



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, 26 October 2021

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TUESDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2021

 The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

Mr Speaker (Hon. Curtis Pitt, Mulgrave) read prayers and took the chair.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I respectfully acknowledge that we are sitting today on the land of Aboriginal people and pay my respects to elders past and present. I thank them, as First Australians, for their careful custodianship of the land over countless generations. We are very fortunate in this country to have two of the world's oldest continuing living cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whose lands, winds and waters we all now share.

ASSENT TO BILLS

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

The Honourable C.W. Pitt MP

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Parliament House

George Street

BRISBANE QLD 4000

My dear Mr Speaker

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

Date of Assent: 20 October 2021

A bill for an Act to amend the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Petroleum Act 1923, the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 for particular purposes

A bill for an Act to amend the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008, the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020, the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Regulation 2009 and the Retirement Villages Act 1999 for particular purposes

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

Yours sincerely, and with all best wishes to members of Assembly

Paul de Jersey


Governor

20 October 2021

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 20 October 2021, from His Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to certain bills on 20 October 2021 [[1793](#)].

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Annual General Meeting

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have a brief reminder of one of the highlights of the year. I remind members of the annual general meeting of the Queensland branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Mr Minnikin: Hear, hear!

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you for your enthusiasm, member. The meeting will be held today at 1.05 pm in the Legislative Assembly chamber.

School Group Tours



Mr SPEAKER: I wish to advise that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from St Catherine's Catholic Primary School in the electorate of Mansfield, Greenbank State School in the electorate of Jordan, Mount Nebo State School in the electorate of Pine Rivers, Riverside Christian School in the electorate of Mundingburra and Genesis Christian College in the electorate of Kurwongbah.

PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, lodged by the honourable member indicated—

Rural and Regional Queensland, Print Media

Mr Katter, from 631 petitioners, requesting the House to subsidise essential media access in a printed format to rural and regional Queensland, the same way that other essential services are subsidised in regional areas to support equity and access [\[1794\]](#).

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

Coronavirus Vaccination, Consent

Mr Andrew, from 2,362 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure fully informed consent for all COVID vaccinations [\[1795\]](#).

Waste Permits, Fill

Mr Andrew, from 1,107 petitioners, requesting the House to withdraw all permits for sites where waste is under the ground water table, fully excavate all waste out of the affected voids and reinstate all affected voids with "Clean Earthen Fill" [\[1796\]](#).

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

Citizen Initiated Referenda

583 petitioners, requesting the House to legislate to introduce Binding Citizen Initiated Referenda [\[1797\]](#).

Coronavirus Vaccination, Members of Parliament and Political Staff

389 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure all MPs and their political staff are fully vaccinated against COVID before being allowed into Parliament House [\[1798\]](#).

Coronavirus Vaccination, Public-Facing Employees

1,015 petitioners, requesting the House to mandate that all employees who face members of the public in their day-to-day work to be vaccinated against COVID [\[1799\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS (SO 31)

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

15 October 2021—

[1762](#) Response from the Minister for Resources (Hon. Stewart), to an ePetition (3565-21) sponsored by the member for Theodore, Mr Boothman, from 510 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure any residential property or title searches include historical land stability history

[1763](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 15, 57th Parliament—Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021

[1764](#) Community Support and Services Committee: Report No. 11, 57th Parliament—Annual Report 2020-2021

[1765](#) Education, Employment and Training Committee: Report No. 11, 57th Parliament—Queensland University of Technology Amendment Bill 2021

[1766](#) Queen's Wharf Brisbane Act 2016: Queen's Wharf Brisbane (Relevant Entity) Declaration 2021, No. 156

[1767](#) Queen's Wharf Brisbane Act 2016: Queen's Wharf Brisbane (Relevant Entity) Declaration 2021, No. 156, explanatory notes

[1768](#) Queen's Wharf Brisbane Act 2016: Queen's Wharf Brisbane (Relevant Entity) Declaration 2021, No. 156, human rights certificate

[1769](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services (Hon. Ryan) pursuant to section 56A(4) of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the State Buildings Protective Security Regulation 2008

18 October 2021—

[1770](#) Transport and Resources Committee: Report No. 13, 57th Parliament—Annual Report 2020-21

- [1771](#) Health and Environment Committee: Report No. 13, 57th Parliament—Annual Report 2020-21
- [1772](#) Legal Affairs and Safety Committee: Report No. 13, 57th Parliament—Annual Report 2020-21
- [1773](#) Legal Affairs and Safety Committee: Report No. 14, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 14 July 2021 and 31 August 2021
- [1774](#) Queensland Police Service—Use of device inspections powers—Annual Report 2020-21

20 October 2021—

- [1775](#) Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission—Annual Report 2020-21
- [1776](#) Health and Environment Committee: Report No. 14, 57th Parliament—Environmental and Other Legislation (Reversal of Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) Amendment Bill 2021

25 October 2021—

- [1777](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 16, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 16 June 2021 and 31 August 2021
- [1778](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 17, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 1 September 2021 and 2 September 2021

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Survey and Mapping Infrastructure Act 2003:

- [1779](#) Survey and Mapping Infrastructure (Survey Standards) Notice 2021, No. 154
- [1780](#) Survey and Mapping Infrastructure (Survey Standards) Notice 2021, No. 154, explanatory notes
- [1781](#) Survey and Mapping Infrastructure (Survey Standards) Notice 2021, No. 154, human rights certificate

Liquor Act 1992, Tourism Services Act 2003, Wine Industry Act 1994:

- [1782](#) Liquor and Other Legislation (Fee Relief) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 155
- [1783](#) Liquor and Other Legislation (Fee Relief) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 155, explanatory notes
- [1784](#) Liquor and Other Legislation (Fee Relief) Amendment Regulation 2021, No. 155, human rights certificate

Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995:

- [1785](#) Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2021, No. 157
- [1786](#) Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2021, No. 157, explanatory notes
- [1787](#) Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2021, No. 157, human rights certificate

Forestry Act 1959, Nature Conservation Act 1992:

- [1788](#) Forestry and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2021, No. 158
- [1789](#) Forestry and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2021, No. 158, explanatory notes
- [1790](#) Forestry and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2021, No. 158, human rights certificate

MEMBERS' PAPERS

The following members' papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Everton (Mr Mander)—


- [1791](#) Nonconforming petition requesting an overpass at the Everton Park State School

Member for Oodgeroo (Dr Robinson)—

- [1792](#) Nonconforming petition requesting the bus stop at 148 Smith Street, Cleveland be reinstated

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Coronavirus, Update; Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.34 am): In Queensland we have two new cases of COVID-19, both locally acquired. One is an unvaccinated 17-year-old from the Gold Coast who presented to the emergency department with a headache. He is a close contact of someone who travelled from New South Wales. Investigations are underway into how that person arrived in Queensland. The second case is a woman in her 30s from Melbourne whose illness was detected while she was in home quarantine. She is considered a low risk because she is in

quarantine. A third person, a truck driver from Gympie, has tested positive in New South Wales and his is classified as a New South Wales case. The driver travelled to Bundaberg. A list of exposure sites will be published as soon as possible.

Yesterday we did 8,779 tests and 12,769 vaccines were delivered by Queensland Health in the past 24 hours; 75.22 per cent of Queenslanders have received their first dose and 60.7 per cent have received their second dose. Today's cases show that Queensland is not immune to the pandemic. We have contained dozens of outbreaks but, as New South Wales, Victoria, the ACT and New Zealand have discovered, it takes only one case to cause a massive outbreak. Our only protection is to get vaccinated. Because of the time it takes between doses, Queenslanders have just five days to get their first dose so that they can be fully vaccinated in time for Christmas when families can once again be reunited with loved ones.

I want to thank the tens of thousands of Queenslanders who heeded our call to get vaccinated last weekend and last week. Over the weekend, 43,591 vaccines were delivered by Queensland Health. Our Super School Saturday had pop-up clinics in 116 schools. In one day, 28,869 vaccines were delivered. I want to thank the Minister for Health and the Minister for Education for getting that underway. We could not have achieved that result without our excellent Queensland Health staff, school principals and teachers, police and everyone who helped to make the day a success.


I also want to thank the ministers in my cabinet who spent last week travelling the length and breadth of this state encouraging everyone to get vaccinated. They covered 27,500 kilometres, which is nearly the distance to New York and back. We visited areas of concern, including Central and North West Queensland. We went to Aurukun, Cherbourg, Horn Island, Pomppuraaw, Thursday Island, Woorabinda and Yarrabah. I went to Rockhampton, Maryborough, Townsville, Mackay and Marsden in Logan. Other places visited include Beerwah, Moranbah, Sarina, Tully and Calliope. In one week, ministers of this government, along with the assistant ministers, the Chief Health Officer and her deputies, visited more than 35 regional centres. I also thank my amazing backbench. Everyone has been out there, talking to people about getting vaccinated. We spoke to the local people and were able to identify improvements, like longer opening hours for clinics, so that more are able to be vaccinated.

Queensland now has 60 per cent of its eligible population fully vaccinated. I want 70 per cent fully vaccinated by 19 November. On 19 November anyone from an interstate hotspot will be able to travel into Queensland provided they arrive by air, are fully vaccinated and produce a negative test. Those people will be required to complete 14 days home quarantine.

Make no mistake: COVID is coming. We continue to do our part by bringing the vaccine to the people. For example, 56,907 were vaccinated on our Super Pfizer Weekend, 30,757 at the NRL finals, 47,219 at our first Super School Saturday in early October and 34,561 at Bunnings. But we will not stop there. This weekend we will launch the Lifesaver Long Weekend, with vaccines available at surf lifesaving clubs. Our lifeguards and surf lifesavers protect lives every day. Anyone who is vaccinated does the same. A vaccine makes us 86 per cent less likely to contract COVID and pass it on. If you are fully vaccinated, your chance of dying from COVID falls by 90 per cent. Recognising the importance of protecting our tourism industry, major theme parks, including Dreamworld, Sea World, Australia Zoo, Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and Aussie World, will also have pop-up clinics over the weekend.

I do not care where people get their vaccine; I only care that they get one and get one fast. When the NSW outbreak started, only four per cent of its population was vaccinated. Queensland has the opportunity to get a head start, to get ahead of the virus and get vaccinated before the outbreak arrives.

Railways, Manufacturing

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.39 am): We are building trains, trains and more trains in Maryborough. Today I can confirm that my government will deliver the largest investment in rail infrastructure that Queensland has ever seen. We will invest \$7.1 billion to build and operate 65 trains and keep our economic recovery on track—made in Queensland, by Queenslanders, for Queenslanders. This will create 800 jobs in Maryborough and the Wide Bay region and up to 3,000 jobs throughout Queensland.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They do not like jobs. They do not like good news.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! For the record, members, 'Toot, toot!' is not an acceptable interjection. I will ask members to go with, 'Chugga, chugga, chugga, chugga!' instead.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It was great to join the Treasurer, the Minister for Transport, the assistant minister who is the member for Maryborough, and the member for Hervey Bay and the mayor to make the historic announcement in Maryborough on Wednesday.

Mr Bleijie: Chugga, chugga!


Ms PALASZCZUK: Don't worry, member for Kawana; he will be 90 per cent by the next election. We know that this investment will not just benefit Maryborough; it will have strong flow-on benefits for the whole Wide Bay region, creating jobs and opportunities for local businesses and workers in the member for Hervey Bay's electorate as well.

At the election I committed to deliver a \$1 billion rail manufacturing pipeline, including a plan to build 20 new trains in Queensland. Our now \$7.1 billion investment will build on that promise, turbocharging Queensland's rail manufacturing sector and locking in the funds required to operate these engines once they are operating in the south-east.

On this side of the House, we understand that manufacturing means jobs. Whether it is trains in Maryborough, hydrogen electrolyzers in Gladstone, or combat reconnaissance vehicles at Redbank in Ipswich, we are partnering with the private sector and investing in manufacturing to create long-term sustainable jobs in Queensland.

Queensland is definitely the place to be. More people and more Australians want to live and work in the Sunshine State—our Olympic State. Our population is expected to grow by 1.5 million people by 2040. With the 2032 Olympics on the horizon, I know these numbers will continue to grow in the future. My government will continue to invest in transport infrastructure to create jobs and deliver our economic recovery plan.


Norfolk Island, Intergovernmental Agreement

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.41 am): In June, I announced a new partnership between the federal government and the Queensland government to deliver critical services, including health and school education, to one of Australia's most remote communities, Norfolk Island. Today I would like to update the House on that partnership. The Deputy Prime Minister and I have now signed an intergovernmental agreement which will transition those critical services from New South Wales to Queensland from 1 January 2022. This agreement will provide greater clarity and certainty for the more than 1,700 residents who call Norfolk Island home. Queensland already delivers world-class health and education services, including to geographically remote locations, and we are honoured to be able to deliver these services for the people of Norfolk Island.

The Minister for Education, who led a delegation to the island in April this year after my request, said that the locals had a great affection for Queensland. They met with elders, Mr Eric Hutchinson, Administrator of Norfolk Island, as well as local government, business and community representatives. They visited schools and health facilities. Overall, the delegation was warmly received by the community with a number of leaders indicating that they were grateful for the time taken by the minister and officials. Almost every person the delegation spoke to has some connection to Queensland, from family living here or children studying here, to where they travel to or to access specialist health services, many saying they had a preference for Queensland health services.

This is an exciting partnership. We will continue to engage with the local community as well as continue our discussions with the Commonwealth on the next steps for a smooth transition and future arrangements. Both governments are 100 per cent focused on delivering these vital services for the Norfolk Island community.

Coronavirus, Vaccination; Local Government

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure) (9.43 am): The Palaszczuk government is driving to get every eligible Queenslanders vaccinated. Last week I went to Mount Isa and saw firsthand what the council, the health service and the community leaders are doing together to get their people vaccinated. The mayor took me to a vaccination clinic in town where they have extended their hours to get more people through. They also have a pop-up clinic at Kmart. They call it a shop and a shot. However, their vaccination rate is still only 48.5 per cent fully vaccinated. I said, 'Who could convince more people here to go and get their vaccination?' They were resolute that it was just one person—Charlie Cameron. Charlie plays for the Brisbane Lions, he was born in Mount Isa and is a local hero, especially to younger people there. With

the help of the Lions, we got him there. He is flying in today and he will be on the ground talking to young people and encouraging them to keep themselves, their friends and their families safe from COVID by getting vaccinated.

Then I went to my ministerial championship community of Pormpuraaw. I am proud to report they are now 98 per cent vaccinated. When I landed, they told me they had just 11 people to go. The health service and the council were tracking them down and explaining to them the importance of the vaccine in keeping their communities safe. They have done an incredible job.

Yesterday I was in Mackay where vaccination rates are 71.2 per cent first dose and just 53.5 per cent fully vaccinated. Mayors from right across the state joined me in getting the message out: get vaccinated to protect the life you love. Do it to protect yourself, your family and your loved ones.

I spent some time at the LGAQ's annual conference in Mackay and I would like to thank them for their efforts supporting our vaccination campaign. I also heard their concerns about some investigations by the Office of the Independent Assessor. The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in the decision-making of Queensland councils. Queenslanders expect their councillors to be strong and fair representatives for their community. The reforms we have implemented in local government are extremely important, but confidence in the system of integrity is also crucial. In light of recent issues, I have asked the parliamentary committee that has oversight of the OIA to conduct a review, and I would like to table my letter to the committee chair, the member for Bancroft.

The LGAQ conference also provided a fitting opportunity to farewell Mr Greg Hallam. There would be very few Queenslanders who have worked harder for the local government sector than Greg during his many decades of service. Greg departs after an incredible 29 years in the role of Chief Executive Officer. On behalf of the Queensland government, I would like to thank Greg for his service to the sector and to his state and for the manner in which he has proudly represented local government. We wish him all the best and congratulate Alison, the incoming CEO, the first woman to hold that role.

Coronavirus, Vaccination



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.46 am): The core component of our plan to unite families and reopen Queensland's borders is vaccination, the core component of our plan to protect the health of Queenslanders is vaccination, and the core component of securing our state's economic recovery is vaccination because vaccination can achieve all of these things by protecting our health system. Vaccination can ensure that our hospitals will not be overwhelmed with COVID cases and, most importantly, vaccination ensures that our frontline health staff will not fall seriously ill with COVID-19. We do not want to lose any nurse, any doctor or any health worker to COVID-19.

In the United Kingdom National Health Service at the peak of the pandemic, 77,000 staff could not work because they were sick with COVID-19. In the United States, more than 3,000 healthcare workers have died because of COVID-19. That is why our government is implementing the health advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee. The AHPPC unequivocally recommends 'mandatory vaccinations for all workers in healthcare settings as a condition of work'.

There is no room for half-measures. It is not enough to say, 'Oh, well, we support vaccination, but we are worried about the impacts of the mandate.' If you are too weak to unequivocally support the health advice, if you do not unequivocally support the mandate for health workers, then you do not support vaccination.


Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Palaszczuk government has had a plan—a plan to protect the health of Queenslanders, a plan to protect the Queensland economy, a plan to protect Queensland lives and livelihoods. At each stage, we have explained our plan to Queenslanders and we have delivered on it.

Now we are moving into the next critical phase of our plan, a phase that will reunite families, reinvigorate interstate tourism and chart a course through the next stages of the pandemic. Our plan will support Queensland's ongoing economic recovery for families, for workers and for businesses, small and large. Our plan will allow greater freedoms for those who are fully vaccinated, including being able to cross the border from interstate hotspots for Christmas.

As the Chief Health Officer has said time and time again, it is inevitable that every Queenslanders will eventually be exposed to COVID-19. The virus is on our doorstep. It will not politely knock. It will storm in. For individuals, the cost of not being vaccinated will be significant. There may be venues they cannot attend, flights they cannot board, jobs they may be denied if they are unvaccinated. But for

individuals the potential is far greater. Unvaccinated people are 29 times more likely to end up in hospital than vaccinated people. Vaccinated people are 86 per cent less likely to catch COVID and pass it on to others. In other states and around the world, we see otherwise young, fit and healthy people become gravely ill and sometimes die because they are unvaccinated. The more of us who are vaccinated, the sooner we can realise the economic benefits of the government's COVID-19 vaccination plan and the sooner all Queenslanders can safely be reunited with family and friends. The message could not be clearer: don't hesitate—vaccinate.

Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.50 am): The Palaszczuk government has a sensible and measured plan to reunite families and protect Queenslanders. The key to the plan, as we have heard, is vaccination, and increasing our double vaccination rates to 70 per cent and then 80 per cent and beyond provides the pathway to continue our economic recovery, reunite families and protect Queenslanders.


Schools and school communities across this state are pitching in to do their bit to help the cause. Last weekend, 116 schools across the state opened their gates and hosted weekend pop-up clinics. From Palm Beach Currumbin State High School on the Gold Coast, Stanthorpe State High School in the Southern Downs, Cloncurry State School in the north-west to Cooktown State School up north and in between, Queenslanders came forward in their droves to get jabbed at their local school.

Thuringowa State High School, in the member for Thuringowa's electorate, was also on the list for Super Saturday. We had a great visit with the local member. I visited the school last week where I met Courtney, a double vaccinated student. She told us she got her vaccination so she could visit her grandmother who is unwell. On Saturday I was at Cavendish Road State High School with the member for Greenslopes where many young people were rolling up their sleeves, including 12-year-old Felix who was there with his mum, Florence. Felix told me he wanted to get the jab because his friends were doing it and he also wants to go and visit his family in Africa.

Thousands of people came out to get their jab at a school on Super Saturday—a fantastic result. What is even better is that over 80 per cent of these were first doses—our exact target. This is the momentum we want to keep going. I thank Queensland Health and Education staff for all their efforts. We were the first in the state to move school and early childhood staff into the priority 1b vaccination category and we have had great results from that—with over 73,000 vaccinations since 8 August. That does not include those who have walked into our many clinics across the state.

We have now had two successful weekends of pop-up clinics on school sites, with more being planned. For example, schools like Mareeba State High School are working with local pharmacies to vaccinate students and staff on site during school hours. Our aim is for easy and free access right across this great state.

Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.53 am): We have always said that vaccinating our population would be no small feat given our decentralised state. Today, I stand proud to say that more than 75 per cent of Queenslanders aged 16 years and older have received at least one dose and more than 60 per cent are now fully vaccinated. It is great to see our fully vaccinated rates are steadily climbing—with a four per cent increase last week. People are continuing to come forward for first doses. This is thanks to Queensland Health, our GPs, our community pharmacies as well as the many organisations we have partnered with to facilitate pop-up vaccination clinics. Most importantly, it is due to the over three million Queenslanders aged 16 years and over who have had at least one dose and almost 2.5 million Queenslanders who are now fully vaccinated.

Across the state, as vaccine supply has become available, health workers have worked tirelessly to get the vaccine to the people of Queensland. We started with our elderly and can now proudly boast that for our 70-year-olds and over more than 95 per cent have had one dose of vaccine and 83.73 per cent are now fully vaccinated. Our seniors have led the way. It is now up to the rest of our eligible Queenslanders to show our appreciation to our seniors by stepping up and getting our vaccinations as well.

Our plan to reunite families is clear. At 70 per cent double dosed, Queenslanders and soon-to-be Queenslanders can arrive by plane and home quarantine if they can meet the requirements set by the government. At 80 per cent fully vaccinated or 17 December, whichever comes sooner, anyone

from any state or territory in Australia will be able to travel into Queensland by any means of transport and not quarantine as long as they are fully vaccinated and have had a negative COVID-19 test. Many international arrivals will also be able to home quarantine. At 90 per cent fully vaccinated we will have even more freedoms.

All this is possible because of the great work of the Palaszczuk government based on the best health advice and the willingness of Queenslanders to protect our communities and support our way of life. With more vaccine coming into Queensland and more options to get vaccinated, it has never been easier. Whether it is at a Bunnings, a football match, a surf lifesaving club, a local community centre, a TAFE or one of our many amazing schools, people can roll up to a site and roll up their sleeves to get jabbed.

Last Saturday was truly a Super Saturday with more than 28,000 doses administered in just one day, including at 116 schools. I think it is important to note that 86 per cent of the vaccines administered at our school sites were to people receiving their first dose. Well done to all those students and their families and the community. This impressive figure reflects the fact that Queenslanders are heeding the call of the Palaszczuk government to get vaccinated against COVID-19 before it is too late.

It is not just the Palaszczuk government ministers who are travelling across the state; it is the vaccine clinics themselves. We have been ramping up our outreach clinics across the state in rural and remote areas. Last week our clinics went to Cooktown, Mapoon, Wujal Wujal, Napranum, Ayr, Doomadgee and Laura. This week outreach clinics are going to Mornington Island, Urandangi, Miles, Dajarra, Lakeland and Charters Towers. We are working closely with many local communities to ensure everyone has access to reliable information, to give them the confidence to get the vaccine and keep themselves and their loved ones safe. Queenslanders, let us reunite our families, strengthen our economy and protect our community. There is no time to waste—come out, get jabbed, stay safe.

International Students

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement) (9.57 am): I am pleased to announce today that we have taken the next most important step in welcoming international students back to Queensland. Our Queensland student arrivals plan has been sent to the federal government for approval. This will see the return of international students to study in Queensland in 2022. It is a critically important document and a significant part of this government's COVID-19 economic recovery plan.


International education and training was this state's biggest services export industry. Before the wrecking ball of COVID-19 swung onto our shores, international education delivered \$5.8 billion to the Queensland economy and supported 27½ thousand jobs. Last year, the value of the industry had shrunk by more than 11 per cent. 2022 is the year of rebuilding and recovering for our international education sector and it starts in January, in time for the first semester. There are more than 20,000 students enrolled in Queensland universities who are continuing their education online from their home countries. Queensland welcomes students from more than 160 countries each year who study and learn from Cairns to Coolangatta and at inland education centres like Toowoomba.

At the heart of the Queensland student arrivals plan is the initial return of 250 students every two weeks, scaling up as we move through this phase of the pandemic. Students must be fully vaccinated, and at first we are prioritising those studying in a medical, medical research or allied health field. We anticipate that these students will be able to back up our hardworking frontline health workers.


Phase 1 of the plan includes all students including students studying at regional universities. The strategic advantage that we will have over the southern states is the Wellcamp quarantine facility under construction west of Toowoomba. Returning students will arrive at Brisbane Airport and be bussed to Wellcamp unless the federal government approves landing international charters at Wellcamp.

Why is the quarantine of returning students still necessary? This is important to do until we have higher vaccination rates amongst Queenslanders. We do not know if and when mutation No. 5 will arrive, but our best defence is vaccination. That is why we are urging all Queenslanders to get double-vaxed for themselves, for their family and for their communities. It is our only way that we can protect our way of life and keep our economic recovery going.

Speaker's Ruling, Tabled Paper Out of Order

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, with reference to the documents sought to be tabled by the Deputy Premier earlier, as the tabling may offend standing order 211, the documents were not tabled and they were returned to the Deputy Premier.

Mackay, Road Death; Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.00 am): Sadly, I have the duty to report to the House that a fatality has occurred of a traffic control worker on the Mackay Northern Access Upgrade project this morning. The 35-year-old traffic controller was simply doing his job when the tragedy occurred. I have been informed by the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Queensland Police Service that a full investigation into the incident is underway. I am sure I speak for the whole chamber in offering our sincerest condolences to the man's family and friends at this difficult time.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!


Mr BAILEY: The Queensland border has faced and continues to face the ultimate test—a massive COVID outbreak right on our doorstep in our neighbouring state. As COVID cases spiked in New South Wales, the Palaszczuk Labor government made tough decisions to protect Queenslanders. Even with these strong measures, COVID found a way in through some truck drivers just doing their job to keep our state supplied, being some of the few workers who regularly cross our interstate borders, putting them in a higher risk category.

We stepped up our response. The freight industry was one of the first in Queensland to comply with COVID vaccination rules. From 15 October this year, all truckies entering Queensland had to have at least one jab and a negative COVID test within the previous seven days. What an outstanding response we have had from the freight sector! Working with the industry, including Queensland Trucking Association CEO Gary Mahon and his team, the Palaszczuk Labor government set up two specific truckie vaccine hubs, at Tugun and Goondiwindi. Here, truckies who do irregular hours could drop in and get the jab on the job. By stopping in and getting the shot, they protected themselves, their families and all Queenslanders. To our truckies getting vaccinated, as the Minister for Transport and Main Roads I sincerely say thank you from the bottom of my heart.

To date we have done more than 500 jabs for truckies at our two specialised clinics on the border. The industry has answered our calls and, since the new rules kicked in, compliance levels at the border are high. To give the House some idea, 1,472 heavy vehicles were stopped at our border in the 24 hours to 10 o'clock last night and only 11 of those were turned around. I thank the industry and our truckies for this high level of compliance and cooperation at such a difficult time.

The truckies have been the unsung heroes of the pandemic, keeping our supply chains open all day every day. This rollout of vaccine requirements has been successful to date and may well be used as a model by other industries and other states. Vaccination is our path out of the pandemic. Getting more Queenslanders vaccinated is the only way we can protect our current way of life and keep our economic recovery underway. Despite the desperate spin from obvious suspects, the Palaszczuk Labor government has delivered a world-leading COVID response. I thank the freight industry for getting behind it, protecting families and protecting all Queenslanders.

Sexual Violence Awareness Month


 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.03 am): Sexual Violence Awareness Month takes place each October to remind us that everyone deserves to live in a society free from the threat of sexual violence. I want to acknowledge all of the survivors, even those who have not yet spoken their truth. We see you. We believe you. This year we have seen women marching in the streets demanding change and safety for women. The Palaszczuk government is committed to this in all our communities.

In October 2019, we launched *Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's framework to address sexual violence* to prevent and respond to sexual violence in Queensland. The framework focuses on addressing all forms of sexual violence and bringing together existing work and new directions and commitments. Today I am pleased to launch the first Sexual Violence Prevention Action Plan 2021-2022 to implement the framework. The whole-of-government action plan is the next step to address sexual violence and work towards our vision of a Queensland where everyone is free from the fear, threat or experience of sexual violence. As the first of many action plans under the framework, this action plan sets the path forward, with signature actions including implementing training on preventing and responding to sexual violence for frontline staff including health and disability services staff, and supporting implementation of the recommendations of the Respect@Work report.

Much has happened since we released the framework. The challenges experienced due to COVID-19 have had a significant impact on our health system, our economy and our communities. Brave women like our Australian of the Year, Grace Tame, and Brittany Higgins have spoken out against sexual violence and encouraged more brave survivors to come forward. Despite these challenges, the Palaszczuk government has continued to work hard to implement the strategies outlined in the framework. Since 2015, we have invested record whole-of-government funding of more than \$600 million for domestic, family and sexual violence programs, services and strategies—but we know there is still more to do.

Today I am also pleased to announce \$150,000 in funding for the Queensland Sexual Assault Network. This will support their advocacy for specialist sexual assault services that have been under enormous pressure. I want to thank all of the incredible frontline workers who provide assistance to victims across Queensland. I look forward to continuing to work with our sexual violence sector partners and the broader community to end sexual violence in Queensland.


Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.06 am): It is vaccination week. The COVID clock is ticking. COVID is coming to Queensland. Our frontline emergency personnel are leading the way. They are setting an example for all Queenslanders. Over 99 per cent of Queensland police officers and staff members are now vaccinated or have an exemption. This is an outstanding result. It means that our police are safe and their families are safe. Because police have so many interactions with the community right across Queensland, it is imperative that police and police staff members are vaccinated to keep the community safe. There is no part of Queensland that police do not go to, so with—and I will say it again—over 99 per cent of officers vaccinated or having an exemption, the community can have confidence in our police.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services is also strongly supporting all of its workforce to get vaccinated. Staff and volunteers come under the phase 1b category of critical and high-risk workers in relation to the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services has mandated at least one COVID-19 vaccination for certain activities undertaken by personnel, including volunteering and working at a vaccination hub or at hotel quarantine, and that is based on advice from Queensland Health. The department is working closely with the Queensland Health COVID-19 task force to ensure staff and volunteers have a pathway to receiving their vaccinations.

Queensland Corrective Services is also strongly encouraging all of its workforce to get vaccinated. All Corrective Services staff are eligible to access the COVID-19 vaccine as a part of Queensland's 1b vaccination group. I am pleased to advise that thousands of staff members have already been vaccinated. I would like to thank all of our frontline emergency staff for showing the way when it comes to vaccination. It is a race. It is a race against time, a race against COVID. I say to all Queenslanders: be like our frontline emergency staff—their jobs save lives; your job will save lives.

World Science Festival Brisbane

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algerie—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (10.08 am): As Queensland heads toward open borders under our vaccine plan, I am excited to announce the return of World Science Festival Brisbane in March 2022. Next year, World Science Festival Brisbane will be back from 9-13 March with its dynamic mix of scientific surprises and fun discoveries, along with an exciting new partnership with Curiosity Brisbane, which will take place from 9-20 March.


This expanded 2022 World Science Festival Brisbane, presented by the Queensland Museum Network, will enable more Queenslanders to connect with the latest wonders of science in Brisbane and beyond. With the release of the Queensland COVID vaccine plan we are reminded again of the importance of science in all our lives as well as all of the wonderful events that can take place in our state with more people vaccinated. The Palaszczuk government is providing \$9 million for the next three World Science Festivals. It is so exciting to see this popular festival continue and present creative solutions for our planet's current and future challenges.

Throughout 2022 the World Science Festival will take place in Townsville in May, Gladstone in June, Chinchilla in July, Ipswich in September and Toowoomba in October. The full program will be announced in early 2022, but I can reveal that festival favourites like The Hatchery: Turtle Conservation Experience and City of Science will be back next year, along with the return of an engaging online program which will continue to attract visitors from across the globe. The 2022 event follows the success

of this year's World Science Festival, which has seen more than 120,000 visitors engaging in the community in Brisbane, Townsville, Chinchilla, Gladstone and Toowoomba, with Ipswich still to be held on 7 and 8 November.

In Brisbane alone 179 events were held at 22 locations, with 360 performances generating more than \$3.6 million in direct and incremental spending. Since its introduction in 2016 the popular World Science Festival events across Queensland have attracted audiences of more than 800,000 visitors in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Chinchilla, Townsville and Mackay and generated more than \$32 million in economic impact for the state. In 2022 World Science Festival Queensland will once again boost the state's economic recovery, including in regional areas, showcasing the connection between science and the arts. I encourage all members to mark these days in their diaries for March 2022 and get on board with the excitement of World Science Festival Brisbane and World Science Festival Queensland—the only World Science Festival held outside of New York.

Coronavirus, Vaccination


 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.11 am): Under the guidance of the Premier and the Chief Health Officer, Queenslanders have done an amazing job at keeping each other safe and the state open. It is through their hard work and following health directions that Queensland has avoided the lengthy lockdowns we have seen in other jurisdictions around the country. In particular, I know that regional Queenslanders appreciate the work our government has done to keep them safe. I know this because mayors, councillors and businesses owners right across the state have said this to me.

While we have all done well so far, we now have a new challenge to tackle as a state. Last week the Premier released Queensland's road map to open our borders to interstate and international travellers, to commence 17 December. As the vaccination rate increases, it is absolutely the right thing to do as we continue to deliver Queensland's plan to build back from the major interruption this pandemic has caused.

To do that in the safest possible way we need every single eligible Queenslander to get vaccinated. That is the message I have been talking to regional Queenslanders about for many months as I have travelled throughout the state. Over the past few weeks I have visited Longreach, Ilfracombe, the northern peninsula area, Toowoomba, Goondiwindi, Charters Towers, Townsville, Ingham, Tully and of course my hometown of Gladstone. My message to each of these communities has been the same: don't wait—get vaccinated. Book an appointment now to protect yourself, your family and your community, or in most cases now you can just walk in. Now that we have a date to work to, it is more important than ever. In fact, it is urgent.

If you have not had your first vaccination by Melbourne Cup Day this year, 2 November, you will not have time to be fully vaccinated before the borders open. I encourage every Queenslanders, wherever they live, to get vaccinated now. Book an appointment at a vaccination clinic, with your GP or at your local pharmacy or get yourself to a local pop-up clinic and just walk in. It does not matter how you get it done; what matters is that you are protecting yourself and you are protecting your loved ones from the delta strain.

Renewable Energy, Buses

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (10.14 am): As members would know, renewable energy presents an incredible opportunity for our state. We can, and we should, be making the components needed for renewable and future technologies right here in Queensland. Today here in Queensland there are terrific examples of how we can boost manufacturing and export Queensland-made products right around the world.


Just down the road in Murarrie the Tritium factory is right now manufacturing EV charging stations to ship across Australia and around the globe. They are a nation-leading business, employing 360 Queenslanders and leading the decarbonisation of transport globally. Last Saturday the Minister for the Environment and I inspected their latest installation at the Clarks buses depot at Loganlea. Those of us who hail from Logan know that Clarks is an institution in our community, and now it is at the forefront of the green industrial revolution. Today I can announce that Clarks in Logan has completed the largest single installation of Tritium chargers anywhere in Australia. Working with the Palaszczuk government, 10 locally made 75-kilowatt DC Tritium chargers are now ready to go at the depot. Paired with their 10 zero-emissions buses, made locally in the electorate of Gaven, Clarks will be leading the way nationally.

That is good news for everyone in Logan who is yet to get their vaccine. Why not get on board a locally manufactured Clarks bus to go and get your jab? In the electorate of Macalister you could take the 563 from the Eagleby Shopping Plaza to the community vaccine hub in Mount Warren Park. In the electorate of Algester you could catch the 547 from Grand Plaza straight to the Logan Entertainment Centre. If you happen to find yourself in the great electorate of Springwood, at the Queensland Investment Corporation owned Hyperdome Shopping Centre the well-known 570 will take you straight to the community-run Shailer Park Medical Centre for your jab. Chances are, in future you might hitch a ride in a locally manufactured zero-emissions bus powered by Queensland renewable sunshine.

It is more jobs, more manufacturing and lower emissions—all thanks to Queensland backed renewables. I want to recognise Clarks buses for leading the way when it comes to zero-emissions transport. I also want to acknowledge the efforts of our awesome staff at Energex who installed a new 100 kVA transformer onsite, enabling this new technology. The collaboration of industry and government is enabling a big step forward in our plans to transform the Queensland economy. On this side of the House we will continue to back local manufacturing, we will back local businesses like Clarks, and we will back Logan residents to get on the bus and get their vaccination.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Report

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (10.16 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 208 of the Ethics Committee titled *Matter of privilege referred by the State Development and Regional Industries Committee on 27 May 2021 relating to an alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings*.


Tabled paper: Ethics Committee: Report No. 208, 57th Parliament—Matter of privilege referred by the State Development and Regional Industries Committee on 27 May 2021 relating to an alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings [[1800](#)].

The report deals with allegations made against the member for Burleigh. The committee has recommended that the House find the member for Burleigh in contempt for the unauthorised disclosure of State Development and Regional Industries Committee proceedings and that he take it upon himself as soon as practicable to unreservedly apologise to the House. If the House considers the member for Burleigh's apology adequate, it is recommended that the House accept it as the appropriate and final penalty, in accordance with section 39 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001. I commend the report to the House.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

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

Mackay Base Hospital

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.17 am): My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to reports that the Mackay Base Hospital was stripped of its certification to train doctors in obstetrics and gynaecology. Despite this, it is alleged doctors involved continue to perform C-sections. How many mothers were put at risk in the weeks between the loss of their accreditation and when the review was announced?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I can advise that the Mackay HHS has received a number of contacts—99 contacts—to 22 October, including emails and phone calls to the hotline since the review was announced. I have already spoken in this House about the review and the fact that the chief executive, immediately upon being contacted by a consumer advocate, took steps to satisfy herself of the seriousness of the allegations and immediately put in place a review.

That review has led to the appointment of two experienced senior doctors to lead a review into obstetrics and gynaecology surgical services: Professor Edward Weaver and Dr Greg Duncombe. The HHS also appointed Professor Mary Sidebotham, a registered midwife and nurse with over 35 years experience, who will provide advice on cases where there is an interface of midwifery and medical care. All reviewers are external to the HHS and the terms of reference are currently being finalised. The Mackay HHS will provide this to the public once it is finalised and has not set an end date for the review.

In relation to the accreditation, I am advised that the Mackay Base Hospital's accreditation with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists is suspended, not cancelled. Following a routine periodic review, the college made a number of recommendations, and the health service is working to implement these to meet the ongoing requirements for accreditation as a training site. I am advised the HHS will work to implement the recommendations to meet the ongoing requirements for accreditation at this site.

Mackay Base Hospital

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Minister for Health. Two weeks have passed since shocking reports of alleged malpractice at the Mackay Base Hospital were aired and there are still no terms of reference for the review. On behalf of the mums of the regions, I ask: what is going wrong with the Mackay Base Hospital?

Mrs D'ATH: I do not accept the premise of the question. There is a review that is commencing—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left.

Mrs D'ATH: There is a review that is commencing. I have just outlined only a moment ago the process of the review that the chief executive—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members to my left, I have made it pretty clear that, where the minister is being responsive to the question asked, I and Hansard need to hear the answer. I would ask that you cease your interjections.

Mrs D'ATH: There seems to be a criticism that the chief executive actually listened to the advice of the consumer advocate, acted fully—

Ms Bates interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: and appointed reviewers. The chief executive has made sure that she has highly qualified people—including a very experienced registered nurse/midwife who has over 35 years experience—as part of this review panel. Now that these individuals have been appointed, the terms of reference will be developed with those individuals. That is the appropriate course. The chief executive has made public statements that the terms of reference would be developed after the reviewers—

Mr Nicholls: How long? What are they doing?

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

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for McConnel.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms Camm interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Whitsunday, you are warned under the standing orders. I had called the House to order.

Mrs D'ATH: As I said, a public statement has been made by the chief executive that the terms of reference would be developed with the reviewers. We have been working with the college. The chief executive went to the college to consult with them about who the reviewers should be. I make no criticism of the chief executive doing that as a proper process to find suitably qualified and independent people to conduct this review so that the community can have full confidence in the review process. The chief executive has indicated that the terms of reference will be developed with the reviewers and will be released publicly.

Regional Queensland, Coronavirus Vaccination

Mrs GILBERT: My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier update the House on how the vaccination rates in regions like Mackay are going? Is the Premier aware of any alternative views?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Mackay for that question because what we are concerned about at the moment is the fact that we need more people in regional Queensland to get vaccinated. Every single person in this House should be talking about the need for people to get vaccinated. I know that is what everyone on this side of the House is doing, but what about those opposite? There is one important thing that needs to happen to keep Queenslanders safe, and that is for people to get vaccinated.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is why I was pleased to join the member for Mackay, the Treasurer and the mayor of Mackay to talk about how important it is for the residents of Mackay and that region to get vaccinated. We have lower vaccination rates in that region. We have issues in the Whitsunday and issues with Bowen. We need to make sure that the vaccination rates lift.

You would think that the member for Whitsunday would be out there talking up vaccination and you would think that the member for Broadwater would be out there talking about getting people vaccinated, but on that side of the House we have George Christensen out there causing trouble. He is one of theirs. He is absolutely disgraceful. He is putting up things on the Facebook page. Then we have the member for Mudgeeraba over there with her little association.

I am also pleased to talk about the Super Saturday school blitz: in Bowen, there were 122 doses; Mackay North State High School, 107 doses; Mirani State High School, 148 doses; Pioneer, 162 doses; and Proserpine State High School, 119 doses. I am also pleased to announce that the Medical Rescue will operate pop-up clinics within the Mackay Hospital and Health Services over the coming days—at Herbert Street Family Medical Centre on 28 October, Bloomsbury State School on 30 October and Midge Point on 1 November. The Minister for Health also went out to Moranbah. We are extending some of the times there. We are concerned about some of those mining towns. We need to get the vaccination rates up. This is the most critical issue facing Queensland.

(Time expired)

Mackay Base Hospital

Ms BATES: My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister confirm that at least one doctor practising at Mackay Base Hospital has reprimands on their clinical registration?

Mrs D'ATH: I am happy to follow that up with the chief executive.

Railways, Manufacturing

Mr SAUNDERS: My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier update the House on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to rail manufacturing in Maryborough?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Maryborough. Never would I have thought I would get a question like that from the member for Maryborough. We know how important it is to generate manufacturing and local jobs. We want to see long-term, secure jobs in Queensland, and that is exactly what manufacturing will do in this state. That is why I am very pleased that we announced that we will be building 65 trains in Maryborough. These trains will be needed for our network but also in time for the Olympics. Once again, this is local procurement—being made in Maryborough in Queensland by Queenslanders. I know how delighted the people of Maryborough were with that announcement.

While I am speaking about Maryborough, it is great news to see that in the Wide Bay region 75 per cent of people have now had their first dose of vaccine, while 59.6 per cent have had their second dose. We are seeing a great turnout from Wide Bay, lifting those vaccination rates.

On that side of the House, there are no fresh ideas. They have no policy ideas about manufacturing. On this side of the House, we have trains in Maryborough, we have hydrogen electrolyzers in Gladstone, we are building reconnaissance vehicles at Redbank in Ipswich, and Boeing is investing in Toowoomba with our government to bring about long-term, secure manufacturing jobs, and we are building a quarantine facility as well. On this side of the House, we get things done. On that side of the House is the most well-resourced opposition in the country, but what do we see from them?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Furner interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will not comment on Minister Furner's interjection!

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, that is one step too far. You are warned under the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: With this investment of over \$7 billion over 30 years, we will see 800 jobs in the local Maryborough region, flow-on impacts into Hervey Bay and Bundaberg and 3,000 jobs across Queensland. I thank the minister for the great work he has done. We are going to be building trains in Queensland—manufacturing in Queensland, as we said we would do at the last election.

(Time expired)

Mackay Base Hospital

Ms CAMM: My question is to the Minister for Health. Amy from Mackay experienced complications after suffering a severed artery during her C-section at Mackay Base Hospital. Amy has been told that she will never give birth naturally and now is afraid of having children again. What is going wrong at the Mackay Base Hospital?

Mrs D'ATH: It is because of examples like Amy's that the chief executive has initiated a review about which I have spoken and detailed the process going forward.

Ms Camm interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Whitsunday, you are already under a warning and you are interjecting. You can leave the chamber for the remainder of question time.

Whereupon the honourable member for Whitsunday withdrew from the chamber at 10.31 am.

International Students

Mr MADDEN: My question is of the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure. Can the Deputy Premier outline to the House how the Palaszczuk government is working towards the safe return of international students, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Ipswich West for his question. As always, it was a good one. The member for Ipswich West, along with all of the members on this side of the House, knows how critical it is to start getting international students back into Queensland. It is critical because of their contribution to our community and their valuable contribution to our universities, particularly through funding their research programs, and to key sectors of our workforce, whether that be in our hospitals, the hospitality sector or elsewhere, and also because our international students make a very valuable cultural contribution to our community.

As the tourism minister announced, Queensland has submitted the student arrivals plan that we have worked on with universities, the health sector and the tourism sector to safely bring international students back here. We can do that because, come Christmas, we will have a dedicated accommodation facility at Wellcamp. It will be able to take international students from January 2022. Right now, there are 20,000 Queensland students stuck overseas. We are keen to have them back and they are keen to come back.

The international borders have been closed now for 570 days, but, with our vaccination rates increasing, it is now safe to start planning for the return of international students. Before the pandemic, international students contributed \$5.8 billion to the state's economy and supported 27,000 full-time jobs. More important than that, those students make a valuable contribution to our universities and to our community. Once they graduate they become lifetime ambassadors for our cities and for our state. When they return home and build their careers, they retain deep and valuable ties with Queensland.

Now, because of two key initiatives, we are able to welcome them back. That is because we are getting people vaccinated and because we have a dedicated accommodation facility. Both of those things have been undermined by those opposite. It is time for the Leader of the Opposition to pull the anti-vaxxers in his party into line. It is time for him to pull into line those members of anti-vax organisations. It is time for those opposite to support the Wellcamp facility. With those two measures we are able to safely bring international students back to Queensland so that they can again contribute to our community.

Premier and Minister for the Olympics, Coronavirus Vaccination

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to the Premier. First it was the flu shot, then the dog bite and, finally, the Japan trip. Will the Premier admit that her delays in getting vaccinated have contributed to Queensland's slow vaccination rate?

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my right, that is uncalled for. The Premier will answer the question.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. We can go back in time and talk about—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my left.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You might remember that the federal government had two jobs: supply of the vaccine and quarantine—and we had to fix both! We care about Queenslanders. We are coming up to the one-year anniversary of our re-election. At that time there was one side of politics demanding the borders be opened. There is the member for Nanango—

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Toowoomba North will cease his interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Those opposite called 64 times—

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Toowoomba North, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: COVID would have ripped through the community and we would have had the numbers that New South Wales and Victoria are seeing right now. One side of this House stood strong and stood up to the federal government, took the health advice—

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Toowoomba South, you are warned under the standing orders. You have had a good go this morning. I have given you a couple of cautions.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let me say this to the Leader of the Opposition: leadership is about standing up for people and doing what is right.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under the standing orders. That is unbecoming to the parliament.

Ms PALASZCZUK: There is no need to channel Campbell Newman in this House. It reminds me exactly of Campbell Newman—exactly the same.

Ms Simpson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Maroochydore, there is no need to pick up where the Leader of the Opposition left off. You are warned under the standing orders. Premier, you have 49 seconds remaining. Do you have anything to add?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Absolutely. The Leader of the Opposition had an opportunity last week to get across regional Queensland and join the government's call to get people vaccinated, and he failed absolutely. I am encouraged by the increase in vaccination rates, even across the south-east. We were concerned initially about Logan, and Logan is now up to 70.6 per cent, which is where I wanted to see it. On the Gold Coast they answered the call and 74.6 per cent have now had the first dose. The Sunshine Coast is at 79.5 per cent; Moreton Bay—

(Time expired)

Coronavirus, Vaccination

Mr POWER: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer please update the House on how important high vaccination rates are for Queensland's continued economic recovery, and is the Treasurer aware of any obstacles to our vaccine rate?

Mr DICK: As the member for Logan knows well, vaccination is the key to our economic recovery in Queensland. 17 December opens the door to an additional \$1½ billion in economic activity, but those benefits depend on a high rate of vaccination across the length and breadth of Queensland. The key to staying open is keeping our health workers safe and free from COVID, which is why the AHPPC says that the vaccine should be mandated for all health workers.

What did we hear from the Leader of the Opposition? Last week the Leader of the Opposition was asked directly on 4BC radio whether he supported the mandatory vaccination of health workers and the Leader of the Opposition said that it should not be a yes or no answer. I say this to the Leader of the Opposition: the answer is simple, the answer that every member of the government would give, and that is an unequivocal yes to the mandatory vaccination of health workers in Queensland.

The Leader of the Opposition could not even say it yesterday. When he was asked yesterday, he said he was 'comfortable with the AHPPC advice'. What does that even mean? I will tell members what it means: it means that the Leader of the Opposition is a weak leader. He is a weak leader who is unwilling or unable to stand up to the anti-vaxxers in the LNP. I remember when the Leader of the Opposition used to have businesspeople standing with him, but not anymore because they are turning away from the Leader of the Opposition in shame because he is jeopardising the business and economic recovery in this state. The sooner we achieve 80 per cent vaccination—as the Premier has led the state—and the sooner we have more places that achieve it, the better for business, but I will tell members one thing: if we fall short or some regional communities fall short, then we will have the Leader of the Opposition and the LNP to thank for that, because the Leader of the Opposition was undermining the bipartisan consensus on vaccination in this state.

What kind of a leader tells the people of Mackay just five days ago that they should 'do their own research on vaccination'? When the Leader of the Opposition is not prescribing a dose of Professor Dr George Christensen, he recommends Dr Google. The anti-vaxxers in this state know that they have a champion, and that person is the Leader of the Opposition.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DICK: By refusing to unequivocally back the mandate for health workers, the Leader of the Opposition—

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

Mr DICK:—stands with the anti-vax lobby in this state, and it is utterly shameful. He is the one who stands with the anti-vaxxers. He will not provide leadership to deliver 80 per cent vaccination. My words to the Leader of the Opposition are these: stop the weasel words, stop the anti-vax sentiment and back in vaccination.

(Time expired)

Coronavirus, Vaccination

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question is to the Premier. I refer to the comments by the AWU national secretary who said, 'We strongly advocate to government and industry that COVID-19 vaccinations should be voluntary.' As this is the stance shared by the QNMU, the AMU, the AMWU, the ETU, the CFMEU, the QTU, the PPTEU and the UFU, I ask: does the Premier support this view or will she resign from her union and tell her front bench to do the same?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am a proud union member.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am a proud union member.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Buderim, it has taken a while, but it seems like you are back in form. You are warned under the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: All unions support the AHPPC advice about the mandatory vaccination of health workers, and that is in stark contrast to those opposite.

Mr Dick interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Except for one little association on that side that the member for Mudgeeraba just cannot tear herself apart from. She then goes running around the state with the Leader of the Opposition standing there looking at him thinking, 'Am I going to get asked a question?' Not about vaccination, because we know that those on their side of the House are not driving vaccination in this state. The Treasurer was right when he said that their side of politics has an anti-vax sentiment and they are not prepared to stand up to that anti-vax sentiment.

I want to continue where I left off previously about the vaccination rates in regional Queensland and why we need to lift the rates in those areas. In Mackay we are now at 67.9 per cent single dose. That is not anywhere near the 70 per cent that we need at the moment and it is under the state average. Those on that side of the House, including the member for Whitsunday, should be standing up and calling for more of her constituency to get vaccinated and calling out George Christensen.

In North-West Queensland I am concerned that it is at 61.3 per cent. We need to lift the vaccination rates there. In Far North Queensland in some of our remote communities it is at 48.8 per cent. I am very concerned that there is a very strong anti-vax sentiment that is being pushed out on

social media. Every single member of this House should call out those anti-vaxxers because this is about protecting Queenslanders, protecting their families, protecting their communities and keeping Queenslanders safe. I would also like to see more people vaccinated in Central Queensland, where it is at 66.6 per cent single dose. However, we have seen a two per cent to three per cent increase in those areas that we visited last week and my government on this side of the House will continue to drive vaccination rates over the next couple of weeks because we know how important that is.

Coronavirus, Vaccination

Mr HARPER: My question is to the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. How are school communities supporting the vaccination efforts, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for the question, and what a good question! Last week we had a fantastic visit to Thuringowa State High School where we met some wonderful students. We had a hub there on the weekend, with many rolling up their sleeves to get the jab. It was fantastic to speak to the students, and they were all on side. They understood the importance of getting vaccinated and the school community really gathered around to ensure that.

It is great to see all schools playing their part in terms of vaccinating people around the state, and they are all doing their own different things. They are finding their own innovative ways to boost vaccination like Darling Heights State School in Toowoomba, which combined its weekly English classes for parents with a pop-up clinic run by a local medical service. It was wonderful. Many of the parents are migrants and refugees and the pop-up clinic was provided. It was a great way of breaking down those barriers and vaccine hesitancy in the community. They had a very good success rate in relation to that.

The Premier was right: it is very difficult to get this message across when we are hearing nothing from those opposite. The Treasurer was also right: we hear nothing from the Leader of the Opposition, but what do we expect? In fact, Premier, the shadow health minister was asked a question in relation to vaccination on 4BC radio by her mate Scotty, and she was asked not just once, not twice but three times. Scott Emerson, an ex-member of those opposite who is now on radio—an ex-minister—asked a very simple question: do you support mandatory vaccination for health workers?

Government members: What did she say?

Ms GRACE: She could not answer the question. She squibbed it and said, 'Listen, Scotty, I'm waiting on the legal advice.' Let me tell members that the legal advice has spoken. Let me inform the House that a recent QIRC decision dismissed an appeal, that the Supreme Court in New South Wales dismissed an appeal and that the Fair Work Commission federally dismissed an appeal, so the legal advice is there. But Scotty did not stop there. He said to her, 'You say you're looking at the legal action, but from the state opposition—from yourself—do you support mandatory vaccination?' Scotty could not get a direct answer to the question from the shadow minister for health. He did not stop there. He tried again—

'Alright but sorry Ros Bates I just want to clarify this very clear for me from the state opposition is it policy? Do they back mandatory vaccines say for health workers say for police?'

Guess what? No answer. They are incompetent. They cannot stand on any policy and they come in here and try to lecture us.

(Time expired)

Coronavirus, Border Restrictions

Mr BLEIJIE: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to Sunshine Coast resident Grant who has been in New South Wales for work and has been denied the right to return home. Grant is running out of food and has been sleeping in his car. He has written to me, and talked to me, to say that he is losing his will to go on. Why won't the Premier allow Queenslanders like Grant to immediately return to Queensland—their home—and home quarantine?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I draw the member's attention to the fact that we have actually released a road map. It is very clear. It has been out there publicly. If the member has any concerns about an individual person he can forward it to the exemptions unit or to the health minister and they will get back to him.

Coronavirus, Vaccination

Mrs MULLEN: My question is to the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. Can the minister please update the House on the vaccination rollout in Queensland and any impediments?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Jordan for her question. I know that the member for Jordan and all members on this side of the House have been out encouraging their community to go and get vaccinated. We have been doing this since the start of the rollout, but remembering that we had very limited supply at the start of the rollout.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: That got them going. There was not enough vaccine for every eligible Queenslander to come out and get vaccinated in February. In fact, it was not available to them. It was only for a priority group in 1a. Then we moved on to 1b. Remember that 1a was aged care that was supposed to be done by the Commonwealth and was supposed to be the residents and the staff, except they forgot about the staff. They went in, they vaccinated the residents, they left and said, 'Whoops, I think we forgot someone.' That is right, all of the staff who worked in aged care with the most vulnerable people in the state. When they finally got around to realising that they had forgotten about the staff, they then said, 'You guys can look after yourselves and go and find a vaccination site somewhere to get vaccinated because we are not coming to you.' They completely dropped the ball.

They were also supposed to be responsible for vaccinating our First Nations people. Again it is the Palaszczuk government that has stepped up and gone into those communities, partnering with the RFDS and with amazing partners across this state to take the vaccine into the remote parts of this state.

We have been doing our part, from the Premier to our ministers to every local member going out and talking about vaccinations in our community, but those on the other side seem to be taking a different approach. They would rather attack. In fact, it was the member for Kawana who has just gone and tweeted again attacking Dr Jeannette Young. It is extraordinary that the member for Kawana would be attacking our Chief Health Officer who has kept COVID under control in this state. The member for Mudgeeraba and the Leader of the Opposition have questions to answer. It is a simple question.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: Scott Emerson asked the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Mudgeeraba, you are under a warning. You can leave the chamber for one hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Mudgeeraba withdrew from the chamber at 10.53 am.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister for Health, you have 29 seconds remaining. Do you have anything further to add?

Mrs D'ATH: Yes, I do. The Leader of the Opposition has failed to answer a very simple question: yes or no, does he support mandatory vaccination for healthcare workers. The AHPPC has recommended it. We have implemented it. The member for Mudgeeraba and the Leader of the Opposition must answer that question. NPAQ has challenged this in the courts. They can also answer the question: do they support that challenge and do they support it being overturned? The member for Mudgeeraba should resign or answer the question. The Leader of the Opposition—

(Time expired)

CopperString 2.0

Mr KATTER: My question is to the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen. With reference to the predicted soaring increase in energy demand that will result from hydrogen production which would see energy prices skyrocket and local families and businesses suffer, will the minister commit to fast-tracking the CopperString 2.0 project to enable new energy production grid capacity rather than validating the claims for a hydrogen future?

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for the question. I think it is important to note that the Palaszczuk government ensures that householders in the electorate that the member represents, just like householders in every other part of Queensland, are increasingly paying lower electricity prices. We want to make sure that we continue to put downward pressure on that. We are putting downward pressure on that through our investment in renewable energy. It has been a culmination of the 44 large-scale renewable projects that we have delivered since coming to office. We have seen

\$10 billion of investment, 7½ thousand jobs created, but also the largest penetration of rooftop solar uptake by Queenslanders. In fact, Queenslanders' rooftops are the largest generators of cheap renewable electricity right across the economy.

We are on the record supporting investigations into the CopperString proposal. In fact, we have committed almost \$16 million to developing the CopperString project. We are working through the arrangements in respect of that with CopperString as we speak. The member is correct: it has been the Palaszczuk government that had the foresight to take a leadership stance on the development of a new hydrogen industry and we have been doing that for several years now.

The hydrogen industry will lead to increased demand for electricity. It will lead to increased demand for Queensland's solar and wind resources. It will deliver more jobs for Queenslanders in places like Gladstone where we have announced the largest hydrogen electrolyser manufacturing plant on the planet. It will lead to more jobs in places right across Queensland. In fact, the Port of Townsville has signed an MOU with Origin Energy as well. The North Queensland Bulk Ports in Mackay has signed an MUO with Itochu. Right across this state, whether it is in North Queensland, Central Queensland or, in fact, here in South-East Queensland where Redlands is currently the home of the state's first hydrogen vehicle refuelling station. I know the member for Redlands, Australia's first hydrogen champion, is incredibly proud of that. We will continue to work with proponents both domestically and internationally to continue to drive investment in Queensland renewables because cheaper, cleaner electricity delivers more jobs for Queenslanders, more industrialisation of this state and this nation.

When it comes to the detailed negotiations with CopperString, I can advise the member that we are now in commercial-in-confidence negotiations with the proponents around their proposals and so in respect of those details I am unable to make further comment at this stage, but I look forward to updating the House as soon as I am able.

Small Business

Mr O'ROURKE: My question is to the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development. Can the minister please update the House on the support for small businesses from the Palaszczuk government?

Ms FARMER: I thank the member for his question. I have seen firsthand how passionate the member is about supporting small businesses in his electorate. He is constantly out and about and on his social media encouraging his community to buy local and supporting them in everything that they are doing. We know the best thing we can do for small businesses is to keep them open and trading and, of course, our strong health response in Queensland has meant we have been able to avoid long lockdowns and we have allowed our economic recovery to continue. That has been so critical for small business. We know the impact of COVID-19 is being felt, which is why backing small business is at the heart of our COVID-19 \$14.5 billion economic recovery plan, including significant financial support.

I am very pleased to announce that in our current program, the COVID-19 business support program, we have paid out almost \$272 million as of today to almost 30,000 small businesses. We know that many small businesses were delighted about the Premier's announcement last week about the easing of restrictions by 19 November and 17 December linked to the 70, 80 and 90 per cent vaccination rates. What a feather in everyone's cap that is—every Queenslanders, including our small businesses—that we have done so well and we have gotten to this stage. It is a credit to everyone.

Of course, the really critical part of this is the vaccination level. As we know, in the past week the Premier, the Chief Health Officer and every single minister in this government have gone around the state to talk up the need for vaccination. Last week I was in Cairns, Aurukun and Surfers Paradise. We have to get the vaccination levels up. We cannot afford to allow delta to get into the regions. We cannot afford small businesses to be affected by localised lockdowns.

This has to be a campaign that is run by everybody across this House so I was really keen to hear what the opposition was saying about it. I did not have to wait very long because, quick as a flash, the opposition leader and the member for Buderim, who is the shadow minister for small business, said it was great but we should have done it six months ago. That was their contribution. What hypocrisy! If you are going to say things like that, you should be able to take the high moral ground but nothing could be further from the truth.

If we look at the Facebook page of the shadow minister for small business, who is casting himself as the champion of small business, not once this year has he gone out to talk about vaccination. Not once has he talked about businesses protecting themselves or about looking after our businesses. Not

once did the Leader of the Opposition ask ScoMo to deliver more vaccines when he was sending them to New South Wales. Not once did he decry George Christensen for telling people to take horse medicine instead of vaccinations. We need to get everybody on board.

(Time expired)

Queensland Building and Construction Commission

Mr MANDER: My question is to the Minister for Public Works. In view of revelations that the minister's senior policy adviser sought to intervene in a QBCC licence suspension of Cullen Group Australia, how can the minister stand by his statement on 13 October denying that neither he nor his staff intervened in QBCC operational matters?

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for the question. It is easy because we did not intervene. Despite repeated attempts by the LNP to undermine confidence in the construction industry—and let us can be clear that what they are trying to do is undermine confidence in the industry—let the facts about the industry speak for themselves.

As I have said, and it bears repeating, insolvencies in the construction industry are at the lowest level they have been in nine years under the framework that this government has led. Monies owed complaints are the lowest since our reforms were introduced, which means more money in the pockets of Queensland tradies. There are more licensees than ever before in the construction industry, with 110,000 of them. This government has implemented 20 of the national *Building confidence* report recommendations. Those reports address serious compliance failures like the Mascot Towers and Opal Tower disasters in New South Wales. We established a special joint task force to investigate fraud in the construction industry. We have acted on all of the recommendations of that report.

The construction industry is incredibly strong. There are 230,000 Queenslanders who go to work every day in the construction industry. We kept them on the job right throughout COVID-19, despite the attempts of those opposite to undermine confidence in the industry. Dwelling approvals are up by 23 per cent. There were 168,000 Queensland Home Warranty Scheme approvals given this year. That means more renovations and more new buildings than ever in Queensland's history. There are 18½ thousand apprentices working on Queensland construction sites today. Our minimum financial requirements framework, which those opposite have sought to undermine time and time again, has reinstated \$1.4 billion of working capital into the construction industry.

Today I can announce that, despite attempts from those opposite, the construction industry is stronger than ever. In its June quarter report, the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research confirmed that Queensland's building and construction industry now contributes \$47.4 billion to the Queensland economy, which is up from \$45 billion. That is thanks to our strong COVID response.

It has been since the Palaszczuk government was elected that the rate of participation by women in Queensland's construction industry has doubled. When we came to office it was at just two to three per cent; today, it is at five per cent. We backed women in trades at our Cannon Hill exemplar project where we exceeded the National Association of Women in Construction target of 11 per cent. Today I can announce that the next exemplar project will be in the electorate of Hervey Bay where we will deliver a 10-unit social housing development and we will ensure that we exceed the target of 11 per cent women in construction.

(Time expired)

Railways, Manufacturing

Mr TANTARI: My question is of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, and I am sure the member for Maryborough will love this one. Can the minister update the House on the government's train rolling stock program?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the honourable member for the question. Of course, I also acknowledge the great contribution of the assistant minister for rail manufacturing, the member for Maryborough, on this historic announcement of the largest ever investment in rail manufacturing in this state's history. Sixty-five new trains are coming and they will be made right here in this state by Queensland workers for Queensland commuters. This commitment means a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility at Torbanlea, outside Maryborough. I thank the member for Maryborough who has been an incredible advocate for Maryborough all the way through. The project will benefit Hervey Bay as well. The whole region will benefit from having quality jobs building quality trains for quality public transport. That is what this government stands for.

Let us compare that to those opposite. They sent this work overseas. When those opposite were in power and the Leader of the Opposition was in cabinet, their policy was to make Maryborough a ghost town. Under this government it is a boom town because the jobs are flowing like there is no tomorrow. I look forward to seeing these trains go out. They will be disability compliant.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I am sorry, Minister. Member for Chatsworth, you have been skating under the radar for most of question time. No longer. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr BAILEY: Those trains will support population growth. They will support and run on the Cross River Rail project. They will be there for the games. They will create 800 rail manufacturing and construction jobs for the area. What did we get from the Leader of the Opposition? You would think he might have learnt from history: 'We botched it before so maybe I should learn? We cut Cross River Rail when we were in government. Maybe I will learn?' What did he say? Did he back it in? Did he say, 'This is great for Queensland jobs! We are making trains!' No! All we heard was criticism, moaning and whingeing. The Leader of the Opposition has learnt nothing.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

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

Mr BAILEY: In the last election campaign the LNP costings made it very clear that they were budgeting to buy trains from overseas again. That is what their own costings said. The Leader of the Opposition had the opportunity to distance himself from those ridiculous policies and those failures. You botched it in government and you have promised to botch it again.

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, Minister.

Mr BAILEY: Those opposite do not learn. We build, we manufacture and we create jobs. Those opposite cut and they send jobs overseas. They promised to do it at the last election and here they are, doing it again. Let us look at their record. They cut Cross River Rail twice. They ordered trains that were not disability compliant from overseas. They stopped the training of drivers in the last year they were in power.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

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

Mr BAILEY: They predicted it would take 36 years to get back to a full timetable and it was six weeks later. Thank you, member for Chatsworth! They cut jobs. They cut 700 road worker jobs. They cut when they were in power. We do not cut; we build. That is what this government does and we will keep doing it.

(Time expired)

State Emergency Service

Mr MILLAR: My question is to the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. Given the impending disaster season across Queensland and the loss of a large number of SES volunteers, when will the minister publicly release the Darby report, which has been on his desk for almost two years, and commit to fully implementing and funding the recommendations?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for the question. The Palaszczuk government has a strong commitment to all of our emergency services, including the State Emergency Service. I have answered this question before, including at estimates.

Mr SPEAKER: I am sorry, Minister. Please set the clock for three minutes.

Mr RYAN: This year we have increased the budget for the State Emergency Service by seven per cent. The number of SES volunteers remains stable at about 6,000. We continue to support the SES, as well as all emergency service volunteers, including those who are with the Rural Fire Service, and we have increased their budget. We have doubled the amount of funding for fire appliances for the Rural Fire Service.

Whether it is the marine rescue volunteers—we are committed to implementing the Blue Water Review, with extra vessels and extra supports for them—or whether it is any number of other emergency services volunteers, like our search and rescue volunteers, who assist with locating people who are missing and also serve the global community in international incidents, we are very committed to our emergency services. We have announced a Queensland Fire and Emergency Services review—

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118(b) on relevance with respect to the Darby report and when that will be released.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I understand that you are providing broader context around the State Emergency Service, but the question related to a particular document, particularly a release date. I ask you to come back to the question as asked.

Mr RYAN: As I said, I addressed this question at estimates. The member for Kawana attended my estimates session, so if he had reflected on the transcript from that estimates session he would have been aware of my answer. As I said at estimates in response to this question—

Mr Millar interjected.

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

Mr RYAN: It is a very complicated issue to address because of the partnerships with council. We are very committed to supporting the State Emergency Service and we are also committed to continuing to work with councils on delivering a very strong, sustainable SES moving forward. Part of doing that is the current work being undertaken around the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services structure and sustainability report. In due course, the government will be able to say more—

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Gregory, I just warned you under the standing orders. You continue to interject. You will leave the chamber for one hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Gregory withdrew from the chamber at 11.11 am.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I wish to reiterate my comments: it is not an optional extra to interject in this House, but if you are on a standing orders warning you will cease all interjections. This will be the third member today leaving the chamber. Minister, you have 54 seconds remaining. Do you have anything relevant to the question?

Mr RYAN: I do. The member who asked the question here did not attend the estimates session that I was a part of so he would not have been aware of the conversations that we had at that estimates session about how the government is—

Mr Lister interjected.

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

Mr RYAN:—supporting the SES and will continue to support the SES and is currently doing further work around how to strengthen the partnership with councils around providing a sustainable SES moving forward.

We have increased the budget to the SES this year by seven per cent. We also increased support for other emergency services volunteers. To contrast that with the reviews done previously by those opposite, they abolished the SES cadets—

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr RYAN:—which was a volunteer program for kids to be involved in the State Emergency Service. While they cut, we fund more. We are supportive of the SES and we will continue to do that.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Southern Downs, I cannot help but feel as though your interjections, despite my very clear warnings to the chamber, were quite deliberate. You are under a standing orders warning. I will ask you to withdraw for the remainder of the day under standing order 253.

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

Coronavirus, Vaccination

Mr SKELTON: My question is for the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement. Will the minister inform the House of the vaccination rates of tourism regions that have received the government's hardship funding but continue to lag behind on vaccination?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for Nicklin for his question. As the member is aware, the Palaszczuk government has committed more than \$1 billion in direct support to help tourism operators through the pandemic. Since the announcement of our vaccination plan, the Premier and ministers last week fanned out across the state, making sure that we supported Queensland vaccination rates. We have seen some encouraging signs of improvement. Almost 61 per cent of Queenslanders aged

16-plus have received double-dose vaccination, or more than 5.8 million jabs. In Nambour, in the heart of the member's electorate, they have jumped ahead of the Queensland average, with 63.1 per cent having had their second dose. That is good news.

Last week, as you are very aware, Mr Speaker, I was in Yarrabah as the community's ministerial champion to talk to community leaders about ways of boosting vaccination rates. As you know, health workers have been going door to door, offering jabs. There was also a pop-up clinic at Barlow Park in Cairns for the Yarrabah Seahawks' famous grand final win over Innisfail earlier this month. Well done to the Seahawks. While Yarrabah's rates are picking up, it is disappointing to see that one of Queensland's favourite visitor destinations is lagging behind the state average. Just under 47 per cent of people in the Whitsundays have had their second vaccination jab, while in the Whitsundays 21 applications for hardship grants have been approved and paid out, to a value of \$335,000.

Further elements of support under Great Queensland Getaway have delivered 6,000 flights into Proserpine and Hamilton Island, or 2½ thousand more seats to Townsville. Those flights to Proserpine and Hamilton Island airports are seeing 67 per cent and 78 per cent take-up respectively. It seems that the member for Whitsunday insists that the region has been forgotten. The reality is that the member for Whitsunday has dropped the ball on encouraging her community to get vaccinated.

It is generous of me to say that there are few mentions of vaccination on the member's Facebook page because there is one, buried very deep in heavy criticism of the government's COVID road map. The member for Whitsunday appears to be following in the footsteps of the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow health minister, who have both refused to support the AHPPC's endorsement of mandatory vaccination of health workers. It is vitally important for the whole of our tourism industry and all of our important tourism regions that we get vaccination rates up. That will play a key role in our economic recovery and the recovery of our great tourism industry.


Building and Construction Industry, Best Practice Industry Conditions

Mr HART: My question is to the Minister for Public Works. The Queensland Major Contractors Association says that the implementation of the best practice industry conditions would open contractors to the very high risk of being in contravention of the Building Code 2016 and the Fair Work Act. Can the minister advise if he sought advice on whether the BPIC policy contravenes these federal acts?

Mr SPEAKER: With that long preamble, the period for question time has expired.


MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Further Answer to Question, Mackay Base Hospital

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (11.17 am): I rise to make a brief ministerial statement in response to the question from one of the members on the other side in relation to whether there are any doctors operating at the Mackay Hospital who have any reprimands. I am advised by the HHS that there are not.

MOTIONS

Business Program

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.17 am): I move—

1. That the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill will be considered during this week's sitting.
2. The following time limits for the bill listed in 1. apply:
 - (a) the minister to be called on in reply by 6.25 pm on Tuesday, 26 October 2021.
3. If all stages of the bill listed in 1. have not been completed by 6.55 pm on Tuesday, 26 October 2021, Mr Speaker:
 - (a) shall call on the minister to table any explanatory notes to their circulated amendments, any statement of compatibility with human rights or any statement relating to an override declaration
 - (b) shall put all remaining questions necessary to pass the bill without further debate
 - (c) may interrupt non-specified business or debate on a bill or motion to complete the requirements of this motion
 - (d) will complete all stages required by this motion notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders.

The government resolved—not the committee, because I know that those on the opposite side will oppose, as they always do—that we will set a time limit in relation to the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill, to be debated this week—there are amendments to be moved that are of some urgency—to ensure the bill can get assent and proceed to Executive Council. Otherwise, the bills on the *Notice Paper* will proceed as planned. We hope that some members may be able to do their address-in-reply speech this week.

I am going to pre-empt a bit of the debate that I suspect we might hear shortly—it is on the front page of the *Courier-Mail*—only because I know that the member for Kawana is pretty predictable and will go there. When it comes to the number of bills before this parliament, it is substance not quantity that matters. We are very proud of the legislation the Palaszczuk government has brought in and passed through this parliament since we came to office in 2015, not least the electoral donation laws that we passed very early on, the termination of pregnancy legislation and the voluntary assisted dying legislation. Of course, this week we will see the introduction of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games organising committee structure—a very important piece of legislation to lay the groundwork for what is to come over the next 11 years in preparation for the Brisbane 2032 games.

If those opposite want to talk about the number of bills coming before this House and the debate on those bills, I remind those members that they have quite a legacy when it comes to bills. They passed a lot of bills. They passed many bills that saw the sacking of public servants. We all recall the Public Service and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 and the appropriation bills that cut \$1.6 billion from the health budget. We all remember the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill that took away the rights of injured workers to common law workers compensation under WorkCover.


Of course we all remember the Vicious Lawless Association Disestablishment Bill—what a name. That led to a single conviction. That legislation was very successful! We did see pink overalls introduced into the prison system. That went down well and changed crime statistics in this state. I am sure crime rates dropped suddenly when people saw the pink overalls. We saw the industrial relations fair work act harmonisation bill that allowed for individual contracts for doctors and removed unfair protections. We saw the boot camp orders legislation. We know what an absolute waste of money that was. We did not see any reduction in youth crime as a consequence of that. In fact, it was so successful that some youth kept coming back to the boot camps over and over again. They enjoyed the experience.

We saw the Vegetation Management Framework Amendment Bill that removed protections and resulted in the broadscale clearing of land, causing 35 million tonnes of carbon pollution in a single year. We saw the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill 2013 which lifted the donations threshold so that someone could walk in the door and make a donation of over \$12,000 and no-one would have to disclose it. We would not know who they were donating to, who it was coming from and how much they were getting in the paper bag. Those are pieces of legislation that I am sure the LNP are still to this day extremely proud of.

The North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Another Act Amendment Bill included mining company Sibelco's branded maps in the legislation to extend sandmining following an undisclosed third-party campaign for the LNP valued at \$90,000. The Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Bill removed third-party appeal rights on resource projects. During consideration in detail on the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill amendments were introduced to make the activities of Karreman Quarries retrospectively legal following \$75,000 in donations to the LNP.

I will take quality over quantity any day. I am very proud of the legislation we have introduced and the bills we will be debating this week.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Before I call the next member, I will remind the House that the following members are under a warning. They are the members for Nanango, Kawana, Toowoomba North, Toowoomba South, Broadwater, Maroochydore, Everton, Buderim, Chatsworth and Clayfield.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (11.22 am): The Leader of the House is right: there are no resolutions in the Business Committee meetings. There are never any resolutions. It is more: this is what is happening; we are telling you what is happening. There is no time or opportunity for the opposition to use the Business Committee as they tell us it was intended. We know the government ram through what they want. I will get to that in a second.

I sat here with interest and listened to the Leader of the House talk about legislation from 2012 and so forth. She finished by saying that she would have quality over quantity any day of the week. Under this third-term Labor government I can say that there ain't been much quality in legislation.

Members do not have to believe me. They only have to look at the number of amendments the Labor Party have to bring in to their own legislation. The bills they introduce they have to amend. I note the Minister for Racing is sitting over there. Who can forget the record she holds for the most amendments ever moved in this parliament—over 200 amendments. She still blames poor Billy from Rockhampton. It was his bill she said. She had to introduce over 200 amendments. She holds the record.

We now have the superannuation bill that we are about to debate. The government is moving amendments because someone in government worked out yesterday that the new Governor, who starts her term on 1 November, will be entitled to two pensions after she finishes her term—both her Public Service pension and the Governor's pension. We now need to urgently move amendments to prevent that from happening. That is what we were told yesterday in the Business Committee meeting.

There would not have been a motion moved today setting out the time lines, but now we have a motion moved to guillotine the superannuation bill so it is debated and finished by tonight. We do not have a couple of days to debate it—as exciting as it may have been for members to speak on this; the speaking list is huge—but instead we see that they have to rush in amendments because no-one in government worked out the issue around the pension of the incoming Governor. We now have to force this through the parliament and guillotine the debate. That issue will be the subject of the debate.

We have seen in the last seven years of this third-term Labor government chaos, no plans and a government running out of ideas. They talked a lot about trains this morning. If these trains were steam trains they would not be going anywhere because this government has run out of steam and this government has run out of puff.

An opposition member: Toot-toot!

Mr BLEIJIE: No, it is not choo-choo; it is chugga-chugga. We have family-friendly hours. We do not see legislation get passed. With family-friendly hours, if there is legislation that those opposite want passed they move an urgency motion.


The reality is that members of parliament are not afforded the opportunity in this place to have their say like the good old days where we could put our case for or against particular bills or raise other issues for our constituency. There is no consideration in detail anymore. We see in the motion that the superannuation bill will be over by 6.25 tonight. This entity that will have over \$200 billion in assets and money is only being given one day of prosecution in this House.

We have no calendar for next year. We do not know when parliament is sitting next year. I note the Leader of the House quoted my tweets in question time today so she is watching my tweets, which is nice. She has read my comments in the *Courier-Mail* today. She talks about the *Courier-Mail* article. I happen to have a copy of that with me where I talked about the fact that there is no leadership on that side of the House, there is no leadership in terms of the bills we debate, they are running out of puff, they are running out of steam and they have no ideas. They have to move amendments to the superannuation bill. Towards the end of the year they are running out of legislation to debate in the parliament.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: They will move a couple of motions to filibuster. We recall that last year the parliament nearly ran out of bills to debate so they had to move motions. The reality is that democracy is served best when the people in this House can represent their constituents by speaking on bills, when we do not have bills rushed through and when appropriate time is allocated for debate. The reality is that that is not happening under this chaotic government that has run out of steam and run out of puff.

(Time expired)


 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (11.27 am): If only we could harness the hot air from the member for Kawana our power grid would be so much stronger! We always get the contrite argument from the member for Kawana that we do not have enough time for debate. We have to put up with the same speech every time this business program motion is moved—wasting this chamber's time.

The Leader of the Opposition said things would be different. Do members remember that? He said things would be different, yet everything is the same on the other side, whether it is the member for Kawana's amateur thespian routines or the same tactics. The Leader of the Opposition even interjects rabidly in the same way the former leader of the opposition did. He has a very thin skin. It does not take much to get him going.

They said things would be different, yet when I look around nothing has changed. Nothing has changed from those opposite. All we get are the same old tactics. Why this is contested and why we do not just get on with it is hard to work out. When it comes to aimlessness, those opposite are the masters of aimlessness. Let us be really clear. They have won one election outright in 30-odd years—one. That is it. They are specialists on the opposition benches. That is what they are really good at. They are really good at losing.

It is this government that has been introducing social reforms—voluntary assisted dying, choice for women, social reform, record spends on infrastructure and a world-leading COVID response. They have the temerity to come into this place and suggest that this is a government running out of ideas, when the rest of the world looks at Queensland's COVID response and thinks, 'How did you achieve that?' There have been tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of deaths in other countries. We have had seven in Queensland and those opposite are trying to run a line that we have run out of puff. It is laughable. I will leave it at that.

The motion of the Leader of the House ought to be supported. I do not think the time of the House is well spent having this repetitive debate by the member for Kawana, who is very overrated on the opposite benches.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (11.30 am): The first question we need to ask ourselves is: why are we in here debating this business motion? It never used to exist. We used to just have the business of the House go to government and there would be a debate. In that debate anybody who wished to speak, as is their right because they have been voted into this House to speak on behalf of their electorate—the voters of Queensland—were allowed to speak. I remember being in government for a period of time.

A government member: A short time.

Mr WATTS: Yes, it was a short government and there was a reason for that.

Government members interjected.

Mr WATTS: Yes, there was a reason for that. The reason was that there were some things that were done that were unreasonable. What we see now is the arrogance, the exuberance and the control for power on this side of the parliament. They crave power.

Last year during the Electoral Act debate there was less than 24 hours for hundreds of amendments to change the way that our democracy operates. When we analyse that document now, as we were never given enough time to do then, what do we find? We find a government who used taxpayers' money to fund an election campaign, who used taxpayers' money to do research and exempted that research so it would not be captured in the cap. We find a government that has grown arrogant, it has grown lazy and it has grown careless.

We find legislation coming into this chamber that needs to be rushed through quickly because we are about to give somebody two pensions. We find legislation coming into this place where the amendments are dumped in their hundreds, not going through a committee structure. The committee structure was set up in a bipartisan way to try to avoid the kind of stupid mistakes that get made by this arrogant government when it comes to legislation.

Legislation is brought into this place and we find the debate is guillotined. The people of Queensland, who voted for every single one of us in here, have their voices denied by this government because the government does not care about their voices. The job of opposition is in the name. It is to hold the government to account to oppose things and to make sure that the government has thought things through carefully.

With the so-called family-friendly hours, which deny any of us who come from regional Queensland the ability to get home to our families—we would rather see a longer debate go on into the evening because that is why we are all down here—we see a lot of members rushing off to functions, trying to pep up the numbers for the next election, not actually doing the job of this House. We see them working to make sure that they keep the power.

We know what this game is all about. We know what this motion is about. We know that it is all about restricting the voices of others, restricting the voices who were voted into this place by the people of Queensland, making sure that they are not allowed to hold the government to account, making sure that they are not allowed to have a debate and raise points that their constituents have raised with them, making sure that the government can rush through their agenda and get out of here as quickly as they can for fear that the media may actually pick up on some of the massive errors they make and the times they have to come back into this place to fix up the mistakes that they have made.

We see the power of this House being abused on a regular basis by the government. This business motion is just an example of how they try to try to control everything in the state to their own advantage. They crave power. We know that it is not about serving the people of Queensland because, if it were about serving the people of Queensland, why would they have their voices denied in this place?

Mr Dick: Are they crazy in Canberra too, are they?

Mr WATTS: I hear the member squawking over there. He ran away from Greenslopes to Woodridge and he now tries to silence me in this place. I will not be silenced by the arrogant Treasurer. I will not be silenced by him. I will not be silenced by anybody on the other side of this House, because this House is the people's house. It was the people who put me here.

This business motion is against everything that is democratic in this state. It is nothing to do with good governance. It is simply about silencing people who would have an alternative point of view. That is what it is about. It is about silencing people who would have an alternative point of view. I, for one, will not be silenced by this arrogant government who will not listen to the people of Queensland.

(Time expired)

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

AYES, 51:

ALP, 51—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

NOES, 35:


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

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.41 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders, the order of business for this Thursday's sitting be altered as follows:

1.00 pm-2.30 pm—Lunch break

2.30 pm-3.30 pm—Private members' statements

3.30 pm-4.30 pm—Debate of committee reports

4.30 pm-6.00 pm—Government business

6.00 pm-6.30 pm—Automatic adjournment.


Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SUPERANNUATION (STATE PUBLIC SECTOR) (SCHEME ADMINISTRATION) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 1 September (see p. 2343).

Second Reading

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (11.42 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

As I noted in my introductory remarks, superannuation has improved the standard of living for millions of Australians who would otherwise be forced to rely on the age pension. Australia's superannuation industry is now valued at \$3.3 trillion, more than 1½ times the size of our nation's gross domestic product. Over the next 40 years the industry is forecast to grow to be 2½ times the size of GDP. Even through a once-in-a-century pandemic the value of funds under management in Australia's superannuation system grew by nearly 15 per cent last financial year. As we know, Labor governments built and sustained Australia's modern system of superannuation, and this legislation builds on Labor's proud legacy.

The bill facilitates the proposed merger between QSuper and Sunsuper—two equally strong and respected superannuation funds. The merged entity will be a financial powerhouse for Queensland. It will manage over \$200 billion in funds for its two million members, making it Australia's second largest superannuation fund. Like QSuper and Sunsuper, the combined entity will be based in Queensland. The merged fund will anchor 2,000 jobs in our great state while competing on the global stage, confirming that Queensland is the best place to establish a new business.

The merger will be good for members too. When it comes to superannuation, size is important. Just last week executive board member of the Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority, Margaret Cole, noted—

Size ... is absolutely a key factor influencing not only member outcomes but also the sustainability of outcomes into the future. Increased scale enables trustees to spread fees and costs over a larger membership base, and access higher-earning investments in unlisted assets, such as major infrastructure projects.

Most importantly for the government, the bill protects the hard-earned superannuation of hardworking Queensland government employees.

Queensland is the only state in Australia with a fully provisioned public sector defined benefit superannuation scheme. As at this year's budget: New South Wales' defined benefit fund was \$68 billion in deficit; Victoria had a \$31.2 billion shortfall; and Western Australia's scheme was \$7 billion away from full funding. Queensland's defined benefit scheme is fully provisioned for and will remain fully funded by law.

To protect the government's interests in funding defined benefits, the bill provides government control over the way defined benefit money held in the superannuation fund is invested. Not only does the bill preserve the government's funding guarantee; it includes specific provisions to ensure that defined benefit entitlements cannot be reduced by the merger or into the future. Employees' accumulation entitlements also cannot go down because of the merger, which is a protection under Commonwealth superannuation legislation. The bill ensures that contribution levels for holders of accumulation accounts will continue to be enshrined in Queensland legislation.

Our government is likely to remain the largest contributing employer to the merged fund. Accordingly, our government will continue to have representatives on the board of the merged fund, as it does now for QSuper. The bill provides for the government to play a role in nominating two directors as government representatives to the board. The first board of trustees for the merged fund will be drawn from existing trustees on both boards, while the current chair of QSuper will be the first chair of the merged fund's board.

The merged fund will continue to be the Queensland government's default fund. The review period for the default arrangement will be extended by 10 years. A similar arrangement applies to LGIAsuper, which merged with Energy Super on 1 July 2021.

Our government supported the merger under several conditions. These included: that the merger was in the best interests of members and that members and stakeholders were kept informed of developments; that the government will continue to have access to expert technical superannuation advice about public sector superannuation arrangements; and that the funds' community service activities will continue to assist the most vulnerable Queenslanders. QSuper and Sunsuper have provided assurances that these conditions will continue to be met.

I acknowledge the Economics and Governance Committee's report on the bill, tabled 15 October 2021, and I thank the members of the committee for their work, particularly the chair, the member for Logan. I would also like to thank those who made submissions to the committee about the bill and those who appeared as witnesses as part of the committee's inquiry. The report shows that the committee overwhelmingly supports the bill. Indeed, the committee made just one recommendation to the Legislative Assembly, and that is that the bill be passed. I would like to take the opportunity to again thank committee members and the secretariat for their hard work in considering the bill.

On behalf of the Premier, amendments to the Governor's (Salary and Pensions) Act 2003 will be proposed during consideration in detail. The governors of Queensland serve our state with distinction. Queenslanders should expect that governors enjoy similar arrangements in retirement as other public officials. Historically, governors receive a pension that is offset by pre-existing military, judicial or other public pension arrangements. This policy remains.

The proposed amendments permit future governors to elect either to have the same superannuation arrangements as a public sector employee, including retaining their existing arrangements and choice of fund, or to have a governor's pension. The amendments proposed by the government are fair and recognise the service of governors in a cost-effective way for the people of Queensland. A similar choice is in place for members appointed to the Land Court.

I welcome the support of all members for the bill and I commend the bill to the House.



Mr JANETZKI (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.48 am): At the outset, let me confirm that the opposition will be supporting the bill today.

The proposed merger of QSuper and Sunsuper is a landmark moment for Queensland's financial services industry. The bill, technical in nature, attends to the mechanical aspects of the merger by, among other things: retiring the board of QSuper and moving QSuper's trustees out of the legislative framework; transferring the Sunsuper fund into the QSuper fund by way of a successive fund transfer; ensuring the merged fund continues to be based in Queensland; facilitating the merged fund to be administered by the current Sunsuper corporate trustee that will be renamed and reconstituted and therefore appointed as the trustee for the merged fund; and retaining a statutory framework for state public sector employees' superannuation contribution arrangements.

QSuper and Sunsuper have long and proud histories. They are quintessential Queensland businesses that have helped public and private sector workers save for retirement for generations. In fact, the fund that ultimately became QSuper, the Public Service Superannuation Fund, was established on 1 January 1913.

The fund was opened to full-time salaried Queensland officers of the Crown and started with just over 2,000 members. Members made contributions from their salary and had access to annuity, assurance and incapacity benefits. By 1920 membership of the fund had grown to nearly 5,000 members. Moving forward to 1958, membership had grown to nearly 13,500 members. However, the fund was being compared unfavourably with the superannuation schemes of other states and the Commonwealth.

The year 1959 witnessed a new scheme under the Public Service Superannuation Act and the introduction of widows and children's pensions in Queensland for the very first time. Membership was widened in 1965 to include full-time salaried employees of the railway department, the Public Hospitals Board, the Queensland Health Education Council and the Golden Casket Art Union Office. Portability of superannuation was a feature by 1985, and in 1986 the Commonwealth announced that Australian employees working under an award would receive a three per cent contribution from their employer.

From 1 January 1991, all new Queensland government employees joined the new QSuper scheme and 95 per cent of existing members were grandfathered. In 1992, superannuation became compulsory, with the superannuation guarantee requiring employers to contribute for their employees. In 1997, legislation was introduced to consolidate a range of schemes, including Gosuper, the Voluntary Investment Plan, State Super, Police Super and fire super under the one QSuper scheme. On 1 July 2017, QSuper became a public offer fund and welcomed all new members to join.

Likewise, Sunsuper has been an industry force since it was established in 1987. Incidentally, one of my mentors helped draft the trust deed at the time. The *Courier-Mail* announced the launch of Sunsuper on 2 October 1987 in glowing terms, with the headline 'Superfund for all jobs is launched'. It went on to say—

Unions and employer representatives yesterday launched Queensland's first multi-industry superannuation fund.

The fund, called Sunsuper, has the support of the Queensland Confederation of Industry, the Trades and Labour Council and the Australian Workers' Union. Suncorp will manage the portable fund.

The QCI general manager, Mr Roger Bryce, said the Sunsuper concept stemmed from the March national wage decision when it became clear every employer would have to face the issue of superannuation. Sunsuper's creation has been described to me quite colourfully as the love child of Paul Keating and Sir Joh. By 1990, it was the largest multi-industry fund in Queensland and the sixth largest private sector industry fund in Australia, with a membership beyond 82,000. The chair of the shortly merged fund, Mr Don Luke, became CEO of Sunsuper in 1996, and by 1999 the Sunsuper personal product launched which allowed anyone to join the fund.

The fund witnessed strong growth from 2005, with well-recognised advertising campaigns. The year 2015 saw the appointment of their first independent director, and in 2017 it was Australia's fastest growing top 10 super fund. As at 30 June 2021, Sunsuper had roughly \$90 billion in funds under administration and close to 1.4 million members. QSuper has about \$134 billion in funds under administration, with over 600,000 members. QSuper funds under administration also include more than \$20 billion in a defined benefit fund administered on behalf of the Queensland government.

QSuper was named as the 2021 fund of the year by SuperRatings and Lonsec—the third time in six years the fund had been recognised—and Sunsuper last year took out the Chant West super fund of the year award for the third time in four years. The merged fund—and I note I am a member of both funds—will be Australia's second largest superannuation fund, rivalling AustralianSuper for size and scale. It will be comprised of more than two million members and manage over \$200 billion in funds under management, and the fund will have around 2,000 employees. From conversations with QSuper chair, Mr Luke, and Sunsuper chair, Mr Fraser, it is obvious the herculean efforts that have been expended in reaching this stage. Consultation with government and opposition members has been significant and consistent throughout the years.

In November 2019, QSuper reported that it and Sunsuper were in early discussions over a proposed merger, and in March 2020 the funds announced their intention to enter exclusive due diligence. One year later, QSuper announced that the trustees of QSuper and Sunsuper had signed a heads of agreement to confirm the intention to merge. Submitters to the bill were strongly supportive with few exceptions, including the CCIQ, which has played a substantial role, particularly with respect to Sunsuper throughout the years.

With nearly half of QSuper members over 50, experts have long noted the need to drive an increase of younger people into their membership. The SuperRatings managing director has commented that QSuper primarily exists to manage the retirement nest eggs of public servants, of whom many are retired or are approaching retirement. About 23 per cent of QSuper's members are aged over 60, while a substantial proportion of Sunsuper's membership are still in their 30s. Merging with Sunsuper will establish a broader and younger membership that will aid sustainability and competitiveness in the decades ahead. It will also effectively spread the risk of the economic cycle.

There is no doubt that a merger of this scale will drive efficiencies. Operating costs will be shared across a broader membership base. Expanded investment opportunities and partnerships will be more easily accessed. Better investment decisions within asset classes will be reached. Social impact investment opportunities that return value can be explored as a way to address social ills. New services and products will be inspired by innovation and technological possibilities. All of this should, as the merged fund has indicated, deliver better returns and reduced fees. When combined fees drawn from QSuper and Sunsuper currently total around \$300 million per year, that is a necessary commitment.

There has undoubtedly been an intensifying regulatory pressure for mergers to achieve economies of scale. Had QSuper and Sunsuper not merged, it is likely that they would have received merger offers from other funds across the nation, but it is not just the superannuation industry where there is consolidation activity. APRA is encouraging consolidation in the mutual banking sector too. Heritage Bank and People's Choice are currently completing due diligence, Newcastle Permanent and Greater Bank are also working together, and CUA rebranded as Great Southern Bank earlier this year. APRA chairman Wayne Byres has repeatedly said that the superannuation industry is not delivering the right outcomes, as noted by the Productivity Commission. Last year Mr Byres said—

Trustees have not always been focused on their members' best interests, aggregate fees and costs are too high, insurance has not always been good value for money and there has been too much inefficiency in the system.

In this regard, board composition is always a point of contention. As superannuation fund managers do not have voting rights, it is imperative that boards contain a high degree of experience in relation to governance and transparency. APRA Prudential Standard SPS 510 outlines the high governance standards necessary and directly addresses skills and expertise requirements, conflict management, and independence and transparency obligations. I echo the Productivity Commission's stated view that—

All trustee boards need to steadfastly appoint skilled board members, better manage unavoidable conflicts of interest, and promote member outcomes without fear or favour.

The merged funds board will have 13 members: six employee representatives—that is, union appointments—four employer representatives and three independent appointments. It goes without saying that the government of the day will have influence directly or indirectly in the appointment of

some of these last seven appointments. These arrangements will be laid down in the merged funds' constitution. Although I have not viewed this constituting document, it will address board composition in detail. I believe that 13 directors is far too many for a board, but it is not surprising, given the complexity of the merger, that such a conclusion has been reached. Mr Luke certainly has the experience and expertise to spearhead the merged fund, and I look forward to his leadership in the years ahead.

Let me turn for a moment to the seriousness of superannuation not just for superannuation members but also for our state and nation. For most Australians, their retirement is funded by a mix of the age pension, superannuation and voluntary savings, or at least two out of these three. The federal Treasury 2021 Intergenerational Report details that expenditure on the age pension will actually drop from 2.7 per cent of GDP to 2.1 per cent of GDP in the next 40 years. In the same timeframe, superannuation drawdowns will move from 2.3 per cent of GDP to six per cent of GDP.

There is well over \$3 trillion under management by superannuation funds in Australia. Fundamentally, superannuation is a trade-off between trusting citizens to plan ahead and a desire to ensure they have a quality of life in retirement. Troublingly, the Productivity Commission has noted that 30 per cent of Australians are financially illiterate. On top of this, only 10 per cent of super fund holders switch funds annually—and some of this will be due to their employer switching default funds—while only one in three people have ever changed their investment options.


During 2020, as part of the COVID economic stimulus, \$37.8 billion was withdrawn from superannuation. At the time this was predicted to have a catastrophic impact on the share market and beyond but, as we saw, the share market and superannuation funds experienced strong returns during financial year 2020-21. Each year, superannuation funds collect over \$30 billion in fees from their members. Despite recent downward trends, the Productivity Commission reported in 2019 that Australia still had the highest pension fund fees in the OECD.

The Financial Services Council reported in 2017 that only 23 per cent of millennials trust superannuation institutions and, further, only 39 per cent of all 18- to 24-year-olds have ever read their superannuation statement. Millennials will hold four different jobs by the time they are 30 and, given their lack of engagement with superannuation, that heightens the likelihood of holding multiple accounts. The Productivity Commission found that each additional fund held will erode super balances at retirement by six per cent due to such erosion by fees. I believe it is incumbent on superannuation funds to educate where possible, starting at school age or their first job, to ensure that more citizens understand what they need in retirement and how they will get there. Further, I think the merged fund could explore product offerings to under-35s, especially with the challenges faced by young people seeking to enter the property market. Certainly, any products that could be flexibly used to help build home deposits are worthy of consideration.

Notably, the federal government's retirement income review showed that there is, on average, a 22 per cent difference between median superannuation balances between men and women at retirement age. Worse still, women, particularly if they are single, divorced or widowed, are much more likely to suffer poverty, housing stress and homelessness in retirement. Earlier this year, Senator Jane Hume was appointed Australia's first Minister for Women's Economic Security. That appointment was in addition to her existing superannuation ministerial responsibilities. The opposition has also appointed a shadow minister for women's economic security, the member for Whitsunday. One area of focus for our economic team is to highlight the superannuation gap for women and the causal contributory factors. These include, among others, the gender pay gap, time out of the workforce due to caring responsibilities and the decision of many to work part-time.

It is exciting that there is a possibility of building Brisbane as a financial services challenger in the decades to come. Compare QIC when it was established in 1991 with where it is now. Now imagine this merged fund and what it might look like in 30 years. Imagine homegrown talent no longer needing to leave for Sydney or Melbourne let alone Hong Kong, London or New York. Imagine a confident Brisbane with a financial services hub right here that will provide more options for young people right across our state—technology, finance professionals, lawyers, accountants and a host of other professions building a career right here at a national financial services powerhouse.

From here, I wish the respective boards the very best in their final deliberations. My hope is that the final prudential approvals are granted expeditiously and that the boards can complete their relevant processes. The passage of this enabling legislation is an important piece in a very complex puzzle that will reach its conclusion in the next few months. Queensland and Queenslanders, both of today and future generations, stand to benefit greatly from this merger.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (12.04 pm): I stand to speak in support of the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill. As chair of the Economics and Governance Committee, I wish to inform the House of the role of the committee in examining the bill. On 1 September 2021, the bill was introduced to the Legislative Assembly by the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment and referred to the committee for examination. The committee was required to report by 15 October 2021. During the process, we invited written submissions on the bill and identified stakeholders. We received nine submissions from a variety of people involved in superannuation administration and industry, including: the Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland; the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union; the institutions of QSuper and Sunsuper—and there was a supplementary response to questions raised during our hearings; the Australian Institute of Superannuation Trustees; LGIAsuper; Maurice Blackburn Lawyers; the Queensland Council of Unions; the Queensland Police Union of Employees; and, of course, the Australian Workers' Union Queensland.

It is important that in this place we should declare any interests. So many of us—in fact, probably all of us—have an interest in either QSuper or Sunsuper. Of course, I have that interest. It is a very broad interest, and we have the same interest as thousands of Queenslanders. It is not required for all members to declare that because it is such a broad interest in terms of the laws we are debating, but I make that comment for all MPs.

The committee received submissions and had a written briefing on the bill from Queensland Treasury prior to the public briefing by department officials on 13 September. We also requested some written advice from Treasury in response to some issues raised in submissions and other matters. We considered holding a public hearing and there was broad discussion amongst the committee about that. We invited stakeholders to express an interest in participating. We noted that from the beginning there was widespread support from submitters and decided not to proceed with a hearing, given respondents indicated they were generally satisfied with the relevant matters canvassed in the written submissions and in the examination of the bill by Queensland Treasury at the public briefing. We thank all of the submitters and Queensland Treasury for the information they provided to the committee and note the broad support this has from those who submitted.

The objectives of this bill are to enable and support the merger of QSuper and Sunsuper, to retire the board of QSuper and to move the trust deed for QSuper out of legislation. Committee members were concerned that this entity continues to be based in Queensland. It is really important that we ensure this institution continues to be based in Queensland. It is an attractive institution. More and more people are putting their superannuation into it, and we will see that grow across Australia. However, we want it to continue to be based in Queensland. We want this to continue to be part of a strong financial sector—an anchor for this growing industry.

We in Queensland—and in Brisbane particularly—have suffered so much from the domination of southern capitals in the banking and finance sector. We want this legislation to be a springboard to continuing to grow. We know that Queensland is the most attractive place to do business and is an excellent place to base a financial institution, to strengthen the sector. If the merger proceeds, this legislation will continue to ensure a real powerhouse financial institution is based in Queensland.

It is important to maintain the statutory framework for state public sector employees' superannuation contribution arrangements, and I note the number of public sector employees and past public sector employees who have defined benefit superannuation schemes. It is important to their financial wellbeing that they have a defined benefit fund. I also note, as the Treasurer did and the opposition spokesperson did not, that we have a fully funded defined benefit superannuation scheme—the only one of its type at a state level in Australia, and that is something that Queenslanders can be rightfully proud of. I note that this policy is about governments thinking ahead and taking action long before there is a perceived need. Both in our defined benefit fund and the superannuation sector in general, that was a public policy that was undertaken.


When Keating was leading this nation to have compulsory super, we constantly saw that being knocked by the Liberals in Canberra in that they wanted to diminish the compulsory nature of superannuation, and we still see that today. We constantly hear a refrain that people should be able to move money out of their super for particular purposes. Indeed, COVID-19 was taken as an opportunity for people to move money out of their super fund. Someone's intention now as a 19- or 20-year-old may be in conflict with their future selves who would much prefer the security of a superannuation scheme. If we were to survey Queenslanders over time, there might be short-term decisions that people make. However, if we surveyed them later in life, people are very thankful that they made that contribution to their superannuation scheme. Getting that scheme up and running was difficult for the

Keating government and it was knocked by the Liberal Party in Canberra, but without this scheme we would not have these powerhouse institutions; nor would we have these investment vehicles that help drive investment in our nation.

Through the eighties I remember the constant refrain was that we had a savings problem, and this has ensured that we have a very strong savings sector that now seeks to diversify funding throughout the world as part of a modern and advanced financial sector. However, this is constantly being run down by the LNP. As we speak there are strategies being put in place to try and diminish this by the Commonwealth government, and it is really disappointing to see that. We have also seen the short-term thinking in other states which did not take the provisions to do the full funding of defined benefit super. They were taking from future taxpayers to pay the liabilities they were accruing today, whereas in Queensland we acted in time to take those hard decisions and ensure there was funding for our defined benefit superannuation scheme.

It is important to note that in the last few years the superannuation system has taken on board the process that when the trustees and the boards examine their role they see it in the best interests of their members to find efficiencies and to find larger funds that can give them more versatility in their investments and, of course, get better returns for their members. That is what is driving the boards of both Sunsuper and QSuper to seek to achieve those efficiencies and to seek to achieve greater returns. Both of the institutions historically have been very strong and this strength will be combined in this new institution, ensuring that they can make the investments that perhaps were too big for one entity alone to do, but they can now make those investments after the merger to get higher returns for Queenslanders.

There is a positive relationship between fund size and net returns to profit members. There is also a reduction in the total administrative costs. Both of those things are valuable to those who are part of our superannuation schemes. After combining the two schemes, the merged fund will have over two million members—and no doubt such a strong scheme will attract more—over \$224 billion worth of funds in management and will fundamentally be a fantastically strong Queensland institution, with over 73 per cent of members based in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House and encourage all members to continue to support both the passage of this bill and also in their general public lives a strong superannuation scheme that puts in place savings for the future of every Queensland and every Australian.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (12.14 pm): Obviously superannuation is a big part of workers' lives right throughout Australia. This is an important bill in terms of amalgamating two very large superannuation funds into one which will hopefully, as per the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority's desire, bring about savings to members. There are about 1.4 million members in Sunsuper, about 600,000 members in QSuper and 2,000 employees who we hope will stay in Queensland in the longer term with the headquarters being up there. The bill is well worth supporting to see this new arrangement put in place and I, along with my colleagues, will be supporting the passage of this bill.

From the outset I would like to say that I am a member of both QSuper through my job here in the parliament and I have been a longer term member of Sunsuper. In other words, I am getting amalgamated. Again, amalgamation has been a big part of my life. One question that I have which I will ask up-front—and I have received some advice back from Treasury on the matter—is in relation to life insurance. It will not benefit me much, but it may benefit some others involved in my family.

I obviously have two sets of life insurance involved with both superannuation policies. We asked Treasury about the outcome of that when they amalgamate—that is, will I have one policy or two? Unfortunately, the response from Treasury was that that would be a matter for the new board. It is not that I do not trust boards or amalgamations and all those sorts of matters, but I really would like the Queensland Treasurer to make it very clear that I will still retain all aspects of my two policies unchanged when the amalgamation has been completed and the new boards will not be able to make any alternative arrangements on my two sets of life insurance. That is being up-front in terms of declaring my personal interest on the matter, but I am representing those thousands of other Queenslanders who have interests in both superannuation bodies and I am sure that they would like that clarified as well. I think it is a very reasonable thing for the Treasurer to answer in his wrap-up later on and I look forward to a positive outcome in that respect.

In essence, the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority has basically said that trustees have not always been focused on members' best interests and added that aggregate fees and costs are too high. Insurance has not always been good value for money and there have been too many inefficiencies in the system, and that is one of the reasons this merger has been taking place since 2019. We would support more efficiencies and better outcomes for our superannuation dollar in terms of preparing all

Queensland employees for their retirement to make sure that they are served well when their working life ceases. However, I cannot help but notice that there will be 13 new board members and I understand that six out of the 13 will be union officials. I understand one Mr Andrew Fraser—a former treasurer of Queensland who actually lost Queensland's AAA credit rating—will be one of those people guiding my funds. I get very nervous when I see these so-called experts in charge of my funds, particularly when that particular person led Queensland down a difficult debt alley.

While I am on my feet, I bring to the attention of the House the defined benefit scheme with QSuper which is worth \$20 billion so that public servants and politicians who were on that defined benefit scheme have an adequate retirement. I do understand the Premier is one of those persons on the defined benefit scheme even though she came in when I did and I do not have a defined benefit scheme. I am not part of the \$20 billion payout. I understand that when the Premier leaves town she will get a meagre \$250,000 a year for the rest of her life, or whatever the defined benefit system deals out to her.


I am sure that if I moved a motion in this House that the previous members who were getting the defined benefit scheme would be not entitled to that benefit scheme, with all these members who are not getting the defined benefit scheme I am sure that motion would be carried. But we are not going to do that today. I feel it is an unequal basis of our life here in the parliament. I am sure that some of the members would support me in that particular area.

An independent auditor of the government tells us that after the scheme was raided by the Treasurer over the last couple of years—as we know, the defined benefit scheme has been touched up—that it is \$2 billion in the red. It is short of funding, despite what the chairman of our committee just said in his speech. The State Actuary, a government employee, says it is \$3 billion in the black. Who do we believe? The independent auditor or the government employee?

Mr King: The government!

Mr STEVENS: Trust the government? Good luck with that in the pub test. Trust the government! We all believe in that! The defined benefit scheme has been robbed over the last couple of years. Terry Mackenroth used a lot of taxpayers' funds a number of years ago to top up the defined benefit scheme to make sure it was covered. Our independent auditor says it is a couple of billion short. As Mark Twain famously said, there are lies, damned lies and statistics. The defined benefit scheme can be made to look like it has a positive outcome, but I will take the independent auditor's advice every day.

We have concerns in relation to the board make-up. We have concerns in terms of this government's use of the \$20 billion defined benefit fund that is in place for the retirement of public servants throughout Queensland. We are concerned about those matters, but in terms of duplication of workplace matters in those two superannuation funds, then we are seriously hoping, in the genuine interests of Queensland employees, that this amalgamation brings about identifiable cost savings. A report should come back to the parliament within the next two to three years after the merger has been completed on the savings achieved by this amalgamation and how it has benefited the superannuation of employees throughout Queensland. That would be a wonderful way to prove exactly why we are passing this particular legislation. It should come back within the next two to three years because that is when those cost savings should be identified and achieved. With those comments, I will be supporting the bill before the House.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (12.24 pm): I rise to support the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021. As a member of the Economics and Governance Committee, we inquired into this bill following its introduction on 1 September 2021. I thank my fellow committee members and the secretariat, as well as submitters, in relation to their involvement in this inquiry into the bill before us. From the outset I declare that I am a member of QSuper, like over 620,000 other Australians, having been a state sector employee since 1977 and, unlike the member for Mermaid Beach, enjoy the defined benefit scheme.

The purpose of this bill is to provide the legislative framework to support the merger of two of Queensland's largest super funds, QSuper and Sunsuper. It does this by retiring the board of QSuper as trustee of QSuper and moving the trust deed for QSuper out of legislation, ensuring the merged superannuation entity continues to be based in Queensland, maintaining public sector employees' defined benefit protections within legislation and retaining a statutory framework for state public sector employees' superannuation contribution arrangements.

It should be noted that the merger of these two entities, between them having over two million members and administering over \$224 billion worth of funds, is at their request. The purpose of this bill is merely to facilitate the legislative requirements of the merger. This is a merger that began in a memorandum of understanding back in 2020 which required close examination and due diligence due

to the legislative requirements that any mergers of funds must be in their members' best financial interests. It should be noted that both of these funds are profit-for-member organisations—that is, that any profits made are returned to members rather than shareholders.

During the inquiry process I asked about the current climate of mergers within the superannuation industry and how a reduction in the number of funds was beneficial for consumers given the age-old adage that more competition in the marketplace was better. I was advised that in June 2013 there were 279 funds regulated by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, or APRA, and as at March this year there were only just over 150. APRA actually encourages the reduction and merger of funds. I was advised that in times of market shocks which the COVID-19 pandemic has caused there has been an impact on funds' flow and liquidity due to declining member contributions and early release withdrawals. Consolidated and larger funds are better placed to weather these market shocks.


On top of that, with economies of scale merged and larger funds are able to deliver better performance with lower fees for members. This was backed by the Productivity Commission report in 2018 which found compelling evidence that larger funds appeared to make better investment decisions within asset classes and that reduced administrative costs associated with increased scales and saved members an estimated \$4.5 billion during the period 2004 to 2017. During the public briefing the Under Treasurer specifically made mention of the benefit of IT spend by funds and the advantages of merged systems and better member services.

If I may turn to the more substantive aspects of the bill, this legislation must make specific amendments to the Superannuation Act as it currently provides that the membership of the QSuper board and appointments of its members are to be prescribed in regulation. There are a number of regulations which establishes the QSuper scheme and articulates its governing rules. The merger of QSuper and Sunsuper will constitute a board which will be administered under a trust deed, not subordinate legislation. Accordingly, the bill seeks to omit the QSuper board provisions from the Superannuation Act. The make up of the new board has been agreed to by both funds.

The bill includes amendments to require that the merged fund continues to be based in Queensland. This is ensured by stipulating that the principal place of business under the Corporations Act is in Queensland and that the new trustee's CEO and the majority of the trustee's directors and key management personnel ordinarily reside in Queensland. This means Queensland will be home to Australia's second largest superannuation fund and the over 2,000 jobs that it encompasses will be Queensland jobs.

The bill also requires that the consolidated trust deed of the merged fund continues the provisions of the QSuper trust deed. This is necessary to continue the defined benefits for state sector employees who already hold it. The safeguarding provisions contained within this bill ensures that any changes to defined benefits cannot be detrimental to current members.

Queensland continues to be the only state in Australia with a fully funded defined benefit superannuation scheme. QSuper and Sunsuper have both confirmed that, under the merger arrangements, there will be no change to the benefit design for existing defined benefit members. The bill also provides that public sector employee superannuation contribution arrangements are retained within the statutory framework. The regulation that supports this must be made within one year of the commencement of this bill. That does not leave much time for dillydallying, but until the regulation is finalised a transitional arrangement will be in place to ensure that the current contribution rates continue as per the current superannuation deed. Queensland's and Australia's current superannuants under both of these schemes can be assured that their contribution arrangements will be continued until such time as that regulation comes into place. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (12.30 pm): I also rise to speak to the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021. I would like to acknowledge my colleagues on the Economics and Governance Committee, which deliberated on the bill. In simple terms, the merger of QSuper and Sunsuper, two large Queensland based superannuation funds, makes sense because it will reduce fees for members. Sunsuper and QSuper say the merger will set them up to create a \$200 billion fund with two million members. Based on the latest data from industry regulator the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, APRA, the merged fund could rival or even replace AustralianSuper as the biggest super fund in the country. Currently, AustralianSuper has around \$191.42 billion worth of assets and around 2.1 million members.

QSuper and Sunsuper signed a heads of agreement in March this year. Currently QSuper has \$130 billion in funds under management and 600,000 members; Sunsuper has \$90 billion in funds under management and 1.4 million members. Sunsuper and QSuper claim the new super fund will have

the scale to deliver outstanding services, greater efficiencies, and lower costs for members. It is believed the merger is set to change the superannuation landscape and would have implications for more than 1.5 million Australians. The merger is part of a broader trend sparked by calls from APRA for super funds to reduce complexity for members by merging. The regulator was given stronger powers to take action against the trustees of underperforming funds in early 2019, following recommendations made in the banking royal commission. The banking royal commission's hefty final report contained 76 recommendations designed to shake up Australia's banking, superannuation, insurance and financial advice sectors.

The Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990 is to be amended to: retire the board of QSuper and provide for the superannuation scheme to be administered by a corporate trustee; provide for the scheme's trust deed, the Superannuation (State Public Sector) Deed 1990, which sets out the scheme's rules, to be moved out of legislation through its conversion to a non-statutory instrument in keeping with the new status of the trustee as a proprietary company; ensure the merged superannuation entity continues to be based in Queensland; maintain public sector employees' defined benefit protections within legislation; and retain a statutory framework for state public sector employees' superannuation contribution arrangements.

The government's agreement to facilitate the necessary amendments to the superannuation act was subject to the following conditions being met: the merger is in the best interests of members; there be appropriate governance and protection to preserve members' benefits and manage the government's liabilities in relation to the defined benefit scheme; the continued representation of the Queensland government as an employer/sponsor on the merged fund's board; the continued delivery of certain administration functions for the government; the continued delivery of community service activities, particularly those supporting Queenslanders facing challenges accessing their superannuation; and consultation and satisfactory outcomes with relevant stakeholders.

On their part, QSuper and Sunsuper have stated that there will be no change to the benefit design for existing defined benefit members or the manner in which defined benefit assets are invested by the merged fund's trustee as a result of the proposed merger. They intend to deliver reduced fees as a result of anticipated operating cost benefits and material efficiencies, and they expect to be able to offer new product and service opportunities that will be in the best financial interests of the members. They are committed to providing employment security for the existing workforces, with all staff below senior management having been assured of their ongoing employment for at least two years.

The committee heard from a number of key stakeholders, including the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, CCIQ, which welcomed the bill's facilitation of the proposed merger. The CCIQ submitted that it 'will create a dynamic, innovative, and highly competitive financial entity, headquartered in Brisbane, that will drive better superannuation outcomes for members and seek to make superannuation easier to manage for business.' Acknowledging, too, the significant consolidation underway in the superannuation industry and the strong track record of the two funds, the CCIQ stated—

If the benefits of size and scale can be brought to life for Sunsuper and QSuper members as a result of the merger it will lead to lower fees and larger retirement balances for members.


...

... providing Queensland retirees with a greater standard of living in their retirement—with more income to spend in local economies which drives economic activity.

The LGIASuper submission expressed support, specifically in relation to the bill's amendment to extend the time frame for an independent review of the default fund arrangements for state and local government employees from five years to 10 years. They also said that almost inevitably other merged partners would be located outside of Queensland, which would result in significant missed opportunities for the state.

The two funds affirm their strong support for the bill's proposed amendments and appropriately facilitating the merger as per the terms of its agreement. Of the merger, QSuper and Sunsuper submitted that the combination of QSuper's public sector heritage in Queensland and Sunsuper's national employment base would create a diversified and resilient organisation of world-class capability. The funds asserted that they expected that the merged fund would have access to expanded investment opportunities and partnerships because of its scale, which, coupled with trading and cost efficiencies, would assist in enhancing returns; it would have a strengthened national footprint with its Queensland headquarters supported by a strong presence in all states and more regions beyond what

would be the case as separate funds; it would have a greater ability to build new and innovative services and products that will flow through to better retirement outcomes for members; and it would have a more balanced membership demographic, contributing to greater long-term sustainability for the merged fund. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (12.36 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate before the House on the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021. The main objective of the bill is to facilitate QSuper's and Sunsuper's proposed structure for the merged fund by amending the Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990. From the outset it must be noted that the bill protects the Queensland government's interests and the interests of Queensland government employees. I also note that I am a member of the QSuper fund.

The Palaszczuk government has supported the merger under several conditions, including that the merger is in the best interests of members, that members and stakeholders are kept informed of developments, that the government will continue to have access to expert technical superannuation advice about public sector superannuation arrangements and that their community service activities will continue to assist Queensland's vulnerable. Each of those key points has been met in the bill.

QSuper is the third largest superannuation fund in Australia with \$120 billion in total assets. Sunsuper is Australia's eighth largest fund with \$75 billion in total assets. The merged fund would have at least \$200 billion in net assets and two million members, mainly Queenslanders.

Both boards of QSuper and Sunsuper have agreed to merge the two funds, which will establish Australia's second largest superannuation fund, only behind AustralianSuper. As required by the bill, both funds provide assurances that public sector employees' defined benefit entitlements cannot be reduced, that a statutory framework for employees' contribution levels will be retained and that the merged fund will be based in Queensland. The bill ensures that the merged fund will preserve the entitlements of QSuper members and will protect Queensland's defined benefit liabilities. The bill also moves QSuper's trust deed from legislation to align the merged fund's governance structure with that of Australia's other largest superannuation funds.

Any changes that impact on member benefits, member contributions or government contributions can only proceed with the consent of the treasurer of the day. That is important, as this ensures Queensland government employees' contribution levels into accumulation accounts continue to have government control. The bill requires contribution levels to continue to be prescribed in Queensland legislation.

As stated in the Economics and Governance Committee report No. 15, the bill sets out that the merged fund will continue to be the Queensland government's default fund. In recognition of the complexity of the administration of superannuation, the bill extends the current review period for the default arrangement to up to 10 years after the funds merge, although that extension does not prevent a review in the meantime.

As the Treasurer indicated earlier, Queensland will continue to be the only state in Australia with a fully funded defined benefit scheme. The legislative guarantee to fund defined benefit entitlements continues intact. At this year's budget, in comparison, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia were either in deficit or had a shortfall in funding with regard to their funds. The important matter to recognise here is that other states' defined benefit funds are not protected to the same extent the Queensland fund is. This legislation ensures the government's interests in funding defined benefits provides government control over the way defined benefit money held in the superannuation fund is invested.

It is important to note that the merged fund will be based in Queensland. I will repeat that: the bill ensures that the merged fund is based in Queensland, building on opportunities QSuper and Sunsuper have already provided as the state's largest superannuation fund and amongst the largest funds in the country. The merger is expected to anchor 2,000 jobs in Queensland, with the boards of both funds having made strong commitments around employment security for rank-and-file employees with existing employees being protected. The merged fund will compete nationally, but its headquarters will remain in Brisbane. The registered office, the main office and the majority of the trustee's business areas will remain in Queensland. All of this means increased account balances for members, higher retirement incomes and a boost to economic activity in Queensland which is what Labor government does well.

Superannuation arrangements before 1992 were, for most, a hit-and-miss affair, mainly set up under industrial awards and fiercely negotiated by the union movement in support of their members. Since being legislated just on 30 years ago by the federal Labor government led by the great Bob

Hawke and Paul Keating, who understood that a national compulsory superannuation scheme was a way to provide a mechanism for Australians to save for their retirement, superannuation has given security and comfort to millions of predominantly working-class people.

I will show my age here, but I was there back then during the decade and a half of my non-superannuated working life, working from week to week to barely pay the family bills. Saving for retirement was something only the well-to-do and the rich did. My family and I were flat out trying to survive. The federally legislated superannuation guarantee introduced by the Keating Labor government in 1992 was a godsend. It meant that millions of Australians who otherwise would have been forced to rely on the age pension have, and will continue to have, an opportunity to retire with a much better standard of living, deserving of their sweat and toil in building our great nation. This was Labor government foresight that has now gone on to grow funds worth \$3.3 trillion, underpinning the wealth of our state and our nation.


For Queensland, the fund merger this bill provides will make us an even more attractive place for new businesses to invest in, enriching the state in the eyes of the world. Having a \$200 billion superannuation fund in Queensland reinforces that our state is the preferred destination for businesses to establish and grow as we move out of the COVID pandemic and is good for business.

The Palaszczuk government supports the fund's proposed governance model as it aligns with other large funds in Australia and is one that serves best a fund that is regulated by the Australian government, as most funds are.

In contrast to QSuper, the trustee of the merged fund will not be a statutory body. However, the Queensland government, which has a very significant interest as possibly the largest contributing employer to the merged fund, will continue to have representation on the trustee board. The very first board of trustees for the merged fund will be drawn from the existing trustees from both current boards. The Queensland government is confident that the proposed arrangements for trustee nomination and representation of the merged fund will result in the same great relationship as it currently has with QSuper's board of trustees.

When the boards of QSuper and Sunsuper first approached the government about their proposal to merge, the government indicated its in-principle support based on several non-negotiables, one of which was providing assurance that the merger was in the members' best interests. The funds have provided forecast data that showed administrative costs will reduce and investment performance will improve in the merged fund which the government is satisfied will be passed on to members through lower fees and higher returns. This data also reinforces the reasons the Australian government is encouraging superannuation funds to merge.

As a member of the Economics and Governance Committee, I would like to put on the record a big thank you to the committee secretariat for their work in assisting the committee through its inquiry process on this bill and note that most feedback the committee received during consideration indicated that respondents were generally satisfied that the relevant matters and issues related to the merger had been canvassed and resolved. This merged fund will serve the people of Queensland well and will continue to build on the Palaszczuk government's economic recovery plan moving forward, turbocharging Queensland retirement incomes for many decades to come. I support the bill before the House.

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (12.45 pm): I rise to address the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021. I note at the outset that the LNP will not be opposing this bill, which seeks to merge QSuper and Sunsuper and will create the second largest superannuation fund in Australia. As has been noted by others, the merged fund will have roughly two million members, including most Queensland state government employees. While this bill is largely technical in nature, the implications of the bill will affect many Queenslanders. On that note, I should declare that I am a member of QSuper as the default state government superannuation fund, as declared on my Register of Members' Interests.

I note that all submissions to the committee process supported the bill, with Maurice Blackburn observing that Sunsuper's total and permanent disability insurance provisions are inferior to other funds.

Outside of their home, for most Australians superannuation is their largest asset. It is an important asset that is designed to provide independence and options for Australians after they finish work. Australia's superannuation system is a system that relies on trust—trust so that Australians can have confidence that the custodians of their retirement savings act in their best interests. That is why it is important that this bill gets the settings right.

I understand the desire for mergers such as the one we are addressing today, which seeks to create efficiencies as operating costs are shared across a larger membership base. The rationale for this merger between QSuper and Sunsuper also has the benefit of diversifying the age and distribution of members of the funds, because Sunsuper has a considerably younger membership than QSuper. That is important to ensure that superannuation funds are sustainable for the long term.

Disappointingly, in the last seven years we have seen this Labor state government dip their hand into the accrued employer fund which is set aside to pay for the state government's public sector defined benefit superannuation obligations, and they have done that many times. When it has been politically expedient to bail out their consistent mismanagement of the budget, Labor have raided funds set aside for their superannuation obligations to public servants. In doing so, they have exposed Queenslanders to greater risk that there will be insufficient funds to meet future defined benefit obligations.

Government members interjected.

Mr MICKELBERG: If you sit there and listen, you might actually learn something. I acknowledge that the defined—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Order, members! Please direct your comments through the chair.

Mr MICKELBERG: I know that those opposite do not like it when we criticise them for raiding public servants' superannuation funds. I acknowledge that defined benefit pensions of Queensland public servants are protected in law, but raiding the funds set aside to meet those obligations at a time when the market is at its peak is irresponsible, and it exposes Queensland taxpayers to potentially needing to tip in more cash to meet those obligations in the future, particularly when market conditions are not so rosy in the future. It is irresponsible, it is reckless and we have seen this government do it too many times.

As was mentioned by the shadow Treasurer, it is clear that the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority believes that the superannuation industry is not delivering the right outcomes. The chair of APRA, Wayne Byres, said last year—

Trustees have not always been focused on members' best interests ...
and—

... aggregate fees and costs are too high, insurance has not always been good value for money and there has been too much inefficiency in the system.

While I recognise that some other super funds have a greater number of issues, such as those mentioned by Mr Byres, QSuper and Sunsuper are not immune from those same criticisms.

In my previous employment, providing advice to small and family businesses, too often I dealt with people who were unable to claim on insurance held within their superannuation when they needed it most. Queenslanders deserve better than to pay for insurance through an entire working life, such as total and permanent disability insurance or income protection insurance, and then find that it does not pay out when they need it most due to a technicality. I urge the combined entity and those who oversight it to ensure that the insurances offered actually meet the needs of their members.

Additionally, I would urge caution to ensure that board members are appointed because of the skills they bring to the board not because they satisfy some ulterior motive to provide a job to a union or Labor mate.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Pine Rivers and member for Maryborough, cease your interjections.

Mr MICKELBERG: Just last week we saw CFMEU state secretary Michael Ravbar attack industry super fund CBUS because they sought to act in the best interests of their members, rather than comply with union demands. In their criticism of CBUS CEO Justin Arter, the CFMEU criticised CBUS's approach to EBA negotiations and described CBUS's approach as 'cynical corporate hypocrisy at its worst' and 'bastardry', and encouraged CFMEU members to change funds away from CBUS.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, I ask you to withdraw that unparliamentary word. I realise you are quoting somebody else, but we cannot do that.

Mr MICKELBERG: I withdraw. They encouraged CFMEU members to change funds away from CBUS. Despite the fact that CBUS is acting in the best interests of its members, they have been attacked by the CFMEU for not complying with union demands. The fact that some CBUS members

may also be CFMEU members does not absolve the CBUS trustees from acting in the best interests of all CBUS members. Industry super funds do not exist to serve at the whim of union masters and should always act in the best interests of superannuation members. Without careful management and a focus on members' interests, the same situation could exist in the merged fund.

This merger is an opportunity to drive Queensland's financial services industry and it will result in a broadly superior outcome for QSuper and Sunsuper members as they sit now. That is why we will not be opposing the bill, but that is not to say there is not room for improvement in the superannuation offering that is currently the default superannuation offering for Queensland public servants. Superannuation offerings for Queenslanders should always act in their members' best interests and not in those of their union masters or for some ulterior motive.

We will not be opposing this bill. However, I would ask that the 13 board members who sit on the combined entity always act in the interests—

Government members interjected.

Mr MICKELBERG: It is interesting to hear those opposite chirping when a few of them have a history of emailing mates about appointments on different boards and different industry super fund mergers. One of them over there is a little quiet at the moment because he has a bit form on this. We know that those opposite are owned by their union masters. Unfortunately, they would like to see industry super funds also owned by their union masters. Their track record speaks for itself. The Minister for Transport and Main Roads is not chirping too much because he knows his track record is that he would like to see—

Mr MADDEN: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I do not see how this affects the bill. I would ask that you get the member to return to the long title of the bill.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Ipswich West, there is no point of order. I have been listening closely to what the member for Buderim has been talking about and note that he is talking about board composition.

Mr MICKELBERG: It is interesting to see the member for Ipswich West defend his left faction union mates after he defected from the right faction. Well done, member for Ipswich West. I am sure that will win you some brownie points. Hopefully we will see him as the minister for agriculture in the not too distant future.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, I am going to start warning people shortly. We have had a peaceful debate up until now. I understand the member for Buderim is being a little provocative, but I will start warning members for their interjections. Minister for Public Works, you will cease your interjections.

Mr MICKELBERG: We will not be opposing the bill. As I said, I call on the 13 board members who are subsequently appointed to act in the best interests of their members at all times.

 **Mr MELLISH (Aspley—ALP) (12.53 pm):** I am pleased to hear the member for Buderim endorse CBUS Super and industry super in general. I am sure he would extend that praise to the incoming chair of CBUS Super if he cares to look that up.

Superannuation funds in Australia broadly fall into five main categories: industry funds, retail funds, public sector funds, corporate funds and self-managed funds.

Mr Brown interjected.

Mr MELLISH: I will take the interjection from the member for Capalaba. For more than 100 years QSuper has been the public sector super fund for current and former Queensland government employees and their spouses. Since 2017 they have been open to all Australians to join. Their history predates the introduction of compulsory superannuation by federal Labor in the early 1990s by many years. Contrastingly, Sunsuper has only been around since 1987.

Both of them are essentially profit-for-members funds, solely focused on helping their members, in the public service and otherwise, achieve their best retirement outcome. They do this by earning strong, long-term investment returns and charging lower fees. They do not have shareholders that need dividends and they do not clip the ticket with high fees like many retail super funds. In outcomes they are similar to successful industry super funds. In fact, I think APRA even classes Sunsuper as an industry fund for their purposes.

As we know, the main objective of the bill is to facilitate QSuper's and Sunsuper's proposed structure for the merged fund by amending the Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990. The bill protects the government's interests and the interests of Queensland government employees. When the boards of QSuper and Sunsuper first approached the government about their proposal to merge, the government indicated its in-principle support because it could see the likely benefits for members. The government has had to be certain that it was in the members' best interests for the funds to merge as the main driving goal.

This is of course why the federal government and their agencies such as APRA are encouraging superannuation funds to merge. The benefits of scale are there for all to see. The funds have provided forecast data that shows the administrative costs will reduce and investment performance will improve in the merged fund. The government is satisfied this will be passed on to members through lower fees and higher returns. The funds have also reassured the government that they are being open and transparent with their members about the merger—another condition of the government in allowing the merger to occur.

The merger will establish Australia's second largest superannuation fund, behind only AustralianSuper. The merged fund would have \$200 billion in net assets and two million members, mainly Queenslanders. The benefits to Queenslanders will be tremendous. It will be a super-duper super fund, if you will. The merged fund will continue to be the Queensland government's default fund. I, of course, declare that it is my superannuation fund, as it is for most members in here.


To ensure Queensland government employees' contribution levels into accumulation accounts continue to have government control, the bill requires contribution levels to continue to be prescribed in Queensland legislation. We are also ensuring that the merged entity will be based in Queensland. The legislative guarantee to fund defined benefit entitlements continues intact. Queensland will continue to be the only state in Australia with a fully funded defined benefit scheme.

I note that New South Wales's defined benefit fund was \$68 billion in deficit and Victoria's has a shortfall, as does Western Australia. We can compare Queensland's prudent approach—with a fully funded defined benefit scheme—to what is happening in New South Wales and we find that it is over \$68 billion in deficit in addition to having a debt-to-revenue ratio of 130 per cent in their latest budget. Worryingly, New South Wales has recently started trying to play riskier parts of the stock market to recoup some of their losses, like a gambler looking for one big win to get them square. A *Financial Review* article in August this year titled 'NSW's "risky" \$10b bet on markets' reads—

The NSW government will borrow more than \$10 billion to inject money into a fund buying stocks and other global financial market assets, in an under-the-radar budget strategy that public finance and credit analysts warn will put taxpayer money at risk.

While we are sensibly merging super funds to help Queenslanders in retirement even more, New South Wales is taking their money down to the horse track to see how it goes.

To protect the government's interests in funding defined benefits, the bill provides government control over the way defined benefit money held in the superannuation fund is invested. This merger essentially means increased retirement incomes for Queenslanders and a boost to economic activity in Queensland. Queensland is an attractive place for new businesses to invest in, proven again this month with new billion dollar investments in our hydrogen industry in particular. Having a \$200 billion superannuation fund in Queensland reinforces that this state is the preferred destination for businesses to establish and grow. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (12.58 pm): I want to touch on and cover off on a few things in relation to this bill in the time I have. As the deputy leader of the LNP has said, we will be supporting this legislation. The history of QSuper has been relayed by many people in this place, as has the history of Sunsuper. Like many in this place, I am a member of both funds as is my wife. Two of my children are members of Sunsuper. It is obviously a fund that has performed well over the years, as has QSuper.


More importantly, I want to discuss the role of superannuation because I believe that superannuation has become an integral part of the compact of employment in Australia between employers and employees. As an integral part of that compact, it is incumbent on us as the people charged with legislating for superannuation, and particularly for QSuper, to make sure that the members of that fund receive the utmost consideration in regard to this merger. It might be convenient for boards and it might be seen as the way forward to get the mass and the size that is being spoken about here—the \$200-plus billion—but before we go too much further, we do need to make sure that it is in the best interests of the members of that fund.

Debate, on motion of Mr Nicholls, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Queensland Health; Tourism Industry; Hallam, Mr G

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): On behalf of every Queensland, I ask: what is going on with the Queensland health system? What is this government doing to fix the Queensland Health crisis? Here we are in parliament for another week and another chapter of the Queensland Health crisis—a book that tells a story of spiralling ambulance ramping, code yellows becoming business as usual, elective surgery waiting lists spiralling out of control, on-time surgeries blown apart and today we hear of a crisis in Mackay, a crisis that started with the accreditation of the department of obstetrics and gynaecology being stripped in September, yet it was not until the microscope was put on this government in the last sitting week that a review was ordered, that those allegedly responsible were stopped from operating.

Today I asked the question. I listened to the prewritten answer that did not answer the question, so I will ask again: how many young mums were put through surgery that was performed by somebody who was not qualified to do it? We will ask those questions. We will ask those questions on behalf of the people of Mackay because their state member is not asking questions. When the shadow health spokesman and I were in Mackay—and we were joined by the members for Whitsunday and Burdekin—we heard harrowing stories of young mums whose lives have been changed forever.

An opposition member: They don't believe them either.

Mr CRISAFULLI: They do not believe them. It appears to me that this government only cares about how things look, not how they are. They will only respond to something when the political problem becomes larger than the medical problem. They only ever respond when it is about image, not about people. We have seen it with border exemptions. We have seen it with one rule for one and one rule for another. It is only when the glare of the media spotlight is put on them that something changes. The member for Kawana will outline one of those system breakdowns shortly.

Who did we hear from at this town hall crisis meeting? We heard from Amy, who can never have another natural birth, who does not believe she wants to go back into that building to ever have another child. We heard stories from people like Leigh, who after giving birth was left with an open wound. She has scarring so bad that it is affecting her quality of life and she will never have children again. We owe it to those people and to many others to ask questions, as we do about the residents of Caboolture whose bodies will never be the same and whose lives will never be the same.

I am sorry but I reckon they have a right to know who operated on them and why it went so horribly wrong. They have a right to know if somebody was operating on them who was operating outside their remit, outside the scope of their practice. They have a right to know what level of oversight there was, what the minister did about it and what systems or actions were put in place. I want to know about the review. I want to know that every resident who wants to have a say has had a say and that they have been listened to.

There are some questions that need to be asked. What is going on at the Caboolture Hospital? What is going on at the Mackay Hospital? What is going wrong with Queensland Health? Long before we knew what coronavirus was, the figures in Queensland Health have been on a downward trajectory. At a time when health has never been more important, this government owes it to the people of Queensland to be honest and transparent and to fix the culture and the problems that exist.

We as an opposition have put forward our solutions. We have gone around the state and we have said what we would like to see done. They have been the suggestions that people have come to us with when we have embarked on these meetings. They want to see data released in real time. They want better triaging so that when people enter an emergency department people like clinical intervention nurses are there to help. They want to see better resourcing. They want to know that doctors and nurses are put back in charge. They want to see a return to frontline services being valued and respected for what they do.

I now want to turn to tourism in this state and again ask the government to chart a pathway out of the pandemic for those tourism operators in those cities that are doing it particularly tough. We have suggested a 20-year plan for tourism. We want to see in the next decade the development of new product offering. We want to see a marketing campaign when the eyes of the world are on us during the Olympic Games. Then we want to know that the decade after that will be a golden era for Queensland tourism.

At the moment the government does not have a 20-week tourism plan. We only have to look at what the other states are doing to chart a course out of the pandemic in 2022 to know that this government is stuck and that it has all its strategies in one basket. The tourism industry that we want to see for Queensland is one that uses its natural beauty, that makes sure that we are at the forefront of new product development and that we respect what has made us great in the past and look for opportunities in the future.

In New South Wales at the moment there is a \$530 million package that focuses on major events, aviation attraction, CBD revitalisation and marketing. Our spend is paltry in comparison. If we look at spending on business support across the nation, we are towards the back of the pack. I was speaking with operators in Cairns just the other day who say that the Tourism and Hospitality Sector Hardship Program, which has been open for a few weeks now, appears not to be meeting the needs of people.

Mr McDonald: It's missed the mark.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It has missed the mark. The operators are saying, 'What now? Will there be another round? Will the terms be broadened? Will money go towards attracting aviation?' One way or another there has to be an acknowledgement that right now the city of Cairns is on its knees, the Whitsundays is doing it tough and the Gold Coast still is not back to its best. Right now is when the government needs to support those tourism operators.

I have said repeatedly that it is a knife fight for market share in places like the Gold Coast. Right now Sydney has been given a sword and Labor has handed Brisbane a butter knife. That is the conflict that exists. We are going into a period where the first mover will have the advantage. We must be that first mover. We cannot accept that other opportunities will flow to other places. Today I read some comments from Chris Mills of Queensland Airports Limited. He says—

I'd be concerned Queensland will fall behind the other states when it comes to attracting international airlines back to the state.


Do you want to know why? It is because the government has chosen a course of fear rather than charting a course of hope. They have constantly moved the goalposts. They have constantly sought to find every reason to blame everyone else. I choose hope over fear. I do not want 2022 in this state to be defined by a disease. I want 2022 to be the year that we make this state the place where people want to do business—in agriculture, in tourism, in mining—and where there are magical opportunities for business relocation in the south-east for medicine and for education. That is what a great Queensland looks like.

Of course vaccines are the key to that pathway and we will continue to go around the state and promote that. The best way to give people confidence to get a vaccine is not to scare them by telling them you are going to take Christmas but to tell them what life will look like.

As I have said repeatedly as we have gone around the state, if you believe in the small and family business owner at the end of the street and the people they employ, get vaccinated. If you believe in maybe one day cuddling a loved one who lives interstate, get vaccinated.

Finally, I wish to place on record my sincere congratulations to Greg Hallam who, at the end of this week, finishes his tenure of nearly three decades as CEO of the Local Government Association of Queensland. Greg has been a fearless advocate, and the fact that his retirement comes at the end of a conference shows his dedication to that organisation. Councils in this state are important and they have never felt more undervalued. They have never felt more pressured. They have never felt more like the big hand of government is over them. Greg Hallam has fought hard, and I commend Alison Smith, who is moving into that role. She is someone who will do a fine job, and we on this side of the House look forward to working with an empowered local government sector for years to come.

Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.10 pm): When it comes to vaccination in Queensland, today is another episode from the flip-flopping Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition simply cannot get it straight because he is simply unable to lead. The most pressing and critical issue facing this state is the COVID-19 vaccination program, and it is beyond question now that the Leader of the Opposition has been holding Queensland back. The Leader of the Opposition has been holding back Queensland's vaccination campaign because he has been blowing the dog whistle for the anti-vaxxers who infest the Liberal National Party in Queensland and its affiliates in their fake unions.

Yesterday in Brisbane the Leader of the Opposition made this bold claim: 'I haven't spoken with forked tongue and I haven't said one thing in one part of the state and one thing in another.' The opposite is true when you come to the Leader of the Opposition. He was doing exactly that by giving

voice to anti-vax sentiments when he was in regional Queensland. This is what the Leader of the Opposition said in Mackay just five days ago, 'Above all, do your own research.' Up there in Mackay, wilting under the heat of the tinfoil hat of the LNP's arch anti-vaxxer, 'Doctor' George Christensen, he may as well have swallowed George Christensen's horse medicine, but mandatory vaccination for health workers is really where the LNP has been falling apart and massively damaging Queensland. We know their affiliates in the fake union, the Nurses Professional Association of Queensland—

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the member for Everton, one of the arch supporters of NPAQ, the fake union that puts health workers at risk in this state. We know they are already undermining the health advice that frontline health workers should be vaccinated. That is on the public record; that is clear. It is clear that NPAQ is infested by members of the LNP and the anti-vax sentiment of the LNP, as is the state LNP party.


What the Leader of the Opposition has not been able to bring himself to do is back the health advice. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition said, 'If you look at the AHPPC guidelines, that talks about the need for frontline staff to be mandated and we're comfortable with that.' I do not know where the Leader of the Opposition found that comfort, but it was not out at Cannon Hill when he was on Radio 4BC eight days ago. Program host Sofie Formica asked the most straightforward question possible: 'David, you've been pushed a little harder by our listeners to give a yes or no answer on the vaccination mandate.' Pushed harder, you could hear the Leader of the Opposition wriggling and writhing, squirming on the airwaves before he could switch on the auto-babble machine. He said, 'I understand that but it shouldn't be of that—a yes or no answer.'

No wonder the Leader of the Opposition hid from the media today. The Leader of the Opposition, the hero of the health system, was he out in the media fronting the campaign? No, he hid in his office. He hid in his office after question time and put out the B grade—sorry, I am misleading the parliament—C grade, the member for Kawana and the member for Maroochydore, sending out his lightweight underlings to do his bidding. But the Leader of the Opposition hid from scrutiny on the most important issue facing our state: vaccination. That is because we are witnessing in real time the weak, failing leadership of the Leader of the Opposition, who has made weak, failing leadership his signature. The Leader of the Opposition was unable to answer the most fundamental question going to the most serious question facing Queensland.

The member for Broadwater has not, and will not, back our vaccination program in accordance with the health advice. Worst of all, the Leader of the Opposition and the LNP, which he leads, know exactly what they are doing because he is working on behalf of the fake unions and the anti-vaxxers of the LNP instead of all Queenslanders. That is precisely what he is doing, which is why he cannot give a straight answer either in the parliament or in the public. Finally we might see the Leader of the Opposition show some courage, and I am calling on him to show some courage. Say these simple words: 'I support mandatory vaccination for health workers.' Just say it, member for Broadwater—

(Time expired)

Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.15 pm): There he goes, the Treasurer of Queensland. When we have the most significant issues before us, what do we get? We get the hysterical rantings of the Treasurer of Queensland shouting at the clouds—

An opposition member: At the mirror!

Mr JANETZKI: I will take the interjection: shouting at the mirror. It has been pretty quiet today. We just had a little thing called the CommSec report released yesterday. The Treasurer has been pretty quiet on that. We are the second worst performing economy in the country on economic growth, on equipment finance, on overall economic performance, and the Treasurer comes in here to hysterically talk about vaccinations.

If we learned anything today, it is a reminder that it was the Premier of Queensland who caused a great deal of the vaccination hesitancy the Treasurer of Queensland is worried about. First it was the dog. Poor old Winton gets a very bad—no, actually, I take that back. The flu vaccination had to come first and next it was the dog. Poor old Winton copped the rough end of the pineapple. What has Winton done? Finally, if it wasn't the flu shot and it wasn't the dog, it was the trip to Japan. All this, together with unnecessary fearmongering around the AstraZeneca vaccine—which is not even going to be


manufactured in Australia after next year—has been the primary contributor to the slowness of the vaccine rollout in Queensland. For the Treasurer to pretend anything else is just fundamentally untruthful.

What the Treasurer should be focused on is the Queensland economy. If not that, the Treasurer should be focused on the inconsistencies in border exemptions. As we saw last week, a week is a very long time in politics. In the last couple of sitting weeks the Treasurer has called MPs who asked questions about borders and businesses ‘crazies’. The Treasurer is on the record in this place talking about anybody who asked questions about borders and businesses as ‘crazies’. Last week we saw a remarkable flip-flop from this government. It went from, ‘I’m keeping you safe; the government’s keeping you safe’ to, ‘You’ve got to go and keep yourselves safe.’ There was a fundamental shift in the language impressed upon this government by the leadership of the New South Wales premier, Dom Perrottet, that shamed this government into acting, yet border exemption inconsistencies prevail.

I spoke last sitting about the Minz family who were trying to get from South Australia to Queensland. They asked Queensland Health three times for advice as they went from Roxby Downs Station and wanted to cross the border at Cunnamulla. Three times they checked and they were not allowed to cross the border so they were sent to Moree. After I spoke about it last sitting, there was some interest from the police and Queensland Health, but 10 days on and the Minz family—four kids, mum, dad and grandma—have been languishing in a motel room in Moree. They have been sitting next door to people in another Moree motel room who could cross the border every single day because they were working. I can now happily inform the House that, once again, media attention and political pressure have resulted in an outcome because the Minz family will be reunited today.

Time and time again, this government will not act unless there is political pressure or media pressure. The inconsistencies and the lack of clarity continue to prevail. If the Treasurer was worth his salt, he would turn his mind to solving this problem, not ranting at the clouds.

Net Zero Emissions

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (2.20 pm): The Palaszczuk government has long been committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2050. Under the strong and decisive leadership of the Premier, we have a position in Queensland to meet those targets and we have made that quite clear. Just as importantly, Queensland is in the prime position to grasp those opportunities to deliver clean, reliable renewable energy to the rest of the world. We are doing this through significant investment in renewables above the ground and exploration for critical minerals below the ground, as Queensland becomes the global clean energy superpower that we know we are.

For example, the International Energy Agency expects global demand for vanadium, a mineral Queensland has large deposits of, to rise between 139,000 and 219,000 tonnes by 2024. At the same time, overall mineral demand for battery storage, of which vanadium is a key component, is expected to rise ninefold over the next two decades. If global emission targets shift to net zero, that demand jumps by a factor of 40. While that represents new opportunities for the resources sector, it also is a huge opportunity for Queensland manufacturers to become part of the global export market.

I have already said that, as we continue to move towards our renewable energy targets, I want Queensland manufacturers making the solar panels, the batteries, the wind turbines and the electrolyzers. I want Queensland manufacturers putting clean renewable energy into homes and businesses right across Queensland, around Australia and around the world. When you break it down to the basics, what it means is more jobs for Queenslanders, particularly more jobs for regional Queenslanders, not only now but into the future.

On this side of the House, we recognise those opportunities and we are supporting Queenslanders to make the most of them. It is a shame that the LNP do not have the same vision for Queensland’s future. I was disappointed—but I certainly was not surprised—this morning to read that the member for Callide is willing to forgo a massive opportunity for Queensland by campaigning against a move towards net zero emissions by 2050. That is right—the world renowned scientific expert and economic guru, the member for Callide, wants to ignore global evidence pointing to environmental and economic benefits of moving to net zero emissions in the future.

If he does not support net zero emissions, then is he willing to forgo the thousands of jobs in the emerging green hydrogen industry—many of them in the electorate that he wants to represent in the federal government? If he does not support net zero emissions, that means throwing away the thousands of jobs in the resources sector that are providing the critical minerals needed to store clean


energy. If he does not support net zero, that means denying Queensland manufacturers—particularly in Gladstone, one of the areas he is going to support—the opportunity to expand in those global markets across the world and help our local businesses to grow and create more jobs for Queenslanders.

He must know something that the rest of the world does not. I am pretty sure it is not new insights into global economics and it is not a new scientific understanding of the environmental impacts of climate change. All that means is that he knows that there is a fractured federal LNP that have no intention of delivering their commitment to net zero emissions by 2050. He knows that the federal LNP are big on announcements and missing in action when it comes to delivering on their commitments to the people of Australia. If that is not the case, then he is standing in front of Central Queenslanders and lying to them about what he can deliver for them in Canberra.

Either way, it is a bleak future for the people of Central Queensland under a divided federal LNP government—a government that are more concerned about securing jobs for themselves through shonky deals than they are about jobs for Queenslanders, particularly regional Queenslanders. They are a government that were willing to give up tens of thousands of jobs across the state for an ideological battle they are fighting based on flawed science, dodgy economics and mistruths.

The people of Central Queensland see right through the member for Callide's fake bravado. They know that only a Labor Party in Queensland will continue to deliver for the workers of Queensland. The last thing that I want to see is the member for Callide saddle up next to Senator Canavan rubbing fake coal on his face and going out and telling the people of Central Queensland that he actually cares for them.

Organic Waste

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (2.25 pm): I have spoken many times about organic waste, or FOGO, and that is because I believe how we manage it will be the biggest shift in our rubbish collection since yellow recycling bins. Food and organic waste make up around half of what Queensland households throw out. When it goes into landfill, it makes methane that is 30 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. By diverting organics, we can cut these emissions and create a market for products like fertiliser for agriculture and biogas for energy generation. It is a win-win.

The government quietly released their organics strategy last month. Given it was a few months late, I was hopeful that it would give us a clear pathway to catch up to every other state and meet the federal government's target of a 50 per cent diversion from landfill by 2030. Sadly, it does not. Calling it a plan would be generous—and I said 'quietly' before, because most stakeholders I have spoken to only heard about it when I reached out to ask their views on it. This 10-year strategy, covering our state's organic waste policy until 2032, was actually announced as a secondary item in a press release about small grants for primary schools to install composters and worm farms.

Queensland currently accounts for almost a quarter of Australia's food waste, yet we have the lowest rate of access to kerbside organic recycling of any state, with just 13 per cent of households currently having a green bin. That is why this strategy is so important, yet it contains very little detail on how to fix this. I urge the minister to clearly outline the next steps to roll out FOGO. We need a plan and policy certainty from the state government, not just further reviews and investigations into potential options. No-one will invest in organic waste processing in Queensland with the vague outline provided in the state government's strategy.

There are a few points I would like to raise specifically on the draft's action themes. In 'Infrastructure and services', it is one of the most important to ensure Queensland has the waste facilities we need to process an increase in organic waste. Under 2.03, multiple directions are given. It lists encouraging home composting, local composting hubs and working with local governments to understand the feasibility of kerbside organic services as action themes. By just listing these, it gives no-one the certainty about which direction the state government actually wants things to go in over the next decade. What will the government do to support a statewide rollout of an organic waste kerbside collection, as most other states have? What about even just for South-East Queensland? We should at least have a plan for where most of our residents live, because that is essential to reaching the diversion targets.

The first step to all of this is to get green wheelie bins to more households, and this strategy does not even talk about that. The lack of detail is leading to growing confusion in our waste industry, with businesses unwilling to take on the risk of building infrastructure that may never be used. The 2019 Arcadis infrastructure report demonstrates how limited our capacity is to process organic waste beyond the next few years. When you add to this the complete failure to spend anywhere near the \$100 million

allocated to the RRIDP before redirecting \$20 million of that to the RMF, despite over \$811 million in applications being received, it gives me absolutely no confidence that the industry and local government will get the support they need.


Further, while point 2.05 names the stakeholders necessary to find our infrastructure solutions, the industry bodies at a recent round table I held here with the waste resources industry of Queensland said they would like to see the roles and responsibilities for the state government, local governments and industry clearly defined in this plan.

On the market and product development theme, we need an analysis of the contamination risks that come with organic waste. This is the biggest concern that continues to be raised with me. We need to understand what the government is doing to plan for contamination and to minimise the risks of it, because this is what will drive investment in this sector.

The suggestion of a landfill disposal ban on organic waste streams seems to go against the advice set out by one of the expert bodies on this, AORA. They say that a ban should only be considered if a state cannot ramp up its collection systems in time to hit a target. Listing this as the first option does not seem to be the right way forward.

Overall, this strategy feels more like a discussion paper than a clear plan forward for the next decade. If it is not improved, it will be another long-term environmental strategy from Labor that delivers no outcomes, misses opportunities and puts us further behind other states.

Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (2.30 pm): I would like to thank every Queenslanders who has rolled up their sleeves to get vaccinated, and I encourage all those who are not yet fully vaccinated to do so as soon as possible. We have done a great job working together to keep each other safe throughout this pandemic. Every time the virus has come into our great state, we have worked together to beat it.

Our next challenge—and perhaps our greatest—is right on our doorstep. The dangerous delta variant has caused death and illness in our neighbouring states and will no doubt once again threaten us in Queensland as the nation and our state open up. Today, in fact, we have had two new local cases, but Queenslanders are heeding the call to get vaccinated in response to the delta threat. Some 28,994 vaccination doses were administered last weekend on Super Saturday and, with 43,716 administered over the whole weekend, Queensland is tracking at just over 60 per cent double dosed.

I would also like to thank all those in our local Bundamba community who have come forward to get vaccinated. This includes people attending our local schools such as Bellbird Park State Secondary College and Ripley Valley State Secondary College. That said, our local vaccination rate is currently 63 per cent for first doses, and 46 per cent of people are fully vaccinated.


While we have made good progress, we clearly need to lift our vaccination rates urgently. That is why I have taken to our local radio waves, roadside billboards and newspapers to encourage as many people as possible to get vaccinated before we open our borders. We need to lift our local vaccination rate to be in line with or above the rate in neighbouring Brisbane which is at 81.2 per cent first dose and 68.1 per cent second dose. Come on, Bundamba. This is our time. This is our call to arms. Let's get vaccinated and let's get protected right now.

I am also encouraging every other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander to get vaccinated urgently. There is a concerning gap in our vaccination rates compared to the rest of the population, with first doses at only 47.9 per cent and second doses at 36.2 per cent. There are also lower rates for other cultural groups, including in the Bundamba community, such as our Polynesian and African community members. It is particularly concerning when we consider that these lower rates often sit alongside greater risk as it is common for large family groups to be in a single house sharing a single kitchen and bathroom.

Sometimes the reasons for these lower rates are not so obvious. It may be hard to get yourself or your loved ones to a clinic because there is no car, no licence or maybe not enough money for a taxi or public transport. There may be cultural challenges or concerns such as language barriers, dealing with administration and paperwork, or not having the appropriate identification or even a Medicare card. Whatever the challenge to getting vaccinated, I believe that it can be worked through. I want to acknowledge the great work of organisations such as Kambu Health, at its Booval and Ipswich clinics, and the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health, which operates our local Goodna clinic. I have been very proud to be part of the institute's Step Up vaccination campaign supported by Deadly Choices.

The Palaszczuk government has assisted the Commonwealth to help vaccinate First Nations Queenslanders, but clearly more needs to be done. The need to vaccinate is urgent. If a community has barriers or challenges—no matter what they are—I urge them to contact Queensland Health, their GP or even their local MP's office for assistance. My office is certainly there and willing to help anyone, because your job will save lives. It may save the life of someone you love. It may even save your own. Vaccination means that together we can keep each other safe and our economy strong as Queensland reopens. Please, do not wait. Vaccinate now.

Coronavirus, Policy

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (2.35 pm): We have battled here in the chamber over a number of situations relating to border closures and exemptions that as MPs we had no say in. This month has delivered relief, with some of our residents now in home quarantine after months stuck over the border. However, many more of our constituents need to be allowed home, including teenagers who remain stranded in great distress. The date for the reopening of our border—17 December—has been announced and we are thankful on behalf of so many. However, valid questions have been raised that need answering urgently as our businesses and residents prepare for this reopening, including around mandatory vaccinations and vaccinated-only venues.

Firstly, what are the legal implications for businesses with some of these directives, including the exclusion of Queenslanders unvaccinated, without a federal or state government mandate or directive in place? Understandably, businesses are concerned about the implications—legally and morally—as well as the impacts on their staff. Could they be sued for refusing access and service? Do they face the prospect of further anger from customers, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated? This is unfair on them as it is leaving a decision to these businesses that should have been determined if not at a national level then at least at the state level or not at all.

In addition, how do they deal with what may be indirect discrimination as outlined in various anti-discrimination and disability acts if they do not make reasonable adjustments for those with adverse physical or mental conditions? How do they enact processes to handle this? What about WorkCover and business insurance impacts? Then they have the issue of the Privacy Act relating to the storage and sighting of individual health identifiers which have strict regulations surrounding them. Who will monitor all of this? Will we continue to source from our fatigued police resources that have had to accommodate border and hotel quarantine duties over many months, leaving diminished policing in some communities whilst domestic violence rises?

In amongst all of this is the ending of financial support for businesses come 17 December, when borders open. This is causing much angst when there has been no guarantee that there will be no further lockdowns or border closures. We must have either guaranteed support for both the business and their staff in the event of future lockdowns or no future lockdowns. Which is it?

Ultimately, what are the moral obligations for us as a society? To segment and isolate Queenslanders by denying access and service to those who cannot or choose not to vaccinate is deeply concerning and confronting to so many. What happens in communities where the facility or venue is the only one? What happens to businesses that have been hanging on a knife's edge for months, turning customers away when they cannot afford to? We as MPs should seriously think about this. Informed choice is to be encouraged—not punished—in developing knowledgeable, responsible and compassionate individuals and communities.

Over many months there has been a pandemic of misinformation and omission of information. Due to a lack of response from governments, my office researched many claims ranging from potential human rights conflicts to discrimination. In addition, I interviewed Dr Ian Norton, from Respond Global, who has worked extensively on global disease outbreaks. This provided responses to my residents' questions on the virus, vaccines, alternative therapies and preventive measures. These have been invaluable for those who have become disorientated by what may seem on the surface credible information and sources but are not, with concerns amplified by recent court actions. With conflicting information coming out daily, more questions arise for Queenslanders, including: why has an Australian vaccine had to seek crowd funding; what is the appropriateness of mandating vaccinations; and where is the fine line between informed choice and coerced 'choice'?

We are one country and need unity and clarity. This includes a national approach regarding legal implications or protections for businesses on government determinations, clarification on claims from our own vaccine developers and consistent criteria on travelling between states. Currently Queenslanders who have booked interstate trips are now having travel companies postpone these

journeys to next year due to inconsistencies. However, international travel is on the horizon. Our communities and businesses need answers to avoid further confusion and anger in the coming weeks. Also, determinations which segment or isolate our society by vaccination status or labelling as 'vaxed' or 'not vaxed' need to be reconsidered as this is not who we are or what we aspire to and nor does it address vaccine complacency or hesitancy.

Local Government, Sustainability



Ms BOYD (Pine Rivers—ALP) (2.40 pm): We appreciate the critical role that local governments play in supporting the safety, livability and prosperity of local communities right across the state. Over time, sustainability pressures on councils have increased and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have added to these challenges. While the Palaszczuk government is responsible for monitoring the overall health of Queensland's local government sector, we also play a critical role in supporting councils to ensure strong and sustainable communities into the future. That is why I was pleased recently to launch the *Local government sustainability framework discussion paper* in Cairns with our state's Far North Queensland councils. I table a copy of the discussion paper for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Queensland Government report, dated October 2021, titled 'Local government sustainability framework: Discussion paper' [[1801](#)].

All of Queensland's 77 councils face unique financial service delivery and community need circumstances. The challenge of ensuring local government sustainability is an important issue for all councils and the Palaszczuk government. It was demonstrated through the Auditor-General's report to parliament No. 17 of 2020-21 which raised concerns about local government financial sustainability, rating 24 out of the state's 77 councils as having a higher risk of sustainability issues in the short to medium term. The report recommends that we consider broadening the view of sustainability to include other elements such as governance, compliance and asset management and consider developing new financial sustainability ratios for councils that consider the different sizes, services and circumstances of various councils. This paper does just that.

The diversity of local government means that no single solution or approach will address the sustainability challenges faced by many local governments. To address this, the proposed sustainability framework is one that is holistic, tailored and relevant. Councils are impacted by a range of factors that affect their long-term sustainability. This includes size and location, population, the ability to raise or increase their own source revenue, governance frameworks and an increasing requirement to fill service delivery gaps to meet community expectations.

The proposal in this framework will also see new sustainability ratios and benchmarks introduced. We know one size does not fit all, so this framework works by grouping councils on populations and establishing relevant benchmarks reflecting what is achievable for each group. It will provide greater insight into the challenges faced by the sector which will support the development of more tailored and relevant solutions. Financial and asset sustainability ratios are expanded from three to eight which will include benchmarks that will provide councils with more relevant and council-specific information, but we have a vision to have business-ready councils as well today and into the future that enable livable communities to grow and prosper by focusing on the principles of foundations, infrastructure and outlook.


The sustainability framework includes revised ratios that will be implemented during 2022. The financial management guideline which sets out the agreed financial and asset ratios will be released in early 2022 and taking effect for the 2022-23 financial year reporting. A phased transition will be implemented to support councils to adequately meet their obligations under the new reporting requirements. Our department will work with councils to develop training and guidance materials to support the implementation of the agreed financial and asset sustainability ratios. This paper covers off this context and more and welcomes feedback from stakeholders until Friday, 12 November 2021. I take this opportunity to encourage stakeholders to put forward their views to achieve the best model possible. After 29 years in local government, CEO Greg Hallam has been at the helm of the Local Government Association in Queensland. I join with the minister, the Deputy Premier, in acknowledging the tremendous contribution to all levels of government for his almost three decades and wish him well in his future endeavours.

Our mayors and local councillors across the state are making a sterling effort in demonstrating leadership to get our communities vaccinated. We know the best possible way to protect the life that you love is to get vaxed. I acknowledge and commend the wonderful work of our local government sector in promoting the increased vaccination rates right throughout the communities. In the lead is

Goondiwindi Regional Council and I give a special shout-out to Mayor Lawrence Springborg. There is definitely a lack of leadership on the opposition side of the House since his departure. I acknowledge the great work that he has been doing in promoting vaccination in his community.

(Time expired)

Queensland Building and Construction Commission

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (2.45 pm): Next Monday, 1 November, is D-day for hundreds of small fire protection businesses. This is the day that Minister de Brenni's mindless changes to fire protection regulations will come into effect—changes that will not improve fire safety standards one iota but will benefit the trade union movement and that of a particular QBCC board member's business. Tens of these businesses, mostly mum-and-dad owned and operated, have written to me begging for help. They have given up on Minister de Brenni, who has abandoned them. Let me read part of one of those emails that I received just yesterday. It states—

My husband and ... I have been in the industry for over twenty-five years and we are now suddenly not qualified to do our job! Our business that we have run for over twenty years is now one of those that is in danger of having to close down and the six families that rely on it are looking at being out of work. It is utterly ridiculous that a law was passed that in effect will cause numerous small fire companies to close and that, due to the lack of licensed people that comply with these new laws, it will actually cause many small businesses to not have their fire requirements carried out simply because there will not be enough people to do the work.

They went on to say that they have no issue with getting the qualifications but that they must have time to be able to do it and they must be able to trade. These people, like the majority of others in this situation, have asked for anonymity. Why? Because they are terrified of the vindictiveness shown by the QBCC, the so-called independent building regulator, aided and abetted by a weak minister who is a servant of the extreme elements of the union movement.

The QBCC dysfunction continues in every aspect of its operations. The minister has constantly denied—again as recently as today—that neither he nor his staff or board members intervene in the operational matters of the QBCC. Emails sourced under right to information show that this assertion is patently false. Just last week a Federal Court public examination into the collapse of the Cullen Group Australia heard that an email was sent from Minister de Brenni's office to the then QBCC commissioner before the licence was suspended asking him to call the minister's office. The email from senior policy adviser Darcy Slattery told Mr Bassett that 'we need to have urgent details of this situation before the licence is suspended'. If this is not ministerial intervention, what is?


Every day another scandal about the QBCC and the minister's oversight of it comes to light. We are constantly hearing about board members' conflicts of interests and inappropriate intervention by the minister, his staff and board members. We have had hordes of experienced and respected QBCC officials resigning. We have had builders who do not meet the fit-and-proper person test still operating. We have had preferential treatment given to certain members of the public to access the minister where others cannot. We have had targeted campaigns by QBCC officials on non-unionised builders and the QBCC not acting on builders who have obviously not met building standards, and the list goes on.

This minister, the Premier and this Labor government have no option but to instigate a comprehensive, independent commission of inquiry. In my opinion they have not only a legal obligation but also a moral obligation to do this. Queensland home owners deserve this inquiry, as do honest builders and the honest officers of the QBCC. Queenslanders must have confidence in the competence and the independence of the state's building regulator.

I want to help the minister with regard to initiating this inquiry, so I table the terms of reference for the commission of inquiry that is so desperately required. I call on the minister to immediately initiate this inquiry so that this dysfunction can cease.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Terms of Reference: Commission of Inquiry into the Queensland Building and Construction Commission' [[1802](#)].

Domestic and Family Violence

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (2.50 pm): I must admit that I swear. I have been swearing since 2008 when I entered the Australian Senate and, importantly, became a White Ribbon ambassador. I have been swearing the oath ever since, because as a White Ribbon ambassador I have sworn not to remain silent in the face of domestic and family violence. I am proud to have stood up for

the victims of domestic and family violence. It means a lot to me. I am proud of all those who have the courage to stand up against the cowards who commit violent acts against family members and especially children.

We know that the scourge of domestic and family violence continues, and that is why I have taken the bold step of putting myself on the line to raise funds for a domestic and family violence refuge in the south-west of the state. On 3 December I, my director-general, Bob Gee, and several of my ministerial office and DAF staff will be shaving our heads in the hope of raising as much money as possible for this shelter. We have been working quietly behind the scenes, and I am pleased to say that as of today we have raised \$17,518 from 118 donors for the cause. We are well and truly on the way to our target of \$30,000.

Our primary producers and other supporters, after donating substantial dollars, are lining up to shave their heads. I would like to thank some of the biggest donors so far—and there will be many more on the way. First there are our agriculture industry partners, good friends of the Palaszczuk government and me: David Foote from Australian Country Choice; Mayor Brett Otto, South Burnett Regional Council; Councillor Kathy Duff, South Burnett Regional Council; Andrew and David Moon from Moonrocks; Peter and Vanessa Honeycombe; Carl Walker from Phantom Produce; Dean Goode from Kilcoy Global Food; James Walker of Camden Park Station in Longreach; Troy Qualischefski from Qualipac; Bryce Camm of Camm Agricultural Group; Will Wilson from AgForce; Chris Stewart from Wilmar Sugar; Beth Woods, former director-general of DAF; Chris Forrester; Damian Power; Evan Moorhead; Gary O'Halloran from the PPTEU Queensland; Terri Irwin, my good friend from Australia Zoo; Michael Choi, former MP for Capalaba; departmental and ministerial staff from many departments; and some guy called Regis.

I would also like to thank the committed people in my office who have put up their hands—and, in fact, stuck up their heads—to be a part of this. In particular, I would like to put on record my thanks to Annette from DAF. She has been a driving force in putting this forward today. She has truly committed to supporting the shelter since 2018 and has done a sterling job for DAF itself. Donating is an easy process. Google 'mycause shave for the brave' or go to www.mycause.com.au and click on the 'Donate' button. I table a flyer that has a QR code on the bottom to direct people to the relevant webpage for those donations.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Mark Furner and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries: Shave for the brave' [1803].

I mentioned earlier the reason I decided to stick up my hand to move into the Senate. It was on the back of some personal reflections of what happened to my daughter. I have listened to many stories in this House. Many in this House have a personal story in relation to domestic and family violence. Domestic violence is a scourge. Everyone needs to stand up and speak out against it. Until we see the back of this scourge, we should not be silent. I commend those who share their stories. I will not stop speaking out against domestic violence. I urge members to not only donate to the cause but also join me in speaking out against the scourge of domestic and family violence.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Good luck with that, Minister. Having been down that path, my only advice is to make sure you get a good beanie.

SUPERANNUATION (STATE PUBLIC SECTOR) (SCHEME ADMINISTRATION) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 3200, on motion of Mr Dick—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (2.55 pm), continuing: Before the lunch break I was talking about what I described as the compact between employers and employees and what is I think generally expected in Australia today in our employee relations—that is, the availability of a good, secure and reliable superannuation plan so that people can, as has been mentioned here, have confidence in their future when they finish work.

We have seen here in Queensland the development of a superannuation scheme starting way back in the early part of the last century. We have seen it develop all the way through to today. We have seen the introduction of compulsory superannuation, as has been discussed, in 1992. We have

seen the system mature over the 30-plus years since it was introduced such that now it is, I guess, an important part of every Australian worker's financial planning. It is what they look for when they finish work.

Regrettably, I do not think many people take enough care of their superannuation. They do not look at their superannuation statements. They do not review their financial position adequately and make plans for their future. They do not change their plans. They do not consider it until it almost becomes too late. By the time you are approaching retirement age, it is too late to do that. We have to acknowledge those circumstances.

For decades people have spoken about financial literacy. They have lamented the fact that young people do not seem to be financially literate. They lament the fact that people do not pay enough attention to their super funds. We know that occurs. In those circumstances, we need to make sure that private or profit-for-member superannuation funds that charge a fee are doing the job as best they can with the full understanding of those challenges that many people face.

Sometimes it is not easy. It can be a confusing and bewildering set of circumstances that people face. I challenge any member to have a look at the notices they have received from QSuper with their last statement of account. How many people have actually read those documents and have seen the changes to the qualification periods, for example? I take the not-quite interjection from the member for Surfers Paradise, who is not one of those people who lamentably takes no interest in his superannuation fund. There are many who do not. It is incumbent on us to make sure that these funds work well.

The changes to QSuper—and I will concentrate on QSuper because that is what we have some degree of control over—have occurred at a faster pace over the last decade or so. Firstly, former treasurer Andrew Fraser closed the defined benefit fund to new members. I distinctly remember that piece of legislation and the reasons for it, because I was the shadow Treasurer when he brought it in. Then, as treasurer, when I had that great privilege, we changed the composition of the board. We reduced it to comply with the best practice requirements that were set out and ensured equal and fair representation between unions and the government as the employer, but we also took the significant step of appointing an independent chair to that board, as recommended.

I pay tribute to the great work Karl Morris did for many years. He is now the chair of the Brisbane Broncos. I think he would rather be back at QSuper. He did a great job of modernising QSuper. Then we started down the process of choice of fund so that people who were in QSuper but who did not want to be in QSuper could go somewhere else—again supporting the idea that people have control of their financial future. That was finally implemented by the subsequent Palaszczuk Labor government under former treasurer Pitt. Now we are seeing the next logical extension of the fund.

That is the history to where we are today and changes to superannuation will continue apace. The great challenge for governments is not to use superannuation funds as their own piggybank. It is not to interfere in the investment decisions that are made by properly accredited, qualified and responsible members of those superannuation funds when they make their investment decisions, because the temptation is always there—and I heard the member for Logan talking about certain things.

We know that the temptation is there and it is a temptation particularly for the Labor Party. It started back in 2007 when Wayne Swan wanted to raid the Future Fund to pay for the NBN at a cost of \$4½ billion. It was there again when the global financial crisis hit and he hit the building fund and the education fund, ripping \$25 billion out of them. It was there again in 2012-13 when Penny Wong, as finance minister—fortunately it was in the last part of that government—wanted to raid the Future Fund again to help balance the budget. Of course, that was a budget that Labor never managed to balance.

It also happened in Queensland when Terry Mackenroth took the superannuation fund balances off the budget because they were variable—they went up and down depending on the returns—and created the seven per cent bond issued by QTC to smooth that out. That was supported by this side at that stage. That hid the performance of the funds but the funds continued to go up and down, up and down, as they do, reflecting international trends, particularly in shares and other things.


Then we saw this current government pause their contributions to the fund; they stopped actually paying for the defined benefit fund. Then they raided the fund twice to prop it up. Then we had two different schemes by two former treasurers, former treasurer Pitt and former treasurer Trad, to raid the funds that were held in order to create a future fund, which was finally brought into being by Treasurer Dick. So, when the member for Logan talks about the vandalism of superannuation funds, I listen with a high degree of scepticism because I know, evidence proves and history determines that when it comes to taking someone else's money no-one beats the ALP.

Mr Powell: It's in their DNA.

Mr NICHOLLS: It is in their DNA. As the current mayor of Bundaberg famously said, how do you spell it? A-L-P!

What is the best thing you can do for people's future and their superannuation? The best thing that you can do is what the coalition government does: create a strong economy with low interest rates and a growing economy with a plan for the future, not by taxing it into the ground as the Albanese opposition potentially wants to do. When it comes to looking after the long-term interests of Queensland employees, when it comes to looking after, preserving and ring fencing the funds that have been put aside and saved for people to enjoy in their retirement, as they are entitled to do, there is no greater obligation. In fact, this move goes some considerable distance towards ensuring that that occurs. That is why I am very comfortable in supporting the bill.

However, we cannot be blinded by all the stories that I have heard about the dazzling figures of \$200 billion plus and the economies of scale. I have seen these things before. We will wait to see if the promised benefits are delivered. We will wait to see if the IT systems work out. We will wait to see whether or not the customer service is better. We will wait to see who still has a job at the end of it, because inevitably an enormous amount of jostling goes on when two funds merge. I refer to the boards. I know Don Luke, of course, having appointed him to chair the QIC. I certainly know Andrew Fraser well. I have spoken to both in relation to this. I do, to a degree, have faith in their capacity to bring this together. However, we should not take our eye off the ball or be dazzled by the promise that it will be better for members and by the promise of a financial superpower based here in Brisbane.

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (3.04 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021. How good is superannuation? I think at the moment it has a quoted value of around \$3.3 trillion. It makes a great contribution to our quality of life and the quality of our investments. We are looking at retirement funds that are far safer and that make retirement far more enjoyable than that of previous generations. There is no doubt that superannuation is a fundamental economic part of our future.

QSuper and Sunsuper are Queensland's largest superannuation funds and are amongst the largest in the country. This bill ensures the merged fund will be based in Queensland, building on the opportunities QSuper and Sunsuper have already provided to the state. Importantly, the merger is expected to anchor around 2,000 jobs in Queensland. The boards of both funds have made strong commitments around employment security for rank-and-file employees. Existing employees will be protected and Queensland will benefit as new employment opportunities emerge through marketing and technology innovations.


The merged fund will compete nationally, but the really good news is that its headquarters will remain in Brisbane. We know that in the future we will see larger and bigger organisations moving to Brisbane. At the moment Sydney and Melbourne are a little bit unattractive and a little too expensive. We are far more competitive. The main office of the majority of the trustee's business areas will remain in Queensland. That means increased account balances for members, higher retirement incomes, which is vitally important with an ageing population, and a boost to economic activity in Queensland. Queensland is an attractive place for new businesses to invest. That has been proven again this month with the new \$1 billion-plus investment in our hydrogen industry. We expect to see those investments continue, creating and growing new industries. Having a \$200 billion superannuation fund in Queensland reinforces that this state is the preferred destination for businesses to establish themselves and to grow.

Importantly, this is a merger of two equally strong and respected funds. The boards of the two funds, having received significant legal and taxation advice and undertaking appropriate due diligence, determined that the best option for members was to retain Sunsuper Pty Ltd as the corporate trustee operating under the new name and a new constitution. The initial board is proposed to consist of seven currently serving QSuper trustees and six currently serving Sunsuper directors. It is proposed that the new board will consist of 13 members, including three independent directors and four employer directors. The seven directors will be selected by the superannuation fund nominee panel, which will consist of two government representatives, two representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland and the chair of the board. The panel's two nominees of the board to represent the interests of the Queensland government must be approved by the Treasurer.

The Queensland government does not own QSuper. While QSuper is established under legislation, it is a trust. Like any trust it has trustees who make up the QSuper board, beneficiaries who are members of QSuper and assets, which are members' superannuation entitlements that are managed by the trustees for the benefit of those beneficiaries. The Treasurer appoints the trustees of the QSuper board. That is the extent of government exercise over the QSuper board.

As I said earlier, superannuation adds significantly to our quality of life and to our investment portfolios. This bill consolidates and adds so much more to it. In keeping with Commonwealth superannuation rules, the rules of the QSuper trust, the Superannuation (State Public Sector) Deed 1990, can only be changed with the consent of the trustees. Because it is a trust, it is already a standalone entity and, therefore, the government does not own QSuper and cannot privatise it.

Sunsuper Pty Ltd is a trust deed company which manages assets and superannuation contributions on behalf of its members. This is a merger—a coming together of two large and well-performing superannuation funds—to make the second largest superannuation fund in Australia. Both the QSuper and Sunsuper boards believe that the merger is in the best interests of its members. It is their decision to merge. As I said, this is positive for their members. It continues to see strong economic growth in Brisbane. It is a positive thing for Queenslanders. I thank the committee and the secretariat for their hard work and acknowledge all those who made contributions to this important legislation. I am very proud to support this bill.

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.09 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021, which will facilitate the creation of a merged fund that will support the futures of Queensland workers' rights across our great state. I note the Clerk's advice that members who may hold an account in either fund do not have a conflict of interest, given that membership to Sunsuper and QSuper is not an interest in common, but out of an abundance of caution I declare that I am a QSuper member.

The proposed merger between QSuper and Sunsuper will establish Australia's second biggest superannuation fund, with \$200 billion in net assets and two million members, the majority of them Queenslanders and many of them public sector workers. In our local community of Bundamba, this bill will support thousands of workers such as health professionals, teachers, first responders, customer service staff, cleaners, community support workers and road workers. The safeguards in this bill mean that the defined benefit entitlements of these public sector workers cannot be reduced and that a statutory framework for workers' contribution levels will be retained.

The merged fund will remain in Queensland, with its head office right here in the south-east. That will help anchor 2,000 jobs. This means that we will continue to build on the opportunities provided by QSuper and Sunsuper—already two of the biggest super funds in Australia—to support more local Queensland jobs. Importantly, the boards of both funds have made strong commitments around ongoing worker security. Existing employees will be protected, and Queensland will benefit as new employment opportunities emerge. Importantly, this bill ensures that the merger will also support new and existing members.


Forecast data from the funds shows that administration costs will reduce and investment performance will improve under the merged fund, meaning lower fees and higher returns for members. The funds are also being open and transparent with their members about the merger—another of the Palaszczuk government's non-negotiables when it comes to this merger. This is a government that continues to support Queensland workers, and any changes that impact member benefits, member contributions or government contributions can only proceed with the consent of the Treasurer.

Like it does now for QSuper, the government will continue to have representation on the board of the merged fund and will have ongoing access to super advice about public sector superannuation arrangements. The merged fund will continue to be the Queensland government's default super fund, and Queensland will continue to be the only state in Australia with a fully funded defined benefit scheme. As at this year's budget, New South Wales' defined benefit fund was \$68 billion in deficit, Victoria had a \$31.2 billion shortfall, and Western Australia's scheme was \$7 billion away from full funding.

To protect the government's interests in funding defined benefits, this bill provides government control over the way defined benefit money held in the superannuation fund is invested. All this means bigger account balances for members, higher retirement incomes and a further boost to economic activity across the state as our safe and strong recovery continues.

Queensland is the place to be for ongoing business investment, proven again this month with a new \$1 billion investment in our world-leading renewable hydrogen industry. Having a \$200 billion superannuation fund based here only further reinforces that this state is the preferred destination for businesses from all industries to establish and grow.

This bill supports Queensland jobs both now and into the future. It safeguards workers' super entitlements and means higher returns and lower fees for around two million members. It supports our economy and it establishes Australia's second biggest super fund right here in our great state of Queensland. I thoroughly commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (3.14 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate of the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021. As outlined by my colleagues and the shadow Treasurer, the proposed merger of QSuper and Sunsuper is a landmark moment in Queensland's financial services industry here in South-East Queensland for the benefit of Queenslanders. We will not be opposing this bill.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to a really important point that is integral to superannuation for Queenslanders, particularly to the at least 50 per cent of Queenslanders who are women. The gender gap in retirement savings is an unfortunate reality facing many women across Queensland. The structure of paid work historically versus the value and choices that women make caring for a family, or the reality of an intermittent career due to women prioritising the choice to have children or raise a family or care for a family member, is a contributing factor to the gender pay gap. Other factors include the undervaluing of the sectors in which women are strongly represented, including child care, social work and disability. One may ask why I take such an interest in that. Recently the opposition appointed me the shadow minister for women's economic security, aligned with the federal parliament. The opposition's role in holding the government to account is very important. It is also very important to propose and take forward policies on behalf of Queenslanders—in particular, in my area of interest of females across our state.

The gender pay gap—of 14.5 per cent for full-time work, rising to 30 per cent when part-time work is included—has changed little over the past two decades. The gender pay gap has fallen from 24.7 per cent to 20.1 per cent. At this rate of change, it will take another 26 years for the full-time gender pay gap for total remuneration to close, according to Bankwest Curtin Economics in Western Australia. That is an important point because that gender pay gap results in a gap in superannuation for women across Queensland. Data from the Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia shows that there is a superannuation gap of 38.8 per cent.

According to Access Economics, on average women retire with 42 per cent less superannuation than men, and older women are the fastest growing group of people experiencing homelessness, not just due to challenges associated with the social crisis that we see in domestic and family violence but also as part of the legacy that we have seen over decades in our nation. Half of all women aged between 45 and 59 have \$8,000 or less in their super funds compared to men, at \$31,000, and the average superannuation payout for a woman is one-third of the payout of a male counterpart—\$37,000 compared to \$110,000.

Sunsuper commissioned a YouGov research poll in 2018 with 1,000 participants. Twenty-one per cent of those participants were confident that they would have enough superannuation to retire on; 39 per cent did not know how much super they had; more than half—54 per cent—of women planned to rely on the federal government pension in retirement; and the biggest concern for 48 per cent of women regarding retirement was not having enough money to be able to retire. Ten per cent of those surveyed said that they would never be able to retire. In 2011, the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick, said—

... the issue of undervaluing the sectors in which women work, such as social work and disability services, lies at the centre of the gender pay gap in our nation.

In handing down its interim decision this year in the equal pay test case brought by the Australian Services Union and others under the *Fair Work Act 2009*, Fair Work Australia recognised that, "for employees in the Social and Community Services sector, there was not equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal or comparable value by comparison with state and government employment.

That is an important factor to note in this House—in particular, by those who represent unions. Ms Broderick said—

The gender pay gap also affects women's economic security because women, on average, have less lifetime earnings compared to men and this becomes a serious issue, especially during retirement.


During the COVID-19 pandemic we know that there has been a higher proportionate impact on women's employment, with nationally 482,000 women losing employment. Since May, when the recovery started, only 270,000 women have regained employment.

Senator Jane Hume, whom I consider to be a very important colleague and friend to me and a friend to Queensland, the Minister for Superannuation, Financial Services and the Digital Economy and the Minister for Women's Economic Security, is committed to the women of Queensland and the women of our nation. The federal government's recent women's economic security update focused on improving women's economic security and, in particular, retirement outcomes for women.

The coalition federally is focused on increasing superannuation coverage and making the system fairer. This includes removing the \$450 threshold under which employers are exempt from paying employees, which predominantly impacts women, and the superannuation guarantee. The federal government is also extending access to downsizer contributions and removing the work test to improve the system's flexibility. Women who are widowed, divorced, survivors of DV or carers are undisputedly disadvantaged with regard to superannuation and, more broadly, economic security in our state.

While we acknowledge that the merger of QSuper and Sunsuper will create Australia's second largest superannuation fund and we welcome its headquarters being located Brisbane—we see this as a statewide advantage—it is also another opportunity, as outlined by the deputy opposition leader, for young professionals to build their careers in Brisbane rather than move to other financial centres around the world. I see that as a career opportunity for women in the financial services sector.

We are pleased to support this merger. The incoming board of the merged QSuper and Sunsuper will have to operate under the financial services regulations. I would certainly like to see the board take a strategic direction in terms of addressing the gender pay gap and the gap that exists in superannuation. Education aimed at engaging and supporting Queensland women both within the public sector and more broadly across the state is an initiative that the board could take on as part of their strategic marketing.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (3.22 pm): It is interesting to hear that the LNP now have an interest in gender pay inequities. They should talk to anybody on this side of the House, particularly those involved in the union movement, who has been working on this issue for nearly half a century. Perhaps we could teach them a thing or two. I do not recall them having much interest in it when I was sitting around the negotiating table as a union official. Welcome to the issue. I am glad they understand it. I have no idea what relevance this has to this bill, but I am glad that they have finally come to the party. We look forward to some great policy ideas coming forward.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Order! Pause the clock. I have called the House to order. Member for Whitsunday, cease your interjections. Member for Nanango, cease your interjections. Member for Pine Rivers, cease your interjections and cross-chamber chatter.

Mr KELLY: I put on record that I am a member of QSuper and my wife is a member of Sunsuper. I have no need to do that, but I just thought I would mention it in case the Greens walk in here and pull another one of their stunts and try to cut me out of being able to have my say on this important bill.

It was interesting to once again hear the member for Clayfield peddling the repetitious and tedious line about economic management. I am proud to be part of the Labor Party that are responsible economic managers. It is a tedious and repetitious line he peddles. Last sitting week we were presented with a set of figures that completely and utterly do not fit their narrative. The Treasurer walked in here and announced a figure of 4.9 per cent unemployment. Members should have seen the faces of those on the opposite side of the House drop. They heard the figures and they said, 'This doesn't fit our narrative. We've spent our entire political careers telling people that Labor are terrible economic managers, but those figures do not fit the narrative.' The reality is that we get those figures by being responsible economic managers. That is what this bill is all about.

I will tell members how else we get them? We get them by supporting people in the private sector who put forward good ideas. That is what this bill is all about. We do not get them by being regressive and looking backwards. The member for Callide has indicated that he wants to go to Canberra and join the Barnaby Joyce show and drag our nation backwards. He has no interest in what we are doing in Gladstone in terms of taking an industry forward and encouraging a billion dollars worth of investment from the private sector.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I ask that you rule on relevance and direct the member come back to the long title of the bill.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Greenslopes, I have been listening carefully and you are straying from the long title of the bill. I will ask you to draw your conclusions back to the long title of the bill.

Government members interjected.


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope no member is reflecting on the chair right now.

Mr KELLY: As I said, the member for Clayfield explored a range of economic matters in relation to Labor's management of the economy so I am simply exploring some of those matters and pointing out an alternative point of view.

I am proud to be part of a party that is responsible for establishing the modern superannuation system. That means that average, working-class people can have security in their retirement. That is not something that was available to my uncles, my aunties and my parents. It was not something that was available, but the great Australian union moment put that in place. We did it by bringing workers and employers together.

I am pleased to see in this bill—a bill where we are supporting two great Queensland institutions come together—that that will continue to be the case. Workers will continue to have a place and a voice in managing the superannuation funds of members—the majority of which are working people. That is entirely appropriate. This bill will create the second biggest super firm in our country. That is something that Queensland should be proud of. We are becoming the powerhouse state with the Olympics coming our way in 2032. To have the second biggest super firm based in our state—and the senior positions based in our state—is a feather in the cap of our state.

We will continue to have a wealth management fund here that understands Queensland and Queenslanders, understands the sorts of opportunities that the Queensland government is trying to grab hold of and is working with the private sector to grab hold of and understands the jobs of the future that we are trying to create—like the jobs of the future in Gladstone. With those few words, I support the bill. I am pleased to see that the union submissions supported the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (3.27 pm): It is crucial that no worker is left worse off as a result of this merger. We are being asked to sign off on a bill that is being rushed through an inquiry on the shortest possible time frame. The standing orders say that an inquiry should conclude within six months of a bill coming to parliament but that six weeks is the absolute minimum the government can reduce this to. Of course, the government runs a six-week inquiry for every possible bill they can. Like so many other details regarding the way this government runs, they cut corners, have no interest in debate and do the absolute minimum to support transparency in the parliament.

We have just a few hours to debate this today because of an administrative error to do with the incoming Governor's pension—big democracy vibes from the government. They had a grand total of nine submissions and one supplementary submission in the compressed time line on a bill that will affect the retirement benefits of two million people by facilitating the merger between Sunsuper, a large multi-industry fund based in Queensland, and QSuper, the default fund for Queensland Public Service employees.

I pick up on the issue of total and permanent disability, TPD, insurance, which two of the submitters to this inquiry made strong representations about. These concerns were not dealt with in detail by the Economics and Governance Committee and they have not been dealt with in the bill or any amendments to it.

TPD insurance is a little known feature of most superannuation funds which provides a financial safety net when permanent injury or illness makes it difficult or impossible to return to work. The terms will vary from insurer to insurer but generally involve the payment of a lump sum once a worker's total and permanent disability has been assessed. Any financial counsellor will tell you that TPD is a critical form of insurance for many people on a low income because of reduced work capacity and that it is underaccessed.

Both Maurice Blackburn, a huge plaintiff law firm, and the police union raised concerns about Sunsuper's TPD offering in strong terms. Both of these organisations have a fair bit in common with the government on most issues, so it is all the more significant that they have broken ranks on this one. To be clear, it is very rare for me to line up with the police union on any issue, but here they have made an important contribution.

Maurice Blackburn explains how for five years Sunsuper has used an insurance product called TPD Assist for its 1.3 million members and that this 'product is a significant deviation from the traditional insurance against total and permanent disability'. As the police union says, this product is 'at odds with many traditional insurance products contained within super funds'. Instead of receiving a lump sum, Sunsuper members get their benefit in five instalments over six years. They have to reapply and re-provide their total and permanent disability documentation every year, requiring ongoing medical assessments and compulsory rehabilitation every year in some cases.

As a plaintiff firm, Maurice Blackburn details the unnecessary stress, mental health impacts and financial impost caused by this insurance product. They detail how even folks experiencing paraplegia or who have lost an entire limb do not qualify for the lump sum. The police union, too, speaks of the protracted and difficult process for members, rather than an approach that would be 'more dignified and


appropriate for those members suffering from an injury or illness that they will not recover from'. They explain how no other industry fund uses this method of drip-feeding TPD benefits. It is entirely unique to Sunsuper.

Maurice Blackburn further details how the TPD Assist product excludes liability for insured members whose 'financial affairs are under the supervision of a third party due to their medical conditions or incapacity'. The effect of this is that workers with their finances administered by the Public Trustee pay full insurance premiums but only receive death cover.

It is obvious that these arrangements unfairly impact the most vulnerable people in the community. People with a disability have to steel themselves for exclusion every day. They have to steel themselves for rigorous government assessments. Like First Nations people, they have been left behind in the COVID-19 vaccine rollout and, as we recently learned in estimates, some of them have been left behind in the NDIS rollout here in Queensland with little ongoing support from the Queensland government in light of their ineligibility for the federal scheme.

To genuinely meet its own policy objectives and enhance workers' benefits, this bill should ensure that no worker is worse off as a result of this merger. A key way to start on that road is to ensure Sunsuper scraps TPD Assist in favour of a fair insurance product like any other applying to industry fund members in Queensland. Without this, as Maurice Blackburn sets out in its submission, we risk a fund which has the Queensland government as a trustee and provides outcomes for injured workers which are well below both industry standard and community expectations.

At best, in failing to ensure workers can access industry standard insurance, the government is cutting corners in keeping with its entire approach to this bill. At worst, the government is wilfully exposing millions of Queenslanders to an outcome which is well below what they deserve.

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (3.33 pm): I am pleased to speak in support of the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021. This bill will facilitate the merger between QSuper and Sunsuper to create the second largest superannuation fund in Australia, with two million members and an estimated \$200 billion in net assets. Our government has supported this merger under the condition that it is in the best interest of QSuper and Sunsuper members—that means quite a lot of Queenslanders—and it will be good for our state and everyone in it.

Importantly, the merged fund will be headquartered in Queensland, meaning that 2,000 jobs will be kept in the state. The merger will lead to better superannuation outcomes for members with larger returns and lower fees due to reduced administration costs and improved investment performance. The fund's scale and diversity of membership will mean more expanded investment opportunities for Queensland and greater capacity to create new and innovative financial services and products. This will enhance financial returns for members and provide them with more income to spend in their retirement years. This will have added flow-on benefits for our local economies as retirees spend more money on local businesses and services.

Importantly, the new merged entity will retain its status as a profit-for-members fund, rather than having its profits ending up in the hands of shareholders. This means the funds will be working in the best financial interests of their members, and members will have peace of mind knowing that they will have a secure income when they retire.

Security of income in retirement years is crucially important for everyone, but especially for women. Women currently retire with 47 per cent less superannuation than men. Even in this day and age, women are usually the ones who have to take time out of the workforce to care for children or older family members. They are more likely to be employed part-time to fit in childcare arrangements. More concerningly, women are still earning lower than average salaries than men—even women who have graduated in the same professions as men and working in the same roles. Women deserve to retire with an income that guarantees a dignified and secure retirement.

While 44 per cent of women currently rely on their partners' income during retirement, a husband is not a plan. Changing demographics are seeing larger numbers of older single women who are entering their retirement years with lower than average super. More disturbingly, 40 per cent of older single retired women now live in poverty and experience economic insecurity in retirement. Many of these women may not own their own home and are forced to compete in an overpriced rental market. They struggle to pay bills and sometimes struggle with ill health which impacts their financial security. Some of those women have forged successful Public Service careers, and some of them have worked on the front lines of our hospitals as nurses and midwives. They deserve to live out their retirement years on a decent income that affords them a good quality of life.


When the Keating Labor government introduced the compulsory superannuation scheme in 1992, it allowed millions of hardworking Australians to retire with dignity and security. It came at a time when more women were entering the workforce and it provided women with the opportunity of having a secure safety net upon retirement rather than forcing them onto the age pension. It included rollover provisions which ensured women who left the workforce to have children could maintain their superannuation coverage ensuring that their super could grow into an adequate sum upon retirement.

The Queensland Labor government supports the ethos of a national compulsory superannuation scheme for all hardworking Australians to provide them with a high standard of living in their retirement years. One of the conditions that our government has maintained in supporting this merger was to ensure that the merger was in the best interests of members.

Queensland government employees can be assured that this bill will preserve their existing QSuper entitlements and benefits, including those of defined benefit members. Any changes that impact on member benefits, member contributions or government contributions can only proceed with the consent of the treasurer of the day. Our government's guarantee regarding defined benefit entitlements will continue to be enshrined in legislation.

I welcome the commitment from QSuper and Sunsuper to providing employment security for the existing workforces with all staff below senior management given assurance of their ongoing employment for at least two years. The merged fund will also attract new jobs for skilled professionals in investment, information technology and customer engagement. It will also reinforce Queensland as an attractive place for new businesses to invest in.

I want to thank the Treasurer for his work in introducing this bill. I want to thank QSuper and Sunsuper for committing to ensuring that the merger works in the best interests of its members and for Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (3.38 pm): I am pleased to rise and make a contribution to the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021. While I understand there is no requirement, I wish to declare that I am not a member of either QSuper or Sunsuper.

This legislation marks the beginning of something very significant for superannuation in this state and indeed in this country. Superannuation is a significant financial asset for many Australians. It sits alongside the age pension, the family home and other household savings as a pillar of the retirement income system.

Prior to entering parliament, I was on the board of a Queensland industry superannuation fund for a number of years. That experience has informed my deep appreciation and understanding of Australia's superannuation system. To the member for Buderim's point, I was in fact an employee representative or union representative, just as there were employer representatives on our board selected by employer organisations like AgForce, Growcom and Canegrowers.

To be very clear, I took my fiduciary responsibilities very seriously during my time on the board. I managed my conflicts carefully and I even completed a diploma in superannuation, so let's be very fair when we begin discussing merit based systems.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Pause the clock. Members in the chamber, the member for Jordan is not taking any interjections. I wish to be able to hear her contribution. Please cease your interjections.

Mrs MULLEN: As a member of the board, ensuring that our decisions were in the best interests of members was paramount. This included making decisions on mergers that would ultimately benefit our members.

As reported in the Economics and Governance Committee report, as of March 2021 superannuation members collectively own approximately \$3.1 trillion in assets, and superannuation will continue to play a central role in funding Australians' retirement into the future. Many may also not appreciate that our super funds also play an important role in the insurance space. About 12 million Australians have insurance—life, total and permanent disability, and/or income protection cover—through their super. Group insurance arrangements deliver many of them much more affordable insurance than they would be able to get through individually written cover outside of super. Because most of these group policies are provided on an opt-out basis, the large share of low-risk members in the pool acts to keep premiums down for everyone.

Some have argued, and I agree, that insurance in super has been a key factor in addressing the underinsurance gap in our country. As the chair of the insurance committee on my board we dealt with some very complex and tragic insurance matters for our members, but without this insurance many of our members would have been left with very little to continue their lives or those of their families.

The merging of two of Queensland's largest superannuation funds, QSuper and Sunsuper, will see a combined \$200 billion in funds under management and two million members. This would establish the merged entity as Australia's second largest superannuation fund after AustralianSuper. As the default fund for Queensland's public sector employees, QSuper has been providing retirement benefits to the state's public sector workers for over a century. Since 2017 the fund has been open to all Australians. Sunsuper was established in 1987 as a fund open to all Australians and has quickly grown to become a leading multi-industry fund. These are both well-known and respected industry funds which operate on a profit-for-member basis, with any profits returned to members rather than to paying shareholders.


This proposed merger is timely, but it is also very much a merger of equals. We know that the superannuation industry has undergone a period of consolidation and rationalisation in recent years. This has been actively supported by the regulator APRA, which has been pushing very hard for several years for more fund mergers. This has been critical not only in weeding out persistent underperformers or making the sector easier to navigate for members; it is also about scale. The Productivity Commission's 2018 inquiry report *Superannuation: assessing efficiency and competitiveness* pointed to 'compelling' evidence of the economies of scale to be gained through the larger fund size associated with mergers.

The commission found that reported fees in Australia are higher than in many other OECD countries. While some of the difference may reflect regulatory or other factors beyond funds' control, the data revealed that Australian super funds pay higher costs for the biggest asset classes—equities and fixed income—compared with their peers in other developed countries. Their analysis found that significant economies of scale have been realised in the super system over the past 13 years, particularly for administration expenses. Holding constant other cost drivers, increases in scale are estimated to have generated cost savings of about \$340 million each year on average, amounting to \$4.5 billion in incremental gains since 2004.

As we know, the super system exists to support its members in retirement. In the long term, members need strong investment performance and a balance that has not been eroded by unnecessarily high fees or insurance premiums. QSuper and Sunsuper have forecast that administrative costs will reduce and investment performance will improve in the merged fund, and the government is satisfied that this will be passed on to members through lower fees and higher returns. As QSuper is established under the Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990, which provides for the governance arrangements for the QSuper board and QSuper fund, amendments to the legislation are required to enable the merger to proceed. It is important to note that the decision to merge is one for the boards of each fund and not for the Queensland government; however, unlike other states, Queensland continues to be the only state in Australia with a fully funded defined benefit scheme.

Given the clear interest the Queensland government has to preserve the entitlements of QSuper members and the government's defined benefit scheme, the agreement to facilitate the necessary amendments to the superannuation act was subject to the following six conditions being met: that the merger is in the best interest of members; there are appropriate governance and protections to preserve member benefits and manage the government's liabilities in relation to the defined benefit scheme; continued representation of the Queensland government as an employer sponsor of the merged fund's board; continued delivery of certain administration functions for the government; continued delivery of community service activities, particularly those supporting Queenslanders facing challenges accessing their superannuation; and consultation and satisfactory outcomes with relevant stakeholders.

The decision by QSuper and Sunsuper to merge is financially sound. It will give the merged fund increased capacity in its investment decisions. It takes into account the current mergers and acquisitions environment that APRA is strongly promoting. Importantly, it is going to be in the best interests of members. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (3.45 pm): I rise to speak on the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill. This bill will facilitate the merger of QSuper and Sunsuper. If the merger goes ahead it will be a significant moment for our state's financial services industry and create the second largest superannuation fund in Australia. This bill will facilitate some technical and mechanical arrangements to support the merger. According to the explanatory notes, the board of QSuper, as trustee of QSuper, will be retired and the trust deed for QSuper moved out of

legislation. It will also ensure the new entity will continue to be based here in Queensland. It will protect public sector employees' defined benefits and keep a statutory framework for state public sector employees' superannuation contribution arrangements.

The new fund will have 13 directors, of which almost half—six—will be union representatives. It will also have four employer representatives and three independents. Former Labor treasurer Andrew Fraser, who is currently chair of Sunsuper, will be on the board. The members of this superannuation fund do not have voting rights. It is important that the board not be stacked with Labor Party and union apparatchiks. It is even more important that appointees are experienced and well credentialed. Appointees to the board need to have a high degree of skills and experience in governance and transparency. The Productivity Commission's 2018 report *Superannuation: assessing efficiency and competitiveness* noted—

All trustee boards need to steadfastly appoint skilled board members, better manage unavoidable conflicts of interest, and promote member outcomes without fear or favour.

These 13 directors will oversee a fund with two million members and 2,000 employees based here in Queensland. It was only two years ago in November 2019 that QSuper and Sunsuper reported they were discussing a proposed merger. Four months later, in March last year they announced an intention to enter exclusive due diligence. A year later the trustees of QSuper and Sunsuper signed a heads of agreement to confirm the intention to merge. The expectation is that this merger will deliver lower fees and better returns for members through increased scale and size.

The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority has been pushing hard for several years for more fund mergers. It has been intensifying regulatory pressure for mergers in the superannuation industry to achieve economies of scale. APRA chairman Wayne Byres has repeatedly said the superannuation industry is not delivering the right outcomes. Last year he said that 'trustees have not been always been focused on members' best interests' and added that 'aggregate fees and costs are too high, insurance has not always been good value for money, and there has been too much inefficiency in the system.' In May this year the deputy chair of APRA Helen Rowell said that this push for mergers—

... isn't simply about weeding out persistent underperformers, or making the sector easier to navigate for members—although both are important. It's also about scale.

All things being equal, the evidence suggests that larger funds are better placed to deliver stronger investment performance and lower fees.

These views are reinforced by the Productivity Commission. Its report into the superannuation industry raised what it called 'compelling' evidence for the economies of scale to be gained through the larger fund size associated with mergers. The commission reported there was a positive relationship between fund size and net returns for profit-to-member funds—also called not-for-profit funds. It found that larger funds appeared to 'make better investment decisions within asset classes.' The commission also pointed to reduced administrative costs, with associated gains in system savings accruing from increases in scale totalling an estimated \$4.5 billion between 2004 and 2017.

Sunsuper has almost \$90 billion in funds and close to 1.4 million members. QSuper has about \$134 billion in funds and more than 600,000 members. A merger of this scale will push efficiencies and increase employment opportunities for finance industry professionals who previously would have moved away. As anticipated by the Productivity Commission and APRA, operating costs will be shared across a broader membership base, expanded investment opportunities and partnerships will be more easily accessed, better investment decisions within asset classes will be reached, and new services and products will be inspired by innovation and technological possibilities. However, these outcomes are not automatic.


Often supporters of mergers and consolidations promise that they will deliver better outcomes. History has shown this has not always happened. As the Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland submission noted, it is an 'if' in relation to the outcome, saying—

If the benefits of size and scale can be brought to life ... it will lead to lower fees and larger retirement balances for members.

That is why it is important that the best experienced people are on the board and that the new merged entity does not lose sight of its core responsibility in handling other people's money. As the committee report noted, Queensland's Under Treasurer emphasised that this bill will not affect the merger in and of itself. The Under Treasurer said—

We should acknowledge that this is still a proposal. The boards have not formally decided on the merger occurring ... The government is providing the basis upon which—if the trustees are of a mind and they think it is in the members' best interests and that is agreed to by the regulator—a merger takes place.

I do not oppose the bill.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (3.51 pm): I rise to support the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill. As a proud former union official, I would like to acknowledge the tireless work undertaken by unions, employers and members over many decades in championing a universal superannuation scheme for all Australian workers. It was an absolute honour in the mid-1980s to be one of the industrial advocates who got superannuation clauses inserted in all of the state system awards. May I add that Sunsuper, as a default scheme, was all part of getting it going from strength to strength. I have also had the honour of serving on the QSuper board, particularly at the time when the new QSuper was born, and what a fantastic fund it is. I have also had the honour of not only serving on the Sunsuper board but being its chair for two years.

Mr Bleijie: This is a resume.

Ms GRACE: And it is a resume that I will recite in this House many, many times. Those opposite want to make out that they know about superannuation, but none of them have a clue. None of them have been on any of the fund boards. None of them have chaired any. None of them have been involved. None of them have advocated. None of them have been at the commission to get it in the awards. None of them have done anything. Yet it is very good that they are supporting this superannuation amendment bill.

I have seen firsthand the positive impacts that superannuation has had on the lives of working people in Queensland and across the nation. The hidden fantastic part of this is the life insurance that is embedded in most superannuation funds. Workers across the board in Australia had very little access to that kind of insurance. In fact, Mates in Construction grew after the number of terrible deaths that occurred in that industry and how that went through the superannuation fund. The union decided that enough was enough and they needed to do something to address it. Every month when they were making decisions about payments to families of members, this issue of self-harm came up, and Mates was born from the money that was going to those families. It would never have happened without the birth of superannuation. Forgive me, Madam Deputy Speaker, if I am very proud of what the Labor governments have been able to achieve over all of these years.

Put simply, superannuation allows people to retire with dignity and financial security, which is something that every Queenslanders deserves. As has been previously stated in this debate, the bill facilitates the proposed merger of Queensland's largest superannuation funds, QSuper and Sunsuper. The best thing about it is that these funds have been managed so well over the years. QSuper is the only public sector fund in the country that is fully funded. That is unbelievable. Billions of dollars are sitting there, waiting, invested for the benefit of members. Every other fund has a liability, where it is not there.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms GRACE: You guys have only been in for three of the last 30 years. It is Labor governments that have funded those super funds, so I would not get too cocky over there if I were you.

The other part is Sunsuper, which is an absolutely fantastic scheme. It was set up by the QCCI and the QCU at the time. It was started to mop up all of those workers who were not directly involved in an industry—because it was the industry funds that were born out of the decision that came down from the federal commission in the mid-1980s. Sunsuper was there to mop up all of those employees and employers who were not part of a particular industry. We are the only surviving and growing scheme of that nature in this state. The rest have merged, have not been able to grow or did not have what I did as industrial officer—that is, I put them as a default super fund in the clauses of those common rule awards. It was absolutely a stroke of genius, if I say so myself, and now we have two fantastic funds that are about to merge because of this bill.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms GRACE: Just ask me! These two fantastic funds are just about to merge to create the second largest superannuation fund in Australia. I know those opposite laugh and think it is funny, but just think about what Queensland is doing. Not only is it the second largest superannuation fund in Australia; it is the second largest fully funded superannuation fund in Australia. This is absolutely outstanding.

There is an interesting point about this. I remember back in the late 1990s we received a McKinsey report. McKinsey was a global management consultant firm. There was a proposition back then to merge Sunsuper, QSuper and QIC. It was an incredibly bold report that had been commissioned by those three organisations back in the late 1990s where they went through it all. The difficulty was

that QSuper was still a public sector fund; it had not opened up to other members. They came to the realisation in the late 1990s to early 2000s—and this is when I joined the board when I was elected the QCU general secretary—that it was just beyond reach. I remember speaking to McKinsey when it went down because it was not going to happen. I said to them that they were about 20 to 25 years ahead of their time. Here we are today, nearly 22 years later, passing this bill in the House that is going to effectively bring about a fantastic new superannuation fund in the best interests of members. That is what is driving this.

As the member for Gympie said, you get more economies of scale, you can reduce your fees and you have a better chance of buying investments that cost less because you have a bigger share of the investment amount that you have to give. It preserves our defined benefit fund, which is absolutely important to those who are in the DBF. There is no doubt that it is one of the best defined benefit funds in Australia, and we want to make sure we preserve that. Of course the accumulation fund continues in its security, and the board nominees are there to make sure we have a good spread and we have excellent people. I commend Don Luke, the current chair of QSuper. Don Luke was the CEO of Sunsuper—

Mrs Frecklington: This is a job application.

Ms GRACE: I cannot help it if those opposite do not know any of these people. They have no idea who they are. Don Luke is a superannuation expert and an absolute genius in this area. We know that the merged fund is in good hands with him as the chair. He is one of the most expert people in superannuation that I know.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Order, members!


Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members, I have just called the House to order.

Ms GRACE: Jealousy is very hard, I know. It is very difficult. I cannot wait to hear from the member for Kawana—he has not stopped interjecting—in terms of all the experience he has with superannuation funds. I would love to hear it all.

This is a great piece of legislation. The merger will be great not only for the Queensland economy but also for Queensland jobs. I can just see it growing bigger and bigger. There is an incredible number of people who will do administration. Obviously, QIC will continue in its fantastic ability in terms of investing funds. We will have in this state a \$200 billion super fund as part of a \$3.3 trillion superannuation industry. We will find that this will grow quickly. The fund is now open to all members of the community. It will provide a fantastic base for people to be part of that great concept of industry superannuation—created by Paul Keating and Bob Hawke and supported and advanced by the unions. It will give workers in this country a superannuation industry and superannuation benefits that are the envy of the rest of the world.

I am proud to stand here as someone who has worked in superannuation most of my life. With my experience, I know that this bill is fantastic. I commend the Treasurer, the chair of the committee—the member for Logan—the deputy chair and committee members. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (4.01 pm): Members of the 57th Parliament, we are gathered here today to witness and celebrate the merger of QSuper and Sunsuper. In the years they have been apart, their love for and understanding of each other has grown and matured. Now they have decided to live their lives together as one big, powerful, Queensland based super fund. A merger begins well before the passing of legislation. How dare the member for Kawana threaten the sanctity of marriage!

The efforts of this merger continue well beyond the bill's passing. A brief moment in time and the stroke of a pen are all that is required to create the legal bond of this merger, but it takes a lifetime of love, commitment and compromise to make a merger durable and everlasting. Today we declare QSuper's and Sunsuper's commitment to each other before the Queensland parliament. Your yesterdays were the path to this moment, and your journey to a future of togetherness becomes a little clearer with each new day.

This Palaszczuk government has been and always will be about delivering jobs, lifestyle and benefits for Queenslanders. Everything we do is for the benefit of Queenslanders, be it roads, health, jobs or education. It is with the pride of a true Queenslander that I support this historic merger of two Queensland based superannuation funds—Sunsuper and QSuper—into one joint entity which will create the second largest superannuation fund in Australia.

Importantly, the headquarters for this powerful new entity will be based right here in Brisbane and will support 2,000 Queensland jobs. Further, I am advised that all staff below senior management at both organisations have been given commitments of employment security for at least two years. Aside from these jobs being supported, I am advised that there will be many opportunities for new jobs in investment, information technology and customer engagement as the fund grows. These roles offer untold opportunities for existing and new employees who are supported by this government's burgeoning framework of training and education to upskill Queenslanders who wish to advance.

Queenslanders can also have confidence in the due diligence process leading to this super merger, knowing that the process leading to the signing of a binding heads of agreement has been debated for nearly two years to ensure Queensland workers get the best deal for their superannuation investment. The two Queensland funds first entered into negotiations in 2019 with a view to increasing investment power, reducing costs and delivering the best returns for their customers. The two parties signed a memorandum of understanding in March last year and worked through the hurdles of the COVID-19 pandemic to finalise the arrangement to get it to where it is today.

The new entity, called MySuper, will manage some \$200 billion in assets, rivalling the size of AustralianSuper, which has similar assets and 2.4 million members. To further ensure Queenslanders are being astutely guided in their superannuation investments, the Queensland government will continue to be represented on the board of the merged fund with a mix of current QSuper and Sunsuper board members also remaining.


The make-up of the new MySuper board of 13 directors will include a talented mix of class and gender including: Michael Clifford, Bruce Cowley, Mary-Anne Curtis, Andrew Fraser, Mark Goodey, Elizabeth Hallett, Shayne Maxwell, Sandra McCullagh, Beth Mohle, Kate Ruttiman, Michael Traill and Georgina Williams. I understand also that the QSuper-Sunsuper merged fund executive team has been announced: CEO Bernard Reilly, chief member officer Karin Muller, chief growth officer David Woodall, chief investment officer Ian Patrick, chief risk officer Anne Browne, chief technology officer Rod Greenaway, chief strategy officer Teifi Whatley, general counsel Deanne Wilden, chief of QInsure Phil Fraser, deputy chief investment officer Charles Woodhouse and chief of staff Lachlan East.

QSuper defined benefit members will continue to have their state guarantee enshrined in legislation, as Queensland will remain the only state in Australia that has its defined benefit liabilities fully provisioned. The Queensland government will continue ongoing discussions with QSuper and Sunsuper to ensure the merger delivers strong outcomes for members and the Queensland community as a whole.

There is even a benefit for non-Queenslanders. The combination of these two strong, successful funds will create an organisation of world-class capability that will be open to all Australians. What a bonus! They get to enjoy what Queenslanders have enjoyed for years. The Queensland government has been keeping a close watch on Queenslanders' benefits all through this merger process. Among its key criteria was that it: has appropriate government representation; maintains the government superannuation office's services; maintains protected defined benefits and associated liabilities; and satisfies key stakeholders.

The integration of two successful superannuation funds such as QSuper and Sunsuper into one world-class business, based here in Queensland, will serve the retirement needs of about two million Australians. QSuper and its predecessor funds have been providing retirement benefits to Queensland public sector workers for more than a century. Sunsuper was established in 1987 and has quickly grown to become a leading multi-industry fund open to all Australians. The new MySuper is in good hands, with QSuper chair Don Luke to take the role as chairman of the new entity, while Sunsuper chief executive Bernard Reilly will lead the new fund until at least December 2022. Both funds have been top performers in the retirement income sector, with researcher SuperRatings awarding Fund of the Year to QSuper in 2020, while Sunsuper won the same award the previous year.

I congratulate all board members and our government officers for the work done to this point. I am very confident that MySuper will realise its potential to achieve real benefits for members. This will be further tested and monitored over coming months and years. By the power vested in me by the parliament of Queensland, I hope to, after the third reading, pronounce MySuper as a merged fund in Queensland. You may now kiss your bride. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (4.07 pm): There is nothing better than listening to a debate on a superannuation bill involving members of Labor aligned unions being given board positions and listening to the comrades opposite talk about their membership and the union movement. We had a

dissertation from Minister Grace about the eighties and nineties when she was a union official or union officer—aka union enforcer. That is what Minister Grace was in the QMU—a union enforcer. I listen with interest when members speak about the merger of Sunsuper and QSuper.

I acknowledge the contributions of members who talked of the importance of super. We all know how important it is. I think of those who are looking to retire now, particularly those of my parents' generation. Just the other day I had a conversation with Mum and Dad about their retirement. They said that they will have to work a lot longer because super was not available to them. Also, they are small business people. They have not had the opportunity to put as much away in superannuation as will generations now and in the future. It is so important that Queenslanders and Australians have superannuation, the dignity of retirement at a time of their own choosing and the ability to spend their money when they choose to retire.

When we talk about elements of this bill, I want to address a few of the issues with respect to the board and—this is of particular importance to me—the composition of the board. The committee report notes the current situation of both Sunsuper and QSuper. Sunsuper has three employee representatives, three employer representatives and one independent representative while QSuper has four employer representatives, four employee representatives and one independent. Under this legislation we are now going to this super structure board of 13 representatives with six employee representatives, four employer representatives and three independent representatives. That concerns me greatly. It concerns me greatly that we have gone from a situation where we have equal representation of employer and employee organisations to a situation now where we have an over-representation of unions. That is essentially what this is. Six employee organisations will be represented, four employers and three independents. In terms of the three independents, who knows? They could very well come from union backgrounds as well while not being officially associated or affiliated with a union. It does not surprise me that we have a Labor government introducing a merger bill with a board composition of more employee representation than employer representation. That just shows the Labor priorities in that we have gone from two situations where the board of each organisation has had equal representation.

The other point is this: under the current appointment process, the terms of the appointment and how the appointments are made are prescribed in the legislation by regulation. The Treasurer makes the appointments under the QSuper act and it is prescribed by regulation how board members are appointed. Therefore, members of parliament have the opportunity to have a disallowance motion with respect to such regulations. That will now not be the case because this will be taken out of the subordinate legislation and put in the hands of a deed with a constitution and no oversight of the parliament. When we go through the appointment process of these 13 members to the board, the parliament will have no oversight of the subordinate legislation as we currently do, and that is contained in the committee report.

I am not as enthusiastic as some Labor members in this House when they talk about the benefits of having said union representatives as great members on this board in terms of how highly skilled they are, given that we are talking about a situation where possibly there will be \$200 billion worth of members' money in this fund. I am not even sure if the CFMEU is on any of the current boards—I do not think it is—but it could very well now be that the CFMEU will have a representative on the new board structure. If those opposite want to talk about accountability and integrity, who can forget Mr Dave Hanna and the horse float running away from Peel Street with documentation covered up with a tarp that they were trying to hide from a royal commission?

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection; he threw a tea towel over the CCTV camera. That is the CFMEU—the BLF—for you, and members opposite talk about how highly skilled these union members are and how valuable they will be in these board positions when we have the CFMEU in Queensland covering up a CCTV camera to hide documentation from a royal commission and rush it away on a horse float, and then I think it was taken to Dave Hanna's property and burnt. So that is transparency and accountability!

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: Correct: assisted by the CFMEU. That, according to Labor—and I note there is a member opposite who is a member of the CFMEU—is the type of transparency and accountability of the CFMEU in Queensland. Is the Labor Party going to be advocating for one of those members of the CFMEU to be on the new merged board?

When we were in government we introduced the union which covered employer and employee financial accountability legislation and the first thing the Labor Party did was abolish it, because we believed in financial transparency for employee and employer groups. We had credit card disclosures of all the weird and wonderful places the unions were going to, and of course the first thing that Minister Grace did when she was IR minister was abolish the financially transparent legislation that we introduced in government. If those opposite want to be fair dinkum about union representation on these boards—and I say real union representation—how about the Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland? Is the Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland a fair dinkum red union? Is it going to be given an opportunity to serve as an employee representative on this board? I think it should because it is clear that the employees of Queensland are leaving traditional Labor unions in droves. That is why we have seen the big political attacks from the Labor Party this week.


If we are to truly represent Queensland workers, let Queensland workers have a say on this new board by allowing NPAQ, the Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland, or TPAQ, the Teachers' Professional Association of Queensland, or both on this board. I would advocate that out of the six employee representatives, to be fairly representative and truly representative of workers in this state, we should definitely have those two red unions on the board of the merged entity structure. Then the Labor Party would show that it is not just going to give it to party friends and unions affiliated with the Labor Party. Rather, it will actually represent the workers, because the workers are speaking with their membership and leaving the QNMU and the Teachers' Union and going to other unions. Why? Because these other unions—the real unions—are offering cheaper membership, better legal indemnities, better representation and guess what? No political interference with any politics—no interference or allegiances with any politics. That is why this week we have seen the concerted—

Mr HARPER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I believe the member is misleading the House, because the organisation he is referring to is run by the LNP.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): That is not a point of order. Sit down.

Mr BLEIJIE: As more Queensland workers leave the Labor affiliated unions and go to these other associations, the Labor Party will be forced to register them under the Industrial Relations Act in Queensland. It will have no choice because the workers are speaking with their feet and they are leaving the Labor affiliated unions and they are going to other unions where they are getting better services.

Finally, I know that Andrew Fraser is on a board and he is being transferred to the new board. There have been some people saying good luck to him. I have to say that I have no time for that fellow. He was the one who delayed the Sunshine Coast University Hospital when he was treasurer, and I will never forgive him for that because we would have had better health services on the Sunshine Coast. He was one of the worst treasurers in Queensland's history. I am really concerned that he will be on the merged board and am not as thankful that he is transferring to the new board as some other members in this place have been.

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (4.17 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021. Before doing so, I declare that I am a holder of a QSuper defined benefit fund account, the result of 24 years serving as a teacher and school administrator and four years as the state member for Mansfield.

Mr Bleijie: You're going to join TPAQ. Have you transferred your membership to TPAQ?

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Order, members!

Ms McMILLAN: Whilst I am declaring, I will declare that I am a proud Queensland Teachers' Union member—

Mr Bleijie: You're paying too much!

Ms McMILLAN:—a proud Queensland Teachers' Union member, a proud member of the QTU of 28 years. It was in 1983 that the Hawke Labor government expressed support for the principles of employee superannuation and in 1986 it joined with the Australian Council of Trade Unions in seeking a universal three per cent superannuation contribution by employers to be paid into an industry fund in lieu of a wage rise for workers. This accord was endorsed by the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in February 1986.

By 1988, 51.3 per cent of Australian employees were covered by super, rising to 64 per cent by 1990. Arguably Keating's most far-reaching achievement as Prime Minister was the full introduction of the national superannuation scheme implemented to address Australia's long-term problem of

chronically low national savings and, of course, to improve the lives of working men and women. In 1992, under the Keating Labor government, the compulsory employer contribution scheme became part of a wider reform package addressing Australia's retirement income dilemma. Today around 15.6 million Australians currently have a super account and as a result of recent federal government legislative reform, from 1 July 2021 to 1 July 2025 the superannuation guarantee will increase from 9½ per cent to 12 per cent in 0.5 per cent increments, something that Keating should be very proud of.


QSuper is the third largest superannuation fund in Australia, with \$120 billion in total assets. Sunsuper is Australia's eighth largest fund, with \$75 billion in total assets. The boards of QSuper and Sunsuper have agreed to merge the two funds. A merger would establish Australia's second largest superannuation fund behind only AustralianSuper. The main objective of the bill is to facilitate QSuper and Sunsuper's proposed structure for the merged fund by amending the Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990. Sunsuper and QSuper detail the new super fund will have the scale to deliver outstanding services, greater efficiencies and lower costs for members. The merger is part of a broader trend sparked by calls from APRA for super funds to reduce complexity for members by merging. The regulator was given stronger powers to take action against the trustees of underperforming funds in early 2019 following recommendations made by the much needed banking royal commission.

Companies seek mergers for a variety of reasons, as we know: to gain access to a larger market and customer base, to reduce competition and to achieve economies of scale. By combining business activities, overall performance efficiency tends to increase and across-the-board costs tend to drop due to the fact that each company leverages off the other company's strengths. Mergers provide an opportunity to grow market share without doing significant heavy lifting. Many merger deals help eliminate future competition and assist the larger market share.

The bill protects the government's interests and the interests of Queensland government employees. Government supported the merger under several conditions, including that the merger is in the best interests of members and that members and stakeholders are being kept informed of developments. The government will continue to access expert technical superannuation advice about public sector superannuation arrangements. I note the contribution of the member for Kawana. We must not make the assumption that union members, or for that matter members of the Labor Party, are uneducated and do not warrant a position on those boards.

Their community service activities will continue to assist Queensland's vulnerable and that is an important aspect associated with the values of the great Australian Labor Party. The funds provide assurances that public sector employees' defined benefit entitlements cannot be reduced, that a statutory framework for employees' contribution levels will be maintained and that the merged fund will remain here in Queensland. The government supports the fund's proposed governance model as it aligns with the other largest funds in Australia and is one that serves best a fund that is regulated by the Australian government, as most funds are. The funds have provided forecast data that show the administrative costs will reduce and investment performance will improve in the merged fund, which the government is satisfied will be passed on to members through lower fees and higher returns.

The merged fund will continue to be the Queensland government's default fund. The bill ensures that the merged fund will preserve the entitlements of QSuper members and will protect the government's defined benefit liabilities. I commend the work of the Treasurer, his department, certainly the chair of the committee and the committee members and I commend this bill to the House.

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (4.24 pm): I rise in support of the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021. QSuper is Australia's third largest super fund, with \$120 billion in total assets, and Sunsuper is the eighth largest, with \$75 billion in total assets. The proposed merger that we are looking at today in this legislation will establish Australia's second largest superannuation fund, coming in behind only AustralianSuper and to be known as MySuper. The merged fund, as we have heard, will have \$224 billion in assets and two million members, mainly Queenslanders.

Our Palaszczuk government supported this merger under important conditions, including, among others, that it must be in the best interests of members and that members and stakeholders were kept informed. Like many, if not most, members of this House, I declare that I am a member of QSuper and can confirm that I have been kept very fully informed of developments. I particularly want to commend the Treasurer's insistence that the newly merged mega super fund will continue to be based in Queensland. The merged fund will compete nationally, but its headquarters will remain in Brisbane, and the registered office, the main office and most of the trustee's business areas will remain in Queensland.

In securing this guarantee our government is supporting and protecting over 2,000 Queensland jobs which, of course, is a key value of Labor governments. Not only will existing jobs be protected, but also new jobs will be created for the future, economic benefits to members will be identified in uptake of technology and the benefits of the fund's bigger scale will be passed on through higher returns, as supported by the Productivity Commission's report. All of this means increased account balances for members, higher retirement incomes and a boost to all-important economic activity here in Queensland.

This merger also benefits Queensland by strengthening our Queensland financial sector which, of course, has been traditionally dominated by southern capitals. Our new MySuper fund will create a financial powerhouse that will help supercharge a burgeoning financial services industry here in Queensland. We have seen during COVID that Queensland is absolutely the place to be and it is absolutely the place to do business, and this bill facilitating the merger creates a springboard for the future growth of this important sector.

The bill also protects our fully funded defined benefit scheme, something we have heard about and something that is unique in Australia. To compare our scheme to other states, New South Wales is currently \$68 billion in deficit leading to the New South Wales government engaging in high-risk investments under the now Premier and former treasurer to try to make up that gap, while Victoria has a \$31.2 billion shortfall and even Western Australia remains \$7 billion short of full funding. Labor is looking to the future. We ensured and continue to ensure that our defined benefit scheme is fully funded. The boards of QSuper and Sunsuper are looking to the future by pursuing this long and complex process of merger. With its two million members and its \$224 billion in investments, this bill will assist the new fund to deliver better outcomes for members by leveraging their massive combined savings to increase their profitability, efficiency and market power.

Labor has always looked to the future when it comes to retirement. We believe a lifetime of work should be recognised and respected. Labor was part of the very first government that implemented the first Australian age pension scheme back in 1908 ensuring a decent safety net for our elders. Superannuation has a proud Labor history. In the 1980s and 1990s Hawke and Keating reforms establishing compulsory super in Australia remain some of Labor's most enduring changes, hitting the sweet spot where economic and social change collide.

I note the member for Hervey Bay's comments that superannuation gives security and comfort to millions of Queenslanders, especially working-class people who would never otherwise have aspired to save for their retirement. I note that through family circumstances my own parents have no superannuation to rely on as they get older and I cannot tell you the comfort I would find in knowing they had more than the age pension to draw on as they age.

Superannuation has been a boon to so many people of my electorate of Pumicestone. Members have heard me say many times that we are the electorate with the highest proportion of people aged over 65 anywhere in Queensland, despite competition from the member for Hervey Bay. This bill will benefit a large number of retired and retiring public sector workers who reside in Pumicestone. Many members of our community in Pumicestone embarking on retirement have reason to be grateful that Labor had the foresight to commit to compulsory superannuation so many years ago and against considerable political opposition.

We have heard a lot today from the LNP on the topic of political opposition and their support for this bill but with the usual stale side serve of attacks on unions from the members for Buderim, Kawana et al.

A government member interjected.

Ms KING: Et cetera. It goes on and on and on. The member for Clayfield said, in particular, that superannuation is an integral part of the compact of employment, but I seek to question what his party's broader record of support for our superannuation system looks like. Shamefully, the LNP's history is one of constant attacks on and undermining of the superannuation system that is the backbone of the Commonwealth of Australia and that ensures a dignified and secure retirement.

In 2020 we heard from Queensland Liberal National Senator Gerard Rennick, who called Australia's \$3 trillion retirement savings funds the biggest rort in Australia. He said—

Of all the rorts that exist in this country, nothing compares to superannuation.


He also said, 'Superannuation is devouring the real economy.' This year he and other LNP politicians called for superannuation to be voluntary. He has called superannuation a 'lie'. He has called it 'lipstick on a pig'. He has called it a 'cancer'. I wonder which LNP members not speaking on this bill today share those views.

In 2020 the Morrison government passed a bill that retroactively legalised the theft of superannuation payments, allowing bosses who have ripped off their workers to get away scot-free. During COVID the Morrison government incentivised desperate and vulnerable people to take up to \$20,000 from their superannuation, without any oversight or assessment of need, consigning many, especially young people, to a poorer, meaner retirement.

The federal LNP has delayed promised superannuation increases, claiming that increasing superannuation contributions will undermine wages growth when we know that the real lid on wage increases is the LNP's own refusal to back real wage increases, particularly in the public sector. We have seen the constant dangling of superannuation raids as an option to get young people into an overheated housing market. While that may sound understandably attractive to young people, it will come at a huge cost to them in later decades when they reach retirement as they will have missed out on many years of compound interest.

Of course, the LNP's greatest ire is reserved for industry super funds. We have heard some of those attacks today, oddly enough by members who, in many cases, declared that they were members of QSuper, Sunsuper or both. All of their ideological whinges about union paymasters and board representation seemingly are not enough to make them cash out of high-performing funds that are run entirely for the benefit of members, like QSuper and Sunsuper.

Our strong retirement savings sector contributes hugely to our national economic health, and people having the best possible support in retirement is key to our Labor vision. This bill and the merger it supports will be beneficial to working people right across Queensland. It is good for Queensland jobs and industry, and it is good for our economic recovery after COVID-19. I commend the Treasurer, the chair and the committee. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (4.32 pm): I rise in support of this bill and the merger between Sunsuper and QSuper. Following on from many of the speakers on this side of the House, I recognise the entrenched history of superannuation within this great Australian Labor Party, particularly the reforms started by the Hawke government in 1983. They sat down with employers and unions and came up with the Prices and Incomes Accord, which led the way to the start of compulsory superannuation. That was followed in 1992 by the Keating government ensuring that workers got up to nine per cent compulsory superannuation. That transformed the landscape of industrial relations and also the retirement futures of millions and millions of workers in this country.

Every step of the way it was opposed by the LNP. It was opposed under Howard and it was opposed under Abbott. Who could forget when Abbott said he would endorse and match Labor's proposed increases to superannuation only to be elected and to backflip on that promise? That backflip cost workers in this country six years. We all know the benefits that come from superannuation through compound interest. Six years means that workers, especially young workers, will miss out on tens if not hundreds of thousands of dollars being paid into their retirement funds.

What have we seen recently? Leading up to the last election Scott Morrison said, 'We promise to do the same', only to have his backbenchers and ministers attack the superannuation increases.

A government member interjected.

Mr BROWN: Yes, it was a complete setup. I believe that the only reason it got up this time is that we are heading into an election year, but I have no doubt that if they are re-elected at the next election they will stall it again and stop the increases to superannuation for millions of workers in this country.

How successful is superannuation? It has \$3.3 trillion worth of market assets! That is unbelievable. It means that taxpayers do not have to fork out so much on the aged pension, yet it is constantly under attack by the LNP. We need only look to their comments and I note that the member for Pumicestone ran through some of them. Senator Rennick called superannuation a 'cancer'. Supposedly, \$3.3 trillion is a cancer. He also said that union linked industry super funds were 'laughing all the way to the bank'. Yes, they are and so are their members. They are laughing all the way to the bank. They are laughing all the way to retirement because they now have funds that they would not have had under a Liberal government—ever. Such comments remind us that superannuation is a hard fought for entitlement that was won by the workers through the great Australian Labor Party and their unions. However, it is constantly under attack and we need to protect it every single step of the way.

I refer to the theft of superannuation. Each year \$6 billion has been stolen from workers and their superannuation funds. What did the federal Liberal government do? They said, 'If you come forward now, we'll give you an amnesty and we'll let you pay some back.' Some employers did the right thing, came forward and were granted an amnesty. However, that was just the tip of the iceberg in terms of

what has been stolen from superannuation. What did our government do? We came in here and changed the law to make wage theft a crime. That shows the difference: we do not give them a free pass; we send them to jail if they do the wrong thing. We need a federal Labor government to do the same with the Commonwealth legislation.

I turn to an issue that really upsets me. During COVID the federal government made out that JobKeeper kept the Australian economy going.

Mr Mander: Correct.

Mr BROWN: I take the interjection. What kept the Australian economy going was workers dipping into their superannuation funds to the tune of \$42 billion. I repeat: \$42 billion. What type of workers are they? They are low-paid workers. They are female workers, cleaners, hospitality workers and workers in the arts, the entertainment and the tourism industries. They had to dip into their superannuation funds and clear them out—by up to \$20,000 in a lot of cases—to the tune of \$42 billion. That is what kept this economy afloat.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr BROWN: I take the interjection from the member for Everton. What did JobKeeper do? It was the biggest transfer in the history of Federation, worth \$40 billion, from taxpayers to profitable companies.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BROWN: I take the interjection. Those profitable companies did not need that money. It was \$40 billion!

Opposition members interjected.


Mr BROWN: They do not like to hear it. Those businesses were profitable. They were making money. According to their own Treasury figures, we have \$40 billion in superannuation and then we have \$40 billion in taxpayers' money transferred to companies such as Harvey Norman and Louis Vuitton. Money transferred to overseas companies is never going to come back into Australia.

What got us through COVID was \$82 billion of workers' taxes and superannuation. That is what got the Australian economy through COVID. They do not like to hear it, which is why they are interjecting so much. We should be clawing back that \$40 billion and giving it back to the superannuation funds of those low-paid workers who did the heavy lifting during COVID. That is what we should be doing.

I commend the Treasurer on the fact that this bill will protect the workers of QSuper. I declare my interest with regard to being a QSuper member and also declare my wife's interest as she is an employee of the Finance Sector Union, a fine union led by Wendy Streets.

Ms Grace: A real union.

Mr BROWN: Yes, it is a real union doing fantastic work for their members. It is important that these workers will be protected. There will be no forced redundancies. This will be very good for the members they work for in the new superannuation fund—less admin fees and greater profits. This is a fantastic bill bringing two fantastic superannuation companies together. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (4.40 pm), in reply: I thank all those members of the House who provided their support for this bill. The bill supports the merger of QSuper and Sunsuper and the consequential changes in fund governance while protecting members' entitlements and the QSuper defined benefit scheme. The proposed merger of these two funds will create the second largest superannuation fund in the country, will serve two million members, will manage \$200 billion of members' funds and will anchor 2,000 jobs in Queensland. The proposed merger will be good for members, good for jobs and good for Queensland.

I welcome members' support for the bill, including the contributions outlining the history of QSuper and Sunsuper as proud Queensland entities. As I noted in my opening remarks, this legislation builds on the proud legacy of superannuation in Australia and Queensland.

I would like to address several points raised by honourable members during the debate. Members noted the proposed size of the merged fund's board. It will be a 13-member board, which is within industry norms, particularly given the fact that the merged fund will become the second largest in Australia. Cbus, Australia's 15th largest fund, has a 14-member board; HESTA, the 14th largest fund, has a 14-member board; Aware Super, currently the second largest fund but soon to be eclipsed by the merged fund, has 15 board members; and Australian Super, the country's largest fund, has 12 board members and six alternate directors.

As I have noted for the merged fund, our government will retain a stake in board membership by having a say in the appointment of two employer representative directors. While it might confound some of the anti-worker sentiments of those opposite, our government is pleased that the board will also include six employee representatives nominated by Queensland unions. We are proud to have those provisions included in the bill.

Ms Grace: Real, registered unions.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection of the Minister for Industrial Relations—real unions, not fake unions that endanger workers by promoting anti-vaccination views.

For all of the high-minded talk from those opposite supporting the merger and supporting superannuation, the LNP forgets that without the Australian trade union movement we would not have the superannuation scheme that they are lauding today. I also remind those opposite that the trustees administering the fund have a legal duty to act in the best interests of members. This accords with their duties as fiduciaries and under the Commonwealth Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993.

Independent directors must also meet strict criteria enforced by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority. An independent director must not be a member of the fund and must be neither an employer sponsor of the fund nor an associate of such an employer sponsor; must be neither an employee of an employer sponsor of the fund nor an employee of an associate of such an employer fund; must not be a representative of a trade union or other organisation representing the interests of one or more members of the fund; and must not be in any capacity a representative of an organisation representing the interests of one or more employer sponsors of the fund.

I also note in passing that the member for Mermaid Beach expressed a concern with a former Labor treasurer managing his money—a truly odd contribution given that the member also noted that he was already a member of Sunsuper, which is currently chaired by the same former Labor treasurer. Money talks! It is stranger still that, with the well-known benefits of consolidating your personal superannuation accounts, the member for Mermaid Beach has had to wait for a Labor government to go one bigger and merge his super funds.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DICK: Thank you, member for Logan. Some members expressed concern about the fees charged by superannuation funds. Indeed, an article published today in the *Australian Financial Review* notes—

For-profit super funds are slugging members twice as much in administration fees as not-for-profit funds.

QSuper and Sunsuper are profit-for-member funds—structures which ensure that members' fees are minimised. The merged entity will also be a profit-for-member fund with no shareholders, which means everything it does will be for the benefit of its members.

Members also drew attention to the important considerations of the age and gender distributions of superannuation fund members. Our government wants all Australians and all Queenslanders to have access to superannuation and a dignified retirement. I am pleased to note that more than 60 per cent of the merged fund's members will be aged 45 or younger—some will be older—and more than 50 per cent of the merged fund's members will be women. As a Labor government, we do not just want women proportionately represented; we want gender pay gaps closed and super balances boosted to reflect women's significant contribution to the workforce, the Queensland economy and the Australian economy.

Other members raised questions about the defined benefit fund. I said it earlier today and I will say it again for the benefit of those opposite: Queensland is the only state in Australia with a fully provisioned public sector defined benefit superannuation scheme. The Auditor-General has noted that the government should ensure sufficient investments are available to make future payments to retirees. On a funding basis—the standard measure of funding based on the expected rate of return of assets—the defined benefit scheme is in surplus. That means the scheme will have more money than will be needed to cover the benefits of fund members when they retire. Remember, those benefits are, by definition, defined. It says it in the name. To talk about raids on the scheme is simply nonsense. Members' benefits are assured and they are guaranteed by law. The member for Buderim might style himself as a Warren Buffett and he might predict that we are at the top of the market.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Member for Buderim!

Mr DICK: If he thinks that, he is welcome to go and try a Big Short with his own money, but he will be betting against the State Actuary, who notes that the defined benefit fund will be sufficient to cover benefits.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Buderim, you continued to interject even after I called you out. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr DICK: If the LNP are worried about defined benefit funds falling short, they should check in with their colleagues in New South Wales where, under the Perrottet Liberal government, the defined benefit fund is almost \$70 billion in deficit.

Members, including the members for Mermaid Beach and Buderim, raised questions about the insurance policies in the merged structure. If a member holds death and total and permanent disablement policies with QSuper and Sunsuper and both policies fall due, I am advised that they would retain the insurance arrangements that prevailed at the merger date. I am also advised that a member holding multiple accounts with death and TPD insurance will be able to claim both death and TPD from all of their accounts, subject to the terms of their cover.

Further on TPD insurance, I am advised that Sunsuper's default insurance product includes two key elements: first, early intervention which allows members to access the benefits of proactive occupational rehabilitation without lodging a claim; and, second, TPD Assist, which provides for up to six individual lump sum payments over a five-year period, along with proactive occupational rehabilitation and return-to-wellness programs.

If a member returns to wellness and work prior to using their full insurance benefit, any unused insurance is then retained. The product aims to balance the need to assist members financially and emotionally when they need it most as well as ensure insurance premiums are sustainable and not eroding members' retirement benefits. The product is the default insurance for Sunsuper members who have the option to change to a lump sum style product. All QSuper members will retain their current insurance, including the current lump sum TPD product. QInsure will remain the insurer for public sector employees. QInsure is experienced at providing cover to QSuper members in higher risk employment categories such as police and emergency services, correctional officers and nurses.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all of those who have contributed to this process. Starting with Treasury, I would like to particularly thank Leon Allen, Under Treasurer, and Treasury staff for their support in preparing this bill. Furthermore, I would like to thank the QSuper team who perform work for the government superannuation office without whose advice and support this bill would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Mr Don Luke, chair of QSuper, and Mr Andrew Fraser, a former Queensland Labor treasurer and chair of Sunsuper, and their staff for their support in ensuring the bill met the needs of the merged fund while protecting their members' benefits, as well as the economic benefits of a superannuation powerhouse being based in our home state of Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—



Mr DICK (4.52 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 2 (Commencement)

Page 8, line 7, after 'and 2'—

insert—

and part 2A

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments and the statement of compatibility with human rights.

Tabled paper: Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021, explanatory notes to Hon. Cameron Dick's amendments [\[1804\]](#).

Tabled paper: Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Cameron Dick's amendments [\[1805\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 54, as read, agreed to.

Message from Governor

Mr DICK (4.53 pm): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): The message from His Excellency recommends the amendment circulated by the Treasurer. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

SUPERANNUATION (STATE PUBLIC SECTOR) (SCHEME ADMINISTRATION) AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PAUL de JERSEY AC CVO, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly that an appropriation be made for the purposes of the attached amendment, to be moved by the Minister, to a Bill for an Act to amend the Public Officers Superannuation Benefits Recovery Act 1988, the Right to Information Act 2009, the Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990 and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes, and to repeal the Superannuation (State Public Sector) Deed 1990

GOVERNOR

Date: 26 October 2021

Tabled paper. Message, dated 26 October 2021, from His Excellency the Governor, recommending an amendment to the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021 [\[1806\]](#).

Insertion of new clauses—



Mr DICK (4.53 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr DICK: I move the following amendment—

2 After clause 54

Page 51, after line 20—

*insert—***Part 2A Amendment of Governors (Salary and Pensions) Act 2003****54A Act amended**This part amends the *Governors (Salary and Pensions) Act 2003*.*Note—*

See also the amendments in schedule 1.

54B Amendment of long title

Long title, from 'the salary' to 'pensions,'—

*omit, insert—***salary and pensions for the Governor of the State of Queensland,****54C Insertion of new s 4A**

Part 3, division 1—

*insert—***4A Application of part**

This part does not apply in relation to a person appointed as Governor who elected, under section 20C, to have the superannuation arrangements under part 3A, division 2 apply to the person's appointment as Governor.

54D Insertion of new pt 3, div 5, hdg

After section 19—

*insert—***Division 5 Other matters relating to pensions****54E Insertion of new pt 3A**

After part 3—

*insert—***Part 3A Superannuation****Division 1 Preliminary****20B Application of part**

This part applies to a person who is appointed Governor after the commencement.

20C Election for superannuation arrangements

- (1) The person may elect to have the superannuation arrangements under division 2 apply to the person's appointment as Governor.
- (2) An election under subsection (1)—
 - (a) must be made within 1 month after the person takes or makes the oath or affirmation of allegiance and of office under the *Constitution of Queensland 2001*, section 31; and
 - (b) must be made by written notice given to the chief executive of the department that administers the *Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990*; and
 - (c) cannot be rescinded.

Division 2 Superannuation arrangements**20D Definitions for division**

In this division—

State public sector employee means an employee of a unit of the State public sector under the *Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990*.

State public sector scheme means the scheme under the *Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990*.

State public sector scheme membership declaration means a declaration under the *Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990*, section 14B.

20E Application of division

This division applies if the person makes an election under section 20C.

20F Superannuation arrangements generally

- (1) The person has the superannuation arrangements that apply under the *Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990* to a State public sector employee mentioned in a State public sector scheme membership declaration.
- (2) To the extent necessary for applying subsection (1), the person is taken to be an employee in relation to the person's appointment as Governor.

20G Matters about membership of State public sector scheme for particular existing members

- (1) This section applies if, immediately before the person's appointment as Governor, the person was—
 - (a) a State public sector employee mentioned in a State public sector scheme membership declaration; and
 - (b) a member of the State public sector scheme.
- (2) The person's membership of the scheme continues in the same category and subject to the same conditions as applied before the person's appointment as Governor.
- (3) For applying section 20F to the person, the person continues to be eligible, in relation to the person's appointment as Governor, for membership in the categories of the State public sector scheme for which the person was eligible immediately before the person's appointment as Governor.

20H Matters about membership of State public sector scheme for other persons

- (1) This section applies in relation to the person if section 20G does not apply in relation to the person.
- (2) The Minister administering the *Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990* may declare, by written notice, the following matters about the person's membership of the State public sector scheme—
 - (a) the membership category or categories for which the person is eligible;
 - (b) any conditions applying to the person's membership of the scheme.
- (3) A notice under subsection (2)—
 - (a) is subordinate legislation; and
 - (b) may be combined with a notice making a State public sector scheme membership declaration.

20I Salary sacrifice

- (1) The person may also elect that the person's salary as Governor be provided in part by the payment of salary to the person and in part by the payment of superannuation contributions payable by the person.
- (2) The election—
 - (a) must be made by written notice given to the Official Secretary of the Office of the Governor; and

(b) takes effect from the date the notice is received by the Official Secretary or from a later date stated in the election for that purpose.

(3) Despite the salary of the person being paid under subsection (1), the person is taken, for any purpose relating to superannuation, to have received the salary to which the person is entitled as Governor.

54F Relocation of s 20 (Accrual and payment of pensions)

Section 20—

relocate to part 3, division 5 as inserted by this Act.

54G Amendment of s 21 (Appropriation)

Section 21(1)—

insert—

(c) under part 3A, division 2 as superannuation contributions payable by the State.

54H Amendment, relocation and renumbering of s 22 (Minister is manager for Commonwealth Act)

(1) Section 22(3), definition *scheme*, 'Act'—

omit, insert—

part

(2) Section 22—

relocate to part 3, division 5 as inserted by this Act and *renumber* as section 20A.

54I Amendment of schedule (Dictionary)

Schedule—

insert—

State public sector employee, for part 3A, division 2, see section 20D.

State public sector scheme, for part 3A, division 2, see section 20D.

State public sector scheme membership declaration, for part 3A, division 2, see section 20D.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 55 to 60, as read, agreed to.

Schedule 1—



Mr DICK (4.54 pm): I move the following amendment—

3

Schedule 1 (Other amendments)

Page 53, after line 15—

insert—

3 Section 20D, definition State public sector employee, from 'means'—

omit, insert—

see the *Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990*, schedule 2.

4 Section 20D, definition State public sector scheme membership declaration, 'section 14B'—

omit, insert—

section 10

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule 1, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (4.55 pm): I move—


That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (4.55 pm): I move the following amendment—

4 Long title

Long title, after 'amend'—

insert—

the Governors (Salary and Pensions) Act 2003,

Amendment agreed to.

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


Motion agreed to.

QUEENSLAND VETERANS' COUNCIL BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 14 October (see p. 3151), on motion of Ms Fentiman—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (4.56 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. The intention of this bill is to provide the legislative framework necessary to establish the Queensland Veterans' Council as a statutory body. The primary roles of the Queensland Veterans' Council will be to: manage Anzac Square in Brisbane on behalf of the people of Queensland as the state's war memorial, ensuring that Anzac Square remains a special place of remembrance of those lives lost and the stark reality of the human cost of war in which Queenslanders can be proud; take on the functions of the board of the Anzac Day Trust Fund, recognising the very important role that veterans and their families play administering the Anzac Day Trust Fund to those organisations who support our ex-service men and women and their dependants; and provide advice to the minister on veterans matters, ensuring that the Queensland veterans community are afforded a clear and direct pathway for communications with the highest levels of Queensland government about matters important to them.

Extensive consultation over the future governance of Anzac Square has taken place since 2017 with the former Anzac Square Steering Committee, the former Queensland Advisory Committee for the Commemoration of the Anzac Centenary, the Queensland Veterans' Advisory Council and the Brisbane City Council. Briefings were also given to: the Returned and Services League of Australia, Queensland branch; the Legacy Club of Brisbane; Australian War Widows Queensland; Mates4Mates; the Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex Servicemen and Women, Queensland branch; the Defence Force Welfare Association Queensland; the Partners of Veterans' Association of Australia, Queensland branch; the Veterans of Australia Association, Hervey Bay branch; and individual stakeholders including the former chair of the Queensland Veterans' Advisory Council and the former deputy chair of the Queensland Advisory Committee for the Commemoration of the Anzac Centenary.

I would like to recognise the Community Support and Services Committee, of which I am a member, for its work in considering the desirability of this legislation. I would also like to thank the secretariat and Hansard for their always supportive work of committee members when they examine bills and conduct inquiries. I would like to thank the committee, after receiving submissions, for recommending that at least 50 per cent of the Queensland Veterans' Council should be veterans or representatives of veterans groups. I thank the assistant minister for having several conversations with me about that. Having spent time in the Defence Force myself, I am keenly aware of the size and diverse nature of the ex-service community here in Queensland. I feel this will go some way to ensuring that all the views of our community are heard and understood for what they mean to former members of our armed services.

I also note that the bill provides the minister with the discretion to determine which veterans organisations to approach when seeking nominations to the Queensland Veterans' Council. The discretion for the minister to choose which veterans organisations may nominate a person for appointment to the council allows the minister to vary the representation of veterans organisations on

the Queensland Veterans' Council over time and provides the option for a broad range of veterans organisations to be involved in the council, as well as a broad range of opinion to be heard by the council. There are currently over 3,000 ex-service organisations and 450,000 ex-defence personnel and their families living in our state.

In taking on the functions of the board of the Anzac Day Trust Fund, the Queensland Veterans' Council will continue to offer annual payments to institutions, organisations and associations that provide help, support or assistance to aged persons who served in the Australian Defence Force; the spouses and children of deceased persons who served in the Australian Defence Force; persons who served in the Australian Defence Force in times of war or armed conflict; and institutions, organisations or associations that provide help or support to aged persons, spouses and children of deceased persons who served in the ADF.


Importantly, the requirement for the Queensland government to make an annual grant for the purposes of the trust fund and the purposes for which payments may be made from the trust fund would not be changed. I congratulate the Palaszczuk Labor government for taking decisive action to ensure our state's war memorial is effectively managed and maintained, while ensuring our veterans community is represented, heard and supported to continue its good work in our community.

I am very grateful for the work of our State Library in its management of the undercroft at Anzac Square. It was very humbling to see all the different units. If anyone knows the military history of our state, they will know that prior to the Korean War most of the units were raised from their districts. They have the unit colours of all of those wonderful units like—I will give an example of where my mum and dad live—31RQR, which is known as the Kennedy regiment. They have all of the units ever to be raised in Queensland. There is an interactive display of people from diverse backgrounds and what war was for them and what they did. It really does highlight the length and breadth of service of our Queenslanders. I would implore all members and their families to visit. It is interactive and intuitive and preserves the memory of the thousands of Queenslanders who have served our proud nation.

I was a little bemused by the dissenting statement about remuneration for persons appointed to the council. This is important work protecting and enshrining the legacy of our great state. In my interactions with many different organisations and individuals, there is no doubt that they would gladly do it for free, but that is simply not fair. We are a vast state, and time and travel all have a dollar value. The aim is for participation from across the state and from many different groups.

In the past, RSL and Legacy were the only organisations representing veterans, but this has changed since the Vietnam War and subsequent conflicts and operations. Thus we have changed the make-up somewhat of the council. Legislation must be agile and reflect the circumstances of the day, which is the aim of this bill.

I again thank the Palaszczuk Labor government for taking more interest and action in the advocacy of Queensland's ex-service community. I praise the government departments that are preserving the memories of this important history. In closing, I would also like to reach out to former comrades in arms to get involved. The Premier and her department are listening. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (5.04 pm): I rise to give a contribution on the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. As we have heard from others, this bill would establish the Queensland Veterans' Council. This new council, the QVC, would play two quite distinct roles. The first is to take on administrative responsibilities as the trustee of Anzac Square and also in administering the Anzac Day Trust Fund. The second would be to replace the existing Queensland Veterans' Advisory Council, or QVAC, as the body responsible for advising government on matters relating to veterans, and they would take on that role with the support of a veterans reference group that is also proposed to be established under the bill.

Our experience on the committee was that the administrative functions proposed to be undertaken by QVC were relatively uncontentious. Submitters did express some concerns about the extent of consultation and the split function of QVC and the perception that veterans welfare concerns were subordinate to the administration of the trust fund and their role as the trustee of Anzac Square. There were some concerns about the potential for loss of funding and taking away from the veterans community discretion about how the trust fund was administered. The department has responded, as I understand it, to all of those concerns with more or less specificity, but the main issues raised in the hearings and that I will focus my comments on today are to do with the proposed composition of the QVC and the discretion around the establishment of the veterans advisory group—both issues which are proposed to be dealt with by amendments from the government.

Turning first to the composition of QVC, a sensible starting point in considering that issue is the membership of QVAC, the existing body that QVC will be replacing in performing those advisory functions. QVAC comprises a chairman and up to 11 other members from the Queensland veterans community. That includes veterans associations, associated ex-service organisations and people with a direct link to interest in veterans issues. Importantly, members of QVAC are nominated or identified by the Queensland veterans community.

The pervasive concern we heard was that the veterans community could be effectively underrepresented on the QVC since the bill, in its initial form, only provides for veterans organisations to nominate two of the eight members of the council. That struck me as an entirely reasonable concern given the significance of the advisory role that QVC is proposed to perform and the importance of having direct experience of veterans feed into that important role.


The department's response initially to these concerns was that, while there is no strict requirement around the number of veterans or representatives of veterans organisations on QVC, there is also no upper limit on the numbers in this respect. Ultimately, there is nothing stopping the nomination of more veterans groups representatives on QVC. They also put to us that the veterans reference group was comprised of members who necessarily had closer ties to the veterans community.

Having heard and considered the department's response, I was very pleased that the committee adopted recommendation 2, which suggests an amendment to mandate that at least 50 per cent of the members of the QVC must be veterans or representatives of the veterans community. I commend the government for picking up on that recommendation and proposing the amendments they have.

The other key concern was around the establishment of the veterans reference group. As I mentioned a moment ago, the department relied on the establishment of this group, and its membership composed of members of the veterans community, in response to concerns about underrepresentation on the QVC. The sticking point was that there is no requirement in the bill as originally drafted for the minister to establish the reference group. Clause 34 of the bill provides that this is a matter for the minister's discretion.

During the hearings I asked members of DPC whether there were any practical or implementation barriers to making the establishment of the reference group a requirement under the act. They confirmed there was no real impediment to that. I think that recommendation 3 is pretty simple, straightforward and commendable; namely, that clause 34 be amended to mandate the establishment of the reference group. It is a very straightforward amendment with the proposed substitution of 'may' for 'must'. I think those concerns have been very simply dealt with by the government with the amendments proposed. In summary, I do commend the government for having picked up on the recommendations made by the committee. They are simple and sensible recommendations that, in my view, address the key concerns that were raised throughout the committee process.

Before I take my seat I want to thank, as always, the committee secretariat for all their hard work. We have had a few changes in our secretariat this year, but we have always been wonderfully supported in the work we have done on the Community Support and Services Committee and I thank my fellow committee members. I support this bill.

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (5.10 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. Firstly, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all members of the committee and the secretariat for their work in considering the bill, particularly the chair, the member for Mansfield. I also extend my thanks and appreciation to the many organisations and individuals who took the time to make submissions in relation to the bill. I very much thank the Premier for bringing forward this bill, which I am very happy to speak to as our assistant minister for veterans affairs.

The bill will establish the Queensland Veterans' Council as a new statutory body with governance responsibility primarily for three functions: to manage Anzac Square; to administer the Anzac Day Trust; and to provide advice to the Queensland government on veterans matters. All three of these tasks are vitally and equally important to support our veterans. Consolidating these functions into one statutory body enables better coordination and oversight of veterans matters in Queensland.

As we all know, Anzac Square, the Shrine of Remembrance, the eternal flame and the memorial gallery play such an important role in many services throughout the year—not only on Anzac Day and the lead-up to it—and are well loved across the state. Having a formal body made up of veterans overseeing all of this is crucial to ensuring the square maintains its status, its relevance and its dignity well into the future. As part of Brisbane City Council handing over responsibility of Anzac Square to the state government, we could have easily just rolled its management into existing departmental structures, but we want veterans to have a say because the appearance, operations and future of our

Shrine of Remembrance, the galleries and parklands should not solely be up to people like us in this chamber and our successors or local councillors. Veterans should have a say, and this bill will do just that. This revered space is too important not to guarantee its role in honouring the memory of those who served our country and those who died doing so.

It continues our commitment to the square, including our contribution of more than \$14 million to the 2019 Anzac Square restoration when the heritage sandstone was enhanced, historic statues and trees were protected, ponds were repaired and undercroft galleries were upgraded. I was very pleased that this year we were able to carry out Anzac Day services broadly as per usual across the state, including at Anzac Square in particular. Very few states were able to do this, but thanks to the great work of every Queenslanders and the leadership of the Premier, the health minister and the Chief Health Officer, Queenslanders were all able to pay their respects in person.

Regarding the second function of the Veterans' Council which this bill will establish, the Anzac Day Trust will continue to perform the role it currently does and is unchanged as to its operations with regard to how its funding is allocated, and that is important. Some submissions to the committee raised concerns about what impact establishing the Queensland Veterans' Council may have on the Anzac Day Trust Fund. The Anzac Day Trust Fund was originally established in 1964. The Anzac Day Trust Fund has been continued under the current Anzac Day Act 1995. It provides annual payments to institutions, organisations or associations to assist and support ex-service men and women and their dependants.

In my time as assistant minister for veterans affairs I have met with and spoken to many veterans and veterans organisation across the state, and I know how important the Anzac Day Trust Fund is in supporting the veterans community. Currently, the trust fund receives funding from the state government in accordance with a formula prescribed in section 13 of the 1995 act. The Queensland Veterans' Council Bill does not amend the quantum of funding provided to the Anzac Day Trust Fund each year.

Under the formula, the Queensland government will provide funding of over \$1.4 million to the Anzac Day Trust this year, but we have committed additional funding to the Anzac Day Trust Fund for the last few years. COVID-19 has had a marked impact on the veterans community. In 2020, as we all know, Anzac Day services across Australia were restricted, with people being encouraged to stand in their driveways at dawn instead of attending the usual various commemorative activities. The Premier committed an additional \$1 million over three annual funding rounds to support veterans affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and for ex-service organisations to conduct COVID-safe commemorative events. To support the veterans community further we have the Queensland Remembers Grant Program, and I look forward to seeing them progress as we go through. It is clear from the provisions in the bill that funding to the Anzac Day Trust Fund cannot be used to support Anzac Square; nor can it be used to support the operations of the Queensland Veterans' Council.

The final function of the bill, and one which is in no way less important than the other two functions I mentioned, establishes that the new Veterans' Council will be an important source of advice that the government can draw upon when we are considering matters that affect veterans. It has been a tough 2021 for many veterans. Some veterans I speak to have told me that a combination of COVID, the Afghanistan withdrawal, the Brereton report and now the royal commission into defence and veteran suicide has made for a very difficult period in their life. I am glad to see the federal government has agreed to longstanding calls for a royal commission to be established in July this year.

Where we can provide feedback to the federal government, in particular on future issues and inquiries like this, I see the Queensland Veterans' Council playing an important role. Whilst of course we cannot and should not supplant the primary role of the federal government in this space, the Queensland Veterans' Council will contribute to bettering the lives of veterans in Queensland and promote better decision-making on veterans matters in our state.


Another suggestion that was made by submitters to the committee was that the chairperson of the Queensland Veterans' Council should be a veteran. By not prescribing that the chairperson must be a veteran the bill provides the opportunity to appoint a range of people, including a widow of a veteran, a partner of a veteran, a child of a veteran or another non-veteran member, and that is important. The amendments proposed to be moved by the Attorney-General during consideration in detail will further strengthen veteran representation on the Queensland Veterans' Council by ensuring that at least half of the council must be veterans and that the government 'must' instead of 'may' establish a veterans reference group. We have taken on board feedback on the bill and we are improving on it.

The opposition's statement of reservation questions the appropriateness of paying remuneration to members of the Veterans' Council, implying that fair remuneration to these veterans and the other members of the council should not be provided on the basis that it may 'impact on their ability to provide unbiased advice and compromise their impartiality'. That is a ridiculous suggestion. We recognise that members of government bodies provide a significant contribution to the community through their participation on these bodies. You would not say that a board member for Queensland Rail or the Port of Townsville is compromised because they are being paid for being on the board. If we want the Queensland Veterans' Council to take veterans matters seriously, we need to take them seriously. We should not ask them to do their work for free, as the opposition would have us do.

In the remaining time allotted I cannot try to understand the opposition's amendments because it is clear they have not put in the work into them. I do commend them for trying to improve the bill, but their amendments are unworkable and would result in fewer veterans being represented instead of more, which is the opposite of their intention. Their amendments would reduce the minimum requirements of veterans representation on the Queensland Veterans' Council and veterans reference group to one third of that which the government is proposing in our bill as amended. They also want to remove Brisbane City Council from the group entirely, not allowing them to have a say in the future of Anzac Square.

In fact, their amendments go even further. The LNP amendments remove the area of heritage conservation from the council. This is a significant concern given the heritage value of Anzac Square to the people of Queensland and the need to ensure its ongoing existence for generations to come. Veterans and the veterans community deserve better than the incomplete and counterproductive amendments from the opposition.

The Queensland Veterans' Council Bill is a significant piece of legislation that demonstrates the Premier and her government's commitment to our veterans and the broader veterans community. I look forward to seeing this bill passed. I look forward to seeing the Queensland Veterans' Council play a significant role in the future of the veterans community here in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.19 pm): I rise to speak to this bill wholeheartedly in support of our veterans and wanting to give voice to their disappointments as expressed in testimony to the Community Support and Services Committee's examination of the bill. I also speak with the hope that the government will address these concerns with amendments to this bill.

As a newly elected MP in 2015, I was privileged to participate in some of the Anzac centenary celebrations across Gregory. In Gregory, the centenary brought Light Horse re-enactments, the commemorative troop train journey along the central western line and even the discovery of a previously unknown surveyor's map of the trenches at Gallipoli made by a young local man serving there. The discovery was so exciting that the national War Memorial came up to Emerald to work on the document. This man was the uncle of my constituent and a bloke I have known for a long time, Mark Murray, who founded Murray and Associates Land Surveyors and Town Planners in Emerald. I have been told that Mark's uncle was a message runner—so of course a map of the trenches was vital to his duty and his survival.

Coming from a surveying background, as Mark Murray does, he surveyed and mapped the trenches using a short piece of knotted string and a tiny notebook containing a beautifully drawn series of maps in proper survey notification. As the family wished to keep the original document in the local setting—that is, Emerald—copies were also made and the original document preserved. It changed the history books. Most of the credit for surveying maps had previously been given to a British officer who had been this Aussie's superior. The maps also gave historians maps for trenches where we knew the names but not the layout. During the Anzac centenary, there was such a great reassessment of mementoes like these diaries and letters home, which was good to see. While the challenge is still how to ensure their preservation, the overall effect was to underscore the living legacy of the Anzac legend across the seat of Gregory.

Our towns' young people were almost over-represented—as many here would know—among those who could truly call themselves Anzacs. The inheritance of the Anzacs truly lives on in the bush. Even the smallest towns have their Anzac memorial. Many of these actually preceded the Brisbane war memorial and were built from public donations. The Brisbane Anzac memorial is important and it represents the whole state, so this bill—to ensure its proper management—is welcome and will be

supported by the people in my seat of Gregory. Gregory continues to contribute sons and daughters to our armed forces and contributes generously to the support of our veterans. They want to see our veterans accorded the respect and support they deserve.


It is that part of the bill that my constituents will expect me to speak out strongly about—the part about the Anzac Day Trust Fund. This fund allocates moneys to organisations who support our ex-service men and women and their dependants, so it is very directly and practically a matter of great interest and concern to our veterans. The bill will effectively remove their management of these funds and place it in the hands of public servants for no apparent reason. As was said by the LNP committee members—the member for Burnett and the member for Scenic Rim—in their statement of reservation—

The Bill ignores and removes the 100-year-old faith in the veteran's community to manage the Anzac Day Trust Fund.

Currently, the Anzac Day Trust Fund is administered by four people, at least three of whom must come from the veterans community. This ensures the voices of the veterans are heard and their challenges and concerns are properly understood. In that sense, it is both a moral and practical arrangement, but it is also an arrangement which properly reflects the community's respect for our veterans. Every single submitter to the committee's inquiry raised these concerns I am voicing here. The bill essentially does two things: firstly, monetary support for our veterans, their organisations, individuals and their families; and, secondly, the maintenance of the bricks and mortar of the Brisbane war memorial. In doing so, the bill risks the bricks and mortar of Anzac Square soaking up most of the funding. Clearly, this will then leave less funding for veterans support.

One of the concerns I have is that the bill replaces what is essentially a veterans board with a body made up of public servants. Of the eight members of the proposed Queensland Veterans' Council, only two will be veterans. They will not have the votes to set agendas and to ensure that agendas are resolved in a way most beneficial to Queensland's veterans. They will not even have the chairman's casting vote if the public servants find themselves deadlocked. This parliament should require good reason before dismantling 100 years of tradition. We have an obligation to our Queensland veterans, and this parliament should address this openly and honestly.

The LNP wants to hand back control of veterans issues to veterans. To that end, the position of chair should be filled by a veteran and the majority of members of the council should be veterans. The bill should be amended to clarify that the primary function of the council is to deal with veterans matters, such as the disbursement of funds from the Anzac Day Trust Fund. This should be its key priority, as was intended by its founders. With these changes, the 12-member veterans reference group, which is proposed to sit under the council in an advisory capacity, will simply no longer be needed. If this bill proceeds in its current form, the Labor government may be surprised at how widespread the backlash will be.

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (5.24 pm): I rise in support today of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. In doing so, I want to acknowledge all of the veterans in Queensland and right across Australia, including those members who have served and are now serving in this place—the members for Macalister, Nicklin, Caloundra, Southern Downs and Buderim. Those men and women who have served our country dedicated their lives, careers and time to keeping our great Australia safe. I must also disclose my membership of Legacy Australia as a legatee. I take my responsibility to declare potential conflicts of interest seriously, and I have done so by incorporating my membership as a volunteer Legacy legatee in my register of interests from the date that I became a Legacy member.

The Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021 establishes the Queensland Veterans' Council as a new statutory body with three areas of responsibility: firstly, trustee of Anzac Square under the Land Act 1994 and the ongoing management and operation of Anzac Square; secondly, the functions of the board of trustees under the Anzac Day Act 1995; and, finally, providing advice to government on veterans matters. Anzac Square was dedicated on Remembrance Day 1930 as the state's war memorial. It is on Crown land, reserved under the Land Act 1994 for the purposes of historical and parks and cultural purposes and is listed on the Queensland Heritage Register. This bill will establish a statutory body for Anzac Square which supports the future strategic direction and operation of the state's war memorial, particularly to the extent that the memorial galleries educate and inform visitors about the service and sacrifice of Queenslanders and Australians in war, peacemaking and peacekeeping.

Anzac Square is an important landmark in the local urban form, right up to a state and national significance. Anzac Square has changed, grown and diversified over the years into a beautiful public space in the centre of our state's capital. Anzac Square, I am proud to say, commemorates all

Queenslanders who participated in war, not just Brisbane residents. In 1928 a competition for the design of a Shrine of Remembrance was won by Sydney architects Buchanan and Cowper. Construction proceeded over the following two years and on Armistice Day, 11 November, 1930 the Governor, Sir John Goodwin, dedicated the shrine and the square. In 1933 the square was declared a reserve for park purposes and the Brisbane City Council was appointed trustee of the site.

Anzac Square remains as the focus of armed services commemorations, particularly on Anzac Day. It has evolved into a place not just for Anzac Day though. It is a place where, when I personally pass, I feel a sense of peace, a still calm but with sorrow, loss, grief and sadness in the midst of this bustling metropolitan centre. It is a reminder of the importance of peace, perhaps from those who the square immortalises—those veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

I am disappointed that amendments proposed by the LNP remove heritage conservation as a potential area in which the minister must be satisfied members of the Queensland Veterans' Council have qualifications or experience in. We on this side of the House understand the heritage value of Anzac Square to the people of Queensland and the need to ensure its ongoing existence for generations to come.

The committee's first recommendation is that the bill be passed. I thank the committee for its support of the policy intention underpinning the bill. The committee's second recommendation is that clause 13 of the bill be amended to provide that at least 50 per cent of the members of the Queensland Veterans' Council must be veterans or representatives of the veterans community. I am proud that the Palaszczuk government supports the committee's recommendation to ensure that at least 50 per cent of the members of the Queensland Veterans' Council are veterans and members of the veterans community.

One of the functions of the Queensland Veterans' Council will be to monitor and provide advice to government on veterans matters, and clause 34 of the bill provides that the minister may establish a veterans reference group. The government recognises that the veterans reference group is essential to supporting the Queensland Veterans' Council in the performance of its advisory function and assisting the Queensland Veterans' Council to consult with a broad range of veterans organisations. The veterans reference group also provides a mechanism for government to engage with the Queensland veterans community.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to making sure Queensland remembers the courage and sacrifice of its dedicated service men and women, including through the new \$4 million grants program which will assist organisations to support the state's veterans and create more opportunities for Queenslanders to honour their service to the nation. The Palaszczuk government is proud to deliver this significant election commitment to help ex-service organisations as well as eligible not-for-profit organisations upgrade their buildings and facilities and purchase equipment so that they can continue to support Queensland veterans and their families. I am pleased that these organisations have this opportunity to build for their future and for the veterans and the families they support.

Ex-service and not-for-profit organisations that support veterans can apply for grants of up to \$50,000 for minor capital works and for grants between \$50,000 and \$250,000 for major capital works over three annual rounds. There are also community grants of up to \$50,000 available to ex-service organisations, councils and not-for-profit community organisations to support them to create or restore memorials, avenues of honour and memorial gardens and to deliver commemorative activities and events.

As demonstrated by the large public turnout on Anzac Day this year, Queenslanders are eager to recognise our veterans publicly now that COVID-19 restrictions have eased. Communities are keen to restore or erect monuments, compile honour rolls, construct memorial trails and gardens and undertake history and educational projects. I take this opportunity to invite members to the Centenary of Anzac Memorial at Emu Park—one of the most impressive memorial trails in the country—which was the vision of Emu Park veteran the late Mr Ross Coulter, brought to life by the amazing Emu Park RSL and its members.

I am proud that the Premier announced this year that War Widows Day will be celebrated annually in Queensland on 19 October from next year—a first for Australia. The date of 19 October was the birthday of Mrs Jessie Vasey, who started the first Queensland branch of the War Widows Guild in Toowoomba in 1947. What an amazing way to celebrate next year's 75th anniversary of what is now Australian War Widows Queensland than to formally dedicate this day as an annual recognition of the people left behind by those who have served in Australia.

The day will further highlight Australian War Widows Queensland's stated aim to empower, support, inspire and celebrate war widows, carers and families affected by defence services. Queensland will be the first to do this, to honour the widows and widowers of members of the Australian Defence Force. I know that widows and widowers of members of the Australian Defence Force bear their sacrifice with dignity and fortitude.

As a Legacy legatee, I hear firsthand from widows, widowers and the children of veterans about the impact of their family members' contribution to keeping Australia safe. I take this opportunity to honour Joyce, Zander and her daughter Ciana, my Legacy clients who I am very humbled to provide support to as a legatee. Becoming a Legacy legatee is something I implore all members to consider doing. By becoming a legatee, you will become a part of Legacy's proud traditions and actively live its values. These traditions and values have been passed on from generation to generation of legatees in caring for the families of veterans.

There are over 4,000 volunteers around Australia who work directly with Legacy families to provide support and friendship, to ensure that Legacy's promise to care for the families of deceased or seriously injured veterans is kept. The spirit of Legacy is service. Legatees are strongly committed to the work of Legacy and wear the Legacy torch symbol upon a pin with pride. Legatees are the backbone of Legacy and, supported by paid staff and other volunteers, deliver the majority of their services.

When a legatee joins Legacy, they are inducted and commit to the Charter of Legacy: 'The spirit of Legacy is service'. I ask for the indulgence of the House to read the Charter of Legacy. It states—

The care of dependants of those who served the country; namely, veterans who gave their lives or health on operational service or subsequently, and Australian Defence Force members who die in service or as a result of their service, affords a field for service.

Safeguarding the interests of dependents, especially children, is a service worth rendering. Personal effort is the main essential. Inasmuch as these are the activities of Legacy, it is our privilege to accept the legacy of the fallen.

I commend the bill to the House.



Mr MADDEN (Ipswich West—ALP) (5.33 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. This bill was tabled on 22 April 2021 by the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. The objective of the bill is to establish the Queensland Veterans' Council as a statutory body. This council will have three principal areas of responsibility: it will be trustee of Anzac Square under the Land Act 1994 and the ongoing management and operation of Anzac Square; it will undertake the functions of the board of trustees under the Anzac Day Act 1995; and, finally, it will provide advice to government on veterans matters.

In August 2019 I was honoured to join the Premier at the official ceremony to mark the completion of the project to restore Anzac Square. Between 2014 and 2019, significant restoration work was undertaken on Anzac Square with funding provided by the Australian government, the Queensland government and the Brisbane City Council. The Queensland government invested more than \$14 million as part of its five-year, \$49.3 million Anzac centenary commemorations. Heritage sandstone was enhanced, historic statues and trees were protected, ponds were repaired and the undercroft galleries were upgraded.

The four-stage restoration and enhancement project involved rectifying structural defects, repairing damage from water infiltration and upgrading interior spaces. Signage and seating have been improved and commemorative bronze screens and interactive technologies have been installed, enhancing the visitor experience. The screens that surround the lower section of the square show the names of the Queensland towns that contributed to our century of service. Over 2,000 towns are listed—a reminder of the extent of the sacrifice made by so many families and towns in our great state of Queensland. More than 10,000 newly digitised items including artefacts, postcards, maps, letters and medals have been incorporated into the galleries.

As the Premier advised in her explanatory speech, Queenslanders have a long history of supporting our veterans and the broader veteran community and honouring Queensland's war legacy. This includes through public donations that supported the creation of Anzac Square, public attendances at commemorative services and the annual government funding provided to the Anzac Day Trust Fund. Currently, the trust fund is administered by the Anzac Day Trust, a statutory body which is governed by a four-member board of trustees. The trust fund provides annual payments to institutions, organisations or associations to assist and support ex-servicemen, ex-servicewomen and their dependants. The Palaszczuk government has committed an additional \$1 million over four years to provide financial support for veterans affected by COVID-19 and for veterans organisations to assist with staging COVID-safe commemorative services.

This bill puts in place modern governance arrangements for the trust fund by abolishing the Anzac Day Trust and transferring the governance responsibility for the trust fund to the Queensland Veterans' Council. One of the functions of the council will be to monitor and provide advice to the government on veterans matters. The council will be a ministerial advisory committee established to provide a forum for Queensland's veterans community to communicate directly with the Queensland government and provide advice on veterans matters.


Under the bill, a veterans reference group will support the Queensland Veterans' Council in providing advice on veterans related matters. The veterans reference group will be comprised of up to 10 members drawn from the veterans community. The bill provides a broad definition of 'veterans community' to include not only veterans but also people who have a direct link to veterans. This broad definition is intended to allow members of the veterans reference group to include people such as medical professionals who specialise in treating veterans or people who specialise in veterans transition from military service to civilian life.

The debate of this bill is timely given that Remembrance Day is fast approaching on 11 November. As we all know, at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month we observe one minute's silence, and we dedicate that to those soldiers who died fighting to protect our great nation of Australia in World War I. It is our opportunity to show our thanks to those soldiers and the medical staff who assisted them as well as acknowledge the sacrifice made by our veterans families.

During World War I there was no conscription in Australia but 416,809 Australian men enlisted voluntarily. Of them, 60,000 were killed and 156,000 were wounded, gassed or taken prisoner. However, we must not forget the medical staff who supported them, particularly the nurses and the medical staff who are often—I will not say forgotten—not honoured appropriately at these services.

Recently, invitations have started coming into my office for me to attend Remembrance Day services in my electorate of Ipswich West and surrounding electorates and I want to thank those groups that have asked me to attend their services. I want to thank the RSL Ipswich Sub Branch, the Greater Springfield RSL Sub-Branch, the Ipswich Railway RSL Sub Branch and the Rosewood QCWA which is hosting the Rosewood Remembrance Day service this year.

In closing, I want to thank the Premier for introducing this important bill, the Community Support and Services Committee which sought public submissions on the bill and provided advice to the parliament by way of its report, the committee secretariat, Hansard and the submitters. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (5.40 pm): Before I start, I want to associate myself with the comments of the member for Keppel in relation to Legacy and I, too, should disclose that I am a Legacy ambassador and also a member of a number of other veterans organisations as declared on my register of members' interests.

The Queensland Veterans' Council Bill is a missed opportunity in my view. It is a missed opportunity for the Queensland state government to do more to support the welfare of veterans and their families. It is a missed opportunity for the state government to tackle veterans homelessness, veterans mental health and the challenges that many veterans face when transitioning from military service. It is a missed opportunity to ensure that the spouses and children of Queensland veterans are not disadvantaged in relation to their employment, their schooling or when seeking care in Queensland hospitals, just to name a few.

At the outset of my contribution to this debate, I want to acknowledge that in Australia there is considerable goodwill towards veterans at all levels of government and on both sides of politics, but goodwill alone will not solve the challenges that Queensland veterans and their families face. The intent of my contribution today does not seek to lay the blame at the feet of the state government for not doing enough to support Queensland veterans. To be clear, it is my view that all levels of government and all political parties are not doing enough to meet their obligations to support those who have sacrificed and continue to sacrifice in the defence of Australia and its interests.

As a society, we acknowledge that the nature of military service is unique. In no other endeavour can a person be obligated to act in a way that is likely to result in their death or serious injury. It is because of this fact that the needs of veterans are different to that of the rest of Australian society. Similarities can be found when comparing the treatment of our police and emergency services personnel. However, I would contend that the demands of military service present different challenges to those faced by even our police and emergency services personnel.

Australian veterans are three times more likely to take their own life than their civilian counterparts. When any veteran dies by suicide it is a tragedy, but it is an all-too common tragedy that demonstrates that all levels of government are not doing enough to support veterans. Words without actions are meaningless and my concern is that the Queensland Veterans' Council in its proposed form will be nothing more than another bureaucracy that does nothing tangible to address the serious issues facing veterans and their families. Veterans need more from politicians than just laying wreaths on Anzac Day. They need more than words and gestures. It is not good enough for our society to ignore the challenges that veterans and their families must overcome long after the guns fall silent.

Anzac Square is a poignant reminder of the service of those who have sacrificed in the defence of Australia, but the true monument for the fallen should be ensuring that veterans and their families who are left behind are provided the support that they deserve to get on with their lives and to be a contributing member of society. The establishment of the Queensland Veterans' Council could be an important step to focus the state government on this important task, but placing the focus of this bill predominantly on the maintenance of Anzac Square misses the mark. As the Defence Force Welfare Association observed in its contribution to the committee process—

The Act focusses the Veterans' Council on the management of, in order:

1. Anzac Square,
2. ANZAC Day Trust, and
3. 'Other Matters,' the latter as almost a throwaway line.

The order of importance seems to reflect a bureaucratic organisational imperative of sorting out the ANZAC Square management and maintenance organisational structure as the lead concern. Then to use the structure adopted to manage the ANZAC Day Trust and then throw in the management of other miscellaneous veteran stuff that is generally regarded as a federal, not state responsibility.

The Act's solution seems to assume that the experience and organisational structure needed to manage ANZAC Square is the same as that required to manage the ANZAC Day Trust and to advise government on veteran matters. It treats advice on veteran issues as a trivial matter.

Those are not my words; those are the words of John Lewis, the Queensland President of DFWA, although I agree with his sentiments completely.

The Queensland Veterans' Council needs to be the mechanism by which the state government better supports veterans and their families. The Veterans' Council should be the forum where important issues like veterans suicide and the welfare of defence families are discussed and, more importantly, where solutions are delivered. The Queensland Veterans' Council will only be meaningful if veterans have a genuine seat at the table and are listened to. The bill as proposed does not deliver that and instead ensures that veterans will be further disenfranchised. I note that the Attorney-General will move amendments to enshrine that 50 per cent of Queensland Veterans' Council members will be veterans, but given the chair can exercise a casting vote control of the Queensland Veterans' Council will still reside with individuals who are appointed by the state government. It is my view that the chair should be a veteran representative as well, and this view is supported by many of those who made submissions in relation to the bill.


The Anzac Day Trust has for many decades been managed by four veterans, and I should note it has been managed exceptionally well for the benefit of all Queensland veterans by those who understand the unique needs and circumstances facing veterans and their families—veterans like long-serving retired Army officers Greg Shannon and Colin Green, both of whom are men of capability and integrity who, along with many others, have volunteered countless hours supporting veterans. In his submission to the committee, former RSL Queensland state president Stewart Cameron contrasted the way that the Anzac Day Trust has been managed with the unnecessary bureaucracy that this bill creates and observed the considerable shortfall in funding available for measures to support veterans after \$2.4 million is spent on maintenance of Anzac Square. As Mr Cameron said—

There are very clearly better ways to spend \$2.4m a year supporting veterans. The money could be directly channelled into delivering services. The Council will in fact deliver no services at all, and at best be a talking shop.

There needs to be a shift away from bureaucracy and barriers to a system that enables and supports veterans to make the difficult transition to civilian life at the end of their military service. Veterans have skills and experiences that make them invaluable to potential employers because, due to the nature of military service, veterans are equipped with formal leadership skills, the ability to interpret complex information and to act decisively when presented with a problem. At their core, every veteran is a team player who can be relied upon to do whatever is required for their team to succeed.

Since being elected in 2017, I have had veterans working in my electorate office at times and, despite all of them being new to politics, they have performed exceptionally well. They perform exceptionally well because they are adaptable and they are focused on the mission, no matter what it is. All that said, some veterans and their families still need a little more support and it is support that the state government should be providing. I do not accept the contention made by the assistant minister for veterans that this is just a federal responsibility or that it is predominantly a federal responsibility; this is the responsibility of all levels of government and of every individual in society because the Australian Defence Force and veterans serve in their defence.

In conclusion, Queensland veterans and their families deserve better in my view than what is contained in this bill. They deserve real solutions rather than just another government bureaucracy focused more on the business of government than on supporting veterans. Supporting Queensland veterans is not just the responsibility of the federal government, as I said; supporting veterans and their families is the responsibility of all levels of government and the cursory and superficial level of support provided by the state government to date simply does not cut it. While the government's move to amend veterans representation on the Queensland Veterans' Council is a good first step, it does not go far enough. There are still significant issues with this bill which the amendments to be moved by the shadow assistant minister for veterans, the member for Southern Downs, seek to remediate. Issues such as the welfare of veterans should be above political gamesmanship, and for that reason I ask the minister to support the opposition's amendments. Doing so will improve this bill and it will bring it more into line with the feedback received by veterans and ex-service organisations during the committee process.

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (5.49 pm): I rise to support the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. From the outset I acknowledge all those who have served in the Australian Defence Force, whether in active duty or not. The sacrifice that they gave to their country will never be fully appreciated. I also acknowledge the sacrifice of their families who stayed behind.

As everyone in this House would know, my home of Townsville has a huge connection to the Australian Defence Force as Australia's largest garrison city. There is a large contingent of active-duty Defence Force personnel, veterans and their families in Townsville. It is essential that we look after those men and women in the best way that we can. That is why this bill is so important. It will establish the Queensland Veterans' Council that will provide feedback to the minister on issues affecting Queensland's, and in particular Townsville's, large veteran community. This council will involve veterans, which is incredibly important as we want to and need to hear from them directly. It is important that there is support in place for veterans. We are committed to listening to them through the Queensland Veterans' Council and the veterans reference group. This veterans reference group is in place to help deliver expert advice to government and will be important for the Queensland Veterans' Council in undertaking their decision-making processes. It is essential that we listen and learn from the large veterans community in Queensland and support them based on the right information.

Another key responsibility of the Queensland Veterans' Council will be to administer the functions of the Anzac Day Trust. In 2020 the Anzac Day Trust provided 204 not-for-profit organisations with \$1.49 million so they could continue to deliver welfare services to veterans and their families. As a government we are committed to bolstering the Anzac Day Trust with an additional \$1 million over three annual rounds to provide financial support for veterans and veterans organisations affected by this global pandemic.

We know how important it is to support veterans and organisations that provide support, which is why this bill is so important. As a government we know how important it is to have support services available to our veterans. We have a track record of supporting them, in particular in my own community of Townsville. It was the Palaszczuk government that backed establishing the Oasis Townsville, which the Premier proudly opened earlier this year, alongside the former member for Mundingburra and minister for communities and minister for disability services and seniors, Coralee O'Rourke, who was critical in getting this facility built.


I can remember a time when the member for Thuringowa, the former member for Mundingburra and myself sat down with the assistant minister, the member for Ipswich, and Lieutenant General John Caligari AO, DSC (Ret'd) and he explained his vision of what was needed in Townsville. Because of those conversations the former member for Mundingburra championed that cause and that is why we have the Oasis Townsville. It provides veterans easy access to a range of services. We know that some veterans have a difficult time dealing with the transition to civilian life. That is what the Oasis Townsville

is all about. It gives local veterans and their families a clear pathway to civilian life with the respect, dignity and support that they deserve. This government supported the development of the project over the last five years, including providing the site. I remember, member for Thuringowa, when there was the old DPI station there that they were going to bulldoze.

Mr Harper: It was a Newman legacy.

Mr STEWART: I take that interjection. It was a Newman legacy. This government also provided \$4.3 million for works to develop infrastructure, including roads, footpaths and parking. During last year's election we committed to providing ongoing support to Oasis, which we are now doing by providing an additional \$1 million over the next four years to support service delivery at that centre. It is this government that backs our veterans and the veterans community and my community of Townsville. My community of Townsville knows the value of our veterans and our ADF. This was really driven home to me when I had the good fortune of walking the Kokoda Track with my father and my brother. Both now have passed on. We spent 10 days walking in the footsteps of some of the most heroic men that ever served our country. They defended Papua New Guinea because they knew that the enemy was on its way into Australia. To sit and listen to the stories from the fuzzy wuzzy angel who told us about what he did to help protect those men was absolutely astounding and is something that will live with me for the rest of my life.

The defence community is highly respected in North Queensland. We owe a debt of gratitude to our veterans for their service to our nation. It was just this year that ADF personnel from Townsville flew to Afghanistan to help evacuate people, putting their own lives at risk to help others. Nobody who was in Townsville during the unprecedented monsoon of 2019 will ever forget what the ADF did for our community. They put their own safety at risk to help people trapped by rising floodwater. They helped save property and they provided the entire Townsville community with reassurance during that tough time. Our Defence Force and our veterans make up a huge part of the fabric of Townsville and this bill will help support them. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (5.55 pm): I rise to support the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. There are two key aspects to the bill: establishing an authority that will protect and preserve Anzac Square into the future and establishing the Queensland Veterans' Council. In establishing the statutory authority we will preserve and protect this significant public historical site that was opened in 1930 and ensure that it remains dedicated to the men and women who have served our country both in conflict and in peacetime. It is important to preserve its heritage. I note that that would be diminished under the LNP's proposed amendments.

The Shrine of Remembrance and the Eternal Flame remembers those who fought and died in the service of our nation. It preserves their legacy for generations of Queenslanders. It is a place, as the member for Keppel said, where one can reflect on the bravery and sacrifice of those men and women who have fought so hard for our nation. In 2013 there was a significant refurbishment program at Anzac Square which has created a really beautiful space. The Anzac Square Memorial Galleries are curated by the State Library of Queensland and it is a wonderful place for all Queenslanders to visit and to delve deeper into our war history.

The Queensland Veterans' Council Bill provides that the council would administer the Anzac Day Trust Fund, recognising the important role that veterans and their families play in administering the Anzac Day Trust Fund to those organisations that support our ex-service men and women and their dependants. The bill also ensures that Queensland's veterans community is afforded a very direct path to government in matters that are important to them so that we have that good line of feedback. In addition, the establishment of the Veterans' Council ensures that we have strong governance and accountability arrangements in place. The two recommendations from the committee are very sensible recommendations. Recommendation 2 is that clause 13 of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill be amended to provide that at least 50 per cent of the members of the Queensland Veterans' Council are veterans or representatives of the veterans community. Recommendation 3 is to establish the reference group. I think that is really important.


While I am on my feet I want to talk about our very strong veterans community in the Redlands. They are incredibly important to our community. They engage with our young people in our high schools and ensure that the memory of our service men and women and the sacrifice they made is never forgotten. A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to go to Russell Island to celebrate their 75th anniversary. That was a special night. It was so lovely to hear from people who had fought in the Vietnam War and listen to the stories that they shared. It is so important to remember that sacrifice.

On our Redlands coast our Anzac Day commemorations are absolutely incredible, with each of our islands having the most incredible dawn services. This year I had the chance to attend the Macleay Island Sub Branch dawn service. At that service I had a porridge type mix. I had never had it before. It was rum mixed with milk. It was quite a way to start the day. By 10 o'clock we were playing two-up and drinking XXXX Gold. By lunchtime on Anzac Day I was feeling a little bit chuffed.

Our Redlands RSL is supported by many amazing community members, particularly Alan Harcourt, Ian Gray and my very good friend John Butler. As I have said, ours is a really strong community. I also acknowledge Herb Shapcott. Herb served in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force, in the 66th Battalion, signals. He served in Hiroshima, Japan. It has been lovely to work with him and with Shane Neumann MP to make sure that we continue to recognise all service men and women who have fought hard for our country. Herb is 94. He loves to rock-and-roll dance. He has spun me around the dance floor a few times and I can tell you that he still has the moves.

I also acknowledge Adrian Aiple, who is a very big contributor. As we have heard from a number of contributions in this place, he is very involved in terms of the significant impacts of mental health and PTSD issues faced by our service men and women. Adrian is a true Redlands champion and a champion for young veterans. He served in Iraq. They have established the Young Veterans Redlands and are doing a terrific job with a range of projects. One of their projects involves young veterans coming together to restore an old car that they are going to race on the track. It is an opportunity to come together and not feel isolated. Adrian is doing great work.

I commend all who are working across the Redlands in the veterans space. Ours really is a very strong community. As the member for Ipswich West noted, we are coming up to Remembrance Day, which is an important time to remember the service men and women in our communities. We do indeed owe a very deep debt of gratitude to the men and women who have fought so hard to make sure that we live in the amazing state and the amazing country that we live in today. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (6.01 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the debate on the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. The objective of the bill is to establish the Queensland Veterans' Council as a statutory body. The QVC would have three areas of responsibility: to act as the trustee of Anzac Square under the Land Act 1994 and undertake the ongoing management and operation of Anzac Square; to undertake the functions of the board of trustees under the Anzac Day Act 1995; and to provide advice to government on veterans matters. Located between Anne Street and Adelaide Street in Brisbane, Anzac Square was dedicated on Remembrance Day 1930 as Queensland's state war memorial and lies on Crown land reserved under the Land Act for purposes of cultural and historical significance and parks. The land is listed on the Queensland Heritage Register.

On 5 December 1974, by Order in Council, land was placed under the control of the Brisbane City Council as trustee. The Brisbane City Council is currently the trustee of Anzac Square. Between 2014 and 2019 significant restoration work was undertaken on Anzac Square in four stages and the final stage 4 works were completed in August 2019. The project cost \$21.98 million and was jointly funded by the Australian government, the Queensland government and the Brisbane City Council. Upon commencement, the bill would transfer the trusteeship and management of Anzac Square to the QVC. The Anzac Day Trust Fund was established by the Anzac Day Act. The trust fund is currently administered under the Anzac Day Trust, a statutory body governed by a four-member board of trustees. Upon commencement of the bill, the QVC would become responsible for the administration of the trust fund.

The Queensland Veterans' Advisory Council is a ministerial committee that provides a forum for the Queensland veterans community to communicate directly with the Queensland government about matters relating to veterans. The QVAC is comprised of a chairperson and up to 11 other members from the Queensland veterans community, including veterans associations, associated ex-service organisations and people with a direct link to or interest in veterans issues. The members of the QVAC are nominated or identified by the Queensland veterans community. Upon commencement of the bill, the QVAC would cease to exist and its advisory functions would be undertaken by the QVC, with the support of the veterans reference group.

The bill provides that the QVC will have three main areas of responsibility: the maintenance and management of Anzac Square as a heritage asset for the state, the management of the trust fund and providing advice to the government on veterans matters. The bill also provides that the QVC would have the following functions in relation to veterans matters: to monitor matters affecting the veterans

community, to investigate and report on any aspect of veterans matters referred to it by the minister, to consult with the veterans community when developing advice for the minister and to advise the minister about veterans matters and any other matter relevant to the performance of the council's functions.

RSL Queensland stated that it welcomed the action by the state government to establish the Queensland Veterans' Council. However, a number of submitters raised concerns that the bill seeks to establish one statutory body to perform three distinct functions that require different skills, experience, knowledge and methods of operation. The Bundaberg District Women Veterans Inc. stated—

... the whole focus of it—

the bill—

appears to us to be on the management and administration of Anzac Square. In a nutshell, Anzac Square is a memorial; veterans are people. We do not think those two necessarily sit easily in the same bill...

Submitters, including Mr O'Kearney and the Defence Force Welfare Association Queensland, supported the model used in New South Wales and Victoria where separate statutory bodies have been established to manage the state war memorials, provide veteran advice and manage grants.

The bill provides that the QVC would have a membership of up to eight people, comprising two ex-officio members consisting of the chief executive of the department or an employee of the department nominated by the chief executive and the chief executive officer of the Brisbane City Council or a council employee nominated by the chief executive officer; and not more than six members appointed by the Governor in Council. The six appointed members may include not more than two members nominated by veterans organisations and not more than four people nominated by the minister.

The majority of submitters raised concerns that, under the current proposal, veterans and representatives of the veterans community were underrepresented on the QVC. The DFVAQ stated—

The Veteran membership of the council must be increased to over 50% to achieve any credibility amongst the veteran community and indeed, the general public.

RSL Queensland stated—

It is important that the members of the council clearly understand veterans' issues and the views of veterans. Having two veterans in a membership of eight does not allow for this.

The Defence Force Welfare Association noted that the equivalent legislation in Victoria provides that the 'ex-service community are to make up the majority of the membership of the Victorian Veterans Council.' Submitters, including Mr Craig, Mr O'Kearney, Mr Shortridge, the DFVAQ and RSL Queensland, considered that the chairperson of the QVC should also be a veteran.


The bill makes provision for the establishment of a veterans reference group. The bill provides that the functions of the veterans reference group are to advise the QVC on any veterans matter referred to the group; to help the QVC to identify and consult with veterans, community veterans organisations and other community organisations when preparing advice for the minister; and to help the QVC to advise the minister about veterans matters. The membership of the veterans reference group is to be decided by the minister. However, the minister must ensure that the group consists of the appointed members of the QVC nominated by a veterans organisation and not more than eight other members of the veterans community with knowledge of or skills in the necessary areas. Submitters expressed concern that the clause should state that the minister 'must' establish a veterans group.

The member for Southern Downs will be moving amendments to address these matters. I note that the minister will also be moving some amendments but they do not go to all the concerns raised by the member for Southern Downs and the member for Buderim, who are both veterans. If this legislation is, as it says, to listen to veterans, it can begin that process right here in this House in this debate on this bill when these amendments are moved.

War memorials are of great significance to each and every community. Every town, be it large or small, has some form of cenotaph to acknowledge the sacrifice made by that town. As you travel around and look at some of those memorials, it becomes apparent the staggering cost that some communities have borne. The town of Charleville in the electorate of Warrego is one that always stands out in my mind.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you were also part of a delegation that went to Port Moresby a couple of years ago. We visited the war cemetery there. I do not think I have ever been as touched anywhere as what I was on that day. These are very cherished and treasured sites. All of these local communities

have a volunteer group. Predominantly they are chaired by or have a lot of involvement from returned servicemen. They are a vital part of carrying on that tradition. I hope those concerns are addressed in this bill.

 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (6.09 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. I thank the Premier for taking this important step to strengthen the Queensland government's support of the veteran community. I recognise that the Premier's leadership in this space is not confined to this specific legislation; rather, the Premier has worked hard over many years supporting the veteran community more broadly.

I want to place on record my support for our local veteran community. The Stafford electorate, like the neighbouring electorates of Cooper and Ferny Grove, has a significant Defence population because of our proximity to the Enoggera base Gallipoli Barracks. In speaking to a bill like this, I want to thank not only our serving ADF members but also our local veterans and the local organisations that work so hard to support them.

I start by recognising the personal service history of some members of this House, as others have done: my chamber buddy the member for Nicklin, my committee buddy the member for Macalister and the member for Caloundra, as well as the members for Buderim and Southern Downs opposite. I also pay respect to some family members who gave and continue to give so much service in uniform. My maternal grandfather was a schoolteacher by profession but, as they did when World War II came along, he signed up. Emmett James Bartlett, known as Jim, served in the Pacific, including in New Guinea. One of my paternal uncles, Brian, served in Vietnam, and as a returning veteran he endured the social confusion, complications and mixed response from the community that was so common for returning veterans particular to that war. I also want to give a shout-out to one of my many maternal cousins, Megan, who has served for years, and continues to serve, in the RAAF.

When it comes to Anzac Square, I have very fond memories from my early childhood of attending the square for Anzac Day dawn service. We would get up extremely early, catch the train in and join the proud but respectful crowd who had worked their way down from Central station to the square. It is great to see this bill providing a more secure future for that much loved site.

More recently, as a student, as a local and then as a father, I loved attending the dawn service at the Lutwyche Cemetery held in the war graves section. It is a beautiful and solemn ceremony each year that brings our veterans, community members and local schools together. As an aside, the Lutwyche Cemetery is where my veteran grandfather and my grandmother lay at rest. There are many honours and privileges that come with serving my community as an elected representative, but one of the real honours for me is that I represent the area that contains the Lutwyche Cemetery, which sits in the suburb of Kedron in the middle of the Stafford electorate.

Speaking about the beauty of the Lutwyche Cemetery service, I pay particular respect to the mighty Kedron-Wavell RSL, which runs that service and many more across the north side. As I said as early as my first speech, the Kedron-Wavell RSL is nothing short of an absolute institution on the north side. I thank them for all they do for our community, especially for our veteran community. It is great to work with them across a range of activities—not only on the range of significant services across the year but also in partnership for veteran services, for local sport, for local community groups and schools and even as a fantastic venue that I and my northside colleagues try to support as often as possible.

I particularly want to thank my neighbour the member for Aspley and assistant minister to the Premier. Mr Mellish—I think Viv will get a kick out of you being referred to as that—the member for Aspley, is really passionate about veterans affairs. He has worked really hard across and with a wide range of veteran support groups and he should be rightly proud of the advocacy pathway that this bill provides for the veteran community.

In my first year it has been great to see such a cooperative approach across the north side with not only the member for Aspley but also the members for Nudgee, Sandgate, Ferny Grove, Cooper, McConnel and others because, unlike those in this chamber, most of my constituents and community groups, including veteran support groups, do not really memorise the ECQ state electoral boundaries. It has been a team approach where needed and I thank them all for it. I think we serve our respective communities better for that approach.

In summary, I thank the Premier for her leadership in this area. I thank the departmental staff, the committee chair and committee members for progressing this bill to where we are today. I commend the bill to the House.



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement) (6.14 pm): I rise to speak to the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. In doing so, I want to reflect upon the provision it makes for the establishment of the Queensland Veterans' Council and particularly those functions that have been remarked upon by so many members during this debate.

The opportunity to provide advice to government on veteran related matters is a very important role for the significant veteran community in so many different parts of our state. In my electorate of Sandgate we have a significant veteran community, and I want to acknowledge the leadership and the service provided to that community by the Sandgate subbranch of the RSL. I want to acknowledge Paddy Evans as president for the work he has done to reach out to more veterans, particularly the younger cohort of veterans that has been maybe not as well connected with the Returned and Services League for too long. He has been of great service to our local veteran community and the wider veteran community.

I also want to acknowledge the extraordinarily important role that is performed by the board of trustees for the Anzac Day Trust and the role that the Queensland Veterans' Council will play in administering that trust that has contributed so excellently to extraordinary institutions, organisations and associations across the board across our state, in order to support them in the service of ex-service men and women and most particularly their dependants. I want to acknowledge the very important role this council will have in that administration.

I want to spend most of my time referring to the role that the Veterans' Council will play in the administration of Anzac Square. We are very closely approaching Remembrance Day. This year's Remembrance Day will mark the 91st anniversary of the establishment of our state war memorial. Anzac Square is a unique form of war memorial across our country and, in some ways, across the Commonwealth. It is a beautiful and extraordinary place but at the same time an utterly functional space. That is what makes it one of the most special places in our city, the capital of our state. I congratulate all of those people who have been its custodians and stewards over that 91-year history. I take pleasure from the fact that, when I was working at Brisbane City Council, I played a bit of a role in helping influence some improvements in the way that area was looked after. I have to say that I do not think, fundamentally, Brisbane City Council was the right entity to be the custodian—and I think Brisbane City Council recognised that as well. We have now come to this situation where the need for this body to administer Anzac Square is so important.

As a consequence of cooperation between three levels of government—quite appropriately—we saw almost \$22 million spent on the restoration of Anzac Square. I was pleased to be present at the rededication at the completion and opening of that project and to see the special way in which the galleries were restored and expanded. The partnership with the State Library of Queensland has resulted in an outstanding war memorial that not only is a functional space but also truly engages people in the story of Queensland's and Queenslanders' service at war. I acknowledge the Minister for the Arts and the State Library of Queensland for their great service to that end.


I acknowledge that the council will not be made up exclusively of those people who have served our nation. It is vitally important to make clear—and amendments will be moved in this regard—that the intention is that the majority of the membership of the council be veterans. It is equally important that Anzac Square is not just a place for veterans but a place for all Queenslanders. Its physical nature meant that it was always designed to be a place for all Queenslanders.

Located between Central station and the GPO means it is a thoroughfare as much as it is a place for contemplation. Its role for pedestrians and citizens is just as important as its memorial role. That does not diminish its memorial role but strengthens it. When people pass through Anzac Square on all the very ordinary occasions they do—and having been a commuter myself who walked through Anzac Square each and every day leaving Central station to go to work and then return—I challenge them not to pause and reflect on why that place is what it is. We see its renewed beauty as a consequence of the restoration, the dedicated support of Queenslanders in fundraising to construct it in the first place in 1920 and complete it in 1930 and the acknowledgement by Queenslanders of the importance of our state war memorial. It moves people on a daily basis in this great city. It is important that it is supported, enhanced and managed by a set of custodians who not only appreciate it from the point of view of those who have served but also appreciate it from the point of view of someone like me who has not had the honour to serve and who comes from a long line of people from protected services.

I do not have any of the honourable history of the member for Stafford and his family. I think it is important that all Queenslanders, no matter their background, have a piece in this place where it is so important to commemorate, recognise and provide reflection on our most important days like

11 November and Anzac Day and on so many other important occasions for those who have served and their families and the whole of the Queensland and Australian community, but that it serves all Queenslanders every day as they use it as a key thoroughfare and connector of our city, which is surrounded by some of the most spectacularly beautiful heritage buildings that make our city centre the subtropical beauty that it is.

I commend the assistant minister for the work he has done in supporting the Premier on the development of this pathway forward to respect and protect the place that is Anzac Square and to respect, protect and support veterans in having a key stakeholder role not only in that special place but also in many other parts of public policy in Queensland to provide better support and recognition of those who have served our nation. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (6.23 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. I wish to thank the members of the Community Support and Services Committee and their staff for their consideration of the bill. There were 12 submissions. A number of the organisations that submitted are volunteer organisations. I wish to thank all of the volunteers who are associated with our veteran community. Volunteer groups like the RSL, the Australian War Widows of Queensland and Legacy do a tremendous job. I commend them for the volunteer work they do for Queensland veterans.

The bill sees the establishment of the Queensland Veterans' Council as a new statutory body. The new Queensland Veterans' Council will have three areas of responsibility previously held by other bodies or levels of government. Those responsibilities include being a trustee of Anzac Square, with responsibility for the ongoing management and operation of the square. They will take over the functions of the board of trustees under the Anzac Day Act 1995. They will provide advice to the government on veterans issues. There was one stakeholder, the Brisbane City Council, that advised that they have no objection to the state government taking over the control of Anzac Square. I acknowledge the work the Brisbane City Council have done in continuing the restoration of Anzac Square.

Anzac Square is an important part of our current Anzac Day and Remembrance Day services. It is a constant reminder of the sacrifice that many have made throughout many conflicts. It is also land that is listed on the Queensland Heritage Register. Many other memorials across Queensland are listed. Local governments in many communities play a great role in maintaining those monuments and memorials for our veterans. For instance, the Paroo shire has a heritage listed memorial. Council recently undertook to restore the fountain in the main streets. It is fondly known as the Cunnamulla War Memorial Fountain. It is a spectacular white fountain. The community hold their Anzac Day events there. They are very fond of that memorial. I say to anyone that if they are in Cunnamulla they should make sure they go and have a look at the fountain.

There were a number of concerns raised by stakeholders in relation to this bill. These relate to the lack of veteran representation on the Queensland Veterans' Council. They called for increased representation to ensure that veterans had a majority voice. Concerns were raised about non-veterans making decisions on issues that only veterans have an in-depth knowledge of. I think that is particularly important. My uncle served in the Second World War and my grandfather served in the First World War. They did not talk or could not talk about what happened in the wars that they served in. They did not talk to their family at all about what happened. In many cases people cannot talk about it. It is important that we have those veterans who have that in-depth knowledge. In terms of making those decisions, they are the only ones who have that knowledge. It is very hard for others who have not had those experiences to make those decisions.

Other issues raised included that the main task of the Queensland Veterans' Council is the management of Anzac Square and not veterans welfare issues. The Queensland Veterans' Council chair is not required to have a military background. Concerns were raised about public servants being on the Queensland Veterans' Council. Concern was raised about the administration of the Anzac Day Trust not being exclusively by nominated veteran members. There was concern that there would be reduced funding for veterans support as Anzac Square will take most of the funding allocated. We note from the committee report that there has already been significant investment in Anzac Square. We have certainly seen a good outcome from that investment.


Submitters also put forward a number of suggestions. It was pleasing to see they came from volunteer groups that are very much at the coalface when it comes to the veterans community. These suggestions included: an increase in veteran representation on the Queensland Veterans' Council to

half or more; the Veterans' Council chair to have a military background; public servants to only provide support and be non-voting members; and establishment of an Anzac Square reference group. Like the proposed veterans reference group, this group would sit under and provide advice to the Queensland Veterans' Council.

They also propose that people with the nominated asset management skills set out in the bill for the Queensland Veterans' Council would be members of this group and that decisions on the activities of the Anzac Day Trust be made by only veteran members of the Queensland Veterans' Council.

I note that there are a number of amendments from both the government and the opposition. I hope that these amendments address a number of the concerns raised by the submitters who are also volunteers who are intrinsically involved with our veterans community.

Before I conclude, I wish to extend my thanks to all of the volunteers who assist our veterans across the veterans community and also thank veterans, and particularly those members in our House who have served, for their sacrifice and what they have done by putting themselves forward to serve for our country.

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (6.29 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021, which provides a modern governance framework to further support our state's veterans now and into the future. This bill will establish the QVC as a trustee of our iconic Anzac Square in the Brisbane CBD under the Land Act 1994. Anzac Square is on Crown land and was placed under the control of the Brisbane City Council in 1974. This bill will ensure the ongoing management, maintenance and operation and Anzac Square as our state's official war memorial.

The new governance arrangement is modelled on similar approaches in Victoria and New South Wales whereby a statutory body has responsibility for the management of their equivalent state war memorial. Much has changed at Anzac Square since it was dedicated on Remembrance Day in 1930. Restoration work between 2014 and 2019 included a major redevelopment of the undercroft, and the space is now fitted with digital technology that provides a platform for educational and interactive exhibitions.

This investment means Anzac Square continues to attract visitors and school groups throughout the year—its appeal has been expanded far beyond its original purpose—and it now requires a new and more modern approach to management and daily operation. Establishing a statutory body will support the future strategic direction and operation of Anzac Square, particularly to the extent that the memorial galleries educate and inform visitors about the service and sacrifice of Queenslanders and Australians in war, peacemaking and peacekeeping.

Our local community of Ipswich has a long and proud association with those who defend our state and our nation. I recently caught up with Karen and the team from Wounded Heroes Australia at their brand new base in Bundamba. Wounded Heroes supports ADF personnel, veterans and their families. Their Bundamba facility includes an op shop and drop-in centre, and Wounded Heroes offers emergency support for current and former service personnel across the country. They have some very exciting plans for the future, and I thank everyone involved in this wonderful national initiative.

I also extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to all of our former and existing service personnel, some of whom are current members of this place. Many of them are posted at RAAF Base Amberley, Australia's biggest base. I acknowledge the work of our local Ipswich, Redbank and Redbank Plains RSL subbranches and, of course, the ongoing support provided by Russell and the team at Goodna Services Club.

This bill supports these groups and hundreds more like them across the state with a new governance arrangement for the Anzac Day Trust Fund by abolishing the existing board of trustees and transferring responsibility for the fund to the Queensland Veterans' Council. The new council has three areas of responsibility, and ending the term of appointment on the trustees allows for consideration of the skill set and expertise required to support the QVC in the performance of all of its functions. It will also monitor and advise the minister on issues affecting Queensland's veterans community, investigate and report on any aspect of veterans matters referred to it by the minister and consult with the veterans community when developing advice.


Importantly, the bill addresses QVC membership to ensure it will have a diverse mix of up to eight members, with the appropriate skills and experience to best represent our veterans effectively. Council members with qualifications or experience in areas like corporate governance, business or financial management and heritage conservation will continue to provide our Queensland veterans with a voice.

Providing the opportunity for non-veteran members of the community with the appropriate skills and experience to be appointed to the council reflects the historical origins of Anzac Square as the broader community's response to World War I and Anzac Square's purpose as a war memorial for all Queenslanders.

A veterans reference group established to support the QVC in the performance of its functions will assist the council in consulting with a wide range of veterans organisations. Stakeholders across Queensland have been consulted on the establishment of the QVC, and extensive consultation on the future management of Anzac Square was conducted between 2017 and 2021.

I am proud to be part of a government that continues to support our veterans, and today we take another important step on that journey. This bill adds to our \$10 million election commitment to deliver more employment assistance, infrastructure funding, accommodation and legal support for veterans. It includes \$4 million for capital works grants to maintain significant buildings, meeting areas and war memorials.

Today we are securing the future of our state's most significant war memorial, providing our veterans with a modern and progressive council of representatives and supporting those who served and continue to serve our country so we can experience the Queensland way of life that we all enjoy today. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (6.35 pm): I rise to speak in support of the bill before the House, the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. The Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021 proposes to establish the Queensland Veterans' Council, the QVC, as a statutory body to administer the Anzac Day Trust, among other roles, recognising the very important role that veterans and their families play in administering the Anzac Day Trust for those organisations who support our ex-service men and women and their dependants.

This body will have responsibility for acting as the trustee of Anzac Square; the ongoing management and operation of Anzac Square in Brisbane; and the functions currently performed by the board of trustees for the Anzac Day Trust established under the Anzac Day Act to provide annual payments to institutions, organisations or associations to assist ex-service men and women and their dependants. In addition, the establishment of the QVC ensures that strong governance and accountability arrangements are in place to safeguard the use of public funds in Queensland.

This bill ensures that the Queensland veterans community are afforded a clear and direct pathway for communication with the highest levels of the Queensland government about matters important to them and providing advice to government on veteran related matters—a role currently performed by the Queensland Veterans' Advisory Council, the QVAC.

The bill provides that the QVC will have up to eight members, with up to six members appointed by the Governor in Council and two ex-officio members. The six appointed members will include two members nominated by veterans organisations and four members with the relevant skills and experience to support the QVC in performing its functions. Significantly, there is no limitation on veterans filling these roles provided they have the necessary skills and experience.

The Community Support and Services Committee report recommends an amendment to the bill relating to the membership of the QVC—that is, at least 50 per cent of the members of the QVC must be veterans or representatives of the veterans community. This is a good amendment and one that I believe is well supported and one that has been accepted for adoption into the bill. Given this, the two ex-officio members will be the director-general of the department, or the nominee, and a nominated employee of the department that administers the act, which is currently the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and the CEO of the Brisbane City Council, or a nominated employee of the Brisbane City Council.

On commencement of the bill, the terms of appointment of the trustees will end and the QVAC will be discontinued in its current form and replaced by the veterans reference group, which will support the QVC in providing advice to the government. The veterans reference group will consist of 10 members, two of whom are members of the QVC who are nominated by veterans organisations and eight other members with knowledge, skills or extensive experience in areas relevant to veterans including veterans' health, military service and veterans transitional assistance provision. These changes stand as a clear commitment to the veterans community and show that their representation and participation in the QVC and the institutions it will administer is of the utmost importance to the government.

Given the functions of the QVC and the size and complexity of its operations, the bill provides that administrative support will be provided by the relevant department, and that is currently the DPC. Local laws made by the Brisbane City Council will continue to apply to Anzac Square unless a regulation made under the act provides otherwise.

In many capital and regional cities, towns and hamlets across the world, war memorials play an integral role in acknowledging the sacrifices made by men and women and their families during periods of conflict. Such war memorials afford a special place of remembrance of those lives lost and the stark reality of the human cost of war, like in my electorate of Hervey Bay at Freedom Park and other sites throughout the Hervey Bay electorate.


This bill will ensure that, in our state capital of Brisbane, Anzac Square will continue to be managed and maintained as one of our war memorials of which Queenslanders, and in fact all Australians, can be proud. We know that the historical origin of Anzac Square in Brisbane was the culmination of the broader Queensland community's response to the First World War. This tradition continued with the detailing of significant periods of conflict that followed, ensuring Anzac Square serves as a war memorial for all Queenslanders.

The main elements of this bill outline the role of the QVC as a new statutory body to assist with providing advice to government on veteran related matters, a role that is currently performed by the Queensland Veterans' Advisory Council, and strengthening the Anzac Day Trust with an additional commitment of \$1 million over three annual rounds to provide financial support for veterans affected by COVID-19, particularly for veterans organisations to assist with staging COVID-safe commemorative events. The government needed to ensure this legislation had clearly defined objectives, particularly regarding providing advice to government on matters of importance to veterans. With this bill I believe an adequate balance has been struck to ensure the QVC will provide an unprecedented amount of coordination of veterans matters in Queensland and the broader veterans community.

This is particularly important to my electorate of Hervey Bay, as we have a large community of veterans whose expectation, rightly so, is that they be heard. It is important that the QVC, as a ministerial committee, is structured in a way that provides the appropriate forum for easy dialogue and communication between the Queensland veterans community and the Queensland government. The QVC will provide this advice conduit to the state government to ensure that policies regarding the provision of services and all relevant matters relating to veterans and their needs are covered when it comes to the veterans community. This will ensure that those men and women who served our country have the required facilities and services provided to them by facilitating communication with the Queensland government on frontline issues relating to veterans matters through the QVC.

I am pleased to see that consultation on the bill covered diverse key stakeholders in the veterans community, including: Returned and Services League of Australia, Queensland Branch; Brisbane Legacy; Australian War Widows; the former chair of QVAC; and the former deputy chair of the Queensland Advisory Committee for the Commemoration of the Anzac Centenary. I also note that one of the consultation groups listed in the Community Support and Services Committee report was the Hervey Bay branch of the Veterans of Australia Association, a group that does a great job providing community support services for the veteran community in the areas of welfare and advice services and social activities. I thank them for engaging in the consultation on this bill. The veterans organisations that have had input into this bill ensure that veterans in Queensland—in this instance, those in the Hervey Bay electorate—have an opportunity to champion their needs and requirements as they transition into community life after their meritorious service.

I believe that this is a good bill. It goes a long way to ensuring Anzac Square, the Anzac Day Trust and the Veterans' Advisory Council will be provided with the structures and resourcing required for the ongoing maintenance and recognition of our veterans requirements. I congratulate the Premier and assistant minister for bringing this bill to the House and the Community Support and Services Committee for their work in formulating further amendments to the bill and for providing the veterans community with the opportunity to consult on the bill at its various hearings. This bill goes further to ensure that our veterans and their families are given the support and recognition they deserve following their service to our country and our state. I support the bill before the House.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (6.43 pm): I rise to speak on the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. The title of the bill is a misnomer. It is misleading. It implies that it will deal with veterans issues. In reality, the government is proposing a bill which is really an asset management body for Anzac Square in Brisbane and the Anzac Day Trust Fund. As it stands, it is not a body to provide recommendations and advice on veterans matters.

The explanatory notes say that the bill aims to establish a Queensland Veterans' Council, or QVC, as a statutory body which will deal with both the administrative and management issues of Anzac Square and the Anzac Day Trust Fund and provide advice to government. That advisory role, which has relegated the wide range of issues facing veterans to be 'other matters', is an afterthought. The Veterans' Council and its members should not be solely managerial. It also needs to understand the range and breadth of issues affecting veterans of all ages and experiences.

Anzac Square was dedicated as Queensland's state war memorial 12 years after the end of the First World War, in 1930. Over the 91 years since then the Brisbane City Council has been the trustee and borne the cost of maintaining the parkland around the memorial. This bill will transfer that responsibility to the state. In anticipation, the government allocated an annual \$2.4 million in last year's budget for the ongoing curation and oversight of Anzac Square.

Another legacy of the First World War was the establishment of the Anzac Day Trust Fund 100 years ago, in 1921. Funds from state government grants provide annual payments to institutions, organisations or associations to help ex-service personnel and their dependants. Previously a board of four trustees administered it. Now that will be undertaken by the Veterans' Council. Both have their origins in the aftermath of the First World War.

So too does every region, town and community across this state have its own war memorial and commemorative sites. In Gympie these include Normanby Hill Remembrance Park, Gympie Memorial Rotunda, Imbil War Memorial, Kandanga War Memorial, Gympie War Memorial Gates, Cooloola Cove Vietnam War Memorial and the Amamoor School memorial orchards. Memorial Lane in Gympie is unique and is the site of Gympie's pictorial war memorial, with murals along the lane. There are memorial halls in Widgee, Wolvi, Traveston and Theebine, which also has a memorial roll of honour. There is a memorial park in Tin Can Bay. There are war memorials in Tin Can Bay, Widgee and Glenwood and a cenotaph and memorial grounds in Rainbow Beach. A number of Gympie schools have even established their own memorials. It does not matter how small the towns are, these sites demonstrate the pride and respect Gympie has in its connection with serving men and women. It is reflected right across the community.

Almost daily we hear and read about the difficulties faced by our current and returning service men and women. We have a duty—we have an obligation—to provide them the support and assistance they need. It is important that the government seeks advice from those who know and understand the complex issues facing the veteran community and their families. The RSL reminds us that the veteran community has been a continuous thread in our communities for more than 100 years. Gympie has an RSL, and Tin Can Bay and the Mary Valley have an RSL subbranch. Currently the RSL in our community takes on the role of supporter and adviser and is the conduit between government agencies and the men and women who need help. It provides ongoing support to veterans and their families. The Gympie RSL has a human resources section which provides a veterans support service.

It is disappointing that this government's obsession with bureaucratic and political appointments was reflected in the proposed membership of the QVC. To only allow two veteran representatives to the QVC pays lip-service to the real-world experience of the veteran community. It meant non-veterans making decisions on issues only veterans have an in-depth knowledge of. The government thought only two veterans would be enough.


The committee received 12 submissions from a wide range of organisations representing veterans and returned services men and women. Among them were Australian War Widows Queensland, former executive members of the Queensland Veterans' Advisory Council, Queensland Advisory Committee for the Commemoration of the Anzac Centenary, the RSL, Legacy, the Royal Australian Regiment Association, Royal Australian Air Force Association Queensland Division and Defence Force Welfare Association Queensland. Every one of them—all of them—were concerned about the lack of veteran representation. They pointed out that the government should ensure veterans have a majority voice by increasing representation. They were also concerned that the focus was going to be on the administration of the trust fund and Anzac Square. This would have relegated the wide range of issues facing veterans to 'other matters' as an afterthought.

Submissions to the bill highlighted the need to increase veteran representation on the QVC to half or more. They also proposed: that the chair have a military background; that public servants did not override the experience of returning service men and women; that public servants have an advisory role on the QVC; and that decisions on the activities of the Anzac Day Trust are only made by veteran members of the QVC.

The government has a notorious track record in having to amend legislation which it has only just introduced. The government will move to amend its membership to a fifty-fifty representation. They should not have played politics with veterans. It is inexcusable to suggest that veterans would not get the majority say.

Our communities rely on the dedication and hard work of veterans, as well as support groups, stakeholders and volunteers, to hold many of our commemoration events, such as Anzac Day and Vietnam Veterans Day. They are often hosted by RSL branches and other organisations across Queensland. They create opportunities for Queenslanders of all ages to reflect on and commemorate the service of our service men and women, both past and present.

We have much to be proud of from our serving personnel, both now and in the past. They have a breadth of knowledge and experience which should not be ignored. This is why the LNP amendments should be supported. Our amendments recognise the issues put forward by many in the veterans community. The LNP amendments will give back control of veterans issues to veterans themselves. They will ensure a majority of members are veterans and the chair is a veteran. The prime role of the council should be to deal with veterans matters, not just an asset management role. It will make the Veterans' Council match its title—that it will be about veterans and not just an asset management body. I support the LNP amendments.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (6.50 pm): In 1996 I was fortunate enough to be on a Mediterranean hillside on the Gallipoli peninsula on a chilly pre-dawn morning. I was exhausted and cold and in the dark a little bit disoriented. The PA system in 1996 was a little tinny and I strained to even understand the words of the service. However, slowly the sun rose revealing the jagged ridge line, and it lifted to reveal the whole scene. I looked out on the water and, with a shiver down the back of my neck, I could almost see those young Australians and New Zealanders in their small row boats rowing towards the shore under Turkish fire. That day spent exploring Anzac Cove, a place that looms so large in our national idea, was so powerful. With other young Aussies and Kiwis, I saw the beaches, the trenches and the ridges, and we saw those special monuments and brass names that represented a lost young Aussie or Kiwi just like us. I will not forget and hope one day to return to those battlefields in France and New Guinea.

The ceremonies in Anzac Square are incredibly special, and the history that it represents and protects is something of a special legacy. This is a special place. This bill acts to protect Anzac Square and to provide advice to government on veterans matters. I find it curious that the LNP seem to think that veterans would not firmly put their views if given remuneration for their time. The veterans I know in Logan are certainly forthright. They certainly give me a free character assessment and even judgements on what my government does. I am also really pleased that they give me a bit of a compliment behind my back. That is the Aussie way—to be forthright to your front and to save the pats on the back for when others are around.

The LNP attacked the idea that the chair might not be a veteran. I notice that they did not reserve the same judgement for the chair and executive of the Australian War Memorial, which has an equally special role in the commemoration of our veterans. When Brendan Nelson was appointed, there were no similar statements. Indeed, there was general recognition that Brendan Nelson was very deeply committed. Upon his replacement, federal minister Darren Chester said of Nelson's potential replacement that the new director need not be from the military but should have 'empathy and a great deal of commitment to ... Australian service men and women'. I think that is what we need to have in our chair, whether they are a veteran or not—someone who has a great deal of commitment and empathy to our service men and women. That is what I hope we appoint through this process.

Veterans in Logan are a fantastic bunch of people. They are very willing to give of themselves to pass on the message that we have about their service, their commitment, our nation and what makes our nation special. They are a robust group and they do a fantastic job.

I want to explain to the House what my Anzac Day looks like. It starts off in the pre-pre-dawn at Logan Village RSL, where there is a fantastic refurbishment on the village green and some great work has been done by the people of the Logan Village RSL. They have the service completely in the dawn, matching the exact timing of the landings on Anzac Cove. I am lucky enough to be asked to read a poem there, reflecting some of the views of those who took to the boats that day.


I want to recognise the fantastic Greenbank RSL, which is an enormous memorial, in contrast to Logan Village and Jimboomba that I will speak about. In the dawn, with the coming of the light, the Greenbank RSL is absolutely packed with veterans, their families and the entire greater Browns Plains, Boronia Heights and Park Ridge community that comes en masse to make sure this is a special event.

During COVID it was very tough for our community because we obviously could not hold these events, but I along with many neighbours stood in the front of our driveways to make sure that memory and spirit was kept alive. Jimboomba RSL also does a fantastic job. They are relatively new. They are the best, as the member for Scenic Rim said—

Mr Krause: Except for Beaudesert.

Mr POWER: No, you said the best, and we will stick to that! They have some fantastic facilities that were enhanced by Skilling Queenslanders for Work. What was really special about that Skilling Queenslanders for Work group is not just that they did a great job of cleaning, painting and presenting the special ex-military buildings; they also learnt an enormous amount about what made the veterans special and they will forever have a protective feeling about that site. Jimboomba RSL—which is the best, as the member for Scenic Rim said—are also fantastic because they involve the cadets of the local area and young people, especially from Jimboomba State School. It is a growing tradition that the people of Flagstone appreciate.

We are one of the few nations on earth that, when it comes time to remember our military, does not glorify a great victory and does not celebrate the defeat of others. Instead, we do the unusual thing of remembering something that was, at best, a difficult stalemate on a difficult area. That is the story of Gallipoli. The veterans I meet do not seek to glorify war, and we do not attempt to do that through this bill. Instead, they seek to remember and they seek to mark that history. The veterans I speak to, especially those whose service still weighs heavily on them, seek to be a living reminder of the enormous decisions that those who are in a democratic house have when sending off soldiers to war. When we send them off to war, we have a commitment to them not just for their time of service but for all of their time because of the enormous commitment that they have given. I support this bill because I think it adds to that commitment and service.


 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (6.58 pm): I rise to speak in support of this bill. I declare to the House that I am a proud veteran representing this side of the House. I am a proud Queensland veteran, noting that Queensland is a service state, from Canungra in the south all the way up to Lavarack Barracks and all the major military bases in between. My service number, F1804601—before they gave us computer based numbers—indicated, first of all, that I was a female, with the 'F', and the No. 1 indicated that I enlisted in the state of Queensland. I also have to admit to the House that I am still actually a current serving member of the Defence Force. I have not yet discharged and I am not required to discharge for some time yet, just in case—break glass only in case of emergency.

The veteran landscape is not homogenous. It was admitted during committee hearings that there are currently over 3½ thousand ex-service organisations throughout this state, so I acknowledge the difficult task it is to put together any body that seeks to represent veterans and ex-service personnel. I acknowledge the difficulty—in the military we use the term 'cat herding'—of getting veterans on the same page. Many of the particularly more recent ones are single-issue organisations, which I can understand. I could go into extreme detail about how many issues are currently facing the veterans community. A country that is quite eager to send its young men and women overseas does not seem so eager to look after their welfare when they return.

Debate, on motion of Mrs McMahon, adjourned.


PRIVILEGE

Unauthorised Disclosure of Committee Proceedings

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (7.00 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege. In response to the recommendations of the Ethics Committee report No. 208 tabled this morning, I unreservedly apologise to the House and to the State Development and Regional Industries Committee for the unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings.

ADJOURNMENT

Moggill Electorate, Traffic Infrastructure

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (7.01 pm): Labor is a consistent roadblock when it comes to busting local traffic congestion across the western suburbs of Brisbane. Years of inaction and failure has seen traffic congestion only worsen under the Queensland state Labor government. Labor is also failing to deliver sufficient public transport services across the electorate of Moggill.

It is more than 190 days since local community consultation was concluded on the Kenmore roundabout upgrade project, yet local residents continue to be left in the dark by a state Labor government that is content with allowing local residents and families to sit in traffic for longer. The overwhelming community feedback provided to the state government was that the Labor Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Hon. Mark Bailey MP, has produced flawed road designs which will simply not resolve safety concerns and will in fact make traffic congestion more problematic for local residents.

The state Labor government should be implementing an integrated road and public transport plan for the western suburbs of Brisbane. The Liberal National Party believes that such a plan is integral to busting traffic congestion and enhancing public transport whilst improving cyclist and pedestrian safety. Local Liberal National Party colleagues, including the federal member for Ryan, Julian Simmonds MP, and councillor Greg Adderman of the Pullenvale ward, are providing the resourcing and funding of both the federal government and Brisbane City Council in order to deliver local infrastructure solutions. However, there is unanimous agreement that what is also desperately needed is a Liberal National Party state government which can implement infrastructure solutions on state controlled roads on behalf of local residents.

Last month marked a very tragic anniversary—10 years since local resident Richard Pollett was killed while cycling along Moggill Road from his parents' home in Kenmore. Local cyclists and cycle advocacy groups, including the Brisbane West Bicycle Users Group and Space for Cycling, are continuing to slam the state Labor government for failing to take meaningful action to address vital cyclist safety as a matter of urgency.

Along with enhanced and additional footpaths along the state government controlled Moggill and Mount Crosby roads, local cyclists' safety must be a priority for the state Labor government. Labor's Minister for Transport and Main Roads must urgently plan, fund and deliver infrastructure solutions. I call on the Queensland state government and the Brisbane City Council to work collaboratively and constructively via the joint Active Transport Advisory Committee to deliver solutions on behalf of local residents. This also includes both levels of government delivering a full road and traffic bridge at Bellbowrie.

Local residents also deserve a full and transparent explanation from Labor's Minister for Transport and Main Roads about the state government's intentions for the Kenmore bypass. Any intended development should have comprehensive and transparent public consultation. Finally, local residents continue to raise with me their significant concerns about the recently installed guardrails along Mount Crosby Road and the devastating impacts this is having on local native wildlife including koalas. That is why I have written to Labor's Minister for Transport and Main Roads seeking an urgent meeting with Department of Transport and Main Roads representatives to discuss these matters. Certainly, the minister can do a lot better when it comes to traffic in the western suburbs of Brisbane.

Rockhampton, Bureau of Meteorology Station



Ms LAUGA (Keppel—ALP) (7.04 pm): In April this year I rose in this place to voice my concerns about the closure of the Rockhampton Bureau of Meteorology station by the LNP Morrison government and the sacking of expert forecasters and technicians. I was very concerned about the potential devastating impact on regional weather radars, warning and disaster services. Since that time, I can confirm that staff have been sacked, all of the equipment at the station has been removed and the Bureau of Meteorology in Rockhampton has been closed. It is absolutely outrageous and I am completely aghast at this shocking decision of the LNP federal government.


Just last week, a Central Queensland meteorologist contacted me because they fear that someone could be killed by inaccurate and late forecasts and storm warnings due to the closure of the Bureau of Meteorology station in Rockhampton. Meteorologist Mike Griffin told me that inaccurate and untimely forecasts could adversely affect flight services, farmers and travellers with potentially fatal consequences. The recent misjudgement by the Brisbane BOM, which last week failed to predict a range of Central Queensland storms, proves the need to keep Rockhampton's BOM office. Closure of the Rockhampton BOM station by the LNP Morrison government and the sacking of expert forecasters and technicians has shown to have a devastating impact on regional weather, radar, warning and disaster services.

Last week's wild Central Queensland weather was missed by the Brisbane based BOM officers, with potentially devastating consequences to locals. Mr Griffin told me that Central Queensland needs to 'get a sonde or we're flying blind'. The LNP Morrison government has left Central Queensland flying blind when it comes to weather forecasting. The bottom line is that, now that they have closed the Rockhampton BOM office, we are getting second-rate forecasts. This could end up in a plane crash or a major storm event being missed without the sonde.

I call on federal MP Michelle Landry and Nationals Senator Matt Canavan to stop cutting local jobs and services and to reverse their government's cull of the Rockhampton BOM station. These cuts that they support are downright insulting to Central Queenslanders, and I call on them to reverse these devastating cuts to BOM jobs and services immediately. We need expert people monitoring the Rockhampton BOM—not an automated service that comes out of Brisbane. These Brisbane people cannot even pronounce the names of our suburbs properly! They have no idea about the local weather conditions because they are reading from a computer screen in Brisbane. We are moving into the annual storm and cyclone season. Late warnings will not be acceptable.

Given that our region is one of the most disaster affected areas in the country, our community and economy rely on reliable weather forecasts, observations and warnings. That is why a fully resourced BOM in our region is absolutely imperative. Our region deserves a fully resourced BOM station, but all this LNP government is doing is cutting jobs and services.

Hearts of Purple


 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (7.07 pm): As members have been walking around Queensland parliament for the past couple of months I am sure they have seen the bright purple bins that now have pride of place. These bins are the brainchild of the team at Hearts of Purple and its CEO, Michelle Beattie. This non-government charity was formed in 2017 following the brutal murder of Teresa Bradford. Today a dedicated volunteer committee works around the clock to help those most vulnerable in our community in terms of domestic and family violence. I am honoured to be able to assist Hearts of Purple in delivering its purple bin program around Bundaberg and the Burnett region and here in parliament.

This program helps to raise much needed funds to keep the charity going. The vital container collection moneys are providing security for those most vulnerable. I advise the House that to date, thanks to all members' good efforts, we have raised nearly \$850. As every 10 cents represents one container, that is a lot of containers! I point out that that also buys two security watches which are monitored for the security of those people escaping domestic and family violence. They can sound alerts and contact emergency numbers as well as send information to a manned monitoring centre and the police. This is just one of the great initiatives of Hearts of Purple.

I take this opportunity to thank all of the wonderful businesses in the Bundaberg and Burnett electorates that are on board with the purple bin program. I give a big shout-out to Just Freight, Metalcorp, Bundaberg Lunchbox, LJ Hooker Bundaberg, Puddles Car Wash and ABC Recycling. These are great local businesses that are leading the way to end domestic and sexual violence. I cannot thank them enough for joining us in this initiative. I implore more local businesses to come on board so we can roll out more purple bins to raise much needed funds. The biggest thank you must go to the incredible Michelle Beattie. I also acknowledge the team here at parliament and thank Mr Speaker for being so generous in his support of this program.

Following Teresa Bradford's horrific murder, Michelle and her team saw the holes and the failures in the system and took action to fix them to ensure that victims of domestic violence were kept safe and alive. It goes without saying that the Hearts of Purple volunteers are remarkable people. Every day those volunteers take direct and swift action to make real and lasting changes, but now it is time to join Michelle and her team to say no to domestic and family violence. Home should be a place where we all feel safe, but for some it can be a dangerous place with no escape. While one voice might go unheard, together, including in this House, we can do a lot more to free those harmed by domestic and family violence. I ask all members here today to promote the Purple Bin program in their communities and here in parliament to deal with the scourge of domestic violence. Members, that means that I do not want to see cans and bottles in a bin that is not appropriate. Let us make sure that these preventive strategies are something we can all work towards in the House. We can do this through to Christmas and after Christmas to make sure that women and children are protected.

Rockhampton River Festival


 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (7.10 pm): On the weekend we had the Rockhampton River Festival. The festival is now in its sixth year and is a fantastic occasion to celebrate Rockhampton through arts, culture and entertainment. It was a welcomed boost to our local economy, with tens of thousands of people attending the three-day event. There were lots of visitors to our region helping to fill motels and hotels. I am pleased to be part of a government that has a strong focus on events that drive visitation, support local jobs, foster community pride and promote our stunning tourism

experiences. There is so much to see and do in CQ. Congratulations to the event organisers and all of those involved in organising this event, including all of the volunteers because, without their help, this event would not be possible.

The Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service took the opportunity to have a pop-up vaccination clinic at the festival. I want to put on record my thanks to Candice, Linda, Louise, Chloe, Steve and their team of hardworking frontline staff for their great work in delivering the COVID vaccine clinics across regional Queensland. The River Festival team delivered 124 vaccinations over the two short sessions and set up a clinic in our car park, which was great. The three school pop-ups collectively delivered 485 vaccines on the Saturday on top of the 954 delivered by the two community centres. Saturday was its biggest day ever, delivering an astounding 1,522 vaccines. This was the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service's largest week of vaccine delivery since the program began. However, we still have a long way to go, with only 68 per cent having received their first vaccination.

I want to thank the Premier, the Chief Health Officer and the ministers who have visited the region in recent weeks to encourage Central Queenslanders to get vaccinated. Now is the time to get vaccinated as the ramifications are so serious. It is a shame that the member for Capricornia, Michelle Landry, has been absent in encouraging people to get vaccinated. One would think that she would want to protect and support the people of Central Queensland, but no. Special thanks to Jase, MJ, Aaron and Tanya from our local 4RO radio station for their support of our COVID jabs ad campaign. We will hear over 300 30-second ads over the next six weeks. Thank you for the support that you are providing to the Rocky community.


Coronavirus, Queensland Border

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (7.13 pm): My office is still inundated with complaints about the Premier's inconsistent border closure regime, particularly blocking Queenslanders from returning home even though they are double vaccinated and prepared to home quarantine for two weeks. There are Queenslanders stranded in other states because of the Premier's barbed wire, unconstitutional blockade of them returning home. What sort of dictatorship are we Queenslanders living in? The Premier needs to develop some personal compassion and humanity and stop the political gamesmanship based on her weekly polling of what is trying to keep her popular. The 'corona queen' crown is falling down around the Premier's ankles because of her lack of caring and compassion for a small band of Queenslanders stuck across borders through no fault of their own.

Some 4,000 Queenslanders are on the waiting list to come home, some of whom are living in their cars because they are out of money and out of hope. There are another 9,000 interstate folk on the waiting list to come to Queensland, but surely our 4,000 Queenslanders should have priority to return to their home state above new arrivals to Queensland. Do Queenslanders take priority, Premier? The illogical and unfair quarantine regime enforced by the Premier has no reasoning in fact or empirical experience. These are double vaccinated people prepared to undertake current COVID testing for a negative result and prepared to home quarantine for two weeks. The only fathomable reason that the Premier is keeping them from returning home is that her weekly polling based decision-making is saying to keep them out of Queensland to enforce the perception that the Premier is keeping Queensland safe from coronavirus.

We have Queensland's most prominent poll dancer! How does the Premier reconcile Transport Workers' Union truckies going back and forth across the border every day but double vaxed Queenslanders are held at bay across the border, as if they are an infected plague? The answer to that of course is that the Premier is looking after union mates at the expense of everyday Queenslanders. The Premier is harping on daily that people should get vaccinated and yet these double vaccinated Queenslanders are being kept out of the state like lepers for no good reason. Let them come home, Premier. Show these Queenslanders some compassion, Premier, and stop playing political games, based on your weekly polling, with the lives of innocent Queenslanders. Queensland, Queensland, Queensland! We need them home right now. Open up the testing regime so that these people do not have to pay \$1,000 for a sample. We want them all home!

Nicklin Electorate, Events

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (7.16 pm): I rise to give a brief overview of recent and upcoming events in the electorate of Nicklin. I first offer my congratulations to the Jonathon Sullivan Memorial Team for taking out the championship of Nambour's Murri Cup carnival. Well done to Kenny and the team.


I would like to recognise the outstanding achievement of Chevallum State School in its centenary anniversary. This wonderful and inclusive school has taught the children of our region for 100 years. In honour of the celebration, a mosaic mural was completed with funds raised by the P&C. This artwork tells the story of the school over the journey. I thank Linda Short, the principal; Scott Teichmann, the deputy principal; Kirsten Bowman, the president of the P&C; and Lyn Walsh, a former principal of 33 years. I also must mention the students, current and former staff, the P&C and the families for all that they have done which enables such long-lasting success.

I want to introduce the parliament to the emerging sport of disc golf. The Sunshine Coast Disc Golf Club has been hosting tournaments that attract competitors from all over the country. This is an inclusive sport that all abilities can enjoy. I look forward to seeing more tournaments on our Sunshine Coast.

On Sunday in Woombye the 2nd Light Horse Woombye troop will be parading at 10 o'clock. There will be 30 horses and riders in period dress. This is to commemorate the 104th anniversary of the Battle of Beersheba, a famous Australian victory in the Middle East during World War I. Friday afternoon also in Woombye will see the celebration of 50 years of Nambour Meals on Wheels. I do not need to explain to members or the public the fantastic work these volunteers do in providing meals and company for our most vulnerable citizens. I also want to acknowledge Don MacAuley for hosting me at the Lake Borumba Fish Stocking Association at Borumba Dam on Saturday. It does important work in conservation in reintroducing native freshwater fish to our estuaries.

Speaking about important volunteer organisations, Friday is also the Day for Daniel. I encourage anyone in Palmwoods to attend the walk at 0600 hours and support the work of the Daniel Morcombe Foundation in advancing child safety and protection. All should wear a splash of red on this day. I note that Minister Linard will be there as well, so if anyone else can attend that would be great. It is my privilege to speak about all of the great people and organisations that enrich the fabric of our community.

Joyce Newton OAM Bursary

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (7.19 pm): I acknowledge in the chamber this evening Ms Mikayla Crouch and her parents, Darryn and Raelene. Mikayla is the 2021 winner of our Joyce Newton OAM bursary. To that end I also acknowledge here this evening two of Joyce's children, Jen Tunley and Carl Newton.


Joyce was not only my friend but also an amazing community advocate who sadly passed away in 2018 from motor neurone disease. She lived and breathed community. She was passionate about agriculture, about learning, about our future generations and about civic society. Mikayla has demonstrated a similar passion. Raised on a Mount Mee dairy farm, Ms Crouch is keen to pursue a career in agriculture and environmental sustainability to show the world that farmers love and care for their environment. She has already paired the two, raising money to protect the glossy black-cockatoo across the D'Aguiar Range. Mikayla has also had an incredibly successful academic and cultural experience at Pine Rivers State High School, winning numerous awards and serving this year as school captain. She is in the middle of final exams as we speak. I will never forget Jen's comments after we had interviewed Mikayla: 'She's just like Mum.'

This year's bursary recipient saw some tough competition—so much so that alongside Mikayla's \$1,000 bursary the panel decided to award two runner-up bursaries of \$750. For that I am incredibly grateful to my other guests this evening and the third member of our interview panel, Sandy Zubrinich of the Sunshine Coast Business Council. Sandy convinced both the business council and the Food and Agribusiness Network to co-sponsor the runner-up prizes. Sandy is joined tonight by her granddaughter Kiaja. Those runner-up prizes went to Mr Leo de Clara of Beerburrum, who is school captain at St Joseph's Nudgee College, and Chelsea-Ann Johnson of Peachester, who just happens to be school captain at Glass House Christian College.

As members can see, we are spoilt for choice in Glass House with so many outstanding young people. Leo was immediately likeable, confident, balanced and we loved that he was committed to contributing his university experience back into the region and into farming. Leo believes his studies in finance and law will ensure future agricultural success in the region, and that is what sold the Food and Agribusiness Network. Chelsea-Ann was also seen as being decisive and knows what she wants to do with her life. She has a sense of humour and a sense of humility, is well grounded, appreciative of her opportunities and wants to make a difference in the lives of children, particularly disadvantaged children.

All three, I understand, have taken up the offer by the Sunshine Coast Business Council to act as youth ambassadors in some of the work they are looking to do next year. My friend Joyce would be so proud to see young people of the calibre of Mikayla, Leo and Chelsea-Ann awarded this bursary in her name. Our future is incredibly safe with young people such as these.

Polio

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (7.22 pm): I rise to recognise Rotarians in my electorate and around the world who have donated their time and money to a very worthy cause—the eradication of polio. Polio is a paralysing and potentially fatal disease that still threatens children in some parts of the world. Polio can be prevented by vaccines but is not curable. However, unlike COVID-19 and many other diseases, polio can be eradicated.


Last Friday I joined with members of local Rotary clubs, including the Sunnybank Hills Rotary Satellite Club Chinese from District 9620, for their End Polio Bridge Walk, marching proudly in their red 'End Polio' shirts behind a traditional Indian marching band, gathering just outside this House at Speaker's Corner. I recognise District Governor Wendy Protheroe and former District Governor Jitendra Prasad for organising this celebration and all the Rotarians who attended, recognising the amazing combined efforts by governments, NGOs, philanthropists, scientists, researchers and, of course, Rotary through their Polio Plus program.

Today this combined effort has reduced polio by 99.9 per cent worldwide and they predict total eradication within three years. The program started 30 years ago and was the first initiative to tackle global polio eradication by vaccinating children on a massive scale. Every year hundreds of Rotarians work with health workers to prepare and distribute information for people in areas that are isolated by conflict, geography and poverty and mobilise local volunteers to assist in transporting the vaccine. They have also won the support of major philanthropists like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which matches their \$50 million commitment per year two to one.

Overall the program has raised over \$2.1 billion and contributed countless volunteer hours to protect more than 2.5 billion children in 122 countries from this devastating disease. It is amazing to think that because of these efforts 19 million people who would otherwise have been paralysed are walking and more than 1.5 million people are alive who would otherwise have died. This is the power of vaccines, of modern medicine and scientific research.

The creation of the polio vaccine in the late 1950s was hailed as a scientific miracle. Likewise, the rapid development of a safe and effective COVID vaccine is something to be praised—a result of decades of experience and research showing that vaccines are safe and effective. With this in mind it has been disappointing to see anti-vaxxers and science deniers stirring up fear in our community. Like the members of Rotary helping the rollout of polio vaccine internationally, it is on all of us in this place to support the rollout of the COVID vaccine locally, encouraging people to get their double dose so we can protect our loved ones and unite families interstate and overseas. The Premier, Deputy Premier, ministers and members on this side are doing their bit, but unfortunately the same cannot be said for those opposite.

The Common Good; Stafford Electorate, Schools

 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (7.25 pm): I take this opportunity to recognise a wonderful organisation that serves my local community, and indeed our state more broadly—that is, The Common Good. The Common Good is the charitable arm of the Prince Charles Hospital and is doing fantastic work in community engagement and genuinely world-leading medical research. Members in the House may know them from their signature fundraising dish, the iconic Ekka strawberry sundae. Indeed, many members may have accidentally been supporting this wonderful organisation for years. The organisation and its work go far further than that.

I was pleased to support their latest initiative and to join with the organisation last week for the Prince Charles Hospital's inaugural Giving Day. All funds raised will be used to fund patient support programs, state-of-the-art equipment and other key initiatives to enable our staff to provide the highest quality of patient care for the community. This includes ongoing work on developing a better model for intensive care units, the ICU of the future. This world-leading research seeks to provide better patient experiences and better outcomes for patients, staff and hospitals alike. It also goes towards an interactive sensory garden for the dementia unit, something that the nursing and allied health staff spoke so passionately about to me last week. The funds are also being directed towards

groundbreaking lung and heart research, something for which the Prince Charles Hospital has built a well-deserved reputation; the Critical Care research group; the Sunrise Room; and the Rehabilitation Path to Recovery to name just a few.

I thank Michael Hornby, The Common Good's CEO, for his leadership in this initiative, particularly in bringing all the moving parts together. I thank his team that did so much last week. I thank the sponsors and supporters, including Brad Thorn and the Reds. He has given up his time on many occasions for The Common Good. I thank everyone who put their hands in their pockets and donated. It is money well spent. I am proud to say that collectively we met the target—in fact exceeded the target of raising \$250,000 in the one day.

Most importantly, I thank the staff of the Prince Charles Hospital for dedicating their time to partner with the foundation: the nurses, doctors, occupational therapists, support staff and others who contributed to the day. It was obvious that they care so much about their patients. That thanks extends to the Prince Charles Hospital administration and Metro North HHS more broadly for their support. The Common Good have built a very effective model, working in partnership with researchers, medical staff, the HHS, business community and other supporters to achieve real outcomes. At the end of the day, those medical discoveries and developments are more than just hidden work in a lab; they impact real patients and save lives. I thank them for what they do each and every day.

I also take this chance to briefly wish our local schools well as we approach, all too quickly, the end of the school year. Can I give a particular shout-out to our year 12 students who have started a big few weeks with external exams underway. I congratulate all the students who have been recognised at recent speech nights for academic, sporting, cultural, musical and community leadership achievements. As the retiring principal from Wavell State High School, Jeff Major, put it, our future really is in good hands.

Carden, Mr W; Caloundra, Youth Detention Centre



Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (7.29 pm): I acknowledge the many people from Caloundra and Kawana who are in the public gallery this evening. We have had a beautiful barbecue on the River Deck. I pay tribute to Lyn Carden, who is in the gallery tonight. I offer condolences to Lyn on the recent loss of Warren. He was a champion, a good friend and we loved him dearly, Lyn, so condolences to you and all your family.

Why are these people from Caloundra and Kawana visiting tonight? One reason is that they love parliament and they love their local member—although not if they are from Caloundra!

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: No, not in Caloundra; Kawana. These people believe in community safety. They want community safety. What they do not want is a Caloundra youth detention centre. The Caloundra detention centre that is proposed by the Palaszczuk Labor government and supported by the member for Caloundra, Jason Hunt, will be detrimental to the community of Caloundra, which is a tourist destination. It will be detrimental to the people of the Sunshine Coast. Crime will go up. The signs have gone up. The government says that consultation is occurring yet the other day the roller door on the police watch house was up—

Ms PEASE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Is the member going to be tabling that document or is he simply using it as a prop? Please make—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): I have heard the point of order. Member for Kawana, will you be tabling that document?

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes. The Labor Party has promised a Caloundra youth jail. That will be detrimental to every resident of the Sunshine Coast. I table a photograph of the sign that has now gone up.

Tabled paper: Photograph of proposed development sign titled 'North Coast remand centre—3 Gregson Place, Caloundra Qld 4551' [\[1807\]](#).

They have said that they are doing community consultation yet there are things they fail to tell the community of the Sunshine Coast. The other day the roller door of the watch house went up and the skip bins are already there. They are already doing it despite the fact that they say they are now consulting with the community. They want to talk about the environmental assessment impact. I encourage the 6,000 people who have signed a petition to put in a proposal against the youth jail in Caloundra. In the government's own documentation, at page 16, they say that if young people are released from custody from the Caloundra youth detention centre they will be transported from the centre to their local community. The local community will be the Sunshine Coast community.

Most youth crime that happens on the Sunshine Coast is committed by youth from outside the Sunshine Coast. This will be bad for the Sunshine Coast. It will be bad for business. We will see the number of break and enters increase. We will see the number of robberies increase. I am calling on the Labor state government to say 'no' to the youth jail in Caloundra. We do not want it on the Sunshine Coast. Send them out bush. Put them in Wacol.

I thank the member for Ninderry for standing up for the people of Caloundra because God knows that the member for Caloundra is not doing it. Youth crime will increase. The member for Caloundra needs to condemn his own government for this youth jail. We do not want it. We say 'no' to the youth jail in Caloundra.

(Time expired)

The House adjourned at 7.32 pm.

ATTENDANCE

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