can you put your question please.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Acting Under Treasurer, can you advise where an allocation is in the budget and how much the government has set aside for an advertising campaign of an education campaign to get Queenslanders vaccinated?

**Mr Allen:** I cannot point to a specific item within the budget papers. That would be contained within the health budget.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Acting Under Treasurer, the Treasurer has flagged getting rid of unnecessary social media accounts from government. When this initiative was put together, how many social media accounts did the government have and what has been the reduction since the Treasurer's announcement in July 2020?

**Mr Allen:** If I could have a moment to gather some information to help me answer your question. I apologise, but I will get that information for you.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** That is fine. I will continue while you are finding those details out.

**CHAIR:** Is there something you can add to that Under Treasurer?

**Mr Allen:** In terms of the reduction in social media accounts across government the number is 101.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Under Treasurer, you referred to 101. That was actually answered in the question on notice but it was not detailed in terms of the agencies. The question I have got now is: if there has been a reduction of 101 as part of the savings plan that the Treasurer announced in July last year, why would the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, which finished in 2018, still have a Twitter account and still be tweeting as of April 2021?

**CHAIR:** Is that addressed to the Under Treasurer?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Correct.

**Mr Allen:** That is not an account that Treasury controls so I am unable to answer that question. You will have to direct that to the relevant agency.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Treasurer, I have a question to you. I have made the point this afternoon in various questions that we have seen government advertising continue despite the fact that you have said you are going to save money on government advertising. You have said that taxpayers' money was going to be saved on social media accounts, but I have just shown that the Commonwealth Games that finished three years ago still has a Twitter account and people are still tweeting. Is it the case that your savings plan for all this social media advertising is actually not saving the Queensland taxpayer anything and considering unite and recover is continuing to be advertised on TV?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the member for his question. It allows me to put on record matters relevant to the savings and debt plan. For many years members of the government have heard about how bloated the Public Service was, how profligate Labor governments were and how much money we wasted. This is a savings and debt plan that we—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** You still do. He is misleading the committee. Labor waste. He is misleading the committee.

**Mr DICK:**—are delivering for Queensland. I thought that would be recognised by members of the opposition rather than criticised.

The savings and debt plan aims to achieve \$3 billion in savings over four years—\$750 million per year. They are savings that are made from agency budgets, including by agencies forgoing growth in budgets that they would ordinarily receive. That is because across government agency budgets increase annually in line with wages and service growth.

I am pleased to report that \$750 million of savings have been achieved in 2020-21, as clearly demonstrated in the budget papers at page 78 of Budget Paper No. 2. Agencies have achieved these savings without reducing services and in line with the Queensland government's commitment to employment security. Examples of savings made in 2020-21 include: a reduction of 101 social media accounts across government; a net reduction of 33—that is, 4.6 per cent or almost five per cent—of the senior executive service via natural attrition between July 2020 and May 2021; and accommodation savings, including \$1.2 million in savings associated with a renegotiation of a Department of Education lease and ongoing savings of \$3½ million per year.

While we made a very clear election commitment to fund the frontline and the frontline will expand to deliver the necessary health, education, policing, corrective services, youth justice, training and other services we deliver as a government, we are also watching everything we spend. We have been able to secure \$750 million in savings without any impact on service delivery for Queenslanders. I am pleased about that. We are going to continue to focus strongly on that in the years to come.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Treasurer, as I have indicated earlier in this estimates process, when you were asked at a press conference the other day about the lack of a small and family business COVID-19 lockdown support package you said that the—

**CHAIR:** From my understanding, that was not the answer that was given. This is commentary before the question. Would you be able to put your question without commentary that does not reflect the answer given?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** In order to have a question, the standing orders allow a preamble in the context of the explanation of the question. That is in the standing orders. For the Treasurer to answer my question about his press conference, I am reminding him what he said at the press conference.

**CHAIR:** At our break there was the forlorn hope that the member for Kawana would follow the standing orders. That was a view universally held by members of the committee.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The standing orders say that I am allowed to ask a question.

**Mr STEVENS:** You are wasting a lot of time. Let's get on with the question.

**CHAIR:** The standing orders insist that members actually put facts that are asserted, and that is not what we have heard from the committee today.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The Treasurer was asked at a press conference and he said, 'We are seeing the economic benefits of the short, sharp lockdown.' Those are his words.

**CHAIR:** You are just arguing with the chair.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** No, I am not. I want to ask a question of the Treasurer. If I could please stop being interrupted. Treasurer, there is no—

**CHAIR:** Order, member for Kawana! I merely insist that the standing orders be followed and that facts not be asserted when they are not in line with the answers that have been given to this committee. Member for Kawana, put your question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The Treasurer did not deny it when I asked it before.

**CHAIR:** No, we are moving on.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** No. Mr Chair—

**CHAIR:** I am going to move to the government and the member for Capalaba. Order!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Point of order. Mr Chair, you are wrongly making the accusation to me that the Treasurer disputed a question. That is not what the Treasurer did. When I asked a question about this matter and the subject matter of what the Treasurer said at a press conference—

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, do you have a point of order?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Yes, I do.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, I am giving you some time to settle down. Your behaviour is not acceptable—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** But Mr Chair—

**CHAIR:** Your behaviour is not acceptable. I am going to put a few questions to the government and then we will return.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair, I have a point of order. If you do not allow me to state my point of order that is against the standing orders.

**CHAIR:** I am hearing your point of order.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** When I asked the Treasurer and referenced his press conference, that was what he said. I think you are referring to a press release that the shadow Treasurer talked about before. That is not what I am asking. The Treasurer never denied what I said was incorrect, so I have a follow-up question to the question—

**CHAIR:** It is out of order to argue the facts of the case with the chair of the committee. In this case I am giving you some time to reflect on your behaviour and your—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair, that is disorderly and that is against the standing orders for free-flowing discussion—

**CHAIR:** We are going to move briefly to the member for Capalaba for a question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I have a question to the Treasurer about the lack of small business support and family support for the state.

**Mr BROWN:** Mr Chair, may I ask my question?

**CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr BROWN:** I refer to page 1 of Budget Paper No. 2. Could the Treasurer please advise the committee on Queensland's recent economic performance throughout the crisis and how the growth and forecast compares to other jurisdictions?

**Mr DICK:** Thank you, member for Capalaba; I appreciate your question in relation to economic growth. Queensland and Australia's relative success in containing the spread of COVID-19, in addition to significant fiscal and monetary support, has seen our domestic economy recover strongly. The sharp recovery in 2020-21 has been driven by household consumption, which rose to be 3.3 per cent above pre-COVID levels by the March quarter 2021 in Queensland, and dwelling investment, which is up 18.4 per cent over the same period. I note that some media commentators continue to persist with the idea that it is purely as a result of public sector stimulus or government stimulus that the economy has recovered, and that is not actually correct. The recovery has also been contributed to significantly by an increase in household consumption and dwelling investment, which has increased by 18.4 per cent, as I have said.

Overall, Queensland's gross state product is forecast to rebound 3¼ per cent in 2020-21, which is stronger than any other state based on the forecasts released by other states in their recent state budgets. In particular, Queensland's forecast economic growth of 3¼ percent in 2020-21 compares with a forecast growth of only three-quarters of a per cent in New South Wales and a fall of two per cent in Victoria. Queensland's economy is then forecast to grow a further 2¾ cent in both 2021-22 and 2022-23, while Australia's gross domestic product is expected to experience a delayed rebound of 4¼ per cent in 2021-22 before moderating to 2½ per cent growth in 2022-23. Importantly, Queensland's faster recovery means that Queensland's aggregate growth across the three years to 2022-23 is stronger than forecast nationally. If projected growth across 2023-24 and 2024-25 is also included, Queensland's expected cumulative growth across the five-year period to 2024-25 is around 15 per cent higher than national growth of around 13.5 per cent. Queensland's economy will grow by 15 per cent to the period 2024-25 and national growth will be 13½ per cent, so we are going to be the growth of the nation.

Based on the currently published 2021-22 budget papers, Queensland's aggregate growth across the five years is also stronger than any other jurisdiction. The strong recovery in the domestic economy has flown through to Queensland's labour market. Data released just yesterday shows that by June 2021 employment in Queensland has rebounded to be 101,600 persons higher than its pre-pandemic level in March 2020. Importantly, this is the strongest employment growth of any jurisdiction since March 2020 by a significant margin. Employment in New South Wales and Victoria increased by 27,700 and 4,700 persons respectively. We have grown 101,600; New South Wales has grown 27,700—so we are almost four times higher than New South Wales—and growth in employment in Victoria over that period was 4,700 persons. Compared to 101,600, we are almost 20 times higher. We have delivered 20 times more jobs in that period than Victoria.

Reflecting this exceptionally strong recovery in the Queensland labour market, employment growth in Queensland is forecast to grow by 8¾ per cent over the year to the June quarter 2021 before growing a further 1¼ per cent per year for the remainder of the forecast period. This is substantially stronger than the jobs growth forecast for Australia, where employment is expected to grow by 6½ per cent over the year to the June quarter and then record more subdued growth of one per cent to 1¼ per cent each year over the remainder of the outlook period.

In year average terms, Queensland's employment growth forecast of 2¼ per cent in 2020-21 and three per cent in 2021-22 is much stronger than other jurisdictions. In comparison, New South Wales is forecasting employment growth of only a quarter of a per cent in 2020-21 and 1½ per cent this financial year. You would have to ask, given the recent events in New South Wales, whether it is possible for them to grow jobs by 1¼ per cent. We hope that they can, because that would be to the benefit of the nation, but no doubt that will now be challenging. Victoria is forecasting employment to fall by one per cent in 2020-21 and only rebound by 2½ per cent in 2021-22.

Queensland's strong employment growth has helped drive down the state's unemployment rate, which has fallen substantially from its COVID-19 induced peak of 8.7 per cent in July 2020 to 5.1 per cent in June 2021. That is quite a staggering reduction and, as I said, the lowest rate since April 2009. We expect the unemployment rate to continue to improve and reach five per cent by 2024-25.

**CHAIR:** I call the member for Maiwar, who I believe has a question.

**Mr BERKMAN:** My question is to the CEO of CS Energy. Mr Bills, I understand that you and the energy minister have said it is CS Energy's intention to rebuild the Callide C4 turbine. Has the joint venture partner, InterGen, agreed to that decision and committed to funding their fair share of the repair bill, or could this cost fall entirely to CS Energy?

**Mr Bills:** The CEO of InterGen accompanied me to site the week after the incident. Before I go further, in relation to the incident I want to acknowledge the actions of our people which ensured that no-one was hurt and there were no injuries. We have restored two units and we have a third unit coming back. That needs to be commended and respected, and it goes to the quality of our people.

I will now turn to answer your question. Yes, the CEO of InterGen has accompanied me to site and has made that public statement. You are right in that the asset is jointly owned 50 per cent between InterGen and CS Energy. Both ourselves and InterGen have different insurers and are working through the process of the claim and the insurance payment. At the moment there is nothing to suggest from the CEO of InterGen that they are not following through with that commitment.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Are you able to give us an indication of what you understand the cost of that repair bill will be?

**Mr Bills:** Our loss assessors only gained access to the unit two weeks ago because up until then it was under the control of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. This is a very current process so at the moment we do not know the timing or the value.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Chair, I would also like to put a question to the CEO of Stanwell. Before the former CEO of Stanwell, Richard Van Breda, stood down, he said that the company was planning for the future of the workforce, with retirement of coal-fired assets including 'steps to bring our people, communities, unions and government together to put plans in place ... in relation to retraining, redeployment and ... retirement' for workers. I understand that he has also said that these plans would aim to 'ensure the long-term economic resilience of their regions'. My question for you is whether that work is continuing, or has it now been dropped since the departure of the former CEO?

**CHAIR:** There is limited scope for the company, but within that scope I think we can put the question to you. I am not sure.

**Mr Aspinall:** I am on the board of Stanwell Corporation and I have taken on the role in an acting capacity as the acting chief executive officer. In that capacity we are not changing any of our plans for looking at the future of our current power stations and working with the communities in which we operate to continue on developing opportunities in the regions in which our power stations are located.

**CHAIR:** We might return to the member for Kawana.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I have a very brief follow-up while the CEO is here.

**CHAIR:** I have given you a fair opportunity. Member for Kawana, I do counsel you not to argue with the chair.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Treasurer, the Queensland government has not implemented a small and family business COVID support package when Queensland businesses go into lockdown or are in their third week of harsh restrictions at the moment. Businesses are suffering and are angry when they saw the

Treasurer on the news saying that they are seeing the economic benefits of a short, sharp lockdown, despite them having to throw out perishables and not make an income and people going without work. Treasurer, why are you so out of touch that you cannot understand the plight of small and family businesses that are going broke because of lockdowns in Queensland and continued restrictions, and why won't the government introduce a COVID support package to support these small businesses?

**CHAIR:** Order. It is very disappointing that, firstly, you inferred a motive in the Treasurer that was out of order. Secondly, there were multiple questions and preambles. I know the Treasurer would take this opportunity to answer this question, and I call the Treasurer.

**Mr DICK:** Thanks, Premier—sorry, I have got to say that I did nod off a bit during the question.

**CHAIR:** In general, it was about small businesses and the benefits of short, sharp lockdowns.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** We know you do not support small business. I know why you have forgotten the question already. It is because you have got no support for small businesses. You were too busy on your phone, weren't you. I saw you. Were you tweeting?

**CHAIR:** The member for Kawana is out of order. This is very disappointing. Treasurer, please ignore all of that provocation. It is not the standards we expect. Small business is important. At its core, there were some important things in the question and I ask you to address that rather than any of the provocations that are outside the standing orders.

**Mr DICK:** Chair, I do appreciate your encouragement. I ignore the member for Kawana all of the time so today is no different.

**CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** And Queenslanders ignore you, mate. You have got no support for small businesses. Not a dollar. Businesses are going broke and you said that we are seeing the economic benefits of short, sharp lockdowns—

**Mr TANTARI:** Point of order—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** That is a slap in the face for small businesses on the Sunshine Coast. You should sign my petition to help small businesses on the Sunshine Coast.

**CHAIR:** Order! There is a point of order.

**Mr TANTARI:** The member is being argumentative. Can you rule him out of order?

**CHAIR:** This argument and bickering—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I am responding to the quarrelling from the Treasurer.

**CHAIR:** Order! I think we might need to take a step back outside if this continues.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Is that a threat, Chair? Are you threatening me?

**CHAIR:** No. I am suggesting that the member—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Then why would you suggest we go outside?

**CHAIR:** I am suggesting that the member for Mermaid Beach and I would have to consider how we keep good order in this committee by having the member for Mermaid Beach counsel some of the members of the opposition in order to ensure they actually behave themselves. It is completely unacceptable that, even after I had to suspend the opposition's question time, in the very first question you put—which at its core has some reasonably interesting and serious things—you immediately started bickering with the Treasurer. These are important issues which in New South Wales we look on in horror—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Point of order, Mr Chair—

**CHAIR:** and you cannot take this seriously—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Well, I do take this seriously because my small businesses in my electorate are going broke, so I take it very seriously. On the point of order, Mr Chair: can you please advise whether you are intending, with respect to the standing order of quarrelling, of applying it to the Treasurer or just to the opposition members on this committee?

**CHAIR:** I thank you and I have counselled the Treasurer repeatedly but the scale is completely different. I do warn both the Treasurer and the member for Kawana that we might actually need to have a conference outside and do some consideration with the deputy chair to consider how we maintain the good order of this committee. Post COVID, we have incredibly serious issues to address. I call the Treasurer.

**Mr DICK:** Thanks. In relation to business support packages, until last night it was clear that the national cabinet arrangements were clear and in place—business and individual support would come in after seven days. I quote the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, from 4 June 2021 when he said—

... states are looking after business payments and we will be addressing individual's payments after that seven day period.

From my perspective, it is a matter of basic fairness—that what is appropriate for individuals ought to be appropriate for business. If the LNP want to say that business should get support but individuals should not, that is a matter for them. The good news is that because New South Wales went into a lockdown the Prime Minister is changing the rules, and we are happy to support that. That changed last night when the Prime Minister announced—as it seems in the paper today—that they would be providing support for Victoria, which is going into lockdown, on a fifty-fifty basis both on business and on individual support. In addition, I understand the matter is being discussed at national cabinet today. We would be looking for Queensland to be treated exactly the same way as any other state that may have to go into lockdown should that happen in the future.

I reject the premise of the question that the government does not care for or support family and small businesses. As members of the committee know, I am a child of small business. My grandmother ran a small business. My grandparents ran a small business. My mother ran a small business. When I talked about my late grandmother and my late father in the budget speech last year, I was mocked by the opposition and they laughed at me.

**Mr STEVENS:** Well, there is a black sheep in every family.

**Mr DICK:** Here they go again. I honour my grandmother and my father every day I do this job because I know how hard it is to run a small business. I know what it is to have a father go to work in the dark and come home in the dark to turn a dollar, to make sure their kids can have a better life than they had. My father's first job was in an abattoir when he was 15 and I am now the Treasurer of Queensland. I honour him every day through my work, and this is disrespected, as I know, often and always by the LNP.

I do not accept the premise of the question that every business wants a support package. I do know there has been public comment by some business owners that they want to get on with it; they do not want to be in lockdown. They want to make sure their business can open and get on with it. It is exactly why we have provided support to small business, some of the most significant and extensive small business support—in some cases, more than any other state. I want to reject entirely this premise, this falsehood and this dishonesty that the LNP has peddled in the community for weeks now.

Let's have a look at what the Labor government has done for businesses in Queensland. There has been over \$180 million in COVID adaptation grants—I just re-emphasise those words: adaptation grants—adaptation grants that have been provided to more than 20,000 businesses so they could change their business operations to ensure they could respond to COVID-19, and regional grant funding is still available. There has been a billion dollars in no interest jobs loans to nearly 7,000 businesses supporting 86,000 Queensland jobs. No other state provided concessional loans to the extent that the Queensland Labor government did. There were no concessional loans for small businesses in New South Wales, Western Australia or South Australia. In Victoria the loan scheme was only \$250 million. The economic recovery plan was underpinned by \$14.2 billion in recovery initiatives. We set and exceeded our small and medium size enterprise procurement target of 25 per cent, meaning \$2.67 billion went into the hands of Queensland small businesses in the last six months of 2020. As I said earlier, there was \$100 million in electricity bill rebates for sole traders and small and medium enterprises which so far have supported around 180,000 Queensland businesses and operators. There were financial resilience webinars to assist small businesses with practical skills like cash flow management, business planning and tailored support through the Mentoring for Growth program.

The other dishonesty being perpetrated in the community by the LNP is this idea—and I quote the LNP—that 'we are the only state without a targeted support program'. That is not true because not every state has had lockdowns like us. New South Wales had never had a short lockdown like us; they have only had lockdowns of two weeks or more. Tasmania has not had any lockdowns since last year. South Australia had a five-day lockdown last year with no additional business support. For states that have had some limited payments, remember they did not provide the extensive no interest loans that Queensland did. They did not set their businesses up like we did in Queensland. Furthermore, those other states do not have the advantages that we have: the fastest growing population and the strongest jobs growth in the nation, which supports economic recovery.

I just put that on the record because if members of the LNP sought to promote that dishonesty in the parliament, they would know quite obviously and clearly now that that is not the case. They would be intentionally and deliberately misleading the parliament if they were to perpetrate the falsehood that the only state without a targeted support program was Queensland.

**CHAIR:** I do note that in the last session we gave considerably more time to the opposition than the government. We are being eminently fair in this process and we are trying to be eminently fair to put questions and have the Treasurer, Under Treasurer and any of the other officers answer them. I ask the member for Hervey Bay do you have a question?

**Mr TANTARI:** I refer to page 11 of Budget Paper No. 2, Treasurer. Could you please advise the committee on Queensland's operating position and when it will be targeting a surplus, and how does this compare with other jurisdictions?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the honourable member for his question. Our decisive action, as the member for Hervey Bay knows, to protect Queenslanders from COVID-19 has meant Queensland has returned to economic growth sooner and more strongly than other economies. This rapid turnaround has been backed by the Queensland government's economic recovery plan through its focus on creating jobs and working together to ensure Queensland's future prosperity.

Compared to the outlook in the 2020-21 budget, the economic recovery has been quicker and stronger than forecast. This has flowed through to benefit key fiscal aggregates, particularly the uplifting key revenues such as own sourced taxes and GST. The recovery and the revenue outlook are allowing the government to balance additional funding for priority service needs, including the evolving COVID-19 response with improved operating balances and significantly lower net debt and borrowings relevant to the 2020-21 budget. The operating balance is now forecast to improve each year across the forward estimates with a return to operating surplus forecast in 2024-25, as I said earlier.

Achieving ongoing operating surpluses in the medium term combined with net operating cash flows from operating activities primarily funding the general government sector capital program will allow the government to stabilise debt levels and reduce debt as a proportion of revenue over time. All Australian states and territories except for Western Australia were thrown into operating deficit due to the impacts of COVID-19, and Western Australia, of course, benefits from strong iron ore royalties—record iron ore prices of course deliver strong iron ore royalties—without losing GST revenue. Of the four big jurisdictions, as I have said previously, we were the first to publish a return to surplus. The Victorian government and the Australian Morrison government are both forecasting sizeable net operating deficits over the forward estimates.

**Mr TANTARI:** My further question is in relation to Budget Paper No. 2, page 31. Could the Treasurer please update the committee on the Queensland Jobs Fund?

**Mr DICK:** That is a great initiative of our government. That fund is about turbocharging our economic recovery through partnering with the private sector to create jobs. We know last year the public sector, through a range of stimulus measures, had to support economic activity in Queensland, families, households, individuals and of course businesses. Now we look to support the private sector and stimulate private sector investment in Queensland. The total funding now committed to the Queensland Jobs Fund is \$3.43 billion. That fund includes new funding for a \$350 million Industry Partnership Program which is open to applications. We have wasted no time in committing up to \$20 million from this program towards the development of the Translational Manufacturing Institute, and it was great to be with the Deputy Premier to announce that on the eve of the budget. That is subject to the Morrison government's commitment to that project through the Modern Manufacturing Initiative. We are confident, along with our partners at TRI, the Translational Research Institute, that will happen and there is about \$43 million to support additional short-lived projects under the Building Acceleration Fund. I know the Deputy Premier is doing a great job leading that.

To further support Queensland's economic recovery we have announced new programs and additional funding for the Queensland Jobs Fund. On 10 June 2021 we committed another \$1½ billion as part of the Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund. Energy government owned corporations have already submitted a diverse range of investment opportunities as part of that renewable energy fund which opened last year. On 21 June I announced a \$520 million Invested in Queensland program, which forms an integral part of the Queensland Jobs Fund. That program is aimed at attracting leading companies to set up operations in Queensland and supporting large-scale investment projects through two new investment schemes: the Strategic Investment Scheme, which will provide tailored funding to support local, interstate and international businesses looking to establish significant job-creating projects in Queensland; and, secondly, the Investment Support Scheme, which

will provide contestable projects with rebates on payroll tax and other state based taxes. I am engaging directly with potential investors promoting Queensland as an investment destination in my role as the Minister for Investment and discussing how government and industry can work together to accelerate major investment projects.

I would encourage any existing Queensland businesses to visit the new Queensland Jobs Fund online presence, which provides further details on the Queensland Jobs Fund and access to a concierge service who will help identify what programs might be relevant. The existing programs that now fall under the Queensland Jobs Fund remit are continuing to be delivered with the aim of creating jobs and strengthening Queensland's economic recovery, and we can do that now. We can look to open the economy even further, attract private sector investment and support jobs growth because Queensland is a safe place for people, capital and business. We can do that now and that will be part of our role going forward to continue to attract private sector investment to our state.

**Mr BROWN:** Treasurer, I refer to page 4 of Budget Paper No. 2, and I note the fantastic hydrogen research that is currently taking place in my city of Redland city. Could the Treasurer please update the committee on how Queensland's Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund will work?

**Mr DICK:** I know of your interest in that. I know that you and the member for Redlands are very interested in the future of the hydrogen industry in Queensland. There is great work being done at the research facility there, and I acknowledge that.

As I said earlier, we are very keen to continue the transformation of Queensland's energy system. As the Premier said in her estimates hearing, we are an energy powerhouse in Queensland, whether it be coal, gas, pumped hydro, solar, wind or, now, hydrogen. The budget commits a further \$1.5 billion to boost the existing \$500 million renewable energy fund. This investment, the \$2 billion renewable energy and hydrogen fund, is a landmark investment for Queensland. It will support government owned energy corporations to invest in commercial renewable and hydrogen projects including in partnership with the private sector. This is a way that we continue to drive our commitment to deliver 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030, complementing the \$145 million we have committed to renewable energy zones in Northern, Central and Southern Queensland. The fact is that renewable energy and the renewable energy economy means investment, jobs and growth for Queensland.

Since 2015, since we set that policy setting for our state, the Labor government's commitment has seen 44 renewable energy projects, around \$10 billion of investment and almost 7,000 jobs created. That is testament to our strong record in capitalising on Queensland's competitive advantages, including world-class renewable resources and the ability to leverage the government owned energy businesses we own to attract new investment.

In terms of how the fund will work, government owned energy corporations will continue to engage with market proponents to identify and bring forward the most attractive investments for consideration through the fund. These proposals can include partnerships with the private sector. This ensures that the fund will leverage the government's significant \$2 billion commitment to maximise benefits through the total amount of investment dollars, renewable energy in hydrogen and jobs that will be supported as a consequence. Investment proposals will be considered based on the key objectives set by the government; for example, it is critical that investments through the fund support additional renewable energy and storage and Queensland's energy system requirements into the future. This includes solar, wind, batteries, pumped hydro and hydrogen projects along with supporting network infrastructure. I think that is a good point. It is one thing to generate the power; it is another to connect it to the network.

Supporting network infrastructure is very important as well. We saw that with Neoen's Kaban Renewable Energy project in the Far North of our state—a great project. A private sector proponent was ready to invest in Queensland and create jobs. Of course, it was the first time a federal energy minister has vetoed a NAIF project. Of all the projects to veto, a renewable energy project was vetoed by a Queensland! Keith Pitt sent a message to his own state that he did not want to support jobs in Queensland. It is staggering. That is something that the Morrison government will be reminded of every day until the next federal election. It is not interested in creating jobs in Queensland. Again, as I have said constantly in the parliament, lazy LNP MPs on fat margins in the federal parliament deliver nothing for Queensland. The only way we will get our fair share out of Canberra is if we get rid of these people who are timeservers and bench warmers in the federal parliament.

**CHAIR:** Referring to page 49 of Budget Paper No. 2, could the Treasurer please advise the committee on Queensland's business investment throughout the crisis and on how business investment forecasts compare with other jurisdictions?

**Mr DICK:** Thanks, chair. I am just trying to clarify something for the committee.

**CHAIR:** From a previous question?

**Mr DICK:** Yes. Unfortunately the member for Kawana is not present—and I am not commenting on his absence—but I thought I should clarify that as soon as practicable. I am advised that the government has confirmed with the CEO of Commonwealth Games Australia that social media and websites were transferred to the Commonwealth Games Foundation after GOLDOC was wound up. That includes the GOLDOC website, Twitter and Facebook accounts. They post periodically, too, mostly anniversaries of what was the best Commonwealth Games event in history. It is not a government channel and, again, the member for Kawana sought to viciously attack the government without any form of factual substantiation; but nothing is new there. So to your question now—

**CHAIR:** Yes, I was asking about the forecasts, especially with other jurisdictions, on business investment and business investment through the pandemic?

**Mr DICK:** Thanks, chair. I am happy to respond to that question. The estimated value of capital investment in 2020-21 through Queensland Treasury's Commercial and Investment Division's project facilitation initiative was \$2.1 billion from a target of \$1.5 billion. The estimated jobs were 1,536. That is a significant job delivered by the Treasury commercial and investment team. I thank them for their work supporting the creation of 1,536 jobs in 2020-21, a great achievement. The onset of the pandemic and the national lockdown of March and April 2020 saw business confidence and conditions in Queensland fall to levels last seen in the early 1990s recession. Spending on non-dwelling construction and machinery and equipment fell sharply in the June quarter 2020. Overall, the Queensland budget estimates that private business investment in Queensland contracted by six per cent in 2020-21. In comparison, the Australian budget estimated national business investment to climb by five per cent. Queensland's subsequent success in controlling the spread of COVID-19 and the easing of many social-distancing restrictions have resulted in a strong rebound in business confidence and conditions. Firms are now reporting the best business conditions for some years. Together with a sustained period of low interest rates, a tighter labour market and tax incentives for business, this is expected to encourage capacity-expanding investment in machinery and equipment.

The global economic recovery and firmer commodity prices should also support investment in engineering construction. A recovery in non-residential building is likely to take longer. Ongoing restrictions on international travel are likely to limit incentives for investment in hotels, while low office occupancy rates are likely to weigh on office construction. The Queensland budget forecasts business investment to grow by four per cent in 2021-22, with growth strengthening to 7½ per cent the following year.

In comparison, the Australian budget forecasts national private business investment growth of 1½ per cent in 2021-22 and 10 per cent in 2022-23. Over the two-year forecast period, the average growth rate is the same. The key difference is that the Queensland budget anticipates a somewhat faster recovery. In 2021-22 we are targeting \$1.6 billion in capital investment and 2,550 jobs enabled through project facilitation. To reach those targets, Queensland Treasury's Commercial and Investment Division is proactively engaging with the private sector and industry on future investment opportunities and challenges. During these discussions we are actively listening to business leaders about what we can do as a government to move major private investment forward for Queensland. In addition, the \$520 million Invest in Queensland program, an integral part of our jobs fund, will offer financial incentives and tax incentives as well for those companies to invest in Queensland.

**CHAIR:** Referring to Budget Paper No. 3—the Treasurer knows how passionate I am about investment, especially in the growing area of Logan in terms of our schools and the Mount Lindsay Highway—could the Treasurer please update the committee on the government's infrastructure spend?

**Mr DICK:** It is a very significant investment in this budget, locking in our \$50 billion infrastructure guarantee for Queenslanders yet again in the 2021-22 budget. Some \$14.688 billion—almost \$14.7 billion—of capital investment in 2021-22 will help drive economic growth across Queensland, directly supporting 46,500 jobs. They are direct jobs and, of course, there will be tens of thousands of jobs that will be supported indirectly through supply chain and other mechanisms. The 2021-22 capital program comprises \$12.606 billion of non-financial asset purchases and acquisitions under finance leases as well as \$2.082 billion of capital grants expenses. The 2021-22 capital program will deliver jobs in the short-term and economic growth over the longer term.

Of course, we have support for our regions—\$8.987 billion of our capital program. Around 61 per cent of that program will be spent in regional Queensland. Of course, that will be welcomed by the member for Hervey Bay. That will be spent outside of greater Brisbane, supporting an estimated 29,800 jobs. As I have said, the capital program across the four years from 2021-22 will total \$52.216 billion.

That is very important. There is \$6.902 billion in transformative transport infrastructure, including: \$1.517 billion to continue work on Cross River Rail and substantial ongoing investment to fund major upgrades to the M1 Pacific Motorway—I know that will be welcomed by the members for Mermaid Beach and Coomera—the Bruce Highway and inland freight routes.

I have received advice in response to the question asked by the member for Mermaid Beach in relation to the Gold Coast Light Rail. I am advised by the minister for transport's office that the answer is 'No'.

To support delivery of health services in 2021-22 we will invest \$1.352 billion, including \$105 million as part of our \$265 million Satellite Hospitals program. Another \$283.7 million will be invested in 2021-22 as part of the \$979 million Building Better Hospitals commitment.

To your question, Chair, we will invest \$1.521 billion in 2021-22 to support students and teachers. Investments in new schools are being facilitated through the \$2.6 billion Building Future Schools Program, while the \$1 billion Great Schools Great Future commitment will help provide new classrooms and facilities at existing schools. I know that you have one of the fastest growing parts of Queensland. We are delivering record education infrastructure expenditure in your part of the world.

The government's capital program will support a range of critical infrastructure projects in the port, rail, water and energy sectors being delivered through the public non-financial corporations sector, otherwise known as GOCs and commercial statutory authorities. Capital purchases by the public non-financial corporations sector in the current financial year will total \$3.7 billion.

As you can see, Chair, there is very significant investment in capital. We will continue to drive that because that creates jobs for Queenslanders across the length and breadth of our state.

**Mr TANTARI:** Treasurer, I refer to page 63 of Budget Paper 2. Could you advise the committee on the impacts of COVID-19 on Queensland's population growth and how its forecasts compare with other jurisdictions?

**Mr DICK:** Our population growth in 2019-20 was negatively impacted by the pandemic. International travel restrictions implemented in late March 2020 curtailed net overseas migration in the June and September quarters of 2020. Further impacts on net overseas migration are expected through 2020-21, including the March quarter 2021, due to expected large decline in international student arrivals. The relaxation of interstate border restrictions in the second half of 2020 has meant interstate migration has only been minimally impacted by the pandemic. Strengthening domestic activity is expected to see interstate migration returning to more normal levels over time.

Over the past several decades, consistent positive net interstate migration has underpinned Queensland's population growth outstripping the national average. In addition to the state's enviable lifestyle—a lifestyle superpower you could describe Queensland as—Queensland's climate, competitive taxation rates and relative housing affordability have been key drivers in attracting interstate migration. These fundamental drivers remain in place, with May 2020 CoreLogic data showing that the Brisbane median dwelling price of \$574,572 was around 41 per cent below that in Sydney—the median price there is \$970,355, so you have to be a millionaire to buy a median priced house in New South Wales—and around 22 per cent below Melbourne's median house price of \$740,562. Natural population increase is not expected to be materially impacted by the pandemic, with only minor changes to birth and death rates.

On balance, Queensland's population growth is forecast to slow to one per cent in both 2020-21 and 2021-22 before gradually strengthening to 1¼ per cent in 2022-23 and 1½ per cent in both 2023-24 and 2024-25, in line with the expected easing of restrictions on international travel—and we hope that comes to pass. Reflecting the anticipated normalisation of interstate migration levels, Queensland's population growth is expected to be slightly stronger than nationally over the forecast period.

**CHAIR:** Member for Maiwar, do you have a question?

**Mr BERKMAN:** I have a question for the Under Treasurer in relation to the Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund. Has Treasury prepared, or can you provide us, a breakdown of what form that funding will take including, for example, the proportion of grants versus loans, whether any loans will be concessional or on regular terms—that sort of information?

**Mr DICK:** I thought I provided a comprehensive answer on how the fund would operate.

**CHAIR:** Acting Under Treasurer, do you have anything to add to the previous answer?

**Mr Allen:** The Treasurer has provided significant detail around that fund. You had specific questions there that would be encapsulated by what is in the budget paper. There will be equity injections into those entities in support of commercial projects that they bring forward.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Mr Cannon, at what level do you think the transfer of surplus funds from the QSuper defined benefit scheme will become a material risk to the defined benefit scheme fund?

**CHAIR:** There is some hypothetical there about future performance. Mr Cannon?

**Mr Cannon:** This question has been somewhat superseded. The Future Fund act brought in a funding guarantee for the defined benefit scheme so, to the extent that there is any funding management undertaken by the government—they take ‘too much’ out, for example—to the extent that there are effects on the funding position of the scheme later on then that guarantee is invoked and the scheme is funded again. I do not make any recommendations about funding levels. I report on them but I do not make any recommendations about funding management initiatives anymore, subsequent to the implementation of that guarantee.

**Mr JANETZKI:** With the merger of Sunsuper and QSuper—firstly, have you been consulted on the merging of the financial systems and these two entities?

**Mr Cannon:** No, I have not been consulted about those things. There are plenty of people involved within the government superannuation officer function, which is part of Treasury and supported by staff within QSuper, plenty of legislative support and guidance and some consultants I understand as well. There is no specific requirement for me. I am able to report on the defined benefit scheme to the extent that any changes are made. To the best of my knowledge to date, at least from public statements, there are no intended changes to the defined benefit scheme so I will continue to value it as it stands and I will play what I see, so to speak.

**Mr CRANDON:** Treasurer, prior to the last election there was a commitment made by the government to build a northern Gold Coast hospital. As it transpired, when we looked at all the figures, it ended up being a commitment of \$3 million towards the planning only of a northern Gold Coast hospital. I asked the Premier at the last estimates where the \$3 million was in the budget and she was unable to give me a specific answer to it. I looked forward to this budget and finding where the \$3 million was, but, unfortunately again, it is not a line item in the current budget. Other health items—

**CHAIR:** This is an extraordinarily long question. Is there a question coming?

**Mr CRANDON:** Yes, there is a question. Other health items for amounts as small as a million dollars or even several hundred thousand dollars are line items. Why, first of all, is the funding for the northern Gold Coast hospital not shown, given that it was an election commitment? Why is it not shown as a line item? Indeed, is \$3 million enough to properly do the planning for a northern Gold Coast hospital?

**CHAIR:** Obviously this is a question that is properly addressed to the health minister, but the Treasurer might have something to add.

**Mr DICK:** I am happy to answer in general terms. The member for Coomera talks about election commitments and I will say a little bit more about election commitments and how they were costed. Not every capital program is listed in the budget papers. Obviously the \$3 million in relation to that project is something that should properly be put to the health minister, but we made a commitment and we will deliver on that. We did not make false commitments like the member for Coomera and others around the Bruce Highway hoax and the fake Bradfield scheme about all the money they said they were going to spend: \$13 billion on the Bruce Highway hoax—it was a \$50 million scoping study, so sadly only \$12,950 million short of the promise; and the \$15 billion Bradfield scheme evaporated into a \$20 million plan, roughly one-thousandth of the dollars promised.

**Mr CRANDON:** So you don't have an answer for me?

**Mr DICK:** If I can respond, I do have an answer.

**Mr CRANDON:** It was a very specific question—

**Mr DICK:** I gave you an answer. The answer was not every capital program is listed in the budget.

**Mr CRANDON:**—that you do not care about and you are not going to deliver.

**Mr DICK:** No, we care about honesty in election commitments—

**Mr CRANDON:** Well, where is it?

**Mr DICK:**— and not misleading the people of Queensland.

**Mr CRANDON:** Where is the money?

**Mr DICK:** You will never apologise for your falsehoods in that campaign; the most disgraceful election commitments in history. You perpetrated a falsehood to everyone on the Gold Coast that you would four-lane the Bruce Highway.

**Mr CRANDON:** It is so interesting—

**CHAIR:** Member for Coomera, stop interjecting!

**Mr DICK:** It is an absolute disgrace.

**Mr CRANDON:**—the absolute dishonesty that you use.

**CHAIR:** Member for Coomera, this is the fifth time you have interjected. You have put the question. Your requirement under the standing orders is to listen to the answer without interjection.

**Mr CRANDON:** With all due respect, the Treasurer was very inflammatory in his response and was not answering the question specifically.

**CHAIR:** You can raise a point of order. If you are raising a point of order I could give a ruling on that, but I find the answer relevant. Member for Coomera, I ask you to respect the process and to not interject while the Treasurer is speaking, no matter how inflammatory he is. Treasurer, I do counsel you to stick to the answer that you are giving and to not inflame the member for Coomera. He finds it difficult.

**Mr DICK:** I provided a comprehensive response. I have nothing further to add.

**Mr CRANDON:** I have a question to the QIC CEO, Damien Frawley, if he could come forward. Mr Frawley, in relation to the business investment fund, I note that last year the fund was announced as \$500 million. However, during a recent webinar a figure of \$100 million was stated over the next three years. How many businesses has QIC invested in since the fund was announced?

**Mr DICK:** Point of order. I did provide a comprehensive answer on the first investment that was made out of that fund in this hearing.

**CHAIR:** The member for Coomera may not have heard that or may wish to hear it from Mr Frawley.

**Mr Frawley:** I thank the honourable member for the question. The government has established the Backing Queensland Business Investment Fund to make direct investments in Queensland businesses and industry. QIC is managing the fund and utilising its investment governance processes to make the investment decisions. The fund will target commercial returns as well as supporting Queensland jobs. This will allow the fund to partner with private investors, financiers, superannuation funds and other investors around the world. QIC has already engaged with approximately 224 businesses and their advisers about the fund. Of these there are currently 42 prospects in early engagement and five opportunities in due diligence. QIC also hosted a webinar in April with the aim of promoting awareness of the fund in the business community. QIC made its initial investment decisions over the June quarter and closed its first investment in Gilmour Space Technologies, as the Treasurer mentioned earlier today.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Thank you for your service. I understand that today may be your last estimates.

**CHAIR:** He is eternally grateful for that.

**Mr DICK:** He is going to miss it!

**Mr JANETZKI:** I wanted to touch base on the Virgin investment. I know the Queensland government took a \$200 million stake in Virgin. From memory, it was maybe \$20 million and a five per cent equity stake and then \$180 million in respect of loans and other incentives. I am wondering how much that investment is worth today, or the progress of that investment into Virgin?

**Mr Frawley:** I thank the honourable member for the question. Just to remind everybody, QIC was pleased to assist the government in meeting its objectives in relation to the retention of Virgin Australia as a Queensland based company and the jobs and economic activity it generates. Economic modelling suggests the retention of Virgin Australia's key operations will deliver approximately \$2.5 billion of economic value to Queensland's gross state product over a 10-year period. The \$200 million that we invested, just in terms of the breakdown, that was a \$25 million equity cheque, it was \$125 million of unsecured debt and then the balance in incentive payments.

Across the package, QIC anticipates generating a commercial return of around seven per cent. Those numbers are not yet known. Virgin will, through Bain, rule a line under their financial statements I suspect in September or October and then we will know the return on the investment.

**CHAIR:** If we could make some room for the member for Traeger.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I want to turn to a couple of questions on the Office of State Revenue. I am going to ask them of the Acting Under Treasurer, but I understand the Revenue Commissioner may be in the room today as well. In the meantime, I just wanted to ask as to whether the Office of State Revenue compliance team has recently been increasing its staffing numbers?

**Mr Allen:** I thank the member for the question. We do have the Revenue Commissioner here, if you are okay with him answering that.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Thank you, Mr Allen.

**Mr Jackson:** We have been increasing our compliance enforcement work recently. We did go through a moratorium or a slowdown during the COVID-19 peak, but progressively, as that has stabilised, we have reinstated compliance. We have also boosted our compliance work, in particular across the revenue lines where there was opportunity to look for additional revenue out of the existing system. That has been happening progressively over the last six months.

**Mr JANETZKI:** And additional numbers into the compliance team in terms of FTE?

**Mr Jackson:** There has been, yes, additional numbers.

**Mr JANETZKI:** How many?

**Mr Jackson:** I would have to check the exact number, but the total number across the increased compliance activities was 94. Some of that is the penalty enforcement side, about half, and about half into the revenue side. Some was directly into compliance officers doing extra audits and that work. Some was work in improving the data quality and some was work in improving the accessibility of our systems, making it easier for people to comply.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Would there be any particular industries OSR would be looking to target or to invest more time into in those compliance activities?

**Mr Jackson:** No, there have not been particular industries isolated. We look across the industry population. We look for outliers in compliance risks and we deal with those accordingly. No particular industry has come to my attention yet as being particularly non-compliant.

**Mr KATTER:** I have a question to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer indicate whether royalties for the North West Minerals Province are forecast in the long-term to increase or decrease?

**Mr DICK:** We have some challenges in the short term with royalties—not necessarily for the North West Minerals Province but for royalties generally, particularly coal royalties which remain below what we projected in the 2019-20 budget across the forwards. That is for a range of factors including the ongoing trade tensions with China. Certainly in the 2020-21 state budget, other royalties—which includes revenue from metals such as copper, lead and zinc in the north-west and other minerals including bauxite—are forecast to average around \$480 million per annum over the four years to 2024-25. The outlook for other royalties over the forecast period—and that is really as far as we can forecast, to the end of the out years, 2024-25—partly reflects the fact that the outlook for Queensland metals export volumes is relatively stable over the forecast period. The state budget does not include projections of mineral royalties beyond the forward estimates, as I have said. The outlook over the longer term can be influenced by a broad range of factors, including volatility in global commodity markets, investment decisions by local and international proponents for new or expanded production, and technological change which can influence both the cost of production by competitors as well as demand and price for minerals produced in Queensland.

I hope that it will be on the up. I hope it will continue to increase as that valuable part of Queensland continues to be explored and new economy minerals in particular are discovered and taken to market. But in the short term it is relatively stable over the forward period. I hope to have a better idea next year.

**Mr KATTER:** My concern is that investment decisions on things such as CopperString may be inhibited if there was an embedded view that there is a forecast decline. Can we then rule out that there is anything saying that there is a decline? If the future is opaque, can we assume that there is no strong evidence that there is a decline? Is that ruling out a decline?

**Mr DICK:** All we can do is forecast the best we can and forecasting is very challenging in the time of COVID. At this stage we are forecasting over the forward estimates that Queensland metals export volumes are relatively stable over the forecast period, so to the end of the forward estimates. As you know, we are continuing to work with the proponent of CopperString. We have provided total state funding of \$15.98 million and we will continue to work with them through the project proposal.

**CHAIR:** Member for Capalaba.

**Mr BROWN:** I refer to page 82 of Budget Paper No. 2. Can the Treasurer please advise the committee on the government's interest repayments, how they compare with recent history and how they compare with other jurisdictions?

**Mr DICK:** I am pleased to advise the committee that our debt servicing costs remain manageable and more affordable than the debt owed by New South Wales and Victoria. It is important to put this in an historical context. Queensland's general government sector interest expense peaked under the Newman government in 2014-15, when it was \$2.3 billion; in 2020-21 under the Palaszczuk Labor government it decreased by \$1.6 billion. General government sector interest expense is expected to be \$1.7 billion in 2020-21 compared to \$3.1 billion for Victoria and \$2.7 billion for New South Wales. Therefore, for 2021 our interest expense will be \$1 billion less than that of New South Wales and \$1.4 billion less than that of Victoria.

Across the forward estimates, interest expenses remain below the 2014-15 peak of \$2.3 billion and are forecast to reach \$2.2 billion. When we get to the last out year, 2024-25, we anticipate interest expense being \$2.2 billion. Again that will compare favourably with New South Wales, which will be at \$4.5 billion. Basically ours is less than half the interest expense of New South Wales and less than half the interest expense of Victoria, which will be at \$4.8 billion. In proportional terms, general government sector interest expenses are forecast to be around 2.6 per cent of revenue—so this is an important measure—which is well below their peak under the Newman government of 4.7 per cent. It is 2.6 per cent under our government in 2021-22—it was 4.7 per cent under the Newman government in 2013-14—which is below the rates of 4.1 per cent for Victoria and 2.9 per cent for New South Wales.

Even when we look to the forwards when we are all borrowing more money—and of course Queensland is at a lower amount than New South Wales, Victoria and the Commonwealth—that interest expense rate is expected to be 3.2 per cent for Queensland in 2024-25, 4.5 per cent for New South Wales and 5.6 per cent for Victoria. Even when we get to 2024-25, at 3.2 per cent it will still be lower than the 4.7 per cent level it reached under the Newman LNP government. This is an interesting contrast: not only is our debt much more affordable than that of New South Wales or Victoria; it also compares favourably with that of the Newman government. For all the cuts, the sackings, the chaos, the disruption and the harm to the Queensland economy that the Newman government was responsible for and that the Leader of the Opposition, can I say, was an ardent supporter of and helped to deliver, the debt burden was higher under that government than it will be under our government, even after we have had to borrow so much to help save and support the Queensland economy during a pandemic.

**Mr BROWN:** I refer to page 99 of Budget Paper No. 2. Can the Treasurer please advise the committee on Queensland's tax competitiveness in the wake of COVID-19?

**Mr DICK:** We touched on this a little earlier and it is worth reinforcing some of the numbers. In 2019-20, taxation per capita was \$771 less than the average of other jurisdictions. Queenslanders pay about \$1,100 less a year in state taxation; \$1,078 less than a resident of New South Wales and \$761 less than Victorian residents.

I might go to the question asked by the member for Mermaid Beach that goes not so much to taxation but to some revenue that relates to the new registration of the licence fees. Member for Mermaid Beach, we are talking about tax competitiveness and relative revenue measures. The revenue estimates for the transfer fee were based on the Department of Transport and Main Roads data about the number of people who transferred their driver's licence into Queensland from another state in previous years. About 70,000 people transferred their licence in Queensland in 2019. You asked about the calculations and I want to make a point of clarification on that.

I have been on record many times saying that Queensland welcomed 30,000 migrants, but that is net interstate migration. That is the ABS figure. It nets out at 101,200 gross arrivals to Queensland and 71,200 gross departures from Queensland over 2020. We are not doing it on net; we are doing it on total numbers. There are 101,000 gross arrivals to Queensland. The net number, of course, is 30,000. It is upon those kinds of figures, that is, gross figures of licence holders arriving in Queensland and not net figures, that our estimate of licensed transfer fee revenue will be based. There is no calculation error and I stand behind our estimate of \$17 million in revenue over three years. I wanted to clarify that for you.

We were talking about state taxation per resident in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. The other relevant measure is that of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, which does an assessment of Queensland's tax effort compared to other jurisdictions and also looks at each state's tax revenue as a proportion of gross state product. You can use these measures and ratios to assess the degree to which governments determine their revenue base, with a lower ratio indicating a relatively lower taxation burden imposed by state taxes. The 2021 update for the Commonwealth Grants Commission determined that Queensland's tax effort in 2019-20 was 6.3 per cent below the national average, using 2019-20 data and using total tax revenue effort across payroll tax, land tax, stamp duty,

insurance duty and motor vehicle taxes. Looking at taxation as a share of gross state product, we also see Queensland beating the rest of Australia being below the average of the other states and significantly lower than the major southern states. That is another good story for Queensland and part of the reason why so many Australians are flocking to live in our state.

**Mr TANTARI:** Treasurer, I refer to page 93 of Budget Paper No. 2. Could you please advise the committee on whether the government will consider replacing transfer duty with land tax, as is being considered in New South Wales?

**Mr DICK:** It is an important and contemporary question. New South Wales has been out there flagging its big, bold reform with the idea that they would do away with stamp duty in exchange for ongoing land tax. I understand, based on the facts sheet of the New South Wales government, the key details of the proposal are as follows: the property tax would be an annual tax consisting of a fixed amount, plus a rate applied to the unimproved land value similar to council rates; secondly, buyers would be given the choice of which tax to pay at the time of purchase, but once a property is subjected to the new tax, subsequent owners must also pay it—so you can flip, but you cannot reverse it; there would be no change for those not purchasing a property; and tax rates would be structured so owner-occupiers pay less than residential investors who in turn pay less than commercial owners.

I understand a consultation paper on the reform was released by the New South Wales government in November 2020 with the consultation process undertaken up to 15 March this year.

I can say, as a treasurer, along with a lot of other Queenslanders, we were looking for the implementation plan for the reform to be announced as part of the New South Wales budget, but they are yet to announce any form of implementation plan. Instead, we have gone back to another round of consultation. A progress paper, as it is called, summarising the feedback and providing updates on the reform was released in June and I understand is open to feedback until 30 July 2021.

Given what has happened in New South Wales, I would be very surprised to see any progress on that proposal in the short term. It was trumpeted, it was broadcast, but, frankly, I would encourage New South Wales and other states who are contemplating this kind of complex reform to just keep it simple. Bring your stamp duty down to Queensland's level which is the most affordable in the nation. We have said, as a government, that now is not the time to create new taxes or to increase the tax burden, and that will continue to be the case for us. Other states should be looking to drive down stamp duty to the level that it applies in Queensland.

Based on the latest outcomes—we have talked about the benefits that Queenslanders have over other states when it comes to state taxation—we have one of the lowest tax burdens in terms of transfer duty on home buyers. Queensland's existing generous concessions for both first home buyers and on Queensland's principal place of residence mean that home buyers across the state pay much less stamp duty than similar buyers in most other jurisdictions. Our government offers extensive concessions for the transfer of land where the property is purchased as a home. This means eligible home buyers pay a one per cent concessional rate on the first \$350,000 of dutiable value rather than the normal scheduled rates of between 1.5 per cent and 3.5 per cent.

Purchasers of a median-priced principal place of residence in Queensland based on CoreLogic's May 2021 national home value index for capital cities would pay significantly lower duty than their interstate counterparts at the median dwelling price in each capital city. If you are buying a house in New South Wales valued at the median price, you would pay \$27,296 more than a Queensland buyer buying a median-priced home in Brisbane. Victorian purchasers pay the same additional amount—\$27,797. They are \$27,797 worse off. Even West Australian buyers pay \$7,089 in transfer duty for the purchase of a median-priced home.

Even with the temporary reduction in transfer duty of up to 50 per cent for eligible properties, Victorian buyers are still paying more transfer duty than Queenslanders. Buyers in Queensland pay only around two per cent of their median price in duty, four per cent of the median price in New South Wales and 5.3 per cent at the standard rate in Victoria.

New South Wales can talk about reform. They are having trouble implementing it. The biggest single thing they could do is free up the property market in their state by reducing rates to Queensland levels. We wonder where their proposal will now go.

**Mr BROWN:** Treasurer, I note that you touched on this in answer to a previous question from the member for Traeger, but I am deeply concerned at the provocation from federal LNP members in regards to the China trade dispute. What has been the impact to the Queensland economy because of that?

**Mr DICK:** Our exports have been hit hard by the closure of international borders and by ongoing trade tensions among our major trading partners. Our main trading partner, China, is maintaining its import ban on Australian coal. I can inform you between October 2020 and April 2021, China had imported just 13 per cent of the volume of coking coal and just four per cent of the volume of thermal coal that it had imported in the same period before COVID, so a very significant reduction, and an 87 per cent reduction in coking coal and a 96 per cent reduction in the volume of thermal coal.

Australian coal prices had fallen by more than US \$20 per tonne. Since April, we have seen some recovery in Chinese demand which has been supported by other trading partners, including India, Japan and South Korea. Our hard coking coal exports to India have increased by 6.8 million tonnes. Our coking coal exports to Japan have increased by 2.4 million tonnes. Our coking coal exports to South Korea have increased by 1.8 million tonnes. The unwinding of China's import ban for coal is uncertain, but we still expect coal exports to grow by 4½ per cent per annum over the next four years. Our royalty revenues have suffered, falling by \$767 million over the forward estimates, relative to last year's budget, so they are much lower than we anticipated in previous budgets or previous Mid Year Fiscal and Economic Reviews.

Relative to the pre-COVID period, royalties are down by \$1.4 billion per year on average. The budget assumes that China's restrictions on Queensland's coal will remain significant through 2021. Even if the ban is lifted, some impacts are assumed to persist across the forward estimates.

We have a diverse economy in Queensland, as you know, member for Capalaba, which has enabled us to respond to this particularly difficult period. Our diverse goods sector has spared our trade-exposed industries the worst of COVID, but we are under no illusions about the size of the challenge ahead for our exporters and we really wish the federal government would work to fix these problems.

**CHAIR:** Member for Ninderry, do you have a question?

**Mr PURDIE:** My question is to the Under Treasurer. Mr Allen, has Treasury performed any modelling as to if and/or when any additional equity injections will need to be made in Stanwell or CS Energy to keep them liquid?

**Mr Allen:** We have, within the forward estimates, projections around the dividends being paid by GOCs. You will see that there is a move to greater retention of earnings by those GOCs to ensure they remain well capitalised and to ensure they continue to invest in their businesses going forward.

**Mr PURDIE:** Mr Allen, following on from the introduction of a volume based royalty model for petroleum, can you advise if any companies have been left worse off due to this change?

**Mr Allen:** I cannot answer that immediately, I am afraid. At a specific company level, I do not have that information.

**Mr PURDIE:** Is that a question that the Treasurer might want to take on notice?

**Mr DICK:** We will not take that on notice. We would not be able to work that out at a firm level.

**CHAIR:** It might be something that could be addressed to the relevant minister.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Through the Under Treasurer, to the Revenue Commissioner, I want to ask a couple of questions to the Office of State Revenue. Mr Jackson, you mentioned that no particular industries had come to your attention in terms of where your compliance activities would be directed. Does OSR have particular parameters or particular guidelines as to which industries it would target and what kind of behaviours that, if it observed, would lead to increased compliance activity?

**CHAIR:** Member for Toowoomba South, the question seems to be one where an answer has been given that particular industries are not targeted and then there is a hypothetical about how they would be. Do you think it is hypothetical—

**Mr JANETZKI:** It is not hypothetical. I am just asking what behaviours would attract greater attention from the Office of State Revenue.

**CHAIR:** Obviously hypothetical questions are not allowed, but if it can be answered without addressing the hypothetical—

**Mr Jackson:** We essentially look through our data for outliers—that is, where the behaviour of a particular organisation is different to the average or normal behaviour or we have information that has come to our attention through various means. That is everything from people telling us there is some problem to our observations about the behaviour of organisations. We select on that basis generally. Where we observe a pattern we may then look to all organisations that behave in that way and treat them as a group. There are certain procedures as to how we identify and categorise—but not that I should be sharing that publicly because they, in a sense, guide noncompliance.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Mr Jackson, does the compliance team have a target in terms of how many assessments they might undertake in a year?

**Mr Jackson:** No, there is not a numerical target of that nature. Obviously, we strive for efficiency in our operation, but setting a number and aiming for a number might be counterproductive if people are simply trying to get to that number rather than doing their job properly with the case in front of them. It is a balancing act. We seek to achieve a certain throughput of cases. A key part of that work is to say to the rest of the community that we are watching to see that people are complying. If you comply with your obligations, your next door neighbour is not going to get an advantage over you because we are not watching their activities.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Mr Jackson, in terms of the interaction between the Office of State Revenue and the business community, does OSR undertake any specialist advisory group meetings or forums where OSR and, in particular its compliance team, can meet with key business organisations and key business figures to build better relationships, identify key issues and perhaps look to solutions?

**Mr Jackson:** We do a couple of different things. First of all, we maintain a series of regular meetings with industry representative bodies—for example, the property group and the like. We have similar meetings with representatives of the law council. We have a tax policy consultative committee where we meet with tax advisers, accountants and lawyers to talk to them about the most recent changes and developments, processes and procedures and directions that we might be adopting so there are no surprises in the community.

At the moment, we are progressively enhancing our capacity to test new approaches, particularly in relation to how people meet their tax obligations, with industry and individual citizens. We are looking to test forms and portals and the like through simulation. We bring people into the office and say, 'Could you see if this works for you.' We observe their behaviour and make modifications to make the system operate more easily. We do that for a few reasons. One is to make it easier for people to meet their obligations. Secondly, if people can get their obligations right and understand what to do the chances of them complying correctly are higher than if they do not know what to do. Sometimes people get it wrong just because they do not know what to do.

**Mr JANETZKI:** In terms of the engagement of those advisory groups, are any of them sitting on the shelf or are they active, meeting regularly and deeply engaged?

**Mr Jackson:** I would probably have to say that some of them have not been meeting as regularly as I would like. As part of a change in the organisation's arrangements that we went through about six months ago, we are seeking to reactivate those committees. It is a current activity that we are working on now.

**Mr KATTER:** My question is to the Treasurer. In terms of the state government's \$2 billion investment in the Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund, can the Treasurer detail the net spend on supporting renewable energy in the 2021-22 financial year?

**Mr DICK:** I do not know whether we have a figure on expenditure, but we do have a figure on the number of projects that we have invested in or that we have seen happen in Queensland since we set our policy direction. Some 44 large-scale renewable energy projects have become operational, financially committed or are under construction, representing \$10 billion in investment and supporting more than 7,000 construction jobs.

Thinking it through, it is probably not possible to work out what the government spends. That would happen across a number of departments and a number of agencies. It obviously would have an impact on our energy GOCs, and our power generating GOCs in particular. We would not have a specific figure on what we would spend, but we set out our investments. There is \$145 million for our renewable energy zones and there is the commitment that we will spend going forward as part of the Renewable Energy Fund, which was really just announced last year in the December budget.

**Mr KATTER:** I have a quick follow-up question. It will be quick because I suspect it will be a similar response. How much is being spent by the Queensland government in support of coal-fired energy in the same financial year? I assume that will be a similar answer.

**Mr DICK:** The truth is that the majority of power generated in Queensland—I think we have got to 20 per cent renewable in Queensland—80 per cent, comes from other sources. That is predominantly gas-fired power stations and coal-fired power stations. The majority of the investment that we have is in traditional forms of energy, but that is transitioning over time. We have moved to 20 per cent in five years, with a target of 50 per cent by 2030.

**CHAIR:** We will turn to government questions.

**Mr DICK:** I have a couple of things to clarify around questions asked previously before the committee concludes.

**CHAIR:** This is one of my favourite question.

**Mr DICK:** Far be it from me to deny you your favourite question.

**CHAIR:** Could the Treasurer please advise the committee on the funding of the government's defined benefit superannuation liability and, importantly, how that compares to other jurisdictions? I know Mr Cannon appreciates this question?

**Mr DICK:** We have had a few question, but I can get some facts on the record now. The last actuarial review of the state public sector superannuation scheme identified a \$3.573 billion funding surplus as at 30 June 2020. Strong investment returns over 2020-21 have substantially improved the funding surplus of the scheme since the last review. The government has withdrawn, as you know, \$1.5 billion from the overfunded scheme and contributed these funds to the Queensland Future Fund.

The State Actuary has advised a preliminary estimated surplus position of more than \$5 billion as at 30 June 2021, after allowing for the transfer of the Queensland Future Fund. New South Wales, in comparison, reported a \$70.673 billion unfunded superannuation liability in its 2020 report on state finances. While the reported New South Wales liability is calculated in a different way to the QSuper review—on an accounting rather than a funding basis—the sum is indicative of the level of unfunded liability. New South Wales indicated in its 2020-21 budget papers that it will extend its plan to fully fund its liability from 2030 to 2040. The Victorian government also has a material unfunded superannuation liability and is working to achieve a fully funded superannuation liability by 2035.

I will respond to a couple of matters that were raised during the hearing. The member for Toowoomba South asked for a comparison of FTEs in the Queensland Productivity Commission compared to the new Office of Productive and Red Tape Reduction. The transition and integration of the Queensland Productivity Commission into Queensland Treasury to form the new office supports the ongoing development and implementation of the government's economic strategy to drive enhanced productivity and competitiveness. I can advise the committee that all funding and full-time equivalents for 22 employees from the Productivity Commission transitioned to Queensland Treasury on 2 June. There were no contractors working, I am advised, in the Queensland Productivity Commission on 2 June.

The transfer has also allowed the resources of the Queensland Productivity Commission to be leveraged and refocussed—we also made some savings along the way—to address the immediate economic challenges facing Queensland in a post-COVID-19 world.

The member for Toowoomba South raised the issue of the number of regulatory requirements. He said that it has been done before. Indeed, I have been advised that it has been done before in 2013 by the Newman government's Office of Best Practice Regulation. They counted 265,189 regulatory requirements across the Queensland government as at March 2012. The Office of Best Practice Regulation within the government advised that the task of counting regulatory requirements was too large to complete internally, so the then Newman government opted to engage KPMG and Ernst & Young on a contract basis to count it for them. They then engaged Clayton Utz as an auditor. Who knows what that cost the taxpayer.

The member for Kawana asked how much was spent on advertising for the budget. I can confirm to the committee that I have been advised there is no spend on the budget campaign by Treasury as asked by the member.

The member for Toowoomba South asked if the Office of State Revenue had increased staffing numbers for compliance. There was an increase of 38 FTE for our Debt Recovery and Compliance program.

I want to correct the record in relation to an answer I provided earlier in relation to the Jobs Fund. I mistakenly said it was worth \$3.43 billion. In fact, it is worth \$3.34 billion, and I apologise to the committee.

**CHAIR:** It is important to clarify that. I thank the Treasurer. The Treasurer may also wish to take this opportunity to thank the hardworking staff who have prepared all of this information.

**Mr DICK:** Thanks very much, Chair. I want to thank the committee members for their attendance at this meeting. It is obviously a very important part of our democratic, parliamentary and accountability process. I am always pleased to appear before the committee. Even on occasions when it may not seem that I am, I am. I can confirm that for the record.

I want to particularly thank the staff of Queensland Treasury and all of the associated GOCs and commercial statutory authorities. They commit themselves very diligently to preparing for estimates, and they do a very, very important job for me as the minister appearing. I want to put on the record my thanks to them. Thank you, Chair, for your outstanding chairing of this hearing today.

**CHAIR:** I wish to thank all of the staff of Treasury and the statutory bodies and GOCs. I do note that some of us are retiring, but I would ask them to come back on a voluntary basis in future just for the enjoyment of it.

**Mr DICK:** I should add for the record that I would like to thank Mr Frawley for his very distinguished service to Queensland. He has run an outstanding investment business for our state.

**Mr STEVENS:** Yes, hear, hear!

**Mr DICK:** I take the interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. I appreciate his acclamation for Mr Frawley as well. Mr Frawley is well-respected by all sides of politics. He has done an outstanding job for Queensland, which is the most important thing of all. I want to put on record my thanks and appreciation for his decade-long service to Queensland.

**CHAIR:** Hear, hear! We all endorse that. I just wish to thank you. As the Clerk said this morning, so much of the estimates process is analysing the role and service you provide for Queensland and anticipating questions that will never get asked to see that you are giving the best public service for the people of Queensland through this difficult period of the pandemic. We thank you very much for your service.

With that, we will adjourn. The hearing will resume at 6.30, at which time the committee will examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriations Bill 2021 for the portfolio areas of the Minister for Tourism Industry Development and Innovation and Minister for Sport.

**Proceedings suspended from 6.03 pm to 6.29 pm.**

## ESTIMATES—ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE—TOURISM INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION; SPORT

### In Attendance

Hon. SJ Hinchliffe, Minister for Tourism Industry Development and Innovation and Minister for Sport

Ms K Adams, Chief of Staff

**Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport**

Mr J Lee, Director-General

Mr J McAlister, Deputy Director-General, Tourism and Major Events

**Tourism and Events Queensland**

Ms L Coddington, Chief Executive Officer

**Stadiums Queensland**

Mr T Harris, Chief Executive Officer

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 **CHAIR:** The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2021 for the portfolio areas of the Minister for Tourism Industry Development and Innovation and Minister for Sport. My name is Linus Power, the member for Logan and chair of the committee. With me here today is Mr Ray Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach and deputy chair. The other committee members are: Mr Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera; Mr Dan Purdie, the member for Ninderry; Mr Adrian Tantari, the member for Hervey Bay; and Mr Don Brown, the member for Capalaba, who is substituting this evening for Mrs Melissa McMahon, the member for Macalister. The visiting members present are: Mr David Crisafulli, the Leader of the Opposition and member for Broadwater; Mr Tim Mander, the member for Everton; Ms Fiona Simpson, the member for Maroochydore; and Mr Sam O'Connor, the member for Bonney.

The committee will examine the minister's portfolio areas until 9.00 pm. I remind those present today that the hearing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules that apply in parliament apply to this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. In respect of statutory authorities, standing order 180(2) provides that a member may ask any question that the committee determines will assist it in its examination of the relevant Appropriation Bill or otherwise assist the committee to determine whether public funds are being efficiently spent or appropriate public guarantees are being provided.

I intend to guide these proceedings so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members. I remind officers that they are permitted to use their mobile phones and electronic devices but they should ensure they are switched to silent mode. Also, I remind you that food and drink are not permitted in the chamber.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the minister, the director-general, officials and departmental officers, and members of the public—the many members of the public in the gallery tonight and tuning in. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials and advisors to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the minister or director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of Tourism Industry Development and Innovation and Sport open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes. For the previous ministers I said around five minutes, but I am saying no more than five minutes.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Thank you for the opportunity to make some comments as part of an opening statement. I want to acknowledge that we are holding this session of estimates on the traditional lands of Aboriginal people and note how lucky we are to live in a place where we share this country with two of the world's oldest living cultures. I want to say how pleasant it is to be able to be part of the parliamentary process here in this chamber—the absent relic of what is now our unicameral parliament.

As I said over seven months ago when I last appeared before the Economics and Governance Committee estimates hearing, it was a great honour to be asked by the Premier last year to serve in the role as Minister for Tourism Industry Development and Innovation and Minister for Sport and to play a key role in supporting the Palaszczuk government's delivery of Queensland's economic recovery plan. We will take that to a huge next step I hope soon, because in five days the Premier will attend the International Olympic Committee Session in Tokyo on 21 July where Brisbane, Queensland, will potentially be awarded the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games—a potentially historic event which will see Queensland and Brisbane firmly planted on the global stage. We are in this position potentially to host the 2032 games because of our world-leading approach to handling the pandemic. This shows how our health response to the pandemic and our economic recovery plan are working.

The 2021-22 budget shows that, because the Palaszczuk government protected the health of Queenslanders, we can recover and grow with confidence. A central part of the economic recovery is the more than \$860 million that the Palaszczuk government has committed in delivered and planned support for the tourism and events sector since the onset of the pandemic. Our economic package of tourism recovery is working. As we can see from data from March 2021, monthly visitor data compiled by Tourism Research Australia shows Queensland outperformed all other states and territories in growth of overnight visitor expenditure. Currently, \$43.5 million is being spent by tourists a day in Queensland, or \$304.5 million a week.

In 2020-21, we saw investment in sport and recreation: \$212.5 million in infrastructure across the state, from local community sports clubs to major stadia; \$11 million worth of \$150 FairPlay vouchers which have helped pay club registration or membership fees for 50,000 young Queenslanders from low-income families; \$10.8 million delivered under the Active Industry Fund to 71 state level sport and recreation organisations and peak bodies for the sport and recreation industry; and \$4.1 million for ActiveKIT to support 39 projects with innovative solutions in the active industry.

Today I am pleased to announce a new \$9 million Active Gameday Projects fund for grants of up to \$150,000 for eligible organisations for projects, including upgrading playing surfaces and installing or upgrading irrigation and field lighting that meets grassroots level playing requirements. Our sport and active recreation clubs have been doing it tough during the pandemic, and the Active Gameday Projects fund will help them get back on their feet, freshen up their facilities for existing members while encouraging new participants to sign up.

In innovation, work is continuing on the government's \$755 million Advance Queensland strategy, with an allocation of \$47.43 million in 2021-22. We are also stepping up our efforts to support regional innovators and entrepreneurs with \$5 million for the Advance Queensland regional futures program. The Palaszczuk government's economic recovery plan will also deliver a further \$25.8 million over four years to rebuild Queensland's international student market. International students are a huge contributor to the Queensland economy and this is an issue I am keen to talk more about this evening. However, now I would like to take the opportunity to thank ahead of time all of the officers from the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport for all of their work in preparing us for tonight. I want to thank the chair and all the committee members and guests for the opportunity to appear before you today and speak to my portfolio's appropriation.

**CHAIR:** I think we are going to be pretty rough Minister, so I do not know if thanking us in advance was wise. I call the member for Mermaid Beach.

**Mr STEVENS:** I defer to the Leader of the Opposition and shadow minister for tourism, the member for Broadwater.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I will also place on record my thanks to everybody for being here late on a Friday night. Minister, do you agree with Labor's 2017 election policy document which states that reducing TEQ funding severely limits their ability to plan for the long term and the Premier's 2020 election launch comments that slashing support when it is most needed hurts confidence and damages tourism?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I understand where the Leader of the Opposition is going with his questioning. What I can say is that I am absolutely proud of the work that the Palaszczuk government has done in delivering record funding for tourism since it first came to office in 2015. This is in absolute stark contrast to the LNP in government. When the Leader of the Opposition was in government, he was part of an LNP team that had no long-term plan to grow tourism. They failed to invest in tourism and they cut \$188 million from the TEQ budget. The government in which the Leader of the Opposition was a minister also cut 35 FTEs from Tourism and Events Queensland through their ruthless budget cuts from 2012 through to 2014.

In comparison, the Palaszczuk government has delivered record funding of TEQ: \$116 million in this budget; \$153 million in 2020-21; \$131 million in 2019-20; \$131 million in 2018-19; \$109 million in 2017-18; \$102 million in 2016-17; and \$101 million in 2015-16. When the LNP were in office, their funding for TEQ decreased in those dramatic ways. We are going to continue to support TEQ and make sure that it has the capacity to support a growing tourism industry.

The premise of the Leader of the Opposition's question is basically failing to recognise the broader commitments that we have made as a government. It has failed to recognise the Queensland government's \$74 million commitment to rebuilding Tourism Queensland and the extra support that is built into what we are providing—through our \$20 million events boost, our \$15 million regional tourism organisation fund and a \$15 million marketing fund for a marketing blitz to encourage more travellers to experience Queensland.

In terms of how we roll those things out, we have to get those things right and we have to work closely with the sector. TEQ will play a very key role in that. We need to make sure that we use wisely the funds that are available to us and also learn from the challenges that we are currently experiencing where it is clear that—

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Are you going to go all night or can we maybe ask some questions?

**CHAIR:** Order! Member for Broadwater, the minister is being relevant to the question asked and I ask him to continue. Minister?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Obviously the Leader of the Opposition thinks I have answered his question, so we will move on to the next one.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. I will direct my future questions to the CEO of TEQ to keep the evening going. CEO, I refer to page 17 of the SDS. At a time when the tourism industry is hurting, can I ask what impact the biggest single funding cut to TEQ—that is cutting over \$37.5 million from the budget, a quarter of the budget—will have on your organisation?

**Ms Coddington:** Thank you for the question. Our budget for Tourism and Events Queensland for FY22 is \$116 million. The base budget that TEQ works to every year is around \$100 million and then we get special grants on top of that for specific activity. We work to \$100 million and that is what we frame our organisation on and then any additional funds are for specific activity over and above that. Funding does come to us throughout the year as well, so we do not necessarily start with the same budget that we finish with; we get additional funding.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I have a further question to the CEO—

**CHAIR:** Member for Broadwater, do you have a question?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Yes, to the CEO. May I ask a question of the CEO?

**CHAIR:** Member for Broadwater, I just counsel you that in general you get the call from the chair just as under the same standing orders you get the call from the Speaker.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** It is embarrassing.

**CHAIR:** I would not see any of this behaviour if this was the Speaker, but the standing orders are exactly the same. Member for Broadwater, I give you the call.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** CEO, I reference the funding to your organisation over many years: in financial year 2018-19, \$141 million; 2019-20, \$141 million; 2020-21, \$158 million, and the actual was \$153 million; and now it is down to \$116 million, so that is cut of over a quarter. What activities are you unable to do this financial year that you have in the past four?

**CHAIR:** I note the question does have some repetition.

**Ms Coddington:** An example of some of the things that are not funded in FY22 at this stage is aviation funding. Historically, we would receive money that would flow through when new routes are secured. That would flow through from the department to TEQ and would come into our budget. That would be part of the gap that is there. As I said, the budget that we are given every year is \$100 million and then additional funding comes through for special projects as they come through during the year.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** CEO, I have a further question. Industry must be saying, though, that they are looking for any form of assistance at the moment. They are on their knees. Surely a quantum cut like that will have repercussions for industry. They are looking for advocacy; they are looking for support. Surely this is the worst possible time to be taking the single biggest cut to your organisation's funding in one lump.

**CHAIR:** I do note that this question has been given a nuanced answer repeatedly. Ms Coddington, is there anything you can add further to that?

**Ms Coddington:** There is no doubt that the tourism and events industry has been hit hard by the impacts of COVID, and we have worked really hard with the funding that we do have to support the industry throughout the pandemic in its ongoing way. We have received an additional \$15 million for marketing for the industry and also an additional \$20 million for events. We are using those moneys wisely over the coming years and working really hard in the marketing and the event space to ensure that we are delivering for the industry.

In addition to that, we have delivered crisis support to the industry and shared information across all of our key stakeholders as well as peer support. We have gathered insights and impacts and shared those with our industry. The Good to Go campaign has delivered successfully for our industry and we have worked really hard to ensure that we have had that marketing drive there, and the minister spoke about how that has delivered for the industry.

Our Holiday Dollars campaigns have had fantastic feedback from the industry in the regions where they have operated. They have credited them with sustaining them through this period. We have acted fast to amend our marketing plans and delivered these last minute deals when borders have closed. There is additional funding for the RTOs that has come through in this budget as well. We have also waived fees where possible. In relation to things like the ATDW we have waived fees for FY20 and FY21.

**CHAIR:** Any further questions?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** CEO, what feedback—I turn to the lockdowns now—have small and family businesses in the tourism sector given you about their desire to see a lockdown support package for those operators at the coalface?

**Ms Coddington:** I have not received directly any feedback about a support package as such. As the marketing and events organisation, they do speak to us about the loss of bookings they have received and the marketing support that they need. In fact, in a conversation that I had with one of the regions today I talked about encouraging our industry to ensure they are working with every single channel they possibly can to ensure their product is being distributed far and wide so that when these lockdowns do occur, we can absolutely maximise the market that we do have at the moment in Queensland to come to their operations.

**CHAIR:** Member for Broadwater, to clarify, was the question about the lockdowns in New South Wales and their effect on Queensland tourism or the Queensland one? The Queensland one. Thank you.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I have a question to the minister. Minister, have you written to either the Treasurer or the Premier to convey the thoughts of industry, of their desire to see a lockdown support package?

**Mr BROWN:** He sits in cabinet with them. He does not need to write to them.

**CHAIR:** Member for Capalaba.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Leader of the Opposition, thank you for your question. No, I have not written to them because I have been speaking to them on a very regular basis about the issues and concerns that the industry have. I have been meeting with industry on a very regular basis. I have been getting out and about across the state meeting with operators on the ground. I have also been in very regular videoconference and teleconference sessions with industry. When I cannot attend all of those, my director-general chairs those sessions, so I am hearing very clear feedback.

The overwhelming feedback from industry is that keeping Queensland and Queenslanders safe is the most important thing, but a desire about consistency around the management of the health issues is clearly expressed. Certainly ways in which we can support and encourage action and activity within their industries is the overwhelming feedback that has come to me over all of that time and through all of those channels, not handouts. What they have been looking for is opportunity. That is the overarching issue that has been consistent. Outside of issues around workforce challenges, labour force challenges, the overwhelming issue has been in relation to the ongoing closure of international borders and the impact that has on those locations that are particularly affected by the international market being absent. Things like our Holiday Dollars program have been a response to that and they have been very well supported by the Premier and the Treasurer.

I will continue to talk to the Premier, the Treasurer and the rest of my cabinet colleagues about the needs and interests of the tourism sector right across the state but particularly those areas that are feeling the ongoing impacts and challenges of international border closures, pandemic hesitancy full stop, the domestic impacts of lockdowns in other states and hotspots and what that means in relation to border outcomes. I will also talk about the impacts of those brief lockdowns that we have had at very poor and challenging times that everyone recognises were the right responses at those times but which came at very terrible, impactful moments.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Good evening. My question is to the director-general. Prior to your appointment as director-general, did you work on the state election campaign?

**CHAIR:** With respect, we have the estimates process to ask questions about this budget. Specifically, we have a question about whether the expenditure should be agreed to. I find it difficult to know how that is related. If the member has a way of—

**Ms SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr Chair. This is a standard integrity question that is consistent with other questions we have asked about senior government appointments where there has been a tie, in other cases, to the Labor state campaign. It is a reasonable question to ask of a senior appointment that has only just occurred. It is appropriate for integrity and scrutiny purposes. It is easier to allow the director-general to answer rather than for the government to try and not allow him to answer.

**Mr TANTARI:** I have a point of order, Mr Chair. This question goes to the heart of relevance.

**CHAIR:** Unfortunately, we have an estimates process that has rules about relevance. Do you have another question?

**Ms SIMPSON:** Yes. With respect, the DG is heading up a major government department and he was permanently appointed. I understand that was announced in June and he was acting in the role prior to that. It is current in respect of the governance of a major government department and the ongoing issue of integrity. Once again, I am sure that it is easier for the DG to answer rather than the government running interference. It is an integrity question and it is pertinent in respect of the appointment process that this state Labor government uses.

**CHAIR:** That does not seem to be a question.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Well, you wanted a justification for the question. The question is one of integrity. Has the DG, who has been recently permanently appointed, worked on the state election campaign?

**CHAIR:** I understand that. Do you have a question, member for Maroochydhore?

**Ms SIMPSON:** Has the DG worked on the state election campaign prior to his appointment to this permanent position?

**CHAIR:** We have already ruled on that, member for Maroochydhore.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Thank you. I will rephrase to a different question. To the director-general: did you work in 1 William Street, whether employed by government or not, prior to the state election?

**Mr BROWN:** I have a point of order. This is a similar vein of question in regards to what has just been ruled out of order. We are here to talk about the budget, and I do not believe this pertains to it.

**CHAIR:** I fail to see how this—

**Ms SIMPSON:** It is the cover-up that will get you, and the DG probably has nothing to cover up. But the government is working awfully hard to try and stop him from answering, which is the problem.

**CHAIR:** I am relatively indifferent to this; however, I do have the standing orders about relevance. I cannot see the relevance to the budget in front of us. Is there another question?

**Ms SIMPSON:** With respect, Mr Chair, you are obstructing the process of a reasonable question, which the DG is probably quite comfortable in answering, and you should not be running interference. This is an integrity issue, and it goes to the process of how DGs are appointed. There has been a smear in other areas of the process.

**CHAIR:** Order! Member for Maroochydhore, I do ask you to reflect on yourself as a former speaker in terms of arguing for the fourth time the ruling that had already been given and then repeating the question that flouted the same ruling. I have no idea whether Mr Lee wishes to answer that; however, we have standing orders about what questions are relevant to the estimates. The question put before the committee is whether the expenditure be agreed to. I do apologise, but I have to enforce those standing orders.

**Ms SIMPSON:** With respect Mr Chair, it is a reasonable question and it is better for the DG to answer than for the government to run this interference.

**CHAIR:** I understand, member for Maroochydore. I have made my ruling. This is now the fifth time you have argued this. I do ask you to reflect on how you would act if you had been in the chair and someone had argued a ruling for the fifth time.

**Ms SIMPSON:** I would have allowed the question, Mr Chair. You asked me to provide my opinion on that. It is easier for people to be open and transparent rather than for the chair to be running interference on these matters.

**CHAIR:** Member for Maroochydore, do you have another question?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I have a question.

**CHAIR:** Member for Broadwater?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** A question to the director-general: page 107 of the capital statement shows that only \$430,000 was spent last year on the Wangetti Trail of a \$4.5 million budget. Can the director-general confirm why this trail project has lost its way?

**CHAIR:** In general counselling about making statements that may be unsupported, the director-general can answer the question.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** They are numbers, Mr Chair.

**Mr Lee:** Thank you, chair, and I thank the member for the question. In terms of the previous question, I am also happy to say that I did not work in an election period. I was employed by a company called Newgate Communications to which I was a partner of until 20 November. I did undertake some work during the start of that year working for the COVID task force in 1 William Street. In terms of the Wangetti Trail, we have had some challenges with regard to the trail, especially with the complexities in dealing with our traditional owners and working through a number of native title issues as well as in moving to the construction phase. The trail does continue to be developed and built on. I might at this stage, with your indulgence, pass to the assistant director-general to add to the answer.

**Mr McAlister:** In regard to the question, the whole-of-life project expenses for the Wangetti Trail incurred to 30 June 2021 are \$5.757 million, represented by: Wangetti Trail operating costs of \$1.613 million; the Mowbray North section of the trail is a capital grant to date of \$3.924 million; and the main Wangetti Trail capital expenditure is \$220,000. The total, whole-of-life, to-date expenses to the end of last financial year are \$5.757 million.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** A further question to the director-general: can I ask for an update of progress on the Cooloola Great Walk, the Paluma to Wallaman Falls Trail or accommodation on the Thorsborne Trail since we last were here?

**Mr Lee:** In reference to the multiple trails question asked by the member, the eco trail program has been enacted for a number of years. There were some pilot programs that were introduced as part of that process that do involve a series of negotiations and collaborations with traditional owners. In relation to the Cooloola Great Walk project, there were some areas regarding the walk involving camping and four-wheel driving. It was the view at the time that that should be reviewed. I am sorry, I might just ask the member in terms of the other walks—

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Paluma to Wallaman, Thorsborne Trail accommodation.

**Mr Lee:** I understand with Paluma to Wallaman there was some funding, I think of \$450,000, provided for a business case. In fact, only recently I visited Paluma and the Crystal Pools, somewhere the member would know well from his previous time in the area. It is a very scenic and beautiful part of tropical North Queensland. Further work and collaboration with Townsville City Council and other stakeholders is being done. Again, there is a need to have detailed consultation with the traditional owners, three different groups, that we are working with to get collaboration to move forward on that project.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Director-General. I reflect that it may have been easy for Mr Lee to answer that, which he chose to do, however that is not point of the process before us. We are answering questions to do with the budget. Those other questions can be put in different formats. It does not matter whether or not it is easy.

**Mr MANDER:** I hope this is the government's time, is it, chair?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Here's hoping!

**CHAIR:** I now call the member for Capalaba.

**Mr BROWN:** With reference to page 2 of the SDS and the \$29.3 million over two years allocation for the preparation for the future Olympic Games, will the minister provide an update on the details of that funding?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I thank the member for his question. I know that he is a passionate follower of all sports and that he will be very excited about the prospects and potentiality of an Olympic Games here in Queensland.

As the Premier announced this morning, if Brisbane, Queensland is successfully awarded the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games next week, the Queensland Academy of Sport will receive \$29.28 million in new funding over the next two years to inspire future sporting success. This funding will enable QAS to kick off a transformational high-performance sports strategy aimed at identifying and nurturing the next generation of medal-winning athletes and coaches to inspire the state and the nation. The additional funding will ensure that potential medal-winning athletes are more systematically identified—particularly in regional Queensland, where we see so many of our wonderful high-performance athletes coming from—and professionally supported with the right expertise to win on the world stage. The funding will also support 12 new high-performance coaches across a range of sports to undertake a two-year program of applied study to jump-start the future coaching workforce in Queensland.

Performance data shows that 75 per cent of Olympic medallists at the Rio 2016 Olympics were top 10 performers in the previous London 2012 games, so if Queensland athletes are not internationally ranked in the top 8 to 10 within individual sports and the top 6 within team sports by the 2028 Los Angeles games, they are very unlikely to be winning at home in 2032. As a result, Queensland has not an 11-year runway but a 6½-year runway to unearth the next generation of athletes with the potential to win on home soil in 2032 and to develop the expert performance systems that are needed to prepare them for such success.

I am pleased to report that we are on a great path already, because 128 Queensland athletes are about to represent our state and our nation at the Tokyo games. This equates to more than 26 per cent of the national team. That is 125 in the full Olympic team and three at this point who are absolutely confirmed for the Paralympics, but there will be many more, so we have very high numbers that will be part of those teams. Queensland athletes succeeding on the world stage do inspire that next generation of Queenslanders, not only as elite performers but also as incredible people and role models.

After the Tokyo games, the Paris games are just three years away. With the potential of the 2032 games being on home soil, we need to identify and support more of that Queensland talent while doing all we can to nurture and develop the elite athletes we already have. This funding will enable us to supercharge our efforts in finding and supporting emerging and existing talent, especially, as I said, in regional areas that are historically Queensland's hot beds for Olympic talent. This injection of funding speaks to the importance of supporting our most promising athletes to achieve their sporting dreams and, in turn, helping Queenslanders more broadly to become more active, healthy and ambitious. This funding will ensure a pipeline of Queensland elite athlete talent from Tokyo to Paris and then Los Angeles and hopefully right here in 2032.

**Mr TANTARI:** Minister, with reference to page 1 of the SDS and the role of the department to support and encourage participation in sport and recreation, can you provide detail on what funding is available for infrastructure to provide great facilities right across Queensland?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I know that there is some great infrastructure in your part of the world that is developing a great context for sport in Hervey Bay and the broader Wide Bay region. Each and every Queenslanders who participates in sport, from the absolute grassroots to the elite level, deserves facilities and infrastructure that are fit for purpose, are safe and allow them to enjoy their chosen sport. The Palaszczuk government has a proud record of delivering grassroots sporting infrastructure since 2015, with a total investment of over \$180 million in competitive grants through programs such as the female facilities fund, the Active Restart Infrastructure Recovery Fund, Get Playing Places and Spaces and others. These have delivered new clubhouses, change rooms, lights, fields and other improvements to clubs right across the state.

Only six weeks ago I visited the Jimboomba Redbacks, which the chair will recognise, being in the electorate of Logan, to inspect their female-friendly change rooms and hear firsthand from the club about how this has created a massive surge of participation in their female teams in both junior and senior groups in Australian Rules.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, the Palaszczuk government took the wise step of supporting as many clubs as possible with keeping volunteers engaged and the doors open and, when the time was right, to restart community sport. Now is the right time to look again at infrastructure needs, not just at maintenance and getting through. That is why in my opening remarks I made mention of the next iteration of infrastructure for community sport and recreation facilities.

The Active Gameday Projects fund will provide, as I said, up to \$150,000 to eligible organisations for projects for the specific purpose of providing new and improved playing spaces. It is expected that the approved projects will also be supported by a 20 per cent contribution from the successful proponent. This \$9 million investment will allow for projects that will improve the training and playing experiences for participants. This could mean new or improved playing surfaces, installing or upgrading irrigation, or installing or upgrading lighting. Applications for this round will open in September and close in November. I expect that successful projects will be announced early in 2022.

The fund has been specifically designed due to the feedback we have been hearing while out in the community meeting with those grassroots clubs. We have also been hearing it from state sporting organisations, which are looking to make the most of the land and sites they have. For example, Cricket Queensland has advocated very strongly for increasing lighting infrastructure to take advantage of demand for T20 participation. There has even been a lot of talk with them around a shift from traditional weekend cricket to midweek night cricket to get more participants and a wider variety of participants. Great examples of the way in which we can help are providing funding to clubs with ageing lights perhaps, which are becoming harder and more expensive to repair, to upgrade to modern LED technology; helping with a field that needs irrigation in order to be used more; or repairing hockey pitches—something we have across a lot of places in Queensland. They are the sorts of things we are looking to support.

Programs like the Active Gameday Projects fund will work to provide support to organisations throughout the state with what they need to deliver great facilities for their participants. I am proud to be part of a Palaszczuk government that is doing that and staying in touch with those clubs and needs right across Queensland.

**CHAIR:** You would have noticed the fantastic grass pitch at the Jimboomba Redbacks for the Bushrangers.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Yes, the joint facility with the cricket club.

**CHAIR:** It is a great facility.

**Mr BROWN:** With reference to page 5 of the SDS and support of the tourism industry, can you provide an overview of the Work in Paradise program and how this will assist?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I acknowledge your long association with workers in the hospitality industry. As I alluded to earlier in answer to a question from the Leader of the Opposition, the No. 1 issue raised with me by industry as I have been travelling around the state and working with those groups on an ongoing basis has been around workforce shortages. We know that roles that have been difficult to fill include chefs, kitchen hands, food and beverage attendants, housekeepers, porters and front-of-house staff.

Throughout the pandemic, many tourism workers relocated from regional Queensland, including international students, who were a key labour source for the industry in many regions. The Palaszczuk government has recognised that we need to create a targeted program to bring workers back to regional Queensland. That is why in May we launched the Work in Paradise program. This program endeavours to assist tourism businesses to attract staff and encourage more people to consider a career in tourism. It is a targeted \$7.5 million package to motivate people to work and live in some of the Australia's most desirable destinations right here in Queensland.

Eligible regions include Northern and Western Queensland. The Work in Paradise scheme includes a \$1,500 cash payment to people who take up a tourism job in an eligible region and stay for six months. Jobseekers who relocate more than 100 kilometres to take up that tourism job are also eligible for a \$250 travel bonus. As an extra bonus, the first 1,000 successful applicants for the Work in Paradise incentive scheme also receive a \$200 holiday voucher. Since launching the program in May, we have received nearly 75,000 visits to the Work in Paradise website and 18,500 people have registered to find work.

On Wednesday, 14 July the Work in Paradise jobs website was opened and the 18,500 registered jobseekers were directly contacted to let them know of the thousands of jobs that need to be filled in Queensland's most beautiful destinations. The jobs website was originally planned to be opened on 1 July, however, because this fell in the middle of the Brisbane lockdown it was prudent to wait for a more appropriate time. Anyone who has started a job in Queensland's tourism and hospitality sector since 20 May when we announced the program could be eligible for a cash incentive payment.

With borders closed to Greater Sydney and Victoria we are currently concentrating on targeting Queensland jobseekers to take up these opportunities. Despite those challenges, we have had a very positive response since the opening of the jobs website on Wednesday. There are 166 people taking

up jobs and registering for the incentive payments already. We have also had some fantastic positive feedback from industry about this initiative, like from Hamilton Island's Rachel Cleary in recruitment who said—

The Work in Paradise incentive, coupled with our recruitment efforts, has resulted in a situation we have rarely been in. Hamilton Island now has only a handful of roles available and have the luxury of building our database of high-quality candidates that we are keeping warm ready for the next role available. Quite a strange situation to be in given the candidate shortage that we were all talking about not so long ago.

Work in Paradise was developed working closely with the tourism industry for the industry so we know that they welcome the program. Simon McGrath, the CEO of Accor Pacific, said—

We want to thank you for your vision and support with the recent launch of the Work in Paradise campaign for Queensland. This campaign is already providing real-time benefit and support for our industry and driving a positive message about the rebuilding of a critical workforce to support increased demand. As the largest operator in the Pacific, you have the full support of Accor in this campaign.

It is really good to get that response after working closely with industry on an outcome.

**CHAIR:** Minister, with reference to page 2 of the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport Service Delivery Statements and the \$10 million aviation route support package, will the minister provide an update on this important program that has delivered in the past and obviously is going to be important in rebuilding routes in the future?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** The airline redevelopment does play an important role in attracting new routes of strategic importance to Queensland and in delivering economic benefits across regional communities, which we all know are so important to the way our state operates. In last month's budget we did announce further support for the tourism industry. The budget does see a further \$10 million to be invested over the next two years to help rebuild aviation connectivity. As our nation's border reopens aviation access will be critical. The new funding will play a key role in attracting additional airline services to increase capacity to Queensland destinations and to grow the tourism and events sector. It will also support growth in trade, in international education sectors and investment in our economy. We need to be ready for all of those opportunities as they re-emerge.

This is on top of the \$15 million provided through last year's crisis response aviation recovery fund, which has been playing a major role in our economic recovery by opening back up our access to regions. This funding was provided to 15 regional airports and Brisbane Airport to negotiate directly with airlines to fast track the return of aviation routes and develop new routes domestically into regional Queensland and Brisbane—as I say, intrastate, interstate and other key markets.

Routes supported by the package include the recently announced year round flights from New Zealand into Cairns, Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast. Previously flights from New Zealand into those regional Queensland areas have only been seasonal. Other routes made possible through this fund include Sunshine Coast to Cairns, Brisbane to Mount Isa, Adelaide to the Gold Coast, Darwin to Townsville, Adelaide to Sunshine Coast, Canberra to Gold Coast, Newcastle to Cairns and, important to Mr Tantari, Sydney to Hervey Bay.

The Palaszczuk government's support for domestic aviation recovery has provided confidence to the marketplace and has resulted in airlines increasing their capacity into Queensland. The unite and recover aviation recovery fund is supporting some 27 services into or around Queensland which is delivering 314,967 seats over 74 return flights per week, which together is estimated to support over 1,000 jobs and an overnight visitor expenditure amount of over \$121 million. Our latest \$10 million commitment to boost aviation recovery is a further commitment to show that we need to be in that space and working closely with industry, particularly the aviation industry, to see that element of the sector rebound.

**Mr TANTARI:** Minister, with reference to page 5 of the SDS and the mention of driving economic growth and job creation through innovation, will you provide an update on the role of the Queensland Chief Entrepreneur?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** As we have discussed on a few occasions, innovation and entrepreneurship are a very important part of our economic recovery plan. Last month the Premier announced Brisbane technology innovator, Wayne Gerard, has been appointed as Queensland's new Chief Entrepreneur. Supporting Queensland companies to scale up and grow is absolutely vital to rebuilding our economy and creating the jobs of the future in this state. That is why last month's state budget included more than \$47 million for our innovation sector. Wayne's experience is impressive. He is a co-founder of RedEye, a Queensland start-up that now manages more than \$250 billion. He was 2015 Queensland Entrepreneur of the Year, American Chamber of Commerce Queensland Governor, and formerly a

member of a range of panels and working groups, including the Premier's Business Advisory Council and Advance Queensland Expert Panel. Since 2012 he has been a key leader in Queensland's innovation ecosystem after founding his tech company. Wayne builds on the important successful contributions of our three previous Queensland Chief Entrepreneurs, Mark Sowerby, Steve Baxter and Leanne Kemp.

The role of Queensland's Chief Entrepreneur has a significant impact on the innovation and entrepreneur ecosystem in Queensland. As the Chief Entrepreneur Mr Gerard will be a real flagbearer for innovation entrepreneurship in Queensland, from helping founders take their first step to getting their business off the ground to working with government and industry to identify the problems that can be solved with innovation and connecting talent to companies and creating that supportive environment. I know Wayne will bring a lot of energy to this role. He has already set out the aims that he is keen to talk about. He is so keen that he is here tonight. I acknowledge Wayne and thank him for joining us here. His aims are to support the development of Queensland's start-up ecosystem by working with incubators and accelerators in co-working spaces; to connect with regional and remote Queensland to encourage and foster statewide entrepreneurship; to showcase Queensland start-up and entrepreneurial talent to local, national and international audiences; to stimulate and attract local, national and international investment and venture capital into Queensland; and to support those local entrepreneur start-ups and small businesses across the state by connecting them with the right opportunities, people, places and spaces to help them grow and scale and create jobs. I know he is very keen to work across the board across government to support the range of opportunities where innovation can play a key role in developing our new businesses and our new jobs right across the state.

**CHAIR:** Building on that innovation agenda, with reference to Advance Queensland on page 5 of the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport Service Delivery Statements, can the minister update the committee on the Innovation Advisory Council?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** As we know and as we alluded to there, our innovation economy has evolved. In December last year at the last estimates session there was a bit of discussion about where we are going to from here and what the future is. Certainly there was a commitment around how we would reframe the conversation. That is what we needed to see and what we are seeing. Startups that began in garages and entrepreneurs with an idea at uni now have staff and customers around the world. Alongside fostering grassroots entrepreneurship, we have to back those global innovators on the cusp of having a global impact and grow the new and emerging industries in our economy, as I was saying in answer to the previous question. Robotics, artificial intelligence, agtech, IT and advanced manufacturing are just some of the new and emerging industries that provide incredible opportunities for Queenslanders.

As our economy has evolved we need an evolved innovation leadership. That is why, when I was appointed innovation minister last year, I hosted an innovation industry round table. That was an opportunity to listen to leaders from universities, corporates, startups, capital investment, and regional and Indigenous enterprises in this space. It was really heartening to hear the strong support for innovation leadership that is fit for purpose and continues to invest in the future of Queensland and its economy. Importantly, the leadership needs to provide expert advice to government and guidance to the private sector in how we can boost innovation and grow new industries.

That is why I am really pleased to announce tonight the initial members of the Innovation Advisory Council who are going to support the new Queensland Chief Entrepreneur, Wayne Gerard. Monica Bradley is an expert in helping startups to implement technology and raise needed capital to reach their potential. With experience on numerous boards, including Beyond Zero Emissions and QIC's investment committee, Monica brings business acumen that is ready to strengthen the link between investors and those Queensland ideas, which is a very important part of the feedback that I have had from industry and from the ecosystem.

Aaron Birkby is entrepreneur in residence at James Cook University and was formerly the CEO of the national Startup Catalyst. He has worked hand in glove to help startups in their early stages and had hosted more than 60 startup weekends and corporate hackathons. He brings great energetic engagement to this team.

Professor Rowena Barrett is Pro Vice-Chancellor, Entrepreneurship, at QUT. Rowena is central to the delivery of the MIT Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program that has fostered the innovation community in regional Queensland. I have seen firsthand the way that that program is really driving things across the state. Rowena will support new pathways for innovators, particularly in our regions.

Bronwyn Harch is Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation, at UQ. Bronwyn has been a board member of Innovation and Science Australia, a research director for Food Agility CRC and chief computational informatics officer for CSIRO. Bronwyn will be critical in helping Queensland bridge the gap between research and industry commercialisation.

The idea is that the council will work with others who play a key role in this space, not just the Chief Entrepreneur but also the Queensland Chief Scientist, the Queensland Small Business Commissioner and the Queensland Chief Customer and Digital Officer, to collaborate on innovation opportunities that will have maximum impact for Queensland. The initial advisory council members will bring vast knowledge and extensive networks to support the Chief Entrepreneur and the government. In the future the Innovation Advisory Council will be expanded to include other elements of the ecosystem. It is expected that additional proposed members will be considered for future appointment to the council to reflect the ecosystem diversity that is needed, looking at regional representation, First Nations representation, greater levels of cultural diversity and capital specialists. I think we have a really good team that will help guide our way forward.

**CHAIR:** Member for Broadwater, do you have a question?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I do. Minister, I refer to underspends in the capital statement, particularly in the area of ecotourism and the fact that government is not meeting time lines in regard to rolling this out. Who is responsible for setting and meeting those targets?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** It is important that I note, firstly, that the Leader of the Opposition got wrong the earlier question to the director-general in relation to how much had been spent on the Wangetti Trail project. He cited \$430,000, calling it out of the budget papers, but that was around the expenditure that there had been on particular elements of the project. We heard from the deputy director-general that it was a much larger figure that had been actually expended. I am making sure that we get an understanding—

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**CHAIR:** I recognise, Minister, that on that case I had given the consideration that he should not characterise it in that way without hearing the answer. The council could be for the same. However, I am presuming that during a COVID pandemic across the whole of government there might be something that had not been achieved so I did not pull up the question.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I was not questioning that. I was drawing the committee's attention to the fact that you have to make sure that you test all the things that are said. Certainly I understand there have been instances where the capital expenditure has not reached a level that the government wanted. That has particularly been in the context of things such as some of those ecotrails where the work with very important stakeholders, including traditional owners, has meant that we have seen some level of underspend in some of those projects and some of those projects not going forward.

We also need to appreciate that there is a number of elements of activities around those things, including outward facing engagement. During the period of the pandemic and with the further impacts that we have had with border closures and so forth, a lot of travel has not been undertaken. That has reduced some of the expenditure as a result. That is why it is important that we stay on top of these projects and keep driving them to fruition. There are some examples of projects where there were funding arrangements whereby grants were allocated to particular proponents on the basis of them delivering a project. However, their capacity being further impacted by the nature of the economic impact of the pandemic has meant that they have not progressed. We need to stay focused on those and continue to work with them. If the director-general wants to add something further about specific examples, I would be happy to refer to him.

**Mr Lee:** With regard to the actual trail and the expenditure in the financial year 2020-21, the estimated cost was \$5.443 million. What was expended in the year in terms of capital was \$3.63 million, plus for property, plant and equipment another \$430,000, which then provides you with an amount of just around \$4 million with an outstanding amount in budget 2021-22 of \$1.8 million. That is to get the expenditure in terms of capital—

**CHAIR:** That is specifically on the Wangetti Trail?

**Mr Lee:** Correct, on Wangetti.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** As one example.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Director-General, in his answer the minister referred to projects that might not be going forward. To the best of your knowledge, are some of the projects that have been flagged earlier no longer on the drawing board to be delivered? In the interests of time I will ask the director-general.

**CHAIR:** Is that in reference to the projects where the minister made mention of—

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** The minister referred to projects not going forward. In the ecotourism space are there projects that are no longer due to be delivered that were planned previously?

**Mr Lee:** Yes, we can confirm that in the Whitsundays, following consultation with the traditional owners and other stakeholders, it was determined that the Ngaro Sea Trail should not go forward on Whitsunday Island.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Has consultation been undertaken with other groups such as local tourism operators and people in the community who have led the push for that trail? What level of engagement has been done with those people?

**Mr Lee:** I am happy to provide you with more information. I understand that a number of the stakeholder groups, including Tourism Whitsundays, were consulted during that period after the traditional owners made the assessment for that, I think, 20-kilometre trail that was proposed from Hill Inlet across to Whitehaven. It was deemed that due to some of the challenges it should not proceed.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I have a further question to the director-general. Has any economic impact on the economic impact to tourism potential in the region been modelled on that decision?

**Mr Lee:** I do not think there is specific modelling on that trail.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** My final question to the director-general is one about future planning. I refer to page 1 of the SDS and the department's purpose about supporting the economy. The Advancing Tourism Plan is 2016-2020; the Advancing Tourism in North Queensland is 2016-2020; the Queensland Tourism Transport Strategy 2016-2020; and, as mentioned in the last estimates, the Queensland Ecotourism Plan is 2016-2020. They are all out of date. What direction has the minister given you about new plans and when will we see them?

**CHAIR:** In general, that is a policy—

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I am asking about the direction given to the director-general.

**CHAIR:** That is fair enough. I understand that.

**Mr Lee:** A number of those programs, as you just outlined, are still quite active. As you would understand, we have appointed an expert panel for the action plan for tourism recovery. Over 70 submissions have been made by industry to that panel. As part of that, there will be specific programs and strategies, both tactical and medium to long-term strategies, that are deployed after that group make recommendations.

**Mr MANDER:** Minister, breaking news is that the Richmond-Lions AFL game at worst is in jeopardy, at best is delayed due to the fact that both teams were delayed on the M1 because of a crash. Is the minister concerned that Labor's lack of infrastructure funding may hamper the successful staging of sporting events in this state?

**CHAIR:** Obviously this is primarily a question on the M1.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I am very happy to answer. I understand the context of the question and the understandable concern that Mr Mander has raised.

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, minister, is his correct title.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** This is a committee.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I would rather that we get the 30 seconds back and allow him to continue.

**CHAIR:** Thank you for your feedback, member for Broadwater. I will take it on notice.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I am aware of the concern and the impact on the match at Metricon Stadium. My understanding is that it does potentially result in a delay of the bounce. I understand that they do ball-ups these days, do they not; they do not bounce them anymore.

**CHAIR:** They do both. Depends whether they can bounce it straight or not.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** But I understand it is confirmed for being an 8.05 ball-up, so you have time to catch it yet, Mr Mander. You raised a concern around whether the Palaszczuk government's infrastructure will be able to support. The reality is that we saw throughout 2020 the Palaszczuk government infrastructure supporting Queensland becoming the home of sport. We saw Palaszczuk government infrastructure support the opportunity to see three State of Origin matches held here in Queensland this year. We saw Palaszczuk government—indeed, I should title it 'Labor government infrastructure' across those stadia making this all possible.

I think it is a churlish question, but one I understand the motivation of. The reality is that without the support that we have provided by putting in place proactively and deliberately and off the back of a really strong, as I mentioned earlier in my initial statements, handling of the pandemic, and the respect with which the broader community and the nation understood the way in which Queensland handled the pandemic so well, that we have been able to become a safe haven for professional and elite sport. We have been able to work proactively with those sports, in both professional and elite codes, to develop a COVID-safe professional code plan around which we proactively engaged with those sports so that they have a consistent understanding of what the expectation will be if they need to be undertaking their codes and events here in Queensland in a range of given circumstances. That has given codes the confidence to relocate to Queensland, including the AFL. I know that the delayed bounce for 8.05 is better than potentially no bounce at all.

**Mr MANDER:** Minister, can you tell us, please, how much Queensland taxpayers' money was paid to stage the State of Origin game in Townsville?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** As the member knows very well, bringing events to Queensland is extremely important to our tourism and events industry. We face very stiff competition from other states and international cities in usual times when it comes to attracting and sustaining major events. As a consequence, the disclosing of an amount of government investment in events puts Queensland's competitive advantage at risk by providing our competitors with information that could be used to draw events away from Queensland. It could also lead to a comparison of event outcomes that, in the absence of all the information, are really subject to misinterpretation and misrepresentation of those event investments and assessment criteria. So it is—

**Mr MANDER:** No?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** No, I will not tell you because it is commercial in confidence.

**Mr MANDER:** Is Townsville Mayor Jenny Hill correct when she stated after the event that taxpayers deserve the right to know how much of their money is invested in these types of projects?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Mayor Hill is welcome to her opinions, as any Queenslanders is. I would have stated the exact same words that I said to you to Mayor Hill should she raised that with me. She has not. She was very welcoming of the commitment that the Queensland government made to deliver State of Origin 1 to Townsville. I note that the City of Townsville was willing to step forward and make investments in helping put that event on, indicative of the range of in-kind components that go into an event attraction like that sort of thing. Putting dollar figures on things is not a perfect way of understanding how these things work. There is a cocktail of things that come into it, including support from local government. I acknowledge Mayor Hill's interest in these matters, but I also think more significantly the people of Townsville acknowledged the commitment that we all had together to work on in getting a great outcome. Unfortunately, everything about that event was spectacularly successful except for about 80 minutes.

**Mr MANDER:** Minister, could you please advise the committee how many other commercial in confidence agreements with sporting organisations has the government entered into?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** That would be one we would have to look at a bit further and maybe come back to you, hopefully by the end of the session. The definition of 'sporting entities' or 'sporting organisations'—not sure of the phrase you used there—may be a bit hard to grapple with because we engage with many. Through Tourism and Events Queensland and other areas of government, we support a range of things from grassroots activities right through to major events like State of Origin 1. I will refer to the director-general if he wants to make any further comments about that and to clarify whether there is something we need to come back further on.

**Mr Lee:** In terms of major events, it is very important because this is, in a jurisdictional sense, very competitive with other states. One only has to look at whether it is a Rugby World Cup or a FIFA Women's World Cup—different states have a bidding arrangement for different events, and that is why it is important that that information and that dollar value remains commercial in confidence because ultimately if you reveal the amount, you will tell your competitors the value of what that event was and you could lose the event accordingly. We have in TEQ and in our major events component within the department, not only for sporting events but for other events and festivals that we support information that remains commercial in confidence, and so it should.

**Mr MANDER:** We would like to know how many of those agreements there are and who they are with. We know about the State of Origin agreement with the NRL. We would like to know how many other commercial-in-confidence agreements have been put in place with organisations to receive state government funding?

**CHAIR:** Is this over a particular period?

**Mr MANDER:** I am happy with the last 12 months.

**CHAIR:** Not 2012-15?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I am advised in terms of commercial-in-confidence agreements with funding that there are 91 for major events across all genres. That is not purely sport. There are some 20 business events that have been funded that are subject to commercial-in-confidence agreements.

**Mr MANDER:** Over what period of time does that refer to?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** That is the 2020-21 financial year.

**Mr MANDER:** For the Townsville State of Origin game I understand a tent city was established to accommodate those who wanted to attend and could not get accommodation. Was state government funding provided for that initiative?

**CHAIR:** Is that question directed to the minister?

**Mr MANDER:** Yes, to the minister.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** There were a range of activations associated with the event that were supported by what I would describe as a cocktail of Queensland government and Townsville City Council support. Again, I will refer that to the director-general.

**Mr Lee:** I am aware that Townsville Enterprise Ltd actually coordinated tent city.

**CHAIR:** I have a question for the minister. With reference to page 2 of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet Service Delivery Statements and the mention of increased funding for the International Education and Training Strategy, will the minister provide an update on Study Queensland's initiatives?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** The Palaszczuk government will double its overseas footprint to help position the education and training sector for recovery following an investment in this year's budget of an additional \$20.6 million over five years to support the sector. This brings our total five-year commitment to the international education and training sector to more than \$32.3 million. International education and training is, as we mentioned earlier, vital to Queensland's economic recovery, to our social capital, to our future capacity and to the way we engage with the world. We are investing in the future of this industry.

The funding will allow new global education specialists to be positioned in key markets overseas to help Queensland recapture its international student market so damaged by the pandemic. This new investment includes funding for new representatives to promote Queensland's IET capacity in Vietnam, German, Malaysia, Brazil, Colombia and North American; the doubling of personnel in India, Hong Kong and North Asia; a new study hub in China that fosters greater relationships with Queensland; and the expansion of Q-Pods, which is a showcase of Queensland education and industry in India specifically. We are preparing for students returning when the time is right by increasing Queensland's foothold in those key markets now.

Additionally, the Palaszczuk government will continue to host Queensland hour and other online events that help recognise the achievements of students who have completed courses while overseas. We are keeping in touch with students who continue to be enrolled in courses in Queensland while in their home countries. Prior to the pandemic international education and training was an absolutely important contributor to our economy—directly and indirectly employing more than 27,000 Queenslanders and generating \$5.8 billion in export revenue.

We are focused on continuing to support the nearly 60,000 international students remaining in Queensland through a 24-hour telephone support line—1800QSTUDY—student hubs in Cairns and on the Gold Coast and the Queensland student hub website. Over 2020-21 Study Queensland's Launch U Trade Accelerator program connected 73 businesses with 414 students. The investment also allows for the continuation of targeted programs supporting city and regional engagement of international students as well as planning for the safe arrival of small cohorts of students when the time is right. Obviously there is a whole lot more work that has to happen in that space to be ready. We stay focused on the opportunity that this represents when the time is right.

**CHAIR:** I just jumped the gun a little bit. The member for Everton had some more questions so I go back to the member for Everton.

**Mr MANDER:** My further question is to the director-general. I want to make sure I heard you right. So there were 91, I think, either sporting or tourist groups and 20 businesses with whom commercial-in-confidence agreements were entered into. Is that not correct?

**Mr Lee:** That is not correct.

**Mr MANDER:** Could you correct me?

**Mr Lee:** In terms of TEQ, in the previous financial year there were 91 major events of all genres, including festivals, music festivals and other types of events, then there was specifically support for 20 business events. For example, in Cairns they might provide an incentive for an international medical conference to occur at the Cairns convention centre. That is an example of one of the 20.

**Mr MANDER:** I need to clarify this because I have obviously misheard the response.

**Mr Lee:** They are all subject commercial-in-confidence because they are contracts that are—

**Mr MANDER:** The 20 or the 91?

**Mr Lee:** Both—91 plus 20.

**Mr MANDER:** That is what I thought. Director-General, can the department provide the names of those organisations and events with whom those agreements were entered into? You obviously cannot do it now, but I am happy if you take that on notice.

**Mr Lee:** Obviously they are engaged by Tourism and Events Queensland, which is a statutory authority. I will get some advice as to which of those will be provided back to the committee.

**Mr MANDER:** My next question is the CEO of Stadiums Queensland. With news that there were COVID infections both at the MCG and AMMI Park in Victoria, causing the five-day lockdown in Victoria, has the CEO changed the health protocols with regard to future attendance at Queensland stadiums?

**Mr Harris:** In terms of the arrangements that sit around all of our venues, there are site specific COVID-safe plans in place at our venues. Each of those plans is assessed by Queensland Health and more specifically the local public health units that are associated with the venues. As health advice changes and evolves those plans are adapted. They are live plans. Those plans were originally submitted in May 2020. There have been multiple iterations of those plans as circumstances change. We liaise very closely with Queensland Health. If there are circumstances that require us to amend those plans we will undertake those amendments. That is obviously based on the advice that we receive from Queensland Health.

**Mr MANDER:** I have a further question for the CEO. Given the infections that have taken place at two of the major stadiums in this country, is that a cause for you to re-examine the protocols or to go to the Chief Health Officer to seek clarification on whether those protocols need to be changed?

**CHAIR:** I think that is repetition of the last question.

**Mr MANDER:** It was not answered. It was a general comment about the health protocols. I want to know specifically given the latest COVID-19 infections. I think this would be of concern to everybody after we have been assured that attendance at sporting events is safe. It is obviously not.

**CHAIR:** Firstly, I did not ask you for an editorial on your question, and I do not think that is within the standing orders. It is somewhat repetitive. We note that the officer can answer the question in the way he sees fit. This is obviously a really important issue. I do note that you—

**Mr MANDER:** Exactly.

**CHAIR:** Just show some respect. Is there anything you can add to your answer?

**Mr Harris:** Probably the most recent example is State of Origin. The plans associated with the State of Origin event at Cbus Super Stadium on Wednesday night were adjusted to account for the most recent health advice. There has not been any change to that advice in Queensland; therefore, there have not been changes to plans between Wednesday and tonight.

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, do you have any further questions?

**Mr MANDER:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** I thought you were going to wind up quickly, because the time—

**Mr MANDER:** Thank you, Chair, for the direction. My question is to the minister. Minister, with regard to the 12 NRL clubs that have now settled in Queensland to ensure the continuity of the NRL competition, would you advise what, if any, government expenditure has been committed to that initiative?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** None specifically. As I mentioned earlier in relation to the COVID-safe professional sporting code plans, they were done proactively and made available to a range of codes as a starting point for engagement and preparation of their own plans in relation to such events and

eventualities such as what has occurred with the NRL. Government did that, but it was not specifically for the NRL. Obviously, there has been the work that Queensland Health has done and the support that my department has provided in helping articulate that. I am happy to table that plan if you want to see a copy of that to understand how important that is to making a contribution.

**Mr MANDER:** No, I think you have answered the question. I simply wanted to know if there was any direct injection of funds from the government.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** The answer is no, but I do not want to mislead you by saying that we have not put money into helping make sure these things are possible.

**Mr MANDER:** I understand.

**CHAIR:** Member for Capalaba, do you have a question?

**Mr BROWN:** Page 2 of the SDS mentions that Queensland may potentially be successful in securing the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Will the minister provide an update on the government's bid?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** As I mentioned earlier, and as I know you are aware, on 21 July—next Wednesday—members of the International Olympic Committee will decide whether or not to award the hosting rights of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games to Brisbane and Queensland. Hosting an Olympic and Paralympic Games has the potential to deliver two decades of opportunities. It is not just the runway of the next 10 or 11 years; it is that lead-up over the next 10 years to the event and the 10 years after that which will continue to, at the very least, garner great outcomes. We know that the Olympic Games has the potential to deliver significant benefits to Queensland and supercharge our economic recovery efforts.

Our work to date has shown that hosting the 2032 Olympics would deliver the following benefits to Queensland. It would support nearly 123,000 jobs. The economic and social benefits of hosting the games are estimated to be up to \$8.1 billion for Queensland and \$17.61 billion for Australia, so there is a huge footprint of opportunity right across the state and the rest of the nation. It will accelerate the development of our sporting and transport infrastructure, and I know that is something many other partners are very keen to work with us on. It will boost international tourism and trade. There is nothing like being an Olympic city to put ourselves on the world stage.

It would have positive environmental impacts because that is part of the way in which we have been able to be successful in this bid. We can do more, including addressing congestion, better public transport and reducing waste through initiatives that will be very focused on those outcomes. There will also be a repurposing of existing infrastructure to deliver not only for that event but for our whole community for many years to come. Significant quantifiable social benefits will also be derived from the Olympic Games, including: physical and mental health benefits; volunteering; civic pride, which should not be underestimated; the social cohesion opportunities of bringing people together; sporting pathways generated for a whole range of athletes, including elite athletes; industry and government partnerships; enhancing community infrastructure; and providing a platform for engaging the whole community around diversity and inclusion.

I know that you are particularly interested in this, Mr Mander. The International Olympic Committee's new rules, known as the 'new norm', have allowed us to be far more flexible in the delivery of the games by using existing infrastructure that is, frankly, more cost effective. At least 84 per cent of the venues are existing or temporary, with many benefiting from scheduled upgrades. This range of economic and social community benefits that our 2032 games will deliver over the next 20 years will be for all residents of Queensland, including regional communities. We know that because we will obviously have a focus on supply chain and procurement opportunities—I know that the Premier has spoken about that very strongly on a number of occasions—for businesses, people buying the best of Queensland from the whole of Queensland. There will also be direct engagement for areas outside of South-East Queensland with events. At this stage, a preliminary football match is being proposed.

In April this year the Prime Minister confirmed that the Australian government will provide the necessary operational support to host the 2032 Olympic Games and agreed to fund critical infrastructure on a fifty-fifty basis. Subject to the IOC decision on Wednesday evening to come—I encourage you all to get involved and support that and be part of the celebration—we will continue to work with games partners and focus on ensuring that any future decisions are made in the best interests of all Queenslanders. This is genuinely about a spectacular event but also delivering a meaningful, lasting set of benefits for the community and putting Brisbane and Queensland on the world stage.

**Mr TANTARI:** Minister, with reference to page 2 of the SDS and the mention of support for tourism, will you provide an update on the Palaszczuk government's support for the industry?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** The member's question gives me an opportunity to speak more about the \$860 million that the Palaszczuk government has committed in delivered and planned economic recovery and support for the tourism and events sector since the onset of the pandemic. It includes: \$10 million in funding announced in last month's budget invested over two years to start rebuilding the aviation connectivity that I mentioned earlier; and the government's \$7.5 million commitment for the Work in Paradise program I also mentioned earlier that offers cash incentives to get much needed workers to take up jobs in the tourism industry in northern and Western Queensland.

These initiatives go along with a long list of other successful programs that have been implemented in the last few months. The hugely popular Holiday Dollars vouchers program and the Great Barrier Reef Education Experience Program have been effective measures to help take the Queensland tourism industry from their darkest hour last year to a position where the economic recovery of the sector genuinely leads the nation. Our economic package of tourism recovery is working, as I said earlier.

Monthly visitor data compiled by Tourism Research Australia in March 2021 shows Queensland outperforming all other states and territories in terms of the growth of overnight business expenditure. Expenditure was up \$637 million—that is up 88 per cent—to \$1.35 billion compared with March 2020. That is \$43.5 million being spent by tourists in a day in Queensland, or \$304.5 million a week.

Despite the Palaszczuk government's \$860 million in support for the tourism industry and the latest data and evidence that the economic recovery plan is working, on 17 June the Leader of the Opposition said in his budget reply speech—

In my shadow portfolio responsibility of tourism, we have seen no major financial injection in their hour of need. In the wake of COVID, the state government has provided amongst the lowest amount of industry support per person of any government in the nation.

That is woefully incorrect and clearly misleading. An analysis of other states and territories shows that Queensland is third out of all the jurisdictions when it comes to per capita spending, with Victoria leading followed by the Northern Territory. It is important that I table that jurisdictional comparison for the information of the committee. I think it would be useful for the committee to use that. That put Queensland ahead of New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, the ACT and Tasmania at the point in time when the Leader of the Opposition made those comments.

The government's investment in the tourism industry's recovery is in stark contrast to those opposite. As I said earlier, when they were fleetingly in government, they cut 35 staff from Tourism and Events Queensland. That is not our agenda. We will continue to work with the sector and be focused on supporting it in this challenging time. We have seen some bright outcomes, particularly I must say in places like Hervey Bay, but it is important that we continue to work with the industry in those parts that are hurting and those parts that are challenged by growth.

**CHAIR:** Minister, with reference to page 1 of the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport's Service Delivery Statement and the objective of maximising the benefits of major events, will the minister provide an update on the recent State of Origin events held in Queensland? I know we had some discussion before but it is a historic thing.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I am happy to put some more flesh around some of the issues that were raised by Mr Mander. For the first time in Origin history, we saw all three games of this year's series played in Queensland. Those people who have been a fan of rugby league for a long time never thought they would see anything like that. Many Queenslanders are obviously thinking of the difficulties that are being faced by our family and friends in the Greater Sydney area that has been affected by the extended COVID-19 lockdown so we do not want to gloat in their presence. They got the benefit of winning the series so they got something out of this.

The Palaszczuk government has always said that we are willing and able to assist the NRL if the need arises. We brought Origin 1 to Townsville when it could not be played in Melbourne, as those circumstances dictated at the time. With the NRL facing the prospect of the final State of Origin being played in an empty stadium in Newcastle, we were again able to help by securing the game for the Gold Coast. We were able to do that because of the consistent capability we have around COVID-safe events and COVID-safe support for sport and professional and elite codes.

We also did it off the back of having great stadiums. We saw a big crowd of at least 23,000 at Cbus Super Stadium, even though there was very minimal notice—with tickets going on sale the day before the game and the decision to move the game only made four days earlier. We are in a fortunate

position where we are able to have capacity crowds with proper, sensible COVID-safe arrangements, including things like the check-in app which is making a big difference to how we can manage those things. That is what has informed the support the appropriate health authorities have for Mr Harris and his team to manage those events at stadia here in Queensland.

It has been a huge opportunity, but the big thing around these events has been that they have delivered for the broader economy. None of this would have been possible without our commitment to support the kick-off, as it were, in State of Origin 1 with an eight-day turnaround for Townsville. The economic boost for North Queensland from State of Origin 1 was approximately \$7 million, with Townsville Airport reporting 14 extra flights arriving into Townsville the week of the game. Chris Mills, the CEO of Queensland Airports Limited, wrote to the government stating, 'Thanks to the promotional coverage of Townsville and its surrounds that were broadcast around the country, this major event will provide benefits to the region for some time to come.' The event attracted 15,000 visitors to Townsville and delivered 22,500 visitor nights for the region, providing a significant boost for the economic recovery efforts in Townsville. Tour and experience operators also reported a 360 per cent increase in bookings the week of State of Origin.

The Palaszczuk government's strong health response has put us in that position to be able to host significant events, including in regional Queensland, and those events are stimulating the broader visitor economy, and that is what we want to be all about. I note that the *Courier-Mail* is reporting that Queensland is in a very good place to be able to save an NRL grand final. If we can repeat the experience of saving the AFL last year and if we need to do that for the great game of Rugby League, we stand ready to do it.

**CHAIR:** We would do a great job, but I hope New South Wales does get on the road to recovery.

**Mr TANTARI:** Minister, in reference to page 2 of the SDS, and I note that you have made a couple of comments already around the aviation route support package, could you update the committee on how the Palaszczuk government is supporting tourism operators in regional Queensland, particularly with the aviation route support package and in particular in Hervey Bay?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I really want to thank you for your hard work in being an advocate for tourism operators in Hervey Bay. You have been outstanding in that regard—a voice that has been hard to ignore. Australians know that Hervey Bay is the whale watching capital of the nation, if not the world, and I note your lapel pin. At this time of year, almost 10,000 humpback whales descend on the east coast of Australia and venture into Hervey Bay. We know how important whale watching is for Hervey Bay's tourism economy. Over the three years to December 2019, the region welcomed some 32,000 whale watching visitors. That is why during the height of the pandemic the Premier stood side by side with the Fraser Coast council mayor, George Seymour, and whale watching tour operators in Hervey Bay to announce support and relief measures. I was there at the time in a different role, but it was good to support her and be part of that announcement.

More than 18 operators across the state shared in \$110,000 in savings from the waiving of the commercial whale watching fee last year. This support has been part of that \$860 million response to back the tourism and visitor economy. That has included loans, stimulus, payroll tax relief, grants and relief programs. I am proud that our budget continues programs aimed at supporting operators in their time of need and supporting the industry to rebuild. That is why this budget does commit \$10 million over two years towards the aviation route support package to support more flight routes.

This funding boost follows the government's successful 2020 unite and recover \$15 million Aviation Route Restart Program, which I mentioned earlier, which has stimulated Queensland's domestic aviation recovery. As you know very well, it has included Hervey Bay. Flights into the region with tourists to see those majestic whales and so many other attractions will inject \$8 million into Hervey Bay's economic recovery and it will support 67 jobs in the region. We know that local restaurants, cafes, tourism operators and accommodation providers all benefit.

Alongside the new flights, our rebuilding tourism and rebuilding tourism jobs program invests in more events and experiences. It continues our partnership with regional tourism organisations like Fraser Coast tourism to work hand in hand with tourism operators and promote the Fraser Coast region as one of the must do destinations for tourists. We know that the Hervey Bay region whale watching experiences have been popular during our Good to Go tourism marketing campaign, as I said earlier. That is going gangbusters. The Fraser Coast region is known as the ideal location particularly for families to create those memories that last a lifetime. I would encourage anyone on the committee to get to the Fraser Coast for the upcoming whale watching season. I am sure Mr Tantari could provide

you with some tips as a longstanding local about how to get the best experience and all the things that can go on. I really encourage you to seek him out, but you can also get great information at queensland.com.

**CHAIR:** The member for Hervey Bay has said that anyone can camp in his backyard.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** No, we want those local tourism providers to get some benefit as well.

**Mr BROWN:** I think you have touched on this before but you can expand on it. It is in relation to page 2 of the SDS and the minister's role in the oversight of Queensland Academy of Sport. Will the minister update the committee on Queensland's representation in the team for the upcoming Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** It is fair to say without being overly parochial that Queensland has a very long and very proud history of Olympic and Paralympic representation and, indeed, success on those stages. From Queensland's very first recognised Olympian swimmer, Frank Springfield in 1908, we have produced generation after generation of athletes who have not only made it to the Olympic stage but excelled on it. One of the key elements in helping our athletes develop, prepare and perform is the Queensland Academy of Sport, and I am pleased that the QAS continues to work at the cutting edge of sport science, performance and athlete development to deliver outstanding results.

With the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics set to commence tonight next week—the opening ceremony is at this time next week—there is an opportunity to acknowledge the Queensland athletes who have achieved their dream of representing their nation and indeed, as we like to think in a way, their state in Japan. For some, this is their first opportunity to be known as an Olympian. For others, it is their second, third or even fourth Olympic experience. Whatever the case, I know that they will all perform with 100 per cent effort and do themselves proud.

I can advise the committee that of the total make-up of the Olympic squad of 486, 128 are from Queensland which, as I mentioned earlier, is more than 26 per cent of the total team. This is up from just over 20 per cent representation in Rio in 2016. Those Queenslanders will compete across 28 of the 33 sports that offer medals in Tokyo at the Olympics. The full team of the Paralympics is not yet confirmed, but of the current 84 athletes named so far, 24, or just over 28 per cent, are Queenslanders.

Of course, there are some sports where our natural strengths lie in terms of facilities and climate. It perhaps will not surprise you or anyone else on the committee that 24 Queenslanders have qualified in the swimming events. That is 65 per cent of the Australian Dolphins squad in that discipline. While that is impressive, I can also advise that Queenslanders are doing the heavy lifting when it comes to weightlifting, with four out of five, or 80 per cent of the team, coming from Queensland. It is great to see that.

The excellence of our female athletes also cannot be overlooked, with some 56 per cent of the Queensland contingent being women. This speaks volumes to the commitment of the Palaszczuk government in providing facilities and opportunities for investment in infrastructure and sport funding to support women in sport.

Whether it is the traditional sports like track and field and swimming or new ones such as skateboarding or surfing, Queensland does have strong representation. I am sure they will do themselves, their families, their state and Australia very proud. I wish—and I know I can speak on behalf of all the committee members—the athletes competing in Tokyo 2020 a safe and successful games. Like so many, I look forward to cheering them on in just over a week's time.

**CHAIR:** Also Patty Mills will be carrying the flag.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** There are certainly people who have very strong and deep Queensland connections. As a proud Torres Strait Islander man, Patty Mills, the captain of the Australian Boomers and the joint flag carrier with another Queensland, Cate Campbell, is someone who we can all be very proud of.

**CHAIR:** Do you know much about basketball?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I am happy to answer any further questions on basketball.

**CHAIR:** Frank Springfield was from Sandgate.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** I looked it up. I would like to table the tourism industry's support jurisdiction comparison, all having viewed it.

**Mr STEVENS:** Are you asking permission to table this?

**CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr STEVENS:** Basically, Chair, there are some mistakes on it in terms of the mathematics. I do not know if the minister did it himself. When you look at the figures, it says Queensland's spending is \$870 million at an average capital spend of \$165. Then you look at New South Wales at \$1.25 billion and their average spend is \$152.90, which is not what these figures are saying. I just warn the minister in tabling this particular document he has got it wrong.

**CHAIR:** Are we still tabling the document?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I am happy to take the document back and review it. I do not want to upset the committee.

**CHAIR:** No, that is fine.

**Mr STEVENS:** It is false information.

**CHAIR:** Any questions, member for Everton?

**Mr MANDER:** I do, thank you. My question is to the director-general. Director-general, I want to clarify a few points about the announcement that the minister made tonight of the Active Gameday Projects Fund of \$9 million. Could you advise over what period of time that \$9 million is to cover? Is it this next financial year or beyond that as well?

**Mr Lee:** I thank the member for the question. As this is a new program, we hope to be in market for all the sports before the end of this year because we would like to see a lot of the work commence in the first half of the calendar year next year. We do expect that for some of the winter sports because it is for the field of play—it might be irrigation works or other works—some of it may then need to be undertaken next financial year, but we hope to be completed by calendar year 2022. That is in terms of the allocation and the works.

**Mr MANDER:** I have a further question. Could you advise where that money appears in the SDS for funding for the future?

**Mr Lee:** I might have to take that on advisement and come back before the end of the committee meeting tonight.

**CHAIR:** We will have some time at the end for the minister to address those questions if there is any further information that can be provided.

**Mr MANDER:** Director-general, approximately how many sporting clubs would there be in Queensland?

**Mr Lee:** I thank the member for the question. Sporting clubs—so we are not talking codes. If we were talking codes, there would be over 75 codes, so it would depend on the number of clubs or the number of associations. It is a pretty interesting question. I do not have the precise number for you, but I can give you an estimate before the end of the hearing if you wish.

**Mr MANDER:** That would be good. Minister, there would be thousands of clubs—thousands. In relation to this \$9 million, let's say it is \$150 grand a pop. That is 60 clubs out of thousands that might be eligible for this funding. Let's be conservative and say they do not get \$150 grand; let's say 100 clubs get a little bit less than that. That is a paltry amount of money, isn't it?

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, is there actually a question?

**Mr MANDER:** I did ask, but you interrupted me at the end.

**Mr STEVENS:** He has asked the question to the minister.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** The question appeared to be, 'That is a paltry amount of money, isn't it?' The reality is we have a pretty good idea regarding the question you asked of the director-general around the number of clubs because of things like our COVID Safe Active Clubs Kickstart funding. That provided some 4,700 grants of \$200 to help local sport and recreational organisations to restart. Our jurisdiction was world leading in many respects in terms of seeing community sport restarting, so we do have a good idea; there is a rough indication of the numbers of clubs across the state. Equally, not all of those clubs operate and maintain their own facilities, which this is focused on—and field of play facilities at that, which is a further thing again. You reduce your numbers there at that next point. This program is also open and available for partnerships with local government. It is around providing support for safe facilities that are provided to a range of different sporting entities. There might be multiple clubs who use the one facility. We have already heard of one tonight where the Jimboomba Cricket Club and the Jimboomba AFL Club share those facilities.

**CHAIR:** The Bushrangers and the Redbacks.

**Mr MANDER:** So we are up to 150 clubs.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Let me reiterate that there is no question, Mr Mander, that facilities grants for sport in Queensland—and I would venture to say in any jurisdiction in the country—are oversubscribed. The number of things that we would love to do to support facilities across the state cannot be achieved by the funding levels that we have now or, indeed, have had historically.

We are seeking to do what we can to work with and help support clubs, particularly off the back of the pandemic, where perhaps we have either seen or they had an expectation of maybe seeing some of their fundraising capabilities impacted. These are some of the usual things that they might want to do in terms of improving field of play facilities that they cannot do. This is an opportunity to address that. Indeed, most importantly and significantly, what I am hearing from across state sporting organisations is that the level of participation has increased to the point that we need to do extra things to try and make a difference to field of play facilities to help increase the durability of those fields of play or the times that they can be used in terms lighting et cetera. I would love to have significantly more funding for every single club across Queensland to have something like this, but that is not possible and would not be prudent or appropriate.

**Mr MANDER:** I have a further question to the minister, on a different subject. I refer to question on notice No. 18, where the minister provides details of the funding for election commitments made during the 2020 campaign. I note that six of these commitments relate to non-Labor seats. I imagine they were made by unsuccessful Labor candidates. Were any other promises related to sport made by unsuccessful Labor candidates that were not included in the budget?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Not to my knowledge in terms of the work that we have done to account for and deliver. The Palaszczuk government is very proud of our record of delivery of election commitments. What we say is what we will do. That is one thing of which we have been most proud throughout our time in office as a government. Let me assure the member that those election commitments that are referred to in that question on notice and in the response are on the basis of the information that I and the government had to hand. That includes those ones that were, as the member says, made by unsuccessful candidates. It does represent commitments totalling over \$144 million which we are very confident will see Queenslanders being more active more often and will work to increase health and wellbeing outcomes right across the state in line with our broader government priorities. We do think that the delivery of these election commitments across the board will deliver great outcomes but, as far as I understand, they reflect all the commitments that were made.

**Mr MANDER:** Those commitments amount to \$144 million of which at least \$110 million is going to Labor-held seats. How does the minister explain this inequity to those sporting clubs in non-government seats?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** There was opportunity across the board. I know that members of the opposition and members of crossbench parties were a party to making commitments during the election. This happens whenever different sides of politics end up in government in that they deliver on the commitments that were made by their candidates, because when the government is elected it needs to deliver on those commitments.

**Mr MANDER:** I agree with that; I respect that. There is an obvious inequity going forward with regard to sporting clubs in non-government seats.

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, you have put the question. Allow the minister to answer.

**Mr MANDER:** My seat gets nothing.

**CHAIR:** Order! This is the third time you have interjected on the minister. It is completely out of order and not within the standing orders.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I acknowledge the concern expressed by Mr Mander about the electorate of Everton getting nothing out of this particular process. Neither does the electorate of Sandgate.

**Mr BROWN:** Or Capalaba.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Or Capalaba. Let us be clear about the reality that Labor won a lot of seats at the last election. That resulted in more of these allocations being in the Labor column as they are analysed now. Those commitments were not made on the basis of those seats being held by Labor at the time; indeed, a number of them fell into seats that were not held by Labor at the time.

**Mr MANDER:** It is 25 out of all that in the category.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** This is part of the natural process. We have spoken tonight about a further program putting on the table a further expenditure for supporting community clubs and grassroots facilities. There will be more to come as we have done traditionally in the past. We are still in the phase

of stepping out of the commitments to return to play, particularly the work that we have done around the restart grants that were so comprehensively across the board. I refer to restart grants which the member might note from the responses to questions on notice touched every electorate across the state and were significant in number. There is no question that we are supporting sport across the state. I look forward to further programs into the future that can support grassroots sport across the state.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** I put on record that Bonney missed out as well and that the Labrador Tigers are very deserving of funding.

**CHAIR:** Member for Bonney, is there a question?

**Mr O'CONNOR:** There is, Chair. At last year's estimates in response to my queries about Minister Jones' review of Advance Queensland that she announced in 2019's estimates, the minister said—

...I want to see that completed by mid-next calendar year...I certainly think that by the time we are back here together...in an estimates setting that you would well and truly see the results of that review...

Has the review been completed and, if so, what were its findings?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I thank the member for the question. The \$755 million Advance Queensland program has been a great success under this government. It has backed more than 7,500 innovation projects and supported almost 27,000 jobs. Significantly, Advance Queensland has leveraged \$965 million committed by program partners, including industry and investors. This is a real strong sign of confidence in Advance Queensland and our state's innovation potential. We want Advance Queensland to evolve. That has been the outcome of the review process that we have undertaken, just as our innovation economy has. As I mentioned earlier, Queensland start-ups have matured with many on the cusp of having a global impact. We are working across government to consider new themes and strategies for how we support innovation in Queensland.

With support from the chief entrepreneur and the advisory council, as I made mention of earlier this evening, we will engage industry to understand how we can continue to support innovation policy and accelerate Queensland's job growth coming out of the pandemic. Advance Queensland will work alongside things like the Palaszczuk government's \$1.84 billion Queensland Jobs Fund, tasked with turbocharging job creation in the state. As part of the jobs fund, a new \$350 million industry partnership program including funding and land-planning approvals to fast-track projects in new, emerging industries like renewable energy resource recovery and catalytic infrastructure—

**Mr O'CONNOR:** So the review was completed?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** The review has taken us to a point where we have seen the establishment of the innovation council and that key role that the chief entrepreneur will play in developing up how we use our programs that are funded under budgetary allocations which have been announced over a period of time in the past, like Ignite, IRF and the Female Founders. How we use those programs going forward will be significantly informed by the Innovation Advisory Council. I am happy to invite the chief entrepreneur to the table if the member wants to hear him speak about his insights into how that reframing, look forward and working with government will be.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** That will be fine, minister. I would just like a bit more on the review. Will you be releasing the review? Was it a recommendation of the review to establish this council?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** In terms of the review per se, the outcomes were the creation of a council. That is where things like the round table that I made mention of before were informing how we look forward at the reframing of Advance Queensland going forward. I look forward to us being able to tell that story more fully going forward.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Minister, was it a recommendation of that review to scrap the role of the Chief Entrepreneur, as you did before being overruled by the Premier?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Don't believe everything you read in the *Courier-Mail*. That is not true.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** So—

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** It is not a true thing that you just said, that I changed—

**Mr O'CONNOR:** The announcement that morning and then the clarifying announcement from the Premier three hours later?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** No, there was no announcement.

**CHAIR:** Order! Member for Bonney, there seems to be too much—

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Would you like to add some clarification?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I would be perfectly happy to clarify that at no point did I ever recommend that the Chief Entrepreneur position be ‘scrapped’, to quote you. That is something you may have read in the *Courier-Mail*; it does not make it true.

**Mr O’CONNOR:** It talked about you listening to the startups and removing that role and moving to an advisory role. You wanted to keep the Chief Entrepreneur?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** At no stage did I ever suggest that we would be getting rid of the Chief Entrepreneur. At the round table there was discussion around different ways forward that helped inform the thinking and ways forward. That came up at the table, but at no point was it my recommendation or my preferred course of action. That was one thing. The *Courier-Mail* might report things. As I say, don’t believe everything you read in the *Courier-Mail*.

**Mr O’CONNOR:** I love transparency, so will you release the review into Advance Queensland?

**CHAIR:** Order! This question has been put. It is now time to move to the member for Capalaba.

**Mr BROWN:** With reference to page 1 of the SDS and the objective of maximising the benefits of major events, will the minister provide an update on the NRL moving their competition to Queensland? I also note that the Wallabies were catered for here last week, along with the AFL last year.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** It is really good to have this opportunity to speak further and clarify that there was no money involved in Queensland hosting another major national sporting competition. As you are aware, the NRL and the Premier announced on Monday that the NRL commission had decided to relocate all New South Wales and ACT based teams to Queensland for at least a month to minimise the risk of the season being impacted by Sydney’s COVID-19 outbreak.

As I said earlier, we know that many Queenslanders will be thinking about their friends and family in Sydney, and I am not wanting to gloat around this, but the Palaszczuk government has always been willing and able to assist the NRL if the need arises. We brought origin 1 to Townsville when it could not be played in Melbourne. Origin 3 was held on the Gold Coast on Wednesday night. Queensland is in a position to host national sporting competitions and have capacity crowds at our stadiums because Queenslanders have worked hard to manage the health impacts of the pandemic.

Twelve NRL teams have relocated to South-East Queensland: Manly, Souths, the Roosters, Wests Tigers, Cronulla, Parramatta, Penrith, Canterbury, Canberra, Newcastle, the Warriors and the St George Illawarra Dragons. I wonder how they are going? They will be based in three hubs: the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane and the Gold Coast. All the Queensland based clubs, like your Broncos, along with the Melbourne Storm, will continue to be based and play home games in their current home cities.

The Palaszczuk government’s support for the NRL competition builds on our success last year in supporting several professional sports organisations with the delivery of their national competitions, boosting the profile of Queensland and generating an economic benefit. Queensland became the unofficial home of sport in 2020, with the AFL and NRL primarily hosting their fixtures in Queensland; the Suncorp Super Netball season and the trans-Tasman women’s cricket series being hosted here in Queensland; Supercars and Super Rugby competition rounds being hosted here; the AFL grand final being hosted in Queensland for the first time in history; and Suncorp Stadium hosting near-capacity crowds for the 2020 State of Origin and the successful NRL magic round earlier this year. As I mentioned, games 1 and 3 of this year’s State of Origin were held in Townsville and on the Gold Coast, to add to game 2 at Suncorp.

The Women’s State of Origin returned to Sunshine Coast Stadium for 2021-22 which was great to see. It was great to see a Queensland victory there. It was also good to see Rugby here in Queensland, as you have made mention of as well, with the Wallabies performing. That is again coming up on Saturday night. I encourage those people who have not got themselves a ticket to get hold of a ticket and support the Wallabies to hopefully get that edge over Les Bleus.

**CHAIR:** Never heard of them! Minister, with reference to page 2 of the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport Service Delivery Statements and the \$20 million allocation for the Sunshine Coast Stadium redevelopment, will you provide an update on this commitment and the recent Women’s State of Origin game held there and any impediments to this and any other Palaszczuk government commitments?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** It was really great to be at Sunshine Coast Stadium on 25 June to see the 2021 Women’s State of Origin, held at that stadium for the second time after 2020 was also at that venue. I am pleased to report to the committee, as you would have seen, that Queensland was once again victorious, winning 8-6 in a very tight game in what can only be described as less-than-ideal weather.

This means that Queensland has won the last two State of Origin games and has an unbeaten record at that venue. The match itself was a showcase for the growth of the women's game in Queensland, with huge increases in participation in all age groups. If the game was anything to go by, there are strong signs for continued growth and expansion.

It should be no secret to anyone on this committee that Sunshine Coast Council has a vision to increase the capacity of Sunshine Coast Stadium to attract more events and to provide a tourism and events drawcard in the region. Sunshine Coast Mayor Mark Jamieson has put forward his proposal, along with a substantial council contribution and a generous philanthropic contribution from some local residents—of \$11 million, I should say. The Palaszczuk government can clearly see the need for and the upside of this expansion. That is why we committed \$20 million towards the cost of the project—in an LNP electorate, I should add.

As the Minister for Sport, soon after the election I wrote to the federal Minister for Sport, Senator Richard Colbeck, seeking a matching contribution from the federal government to allow the construction to commence as soon as possible. It was pretty disappointing to see Senator Colbeck reject this request, indicating that the federal government had no intention of funding this major infrastructure outside of Brisbane. I have multiple copies of that letter that I can table and share with the committee. Make no mistake: this cold shoulder shown by the federal government to the Sunshine Coast Stadium upgrade puts the project in serious doubt. This is despite what I know has been very strong support for the project from the local federal LNP members and the desire to see more events and tourism in the region. That is why it is puzzling to me why state LNP members, who claim to be the progenitors of the project, from the Sunshine Coast have been pretty silent about the lack of action by the federal government and the lack of support for the project from the federal government. I really encourage them to call out the federal LNP and demand investment in their region.

I asked if there are any other projects where the federal government has refused to match funding put forward by the Palaszczuk government. I regret to inform the committee that there are. The new Brisbane Lions facility under construction at Springfield, designed to be the training and high-performance centre as well as the home field for the premiership-winning AFLW team, will be a great venue, with investment from all three levels of government. I acknowledge that. It was disappointing, then, to see a request to the federal government for an additional \$3 million for lighting to allow the Lions AFLW team to play night matches at that facility rejected. I will table that letter from Senator Colbeck rejecting that as well. There are multiple copies there.

It is about time the federal government stepped up with funding needed to make these projects happen in their entirety. It is about time the state LNP stood up to their Canberra colleagues and advocated for these important facilities. I really encourage those members of the committee who are here to talk to their Sunshine Coast colleagues as well, to be advocates around this. I encourage those who want to support that facility at Springfield to be advocates.

**Mr BROWN:** With reference to page 14 of the SDS and the mention of supporting tourism jobs and growing our regions, will the minister provide an update on the Queensland Holiday Dollars program?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** The Palaszczuk government has always worked collaboratively with the tourism industry across the state to ensure that we deliver targeted support for tourism operators. In answer to some questions earlier this evening I was very focused on the way in which we have worked closely with operators right across the state and heard from them what they wanted. What they wanted was support for doing their job, not government handouts.

We delivered the Holiday Dollars program, specifically designed working closely with operators and their representatives, in four specific regions—that is, Cairns, Brisbane, Whitsundays and the Gold Coast. The objective of the Queensland Holiday Dollars program was to support those regions significantly impacted by the loss of international tourism by driving bookings for tourism experiences and accommodation. This is the first time the Queensland government has offered travel vouchers. It has allowed us to also implement marketing and distribution initiatives across the regions to encourage visitation and bookings.

I have to acknowledge that the Premier, the assistant minister for tourism and I had the pleasure of launching the first Holiday Dollars program in the Cairns region in March this year. The Cairns Holiday Dollars offer was for a free \$200 voucher for a tourism experience. In each of the regions we have worked closely with our partners, Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Brisbane Economic Development Agency, Tourism Whitsundays and Destination Gold Coast, to create these campaigns to specifically address the challenges facing operators in each respective region. In Cairns we had

127 tourism operators sign up to the program. In Whitsundays we had 42 tourism operators sign up to the program. In Brisbane 225 tourism operators signed up to the program and on the Gold Coast 180 tourism operators signed up to the program. I am pleased to advise the committee that across all four campaigns over 27,000 bookings have been made using the vouchers with over \$8 million going to tourism operators and accommodation providers in these regions.

On Sunday we announced an extra 38,000 vouchers for Gold Coast, Brisbane and Cairns. Coverage of the Queensland Holiday Dollars program has reached almost 11 million Australians, generating a publicity value of \$9.6 million in itself. The numbers speak for themselves. The program has been a great success. For every \$1 of program spend we are seeing \$2.60 going to operators, and in some regions this has gone as high as \$2.90. The Queensland Holiday Dollars program has helped to generate up to \$50 million in the local visitor economy in respect of regions. I want to put on the public record my thanks, and the whole of our team's thanks, to our delivery partners, TTNQ, Destination Gold Coast, Tourism Whitsundays and Brisbane Economic Development Agency, for all their work on the Holiday Dollars campaign in their respective regions. It has been a great joint initiative and a great way to work together. Real results are providing direct support to operators and the feedback we have had from those operators has been overwhelmingly positive. John Sharpe, the owner of Riverlife here in Brisbane, said—

The Brisbane Holiday Dollars program has proven to be an extremely valuable initiative for the tourism industry. My business alone has benefitted from an increase of 400 double bookings thanks solely to the program, which is an increase in visitation of 15 per cent. It has proven to be a great initiative.

Renee Branton-Brown, sales and marketing manager at Cruise Whitsundays said—

We greatly appreciate the support of the Queensland government for this initiative and thank our RTO, Tourism Whitsundays, for all the hard work they did to make it possible. The Holiday Dollars initiative came at an imperative time during what is traditionally a slower period in our region.

A key part of the work that we did with those RTOs was the timing of this initiative to make sure it was timed for when those regions were looking for that extra boost.

**CHAIR:** I am going to turn to the member for South Brisbane, but before I do that, we have had two documents that the minister has tabled. We asked the committee, having perused them, is leave granted and leave is granted. I do note that the deputy chair was so disgusted with Senator Colbeck that he screwed up both letters.

**Mr STEVENS:** I will correct the *Hansard* record. I am disgusted that the minister has to put his hand out to the federal government for his own state responsibilities. It is an absolute shame.

**CHAIR:** Not like car parks in Victoria.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Not like car parks or quarantine.

**Dr MacMAHON:** My question is for the director-general. The plan to turn Raymond Park in Kangaroo Point into a warm-up track for the 2032 Olympics will displace a well-used park and a sports field used by the Kangaroo Point Rovers. If this plan goes ahead, what plans are there to accommodate the Kangaroo Point Rovers locally, deliver other green space and sports facilities to the neighbouring community and what resources have been put towards community consultation?

**Mr Lee:** If the member does not mind a little bit of context around the use of Raymond Park, if Brisbane, Queensland and Australia are successful in obtaining the rights to host the games in 2032, just as in any major Olympics there is a need for athletes to warm up before they actually compete so there is a need for warm-up tracks for both track and field athletics. Also it has been used historically, that area, for staging for the opening and closing ceremony. Obviously if Brisbane win that right next week there will be a lot of time for planning and consultation. The early works have been undertaken in terms of the temporary-only use of Raymond Park during the games. Usually the IOC has a requirement of around 12 weeks to ensure that facilities are able to be used for the games. We do envisage for that year in 2032 that there may be a request from international federations to hold their world championships in Brisbane, Queensland. World Athletics with Seb Coe may make that application so at that stage we will be investigating whether for a world championships there is a need to actually procure and transfer Raymond Park into that warm-up facility or whether it will only be used in the three months leading up to the games.

As you correctly point out in your question, we are only at the early design phase for the whole of a number of the Olympic venues and there will be detailed consultation with members of the community and those who may be impacted, albeit only on a temporary basis, leading up to the games and then soon after before they are then transferred back to being a community facility.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** To the director-general, are you able to enlighten us with some more details about what that review of Advance Queensland found?

**Mr Lee:** I think the minister gave a fulsome answer to that. All I can add is that I participated in the workshop that was referenced in the minister's answer and there was a series of options that were discussed by a number of the participants, if you would call them the ecosystem that makes up the innovation sector. There are always diverse views about what is the best way to move forward. Ultimately the government took the decision to appoint a new Chief Entrepreneur. Mr Gerard was actually the facilitator of that workshop and was integral to arriving at that decision.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Was that the sole recommendation of the review? It was not any broader than that? We are talking about \$755 million.

**CHAIR:** Are you directing your question to the director-general?

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Yes.

**Mr Lee:** I think as part of Advance Queensland there have been multiple departments involved in looking at all types of programs and expenditure. I think in the recent budget the Treasurer announced a major industry fund, for example, that will also now be part of investing in jobs and local manufacturing. That was not the only input. There were others.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Are we able to see that review with that broader information, director-general?

**Mr Lee:** I have nothing further to add to my previous answer.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Further to the director-general, are there specific key performance indicators on Advance Queensland to measure its success and the success of the \$755 million of funding that has gone through it?

**Mr Lee:** If we go to the Advance Queensland service area objective—

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Is that page 5?

**Mr Lee:** Yes, that is page 5.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** There is a table with, I think, four rows—

**CHAIR:** Member for Bonney, you have put the question to the director-general and we are awaiting the answer. If you wish to clarify, that is fine, but reading it out is not. We are allowing the director-general to answer the question. The interjection was out of order and further interjections will be out of order.

**Mr Lee:** I thank the Chair for the clarification. In terms of page 5 from the budget paper, it sets out a series of measure or KPIs, as the question suggested. It is important to note that every program under Advance Queensland is usually assessed on the impact in terms of jobs and feasibility as it moves forward, as well as the objectives that are set out on that page.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Director-General, this is \$755 million of investment. Is there any more than a table with four rows of measures to determine this by?

**Mr Lee:** I would refer the member to previous answers by the minister. The overall program and the benefits from that program were detailed in his answers.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Minister, the figure quoted in the capital statement is 27,000 jobs created through Advance Queensland. Can I get a breakdown of those jobs per industry and region, and how that figure of 27,000 was arrived at and the underlying assumptions for it?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Those figures are a consequence of the form of modelling that is done generally around projects like this and the reporting that happens out of those programs across all the different elements that were provided for in Advance Queensland, whether that is across the creation of the innovation hubs, the business grants like Ignite Ideas, and the commercialisation aspects that fit into that. In terms of whether it is possible to break that down or whether that figure has been done purely through the usual Treasury matrix to identify that job-creation figure, I will check whether we can get some further information about that.

**CHAIR:** Minister, will the director-general answer or yourself? Is that something that you might focus on later, Minister?

**Mr Lee:** We will take some advice. When we are summarising I will add that to the list.

**CHAIR:** We will do that quickly at the stage when we are summarising. It is not that far off.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Can I add to that the \$850 million of investment attraction, how that was arrived at and the underlying assumptions to it? Can you take that on advisement too, if possible?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Can you clarify what you mean?

**Mr O'CONNOR:** The Advance Queensland investment attraction figure of \$850 million, similar to the jobs figure. I am trying to figure out what the assumptions were.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** How those have been defined; yes, we can clarify that. We will seek to achieve that in the same time.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Minister, I turn to the Gold Coast innovation precinct, the Health and Knowledge Precinct, which I will declare is in my electorate of Bonney. Until a sod turning this week, not a single state-owned block of land has seen construction since the Commonwealth Games ended in 2018. This was one of our key legacies. What role does Advance Queensland have, or your department more broadly, in encouraging innovation in the key precinct within our state's second largest city?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I understand and acknowledge the member's interest in that particular locality. Primarily, the Health and Knowledge Precinct is and has been, from its earliest days—and I can tell you that I speak to this as a former minister for infrastructure and planning in a previous government that acquired that site, much to the chagrin of some people, to leverage the opportunities for the Commonwealth Games and for the future of that part of the city. That area is now administered, clearly, by the Deputy Premier's portfolio. As someone who has priority development areas in your electorate, as I do in my electorate, you would appreciate that Economic Development Queensland is the key agency that provides leadership in that precinct and so forth.

It is achieving as a precinct on that 200-hectare site, supported by some \$5 billion worth of investment in health, education and transport infrastructure that has happened there already. That precinct is achieving and it is delivering an extraordinary amount in relation to our innovation assets and our capability going forward. It includes, obviously, the Gold Coast University Hospital, which is a \$1.76 billion tertiary healthcare facility that opened in 2013 to service a population of nearly 600,000 residents. We also have the Gold Coast Private Hospital, a 314-bed private hospital—

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Chair, can I clarify? I am well aware of what is in there. I live very close to it, in fact. Minister, I am more interested in what your department is doing to support the key innovation precinct in the second-largest city in Queensland.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, member for Bonney. The minister is answering the question.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** The lead agency in relation to that site is Economic Development Queensland. The beauty of the work that we do in Innovation is supporting businesses directly. We help guide them and coordinate support across other agencies about where opportunities might be in terms of the physical location of those industries. Certainly we have a good partner in Economic Development Queensland and other agencies of government, particularly in the State Development portfolio, to help us with that. There has been allusion made to that with those other funds announced in recent budgets, which will have a big role in that space. I assure you that I know that good awareness of the capability of sites like that and others will be key to the work and the evangelising that the Innovation Advisory Council will do.

**CHAIR:** Member for Bonney, we do not have much time but if you have a quick question—

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I will be brief in my answer.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** I doubt that but we will see. I look with great jealousy at Lot Fourteen in Adelaide which has Google, Amazon, a science education centre—

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I have been there.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** I am wondering what your department or Advance Queensland is doing, in conjunction with EDQ, which obviously controls most of the mechanics of the site, to actually promote it and attract investment to it?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Over and above precincts like that and the advisory group that is set up to support that precinct to reach its full potential, which exists to help engage broadly with the sector, we have a further \$1.24 million provided through the Regional Startup Hubs Support Program to 20 different recipients across the Sunshine Coast, Central Queensland, Far North Queensland, Wide Bay, Darling Downs, Ipswich, Logan, Mackay/Whitsunday and the Gold Coast to help support those ecosystems and those communities.

**CHAIR:** It is not a short answer.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Obviously the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct and the strategic advisory group can work in closely with that capability. The Innovation department's role, outside of the direct funding of those projects that sit under Advance Queensland, is really as a coordinator and an engager. It is about bringing different assets together. Certainly assets like the Health and Knowledge Precinct on the Gold Coast can be part of that story.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** I hope you improve the coordination and—

**CHAIR:** Thank you. We will not have any commentary, member for Bonney. Minister, there were some issues that we said we might be returning to. One was on Everton, which I think you answered but has the director-general some more information?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Let us deal with what we can and then figure out what is left.

**Mr Lee:** By a process of elimination, we can work through what has been sourced and then go from there. Earlier on in the hearing it was requested that TEQ provide the full list of the 111 events, that is, the 91 major events plus the 20 business events. I am happy to table, if the committee permits, 10 copies of that.

A clarifying statement regarding the Ngaro walking trail: the Department of Environment and Science continue to complete the actual walking trail. It was the enhancement with the building of luxury lodges on Whitsunday Island that ultimately was not supported by traditional owners and that procurement process for privately operated accommodation was cancelled by our department and will not continue.

There was a further question around active game day funding. The question from the member for Everton was: where was the source of those funds from? It is on page 107 of BP3.

There was a fourth question regarding the 27,000 jobs that are supported. That information comes from recipients who leverage off the \$850 million and the 7,500 innovation projects.

I think that is the four of them. I do not know if we have missed any, chair.

**CHAIR:** There was also the number of sporting clubs—I believe the minister gave an indication via the total number of those that would get it in COVID, but there may be something further to contribute.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** The answer is that it is approximately 10,000. I understand Mr Stevens had a concern about another document that I sought to be tabled and I accept the committee's decision about what it wants to do with that. I understand that that issue was raised in relation to the figures quoted in the comparison table that I sought to table earlier. The New South Wales figure does not include some broad-scale support programs as we are unable to identify the extent to which tourism businesses have benefitted from them. That is the reason why it is constructed in the way that it is.

**CHAIR:** I see, and relatively complex. The director-general, through the minister, has sought leave to table the document with regard to the TEQ supported major and business event contracts. Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

With all of those questions being answered, I note there are no questions taken on notice. With that, I thank you, minister and director-general. Minister, is there anything you would like to add about the department before we conclude and the hard work they have done?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I want to not only thank the committee and its members, including its guests, committee staff, all of the parliamentary staff that have supported this hearing, but also take this opportunity to thank all the very hard-working members of the departments of tourism, innovation and sport for the work they have done in preparing for this event and this opportunity for celebrating the things that we have been able to achieve in the face of some challenging times. I look forward to continuing to work with all the broader stakeholders in tourism, innovation and sport across the state, particularly on the cusp of a huge opportunity that is represented by the decision that will be made next week.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, minister. I would like to thank all of the participants here today, especially my erstwhile deputy chair who holds me to account but does it in good humour. I would like to thank the secretariat staff, especially Lucy Manderson, and all of the staff. I would like to thank Hansard. I would especially like to thank the broadcasters as I think they are underrated because they do not get noticed because they do such a good job and I also know that if I do this, they will do the right thing by me. I want to thank all of the Public Service staff, especially in tourism and sport. You will never have a tougher year. It has been quite extraordinary the stressors that have been placed on your stakeholders, whether that is the people trying to run sports events or the people who are such

hard-working and innovative people within the tourism industry, and we thank you for all your hard work with them. The other thing is the prospect of the Olympics which is making us the focus of much of the world. It is such an exciting event for the future and a tribute to all of your discipline and hard work keeping these industries and activities going.

With that, I close the hearing. It concludes the estimates of the Economics and Governance Committee for 2021. Thank you.

**The committee adjourned at 9.04 pm.**