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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 27 October 2021

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WEDNESDAY, 27 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.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Legislative Council, Anniversary of Abolition

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, at 8.37 pm on this day 100 years ago the Legislative Council adjourned for the last time.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr SPEAKER: I really did not expect that reaction. Having passed the Constitution Act Amendment Bill 1921 the previous day, the Legislative Council did not sit again until the bill became law in March 1922 when it was abolished. The abolition of the Legislative Council shaped Queensland's distinct political culture.

I advise members that the Parliamentary Service will be commemorating the abolition of the upper house at its 100th anniversary in March next year. Organised by the Parliamentary Library, the commemoration will include: an historical seminar co-hosted with the Royal Historical Society of Queensland on Saturday 19 March 2022; an interactive online biographical portal on the House website of the 195 members who served on the council; and a commemorative red wine, sourced locally, for purchase here at parliament.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, one cannot live on Speakers Gin alone. The centenary of the abolition of Queensland's Legislative Council is an important commemoration of a defining event in Queensland's history. I encourage all members to take part.

School Group Tour

 **Mr SPEAKER:** I wish to advise members that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from Greenbank State School in the electorate of Jordan.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Coronavirus, Update; Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.33 am): Overnight Queensland recorded zero new community cases, which is great news. We have one new case in hotel quarantine and 17 active cases. Yesterday 10,103 tests were done, which is also great news, but once again if people have any symptoms they should get tested. In the past 24 hours, 13,603 vaccines were delivered by Queensland Health, which now means 75.6 per cent of eligible Queenslanders have received one dose and 61.22 per cent are fully vaccinated.

Every day more Queenslanders are choosing to be vaccinated but we need more—many more—to get moving. Anyone who has not had their first dose of vaccine has just four days to get it. If you do not, you will run out of time to get your second dose and for it to reach full strength before Christmas.

The Christmas deadline is no accident. It is a time when families should be together. Make no mistake: travellers coming from interstate hotspots will bring COVID with them. Queensland has this chance to be vaccinated before the virus arrives, but our window of opportunity is closing fast.

Last Friday in Victoria 16 people died from COVID. That was in just one day. Yesterday in New South Wales and Victoria there were another five deaths. In total, in the four months since June, 747 people have tragically lost their lives in this current outbreak.

I say to those Queenslanders yet to get vaccinated: what do you think will happen to you when COVID comes? What if you escape it but you give it to someone who does not? What are you going to tell the nurses and doctors when you turn up sick and you have not bothered to get vaccinated?

Each day brings new developments in providing broader protection for our community. I am advised that overnight the US Food and Drug Administration approved Pfizer for children aged five to 11. The need for that was something I raised in this House some time ago.

We can barely throw a rock without hitting a place where you can get vaccinated. Pharmacies, GP clinics, mass vaccination hubs and convention centres, theme parks, surf lifesaving clubs and mobile clinics operate right across our state. Today, a door-to-door, street-to-street program is starting in Cherbourg, and I thank the minister for visiting there. A pop-up clinic will operate at the Let's Go caravanning expo at Brisbane's RNA showgrounds this weekend.

If you are sitting at home on Sunday afternoon and you or your family are not vaccinated, get up, go out and get it done. I have stopped asking; now I am telling you: go and get vaccinated.

Legislative Council, Anniversary of Abolition

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.36 am): Mr Speaker, as you have mentioned, today marks a significant milestone. One hundred years ago, on 27 October 1921, Queensland's Legislative Council sat for the last time. Labor premiers considered it a handbrake on democracy because its members were not elected. They were wealthy landed gentry, almost exclusively born in England. In fact, many never left England and never deigned to sit in the lavish red chamber at the other end of this House.

The Legislative Council saw its role as being one of obstruction and it scuttled more than 800 bills. Even the *Moreton Bay Courier* called for its abolition saying, 'It's a contemptible instrument of bad government.'

It took the Ryan and Theodore governments to install a sufficient number of members into the Legislative Council simply to get rid of it. Those members, known as the 'suicide squad', were there only to achieve its abolition. I think I can feel a Netflix series coming on.

Mr SPEAKER: I was going to say something, Premier, but I will not.

Ms PALASZCZUK: At 8.37 pm on 27 October 1921, Queensland's upper house rose for the very last time. Let us just think about that history.

One of the many things that makes Queensland different is our unicameral, or single-chamber, parliament. The lack of an upper house was often cited as a reason for the excesses of the Joh years and it took another Labor Premier to fix it. Acting on Tony Fitzgerald's advice, Wayne Goss introduced the committee system that has served us so well.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: With excellent committee chairs.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Calm down!

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I give talks to students all the time and they never get that excited about committees.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We only have to look at the passage of the voluntary assisted dying legislation to see how well our committees can operate. Bipartisan, thorough and inclusive, the Health and Environment Committee took 11,000 submissions giving everyday Queenslanders, not just a select few, a real say on really significant, important and personal legislation. For a century, Queensland has prospered and our democracy strengthened because of this major reform led by a Labor government and backed also by the local paper.

2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Organising Committee

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.40 am): Later today I will introduce a bill paving the way for the formation of an organising committee for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This is another historic step towards bringing the world's biggest event

to Queensland. One of the reasons our state will host these games is the cooperation shown by all levels of government. Preparing this legislation has been no different. All our partners have been consulted and their views considered. All of us want the same thing: a games that Queensland and Australia can be proud of.

The Organising Committee for the Olympic Games, OCOG, will be responsible for the delivery of the games themselves, including the sports program, accommodation for athletes and officials and cultural and sporting events such as the torch relay and the opening ceremony. I am pleased to advise that the International Olympic Committee has endorsed these arrangements.

I received a letter from the IOC President, Thomas Bach, welcoming changes to my cabinet in preparation for the games. He said—

I am convinced that with your team you will prepare for a fantastic and memorable Olympic Games.

And we will. Since the beginning of this process I have said that I want every Queenslanders to share the pride of hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games. These games belong to all of us.

The 11 years between now and 2032 will go quickly. We are wasting no time, last week announcing the manufacture in Maryborough of trains needed in time for the Olympics. The formation of OCOG is another step towards delivering the games. Queensland's golden age is underway.

War Widows Day

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.41 am): 19 October was the birthdate of Jessie Vasey, who in 1947 started the first branch of what is now Australian War Widows Queensland. Mrs Vasey worked to ensure that war widows were recognised by governments in Australia and given the financial support and services they needed. From next year, her birthday will be marked every year in Queensland as War Widows Day. I am proud to say that we are the first state to set an annual day to acknowledge the widows and widowers of Defence Force personnel. Australian War Widows is a great organisation, led in Queensland by President Jenny Gregory. It exists to empower, support, inspire and celebrate war widows, carers and families affected by defence services.

Next year will be the 75th anniversary of the first Queensland branch. It was my pleasure to accept Jenny's suggestion to celebrate those 75 years by choosing 19 October 2022 to be the first annual War Widows Day. I know I am supported in that by the Attorney-General and Minister for Women and by my assistant minister for veterans affairs. The announcement was warmly welcomed at a lunch on Jessie Vasey's birthday in the presence of His Excellency the Governor, who is the organisation's patron, and the Attorney-General, who represented the government at this very significant event.

We have days like Anzac Day and Remembrance Day to honour those who have served and fallen, but to borrow a quote from years gone by, as a society we are also obliged to bring justice to the orphan and to plead the widow's cause. The annual War Widows Day on 19 October will help us all do that.

South East Queensland City Deal

 **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 remains committed to negotiating and signing a South East Queensland City Deal, but the Morrison government's current proposal includes less investment and fewer projects for South-East Queensland, and the Morrison government expects Queensland taxpayers to pay most of the money back through a GST clawback. This means that when the Morrison government announces money for these projects it deducts money from Queensland's future GST allocation in return, making the deal practically worthless to the state. Queensland taxpayers are left to foot most of the bill. That means all of Queensland gets less money to fund hospitals, schools, doctors and nurses, just so the Morrison government can make announcements in the south-east.

We have made our position very clear since the beginning: we will not support a deal that affects our GST allocation. Until they are willing to commit new federal funding, rather than Queensland funds that they will subtract from our GST allocation, it is clear that they are not serious about securing a city deal. This year alone the Morrison government has crossed out more than \$400 million of projects from the South East Queensland City Deal. Projects cut include the ADaPT Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct on the Gold Coast, the Maroochydore Convention Centre on the Sunshine Coast, The Mill at Moreton Bay and the Wellcamp Entertainment Precinct in Toowoomba.

Their new proposed city deal will deliver less funding per capita than any other city deal in Australia. The new city deal specifically excludes the Gold Coast. I can advise the House that the Palaszczuk government is very strongly of the view that the Gold Coast is part of South-East Queensland, especially given that it is the most south-east part of South-East Queensland.

Most city deals in other parts of the country deliver over \$1,500 per person, but for the South-East Queensland deal—this is the fastest growing region in Australia right now—the Morrison government has proposed just \$400 per person. The Morrison government demanded that we sign this deal without any consultation with the community just so they could get it done before the election, but I have said all along that we would not sign without consulting the community and we would not sign a deal that was bad for Queensland.

We have now commenced targeted consultation. We will ask industry whether they think the deal is good value for the region and whether they think it is fair for the Commonwealth to claw back 80 per cent of their contribution through GST—and we will ask them whether they think the Gold Coast is part of South-East Queensland. I am confident that once Queensland stakeholders see the Morrison government's proposal and understand the meagre contribution proposed, they will understand our concerns. I urge the Morrison government to join us in engaging meaningfully with community and civic leaders and industry to agree on the best deal possible for South-East Queensland.

Exports

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.47 am): Queensland's focus on being an outward-looking, trade focused state has never been more important than as we emerge from COVID-19. Our strong health response means that we have not just weathered the storm but have come out of the pandemic stronger than when we went into it. It is a position that is the envy of many other economies, both domestically and internationally.

As the world opens up, our government is determined to ensure that Queensland maintains and extends our competitive advantage. Queensland businesses that want to sell to the world are critical to our economic recovery and growth in our regions. Nearly 7½ thousand exporters, or about 40 per cent of our state's total, are based in regional Queensland. Our exporters have risen to the challenge of COVID-19 by diversifying into new markets. They are developing new products and strengthening relationships with customers in some of the toughest of times.

In the past financial year, exports to four of our largest and nearest export markets—India, Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand—all rose by a combined \$464 million. In the same period, our exports of copper rose by \$425 million, or 23 per cent, in value, reflecting increased demand for our minerals, with exports of zinc and lead also up. This is further evidence of how highly the world values Queensland's products and services.

To recognise the excellence of our exporters, I was able to join the Premier for the Premier of Queensland's Export Awards recently. From 160 applications, 36 companies across 13 categories were selected by judges as finalists. That is more applications than any other state and territory, showing just how much export means to Queensland businesses.

Our Exporter of the Year is Next Level Racing from Southport. Next Level designs and manufactures racing simulators and flight simulators. Among their customers they count Bosch, Ford and the organisation that safely took mankind to the moon, NASA. Next Level Racing exports to 50 countries. Next Level Racing is an example of the incredible diversity of products and services that Queensland exports.

The world is seeing what we have to offer right now through Expo 2020 Dubai. Queensland is showcasing its future focused opportunities to a global audience at the world expo which started on 1 October after a long delay due to COVID-19. Queensland is part of the Australian pavilion at this amazing event. Of course, the Brisbane 2032 Olympics will be our centrepiece, but we will also be highlighting our world-class capabilities in emerging global sectors such as renewable energy and mobility solutions. Business leaders and decision-makers from around the globe will be present and will see Queensland on display.

The single best way to protect our state's exporters, regional economies and Queensland jobs right now is for as many Queenslanders as possible to get vaccinated as quickly as possible. Our message to Queenslanders is this: do not hesitate; vaccinate.

Interruption.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Comments by Member for Mermaid Beach

 **Mr SPEAKER:** It has come to my attention that last night during the adjournment debate the member for Mermaid Beach made comments which would be deemed unparliamentary. I would ask the member to immediately withdraw those comments.

Mr STEVENS: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Visitor to Public Gallery

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Speaking of unparliamentary language, we have Robert Schwarten—a former leader of the House, minister and member for Rockhampton—in the gallery today. Against my better judgement, he is in the Speaker's Gallery.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Resumed from p. 3268.

Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.51 am): I wish former member Robbie Schwarten all the best. It is great to see you here.

On top of our successful Super Saturday school vaccination blitz, we are ramping up vaccinations in schools through other avenues. We want to make it as easy as possible for our young people, family, friends and staff to get vaccinated, particularly those in rural and remote Queensland. That is why we are bringing the vaccine to school communities throughout Queensland.

I am pleased that our Far North Queensland state schools are working with the Pharmacy Guild of Queensland to administer jabs during school hours. So far, eight Far North Queensland state schools have teamed up with their local pharmacy and health services to vaccinate students, the school community and staff during school time. The first cab off the rank was Mareeba State High in the electorate of Cook where Wholelife Pharmacy administered vaccines to students and staff.

The Tagai State College Thursday Island secondary campus in Cook has teamed up with the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service to administer the vaccine at the school, with 73 students getting their first dose at the clinic. The clinic is up and running again this week. Babinda State School, Malanda State High School and Tully State High School in the electorate of Hill have partnered with local pharmacies to deliver the vaccine.

We have also trialled vaccine hubs during a school's busiest period, their pick-up time. Four schools hosted vaccination hubs last Friday from 3 pm to 5 pm. They included: Kelvin Grove State College, in my own electorate; Aldridge State High School, in the Maryborough electorate; Bray Park State High School, in the Pine Rivers electorate; and Cleveland District State High School, in the electorate of Oodgeroo. I am pleased to report that more than 100 vaccines were administered during this two-hour time frame, with the majority getting their first dose. We also note the reports that are coming out of the US in relation to vaccinating 5- to 11-year-old children. We are keeping a very close eye on this and we will do whatever we can to continue to support and plan vaccination efforts in our schools.

I am sure the whole parliament will join with me in taking this opportunity to wish all of our Queensland year 12 students the best of luck with their external exams which kicked off last Friday. Around 38,000 students will sit at least one exam over the next few weeks. My advice is study hard, do your best, but do not forget to get a good night sleep. Good luck to all!

Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, Health Services

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.53 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to supporting First Nations peoples achieve better health outcomes across the state. Yesterday, I had the pleasure of co-launching Making Tracks Together,

Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equity framework, with Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council Chairperson, Mr Matthew Cooke, and representatives from the First Nations health sector.

I thank the more than 490 people from across Queensland, both in the health system and community, who committed to the process of co-design and engagement to develop the framework. This process is a demonstration of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to reframing our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Queensland is leading the way in the design and delivery of First Nations healthcare services, which has largely been enabled by the amendments made to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 earlier this year. Every hospital and health service is now required to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations to design and deliver local healthcare services. Because of this nation-first change, I can announce that there are currently 23 First Nations board members sitting across all 16 of our hospital and health service boards. Every hospital and health service is also required to deliver their First Nations health equity strategies by April 2022.

The Making Tracks Together health equity framework will inform these strategies that will facilitate local solutions developed between HHSs and local First Nations peoples. We know the life expectancy of First Nations peoples is almost 10 years less than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples so every change we implement must close the life expectancy gap and work to reduce inequality. That is why the Palaszczuk government is focused on placing First Nations voices at the centre of their own health care and prioritising their needs. This will ensure our healthcare system is delivering culturally responsive, adaptive, equitable and appropriate care, irrespective of where any Queenslanders is from or the care they seek. Our First Nations Queenslanders deserve the very best possible health care, and that is what we are seeking to deliver.

Off the back of this co-launch yesterday, I reiterate the importance of our First Nations people getting the COVID vaccine. I am not just talking about in our remote communities. The majority of our First Nations people live in South-East Queensland. We call on all First Nations people to come forward and get vaccinated to protect themselves and their loved ones.

I am also calling on the Commonwealth to do more to partner with us to get the vaccine into these communities. The agreement from the beginning was that the Commonwealth would take responsibility for the rollout of the vaccine to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is Queenslanders and the Queensland government that are doing this work, along with our amazing First Nations people's organisations such as the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council. We cannot do this alone. We need to ensure that we get these vaccination rates up to protect our communities. The Commonwealth needs to be stepping up. They need to be putting in more resources. They need to be putting in more money. They need to stop standing up and harping on about our vaccination rates when quite honestly that is the only contribution they are making to the vaccination rollout right now.

Railways, Manufacturing; Cross River Rail



Hon. MC BAILEY (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.57 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government's historic investment in Queensland trains will benefit the whole state. Building 65 trains in Maryborough has turned the city around—from ghost town, to boom town. It is not the only place winning big in terms of our record \$7.1 billion investment.

Today I can announce that the new Queensland train building program will support jobs across South-East Queensland, in construction, maintenance and operations. As part of the Palaszczuk Labor government's commitment to make trains in Queensland, we will also be building new maintenance and support bases on the Gold Coast and in the Moreton Bay region. Not only does making trains in Queensland create jobs in the Wide Bay region, in the electorates of the members for Maryborough and Hervey Bay, it supports workers in the south-east and supply chain jobs in Central Queensland—trains made by Queenslanders, for Queenslanders, supporting Queensland manufacturing jobs.

We will need these trains as South-East Queensland's population booms due to our world-leading response to the COVID pandemic and the growth that comes with it. We will need them for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. For growth and games, we are sending in the trains. The trains also support the transformational Cross River Rail line.

Today I can update the House on another exciting milestone on the Cross River Rail project. The first sections of track have been laid for the expansion of the Mayne yard train depot, being delivered as part of Cross River Rail. Once complete, this will allow 17 additional six-car trains to be stabled at the site, increasing capacity on the network.

I was down the track from there last week at Cross River Rail's northern portal with the member for Cooper, who joined me to see the incredible progress being made. From what looked like a pile of dirt in January, it is now forming as the runway for our final take-off in the year of tunnelling, as tunnel-boring machines Else and Merle carve their way out to see sunlight towards the end of this year. I can report that we are now just weeks away from the project's last breakthrough—well ahead of schedule.

Cross River Rail is supporting 7,700 jobs—built and 100 per cent funded by this government after it was cut by those opposite. The Palaszczuk Labor government gets things done! We get things done. We are committed to driving our economic recovery plan through record infrastructure investments which include the Cross River Rail project and by supporting local manufacturing jobs, not by sending them overseas. We are supporting Queensland workers in manufacturing as part of our Queensland train building program. We are proud of it and we will keep at it.

Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.00 am): Protecting and safeguarding all Queenslanders from COVID-19 has been and will continue to be an immediate priority for our government whether or not English is their first language and irrespective of their cultural or religious background. As Minister for Multicultural Affairs, my urgent message to people from all backgrounds is to get vaccinated without delay.

As a government, we are always looking to do more to remove the real and perceived barriers some people face in our community. This includes dispelling myths causing vaccine hesitancy or accessibility issues. Queensland is not a homogenous state; Queensland is of course a multicultural state. We know our diverse communities sometimes need a different or unique approach or initiative to serve their needs. That is why our government has been working so closely with community leaders to encourage vaccinations to protect ourselves, our loved ones and our community.

I was delighted to join the Deputy Premier and Deputy Chief Health Officer, Dr Lynne McKinlay, in a multicultural community leaders online meeting, hosted last night by Multicultural Australia. About 60 leaders were online as we worked together on how to boost vaccination rates. One of the first things we acknowledged was the amazing voluntary work done by multicultural community leaders to so successfully promote important COVID-19 messaging in culturally accessible ways across Queensland. We greatly appreciate these efforts and acknowledge the way the leaders have stepped up to protect the safety of their communities.

As the vaccination urgency grows, we are again calling on community leaders to draw on their considerable expertise, experience and wisdom for creative ways to reach all Queenslanders with the important messaging about the urgent need to vaccinate and to identify barriers that need to be overcome. Just as we have relied on the advice from mayors about the issues impacting vaccination uptake in certain regional areas, so too we have asked for our multicultural leaders' advice on issues impacting their communities. We received a number of valuable suggestions from our leaders at the meeting and all will be considered.

We are at the crucial juncture in our fight against COVID and the delta variant. The critical date of 17 December is looming large for opening our borders, or earlier if we reach that 80 per cent target. We want all our multicultural communities to be fully informed about the risks of not being vaccinated once our borders are open. We want every Queenslanders to feel confident to get vaccinated. We know our multicultural leaders hold the faith and confidence of their communities. The Palaszczuk government will continue to work hand in hand with our community leaders and we will continue to value their unique insights into how to address vaccination across Queensland.

Cairns Convention Centre

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (10.03 am): Without starting a game of bingo, I have a few numbers from a project that, Mr Speaker, you know well—the Cairns Convention Centre refurbishment and expansion. Get your pens ready: 50—that is the number of apprentices who have been inducted on site already; 100—that is the number of trade packages awarded; and here is a really great number—16,152. That is the number of doses of COVID-19 vaccine administered in the beautifully refurbished convention centre between September and 10 October.

When the convention centre is not putting backsides in seats for concerts and conferences, the centre is helping put jobs in the arms of Queenslanders as a mass vaccination hub. It is just another major community win from our \$176 million investment into the Far North. The mass vaccination hub

reopened last week, and we want to see as many Cairns locals through the doors as possible because, when Queensland's borders reopen on 17 December, the last thing tourism operators can afford is an outbreak of delta in the Far North. The message for your family, friends and workmates is: now is the time to get vaccinated in Cairns.

Speaking of family, it is very much a family affair on the convention centre expansions works with our 100th trade package awarded to a local company called the J Bros—a family business run by eight brothers. There is John, Joshua, Justus, Jehosh, Jeremiah, James, Jotham and Joram—the J Bros. Yes, families are the foundation of our society, but this family is literally pouring the foundations of the Cairns Convention Centre expansion. The breathtaking views that we will see from the new mezzanine and the sky terrace will be largely thanks to the J Bros.

There is no doubt the Palaszczuk government's \$176 million investment is delivering for the Cairns community. We have created 641 local construction jobs and engaged 54 local businesses. We are creating a legacy of qualified tradies and successful businesses in the Far North. As I mentioned, there are 50 apprentices, with more than 22,000 training hours on site. We met our 50th apprentice, Tim, just a couple of weeks ago. Tim tells me that working on the Cairns Convention Centre expansion is a pretty big deal. As it turns out, Tim is an apprentice for none other than the J Bros. I can confirm that Tim has not asked to change his name to Jim!

Mr SPEAKER: Bingo is correct!

Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.06 am): The ministerial portfolio of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships is responsible for three of the most vulnerable population groups in our society, and this is heightened in the current climate of a global pandemic.

Delta is on our doorstep, and there are none more vulnerable than elders in our community, people with disability or chronic illness and co-morbidities, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We know that these three cohorts are at greater risk of getting very sick if they catch COVID-19. That is why the Palaszczuk government is actively engaging to ensure they are protected.

I am happy to report that our Queensland seniors are leading the way when it comes to protecting themselves and their communities. Older Queenslanders have resoundingly answered the call for vaccination. At least 94 per cent of Queenslanders aged 70 years and over have had their first COVID vaccination and 81 per cent are fully vaccinated. Older Queenslanders understand the importance of getting vaccinated to stay safe and connected to their family and community, and to be able to get back to doing the things they enjoy.

Also rising to the challenge are Queenslanders living with disability. Around 82 per cent of people with disability who utilise accommodation support and respite services have now had at least one dose of vaccination. We will continue to work with disability clients, service providers and families to support them to be fully vaccinated. We have also increased access and mobility at a number of vaccination clinics for people with disability, their families, carers and the disability workforce, with locations advertised online.

The Palaszczuk government has also been persistent in urging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to get their COVID-19 vaccine. While vaccination uptake has been strong among First Nations people in Brisbane and the south-east, the government is concerned about the lower uptake in regional and remote areas. We know some of our isolated Indigenous communities are among the nation's most vulnerable to an outbreak of the delta strain.

We are deeply concerned about the potential impact if the virus were to take hold among the chronically ill and elderly in these towns and communities. Even more worrying is the fact that the First Nations cohort aged 20 to 29 currently have the lowest vaccination rate of any in the state. Statewide figures show that 47.9 per cent of First Nations people have had their first dose, with 36.2 per cent having had their second dose.

Thankfully, to date there have been zero cases of community transmission in any of the discrete communities, but now is the time for everyone to make the choice and get vaccinated. In some communities, teams of health workers have been going door to door to encourage residents to get the

job, and ministerial and government champions have been out visiting their communities to support the rollout effort. I thank those ministers who changed their diaries at the last minute last week to undertake that important work.

The Make the Choice COVID-19 vaccine campaign is being rolled out, and the Chief Health Officer and I have been in regular contact with the mayors of remote communities for those discussions. It has been great to see many of them lead the way in getting the job and promoting the vaccine rollout in their communities. I very much acknowledge the mayors and elders in communities for their leadership. The time is now to get vaccinated before the wet season and before Queensland begins to open up to interstate and international travellers. I implore all members of this House to reach out to the First Nations leaders in their electorates to discuss how, as members of parliament, they can assist with the much needed positive messaging into their electorates around vaccination. The more Queenslanders who are vaccinated, the safer our families and communities will be.

Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (10.10 am): The Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to getting every eligible Queenslanders vaccinated against COVID-19. We know this is the best thing we can do to reunite families, support our economy and, most importantly, keep people safe. Getting vaccinated is particularly important for young Queenslanders. As the Minister for Youth Affairs I have been out across Queensland talking to young people about how important it is that they come forward. We have seen a really strong vaccination uptake amongst high school students, with 55.21 per cent of 16- to 19-year-olds now having had their first dose. That is an increase of 5.89 per cent since we started our vaxathon last week, and I want to say thank you to all of the students who have taken the time to go out and get vaccinated.

Schoolies is coming up in less than a month. We are strongly encouraging all school leavers to get their first vaccination this week if they have not already. Getting vaccinated this week means you will be able to get your second dose in time to celebrate the end of school with your mates. We will continue to work through our Safer Schoolies Response alongside accommodation providers and third parties like schoolies.com to continue this push.

Universities are also stepping up to the plate. On Friday I was at one of Queensland Health's pop-up vaccination clinics just outside the parliament here where QUT students were getting vaccinated on their way to class. In fact, it is back out there today. This is a great initiative because we know that we need to meet young people where they are. I am pleased to advise that almost all Queensland universities are offering vaccinations to students on campus, whether that be through Queensland Health vaccination hubs like at JCU Smithfield, CQU Gladstone, through university health services offering dedicated clinics at Griffith or UQ, or through the hardworking medical staff in university medical centres who provide really important mental and physical health support on campus year-round. It is great to see everyone playing their part.

Some young Queenslanders may feel invincible and like this is not a priority, but we have seen very clearly that this virus can impact anyone. Just yesterday we heard from the Premier about the unvaccinated 17-year-old in my community on the Gold Coast, so my message to young Queenslanders is simple: get vaccinated. It is safe, effective and easy. Get vaccinated so you can travel. Get vaccinated so you can enjoy schoolies. Get vaccinated to look after yourself, your family and your loved ones.

Resources Industry

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.12 am): One of Queensland's key competitive attributes as a global resource investment destination is our skilled workforce. That does not just happen by chance: it happens because of planning and investment by government and industry in the skill sector that we need well into the future. I am pleased to announce the latest example of that right here this morning—a three-year investment by Mitsubishi Development in digital technology education at the University of Queensland.

Mitsubishi will fund the new position of future mining systems initiative director at UQ to develop a new digital technologies curriculum for mining engineering students. This will see future mining engineering graduates excel in fields like automation, data analytics and robotics. Mitsubishi and UQ are confident that these skills and this knowledge will help graduates drive new operational efficiencies

and emissions reductions at mine sites. As a former principal, I was very pleased to hear that this partnership will also support UQ's engagement with secondary students, highlighting the career opportunities available in the resources sector.

This is about Queensland's future—future skills, future jobs and future resources investment across the state and growing our regional economies. The resources sector is transforming, and as the resources sector market transforms we need to move with it. As resources become more difficult to access, technology and techniques adapt. This will also provide more opportunities for our world-class mining equipment, technology and services sector. We must ensure we continue to invest in our people and their skills and knowledge, as Mitsubishi and UQ are doing with this latest initiative.

This builds on existing programs such as the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy, a 16-year partnership between the Queensland government and the Queensland Resources Council. The academy offers programs for teachers and students from years 7 to 12 in more than 80 schools. It provides a talent pipeline of employees into the resources sector and supports other STEM industries. The Palaszczuk government is working with the university sector to foster innovation and identify and address current and potential future skills shortages.

Queensland's resources sector employs about 80,000 people and has maintained that performance for the past year despite the pandemic. The resources sector has been an employer of choice for Queenslanders for decades. Thanks to continuing investment from government, industry and the university sector it will continue to offer secure well-paid jobs and rewarding careers well into the future.

MOTION

Member for Burleigh, Finding of Contempt



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.15 am) by leave, without notice: I move—

That this House—

1. notes the Ethics Committee Report No. 208, tabled in the House on 26 October 2021;
2. finds the member for Burleigh in contempt for disclosing proceedings of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee without authorisation in a statement of reservation to Report No. 5 of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee tabled on 8 March 2021, and in statements made during debate in the House on 12 May 2021;
3. notes the member for Burleigh's apology given in the House on 26 October 2021;
4. determines under section 38 (Decisions on contempt) of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 that the member for Burleigh's conduct be now dealt with by this House as a contempt; and
5. accepts the recommendation of Ethics Committee Report No. 208 that the member for Burleigh's apology for his conduct is adequate, and the appropriate and final penalty in accordance with section 39—Assembly's power to deal with contempt—of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Queensland Building and Construction Commission



Mr MANDER (Everton—LNP) (10.17 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House notes the widespread concern about the performance of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, including:

- (a) potential conflicts of interest of board members;
- (b) allegations of inappropriate intervention in the commission's affairs;
- (c) the resignation of respected and experienced officers from the commission;
- (d) inconsistent approaches to licensing builders in relation to the fit and proper person test; and
- (e) targeted campaigns against non-unionised builders

and calls on the government to launch an inquiry into the QBCC in the terms outlined by the member for Everton in the Legislative Assembly on 26 October 2021.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, question time will conclude today at 11.17 am.

Caboolture Hospital

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.17 am): My question is to the Minister for Health. It has been a fortnight since a review was announced into the Mackay hospital, yet details and how long it will run remain unclear. In contrast, the terms of reference for the six-week Caboolture Hospital review were finalised within two days. Does the minister have confidence that all Caboolture patients will get the voice they deserve?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. The answer is yes.

Caboolture Hospital

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Minister for Health. Jody is a patient at Caboolture who is still suffering adverse outcomes eight months after the removal of his appendix. This morning Jody told me that, despite being promised several times, no meeting was ever arranged and now the review has been finalised. Given that Jody's voice was not heard, how can the minister be the one to lead Queensland out of the health crisis?

Mrs D'ATH: I am not privy to what complaints were brought forward in relation to the review. I was advised that anyone who came forward with any complaints as part of the review—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left, the minister is being responsive to the question as asked. You will cease your interjections.

Mrs D'ATH: This independent review was conducted by the highly respected surgeon Dr Jim Sweeney, and I thank him for his time and efforts in relation to that. I understand he provided his report to the board chair on Monday and to the director-general.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: If the Leader of the Opposition has evidence that someone's complaint was not considered as part of that review—evidence that that complaint was not part—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. Member for Cairns, you may be trying to assist but you are warned under the standing orders.

Mrs D'ATH: If the Leader of the Opposition has evidence that a complaint that was made was not considered by the reviewer, then I am happy for that to be referred to my office and I will refer that to the board chair and the reviewer as well.

Central Queensland, Coronavirus Vaccination

Mr O'ROURKE: My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier update the House on the vaccination rollout in Central Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Rockhampton for that very sensible question because on this side of the House we are concerned about getting people vaccinated. It is urgent, with four days to go.

Mrs Frecklington: There's vaccine hesitancy for a reason.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I hear the member for Nanango interjecting. The best thing she can do is stand up in her community and tell them to get vaccinated—and do it today. Do it today. I would like to acknowledge the former member for Rockhampton in the gallery today. It is lovely to have him with us.

I take this opportunity to commend the 562 people who turned up at Blackwater State School and Gracemere to get vaccinated during our super Saturday vaccination blitz on the weekend, but we know we must do better. In good news, in a week we have seen more than a three per cent increase in the number of people getting vaccinated in the Central Queensland region. In Central Queensland, it has gone from 62.9 per cent single dose to 66.6 per cent, and that is great. It is good to see the members for Keppel and Rockhampton out there urging Queenslanders to get vaccinated. In that region though, there are 37,000 people who still need to get vaccinated so I urge everyone to get vaccinated. Like I said, I am not asking now; I am telling people to go and get vaccinated.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: On that side, it is crickets.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, you know what is coming. You are warned under the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We hear crickets on that side when it comes to vaccination. There appear to be some senators out there who do not seem to be supporting vaccination. Senator Gerard Rennick, if that is his name—I have not really heard of him much—

A government member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right: who? He said in a Facebook post 'Leave our kids alone!' That is what he is saying. He said—

Given no children have died from Covid in Australia there is no reason to be jabbing them with a vaccine.

That is the anti-vaccine sentiment from that side of the House. They are completely and utterly divided.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Theodore will cease his interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The best thing today we can see from the Leader of the Opposition is to stand up in this House and tell Queenslanders to go and get vaccinated.

(Time expired)

Ms Bates: Mr Speaker—

Ms PALASZCZUK: And the member for Mudgeeraba as well, Mr Speaker.

Ms Bates: I have been doing that, Premier. I have been doing it every day, Premier.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my right. Member for Mudgeeraba, it would help the House if you did not make comments whilst rising to seek the call for a question.

Mackay Base Hospital

Ms BATES: My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the minister's statement after yesterday's question time that there is no doctor at Mackay Hospital who has reprimands on their clinical registration. The opposition can reveal that public records show this is incorrect and a doctor with reprimands is still operating in Mackay. Given this revelation, how can the minister be the one to lead Queensland out of the health crisis?

Mrs D'ATH: In fact I can advise the House that further to the advice that the HHS gave me yesterday—

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: If they want to listen—further to the advice, because the advice was given on the basis that they were—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Nanango, you are warned under the standing orders. I have been pretty clear that if a minister is responding to the question as asked the House will hear that answer. As I can hear it, the minister is providing exactly that.

Mrs D'ATH: The advice I was given at the time was that they believed the question may have related to the obstetrics and gynaecology services.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: If the Leader of the Opposition would like to listen—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mudgeeraba and Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

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

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Treasurer will cease his interjections.

Mrs D'ATH: I was advised yesterday at the end of question time that there were none based on what they thought the query was at the time. I have been advised that further searches were performed by the Mackay HHS. Two doctors have been identified with reprimands. These reprimands were issued prior to employment at Mackay and were disclosed during recruitment selection processes. I say that because, if the Leader of the Opposition or the member for Mudgeeraba—

Ms Bates interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: If they would like to stand up and hand on heart guarantee there was not one doctor working across the entire Queensland health system in every single hospital during their term of government with a reprimand on their record—not one—I would like to hear that from the Leader of the Opposition. When they come in here throwing stones—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will cease his interjections.

Mrs D'ATH: Will the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mudgeeraba stand up and say that the entire time they were in government there would not have been one doctor working in one hospital across the entire system with a reprimand on their record? I would welcome hearing that from them.

Agriculture Industry

Mr MADDEN: My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier update the House on how the Palaszczuk government's support for the agricultural industry is supporting our economic recovery?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Ipswich West. I also thank the member for Ipswich West for urging his community to get vaccinated. It is wonderful to see that the people in Ipswich are getting vaccinated. In fact they have increased from 70 per cent to 73.2 per cent on vaccination levels. Well done to the members who are covering that area. It was good to see the mayor came out and backed it as well, but there are crickets over there when it comes to vaccination.

Let me get back to the question. The question was about agriculture and supporting our economic recovery. What we do know is that because we have had a strong health response our economy has been able to recover. It has been just over a year since we visited Marto's Mangoes in Bowen. They were a proud recipient of one of our Rural Economic Development grants, and they were able to update their machinery which meant they were able to put more staff on and export to more countries around the world. I am pleased to say that we are going to continue these grants, and today I am pleased to announce that the next round of \$3.3 million will be going out to benefit our—

A government member:—more jobs.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right—to support more jobs in our regions. On this side of the House we support the regions and we support the regions getting vaccinated. Last time we supported more than 30 projects which created more than 1,800 jobs, and there are some matched partnerships. I want to go through a few of those. They are businesses like Kialla foods on the Darling Downs, which saw demand for their grain products jump 300 per cent during the pandemic last year; Western Game meat processing in Longreach, who have just completed their expansion supporting 48 jobs, direct and indirect; and I will say that that member does support vaccinations—

Mr Millar interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: He has been a strong supporter of vaccinations, unlike some of the others on that side. There is also Macadamias Australia in Bundaberg in the member for Bundaberg's electorate, which installed new machinery for processing which created 76 jobs; Pohlman's nursery at Gatton with a new state-of-the-art greenhouse, 40 jobs; and, like I said, Marto's Mangoes contributed 60 jobs. It is absolutely fantastic to see that.

We are not going to continue to have this strong economic recovery if our public does not get vaccinated. There are four days to go and every single member in this House should be categorically standing up supporting vaccinations. We will continue to keep Queenslanders safe and allow families to be reunited in time for Christmas.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (10.31 am): Mr Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. The health minister has given a response to the previous question noting that the information she gave the House yesterday was factually incorrect. The health minister has had 24 hours to correct the record in the House with ministerial statements this morning and deliberately chose not to until questioned by the opposition. I believe the minister has deliberately withheld the information from the House and I will be writing to you, Mr Speaker, about the minister deliberately misleading the House until she got caught out by the opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: As always, member for Kawana, I will consider such correspondence as I receive it and I will give due consideration to that correspondence.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Resumed from p. 3277.

Hospitals, Access

 **Mr JANETZKI:** My question is to the Minister for Health. Statewide ambulance ramping is at record highs at 41 per cent. At some hospitals nearly two-thirds of ambulances are ramped on arrival. With record highs like these, how can the minister be the one to lead Queensland out of the health crisis?

Mrs D'ATH: At least I am a minister who actually acknowledges that across the entire country there is pressure on every single health system, who does not put their head in the sand playing politics. This is just a Queensland problem? This is an anomaly for Queensland. Those on the opposite side want to play politics with the health system by claiming that it is Queensland and Queensland alone that is having a problem. They want to ignore the fact that their own colleagues interstate signed a letter, along with me, to the Commonwealth saying we need immediate and urgent support of our—

Mr Powell interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: Every single health system in this country, including those that do not have major outbreaks right now, is experiencing major ramping and pressures on its emergency department and their bed capacity. Many of them are actually making decisions right now about load sharing their elective surgery in preparation for the COVID cases they all know are going to come. We all know COVID cases are going to come—those of us on this side do.

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Toowoomba North, members will be addressed by their correct title. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mrs D'ATH: Those of us on this side are fighting so hard to get our vaccination rates up because we know what is coming. We know this virus is going to come to every one of our communities—every single community—including the communities of those members on the other side. Why are they not talking about what is going to happen as far as the pressures on the health system are concerned if people are not vaccinated at high rates?

Mr Janetzi interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: Why are they not asking their Commonwealth colleagues why they are not doing more to get vaccines into arms? The only thing we hear from federal members of parliament is harping and whingeing. They are not out there supporting the vaccine rollout. They are not encouraging people to get vaccinated. They are not worried about our First Nations people. They are not worried about our elderly people in aged-care centres. They could not even be bothered to vaccinate the aged-care workers, and the Commonwealth forced us to ensure we mandated aged care because they would not do it. They have such a dilemma in their own caucus about mandating vaccines they do not want to have that conversation. We know those on the other side are having that same conversation, 'We don't want to mandate vaccines. Let's not talk about mandating vaccines. We don't want to talk about that.' The Leader of the Opposition would do anything to avoid that.

(Time expired)

Superyacht Industry

Ms RICHARDS: My question is to the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the Palaszczuk government's plan to supercharge Queensland's superyacht industry and the economic opportunities that come with that, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Redlands for her question and let me also acknowledge the great work of the member for Cairns as our superyacht champion. They both know that this government will take every opportunity to create jobs for Queenslanders, including in the superyacht industry, because bringing more—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Dr MILES: We know that attracting more superyachts here will create jobs in tourism as well as supporting jobs in the shipbuilding and maintenance industries right from the Gold Coast north to Cairns. I am pleased to advise the House that we have achieved practical completion on the Gold Coast's largest superyacht berth, allowing us to now take superyachts up to 130 metres bringing their passengers and crew to the Gold Coast, allowing them to enjoy our beautiful Gold Coast as either a destination or a stopover. All of this investment into superyachts comes just in time for Queensland's newest superyacht.

That is right, Clive Palmer has shelled out \$40 million for a brand new superyacht. When he bought it, it was called *Bash*, but there is nothing bashful about it. It is a 56-metre vessel called *Bash*. It must be a great relief to the Leader of the Opposition to know this far out where the LNP executive will be spending their election night. Let's not forget his predecessor only found out where they would be toasting her defeat on election night. Now the question is: will he get an invite? We know the member for Nanango could not get an invite. The member for Broadwater was Clive's pick for leader, so maybe he is in with a chance. After crew, they can only fit 12 passengers, so they will need to arrange the deckchairs very, very carefully.

There are two sundecks on board as well as a bar and a VIP suite. That is where they will be able to spend their election night. They will even be able to soak their weary election day muscles in the onboard jacuzzi. There is an image we all needed: the member for Broadwater and Clive Palmer in a hot tub on the Brisbane River! I only have one piece of advice to the member for Broadwater: no matter what Clive says, pack your board shorts.

Mr SPEAKER: I wish I had a hot tub time machine. I would go back to the beginning of question time!

Elective Surgery, Waiting List

Dr ROWAN: My question is to the Minister for Health. There are a record 57,000 Queenslanders on the elective surgery waiting list, nearly double the number when Labor came to office. With record high elective surgery waiting lists, how can the minister be the one to lead Queensland out of the health crisis?

Mrs D'ATH: The member might want to go back to estimates and refer to the long wait list and how many people we cleared off the list left behind by the opposition. While those on the other side talk about people on waiting lists—we know that they spent millions of dollars on their advertising—

Mr Dick: Wait-time guarantee.

Mrs D'ATH: Their wait-time guarantee. It is absolutely true that they had fewer people waiting on the surgical waitlist, because you could not get into outpatients to get onto the surgical waitlist!

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, Minister.

Mrs D'ATH: This is a very serious issue. If those on the other side actually cared less about waiting lists and elective surgery, they would be doing everything possible to encourage people to get vaccinated. There will have to be load sharing when we have hundreds of cases, if not thousands, in our hospitals. That is what happens. That is what you have to plan for. That is what every state and territory plans for.

The other figure to note is the 111 people who have died in the past eight days in New South Wales and Victoria. Let us remember the 111 loved ones who died alone—not holding the hand of their husband, wife, daughter, son, mother or father—in a hospital bed with COVID. The only person to care for them is a health worker—putting their life at risk, holding the hand of and caring for someone dying

of COVID. There were 111 people in eight days in two states. We never hear the opposition talking about those people. They are nobodies to them. They could not care less. Not once have I heard them talking about the lives being lost because of COVID. They talk about the number of people who want to come back home, over the border and everything else. They never want to talk about the people who are dying from this disease.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker—

Mr Crisafulli: Those Queenslanders should come home.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I have just called the House to order. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection. We want to get Queenslanders home. They can get home much quicker if we get people vaccinated. The Leader of the Opposition can start by backing in 100 per cent mandatory vaccination for health workers, by making the member for Mudgeeraba stand up and back in 100 per cent mandatory vaccination for health workers—and our aged-care workers at that—and by condemning NPAQ for its legal challenge to overturn that decision. The Leader of the Opposition will do and say anything else. They want a distraction because they do not want to commit.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Thuringowa, you are warned under the standing orders. Do not look so shocked!

Net Zero Emissions

Mr McCALLUM: My question is of the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer please update the House on what steps the Palaszczuk government is taking to develop new industries and jobs as part of its commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, and is the Treasurer aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Bundamba for his question. As the member for Bundamba knows, particularly being a great champion for hydrogen and also renewable energy in his role as assistant minister, Queensland has long been Australia's energy powerhouse. We have been the backbone of the national energy market for many years. Now we are using Queensland's natural resources to take our national dominance to a global level.

Through our \$2 billion renewable energy and jobs fund, we are using our publicly owned companies to partner with the private sector to support the expansion of renewable energy as we drive towards our 50 per cent renewable energy target. We have a plan and we are delivering on that plan, and that is giving great confidence to the private sector to look to Queensland to invest and to create jobs in the energy of the future. The most recent example of this, of course, is the investment decision by Andrew Forrest and Fortescue Future Industries to build the largest electrolyser manufacturing plant in the world, in the great industrial city of Gladstone.

We are doing our bit in our drive to net zero emissions. That was until we saw Scott Morrison's plan yesterday. It was a plan with a capital 'P' but not much else. It did say something that drew my attention: choices, not mandates. Where have we heard that before? It is straight out of the state LNP playbook. That is where we have heard that before. That, of course, is their position on the mandatory vaccination of health workers in this state: choices, not mandates.

The state LNP is led by the anti-vaxxers in this state, and they have their champion. The Leader of the Opposition is the anti-vaxxer champion in this state, because on this issue he is weak. The Leader of the Opposition is the weakest opposition leader in recent history. We saw his glass jaw with the criticism yesterday, when he was screaming and yelling at the Premier—unable to control and discipline himself in the House. That is because he is led by people such as George Christensen and that disgraceful LNP senator for Queensland Senator Gerard Rennick, who is promoting anti-vax sentiment across the length and breadth of Queensland. Not one of those opposite will stand up against him. The person who is weakest of all is the Leader of the Opposition.

What did the Leader of the Opposition do yesterday after question time? He hid in his office. He would not face the media, because he could not answer the simple question: do you support the AHPPC's advice that health workers in this state should be mandatorily vaccinated? It is a simple question. Yes or no? The Leader of the Opposition hid in his office and would not come out from under his desk to answer the question. We can see the blood level rising now—

(Time expired)

Coronavirus, Border Restrictions

Mr McDONALD: My question is to the Premier. David is a resident of Lockyer who has been stuck over the border with his family for six weeks and was granted a day pass to drive home to help other family. David then had to drive back to New South Wales to await approval to permanently come home, which requires him to drive to Sydney, fly to Brisbane and then have the vehicle towed home. Will the Premier acknowledge that Queensland's exemption unit is broken?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I say to the member for Lockyer: the best thing Queenslanders can do is get vaccinated. We put in place the road map. If we reach those thresholds earlier, things will move earlier. To do that, Queenslanders need to get vaccinated. I urge the member for Lockyer to tell your community to get vaccinated.

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is safe and it is the best thing that Queenslanders can do.

Mr Mander: Heartless.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: I find the member for Everton's comments offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr MANDER: I withdraw.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That just shows that the opposition is treating vaccination as a complete and utter joke.

Mr Dick: Zero leadership. Weak leader.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right: zero leadership—weak leadership from the member for Broadwater. As I said, more Queenslanders will be vaccinated if every single member in this House is absolutely on message in telling Queenslanders to do the right thing because it is safe to do so—but no. We have misinformation being spread by members of the LNP—

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118(b). The member asked about his constituents and the exemptions unit in Queensland and border policy—not vaccinations. I ask that the Premier be brought back—

Ms Palaszczuk: So you don't want to talk about vaccinations?

Mr BLEIJIE: If you want to talk about vaccinations, talk about your lack of vaccination early on.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! Member for Kawana, your role as Manager of Opposition Business allows you some latitude on a number of things, but using that opportunity to attack the government is not one of them. You were already under a warning. You can leave the chamber for the remainder of question time.

Whereupon the honourable member for Kawana withdrew from the chamber at 10.48 am.

Mr SPEAKER: As to the point of order, Premier, it is valid in that there are a number of things that can be spoken about but the question did allude to those two areas in particular. I ask you to come back to the question as asked.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As everyone knows, there is an exemptions unit that is processing people as quickly as possible, but Queenslanders expect us to keep the borders closed until it is safe to open them when people are vaccinated. As I have said, and I will say it again: the best thing that people can do, including every single member of this House, is to get people vaccinated.

Coronavirus, Schools

Mr HUNT: My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Can the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's efforts to ensure our school communities are kept safe during this pandemic and advise if there are any alternative approaches?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for the question. It was fantastic to see Beerwah State High School in his electorate as one of the 116 schools that opened their gates for people to get vaccinated on Super Saturday. In fact, seven schools were opened on the Sunshine Coast—Nambour, Kawana,

Coolum, Chancellor State College, Maroochydore and Noosa. They were very successful, with the majority of people getting their first dose, so that was a really good outcome. We are also continuing to ensure that our schools are safe. I note that New South Wales and Victoria have opened up schools. Not long after opening those schools, between them they have had to close over 320 schools already because areas that had no COVID have had an outbreak such as Albury-Wodonga.

In comparison as an alternative approach, we have taken a safe and cautious plan to the people about opening the borders. When those opposite talk about stranded Queenslanders, I note the indignation and the manner in which the Leader of the Opposition channelled Campbell Newman in here yesterday about Queenslanders coming home. However, we have not heard one word from those opposite about the Queenslanders overseas who were promised to come home last Christmas and it is now nearly 12 months and they are still stuck overseas.

Isn't it funny how those opposite have such concern for those in this country but no concern whatsoever for a federal government which failed on supply of vaccinations? That is why we can spread vaccinations out now because we finally got the supply. Those opposite say nothing about those Queenslanders stranded overseas. They only ever talk about the ones interstate but not those overseas who were promised 12 months ago that they would be able to come home. Where is the indignation from the Leader of the Opposition in relation to those people?

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Burleigh!

Ms GRACE: No, it is all right for the federal government to fail! It is all right for it not to worry about—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Burleigh, you are warned under the standing orders, and I would appreciate no gesticulating in the chamber.

Ms GRACE: Yes, I would gesticulate if I was him, too.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, we do not need your commentary on that.

Ms GRACE: When the Premier raised the issue about five to 11-year-olds, didn't we hear the alternate view over there—scaremongering and asking, 'What's she doing?' A report that has come out of the *Sydney Morning Herald* just now has said that it is likely that by the end of November five to 11-year-olds will be vaccinated and the US in a report has already approved vaccination for that age group. When it comes to alternative approaches, there is nothing over there. It is only here on this side, and thank goodness 12 months ago the people of Queensland voted to return this government and this Premier during the election!

(Time expired)

Mr Saunders interjected.

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

Coronavirus, Border Restrictions

Mr LANGBROEK: My question is to the Premier. Last sitting the member for Kawana raised the issue of little Lenny. Hours later, he was granted an exemption to return home. Yesterday he raised the issue of Grant. Hours later, he was granted an exemption to return home. It is clear that only media and opposition pressure are getting Queenslanders home. We could mention the names of thousands of stranded Queenslanders and tell their heartbreaking stories, so when will the Premier allow all stranded Queenslanders to come home?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. As we said, when more people get vaccinated. It is a very simple answer to the member's question. Vaccination is the key, and we are hearing crickets from that side when it comes to vaccination. We all should be on one songbook here, because there is nothing more critical to keeping Queenslanders—keeping families—safe than getting vaccinated.

The member for Surfers Paradise represents a region that was lagging in vaccination—one of the tourist hotspots of Australia, a destination where people want to go. They will be bringing their families and they will be meeting up with friends and it was just on 70 per cent, but now I can advise that on the Gold Coast we have seen an increase of single dose from 71 per cent to 74.5 per cent. However, that is not where it needs to be because across Brisbane it is over 80 per cent single dose.

In fact, Brisbane west is at 83.9 per cent first dose, so I am comfortable with people coming into Brisbane but I am concerned about people going to the Gold Coast, going to Cairns and every other regional part of this state. The vaccination levels need to lift. This is now an urgent situation. This is no time to be sitting here playing politics. This is a time for unity. Those opposite may sit there and talk behind their hands or hop on their mobile phones, but every single member in this parliament should be proud to get people in their community vaccinated to keep them safe.

Mr LANGBROEK: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Under 118(b), I made no mention of vaccinations in my question. It is to do with media—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Sorry, member. Members to my right, I will hear the point of order without interruption. Sorry; please continue.

Mr LANGBROEK: Under standing order 118(b), I am asking you to rule on relevance in relation to the answer to this question, given that there was no mention of vaccination in my question.

Ms Boyd interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order in relation to the objection that has been made. The vaccines are directly related to the border plan. It is relevant.

Mr SPEAKER: No, we are not going to have the debate about whether the point of order is valid, Leader of the House. Premier, I would ask you to consider the question as asked and come back to that. However, I do appreciate the fact that it is almost impossible to not speak about the issue of vaccination when discussing this matter. However, Premier, the point of order is valid and I ask you to come back to relevance.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The member asked what people need to do, and the answer is get vaccinated. To the member for Surfers Paradise, this is *Queensland's COVID vaccine plan to unite families*. There it is, member for Surfers Paradise. There it is. I am happy—

Mr SPEAKER: Either table that or please put it down, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to give the member a copy because it says, 'A plan for Queensland's borders' and 'Queensland's COVID-19 vaccine plan to unite families'. It is pretty clear, it is pretty simple and it is linked to vaccination. The best thing every single person here can do is to get their community vaccinated. What is going to happen if people do not get vaccinated? Has anyone thought about that for a moment? Just think about that. If I was a member of the opposition and I had a large area or a large community who were unvaccinated, what is going to happen to those families? What is going to happen to those families? Do you want that on your conscience?

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: A reminder that I would appreciate it if comments were directed through the chair and not at those opposite.

Hospitals, Demand

Ms LUI: My question is of the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. Can the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is supporting aged-care and disability care patients to find suitable accommodation and any alternative approaches?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Cook for her question. This is a really important part of our health system. While those on the other side ask about elective surgery and ramping and bed capacity, they never ask about people who are on aged-care or disability support and what help is being given to them. Our hospitals do an incredible job. We have a world-class health system in this state and in this country and our health workers work tirelessly day in and day out. However, we have continually had to step up and fill the void left behind by the Commonwealth, whether it is the vaccine rollout, whether it is hotel quarantine or whether it is our most frail and elderly and disabled Queenslanders. We are making sure that they are not left languishing in our hospital beds when they should be cared for in the community or appropriate facilities.

When it comes to aged care and NDIS, there are currently almost 600 people in Queensland public hospitals today who would be better placed in more suitable accommodation settings: aged-care facilities or, alternatively, disability accommodation.

I would like to share the story of Mr Boots Williams from Atherton who until recently was one of these people in our hospitals. He has given me permission to share his story and I thank him for that opportunity. Mr Williams was admitted to hospital in March 2021 following a stroke which left him with the inability to swallow and speak. He was treated in Cairns and Atherton hospitals with a total length of stay of 217 days. Eighty of these days were clinically unnecessary. The reason for that was the failure of the Commonwealth to provide a suitable supported, independent living option through the NDIS.

Mr Williams said he experienced low moods and high levels of frustration as he waited for his forever home to become available. The Palaszczuk government's long-stay rapid response program became aware of Mr Williams' situation and he was discharged to interim accommodation on 9 October following a rapid approval of \$10,000 in funding by the Palaszczuk government. Mr Williams says he is very happy to be out of hospital and is looking forward to getting on with his life.

His situation is not unique. Forty-two unnecessary bed days have been prevented because of our support. The ones who are in the system now—83 long-stay NDIS and aged-care patients that we have transitioned out and a further 89 being transitioned out—equates to 36 years waiting in hospital and \$26.5 million of funding. That is \$26.5 million that can go to opening up more beds. This is a shocking indictment on the Commonwealth government.

Coronavirus, Hospitals

Mr BERKMAN: My question is to the Minister for Health. Earlier this month the Premier said Queensland hospitals need extra funding to prepare for opening our borders, but since the federal LNP refused their request the government has pretended everything is fine. Has the government simply given up on fully funding and preparing our hospitals and ICUs for surging COVID cases?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Maiwar for his question, but I am not sure where he has been. To say that we have pretended that nothing is going on shows me that the member for Maiwar has not even walked out the front door, looked at a TV or a phone or any sort electronic device and has been living under a rock. Every single day we have been talking about the pressures on the health system in this state. I am not going to let the Commonwealth off the hook. It is not okay. I have just spoken about the fact we have stepped up and put extra funding into getting people out of hospital beds and into aged care and NDIS accommodation. I have just said that. This is extra money that we are putting in that is a Commonwealth responsibility. The Commonwealth should not be let off the hook.

Mr Dick: Why do you attack Labor and not the LNP?

Mr SPEAKER: The Treasurer will cease his interjections.

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Treasurer is warned under the standing orders. Comments will be directed through the chair. I have tried to give guidance.

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection because it is quite interesting that the Greens constantly criticise the Labor government for the Liberal's failures. We get criticised for the Liberal's failures and asked why are we not picking up where they fail. It is not our job to fill all the voids left behind by Liberal governments.

The Commonwealth government has a key responsibility when it comes to health care in this state and this country. It is not okay to ask: why are you not filling the gap left by the Commonwealth? The member for Maiwar should be standing up and calling on the government, as we are, but also calling on the LNP on the other side, who give them preferences so they can get elected, to support our efforts for more funding but also for more efforts for vaccination.

Every single member in this chamber has a responsibility. If you are worried about pressures on the health system, if you are worried about ramping, if you are worried about bed capacity, if you are worried about what is going to happen when we have this virus through every one of our communities, then you will be getting up every single day and using every avenue you have available to you to call on people to get vaccinated. That is your job. That is our job. That is our responsibility.

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, please.

Mrs D'ATH: If you are not doing that then you are failing the people of Queensland, because that is the most important thing that every single member of this parliament can be doing right now. It is the most important thing because our economy cannot grow and we cannot support jobs if we do not have a strong health system. Every single person in this chamber needs to—

(Time expired)

Climate Change, Jobs

Mr MELLISH: My question is to the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs. Can the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is responding to the demands from Queenslanders, including young Queenslanders, to deliver action on climate change and more jobs in more industries and contrast any alternative approaches?

Ms SCANLON: I thank the member for Aspley for the question. Over the last week I have had the privilege of talking to a number of young Queenslanders about our 2030 climate action plan and, of course, our 2050 target that we have set out and the investment that we are making to create more jobs in more industries. We have done that because we know how important this issue is to our next generation. In fact, it is one of the reasons I got involved in politics to begin with.

Naturally, I was eagerly waiting to see whether the Morrison government would finally budge on whether they would agree with a net zero emissions target. I was expecting a lot, because we have been waiting for eight long years. We have seen the pantomime, or as Bridget McKenzie likes to call it the 'fight club', between the Liberals and the Nationals about whether they kind of, in principle, support the process that might take us to 2050, but like most things it was more spin and no substance.

Five minutes to midnight, a week before we go to the biggest climate conference in the world, and this is all the federal government could come up with: their so-called plan. I had a look through it to see whether there was anything for Queensland. We had a look to see whether there was any funding. The answer is no. They say there is a \$20 billion bucket of money, but it is all previously announced funding. In fact, at least \$10 billion of the \$20 billion that they have announced was committed through the Clean Energy Finance Corporation by the then Labor government that they actually went into the parliament to try to scrap. Now they are taking credit for it in this \$20 billion supposed plan.

We had a look to see whether there is any new policy. Not only is there no policy, they actually even say in the document itself this is all based on existing policies. When you look to see if there are any job opportunities, the only new job opportunity I could see was for the resources minister Keith Pitt who has been promoted to the cabinet. In fact, the Prime Minister said he has been promoted to the cabinet for the direct purpose of ensuring we reach our emissions reduction target. This is a bloke who seemingly is unfamiliar with the concept of batteries. He just last week said solar does not work at night. He said that solar power is this generation's asbestos. He also used his ministerial powers to block a wind farm right here in Far North Queensland.

I have a question for those opposite, because we have had very little from the Leader of the Opposition. We know he side-stepped the question about whether the LNP support a net zero emissions reduction target for 2050. The member for Nanango went to the last election proposing to scrap the renewable energy target. The only person we have heard from is the member for Callide who said that he is going to be going out there and campaigning against the federal government's so-called policy on net zero emissions. It is only this side of the House that will take real and meaningful action on climate. It is always the states that deliver. Those opposite continue to brawl amongst each other while jobs are put at stake.

Coronavirus, Emergency Response

Mr ANDREW: My question is to the Premier. The Chief Health Officer's powers under the state emergency powers legislation has been used to create many new laws and policies in Queensland. Will the Premier confirm that once the CHO's emergency powers end in 2022, all these extraordinary laws and mandates will also cease to have any lawful effect in Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The government will be looking at that when we get to that particular point in time. I do not have a crystal ball. We do not know what is going to be happening. What we do know is that the best way that we can emerge from this pandemic is to get vaccinated. I urge the member for Mirani to urge his community to get vaccinated, as some of those rates are not as high as they should be, especially in the electorate that you represent.

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is absolutely critical that all members urge their community to get vaccinated, because we have four days to go.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

Mr TANTARI: My question is of the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development. Will the minister please update the House on how the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program is helping people in my electorate of Hervey Bay to enter the workforce and is the minister aware of any alternative views?

Ms FARMER: I thank the member for the question. As with every member on this side of the House, I know how proud he is of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, or SQW as we call it, which operates in his electorate and changes lives. When the Treasurer announced in this year's budget that funding for the program was going to be permanent with ongoing funding of \$80 million a year, I was overwhelmed with positive feedback from the sector. The Ipswich Community Youth Service said, 'This program changes lives.' The Queensland Community Alliance said, 'Great announcement today ... Our member organisations ... see the benefits for their members among the most vulnerable in our community', and there were many others.

Quite simply, SQW is one of the most successful employment programs in this country. In the six years since we reinstated it, 73 per cent of participants have gone on to further training or jobs, that is 65,000 people supported, which compares to a success rate of 46 per cent for the federal government's jobactive program. Last year Deloitte assessed SQW and said that it increased gross state product by \$1.1 billion and before the LNP cut it—which they did as soon as they got into government—another Deloitte report showed that every dollar spent on SQW saw \$8 returned to the economy.

Yes, you heard it right: they cut the program. Who would do that? Going to the last election they had set aside no funding for SQW. They are actually obsessed with SQW. They cannot get over it. It is almost as if they do not want Queenslanders to have an employment program that works. Therefore I was not surprised when I looked at the *Courier-Mail* this morning and read that yet again—

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I am sorry, Minister. Member for McConnel, you will withdraw. That language is unparliamentary.

Ms GRACE: I withdraw.

Ms FARMER: I was not surprised that yet again, as reported in the *Courier-Mail*, they are criticising SQW. It made me wonder: what does the LNP talk about at their strategy and policy meetings? It is a bit like Vanilla Ice going to his record producer and saying, 'How about we do a new album? You got any ideas for some new songs?' They talk and they talk and they decide, 'Let's just do a remix of *Ice Ice Baby* as a greatest hits album.' The LNP opposition leader probably says, 'Anyone got any ideas?' The member for Mudgeeraba would say, 'How about we attack nurses?' The member for Kawana would say, 'I could complain about unions again.' The member for Buderim would say, 'How about we commit to cutting SQW!' The problem is that they do not have enough hits for an album so they would have to do what Vanilla Ice did with MC Hammer. Maybe they could join up with Tony Abbott. In the end the opposition leader would have to say, 'Play it again, Brent.'

We are looking at creating jobs for Queenslanders. We are looking at breaking down barriers. We have the most successful employment program in the entire country. We are funding it and we are funding it permanently. We are here—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Word to your mother!

Elective Surgery, Waiting List

Mr MICKELBERG: My question is to the Minister for Health. Queensland Health says that Sunshine Coast grandmother Wendy urgently requires treatment from a rheumatologist. Wendy has already waited twice as long as clinically recommended and has been told that she will be waiting for at least another year. Wendy is in severe pain and feels like she should give up. What is the government doing to give Wendy the health system that she deserves?

Mrs D'ATH: It is Labor governments that invest in the health system. We have made a \$22 billion investment in health this year. We have allocated additional funds to open up around 416 beds over the coming months and many of those beds are already online. We are supporting many new initiatives. In fact, between May and September we saw a decline of about 20 per cent in lost time due to ambulance ramping. It is great to have a 20 per cent decline already, meaning that we are seeing an improvement in lost time.

However, we know there is a lot more to do. We know that every outbreak that we have had has led to delays. Many of our health workers had to isolate when we had the Indooroopilly cluster and that had an impact on the health system. Those on the other side refuse to publicly acknowledge the impact COVID has had on our health system over almost two years now. They are in complete denial. They keep comparing our health system and what has happened over the past 20 months with what was in place when they were in government. However, when you compare what has happened in the last few months with when they were in government, we are still in a better position despite having to deal with COVID.

There has to be an acknowledgement that last year national cabinet agreed to suspend elective surgery. While we have done a great job in playing catch-up and dealing with the backlog, it has caused problems across the whole country and that is why every single health minister has written to the Commonwealth. Every time those on the opposite side talk to their constituents about these pressures, I hope they are honest about what the Commonwealth is doing, what is happening with COVID and what all of us can be doing to make sure we do not put more pressure on the health system, which is to get vaccinated. Think about what would happen if we do not get vaccinated and there are big outbreaks, including on the Sunshine Coast where there are areas with low vaccination rates. What do members opposite think would happen at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital then?

Are members opposite having those conversations with their constituents? Are they talking about what an outbreak will do to elective surgery and what it will do to demand in the hospital system? Are they talking about what it will mean for our health workers? Are they saying, 'That's why we think health workers should be vaccinated and I support the mandatory vaccination of health workers'? I wonder whether the member for Buderim is actually saying to his constituents, 'This is why we have to do what we are doing and this is why we have had this response.' I am very proud of the response of this government, led by the Premier and the Chief Health Officer.

(Time expired)

Superyachts

Ms PEASE: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister update the House on how Maritime Safety Queensland is dealing with the increasing number of superyachts arriving in Queensland waters?

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

Mr BAILEY: I thank the member for the question. The member sees the superyachts as they go up the river. We have heard about the recent arrival of a certain 56-metre superyacht owned by Clive Palmer, which he renamed *Australia*. His attempt to literally buy the country failed, but he was happy to rename his superyacht in honour of the country.

The question is this: who do you invite onto a superyacht when you can have only 12 people? I will give it a quick go. The member for Nanango would be an apology. The member for Surfers Paradise is a big supporter. What about the member for Mudgeeraba? Given the anti-vax union and all of that, it will be, 'Come on, Ros!' I think Clive would have George Christensen, Gerard Rennick and Matt Canavan. Members will remember that the member for Clayfield was a big supporter of a coal-fired power station, so Clive would say, 'Come on board!' The member for Callide would be very quiet but at least he would be low maintenance on the superyacht. You would not have the member for Burleigh because I think he has prebooked a luxury cruise for once the borders are opened—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Coronavirus, Vaccination Mandate

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (11.17 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House endorses the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination of all workers in Queensland healthcare settings as a condition of employment, as recommended by AHPPC.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.18 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders, the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services be permitted to move a motion at 3.55 pm today, notice of which has been given, with the following time limits to apply—

- 3 minutes for each member; and
- Total debate time before question put—1 hour.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

BRISBANE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES ARRANGEMENTS BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (11.18 am): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.

Mr SPEAKER: The message from His Excellency the Governor recommends the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

BRISBANE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES ARRANGEMENTS BILL 2021

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PAUL de JERSEY AC CVO, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intitled—

A Bill for an Act to establish an organising committee for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and for related purposes, and to amend this Act and the Right to Information Act 2009 for particular purposes

GOVERNOR

Date: 27 October 2021

Tabled paper: Message, dated 27 October 2021, from His Excellency the Governor, recommending the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Bill 2021 [[1808](#)].

Introduction

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (11.20 am): I present a bill for an act to establish an organising committee for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and for related purposes, and to amend this act and the Right to Information Act 2009 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Economics and Governance Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Bill 2021 [[1809](#)].

Tabled paper: Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Bill 2021, explanatory notes [[1810](#)].

Tabled paper: Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Bill 2021, statement of compatibility with human rights [[1811](#)].

Today I am pleased to introduce the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Bill 2021. Hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games is a transformational opportunity for Queensland that will unlock social, economic and environmental outcomes at a scale our state has never seen before. My government is committed to ensuring the games have lasting benefits for all Queenslanders, including an estimated \$8.1 billion in social and economic benefits to be shared across the state. The games are an opportunity to accelerate the delivery of long-term plans needed for sustainable growth right across Queensland and are providing the certainty and confidence needed to trigger increased investment and innovation now and over the next 20 years.

Hosting the single greatest sporting event in the world carries enormous responsibility not only to the people of Queensland but also to the people of Australia and the rest of the globe. That is why my government is committed to delivering the games in partnership with all three levels of government to ensure we achieve the best possible outcomes for our state, the nation and the world.

Tokyo 2020 was broadcast to more than 200 nations and territories and reached a global audience of more than five billion people. In 2032 all eyes will be on Queensland, providing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to market our state as a global destination and place to do business.

As Queensland's Premier, I had the privilege to join the Lord Mayor of Brisbane City Council and President of the Australian Olympic Committee in signing the Olympic Host Contract with the International Olympic Committee. Three months on from that historic moment, we are solidifying our partnership by introducing a bill that will establish the Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games and its board.

The bill was prepared in close consultation with our games partners, and I thank them for their collaborative approach. The bill ensures that the board includes representation from all levels of government and the international and Australian Olympic and Paralympic committees along with past Olympians and Paralympians and a number of independent experts and community representatives. I am also pleased to advise that the International Olympics Committee have provided their support for the bill I am introducing today.

The bill ensures that the diversity of the board is considered, including a requirement that 50 per cent of the nominated directors are female. The board of the organising committee will be led by an independent president and currently, on establishment, will include the vice-president of the International Olympic Committee, the president of Paralympics Australia, the chief executive officer of the Australian Olympic Committee, one recent Olympian who the AOC has confirmed will be Bronte Barrett, one recent Paralympian, four nominees from the Premier, four nominees from the Prime Minister, the Lord Mayor and his nominee. The Queensland Minister for the Olympics and the Prime Minister will also jointly nominate five independent directors, which include the president of the organising committee. The bill ensures that one of these independent directors will be Indigenous. The bill ensures that for the board to have a quorum a president or a vice-president must be in attendance, along with two-thirds of the directors holding office.

Establishing the organising committee as a statutory body under Queensland legislation provides the organisation with the necessary operational and financial independence and flexibility to achieve its objectives whilst ensuring it is subject to an appropriate level of public accountability. The main function of the organising committee is to facilitate the organisation, conduct, promotion and commercial and financial management of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. It will be responsible for working with all games partners, including the international Olympic and Paralympic committees, the Australian Olympic and Paralympic committees and the three levels of government, to organise events and ceremonies such as the Olympic and Paralympic torch relays and the opening and closing ceremonies; accommodation and transport for competitors, officials and media; and the thousands of volunteers who will welcome our athletes and guests to Queensland.

Importantly, the organising committee will manage all of the obligations of planning and delivering the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games at no cost to the taxpayer. Robust and detailed budgets have been prepared to achieve this which include significant contributions from the International Olympic Committee and private commercial revenue to ensure all activities associated with the organising committee are delivered on a cost-neutral basis.

Engaging local industry and generating jobs are two of the key objectives of this government. I am proud that the legislation creating the organising committee for the Olympic Games makes clear that the committee will undertake procurement activities in accordance with the Queensland Procurement Policy. It will take a Buy Queensland approach. Hosting the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games has never been about a few weeks of competition. It is about the decades of investment, the decades of growth and the decades of opportunity for our great state of Queensland. We have an unprecedented 11-year planning runway and we are wasting no time to capitalise on this with the formation of the organising committee. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (11.24 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Economics and Governance Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Economics and Governance Committee.

Declared Urgent; Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (11.25 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, under the provision of standing order 137, the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Bill be declared an urgent bill and the Economics and Governance Committee report to the House on the bill by Friday, 26 November 2021.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

QUEENSLAND VETERANS' COUNCIL BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 26 October (see p. 3257), on motion of Ms Fentiman—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Before I call the member for Macalister, I remind the following members that they are under warnings until 1 pm: the members for Cairns, Buderim, Nanango, Kawana, Mudgeeraba, Gregory, Glass House, Toowoomba North, Toowoomba South, Broadwater, Thuringowa, Everton, Burleigh, Maryborough, Pine Rivers and Woodridge.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (11.26 am), continuing: I continue my contribution from yesterday and, in doing so, I also declare that I am a member of the Returned and Services League of Australia as outlined in the register of members' interests.

The purpose of this bill is to establish the Queensland Veterans' Council. The QVC will be responsible for the management, maintenance, preservation and development of Anzac Square and the administration of the Anzac Day Trust and to provide advice to the minister on veteran matters. I am not quite sure what the member for Gympie was concerned about in saying that the bill was mistitled, because it is the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill and it does establish the Queensland Veterans' Council. It really does what it says on the box.

Anzac Square is Queensland's pre-eminent war memorial. Located in the Brisbane CBD, Anzac Square is the home of the Shrine of Remembrance and the Eternal Flame and was first dedicated on Remembrance Day 1930. I first marched onto Anzac Square as a 19-year-old, when my regiment exercised Freedom of the City throughout Brisbane. My parents proudly snapped a photo of me in my slouch hat, my pollies and polished boots in front of the shrine, like generations of service personnel before me. In the photo I am young, I have a lopsided grin and I have not finished my training. My instructors were Vietnam veterans and they were as rough as guts. I had no idea that I would ever become a veteran. My service changed me irrevocably. It took an 18-year-old who was directionless and set me on a path that I continue on today. Whilst it shaped me, it did also break me, but I would not change it for anything because military service is unique.

This led me to look at the definitions contained within this bill. The term 'veteran' has represented a bit of a moving feast over the past few years, at least from the federal Department of Veterans' Affairs perspective. In years gone by the term 'veteran' was used quite sparingly and reverently, with very prescribed eligibility criteria and usually limited to specific deployments or conditions of service. However, as the nature of ADF deployments has changed, the criteria to be considered a veteran have also changed. I note that within the definition in this bill, a veteran means any person who is or has served within the ADF. This would be one of the most inclusive definitions of 'veteran' that I have ever come across. When the term 'veterans community' is used it becomes significantly wider—all veterans, their partners, their children and their parents. Given that Queensland is a service state, as I mentioned earlier, this would capture a large portion of the Queensland community.

I would like to address the assertion that because the objective of providing advice to the minister on veterans matters is listed third at clause 3 it is not a priority. That is somewhat disingenuous. Certainly when dealing with military personnel, when your commanding officer gives you three specified tasks to do you do all three tasks and you do them to the best of your ability, regardless of the order in

which they are given to you. I am pleased to see that the committee's recommendations have been acted on with the increase in veterans representation as appointed people on the Veterans' Council as well as the requirement for the establishment of the reference group.

While I am on my feet, and with the indulgence of the House, I would like to make reference to a particular veteran whom I had the pleasure of working with and called a mate. John Robert Carey was a sapper who served in the early days of the East Timor deployments. I met him after he got out and joined the QPS. He was very quiet about his military service. Before my first appointment he took me aside and spent an inordinate amount of time talking to me about the road upgrades that he and his fellow engineers had done along the road to Same. It is an engineer thing, I guess. He wanted me to take photographs of what remained of their road upgrade. When I set off on my convoy we stopped at the first set of gabion baskets and then the second. After that, I just took photographs from the moving vehicle because there were about 78 of them. I came back from that patrol with my SD card full of blurry photographs of retaining walls—whatever. He was very proud of his work—his legacy.

John passed away earlier this month in—once again I have to report to this House—heartbreaking circumstances. He was the son of Colleen and Robert and father of Benjamin and Patrick. I reflect that he was younger than I am. He was a good mate, a proud soldier and a dedicated detective. Every time I see one of those pretentious fences that people pay a fortune for that contain gabion baskets containing rocks I automatically think of JC and that road to Same.

I think of all the veterans who have made a sacrifice and who have stood up and done their time with no fuss. They have got in and done their job. We will now have a Veterans' Council that will be able to not only represent veterans on matters of physical importance such as Anzac Square and the grants that come from the Anzac Day Trust—I know my RSL associations really do rely on those—but also ensure they have a voice when it comes to veterans matters and have a level of representation, no matter how quiet they are about their service. There will always be people who stand up and make reference to the things that are important to veterans. I am proud that this House enables that through this legislation. This is for you, JC. Rest in peace. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (11.32 am): I rise to give my contribution on the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. I think it is important for us to acknowledge every ADF service man and woman who is currently serving and every veteran currently living in this country. They have given immensely to ensure our freedoms in this country. The people who are serving now continue to give everything to ensure our freedoms and sovereignty in this country. I think the sentiment of everyone in this House is to acknowledge and continue to support them wherever we can.

I come from the small town of Ingham, but I now reside in the City of Townsville. The northern beaches of Townsville is my home. As most people would know, Townsville is a garrison city. Most people in Townsville either live next door to somebody who works in the ADF or are good friends with somebody in the ADF. Throughout the time I have lived in Townsville, I have made friends with a lot of people who work in the Army, Air Force or Navy.

We have heard multiple speakers on both sides of the House talk about supporting veterans as they go through their transition into civilian life and the challenges that can come with that. I have been fortunate enough in the mining industry to see quite a number of success stories of veterans move from working either in Iraq or Afghanistan to working in the mining industry. Seeing those men and women move across gives us hope that there is an opportunity for people post service to become not only involved in every day society but also contribute quite well. The most important thing for any veteran is to find a space where they feel like they are contributing. They give a fair chunk of their lives and commit wholly to make sure they give their all to serve not only the people they work beside but also the country they represent and defend.

The bill establishes the Queensland Veterans' Council, the QVC, as a statutory body. The QVC will have three areas of responsibility. These are: trustee of Anzac Square under the Land Act 1994 and its ongoing management and operation; functions of the board of trustees under the Anzac Day Act 1995; and providing advice to government. There will be six appointed members of the council, but only two nominated by veterans organisations. That is a bit of a worry for some people who have criticised this bill. The minister will invite onto the council four members who will be experts in governance, business, financial management or heritage conservation. There are concerns that they may be almost political appointments. That is of concern to some people.

This bill is unique and unlike any other in Australia because it merges three things: the necessary management of Anzac Square; management of the Anzac Day Trust; and representation of veterans issues to government. Essentially the same council will be providing advice on three separate matters. Under the bill, the Anzac Day Trust will be abolished. The Anzac Day Trust will be administered by the

new council. The Anzac Day Trust has operated in the way it has for over 100 years. We have not heard major calls from the veteran community to change this. I am still unsure why we have had to go through this process of tidying this up when things seem to be working quite fine.

The QVC will absorb the role of the trust. Instead of being a four-person veterans board it will now be a six-person board. Moving forward, four of those people may not be veterans. During the committee process veteran representative groups criticised the bill for losing a veterans focus and empowering the minister of the day to do as he or she pleases.

It was further criticised during the committee process for being too bureaucratic and Brisbane-centric. There were comments made by Mr Daniel O'Kearney in his private capacity. He was a former chair of the Queensland Veterans' Advisory Council, the responsibilities of which will be absorbed by the QVC. I will paraphrase his contribution to the committee. He said that places like Biloela that asked the fund for \$1,500 for an Anzac Day morning tea would have been given that previously. They also ensured that \$100,000 went to Legacy. The fund was made up of veterans who had a unique understanding of the needs of veterans and the RSL. They would see the importance of giving \$1,500 for a morning tea but someone with a more bureaucratic mind or someone who works for the Brisbane City Council may not have the same empathy for those sorts of things. I can see his concerns.

We will look at the amendments that will be moved by the LNP during consideration in detail. The KAP has not quite landed where we sit on this bill. We will consider where we stand on the LNP amendments. There are some important things that the member for Southern Downs talked about during his contribution. I acknowledge the ex-ADF members who are current members of this House. I think their contributions during this debate are important. I think what they say should be listened to by both sides of the House when considering this bill.

In my final minutes, on indulgence, I want to let the House know that I have probably become Townsville's newest ADF husband as my wife is at Kapooka right now going through her basic training, or recruit training as it is called. She is 2½ weeks through the process. I have spoken to her three times since being there, and it is everything she thought it would be. It does not sound like her spirit is completely broken yet. She made it quite clear that she had learned something very early on the piece: to listen and do—do not ask—and you will get through the process quite quickly. I acknowledge my wife and the contribution she will make to the ADF and our country. I am immensely proud of that. Over the next two weeks I look forward to welcoming home Townsville's newest soldier. I am very proud to be one of the garrison city of Townsville's newest Army husbands.

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (11.40 am): I rise in support of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. I begin by offering my respects to every member of this House who has served or continues to serve, particularly I note the member for Macalister. She is a very hard act to follow at any time but particularly on this topic. I also note the members for Southern Downs and Buderim, and I know that there are others.

Like the member for Logan, I have been privileged to stand on the shores of Gallipoli and see the sunrise, although not on Anzac Day. It was in 2004—perhaps before the current enthusiasm for drinking and eating pies on the beaches of Gallipoli hit its full peak. The contemplative moments that I spent there are some of my most cherished memories, following on a family tradition of my father and uncle attending there and my great great-uncle serving there. It really does bring home the meaning of heritage.

I know that that sense of heritage and the importance of veterans service is something that is profoundly felt in my own electorate of Pumicestone. We have a very proud veterans community and a very active veterans community. I want to offer my acknowledgement to some of those veterans associations—in particular, the Bribie Island RSL sub-branch and its president George Franklin. I was sorry not to be able to join him at the recent Presidents Lunch. Also, the National Servicemen's Association on Bribie and the Beachmere sub-branch of the RSL are hugely active. Their commemoration of particular veterans days are community focused. They involve our local schoolchildren and they bring home the meaning of service and the vast and important cultural lessons of war to a new generation of people in a really powerful way. I want to acknowledge them in particular.

I also want to pay special respects to my friend Kanga, a former Navy officer who always finds me at those events and invites me to share a rum with him and takes me by the arm and makes a cheeky comment about the Navy's appreciation for women politicians.

Mr Madden: And rum.

Ms KING: And rum. This bill continues the long and honourable support of Queenslanders for our veteran communities and Queensland's most significant memorial site—Anzac Square. It puts veterans front and centre in the management of the institutions they hold most dear—Anzac Square and the Anzac Day Trust. It does that by establishing a new statutory body—the Queensland Veterans' Council—to take responsibility for Anzac Square and the Anzac Day Trust in its vital role of assisting ex-service men and ex-service women and their families and also by advising the government on matters relating to veterans, and that is so very important.

Of the eight members of the Queensland Veterans' Council, there will be six appointed by the Governor in Council and two ex-officio members. Due to the heavy responsibilities placed on statutory bodies like the Queensland Veterans' Council, the governance structure and membership of the council must include a high degree of skills and experience to protect the future of these important institutions. The Palaszczuk government has always believed that Anzac Square and the Anzac Day Trust should be managed by veterans and for veterans. We always expected that veterans' voices would make up the majority of Queensland Veterans' Council membership.

While the bill as originally drafted did not limit the number of veterans on the council, we have heard loud and clear from stakeholders during the consultation that they want a legislative commitment to a minimum threshold of veteran representation on the council. That is why we have accepted the recommendations of the Community Support and Services Committee and will move an amendment during consideration in detail. That will ensure that at least 50 per cent of members of the Queensland Veterans' Council will be veterans or representatives of the veteran community. I note the member for Macalister's comments about the very inclusive definition of veterans community and veterans included in this bill, and I welcome that. This amendment represents our government's commitment to listening to the veterans community, to making sure veterans know they are valued and placing their views front and centre in managing these important institutions.

Our government fundamentally believes that veterans, their families and their communities must be at the forefront of decision-making about matters most important to them. A central function of the Queensland Veterans' Council will be to provide advice to government on veteran related matters. The Queensland Veterans' Advisory Council has performed this role over many years, and I know that the veterans community and the government deeply appreciate their dedicated service.

This bill establishes a veterans reference group to support the Queensland Veterans' Council with providing advice to government on key matters. That group will be made up of 10 members, two of whom will be council members nominated by veterans organisations and eight other members with relevant knowledge, skills or experience in veterans welfare, health, military service and transition out of military service. Again, because our government values the views of veterans, we are accepting the committee's recommendation and will move an amendment during consideration in detail to require the establishment of the veterans reference group. We are changing this provision so that the legislation specifies that the minister 'must' establish that group rather than 'may' establish it.

Turning again to the report of the Community Support and Services Committee, there was a surprise hidden in the statement of reservation from the LNP members. In that statement of reservation, the member for Burnett and the member for Scenic Rim said that they 'question the appropriateness of paying remuneration to members of the QVC, as it may impact on their ability to provide unbiased advice and compromise their impartiality'. I found it concerning that the LNP committee members recommended that the bill be amended to remove all remuneration for council members beyond reasonable reimbursement of expenses. It was disappointing to see this questioning of the ability of veterans to provide unbiased advice. Surely on matters relating to veterans we can put politics aside and hope to find some bipartisanship.

The Palaszczuk government rejects this idea that veterans are incapable of providing unbiased advice. We believe strongly that chairs and members of government boards and advisory bodies make an important contribution and they make that contribution at often great personal cost. In their service on the council, veterans will be giving back to the veterans community and the broader Queensland community, as they did during their service in the forces. In asking council members to work for nothing, what message would it send about the respect held for our veterans institutions? On this side of the House we believe that the labourer is worthy of their hire and that the work and effort of council members is worthy of recognition and remuneration.

In creating the Queensland Veterans' Council as an independent statutory body, our government is creating a robust, streamlined and modern legislative framework for veterans matters in Queensland. We are elevating the voices of veterans through a formalised advisory role to government and in the management of the charitable institutions and heritage places most important to them. In so doing, we

are demonstrating our Palaszczuk government's support for Queensland veterans in line with the respect of the wider community right across our service state of Queensland. I commend the Premier, our assistant minister for veterans' affairs and the committee for their work. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (11.48 am): I rise in support of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill, which will establish the Queensland Veterans' Council and amend the Anzac Day Act 1995, the Public Sector Ethics Regulation 2010 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Regulation 2019. This is an opportunity for all of us to reiterate our affection for, our support for and our confidence in our local veterans communities but also veterans communities across Queensland. This bill says to veterans across Queensland: you are important and we want to make our state work as best as possible for you.

Anzac Square has obviously been around for a very long time—I think since 1930. It was a response from the community to World War I. Monuments are such important symbols of respect. It is really critical that we have this modern, upgraded square where we can all come and pay our respects. I think that every single one of us has had a moment where we have been part of a ceremony and felt quite overwhelmed by the enormity of what men and women from our state and our country have done on our behalf. Anzac Square is that monument.

In my own community, if you drive down Oxford Street along Bulimba Memorial Park there are trees planted in honour of the single men who fought in World War I and plaques with their names on them. I want to give a big thanks to the Bulimba District Historical Society, the local RSL subbranches and the Friends of Balmoral Cemetery for doing an enormous amount of research so that we have our own monuments in the form of those trees in my local community.

We know that this bill is going to establish a Queensland Veterans' Council and that the Queensland Veterans' Council will provide advice to the government on veterans matters. I note there has been some question and controversy about who is actually allowed on that Veterans' Council and that there is a wide definition of veterans community to include all veterans and all people who have a direct link to veterans. I understand that broad definition is going to mean that people who provide support to veterans such as medical professionals who specialise in treating veterans and people who specialise in veterans' transition from military service are part of that. Any of us who have had any connection to our local veterans will know what important places those people play in our veterans' lives.

To modernise the governance around this, to make sure we have the right opportunities for veterans to speak to government, and that the rules, regulations and systems around this are undertaken properly for such a sacred and hugely important body is something that we all want to do. That is what this parliament is about. I know that my local RSL subbranches are just absolutely delighted that we are sending this message of respect for the work they do. I really want to praise my Norman Park and National Servicemen's RSL Sub-Branch president and life member Eric Beutel. I am very proud to be patron of that organisation. I want to also shout-out to the Bulimba District RSL Sub-Branch, their president Brian Daley, and all of the members of that subbranch who work so hard to make sure that our community very broadly, and our schools in particular, can show their respect for our veterans, particularly on Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. We have 5,000 people in Bulimba Memorial Park and we are led by schoolchildren, who have such respect for the contribution that our veterans made. That is because of the work our subbranches do.

There are also some other very important people in my community who do so much to make sure the contribution of our veterans is not lost. I really want to shout-out to the Friends of Balmoral Cemetery. For years now they been working on a project to make sure that those men and women who returned from war are named. They have been doing research with families over an enormous period of time to make sure they can be named and that there are headstones for them in our local cemetery. In fact, our cemetery at Balmoral reads like a street directory of our local area. They are the names of our men and women who gave their lives and made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our country. I want to also acknowledge Legacy and Brendan Cox, the CEO of Legacy, who happens to live in my electorate. They are doing outstanding work locally, supporting widows and families to make sure that they feel looked after when their loved ones are no longer there to look after them.

We often think about this on Anzac Day and Remembrance Day, but oftentimes we are talking about veterans of the long past. When we have an opportunity to talk to those older veterans who have been in conflicts quite some time ago their stories are absolutely astonishing. I love to see our kids stop and consider those stories. I also want to acknowledge some of the veterans from our very recent conflicts. The impact on them has not just been physical but mental and emotional as well. I

congratulate the Bulimba District RSL for the recent Veterans Health Expo Day they held. There were people there not just from the RSL but also from Mates4Mates. There were also psychologists, dieticians and people who acknowledge that, by being prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for us, veterans sometimes suffer lifelong impacts. To all of those men and women in our community, whether they have come from recent conflicts or conflicts long ago, we put our arms around you in our community and we are there to support you.

On behalf of my community, I congratulate the Premier for bringing this bill forward. It is a sign of respect to our veterans. They are important. We are going to make sure that the role they play in Queensland is an important one. We are always conscious of their needs.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (11.55 am): During the First World War and subsequent wars the men and women of Noosa answered the call and signed up to serve their country. Like many communities across Queensland, the residents of Noosa have paid tribute to these selfless men and women through war memorials which list the names of those who served in the First World War. The 2017 publication of *Noosa Remembers: A history of the World War I memorials of Noosa Shire* was co-authored by Joe Hextall and Jane Harding, who is the heritage librarian at the Noosa Library Service. It traces the history of the various World War I memorials that are located within our district and come in the form of parks and reserves, halls, baths, an avenue and a rotunda, as well as eight honour boards in communities including Pomona, Federal, Cooroy and Cooran.

The year 1922, nearly 100 years ago, was a really significant year for the shire. Two key memorials were erected: the cenotaphs in both Tewantin and Cooroy were dedicated. Every year on Anzac Day thousands of our residents gather to honour and remember. This publication is one of the many tributes that demonstrates how our community commemorates and cares for their war memorials—similar to the care given to the state memorial at Anzac Square here in Brisbane. It is a privilege to see the significant events and important memorials that commemorate the members of the Defence Force and their duty to our nation. I want to give a huge shout-out to the Cooroy-Pomona RSL Sub Branch, the Tewantin-Noosa RSL Sub Branch and the Coolum-Peregian RSL Sub Branch and their members and beautiful families and partners. What they do every single day is just incredible.

Anzac Square was dedicated on Remembrance Day 1930 as Queensland's state war memorial and was the culmination of the broader Queensland community's response to the First World War. The Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021 will ensure that Anzac Square is one of the war memorials of which all Queenslanders and Australians can continue to be incredibly proud. The bill will establish the Queensland Veterans' Council as a statutory body with areas of responsibility including: as trustee of Anzac Square; assuming the functions of the board of trustees under the Anzac Day Act 1995; and providing advice to government on veterans matters. The bill also provides that the QVC will have the function of administering the trust fund and deciding applications for payments out of that fund. This is funded predominantly by a grant appropriated from the Queensland government and provides annual payments to institutions, organisations or associations to assist ex-service men and women and their dependents. The bill does not alter the quantum of funding provided by government to the trust fund, nor does it alter the purposes for which payments can be made from that fund.

To support the QVC in the performance of its advisory function the bill also formalises the role of the QVAC as a ministerial advisory committee established to: provide a forum for the Queensland veterans community; communicate directly with the Queensland government; and provide advice on veterans matters.

Many submitters, including RSL Queensland, welcomed the establishment of the QVC as a statutory body to modernise the legislative framework for veterans matters. While supportive of the QVC concept, submitters are justifiably concerned that the act in its present form diminishes the Queensland veteran community by not recognising the experience needed to manage Anzac Square and the Anzac Day Trust and to advise the government on matters that are very much related to veterans issues. Its proposed governance structure means the advice to government from veterans and veteran organisations via the veterans reference group is filtered by the QVC comprising six non-veterans and only two veterans. This thereby prevents the appointed veteran members from having a majority vote when it comes to decision-making on matters that specifically affect the wellbeing of veterans.

Submitters agree the proposed membership structure identified in the bill and the underrepresentation and involvement of veterans in this legislation raise concern. In response, the committee recommended the bill be amended to provide that at least 50 per cent of the members of the QVC must be veterans or representatives of the veterans community and provide that the minister must establish a veterans reference group. I will be supporting any amendments to this effect.

We rely on our veterans communities for the selfless commitments they make—in the memorials they care for, in remembrance, in the events that acknowledge the men and women and their families who make sacrifices for us—and the support that is desperately needed. In return, they should be able to rely on us. I thank the committee for their recommendations and work, as well as the submitters and attendees at the public hearing for their commitment to ensure we get this right. I give deep gratitude and respect to all those who have sacrificed and continue to sacrifice so much for all of us, and to their families and loved ones. Lest we forget.

 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (12.01 pm): It is fair to say that, even though some of us have not served, we still understand the importance of the sacrifice of those who have served. That is what makes this such an important bill. The sacrifice is about the sacrifice of lives that were taken in service of our country, the sacrifice of lives that were changed forever through that service and the sacrifice born out of shaping a course of history that our country now does and will continue to reflect upon.

I intend to focus on three key components of this bill. The first is the transfer of the trusteeship of Anzac Square to the QVC. The works that have been completed around Anzac Square in Brisbane city have created a strong balance of sombre spirituality and pride for those who have served with such high distinction, but they also generate a terrific experience of education and learning in regard to history and heritage.

I will reflect upon my own time as a teacher. When I brought students down from the Wide Bay region to visit Anzac Square, we reflected upon not just the statues but the symbolism and message behind those statues. If I may with some indulgence talk about one particular statue—that being the statue which commemorates the nurses in World War II. Those who are into history will recognise that it is very symbolic of the Pieta statue, which is Mary holding Christ after the crucifixion. When you go through Anzac Square, you might see that statue as more than just recognising nurses and those who have served; maybe it is actually recognising the sons and daughters of Australia and their sacrifice for our country. That is of great importance—to make sure we continue to recognise the importance behind statues because there is so much more to them.

There is a great opportunity to grow that depth and breadth of education throughout Anzac Square. With the amendments to ensure a fifty-fifty representation of veterans on the council, I believe that will add to the opportunity for more firsthand accounts and primary perspectives being included, especially when we acknowledge the service and conflicts post-World War II. When you go under Anzac Square and under the cenotaph, you can look at the fantastic digital display. There probably needs to be a future effort to make sure we recognise those post-World War II conflicts, especially when we look into the modern military and the efforts in the Middle East for our future veterans. We need to make sure there is a space there to recognise so much more than what we already have there.

The second component of the bill is the Anzac Day Trust Fund. When the bill was first introduced, some of my local service groups had questions about how the funding would continue. However, after conversations and going through the bill with those service groups, they are satisfied that it is more of a change of administration. We know that support for our ex-service men and women and their dependents will continue to be there through the funding, and that is important moving forward.

The third key component that I wish to speak on is in regard to the membership of the QVC, especially with regard to advice to the government on veterans matters. I want to take the time to thank Jennifer Waldron for her advocacy not just for her own association—which is the Bundaberg District Women Veterans—but especially on behalf of all women who have served in the Australian Defence Force. In her submission to the committee's public hearing, Jenny raised very valid and considered points concerning the membership of the QVC. Jenny submitted to the committee the need for greater representation of veterans on the council and also the need for women veterans to be represented on the council. There is a difference between those family members who have a connection to a loved one who has served and then especially women who have served. Again, as I talk about moving through the modern military, we need to make sure there is a space there moving forward to represent women who have served our great country. I am glad there will be an amendment to the bill to raise the number of veterans on the council and to make it a fifty-fifty ratio of veterans as well. I think that is important, and I again strongly advocate for the representation of women who have served our great country on the QVC.

In closing, I want to acknowledge a couple of service groups in Bundaberg. The first is the Bundaberg RSL Sub Branch and their president, Graham Crowden. I have been there a few times and it is a fantastic organisation because it is all about making sure that camaraderie, mateship and a sense of family and identity are protected. That is very important moving forward. For so many of us civilians who have never served, we recognise there is something different with those who have served—a

different brotherhood and sisterhood—and that is important. As much as we want to get out there and commemorate and share that sense of history and duty with those who have served, they have a very special bond that can only be found between those who have served, and we recognise that.

The Bundaberg Defence Veterans Drop-In Centre is a fantastic group of gentlemen. Their monthly barbecues on a Sunday are fantastic. I enjoy going along and hearing stories and learning some military phrases that I never thought I would learn, but they do like to educate me. They are a fantastic group. They are mostly Vietnam veterans at the moment, and I want to put on record my appreciation for the role that Vietnam veterans have played in recognising the horrors of war, especially PTSD. When you think about those returned service men and women from World War I, World War II and even Korea—my grandfather served in Korea—there was a silence about that. Once that conflict was over, you did not speak about it. What we saw post-Vietnam was many veterans coming back to a community and a society that had turned against them, gave them the cold shoulder and even protested against them in the streets. Whilst we never want to see war, we should never, ever turn our back on those who returned from war, especially those who were drafted. They did not get that choice.

I think there is great courage in our Vietnam veterans because they were the first veterans who spoke out about what happened to them and what still happens to them today. I think we owe them a great credit—not just for their service but for their bravery in speaking about their service. I commend all of those Vietnam veterans, especially in the Bundaberg region.

I also mention the great work that Legacy do in Bundaberg. We recently had the opening of Legacy House. It is a great new modern facility where families can come together and talk about their experiences and share their hardships. It also provides modern working facilities for the staff.

I would also like to mention the Bundaberg District Women Veterans, who may well be the only organisation who have ever made me hula hoop in public. They are a fantastic group. I have gone along to their lunches in the past. They have a great sense of camaraderie. I really do thank them for taking a role in this parliamentary process by submitting to the committee and putting those points forward that have brought about a change through the amendment relating to that fifty-fifty ratio. I think that is a great example of how the parliamentary process works with community, works with organisations and really hears their voice. I really do thank the committee for taking that on and also the Premier and the assistant minister the member for Aspley for considering that and putting those amendments forward.

In conclusion, I do want to say how much I absolutely respect all those who have served—men and women and also their families. We do recognise that their families have gone through a sacrifice of their own as well. To all those who have served in this House, I absolutely thank you for everything that you have done. I absolutely recognise that and I support this bill.

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (12.10 pm): I rise to support the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill. Through this bill, the formalisation of a number of important processes through the establishment of the Queensland Veterans' Council as a statutory body can be implemented. I would like to thank the committee chair the member for Mansfield and the members of the Community Support and Services Committee for their work on this legislation. Additionally, I thank the Premier for the introduction of this bill and the ongoing support for our veterans and Assistant Minister Mellish for his work in this regard.

I would also like to put on record the acknowledgement of those members of this parliament who themselves have served in uniform. As a former chair of the Senate defence subcommittee during my time in the federal parliament, I am ultimately aware of the issues that face our troops not only while they are serving but also after their period of service has been completed. As a nation, we come together on occasions like Anzac Day, Remembrance Day and other commemorative days to mark the contribution of those who have served us in uniform and, of course, those who have made the ultimate sacrifice while fighting for our nation.

Those commemorations went through a period during the 1980s and early 1990s when attendances dropped off in some places and there was commentary from some quarters about whether they had lost their relevance to the nation. I do not think so. That turned around in 1995 when the Australia Remembers campaign to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War inspired hundreds of thousands of Australians to once again make those occasions important to a whole new generation. Since then, I think momentum has grown even more. People are involved in those ceremonies today, even as our veterans of many conflicts become fewer and fewer in number.

An important part of those commemorations is to have a focal point, a place that stands in the heart as an obvious but also sacrosanct home of these ceremonies. Many of these regional towns still have stone memorials, erected using funds from grateful citizens, standing in their town squares near

RSL halls or in local memorial parks honouring those who gave their lives in what we knew as the Great War. These still play important roles in local ceremonies today. Around the nation, whether it be at the War Memorial in Canberra or the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, we see Australians gathered by the thousands. They pass on important stories, they share special moments with their children and they remember, either for themselves or those who no longer can.

In Brisbane Anzac Square is an icon. It is known by location or by image to many Queenslanders and certainly to the vast majority in the south-east of the state. It is appropriate that the management of this iconic place, this sacred place, involves direct input from the very veterans that it is designed to represent. That is something this bill will achieve. As part of the Queensland government's Anzac Centenary commemoration program, we partnered with the Commonwealth and the Brisbane City Council for a \$21.98 million Anzac Square restoration and enhancement project. This includes a redevelopment to create the modern gallery spaces that now exist. In 2019-20 we committed \$2.4 million per annum for the creation of these new spaces and to establish the Queensland Veterans' Council in the Office for Veterans within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

The bill before us now proposes that the QVC act as trustees of Anzac Square reserve. The council will have a role: to manage, maintain, preserve and develop Anzac Square as a memorial to honour the service and sacrifice of Queenslanders and other Australians in war conflict, peacekeeping and peacemaking; to approve and oversee the staging of commemorative activities and events at Anzac Square; to commemorate the services and sacrifices of Queenslanders and other Australians; to approve, manage and promote public programs at Anzac Square to inform, educate and promote understanding among Queenslanders and visitors around the history, the experiences, the service and the sacrifice of Queenslanders and other Australians; and to manage the cultural heritage significance of Anzac Square.

Due to having the Gallipoli Barracks in my electorate of Ferny Grove, I have spoken to many veterans over the years. I have heard about their service. I have heard about their struggles. I have heard about their pride in the uniform and the special status in our community that is earned by those who have served. This bill is a chance for us to lift the level of guardianship of this most sacred momentum to the men and women to whom it means the most: those who have served in the Defence Force, their families and the broader veterans community. The bill entrenches the role of veterans in guiding the use of this important monument going forward. The bill and proposed amendments by the government will guarantee that at least 50 per cent of the council will be members of the veterans community. It builds on our government's commitment to veterans and maintaining Queensland's monuments to their service and sacrifice.

I have always been proud of Australia's fighting men and women no matter where they have served in the world. As the chair of the Senate defence subcommittee, I had the privilege of travelling to Afghanistan and witnessing their professionalism, their expertise and also their commitment right up close. That journey saw the delegation travel to Al Minhad Air Base in UAE and then on to Tirin Kut to visit our ADF. While there we were loaded on to Black Hawks, travelled up to a forward operating base, on to Kandahar and then Kabul. It is an experience I will never forget. It is an experience in which I appreciated the good, honest work and commitment that our ADF personnel provide in serving. While visiting the FOB near Tirin Kut we spoke to local Afghans who expressed concerns about losing our ADF who were on standard rotation. Having expressed through translation they would be replaced with a group of similarly experienced ADF, an ease of confidence settled in.

I have rarely been in more capable hands in my life during that time in Afghanistan. I take to task, however, the assertion by the LNP that the chair of the Queensland Veterans' Council should be a veteran. Following my return, the committee which I chaired led an inquiry titled 'Care for ADF personnel wounded and injured in operations'. The four years experience as the chair of that committee and our experience in Afghanistan provided me and also committee members with a good opportunity to deliberate on our findings and recommendations of improving the life for those veterans and returned service men and women.

Whether someone is a member of this parliament or other parliaments around the country, the essence of a good parliamentarian is holding the empathy, the competence, the commitment and the values and to express those to their constituents. I believe all members of this chamber carry in their hearts the same high level of respect and gratitude for our women and men in uniform as I do. A part of Australia's national identity is formed around the courage and the sacrifice of our uniformed services from the beaches of Gallipoli to the mountains and deserts of Afghanistan. We owe it to those who have served to understand and teach our children about the sacrifices that were made for their future. This bill introduced by the Palaszczuk government is another way in which we can further the support.

In conclusion, I want to put on record my sincere gratitude to many organisations in the electorate of Ferny Grove. One such organisation is Wounded Heroes and, in particular, Martin Shaw, who tirelessly goes out and assists our veterans in times of need whether through fundraising or assisting the widows of those veterans in times of need. In particular, I mention a very good friend of mine Mark Orreal from Samford, who was once the subbranch secretary of the Samford RSL, which I lost to the now member for Pine Rivers. He is a champion for the veterans and also the beliefs that veterans hold near and dear. This is a bill that will go a long way in continuing the support that the Palaszczuk government provides to the veterans in Queensland.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (12.19 pm): I rise to speak to the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. I thank the Community Support and Services Committee for its consideration of the bill before us. As we just heard from the previous speaker and from many other members who have spoken, Queenslanders value the sacrifices of those who serve and who have served in defence of our nation and their families. The delivery of programs, policy and legislation in support of the veteran community is therefore of utmost importance.

The main purpose of this bill is to allow for the consolidation of governance of the Anzac Day Trust Fund and Anzac Square into one new statutory body: the Queensland Veterans' Council, QVC. In addition, the council would be responsible for providing advice to government on veterans matters. The bill further provides that the council will be comprised of eight people, only two of whom would be dedicated veterans representatives as nominated by veterans groups.

In aiming for greater coordination of veteran related matters in Queensland, the bill carelessly conflates three distinct functions for performance by the council. Submitters to this bill expressed concerns as to the proposed across the board functions of the council as well as the overwhelming focus on the management of Anzac Square, with Bundaberg District Women Veterans Inc. stating—

Anzac Square is a memorial, veterans are people. We do not think those two necessarily sit easily in the same bill.

It almost seems as though the welfare of the veterans community is priority B after the management and administration of Anzac Square.

Additionally, the bill sidelines the voices of the very community it seeks to serve—firstly, in respect of the inadequate consultation undertaken on the bill, which was raised by several submitters at the public hearing on 24 May; and, secondly, in respect of the under-representation of veterans in membership of the council. The betterment of the veteran community cannot be achieved where veterans matters are being decided in the majority by non-veterans council members and a non-veteran chair who may be without the necessary governance skills and expertise and who do not speak for the veterans community. Indeed, the Community Support and Services Committee noted the obtrusive flaw in this bill and recommended that at least 50 per cent of council members come from the veterans community. The administration of the Anzac Day Trust Fund in providing payments to institutions, organisations or associations to assist ex-service men and women and their dependants is proposed to sit with non-veterans and goes against the 100-year-old faith in the veterans community to manage trust money.

I have kept a close eye in my electorate on the Surfers Paradise subbranch of the RSL that has been struggling for a number of years now. They have been struggling because of the loss of its home—the club itself. They are now working out of a shed, basically, in Cascade Gardens that I think is a Veterans' Affairs shed. They lost their home, which was centrally located in Surfers Paradise, partly as a consequence of rent related matters following the difficulties of the COVID pandemic but partly because of some financial issues they have been dealing with for some time.

Nevertheless, the Surfers Paradise RSL Sub Branch continues to be an integral part of the community. I acknowledge the funding distributed to RSL Queensland via the Anzac Day Trust grants program in 2020, but Surfers never saw any of that. There continues to be no direct assistance to struggling licensed RSL subbranches. Even so, the Surfers Paradise subbranch held a very successful Anzac Day this year. I was fortunate to take part in that. It is renowned for having a dawn service on the esplanade which is increasingly well attended by locals and visitors, followed by a 12.30 service at the cenotaph just outside the Cavill Hotel in Cavill Avenue. The president of Surfers RSL recently sent me a letter which detailed the efforts of the many individuals who came together to ensure that these celebrations went ahead to remember all our veterans and their families.

I am always pleased to contribute to the Australian and New Zealand flags that fly on the esplanade. Of course, because they are in such a difficult environment climatically, they need regular replacement and I have been happy to provide that. Whilst we get Australian flags provided by our federal members, New Zealand flags are not provided and the RSL wants to fly the two flags together

at Trickett Street in Surfers Paradise. Through my electorate allowances—I know that other members do this, too—I am happy to provide the New Zealand flags and marquees for ceremonies they might hold. I would like to read a passage from the letter the president sent to me. It states—

We have had a tragic period in the life of the sub branch and it is still not over yet. We scrapped and scraped up enough funds from friends and supporters to pay for all the bills [to have a successful Anzac Day] ... Whether it was selling memorabilia, serving at the Gun Fire breakfast, fundraising, bucket donation, security, watching for veterans in need of assistance, marshalling—

It is concerning that the proposed administration of the Anzac Day Trust is not entirely with nominated veteran members, as is the status quo. Presently, four people administer the trust fund with no fewer than three from the veterans community. With it already being a challenge for the Surfers RSL subbranch to gain traction for financial support, under this updated mechanism it would appear an even more difficult feat. Indeed, as Mr Daniel O'Kearney, former chair of the Queensland Veterans' Advisory Council, notes—

People who have no understanding of the veterans' community will now be making decisions on where that trust money goes.

The provision of funding is an important enabler for COVID-safe commemorative events that honour those who serve and who have served. It should be that the activities of the Anzac Day Trust are decided solely by veteran members of the council.

It is rather sobering to think that those whom the bill is intended to serve are not afforded a majority voice in veterans affairs in Queensland. Additionally, it would seem that the entire focus of this bill is on the administration and management of Anzac Square, with little to no consideration of or for the welfare issues faced by veterans in our state. It is the position of the LNP that the voices of veterans must be enshrined and that the issues important to veterans are focused upon in this new council.

Before I conclude, I congratulate the member for Southern Downs on the carriage that he has had for this side of the House as a veteran. I know that there are veterans on the other side of the House, but it is a significant opportunity that the member for Southern Downs has been granted. I know that he is particularly appreciative.

Finally, I table a redacted copy of the letter from the president of the Surfers Paradise RSL Sub Branch Inc.

Tabled paper: Letter (redacted), dated 18 May 2021, from the Surfers Paradise RSL Sub Branch Inc. to the member for Surfers Paradise, Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, relating to the operations of the subbranch [1812].

I pass on my concerns for the long-term viability of that subbranch. Whether it is for Remembrance Day on 11 November or for Anzac Day—Queenslanders, Australians and foreigners visiting the Gold Coast know about the service held at Elephant Rock—the Surfers Paradise subbranch's march, which used to go all the way along the esplanade, is in danger of not continuing because it cannot continue without support. Financially, the directors will not be able to keep doing the things they do. It would be very disappointing to lose that dawn service and then, of course, the midday service. Australians on holidays enjoy seeing those marches and the subsequent ceremonies.

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (12.27 pm): I rise to speak on the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. I also acknowledge the service of veterans on both sides of the chamber. I appreciate what they have done for our country. I also appreciate the Premier and the assistant minister in terms of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill. I reflect on the words of the member for Sandgate yesterday. I go for a walk every morning. This morning I walked through Anzac Square and reflected on his words about it being a significant spot. It is. When you walk through Anzac Square you think about the people who sacrificed their lives so that we can have the life we have today. My father served in the Catalinas during World War II and lost two brothers in that war. This bill is all about veterans and making sure that they are looked after.

The Palaszczuk government has respect for veterans. I refer to the Gallipoli to Armistice Memorial in Maryborough which the Palaszczuk government helped fund along with the federal government and the Fraser Coast Regional Council. I publicly thank Nancy Bates, Greig Bolderrow and Captain Jason Scanes, who is a very good friend of mine and a champion of a man. I will talk more about Jason shortly.

The Duncan Chapman Memorial in Maryborough was opened on 21 July 2018 by the Premier, then prime minister of Australia Malcolm Turnbull and the Fraser Coast Mayor, George Seymour—and what an amazing tribute it is to our World War I diggers. When you walk through the memorial it sends shivers up your spine to think what the men went through in the battlefields of Gallipoli and France, and that is why the Palaszczuk government is very strongly committed to that. Another thing the Palaszczuk government has initiated is the employment pathway—that is, we are employing ex-veterans through the public sector in Queensland. That is a great initiative from this government to ensure that veterans get employment when they come out of the service.

Debate, on motion of Mr Saunders, adjourned.

BIG BANK LEVY (COVID-19 HEALTH RESPONSE) BILL

Introduction



Dr MacMAHON (South Brisbane—Grn) (12.30 pm): I present a bill for an act to impose a levy on particular authorised deposit-taking institutions operating in the state, and to amend this act and the Taxation Administration Act 2001 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes and statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Economics and Governance Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Big Bank Levy (COVID-19 Health Response) Bill 2021 [[1813](#)].

Tabled paper: Big Bank Levy (COVID-19 Health Response) Bill 2021, explanatory notes [[1814](#)].

Tabled paper: Big Bank Levy (COVID-19 Health Response) Bill 2021, statement of compatibility with human rights [[1815](#)].

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the Big Bank Levy (COVID-19 Health Response) Bill 2021 into this House. I introduce this bill against the backdrop of a looming health crisis here in Queensland. For months healthcare workers, peak bodies and staff have been warning of a crisis in Queensland hospitals. We have been alerted that our hospitals are already operating at 100 per cent capacity. We have been alerted that the likely spike in COVID-19 cases when Queensland opens will push our hospitals to their limit. We are watching terrifying scenarios unfold in Victoria, with hundreds of people in intensive care and long-term underfunding leading to a system at breaking point. My own family has felt these pressures in Queensland this week, with one relative waiting two hours for an ambulance and another sat on an ambulance ramp for hours, and too many Queenslanders have stories just like this.

The Together union has said that there are not enough staff to safely care for Queensland residents. The Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union has warned of burnout amongst staff, while the Electrical Trades Union has said privatising beds and services is not a solution to achieving a sustainable public health system. My office has been hearing from healthcare workers on the front lines of COVID raising the alarm bells in our public health system. One paramedic said—

For years the healthcare system has not kept up with population growth, and mental health particularly paediatric mental health is severely underfunded.

A public hospital nurse wrote about fears around lack of hospital capacity and a lack of safe PPE, writing—

Ambulance ramping everyday ... There are no beds to offload patients into, patients that require monitoring are being offloaded early which is unsafe ... Another patient waited over 16 hours for an ICU bed and remained in ED intubated and ventilated due to no ICU beds in SEQ.

An emergency department admin staffer said—

I've worked in ED for 10 years and while the numbers of patients has doubled over that time, there has been no expanding of the space. There is always a delayed response to increases in patient numbers.

A public allied health worker said that over the COVID crisis—

Mental health of the workforce has deteriorated. More of a sense of fatigue and less comrades working together ...

Yet another said—

We have been asked to do even more with even less, while managing the stress of COVID-19 safety, restrictions and lockdowns.

Many have said that they feel their workplaces are not prepared for the coming delta wave. The QIMR Berghofer modelling shows that once the borders open up the very best case scenario is around 400 new infections per day and worst case more than 1,200, even at 80 per cent fully vaccinated, assuming no health measures like localised lockdowns. Under the same scenario, it shows between 100 and 600 people in ICU beds come July. Given that Queensland Health only has around 393 staffed and equipped ICU beds, with surge capacity up to a total of 576, these numbers are very worrying. This leaves little to no space for victims of accidents, car crashes, heart attacks, strokes or other infections and people recovering from surgery. Given that our public hospitals are already at capacity, this model indicates a dire picture for the coming months. There were 13 capacity code yellows—when hospitals start to run out of beds and ambulances are forced to divert to other emergency departments—in Queensland facilities in September.

The Chief Health Officer has said that we can cope with 400 cases and that our ICUs can cope with 400 cases, but the QIMR modelling says that 400 daily cases would be the very best case scenario under a 90 per cent vaccination rate. Queenslanders deserve to know what other measures the

government is considering to achieve best-case scenario, particularly when looking at examples of Victoria where there are 1,534 new local COVID-19 cases today at around a 75 per cent vaccination rate. These scenarios paint a dire picture for vulnerable communities and those communities for which the vaccine rollout has been slow—people with disabilities, First Nations communities and multicultural communities.

While Queenslanders go out and get vaccinated and we are just weeks away from opening, there is no reason—no reason—why our healthcare system should be in this dire state. Instead of spending the last 18 months bolstering our healthcare system, the government has been trying to squeeze a billion dollar efficiency dividend out of our healthcare system. We have seen some of the lowest increases in new hospital beds over the past decade, with just 200 new beds over the last 12 months—well below the average of 245. It is a pitiful number, particularly in the middle of a global pandemic and during critical months to prepare for the coming surge.

The state government has itself conceded that we are facing a massive funding shortfall, going cap in hand with other states to the federal government, only to be refused. But we do not have time for the feds and states to play blame games. Our healthcare system needs to be ready if Queenslanders are going to be kept safe and healthy for the inevitable COVID surge when our borders open, and the government needs to act now. We have just seven weeks until the borders open and the time for buck-passing is up. Of course, we support more federal funding for our hospitals, which is crucial. Of course we would absolutely welcome the Morrison government changing its appalling position and urgently funding our hospitals, but as for this game of each government blaming each other for our underfunded hospitals we have heard it before, we have heard it for the last decade and Queenslanders are fed up. I am fed up with this state Labor government acting like its hands are tied and that it cannot do anything about our critically underfunded hospitals. This state government knows full well that there are a multitude of ways that we can raise funds to fund our hospitals. This is a Labor state government. Health is meant to be its bread and butter, and it is time to act.

Our health system urgently needs a massive funding boost to cope with the looming surge and today I am proposing a way for the government to do just that. Despite the pandemic, Queensland is still a wealthy state and not everyone has been doing it tough during COVID. The big banks have been rolling in profit. They have made massive profits, bolstered by \$188 billion in ultracheap loans from the Reserve Bank and the unprecedented housing boom. The big four have been sitting on \$19 billion in surplus capital and these ultracheap loans from the RBA have been estimated to equate to about \$1.5 billion in handouts over the next three years. The same housing boom that has jacked up rents, put home ownership out of reach for so many people and has so many Queenslanders on the brink of homelessness has delivered unprecedented profits to the big banks.

Across the big four, half-year cash profits soared by an average of 62 per cent, with the Commonwealth Bank reporting a whopping \$8.7 billion in profit in the last financial year. NAB and Westpac posted half-year profits of \$3.4 billion and \$3.5 billion and in this context a 0.05 per cent levy is a fair and reasonable rate to charge the big banks. In fact, if we applied the levy against the Commonwealth Bank's profits this financial year, the Commonwealth Bank still would have made \$8 billion in profits and NAB and Westpac still over \$3 billion in half-year profits.

The big banks can absolutely afford to pay a little bit more for the benefit of all Queenslanders. If we just use a fraction of the big banks' obscene wealth to fund our hospitals, they would be in a much better position to handle the surge in numbers that we know is coming when Queensland reopens. That is why the Queensland Greens are proposing a COVID-19 health levy on the big banks. We would raise \$1.03 billion over the next year alone if we were to impose a state based levy of 0.05 per cent of total liabilities per quarter on the biggest banks operating in Queensland. Just a modest 0.05 per cent means that \$1.03 billion could be invested right now in our public hospitals and \$4.3 billion over the next four years.

The bill I am introducing today would impose a bank levy of 0.05 per cent on authorised deposit-taking of institutions for any quarter where they are liable to pay the Commonwealth major bank levy—that is, 0.2 per cent per year. It would apply from the first quarter starting immediately after commencement of the act. In effect, that means banks with more than \$100 billion in licensed entity liabilities: the big banks—the Commonwealth Bank, Westpac, ANZ and NAB, plus Macquarie Bank—five corporate entities in total. This levy is additional to the federal bank levy of 0.015 per cent per quarter.

It would apply to Queensland's share of bank liabilities, the bank's main source of revenue. This would be calculated using Queensland's gross state product as a share of national GDP, currently at 18.9 per cent. The bill prohibits banks from recovering the cost of the levy from customers. There is no evidence that the federal bank levy has been handed on to customers. Banks will easily be able to

cover this small levy from their profit margins. I would also say that if the big banks hand the cost on to customers they do so at their own peril. A range of great small banks make up our banking sector here in Queensland. If the big banks want to be greedy and shift their costs on to customers, Queenslanders can take their money elsewhere.

It is time we had a little bit more for Queensland hospitals and a little less for the big banks. The bank levy will raise \$4.3 billion from the inflated profit margin of the banks to invest in our public health system. It is a crucial opportunity to boost our health funding and similar to what is already in place at the federal level. In fact, it is also similar to the bank levy proposed by the South Australian Labor government in 2017, which they only abandoned after a concerted campaign by conservatives and the big banks.

The government is so careful to paint a picture that our health system is fine, but it is clearly not. There is a lack of transparency about our system. When I asked the minister about how many beds were available in the system over the past financial year I was told it is impossible to know that as it changes from day to day. The jig is up now. The state government has hit the feds up for more hospital funding and when that went through there were inconsistent statements from the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the health minister. Is the hospital system ready for the surge in COVID-19 cases or not? It is clear that after 30 years of underfunding from successive governments it is not.

Here is our opportunity to raise those funds, to make the big end of town contribute to public health. Queensland's hospitals are already operating at 100 per cent capacity and that is before the coming surge. An extra billion dollars a year would boost our hospital system with an extra \$750 million to create an additional 500 beds across ICU, emergency and inpatient wards and enhance our state's Hospital in the Home options by delivering it publicly with an extra \$280 million per year, ensuring Queenslanders with COVID-19 in a stable condition can isolate at home with the health care they need to get better.

The Victorian government currently spend about \$268 million a year to provide 203 Hospital in the Home beds. It is anticipated that \$268 million would roughly deliver the same amount of beds here in Queensland—an extra 200 beds—and the remaining \$12 million could be invested in personal oxygen meters for people to safely monitor their oxygen levels at home, phones with data for people who need them and strengthening connections between Queensland Health, primary health networks and GPs.

Even before COVID-19 our public hospital system did not have enough beds, nurses and doctors. In 2019 Queensland public hospitals were so overwhelmed that they were forced to declare an emergency and ask people not to go to emergency departments. We have seen code yellows and healthcare workers raising the alarm. While an extra billion dollar investment will go a long way to boosting our healthcare system, we also need significant investment in long-term solutions for our public health system. Additionally, ongoing investment is needed to bolster emergency departments, improve staff-to-patient ratios, overhaul mental health support and care and improve palliative care, maternity services and addiction management.

Almost a year ago today I was elected on a platform to introduce a big bank levy, make mining companies pay their fair share of royalties and a developer tax. We would raise \$67 billion during this parliamentary term if we made big banks, mining companies and developers pay their fair share. I prioritised the introduction of this bill to ensure Queensland hospitals can cope with the coming surge when we open our borders. We are not stuck between begging from the feds and blaming them. Of course we support the feds contributing—we urge them to—but in the absence of this the state absolutely can and should raise this revenue.

In preparing for this intervention I engaged a number of stakeholders, including the AMAQ, Health Consumers Queensland, Queenslanders with Disability Network and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane. It is clear that any conversation about opening Queensland back up has to take into account the needs of people with disability and First Nations people. The vaccination rates in these communities are simply not high enough for there to be complacency and I am really concerned about the impacts of a surge of COVID-19 on these communities. The other thing that emerged in this consultation is the state of Queensland's hospital system. It is simply ill equipped to deal with the coming surge and this bill maps a way forward to funding it to do its job.

If members are wondering if I consulted with the big banks, the big banks have made massive profits ripping off everyday people. A study by the University of Melbourne found bank misconduct has cost Australians over \$200 billion over five years. Based on Queensland's share of the economy, that means Queenslanders have been ripped off about \$38 billion. The big banks have ripped billions of

dollars out of the Queensland economy and given nothing back. So, no, I did not consult the big banks and I have no intention to do so. My job is to represent ordinary Queenslanders, not to look after the profit margins of greedy, dodgy banks.

Our bank levy is modelled on the bill proposed by the South Australian Weatherill Labor government in 2017. They were committed to standing up to the big banks and standing on the side of everyday South Australians.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Members on my right and, members on my left, order!

Mr Ryan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Morayfield, you are warned.

Dr MacMAHON: Shamefully, following a campaign by the big bank lobby, led by none other than former Queensland Labor premier Anna Bligh, the bill failed in the upper house thanks to the LNP and Xenophon party. This is what former Labor premier Jay Weatherill had to say when their bank levy got shot down—

We've taken the fight up to the big banks but with Steven Marshall taking the side of the banks over the people of South Australia this has no chance of getting up.

While Steven Marshall and Nick Xenophon side with large corporate interests, I will always stand up for South Australian small business.

Today I ask Queensland Labor: will you follow your South Australian colleagues? Will you take the side of everyday people or will you go the way of the South Australian LNP and side with large corporate interests and the big banks?

Queenslanders have been committed to the health advice over the past two years. We have locked down, we have masked up, we have followed restrictions, we have been separated from family and friends and we are getting vaccinated. I encourage every Queenslanders to go and get your vaccine as soon as you can. While we have been doing all of that we have been relying on the government to be strengthening our healthcare system with the beds, staff and technology we need. We have just seven weeks. We could start investing in our health system now knowing that we have sustainable funding streams for years to come. I urge the government to not go the way of the South Australian LNP. Do not side with the big banks and the bank lobby who only care about their profits; stand on the side of everyday Queenslanders.

First Reading

Dr MacMAHON (South Brisbane—Grn) (12.48 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Economics and Governance Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Economics and Governance Committee.

FOOD (LABELLING OF SEAFOOD) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (12.48 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Food Act 2006 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the State Development and Regional Industries Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Food (Labelling of Seafood) Amendment Bill 2021 [[1816](#)].

Tabled paper: Food (Labelling of Seafood) Amendment Bill 2021, explanatory notes [[1817](#)].

Tabled paper: Food (Labelling of Seafood) Amendment Bill 2021, statement of compatibility with human rights [[1818](#)].

I am proud to continue the tradition in this parliament of Katter's Australian Party recognising the value of domestic production and protecting it by materialising those protections into legislation that has some grunt and is promoted out in the real world. I am pleased to present this bill which is about country of origin labelling in seafood sold through the food service sector in dining outlets across Queensland.

The purpose of this bill is twofold. The first aim is to increase consumer awareness around the origins of the seafood that they purchase and consume. If we want market driven results we need to properly inform consumers, but at the moment we do not have those safeguards in place. At the moment there are some voluntary labels that work and are effective, but if that is not enforced it is quite useless as people can simply choose not to use them. The second aim is to support the Australian and Queensland seafood industry, which supports thousands of local jobs now but many more could be created in the future. As I will discuss later in this speech, there is enormous potential in this regard. We are only scratching the surface with what we are producing now.

When looking at stimulating the industry, the main point is to recognise the natural advantages we have over most of our global competitors in this space and to properly capitalise on them. At the moment we are not taking advantage of that. We have a trusted agriculture and aquaculture supply with very strict ethical and environmental standards compared to many of our major competitors, particularly those in Asia. Australians have come to expect those standards.

Since 1986, across the country the retailers of food—although not the cafes, restaurants and the like in the service industry—have been operating with fixed information. They were forced to do that through legislation. Under the Country of Origin Food Labelling Information Standard 2016, under section 134 of the Australian Consumer Law, it became mandatory for all retail seafood to be labelled with its country of origin. Major supermarkets, convenience stores, local suppliers—which I like to shop at—and independent grocers are forced to have that labelling. However, if you go across the road to a cafe or restaurant they do not have to do it.

Businesses preparing food for immediate public consumption have long been exempt from the code and that exemption exists throughout all the states. The code is an Australian and New Zealand food service standard code; it crosses the Tasman. The standard that was introduced has been effective and is well accepted by the market, but there is now a significant gap between the retail and hospitality sectors, and I would say that leads to misinformation for consumers. Consumers are used to seeing the labels at the supermarket so when they see a barramundi sold in a restaurant naturally they think that, because it is an Australian fish, it must be from Australia. There is data to support the fact that that misconception exists amongst consumers.

The Northern Territory is the exception. In 2008 they legislated to make it a requirement for venues to identify imported seafood. The Northern Territory is an anomaly. Good job, Northern Territory. We would like Queensland to be like them in this respect. We want labelling such as the Northern Territory has to support our seafood industries, whether it be wild-caught catch or seafood from the aquaculture farms.

When it comes to seafood no-one could argue about the quality of the Australian product, but our capacity to produce is under-utilised. The interesting point is that currently only 30 or 40 per cent of what is consumed in Australia is produced locally. That means that 60 per cent of what we eat comes from overseas. That is a shame because we have a strong capacity to enhance the amount of catch that we bring in. Whether it is through aquaculture or wild-caught catch, there is a great capacity to expand.

In 2019-20, in Australia a total of 334,615 tonnes of seafood was consumed, which is about 12.4 kilograms per person. As I said, 60 per cent of that was imported. I think that is something that we need to remedy and we can do that by passing legislation in this House, which is what the KAP is proposing in this bill. Overwhelmingly, Australian consumers have demonstrated that they want to eat local seafood, so the question is: how do we properly educate people? This legislation will go some way towards doing that.

In 2018, the *Food demand in Australia: trends and issues* report found that the demand for Australian grown produce was on the rise domestically. I think that the onset of COVID has enhanced that even further. People want to know that they are eating under the protection of the environmental and ethical food safety standards that we have in Australia. I think that desire will only increase. While nearly all of the beef, lamb and chicken that we consume is domestic product, seafood is the anomaly, with 60 per cent being imported.

Mr Dametto: Shame.

Mr KATTER: It is a shame, as the member for Hinchinbrook says, but it is something that is really within our capacity to fix. This situation can result in an elevated risk of inappropriate pricing. People can exploit the fact that there is confusion and misunderstanding at the point of sale. A cafe or restaurant can sell imported barramundi for the same price as local barramundi simply because people are not properly educated on what they are eating. This bill seeks to address that issue.

Australian seafood industry representatives have said that more than 50 per cent of people often incorrectly assume that the seafood they are eating is produced in Australia when no country of origin is stated. As I have said, currently supermarkets are required to inform shoppers, but the service industry—the pubs, fish and chip shops, restaurants—is not required to do that. Many in the Australian seafood industry, including the Barramundi Farmers Association and Seafood Industry Australia, explain that the exemption is to not only the economic but also the social detriment of the industry and local jobs, which is probably the more important issue.

To expand the industry we have to ask if we have the capacity to meet an intended increase in demand for domestic produce. In 2018, the national production of farmed barramundi was valued at \$90 million, which represented a doubling of production since 2014, so there has already been a great increase in production rates. There is a target to double production and become a \$200 million industry by 2025. Therefore, it is quite clear that we have the capacity. Anyone who has spent any time in North Queensland, the Northern Territory and other remote parts of Northern Australia will know that there is plenty of appetite for expansion and a desire to do it.

Mr Dametto interjected.

Mr KATTER: Yes, I understand and acknowledge that the state has indicated their intent to expand and we welcome that, but it has to hit the ground and materialise into something real. You have to create the demand for the product domestically, which is what we are trying to achieve here.

The federal Competition and Consumer Amendment (Country of Origin) Bill 2016 received bipartisan support and was applied to retailers. Why not expand that to the hospitality industry? There have been a number of inquiries into this issue: the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee's Inquiry into the current requirements for labelling of seafood and seafood products; the Joint Select Committee of Northern Australia report titled *Scaling up: inquiry into opportunities for expanding aquaculture in Northern Australia*; the government response to Senator Xenophon's Food Standards Amendment (Fish Labelling) Bill, which recognised the consumers' desire to know the origin of food; and the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Industry's report titled *A clearer message for consumers*, which states—

The Committee acknowledges that many consumers want to support Australian businesses by purchasing Australian made products—consumers express a strong preference to support local industries including food processing and manufacturing.

In addition, there is the *Food demand in Australia: trends and issues 2018* report. Finally, in 2015 the research conducted by the federal department of industry, innovation and science found that being able to identify the country of origin was either important or very important to 74 per cent of the consumers surveyed. There is pretty strong rigour behind this and it all points in the right direction, which is that we need to better educate consumers. This is about a subtle expansion of what we are already doing in the retail industry.

What are we seeking to achieve through this bill? We want to remove the country of origin exemption on the food service industry so that it must include the mandatory labelling of the seafood that is sold in food service venues. We want to ensure that food service menus identify the origin of seafood through country, region or specific location. It would be at the discretion of the business to say, for example, it is Australian barramundi or it is Northern Territory barramundi.

Debate, on motion of Mr Katter, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

QUEENSLAND VETERANS' COUNCIL BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 3301, on motion of Ms Fentiman—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (2.00 pm), continuing: I was talking about the great work the Palaszczuk government does with veterans, particularly in the Maryborough electorate. We have the Gallipoli to Armistice Memorial, known locally as the Duncan Chapman Memorial. We also have the

Military Trail, which goes from Maryborough through to Hervey Bay, Toogoom, Howard and Tiaro. There are some interesting stories regarding our veterans in the area. The Military Trail, backed by the Palaszczuk government and the Fraser Coast Regional Council, has become a big tourist trail for the region—besides the whales at Hervey Bay and the manufacturing in Maryborough. We do get a lot of veterans who come through.

We have some really great RSL clubs: Maryborough, Tiaro, Burrum District at Howard and Toogoom. The Toogoom and District RSL club is what I call a traditional club. It is an old Vietnam shed that was found in crates and put together by a lot of the Vietnam veterans. It is a really good atmosphere. They are doing great work in the community for the Vietnam veterans and also for the Afghan and Iraqi veterans. There is a lot happening with veterans particularly in the regional area of Maryborough. Thanks to the Palaszczuk Labor government, we have work for veterans in the Public Service.

I would like to talk about some very good friends of mine who are veterans. One in particular is a bloke called Jason Scanes. Jason and I are very good friends. Jason is one of the most principled men you will ever meet in your life. He is a tremendous person.

Mr Mellish: Hear, hear!

Mr SAUNDERS: I will take that interjection from the assistant minister, the member for Aspley. I know that they are quite good friends. Jason is a bloke from Forsaken Fighters Australia. He has done a lot just recently in terms of bringing interpreters to Australia, particularly his interpreter from Afghanistan. I know that it has been a very hard time for Jason. As I said, he is a very principled man and a man of his word. We think about Jason all the time and acknowledge the hard work he has done to bring the interpreters here. Also, he is talking to the Afghan soldiers back there all the time. Forsaken Fighters Australia is a very good group. Jason plays a major part in that. Craig Smith is another great friend of mine. I also mention Ricky Rowland. There are a lot of good veterans in our community and a lot of veterans on the Fraser Coast, particularly in the Maryborough-Hervey Bay area. They play a very important role in our community.

I acknowledge the veterans who have served our country. We can never pay them enough. One of the worries I have is that if the Indue card, which is the federal government card, comes in and if the Morrison government is re-elected all veterans will go on this Indue card. I am very concerned because we have seen what it has done to ordinary people but particularly to veterans who have issues. I think putting them on the Indue card is an absolute disgrace. We know that the bill has been passed by the federal government—they only have to pull the trigger on the legislation—and I am very concerned about what will happen to our veterans if the government does get re-elected and they put veterans on the Indue card.

I would like to thank the Premier and particularly the assistant minister. I have talked at length about this bill with the assistant minister, along with Jason Scanes and other veterans in my area. I thank the member for Aspley. I know that he has been in contact with a lot of members of my community about this bill and has worked very hard with my veteran community to make sure it has landed in the right spot. I thank the committee and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (2.04 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. The Palaszczuk government will always be committed to our veterans and their families. That goes to the heart of this proposal to establish the Queensland Veterans' Council as a new statutory body.

I would like to acknowledge all of our veterans here in Queensland, including those in this chamber, on both sides of the chamber, for their commitment to our country and our community. Both my parents served in the RAAF—they in fact met there—so from a young age I have had a very strong understanding of the importance of our service personnel and our veterans and their role in our community and our country.

It is proposed that the Queensland Veterans' Council will become the trustee of Anzac Square and will have responsibility for its ongoing management and operation and that the Queensland Veterans' Council will have responsibility for managing the Anzac Day Trust Fund under the Anzac Day Act 1995. The Queensland Veterans' Council will also provide valuable advice to government on veterans matters.

The change proposed in this bill will mean that the Queensland Veterans' Council will be responsible for managing, maintaining and preserving Anzac Square as a memorial to honour the service and sacrifice of Queenslanders and other Australians in war, conflict, peacemaking as well as peacekeeping. The creation of the Queensland Veterans' Council hands over control of the monument to the men and women who served the nation in the Defence Force, their families and the broader

veterans community. Currently, the monument is managed by the Brisbane City Council, the State Library of Queensland and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and does not require direct involvement of veterans in the day-to-day decisions of the site.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has listened to the defence community. That is why we have accepted the committee's recommendation to give a stronger voice for service men and women, to ensure that at least 50 per cent of the members of the Queensland Veterans' Council be a veteran or a representative, to ensure that the Anzac Day Trust and Anzac Square are managed by veterans for veterans.

This is a landmark moment where veterans, their families and the broader community will be handed unprecedented input into the management of their affairs in Queensland. It beggars belief, to be quite frank, that the other side of the House have recommended the veterans serving on this body should not receive remuneration for doing so. I note that the member for Burnett and the member for Scenic Rim have questioned the appropriateness of paying remuneration to members of the Queensland Veterans' Council, implying that fair remuneration to these veterans and other members of the council not be provided on the basis that it may 'impact on their ability to provide unbiased advice and compromise their impartiality'.

As the member for Miller, I am always proud to participate in local events in honour of veterans and their families, run by groups in my electorate such as—I would like to acknowledge their incredible hard work, not just at the special event days of the year like Anzac Day but all year—the Stephens RSL Sub Branch based at Annerley, Sherwood Indooroopilly RSL Sub Branch and Yeronga Dutton Park RSL Sub-Branch, which runs the service at the Ekibin Memorial Park.

As the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, I am also proud to have made it easier for veterans to access cheaper public transport. Under that scheme, the Veteran White Card holders can access a 50 per cent discount on public transport fares across the state. This is in addition to more than 35,000 veterans who hold Gold Cards who can access public transport discounts. It is the Palaszczuk Labor government that has supported veterans and accompanying family members to travel free on any TransLink bus, train, ferry or tram service on Remembrance Day every year.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has also created an online portal for veterans in Queensland to support ex-service personnel and their families in transitioning to civilian lives. This can often be difficult for some personnel. It incorporates support service search engines and allows them to connect with the support they need, including employment opportunities, housing and accommodation services and support, counselling, mental health services and information on concessions.

We as a government understand the importance of supporting veterans and their families through tough times. I see this bill very much in that light—as a continuing commitment that we have to those who have put their lives on the line and who have sacrificed their professional careers in terms of defending our country. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (2.09 pm): I will begin, as other members have, by acknowledging and thanking all those who have served, and in particular the members in this House who have served. Growing up in Ipswich, the Australian Defence Force was never too far away from my childhood. Teachers used to have to regularly pause lessons when an F-111 or a C-17 flew over. We got to see more dump and burns than anyone else in Queensland.

I owe my very existence to the RAAF base at Amberley. My father, Rod, was posted there as an airframe fitter. He met my mum at a disco held on the base. I do not want to know any further details about that. I am exceptionally proud of his service. He spent 23 years in the Royal Australian Air Force. He is currently an active reservist. He has worked for the last decade or so as a Commonwealth public servant with the 16th Aviation Brigade in Enoggera.

As all members have noted, we are so thankful to the men and women who have consistently put themselves forward to protect our way of life, to allow us to live in peace. There is no greater example of what to be thankful for than the parliament we are speaking in today. We take our freedom for granted every day, but we only have it because of that very special group of Australians who chose to put themselves quite literally on the line to defend our values. To say we owe it to our veterans to ensure we best care for them is an understatement.

The horror of wars and conflict is something most of us would never want to and will never face. Because of our service men and women and because of our veterans, none of us are likely to ever have to do so. Because of the nature of that service, we need to do all we can to support this group of people. One of the best ways we can do that is to listen to what they need. The establishment of the

Queensland Veterans' Council should be about that. That is why it was surprising to see the original make-up of this council was not proposed to be predominantly of veterans and that the veterans reference group was not mandated.

Disappointingly, the first draft before the amendment only allowed for two veterans on the council. I understand one of the difficulties of this council is the wideranging scope they will cover. Therefore, certain expertise in heritage conservation, financial management and so forth is needed. However, surely the prime role of the Queensland Veterans' Council should be to represent veterans and their views. That is how their stories will be told. That is how they will be heard. That is how we will best respect our veterans. This was shared by many stakeholders. RSL Queensland put it plainly—

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.

I welcome the committee's recommendation and the government's subsequent amendment to ensure 50 per cent of the council will be veterans. I, of course, support the amendment to be moved by the member for Southern Downs to ensure the chair is a veteran.

This bill must provide a genuine space for veterans to represent their communities. The veterans reference group is another avenue for this to happen. I support the view that this should be mandatory. It allows for more veterans to be represented and works directly with the QVC. It allows for more veterans groups to be able to take part and will aid the council well in their decision-making.

Queenslanders want to honour their veterans. The continued development of Anzac Square will provide a central space for residents to come to, to learn and to pay their respects to those who have done so well to protect our way of life. In my electorate, I have seen the importance of remembering our fallen soldiers. Ken Golden, the President of the North Gold Coast RSL Sub Branch, which is actually in the electorate of Theodore, led the incredible project of painting a mural on Brisbane Road. It has the faces of 24 soldiers over both sides of the road who lost their lives during World War I from the now Gold Coast region as well as the names of an additional six. This is one of our busiest roads, with thousands of cars passing along there every day as people come in and out of our city. It pays respect to what those young soldiers gave their lives for—for us to enjoy the standard of living we have today. There is no better standard than on the Gold Coast.

The response we have to our local veterans groups demonstrates the desire of Queenslanders to honour their service. Whether it is the North Gold Coast RSL Sub Branch at Helensvale, the Southport Sub Branch with Rodney Tagg or the Runaway Bay Sub Branch led by Bruce Main and his team, including Graham Gordon and Barry Medlin, all these groups work hard to honour their members and those no longer with us and to educate young and old alike about the different conflicts our nation has been part of. This education is so important and we must ensure it continues.

In Labrador and Biggera Waters we have the names of local soldiers on our street signs. Sydney Henry Turpin, George Henry Parr, Norman David Freeman, Percival George Burrows and Bertie James Taylor all served and died in the First World War and all were honoured by our council in the 1930s by having local streets renamed after them. These young men gave their lives before the Gold Coast was even a city. They did not have a concept of what it would look like today, but it is through their sacrifice that we all enjoy living there.

I have shared some of that history locally. Once again, we have seen a massive response. People want to know more. They want to understand their local history and what happened to get us where we are today. They also want our veterans to be honoured, to be respected and to be heard. We know the terrible rates of suicide amongst this community, amongst many other issues. More needs to be done. I hope through the establishment of the Queensland Veterans' Council we will see a dramatic improvement for all who have served.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (2.15 pm): In rising to speak to the Veterans' Council Bill, I acknowledge at the outset that I have family members who fought in the First World War and, therefore, like many Queenslanders, Anzac Square in Brisbane city is very important to me and my family. Like many Australian and New Zealand families, the Pughs sent over three boys to fight on the front line in World War I and two returned home. Sadly, Frank was lost fighting at the Somme. As a percentage of the total population, no-one gave more to the cause than Australia and New Zealand.

The memorial shrine is also very important to my three local RSLs—Centenary, Darra and Sherwood-Indooroopilly. Like many members, although we find the services in our local area to be very popular—they are in fact growing in popularity every year—there is still something irreplaceably important and sacred about Anzac Square in the Brisbane CBD. Despite the increased attendance of the community at our local services, I also have a very high number of service men, women and their

families who will attend a local service and then head into the city for the march or conversely attend the beautiful dawn service before returning to their local community for their local service and, of course, a game of two-up at the local golf club.

I have noted in parliament before that there are more Kiwis who call Brisbane home than any other city in Australia.

Mr Harper: Hear, hear!

Ms PUGH: 'Hear, hear' indeed! I checked yesterday and I can point out for the information of the House that 191,000 Kiwis call Queensland home whereas just 114,000 call New South Wales home. From a nation of five million people—that is, New Zealand—a significant number have chosen to make Queensland their home.

Anzac Square is incredibly important to these Kiwis. It is an acknowledgement of the sacrifice of their forebears, but it is also a strong and enduring recognition of the bond that exists between our two nations—a bond that was solidified at Gallipoli. I believe that Anzac Square has significant importance for the Queensland community, particularly the Kiwis who have come to call Queensland home, and it will do for so for generations to come.

That is why it is important to have management plans in place for this sacred site now and into the future. This bill will achieve that. I know that Mount Ommaney locals are very supportive of the state's investment in Anzac Square. My colleague the member for Ipswich West spoke beautifully about some of the features of the upgrade. In my view, attending a dawn service at that beautiful arena is certainly something that every Queenslanders should experience at least once, even if they religiously attend their local services, as I do.

As the member for Macalister noted in her contribution, our veterans are not a homogenous group. I noted earlier that I have three RSLs in my electorate. Each of them is very different in terms of culture and what they choose to focus on in their Anzac Day services and their Remembrance Day services. Darra, under the leadership of Peter Mapp, has a wonderful relationship with many of our Vietnam veterans in particular because we have a very high Vietnamese population. The establishment of that relationship between our Vietnamese community and the Vietnam veterans has been crucial to that RSL.

Centenary RSL have a strong focus on including young people in their services. For every service they always invite the local school groups along. Every Anzac Day service has a concert quality performance by the Centenary State High School band. The president, George Lefevre, has always believed that children are the future of the Anzac movement and he has always been fastidious about including them.

Sherwood Indooroopilly RSL have a strong focus on the relationships with our First Nations people. This year's Anzac service—I note that many other states were not able to hold an Anzac Day service—had a beautiful tribute to our First Nations people and diggers. It was a wonderful step towards redressing the long-term injustice of failing to recognise our First Nations diggers who have never been properly acknowledged. I thank Bill Cross, the president, for his leadership in incorporating in his services the recognition of our First Nations diggers.

I also want to thank and recognise Glenn Mostyn, the former president. He would always begin our Anzac Day services with a recognition of our First Nations people. He would recognise that they had not been properly acknowledged. This has been a longstanding effort from the Sherwood Indooroopilly RSL and it is paying dividends.

In my local community we have recently named a significant local bridge after Len Waters, the first Indigenous fighter pilot. It is my view that the inroads carved by our local RSLs in recognising the First Nations' war effort was key to securing community support for the naming of this bridge. I thank the Minister for Main Roads for his support for the naming of that bridge. It was a wonderful day to stand there with Len's family and name that bridge after our first Indigenous RAAF fighter pilot. It was a very proud day for my community.

Beyond the local RSLs, our local community is also home to Paws for Hope and Understanding, which provides service dogs for veterans via Wounded Heroes and Aussie Heroes. All of these groups provide different services to our veterans. I should declare that, as listed on my register of interests, I am a proud patron of Paws for Hope and Understanding.

As you can see from the efforts of my RSLs and veterans service groups, as the member for Macalister has highlighted, these groups are so diverse. This is just one electorate's worth of groups and viewpoints and different perspectives that they provide. It is absolutely crucial that we have the space and the room on the council for all of those different views because they are all so important and so valid and so needed. Thinking of the wonderful groups in my electorate, I know each of them could

make a wonderful contribution. It is these different voices that will ensure that we continue to address the many different needs of our veterans groups because they are just as diverse as the rest of Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (2.22 pm): I rise to speak in support of this very important bill before the House, the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021, and the establishment of the Queensland Veterans' Council, the QVC. It is good to see that this council will have responsibility for Anzac Square, take on the role and responsibilities of the current board of trustees for the Anzac Day Trust and provide important advice to the government on veteran related matters. This is very important for all Australians, more so for our Australian defence men and women who have served our country with their bravery and who have paid the ultimate sacrifice since the Boer War. It is also very important to their families and friends who stayed behind.

As most members in this place would know, Anzac Square—with the impressive Shrine of Remembrance and the Eternal Flame burning at its heart—is a heritage listed town square and war memorial located in the heart of Brisbane's CBD. It is a very impressive structure with a very important purpose. It is a state memorial to commemorate the Queensland men and women who served in major international conflicts and it preserves their legacy by offering generations of Queenslanders a place to reflect on their bravery and sacrifice.

Anzac Square was officially opened on Armistice Day in 1930, exactly 12 years after the treaty was signed to end the fighting on the Western Front, effectively bringing World War I to a close. The Shrine of Remembrance is the most impressive feature in the square. The external wall of the Shrine of Memories is dedicated to approximately 60,000 Queenslanders who fought in World War I. It was one-tenth of the state's population at the time. That is why when you read the names you see that there are so many who are related to each other and who served together.

What I found more fascinating was that the funding for this monument, Anzac Square, came from funds raised by public subscription from the people of Queensland and more so from the people of Brisbane. It came from men and women who at the same time were dealing with the Great Depression. It took 15 years to raise the money. That in itself is quite moving, and clearly demonstrated to me how the people felt at the time about their fellow Australians who had served them in extremely tough times.

It also demonstrated to me what the true meaning of the Anzac spirit was and still is today. Doing some research about this incredible site and its history gave me a better understanding about the Australian spirit that makes us as Aussies very unique around the world. It was also impressive to see that at the start of 2014 Anzac Square underwent a major restoration and enhancement project. Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the project were a joint initiative by the Queensland government and the Brisbane City Council and were undertaken from 2014 to 2016. The Eternal Flame urn also had an upgrade with a new electronic ignition system to help make sure the flame would stay alight.

The more I reflected on war memorials I had visited around the country, the more I started to think about our unique memorials in Townsville. It reminded me of the time when we as a city council in Townsville had to petition the Howard federal government to stop them from selling off our historic military site at Kissing Point at the northern end of our beautiful Strand. The site was saved by the people for the people so we could also save old existing military buildings and build a place for reflection and a place to record our city's military history and the memories of those who served. That is important and it is the right thing to do. It also clearly demonstrated the power of the people when it comes to showing due respect to those who have served us under the Australian flag. It does not matter where you live, the emotion is still the same.

Due to that campaign, today we have a very beautiful open space at Kissing Point—also known as Jezzine Barracks—that now records our garrison city's monumental military history and it is a people's place that demonstrates the true meaning of the Anzac spirit. It also demonstrates how much we respect and honour Australia's finest. That is why it is important for this bill to be passed. It is not just about doing the right thing but about keeping the spirit alive.

As the member for Mundingburra, I am fortunate enough to have Lavarack Barracks in my electorate—the largest Army base in the country. On 29 July 1966, Lavarack Barracks was officially opened by then Australian prime minister Harold Holt. This was during the conflict in Vietnam. I would also like to take a moment to thank the former member for Mundingburra and former minister for communities, disability services and seniors, Coralee O'Rourke. I worked alongside Coralee on the steering committee for The Oasis Townsville—one of the first dedicated defence transition centres in the country. I was joined by retired Lieutenant General John Caligari AO, Floss and Anita, who worked tirelessly to deliver this project. I also thank them for their amazing work in our community and their dedication to improving the lives of our veterans.

Townsville, as a city and a community, is very proud of our military family and history. We know what sacrifices they have made, and continue to make each and every day, for our country through war and helping during natural disasters or anything else that is asked of them. That is why I sincerely support this bill. We must do everything to record and preserve our military history and furthermore keep the Anzac spirit alive.

The first Americans arrived in Brisbane on 22 December 1941, and by mid-1943 the number in Australia had risen to 150,000, with the largest concentrations in Queensland being near Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville. I am sharing this information to demonstrate that our men and women who served in our Australian Defence Force played a very important role alongside our allies protecting the state of Queensland and our great country. Keep in mind that this was 78 years ago when our state population was only just over one million people. That is one-fifth of the state's population today. This gives you a very clear picture of what a huge military presence looked like some 78 years ago.

I could talk for hours about our great men and women and my brother Tony, for that matter, who have served this country proudly during the different wars and conflicts around the globe which made Australia what it is today.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Member for Mundingburra, you might just come back to the bill. I know you can talk for hours about other things, but come back to the bill, please.

Mr WALKER: We must never forget our brave Australians. It is these historical war memorials—made by the people, for the people—around Australia and our great state that make us who we are today. Lest we forget. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (2.29 pm): This bill affects real people—the people to whom we owe our freedoms—and I will take this opportunity to reiterate some of their messages in the words of these local veterans. One veteran recalled—

I was in hospital for three months suffering this awful depression and anxiety. They said it was PTSD. The first day I went out, I saw my first dead body. This dead body, who was a thriving human being 24 hours before, looked like one of the dead animals that had been hit by a car.

Another explained—

You can't blot out of your life man's inhumanity to man. It's there, it's always with you, it's vulgar, it's violent, it's frightening, and it's gut-wrenching. War is a bit like a motor vehicle, you have the violence of the crash of the vehicles, and then you have the violence and vulgarity of people being severely injured. The difference is that being in a war is a bit like being in a car crash everyday.

In my electorate of Currumbin we have a very large and proud veteran community. There are over 1,600 veterans registered with Veterans' Affairs on the southern Gold Coast, but we know there are many more veterans than that. There are many veterans, spouses and their families who are not represented in that data. All of these veterans and their families are supported in my community by our wonderful Tweed Heads-Coolangatta RSL Sub Branch and the Currumbin-Palm Beach RSL Sub Branch, including their young veteran support services and the Ron Workman OAM Veteran Support Centre.

The Young Veteran Support Services Centre is the first of its kind in South-East Queensland. It was established three years ago after identifying the need in our local community to better support and engage with our younger veterans. A key focus is support in social, health and wellbeing, and education and employment opportunities for both our young veterans and their families. Currumbin also has the Ron Workman OAM Veteran Support Centre, which was established in 1998 with the sole aim of supporting our veteran community. Initially run by hardworking volunteers, it now employs several qualified staff who specialise in offering veteran support services to our veteran community. This is our veteran community and these are the people this bill will affect.

It is because of this and the duty that I owe to our wonderful veteran community that I must put on the record the reservations I hold in relation to the bill and why the LNP will propose some amendments. I urge the government to consider the voices of our veteran community when they consider the LNP's amendments. As it stands, this bill will see the establishment of the Queensland Veterans' Council as a new statutory body. The bill proposes that the QVC will be made up of eight people who will hold their positions for up to four years. The bill initially proposed that only two of those positions would be dedicated to veteran representatives while the rest were government appointments.

There were 12 submissions made to the committee during the consideration of this bill, and all of these submissions raised concerns with the lack of actual veteran representation on the council. Veterans are the only people with in-depth, first-hand knowledge of the unique needs and circumstances facing veterans and their families. The committee acknowledged this in their report, and I understand the Attorney-General has foreshadowed amendments to ensure that four of the eight

positions will now be occupied by veterans. We support the government's efforts to correct this mistake. For the council to be genuinely representative of veterans the government should ensure that the chair is also a veteran. The chair will have the casting vote so the chair needs to be a veteran. This is not proposed by the government. This is just one aspect of the bill that, in my view, lets the veteran community down. The council should be headed up by a veteran.

Another missed opportunity in this bill relates to the responsibilities and priorities of the QVC. It is proposed that council have three core areas of responsibility: firstly, to be a trustee of Anzac Square with the responsibility for the ongoing management and operation of the square. Anzac Square is currently under the control of the Brisbane City Council, which meets the costs of preserving, maintaining and enhancing the amazing legacy that is Anzac Square. Secondly, the council will manage the Anzac Day Trust Fund, which provides annual payments to organisations to help veterans and their families. For many decades the Anzac Day Trust Fund has been very well managed by four veterans, but this will change under the QVC structure. The third core area of responsibility is to provide advice to government on veterans issues.

The veterans community has raised legitimate concerns about the combining of these three functions within the remit of the QVC and also the prioritisation of these functions by the state government. The Queensland president of the Defence Force Welfare Association submitted—

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 Square Trust and to advise government on veteran matters. It treats advice on veteran issues as a trivial matter.

The former chair of the Queensland Veterans' Advisory Council stated that the bill—

... removes a 100-year-old faith in the veterans' community to manage the funds of the Anzac Day Trust ... It mixes bricks and mortar with the welfare of people.

He further stated—

The biggest problem with what this bill calls a veteran's council is that it is trying to run together two Acts—about Anzac Square, to look after a static thing which has different requirements, and looking after people's welfare.

Mr Andrew Craig, a Royal Australian Navy veteran who served as vice chair and subsequently chair of the Queensland Advisory Committee, made a similar point, stating—

... the bill attempts to conflate three elements, all of which require different skills and methods of operation.

To resolve this issue Mr Stewart Cameron, former president of RSL Queensland, suggested—

... that the management and conservation and significant aspects of Anzac Square need to be treated as a separate entity ... The veterans community should be treated as a separate issue.

I agree with all these submitters; furthermore, I would like to see the priorities of the Queensland Veterans' Council squarely on veteran welfare. I believe that placing the focus of this bill predominantly on the maintenance of Anzac Square is a missed opportunity for the state government to better support veterans and their families.

Concerns were also raised around the shortfall in funding for veteran support. Given the amount of funding allocated to the maintenance of Anzac Square—\$2.4 million—submitters to the bill held concerns that not enough money is being allocated to deliver services to support veterans. In fact, the Queensland Veterans' Council will not deliver any services at all.

In my view, this bill is a missed opportunity for the state government to tackle some of the critical concerns of veterans such as homelessness, mental health and the challenges that many veterans face when transitioning from military service. We need to do better for the spouses and children of Queensland's veterans. We need to do more than just lay wreaths on Anzac Day. We need to provide more than just words and gestures.

The amendments put forward by the LNP will take into account the concerns raised by stakeholders and ensure this bill better represents our veteran community. The LNP's amendments will improve the bill, so I urge the government to put politics aside and consider improving the bill.

In closing, I wish to acknowledge and thank all of the people in the Currumbin electorate who support our veteran community. Thank you to veteran David Freeman AM, who operates a veterans support program from his farm in Currumbin Valley. Thank you to the Currumbin RSL's Veteran Support

Centre and Young Veterans Support Services for their incredible work in initiating an ex-service organisations collaboration forum. This forum brings together ex-service organisations to collaborate on how they can best service the veteran community in an holistic manner.

My community has identified that one of the biggest barriers veterans face when getting support and assistance is navigating the services on offer. This forum helps our veteran community to navigate the challenges they face by mapping services, creating a directory and recommending specific services that support them in transitioning from service. Just last weekend the ESO came together to participate in an expo at the Currumbin RSL in support of Veterans' Health Week.

There are so many wonderful people in the Currumbin electorate who provide vital services to our local veteran community, and I wish to put on the record my sincere thanks to every single one of them for everything they do to support not only veterans but their families, their spouses and their children. It is vital work. In my view, this bill is a missed opportunity to further support veterans not just in relation to the Anzac Day Trust but also in the welfare and services they need to be provided with in order to transition from military service and also veterans who are currently serving.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (2.39 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. The objective of the bill is to establish the Queensland Veterans' Council as a statutory body. The Queensland Veterans' Council will have three areas of responsibility: trustee of Anzac Square under the Land Act 1994 and the ongoing management and operation of Anzac Square; the functions of the board of trustees under the Anzac Day Act 1995; and providing advice to government on veterans matters.

The bill will provide for the creation of the Queensland Veterans' Council as a statutory body to strengthen and modernise the legislative framework for veterans matters in Queensland. The bill specifies that the Queensland Veterans' Council will have three main areas of responsibility: maintenance and management of Anzac Square as the heritage asset for the state; management of the trust fund; and providing advice to the government on veterans matters.

In 1974 the land where Anzac Square is located was placed under the control of the Brisbane City Council as trustee of the site and they remained trustee to this time. The newly created QVC would undertake the role of trustee of Anzac Square memorial. Anzac Square memorial is a place of significant focus for Queenslanders and it has been here where annual Anzac Day and Remembrance Day services have been held in Brisbane since the memorial was opened in 1930.

Australia's involvement in World War I exacted a heavy toll in death and injury. While originally envisaged as a World War I memorial, Anzac Square has become the focus of all armed services commemorations. Anzac Square is the place in Brisbane city where all Queenslanders can honour and uphold the ANZAC spirit and remember the men and women who have served their country in conflict and in peace since the Boer War. It is, as it rightly should be, a place of great significance to the community.

Significant restoration work was undertaken on Anzac Square between 2014 and 2019. The project included a major redevelopment of the undercroft, allowing Anzac Square to expand its original purpose to include a platform for educational and interactive exhibitions. Upon commencement of the bill, the trusteeship and the management of Anzac Square would transfer to the QVC which would then enable it to continue to safeguard Queensland's pre-eminent state war memorial for all generations. Anzac Square is too important for us not to guarantee its oversight in memory of those who lost their lives in the many theatres of war.

The second objective of the bill is to create capacity for the QVC to administer the Anzac Day Trust Fund. The trust fund was established to offer annual grants to institutions, organisations and associations that support and assist ex-service men and women and their dependants. The Palaszczuk government wants to ensure Queensland veterans, their families and dependants can continue to access the welfare services and financial support they deserve. We will continue to honour those who served and provide the opportunity for ex-service organisations to hold commemorative events.

My local Sunnybank RSL Sub-Branch and the Salisbury RSL Sub-Branch provide valuable and valued support for our veterans. The Sunnybank RSL Sub-Branch host a range of activities, including a drop-in centre, bowls, bingo, tai chi and Friday lunches for members. This social engagement is vital. I am looking forward to being able to catch up with members at this year's Remembrance Day service at the Salisbury RSL Sub-Branch and the Our Community Remembers combined service hosted by the Sunnybank RSL Sub-Branch in November. The Our Community Remembers combined service was an initiative from 2020 and provides an opportunity for the veterans and wider community to commemorate those conflicts which would normally be commemorated throughout the year but could not occur due to the imposition and uncertainty of COVID restrictions.

The other objective of the bill is to allow the QVC to undertake the functions and roles currently provided by the Queensland Veterans' Advisory Council, a ministerial committee. The QVC, with support from the veterans reference group, will communicate directly with the Queensland government and provide advice to government on veterans matters. Legislation is the only way to establish the QVC as a statutory body. In addition, legislative amendment to the Anzac Day Act is the only way to abolish the Anzac Day Trust as a statutory body and transfer the governance of the trust fund to the QVC. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (2.44 pm): I rise to address the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. In just over two weeks, Queenslanders and Australians will pause at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month to reflect and commemorate the service and sacrifice made by so many on behalf of our nation. We do so in order to commemorate the anniversary of the Armistice on 11 November 1918, a day we recognise as Remembrance Day following the conclusion of hostilities during World War I. This year on 11 November it will be the 91st anniversary of Anzac Square being officially dedicated as Queensland's state war memorial.

All Queenslanders and indeed all Australians are to be commended for the incredible respect, dignity and responsibility that is exhibited each and every year when coming together to recognise and mark such significant commemorations, including those on Remembrance Day and Anzac Day. This responsibility and duty goes to the core of what it is to be an Australian—to take time to pause and pay our respects to those who have served and fought for the freedoms which we all enjoy today.

In seeking to establish the Queensland Veterans' Council, this legislation as proposed by the Palaszczuk state Labor government presents a significant number of concerns for our veterans community and the potential impacts this will have into the future. On 22 April this year, the Premier and then minister for trade introduced the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021 into the Queensland parliament. The primary objective of this legislation is to establish the Queensland Veterans' Council as a new statutory body and, in doing so, consolidate three areas of responsibility which were previously held by other entities and various levels of government. Accordingly, upon its establishment, the Queensland Veterans' Council will: firstly, become trustee of Anzac Square under the Land Act 1994, taking responsibility for the ongoing management and operation of the square; secondly, assume the functions of the board of trustees under the Anzac Day Act 1995; and, thirdly, provide advice to the Queensland government on veterans matters.

In its examination of this legislation, the Queensland parliament's Community Support and Services Committee received 12 submissions—the vast majority of which raised a number of significant concerns about the changes contained within the legislation, along with the wholly inadequate process of consultation by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Whilst a number of concerns have already been canvassed in depth by my Liberal National Party colleagues, including the LNP's shadow assistant minister for veterans, the member for Southern Downs, I wish to reflect on perhaps one of the most problematic proposals contained within this legislation.

The bill as originally drafted would have the membership of the Queensland Veterans' Council composed of eight people, including two persons being dedicated veterans representatives nominated by veterans groups, four members to be appointed by the minister based on their experience relative to the responsibility of the Queensland Veterans' Council and two members who are ex-officio members—that being a state departmental official and the chief executive officer or their delegate of the Brisbane City Council. This would have effectively established a Veterans' Council in name only, with just two members being of the veteran community.

Indeed, this very point was highlighted by former president of the Kenmore-Moggill RSL Sub-Branch, Mr Stewart Cameron CSC, Air Commodore now retired, in his personal submission to the committee, where he stated—

The name Queensland Veterans Council is a misnomer, as veterans will account for only one quarter its members. As five of the members of the council (and potentially six if an additional Chair is appointed by the Minister), veterans will essentially be nothing more than spectators with no real power to direct or control the decisions of the Council.

This should be seen in contrast to the ANZAC Day Trust, which has four members, all of whom are veterans.

Whilst I acknowledge the Queensland state government's response to recommendation No. 2 of the committee report, as articulated in the Liberal National Party statement of reservation, this does not go far enough and the bill should be further amended to require that the Queensland Veterans' Council be chaired by a representative of an ex-service organisation. This would further ensure that veterans have a strong voice on the council and provide the requisite leadership on veterans matters.

It must also be noted that there are substantial concerns within the veteran community with respect to the incorporation of the management and administration of Anzac Square, and this legislation primarily places the main task of the Queensland Veterans' Council of managing Anzac Square first and the welfare of veterans second.

Our veterans are the ultimate custodians and guardians of the legacy of the service and sacrifice that has been made on behalf of our state and nation. For over a century our veterans have been at the very core of our communities right across our state, diligently ensuring that we commemorate those who have served whilst also educating the next generation of Queenslanders about why that service and sacrifice has been so important. To that end, I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the many men and women of the Kenmore-Moggill RSL Sub-Branch who have performed this duty with the utmost respect and diligence. Next month the Kenmore-Moggill RSL Sub-Branch will be hosting a 30th anniversary celebratory dinner in Bellbowrie which I look forward to attending and joining with other members of the local veteran community to formally recognise the outstanding work that has been achieved over these last three decades by the subbranch.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge some local residents and members who have given so much to the Kenmore-Moggill RSL Sub-Branch and the veteran community, including Lieutenant Colonel Rick Maher, President of the Kenmore-Moggill RSL Sub-Branch; Doug Pickering and Di Pickering, who currently serve as the secretary and vice-president respectively; and Chris Moon, who has done an outstanding job as the local commemorations officer for the Kenmore-Moggill RSL Sub-Branch.

I also acknowledge the service of Mr John Strachan OAM, who has made a significant contribution to the veteran community since first joining the Queensland RSL in 1984 and holding senior leadership roles including district president and district vice-president as well as state deputy president of RSL Queensland. Currently, he is also the protocol officer of the Anzac Day Parade committee.

I would also like to acknowledge the late Chris Stephens for his incredible contribution. As one local RSL member relayed to me recently, Chris Stephens represented the very best of a generation that we will probably never see again. In addition to his volunteer work through the Kenmore-Moggill RSL Sub-Branch, Chris also volunteered his time at the Wesley Hospital and at the Army Museum at Victoria Barracks. Chris never lost his sense of service and he served his community right up until his recent death. I offer my condolences to his wife, Janis, and their entire extended family.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the leadership and commitment shown by the Kenmore-Moggill RSL Sub-Branch as it continues to work towards establishing a local cadets unit. Listed as a key priority for the local veteran community, the formalisation of a local cadets unit will serve as a terrific vehicle to encourage and develop youth leadership whilst also engaging the next generation of Queenslanders and ensuring that the service and sacrifice of many made on behalf of our state and nation is secure into the future. I certainly am delighted to continue to offer my full support for this endeavour. I look forward to continuing to work with the Kenmore-Moggill RSL Sub-Branch and other local Liberal National Party representatives as well as Richard Ponsonby to see this vision of the subbranch become a reality.

As the state member for Moggill, I am fortunate to be able to work with and support a number of veterans and veteran organisations throughout the western suburbs of Brisbane. I also wish to recognise members of the Centenary Suburbs RSL Sub Branch and, in particular, Mal Lancaster PSM RFD with whom I met earlier this year about a number of veterans matters.

In closing, I thank all members of the Community Support and Services Committee of the 57th Parliament including the Liberal National Party deputy chair, the member for Burnett, as well as the member for Scenic Rim for their examination of the bill. I also thank all committee staff and the committee secretariat for their work in examining this legislation.

Finally, I again wish to extend my sincere appreciation to all veterans for their service and sacrifice and to those members of the Australian Defence Force who continue to serve in various capacities on behalf of our state and our nation.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (2.53 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. First of all, I would like to recognise those members of this chamber who have served in the Defence Force and thank them for their service. I think it is important we do so. There are also several opportunities here that I think we have missed—opportunities to do more for veterans. It would have been good if we could have included some of those aspects. The board composition was an opportunity to ensure veterans' voices were ongoing and heard louder than just two out of eight.

Before I go any further, I want to recognise a couple of institutions and organisations in Toowoomba that look after our veterans, particularly the Toowoomba Legacy and the President, David Melandri. They have 394 beneficiaries in Toowoomba including 12 children. They do a great deal of work and their hundredth year is in 2023. I also mention the Highfields RSL branch, Russell Czynski and all of the ex-serving members out there who run that organisation. As that community grows they do a wonderful job to ensure it grows with a deep respect for the RSL. There is also the Toowoomba RSL President, Scott May, and Deputy President, Sheldon Rogers. I will come to some of the programs that the Toowoomba RSL is running that could be opportunities for government, both this government and also the federal government, to consider going forward. Toowoomba also has a proud history with the National Servicemen's Association being first established in Toowoomba, and the current president is Bill McMillan. Then there is the Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex Servicemen and Women with President Roland Thompson. These are just some of the organisations in Toowoomba that work with our veterans.

In particular, I want to talk about opportunities where things that have been happening with veterans could have been incorporated to a certain extent in this bill. We could have not just looked at the space—and I am not suggesting for a moment that Anzac Square is not a space that needs to be looked after; it absolutely is. It is a revered space and one that we must pay great respect to and maintain and look after. I am not suggesting that at all. However, the welfare of the individuals who have served is something that needs to be considered. I have a list of programs that is being worked on by the young veterans of Australia who have funded some of them for the Toowoomba RSL subbranch. One such program is budget endurance racing where veterans and active service personnel elaborate and race a budget endurance car. This helps them deliver mindfulness, teamwork and communication skills. It is teaching practical skills and psychosocial engagement. There are current serving members and veterans collaborating together on that project. It brings a level of engagement.

There is also a program called Veteran Adaptive Sport Toowoomba where veterans and veterans' families are able to access non-physical exclusive sports and recreation activities such as archery. Recumbent bicycles are introduced and wheelchair Rugby is being used as an example of how veterans of all abilities can gain an understanding and collaboration. Again, mindfulness is one of the key components, particularly for those veterans who have suffered an injury. I think that participating in wheelchair basketball with their able-bodied colleagues is something that they enjoy very much.

There is also a drone program whereby the Toowoomba RSL provides licensed training to veterans to gain licensing and accreditation to operate unmanned aerial vehicles in accordance with CASA guidelines. Again, this is all about providing employment opportunities for veterans. It also provides opportunities for them to not only use skills they may already have but also develop new skills. It can also help them transition into the community to bring about some of those employment opportunities.

There is another program called Skill at Arms. This is a collaboration with a rifle-shooting club to facilitate opportunities for Toowoomba based veterans to practise and retain their rifle skills. It has been very popular with the veterans. With the Olympics coming up, seeing some of those veterans' transition to various aspects of shooting that are in the Olympic category will be very useful. Again, this is all about trying to help the returned veterans get involved in the community and pursue activities. They have done some four-wheel drive trips with veterans and their families. Again, this is about getting a group together. They have driven out to Birdsville and back. It is about bringing those veterans together. I think that providing an opportunity for that social engagement, communication and just talking to each other has been very useful for them.

Something that happened back in March 2020, as the pandemic was coming on, was Flags on the Homefront, a really interesting program. As we know, many Anzac services were cancelled that year. The Toowoomba RSL put out the call for people who might want flagpoles constructed and then had a team of people go around and put flagpoles in people's front yards specifically so they could still have an Anzac service. I helped with one of those—I do not want to claim any more than that—but they put up a power of poles around the electorate.

Something else that is important and has been helping many veterans in terms of their welfare is their passion for military history. Obviously Anzac Square forms part of that military history, but I think it is very important that people are involved in projects where they are restoring historical objects, researching historical objects and writing some of that down for future generations to read and understand. Certainly in Toowoomba there is a proud history, particularly around Milne Bay and the Battle of Milne Bay, with the battalion from our region that was sent over to serve at that time. Again, it is a good program around the welfare of veterans.

Something that is unfortunately required—it is a program run by the Toowoomba RSL branch—is helping to organise and conduct funeral services for recently passed veterans, providing the veteran with dignity and their families with support as they deal with the passing of their veteran loved one. It is a program we all could support. These are just some of the programs that I think people in this place should be aware of. When we are contemplating things that affect veterans—whether it be their voting rights on a board or looking after Anzac Square, or whether it be to do with any of the memorials or other services—it is important that we remember that veterans are Queenslanders who answered the call to serve and served. When they get back, it is particularly our responsibility to provide a framework and an environment where their service can be honoured, their memory can be cherished and support can be given to help them transition back into Queensland society.

In particular, I want to talk about designing and advocating with local council for the delivery of a memorial to be located at Mothers' Memorial Park in Toowoomba to commemorate the service of Toowoomba veterans, both in peacetime and post war. Currently the program does not have any funding as the concept needs final local council approval. Mothers' Memorial used to sit in the centre of town but it was moved. At the time it was controversial, but the area it now sits on is a much revered area where people go to contemplate and commemorate the service of many of our veterans.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (3.03 pm), in reply: At the outset, I thank all members who have contributed to the debate on the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. In particular, I thank those members of this House from all political persuasions who have served our nation in the Australian Defence Force. We appreciate and honour your service. I would also like to thank the Assistant Minister to the Premier for Veterans' Affairs, Trade and COVID Economic Recovery, Bart Mellish, for all of his work on this bill. I am proud to be supporting legislation that will establish a Queensland Veterans' Council. The creation of the Queensland Veterans' Council via this bill will elevate the role of veterans in the management of their own affairs in a way that has never been seen before in this state.

I would now like to address comments made during the second reading debate. The member for Southern Downs and other LNP members have suggested that the proposed membership of the Queensland Veterans' Council would see the voice of veterans watered down. I want to make it clear to the House that the bill does not limit the number of veterans who may be appointed to the six appointed member positions. As I have foreshadowed, I will be moving amendments during consideration in detail to mandate that four of the six appointed members must be veterans or members of the veterans community. This means the membership of the Queensland Veterans' Council will be comprised of at least 50 per cent of veterans or members of the veterans community.

The government's model also provides for an additional eight members of the veterans community to serve on the veterans reference group to provide expert advice on veterans related matters to both the council and the highest levels of government. That means that under the government's model there will be at least 12 veterans or other members of the veterans community sitting on the bodies created by this bill. In contrast, I note that amendments proposed by the LNP will reduce the veterans community voices on the bodies created by this bill to four members—one-third of what the government is proposing. Under the LNP's proposal, none of the members of their proposed Anzac Square reference group must be veterans or members of the veterans community. The LNP's amendment would reduce the veterans' voice from a minimum of 12 to a minimum of only four.

It is also worth noting that the LNP's proposed model limits the requirement for half the Queensland Veterans' Council to be members of the veterans community to only include members nominated by veterans organisations. Not all veterans are members of a veterans organisation. As such, the opposition's amendments limit the opportunity for non-member veterans and members of the veterans community to be heard.

This leads me to the argument put forward by the member for Gregory that the Queensland Veterans' Council will diminish the veteran community's role in the administration of the Anzac Day Trust Fund. As I have explained, the proposal put forward by the government will include a minimum of 12 members of the veterans community on the bodies created under this bill. The government's proposal, with the amendments to be moved during consideration in detail, will increase the number of veterans or members of the veterans community who can determine how the Anzac Day Trust Fund is administered from three to at least four. I reiterate what has already been said in this House: there is no change to the purposes for which payments may be made from the Anzac Day Trust Fund or the government's contribution to that fund.

The member for Southern Downs and others have suggested that the chairperson of the Queensland Veterans' Council should be a veteran. However, I note that the amendments circulated in the member for Southern Downs' name instead provide that the chairperson is to be a member of the veterans community. Therefore, it is a little unclear what the LNP's policy intent is. By not prescribing that the chairperson of the council must be a veteran, the bill currently provides the minister with the opportunity to appoint a range of people including a widow of a veteran, a partner of a veteran, a child or other family member of a veteran, or another non-veteran family member.

Finally, I would like to address the comments made by the member for Buderim during the debate, because I believe that they go to the very heart of what the Queensland Veterans' Council will be all about. Let me say from the outset that I respect the member for Buderim for his service to our nation and that I agree with the member that all levels of government must do more to assist veterans, their families and their community. That is why during the 2020 state election the Premier committed an additional \$10 million over four years to support our state's veterans and the organisations that assist them. We have also committed an additional \$1 million supplementary payment to the Anzac Day Trust to provide financial support for veterans affected by COVID-19 and to assist with staging COVID-19 safe commemorative events. This is in addition to the \$1.4 million in funding the Palaszczuk government is already providing to the Anzac Day Trust this year. The Palaszczuk government's 2020 election commitments also include funding for homelessness support for veterans and their families as well as employment services and expanded legal assistance for veterans.

We know that there is more work to be done. That is why the advisory function of the Queensland Veterans' Council is so important. I note that the member for Buderim suggested that the advisory function of the Queensland Veterans' Council is ascribed less importance in this bill than its other two functions—administering the Anzac Day Trust Fund and Anzac Square. On the contrary, this function is given equal weighting to the other two functions provided to the council in this bill.

The member for Burnett and other opposition members suggested in their contributions to the debate that members of the Queensland Veterans' Council should not be remunerated. This body will administer a million dollar trust fund, will be responsible for the day-to-day management of Queensland's premiere war memorial located in the heart of Brisbane's CBD and will be responsible for the incredibly important task of advocacy to government on issues facing veterans. Any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest for members of the Queensland Veterans' Council will be identified and managed in the public interest consistent with existing Queensland government policy.

In conclusion, the Queensland Veterans' Council will allow veterans an unprecedented amount of control over the functions of the Queensland Veterans' Council and in particular providing advice to government on veterans matters in this state. The bill builds on the government's commitment to the welfare of Queensland veterans and the advocacy of their affairs as well as our commitment to maintaining Queensland's monuments to their service and sacrifice. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 8, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr LISTER (3.11 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 After clause 8

Page 8, after line 1—

insert—

8A Functions

- (1) The council has the following functions—
 - (a) to monitor matters affecting the veterans' community;
 - (b) to investigate and report on any aspect of veterans' matters referred to it by the Minister;
 - (c) to consult with the veterans' community when developing advice for the Minister;
 - (d) to advise the Minister about veterans' matters and any other matter relevant to the performance of the council's functions.
- (2) The council also has the other functions given to the council under this Act or another Act.

I table the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights for my amendments and also a copy of the amendments that I will be moving today.

Tabled paper: Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021, explanatory notes to Mr James Lister's amendments [1819].

Tabled paper: Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Mr James Lister's amendments [1820].

Tabled paper: Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021, amendments to be moved by Mr James Lister [1821].

I think it is important that we recognise that this Veterans' Council should be unashamedly about veterans. If veterans are to have confidence in the organisation and confidence that they are being represented appropriately by people who have the necessary skills and personal attributes, it should be composed primarily of veterans.

This amendment takes away some of the other functions which have been given to the Queensland Veterans' Council under the bill because we think they muddy the waters for its task of representing veterans and administering the funds given to it. The management of Anzac Square is a matter of bricks and mortar. It is an ongoing concern which needs expert attention, but the LNP does not believe that the minutia of mowing the lawns, removing graffiti and keeping the eternal flame going should be burdened upon members of the Queensland Veterans' Council. Rather, their attentions would be better applied to matters concerning veterans welfare, veterans' health, the commemoration of events, aged care for veterans and so on. Our amendment proposes that the other functions associated with Anzac Square be taken away, and we will refer to those in future amendments.

Mr MICKELBERG: I rise to speak to the shadow assistant minister's amendment that he has moved, and it goes to the point that the Attorney-General raised earlier with respect to the priorities of the bill. Fundamentally I think this bill gets the balance wrong in relation to where it has its emphasis, and one only has to read through the contributions from those opposite to note that it is focused on Anzac Square. The member for Mundingburra, who probably has the largest veterans community of any seat in this parliament, did not mention veterans welfare once. He spoke about the need for Anzac Square—and it is an important issue—but I would contend that the most important issue is ensuring that veteran welfare and that of the veterans community and their families—ex-serving members, serving members, their spouses and children—is given pre-eminent importance.

Let us face it: this bill is designed to remediate a problem with respect to Anzac Square and then as a secondary thought process it tries to fold in the Anzac Day Trust, which has been a problem for the government over the years, and then as an afterthought—and subsequent clauses after this amendment deal with this afterthought—are other issues which capture veterans welfare.

The member for Southern Downs has sought to remediate that by reversing the priority and putting the emphasis on welfare and putting the emphasis on supporting veterans in the veterans community. I commend the member for Southern Downs and encourage the government to not just listen to the member for Southern Downs, because this was the clear feedback from the majority of submitters to the bill as well—submitters like the Defence Force Welfare Association, former state presidents of the RSL and the former chair of the Queensland Veterans' Advisory Council, the government's own body. They all think that this should be the focus of the Queensland Veterans' Council and I do not think that the veterans reference group is going to perform the same role adequately.

The simple fact is the pre-eminent body here is the Queensland Veterans' Council and it should be empowered to deal with veterans welfare issues as a priority. I would ask the minister not to dismiss the member for Southern Downs's amendment. It has merit and I have not heard an argument yet to suggest otherwise, other than the fact that those three priorities are weighted equally in the bill. I accept that the bill says that, but that is not the substance of the bill. We can just see from the very fact in the way it is framed with the subsequent clauses that we are going to debate deal in order with Anzac Square, the administration of the Anzac Day Trust and then 'other functions'—other functions like veteran suicide, the welfare of serving members' children and spouses. This is the other bit that this does not deal with adequately.

Ms FENTIMAN: The government does not support this amendment for the reasons I outlined in my speech earlier. I want to make it very clear that the Queensland Veterans' Council will have three areas of responsibility: trustee of Anzac Square, the function of the board of trustees under the Anzac Day Act and providing advice to government on veterans matters. There is absolutely nothing in this bill that provides that one function is more important than another and the Queensland Veterans' Council will be required to perform its functions fully. I have no doubt that the members of the council will take very seriously their role in advocating to government so that we can do everything we can to

support veterans and their families. That is one of the key functions of the council and I have no doubt that it will absolutely perform that role adequately and make sure that it does prioritise advocacy to government on these important issues.

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

AYES, 33:

LNP, 32—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Camm, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

NOES, 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.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Lister) negatived.

Clauses 9 and 10—



Mr MICKELBERG (3.22 pm): I would like to speak to clause 10 which abolishes the Anzac Day Trust and shifts it over into the Queensland Veterans' Council. I do not believe the government has made a case for why this needs to occur. The Anzac Day Trust has existed for decades. It has not existed for the hundreds of years that some have said, but it has existed since the sixties. There has never been an issue, as far as I am aware, with respect to the governance structure. The explanatory notes and the bill make reference to the fact that it needs a more modernised approach to governance, but I make the point that the government has put additional funding, as identified by the Attorney-General, into the Anzac Day Trust in recent years so clearly they are not concerned with the governance approaches that have taken place.

I make the point, as is noted in the explanatory notes, that it has strong acceptance by the veterans community. I am not sure that that same acceptance is going to exist with the Queensland Veterans' Council. It may, but why fix something that is not broken. I ask the minister to clarify the rationale behind moving the Anzac Day Trust—abolishing the trust, effectively—and shifting it over into the Queensland's Veterans' Council.

Clauses 9 and 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12, as read, agreed to.

Clause 13—



Mr LISTER (3.24 pm): I move the following amendment—

3 Clause 13 (Membership of council)

Page 10, lines 6 to 8—

omit.

This clause aims to remove the Brisbane City Council CEO from what we will later be calling the Anzac Square reference group, which we will later propose to replace the veterans reference group. As I have said, I do not think it is appropriate that the matters associated with the maintenance of Anzac Square be elevated to the Queensland Veterans' Council itself. That is quite apart from any consideration about diluting the voices of veterans by having a public servant on the board who is not necessary.

As we have heard from the member for Buderim, the management of Anzac Square is important. It has always been done competently at a level apart from that which we are proposing for the Queensland Veterans' Council. In accordance with the amendments that I will be moving in the course of this debate, we certainly do not need to have the Brisbane City Council CEO on the Queensland Veterans' Council.

Mr MELLISH: Brisbane City Council has a long association with Anzac Square. The council's role of trustee first commenced in 1933 and has continued under the most recent Order in Council from 1974. It is considered appropriate for Brisbane City Council to be an ex-officio member of the Veterans' Council because Anzac Square is located within the Brisbane City Council local government area and

their local laws will continue to apply to Anzac Square. Having a presence on the Veterans' Council will support the management of the square. It is a bit strange that those opposite have offered to remove Brisbane City Council here. I am not sure what their LNP colleagues in council would think of that.

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

AYES, 34:

LNP, 32—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Camm, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 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.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Lister) negatived.



Ms FENTIMAN (3.31 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 13 (Membership of council)

Page 10, line 9, 'not more than'—
omit.

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

Tabled paper: Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021, explanatory notes to Hon. Shannon Fentiman's amendments [1822].

Tabled paper: Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Shannon Fentiman's amendments [1823].

I will speak to amendments 1 to 5 as together they give effect to the Community Support and Services Committee's recommendation No. 2. Recommendation No. 2 was 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.

The government notes that the bill does not place an upper limit on the number of veterans who may be appointed to the six appointed member positions provided they have the necessary skills and experience. Further, the government supports the intent of the committee's recommendation to ensure that there are veterans and members of the veterans community on the council. The amendments give effect to the recommendation by clarifying the number of appointed members on the council and inserting a new clause to aid or provide that at least four of the appointed members must be veterans or members of the veterans community.

Mr MICKELBERG: I rise to speak to the minister's amendments. I observe that much of the framing of the amendments is the consequence of a lack of consultation with ex-service organisations before the bill was brought into the House. I pass on the feedback of ex-service organisations that also made submissions to the committee that made it very clear they were not consulted adequately and that any consultation in relation to this bill only related to Anzac Square.

I will make a couple of points. The minister has spoken to amendment No. 4 so I will speak to that first. In effect, this amendment means that the minister will appoint 50 per cent of the council, plus the departmental representative and the Brisbane City Council representative.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, I note that we are still on amendment No. 1. You could probably speak to amendment No. 4 when it is moved.

Mr MICKELBERG: Mr Speaker, I am responding to the Attorney-General. I am happy to speak to it later, if you would like.

Mr SPEAKER: No, continue. I will allow it.

Mr MICKELBERG: I note that the relevant minister, the Premier, has not spoken in the second reading debate on the bill. The minister will appoint 50 per cent of the council, the departmental representative and the Brisbane City Council representative. In effect, the state government will appoint greater than 50 per cent of the Queensland Veterans' Council—the fact that they may be veterans does not necessarily mean that they are drawn from veterans organisations—and will control the Veterans' Council. My view is that the amendment does not go far enough. Similarly, the Attorney-General's

amendment No. 5 does the same. The government still controls the chair and the chair has a casting vote. The Queensland Veterans' Council will, in effect, be a body of the government controlled by the government and by the minister of the day, who is currently the Premier.

I do not think these amendments pass muster. They are a reflection of the fact that the feedback from veterans organisations was very hostile in relation to this aspect of the bill. Veterans feel disenfranchised because they will not have an adequate voice on the Veterans' Council.

I have spoken about the unique nature of military service. Despite what Minister Furner asserted in his contribution, I contend that it is only veterans and their families who can understand the nature of military service and the unique consequences of that service. I do not think being the chair of a Senate select committee or spending a couple of weeks in Afghanistan gives you the skills to be able to understand that. I ask that the Attorney-General listen to the amendments moved by the—

Mr Skelton interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Nicklin, you will cease your interjections and you will direct your comments through the chair.

Mr MICKELBERG: Perhaps the member for Nicklin, as a veteran, might actually stand up, have a crack and say something himself rather than sniping from the sidelines. He has not added anything of value to this process. Let us be clear: veterans are dissatisfied with this and the government should be listening to the voice of veterans on this issue.

(Time expired)

Amendment agreed to.

Ms FENTIMAN: I move the following amendments—

2 Clause 13 (Membership of council)

Page 10, line 11, 'may'—

omit, insert—

must

3 Clause 13 (Membership of council)

Page 10, line 12, 'not more than'—

omit.

Amendments agreed to.

Mr LISTER: I move the following amendment—

5 Clause 13 (Membership of council)

Page 10, line 12, '2'—

omit, insert—

4

We recognise the government's amendment No. 3, which deletes the maximum number of veterans on the QVC. Our amendment No. 5 has the effect of specifying that four of the six appointed members or 66 per cent of the QVC must be veterans. Obviously a veterans' council worthy of the name must have a majority of veterans as members. It should be stated that the government's original intent of having only two is the stuff of newspaper cartoons. I am amazed that the government had any plans to proceed with something like that. They should not have had to be told by the veterans community that it was unacceptable when the name of the body is the 'Queensland Veterans' Council'. I do not know how they could have contemplated that.

I note some comments the Attorney-General made in her second reading summing-up. She asked whether it was unfair that veterans should have to be a member of a veterans group as not all veterans are. I ask the member if it is commonplace for the government to appoint employee representatives to boards who are not members of a trade union. I would be very interested to see if that has ever happened. I will leave it at that.

Ms FENTIMAN: The government does not support the amendment to increase the number of members nominated by veterans organisations from two to four. The government notes that the bill does not place an upper limit on the number of veterans or members of the veterans community who may be appointed to the six appointed member positions provided they have the necessary skills and experience. The government's amendments give effect to the committee's recommendation No. 2 that clause 13 of the bill be amended to provide that at least 50 per cent of the members of the council be veterans or representatives of the veterans community.

Under the LNP's proposed amendment, four members of the council are to be nominated by veterans organisations. By prescribing that four members of the council are to be nominated by veterans organisations, the LNP amendments do not ensure that unaligned veterans or unaligned members of the veterans community are able to be appointed to the council.

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

AYES, 34:

LNP, 32—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Camm, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 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.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Lister) negatived.

Ms FENTIMAN: I move the following amendment—

4 Clause 13 (Membership of council)

Page 10, line 14, 'not more than'—
omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr LISTER: We will not proceed with amendment No. 6 because the defeat of earlier amendments has made it unnecessary.

Ms FENTIMAN: I move the following amendment—

5 Clause 13 (Membership of council)

Page 10, after line 14—
insert—

(2A) At least 4 of the appointed members must be veterans or members of the veterans' community.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr LISTER: I move the following amendment—

7 Clause 13 (Membership of council)

Page 10, lines 18 to 23—
omit, insert—

- (a) veterans' health;
- (b) veterans' welfare;
- (c) military service;
- (d) transition from military service;
- (e) employment after military service;
- (f) veterans' aged care;
- (g) matters that affect veterans' partners, widows and dependants;
- (h) other matters that affect the health and welfare of members of the veterans' community;
- (i) corporate governance;
- (j) business or financial management.

I will not be moving amendment No. 8 as it has been rendered redundant by defeat of earlier amendments.

The purpose of this amendment is to make sure that those who are selected by the minister to be on the Queensland Veterans' Council have the skills, attributes and experience necessary to fulfil their role in advocating for veterans. It is not a question of just being a veteran; they must also have something to offer on the QVC. What we are requiring are attributes which assist them in areas such as veterans' health, veterans welfare—they should have had military service and experience with transition from military service and employment after military service—veterans aged care and matters

in general which affect veterans and their partners, widows, dependants and so forth. They should also have the necessary professional skills in corporate governance and financial management to accomplish some of the tasks which will be given to the Queensland Veterans' Council.

The member for Buderim made a very good contribution about the importance of people who understand the veterans world and, due to the unique nature of military service, it is important that most of the members on the board have specific understanding of that kind of lifestyle. We are talking about the requirement to obey orders, the control that military service places over aspects of people's lives, the long hours without a break, the requirement to serve in dangerous situations or even deadly situations and the requirement to perhaps use deadly force against someone. It must be remembered that these things come because those who are called to serve in the military are not employed in the usual sense but are in fact commissioned, appointed or enlisted to serve the people of Australia under any condition. I commend this amendment to the House.

Mr MICKELBERG: I think this amendment better reflects a focus on the needs of veterans as I spoke about earlier. The government will no doubt criticise this amendment for not containing a reference to heritage conservation, but I think that talks to the government's motivations with respect to this bill. What it does have is a focus on veterans' health, veterans welfare, transition from military service, employment after military service, veterans aged care, matters affecting veterans, partners, widows and dependants. I would contend that skills and experience like heritage conservation that may not be resident in the veteran population—I do not know any veterans who are skilled in heritage conservation; I am sure there are one or two out there—are specialist skills that can be provided to augment the Veterans' Council. The overriding objective of the Veterans' Council should be to look after the needs of veterans, their spouses and their children, as opposed to focusing on the heritage aspects of Anzac Square. I have made the point—I do not want to labour it—that this bill gets that balance wrong and I ask the government to support the amendment moved by the member for Southern Downs.

Ms FENTIMAN: The member for Buderim will no doubt not be surprised that we do not support the amendment to clause 13(3) to increase the number of areas in which the minister must be satisfied the persons have qualifications or experience. Clause 13(3) prescribes matters to ensure the appropriate governance of a statutory body. Clause 13(3)(d) allows the minister discretion to consider other relevant or necessary issues to support the council to perform its functions. The clause is considered broad enough to allow the minister to consider such areas as those listed in the amendments should they be considered relevant or necessary to support the council.

We do note that the LNP amendments remove the area of heritage conservation from the governing body. This is of significant concern to us given the heritage value of Anzac Square to the people of Queensland and the need to ensure its ongoing existence for generations to come.

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

AYES, 33:

LNP, 32—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Camm, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

NOES, 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.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Lister) negatived.

Debate, on motion of Ms Fentiman, adjourned.

MOTIONS

Coronavirus, Vaccination Mandate



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (3.54 pm): I move—

That this House endorses the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination of all workers in Queensland healthcare settings as a condition of employment, as recommended by AHPPC.

We are very proud of the stance we have taken to require vaccination of the health workforce across our HHSs—all those employees who are required to work in hospitals on a regular or even infrequent basis—to ensure that we keep our staff safe, to ensure we have the staff capacity to look after patients and to ensure that we keep patients and the community safe. This is fully backed by the AHPPC. It has recommended that the health workforce be vaccinated.

It is sad that we have to move this motion to finally get the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mudgeeraba to say one way or the other whether they support the mandatory vaccination of the health workforce. We seemed to get an indication earlier this morning that the Leader of the Opposition was all ready to go and keen to debate this motion. If they do get up shortly and say yes to this, my question is: what took them so long? Why have they been avoiding this conversation? Every journalist has asked them in front of a camera or on radio all around the state a very simple question and they have fudged it every single time.

It is interesting that the member for Mudgeeraba, who claims to be on the side of nurses, would rather back in a fake union and their position by not condemning their challenge around mandatory vaccination, by not condemning their stance of posting anti-vax sentiment and by not condemning them for standing up in rallies with offensive barriers and banners around them which display anti-vax sentiments. We should not be surprised because the member for Mudgeeraba was also the person who called 64 times for the borders to be opened, who voted against the nurse-to-patient ratio and who formed part of the government that cut funding in health and sacked health workers.

I look forward to hearing, once and for all, whether the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mudgeeraba can give a straight answer and not say, 'If you can guarantee there are no unintended consequences.' AHPPC said that there will be unintended consequences, but the unintended consequences are far outweighed by the virus and what it will do to our health workforce. Leader of the Opposition: do you support the mandate; yes or no?

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the Leader of the Opposition, I remind all members that comments will be directed through the chair or I will issue warnings.

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.57 pm): I rise to make my contribution in front of the two glaring pair of eyes of the government. There is not a full house there, Minister, for what the minister thought was going to be some sort of gotcha moment. Here goes.

I back the AHPPC. I have backed the AHPPC outside the chamber and inside the chamber. May I ask the government, as I have consistently asked, to see the modelling on the impacts on frontline services. I would like to see what it means for the workforce.

Mr Power interjected.

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

Mr CRISAFULLI: I will say again that I back the AHPPC guidelines. It protects frontline staff and it protects patients.

What I do not back is Queensland's sluggish vaccination rate. What I do not back is the mixed messaging that has led to it. I am sorry, but the Premier's deferral in getting the vaccine early in the piece sent shock waves through the community. We can paint it any way we like, but when that occurred that sent shock waves through the Queensland community. I wrote to the Premier in February—I did not make it public—and said, 'We should get vaccinated together as a sign of bipartisan and to put this beyond politics.' Instead, the Premier found every excuse not to get vaccinated for several months. That was a mistake.

In the last few days, we have seen a mad panic across regional Queensland. Today the member for Barron River told us just how rushed it really was. I find that refreshing because it gives people the opportunity to see how important vaccines are, but I wish it had occurred a long time ago. Mr Speaker, I can tell you though that it has not moved the needle. Queensland remains at the back of the pack. That is why I have put forward my suggestion and the opposition health spokesperson has put forward our suggestion, and that is: let's get medical professionals—people who are respected medical professionals in the Indigenous community and in the multicultural community and people who are respected in the medical profession across the board—to stand up and be part of an advertising campaign, because clearly they are not listening to people who demonise.

I make this point: what I fear about this motion is that it is the government attempting to find someone else to blame in the weeks ahead, and that concerns me. It concerns me because the government has been bereft of ideas on how to roll out the vaccine and give confidence. It has been bereft of ideas on how to promote hope over fear, and I will not tolerate a misguided scare campaign because the government's slow vaccination rate is on its watch.

(Time expired)

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (4.01 pm): I rise to support the government motion that this House endorses the mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for all workers in Queensland health care. As a volunteer ambo, I had to get vaccinated—no problem. I only just sat down with the assistant commissioner in North Queensland the other day—99 per cent of the ambulance staff up there are already vaccinated. The shadow minister for health claims to be a nurse. I ask: does the member back vaccinations? Does she back the science or does she back NPAQ, the false association that has been absolutely trying to question the science? This is so wrong.

Healthcare workers across the world have died. I ask the question. The Leader of the Opposition has just left the House but he cannot actually say the words. Does he back mandatory—

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is against the convention of this House to make reference to members who may not be here temporarily. We do not do it with other members—

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member. If you had given me half a second more, I was going to say the same thing. The convention is as the member for Maroochydore has suggested. I ask you to withdraw those statements.

Mr HARPER: I withdraw. We have lived and dealt with this global pandemic now for 18 months. There is light at the end of the tunnel and that light is vaccinations. Queensland and my home town of Townsville has fared incredibly well during this global pandemic with our economy booming. The reason for this is that we followed the health advice of the Chief Health Officer. Those on the other side are not standing up in their communities and getting their communities vaccinated. We are doing all the heavy lifting. They are doing nothing. The LNP are not listening to the science. Do they back vaccinations? Do they back the science? Do they back it?

Opposition members: Yes!

Mr HARPER: Well, get your leader to come out and say it! Who could forget the former leader of the opposition—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr HARPER: I take her interjection—who called for the borders to be opened 64 times last year? It seems they have not learnt their lesson—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Nanango will cease her interjections.

Mr HARPER:—because they will not listen to the health advice when it comes to mandatory vaccines for our health workers. Our amazing healthcare workers have been on the front line dealing with COVID since the beginning of this pandemic. They have helped to keep Queenslanders, as always, safe and have looked after those who are sick. They are not going to put themselves at risk of getting sick either. That is why they are vaccinated. I am really interested in what the member for Mudgeeraba is going to get up and say. Does she back the health advice? Does she back vaccines?

Ms Bates: Yes.

Mr HARPER: I want to hear the Leader of the Opposition say that as well.

Mr Mickelberg: He just said it!

Mr HARPER: No, he did not actually say it.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock! Member for Buderim, that is uncalled for. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr HARPER: He did not say it. We know that the member for Mudgeeraba is a member of NPAQ who continue to question the science behind vaccines. This is a disgrace. We need everyone to roll up their sleeves and get vaccinated and we need all sides of politics to get behind the push. The member for Mudgeeraba cannot give a simple yes or no answer as to whether she supports the health worker vaccine mandate and neither can the Leader of the Opposition.

(Time expired)

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (4.04 pm): I want to echo what I said the last time parliament sat. I had my vaccination before the Premier. I had my vaccination before the health minister. My message—my position—is clear when it comes to vaccines. I back them to the hilt. It is our silver bullet. It is a marvel of modern science. I have said it to my family. I have said it to my friends. I have said it privately. I have said it publicly. I have said it time and time again at every press conference. I have said it time and time again in this chamber. My position is unequivocal. I back the AHPCC statement

on vaccines for health workers. I back Queensland Health's direction to their staff in hospital settings to get the jab. I back the vaccine—full stop, end of story. Let the record show though that this is what the QNMU said about mandatory vaccinations—

We will always recognise that individuals have the right to make personal choices about immunisation.

The Australian Workers' Union said—

We have strongly advocated to government and industry that COVID-19 vaccinations should be voluntary.

To hound me and the opposition as being anti-vaxxers, even after comments like this by their own unions! Mr Speaker, some members of the cabinet and the caucus ought to look in their own backyard after they cast aspersions.

This pandemic has taught us many things, not the least of which is the impossibly low levels this government will stoop to in order to protect its political hide. Those on the government benches have allowed public debate to descend into petty bickering in an attempt to distract from the real issues at play here in Queensland. We have a health system which the government is losing control of. Let's face it: they are losing control of Queensland Health, and that was happening long before COVID—ramping, elective surgery, code yellows, you name it. The stats back it up.

Why aren't we here talking about that? I will tell you why—because those opposite do not want to. I say to those opposite: your mediocrity and your cheap games are hurting every resident in this great state. In its insistence to aimlessly carry on with this falsehood about opposition and the vaccine, the government has only added fuel to the anti-vaccine fire. Those opposite should be building up the vaccine. Instead, with their incessant droning on this issue, they are inadvertently serving to tear it down. It is childish, it is irresponsible and, frankly, it is pathetic.

They seek to divide our community. They peddle the politics of fear. I, and we, will not cop it. I stand for the politics of hope over the politics of fear. Listening to scientific advice and getting the vaccine should not be a political issue, but there is not an issue that this government will not politicise if it can score a political point.

(Time expired)

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (4.07 pm): I support this motion. Let me be clear: I support the health advice. Sadly, on this issue I am not on a unity ticket with my federal counterpart, the member for Dawson. Adding to his laundry list of downright disturbing remarks, George Christensen has compared mandatory vaccinations with 'apartheid'—how shameful. Those opposite keep saying that they support vaccination, but there is always a 'but'—but, but, but. Then they spend the next three minutes talking about why they do not support it.

The member for Dawson is more concerned with his own personal preference for crank fringe politics more akin to One Nation than fighting for the people of Mackay—the job that he is paid to do. As always with George, the facts on vaccination are of course right in front of him from the AHPPC. They are just not the facts that suit his agenda. The facts are that vaccines save lives. That is what everybody over there needs to understand. The AHPPC logically suggests that those caring for the sick and vulnerable should, in fact, be vaccinated and it should be mandatory, so get behind us and back this.

When the member for Dawson opposes this, he is saying that he is happy for people to be at high risk of catching, and possibly dying, of COVID. It is patients who are at risk. I am disturbed to hear complaints from local nurses in Mackay that anti-vax posters linked to NPAQ—and the member for Mudgeeraba needs to resign—and their legal challenge have surfaced around the Mackay hospital. How disgusting! They were printed on the back of George Christensen's signs. This is absolutely outrageous!

You would think that when the member for Dawson sprouts dangerous anti-vax rhetoric those opposite would distance themselves from his views. In fact, you would repeatedly condemn them publicly. But not the member for Whitsunday, because George Christiansen is her close friend and ally, her political aspiration and mentor. The member for Whitsunday fails to distance herself from his dangerous rhetoric and actions because they are a team. They have been on billboards together. They back each other in on every topic that you raise. Words matter. If the lives of the people of Mackay and Whitsunday matter, the member for Whitsunday should be brave enough to support this motion.

(Time expired)

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (4.11 pm): I rise in support of this motion. The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee is comprised of all state and territory chief health officers and is chaired by the Australian Chief Medical Officer, Professor Paul Kelly. On the best scientific and health evidence, the AHPPC has recommended mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for all workers in healthcare settings and that this be a condition of work. This advice must be implemented in full. It must be supported by all elected representatives and relevant organisations. It must be implemented in order to protect all Queenslanders and Australians. I fully support the AHPPC advice.

COVID-19 vaccinations are critically important to protect the public, staff and patients as outlined by the AHPPC. I say to all Queenslanders—as I have been saying for a long period of time in all of my social media posts, in all of my communications out to the electorate, in all of my speeches in the parliament—get vaccinated. If you have not been vaccinated, get vaccinated now. Now is the time to get vaccinated. I have been providing all of that information out to my electorate over a long period of time.

In my professional life as a specialist physician and in various roles, including as a former president of the Australian Medical Association, as a former deputy chief medical officer, also as a former past president of the Rural Doctors Association, I have been consistently advocating for vaccines and vaccination programs. They are an important public health strategy to control, suppress and eliminate infectious diseases. That also goes for our Childhood Immunisation Register and the National Immunisation Program Schedule. In fact, in my maiden speech in this parliament I talked about the real risks of new and emerging infectious diseases, and the newly elected Labor government at the time did not listen to that information carefully enough to start planning for the future well before we saw COVID-19. That is the reality. They have not been investing in those services.

I have been working with LNP colleagues at all levels of government to ensure that as many people who can be vaccinated are vaccinated. What we have seen over recent weeks in this parliament is a completely vacuous, puerile and facile approach to this debate. There has been a lack of leadership by the Labor Party on the other side of the chamber who has been trying to drive wedge politics. What is needed in this chamber is leadership from the most senior people in the government, including the Premier and the health minister. We need bipartisanship. We need leadership by this state Labor government. We have had absolutely nothing. What they have been trying to do is cheap politics, wedge politics. They have been undermining vaccinations and the vaccination rollout program themselves. They know that once we get going here in Queensland there are going to be real problems because they have not done their due diligence and got people vaccinated in a timelier manner over the last 12 months.

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (4.14 pm): We have been following the health advice that has kept us safe. There has been a pandemic that saw us prepare for the worst. Millions of people have lost their lives. Health systems around the world have been pushed beyond the brink. There has been no handbook, no manual and no guide, but we took the advice of health and medical professionals and it has kept us safe.

Now we have a vaccine that is safe and effective and we need Queenslanders to get it now. Vaccination saves lives; it is the pathway out of the pandemic. It beggars belief that the opposition again fails to recognise that Queensland's success is because Queenslanders have followed the health advice. It is only sensible that those caring for our most vulnerable in our health and hospital systems are vaccinated too. That is what the health advice says. The World Health Organization has said the backbone of every health system is the workforce, the people who deliver health services.

The pandemic is a powerful demonstration of just how much we rely on our health workers and how vulnerable we all are when the people who protect our health are themselves unprotected. We have all read the stories of the thousands of health workers around the world who have died because of COVID. As the parent of a frontline health worker, it puts me at ease that my son Harry and those working with him are fully vaccinated. Why does the opposition continue to dance around this issue? Do they support the health advice making vaccinations a requirement for those caring for the sick and frail as recommended by the AHPPC, or do they wish to pursue their own political agenda based on their political opinion?

Who is really pulling the strings here? Is it the so-called union that the member for Mudgeeraba is beholden to, the one that is actively undermining the AHPPC's recommendations for health workers by mounting an active challenge in the courts? I despair that the person nominated by the opposition to be their spokesperson on health refuses to say whether she backs the health advice or if she is just

being wishy-washy because it is politically convenient for her so-called union. I back the medical experts, I back our Chief Health Officer and I back the AHPPC—not the member for Mudgeeraba and her keyboard companions.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (4.17 pm): I rise to speak to this motion like all of the members on this side of the House. It appears to be an own goal from the Palaszczuk government—and that is why half of them are not here—because we do support the AHPPC advice. What an own goal! As if the health minister has not had a bad enough day as it is after that question time, when she had to keep getting up trying to defend the absolute debacle that is happening in Queensland Health right now.

Let's have a look at this vaccination rate. Why is the vaccination rate so low in Queensland? I will tell you why: because it starts at the top. When the Premier of Queensland was the last premier in the nation to get vaccinated—I can see them yawning over there—no wonder those over there were so slow to get the vaccination. On this side of the House we all rolled up and told our constituents to get vaccinated.

I know the health minister knows that I am a strong supporter of vaccination because on 27 May I wrote to the health minister demanding help in my region. I got a response from the health minister saying, 'I appreciate your feedback.' On 10 June I wrote to her again. On 3 August I wrote to her again. On 4 August I wrote to the health minister again. On 11 August I again wrote to the health minister. On 19 August I wrote to the health minister once again.

An opposition member interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Yes, I still have more. I was so sick of not getting a decent response from the health minister that I stepped it up and wrote to the Premier because, surely to goodness, you would think the Premier would listen. No, once again there was no response from those opposite. What are these letters about? These letters are about protecting my community and wanting a vaccine hub in my area. The government has been silent. I have also written about Swickers, because when the government came up with that announcement where was the largest pork factory in the Southern Hemisphere?

Mr Fumer interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It was not on their list because they did not rate it as big enough. I will table this. Yes, I will table it all because I was in Kingaroy and I have been there advocating. Here are the letters.

Tabled paper: Bundle of letters from and to the member for Nanango, Mrs Deb Frecklington MP, regarding COVID-19 vaccinations [[1824](#)].

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

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will continue to table these letters, but what I will say is this. There is one reason why there is vaccine hesitancy in this great state of ours and that is because, from the top, the Premier has blamed everything but common sense on why she has not got the vaccine when everyone else was stepping up and rolling up and doing the right thing. My community are telling me that is why there is vaccine hesitancy in this state.

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (4.20 pm): Every single sick or vulnerable Queenslanders needing health care deserves to know they can be as safe as possible from catching COVID when they place their trust in our hospitals, and our healthcare workers on the front line need to be safe so they can keep others safe doing that essential work. These are tough decisions, but making tough decisions in a crisis is what leadership is all about.

That is where the member for Broadwater and the member for Mudgeeraba absolutely collapse, because up until today they have not shown a scrap of leadership between the two of them. They have talked down our vaccination program every single step of the way. If the member for Nanango wants to talk about own goals, I remind her that she called for the borders to be opened 64 times—at least I suppose she stood for something, unlike the current Leader of the Opposition.

The member for Mudgeeraba talks about her time as a nurse. She should know that mandatory vaccination for healthcare workers is not new—hepatitis B, measles, mumps, rubella, whooping cough, chickenpox. Since 2016 Queensland Health has had mandatory vaccination requirements where necessary. Now, like every other state, the Palaszczuk government has added COVID-19 to that because the Commonwealth AHPPC recommends it and because it is the right thing to do, but the

Leader of the Opposition and his health spokesperson could not bring themselves to stand up until today. They are all about freedom but they are silent on responsibility. They are big on ranting. They are failing on leadership.

Who are they protecting with their delays on backing in the advice? Is it LNP Senator Gerard Rennick, the Queensland LNP's new Craig Kelly? I had a look at his Facebook page today. There is a constant stream of false information and scare campaigns. He shamefully describes compulsory vaccination as the equivalent of the Tiananmen Square massacre. Shameful. The failure of LNP members to call out these conspiracy theories is dangerous. People in my community in northern Moreton Bay are falling into the conspiracy theory trap, yet there is a cone of silence from local LNP members at the state and federal level on vaccination. We are meant to be leaders in our communities. If every member here does not speak up strong, Queenslanders are at risk and they will die.

It is pure opportunism that stopped the LNP backing in mandatory vaccination up until this point. They are hoping to ride the wave of vaccine conspiracy theorists coming out of the uncertainty of the pandemic. They are empowering their fake union that is undermining the safety of healthcare workers, and 115,000 healthcare workers have died worldwide. When will the LNP be satisfied? When it comes to borders, when it comes to vaccination, when it comes to health, they do not listen to the science and they do not listen to the health advice. Who can forget the member for Broadwater calling our CHO a punch-drunk bureaucrat? Until they can stand up and condemn NPAQ's challenge and Gerard Rennick, the LNP are showing that they are not fit to lead their communities and they will never be fit to lead Queensland.

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (4.23 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Minister for Health supporting the position of the AHPPC requiring COVID-19 vaccination for all Queensland Health workers as a condition of employment, but let us be clear: we are only here speaking about this issue because the state government are seeking to use it for their own selfish political reasons. We are here debating this motion because of the failings of Queensland's own vaccine-hesitant Premier—who through her own words and her own actions created the wave of COVID vaccine hesitancy that Queensland is now afflicted by.

Through their unbecoming and politically motivated attacks over recent weeks, the government are seeking to distract from their failure to get Queenslanders vaccinated. This motion and the state government's disingenuous attacks on the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow minister for health are all about distancing the state government from the fact that they have failed to support and adequately roll out a COVID vaccine program for Queenslanders across the state. It is through their actions and their comments that the Premier and her ministers have created the very problem that they are now trying to shift responsibility from.

Yesterday we heard from the Minister for Small Business, who sought to attack me for not supporting the vaccination against COVID-19. Evidently, the minister is incapable of even getting her facts straight before she comes in here and starts her pathetic little political games. For the record, I support COVID-19 vaccination and I encourage every Queenslanders to get vaccinated as a priority. I also support the AHPPC statement in relation to mandatory vaccination of healthcare workers, and that is why I ignored the Premier's anti-vax fearmongering about AstraZeneca and I got vaccinated with the only COVID-19 vaccine available to me as a person under 40 at the time—as did the member for Kawana and the member for Bonney. I got vaccinated with AstraZeneca at the first opportunity because I wanted to demonstrate leadership by example for my community—leadership that has been so sadly lacking from the vaccine-hesitant Premier who has constantly sniped at the federal government about vaccines and peddled factually incorrect scare campaigns about the abundant AstraZeneca vaccine.

When I got vaccinated, I also encouraged Queenslanders to get vaccinated in TV news stories that ran statewide on 7NEWS, so to suggest that I have not supported the vaccine rollout is laughable. I have also earned the ire of the anti-vax brigade for publicly criticising Victorians protesting about COVID-19 vaccinations—protests that I add were in large part made up by CFMEU members, a union that all those opposite support, a union that the Queensland Labor Party have taken more than \$335,000 from since they came to power. Queenslanders deserve hope over fear and I call on those opposite to stop the petty political gamesmanship.

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algerst—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (4.26 pm): I rise to support the motion. We know statistically that, sadly, First Nations Queenslanders continue to be over-represented on almost every health indicator, and our reliance on health services is directly linked to that fact. Whether it be Queensland Health services, community managed health services or independently run not-for-profit services that provide outreach to our communities across the state, First Nations communities and families can have multiple

interactions with health professionals in any given week. With vaccination rates lagging in too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities—thanks to the federal LNP government’s total failure to fulfil their responsibilities to roll out the vaccine across Indigenous communities, as was their responsibility—the risk is even higher.

Throughout the pandemic we have kept Queenslanders safe by following the health advice. Whilst our vaccine plan to unite families and protect Queenslanders sets out our pathway to opening our borders in a cautious, measured manner, we have to accept that the dangerous delta variant will eventually come to Queensland and it will find a way to infect unvaccinated Queenslanders—which is why vaccinations are so very important.

The thing that worries me the most about the virus and its potential impact on Indigenous communities is the vulnerability of our elders and cultural leaders. Our elders are the most valued treasures of our communities and of our state. Our elders are the precious libraries of our communities. They represent every history book never written. They are the custodians of every ancient story that encapsulates the cultural identity of their people and ultimately our state. They hold the knowledge of our past in a way that allows us to understand our place in the world. Our elders are equally the cultural compass of our future. They map the course for healing and progress in our communities and for many First Nations people they are the touchstone that grounds us in a world of multiple challenges.

We cannot risk losing even a small proportion of this cultural leadership simply because of something we read on Facebook or because of the inability of the LNP to back mandatory vaccinations for health professionals. The loss of eldership would have intergenerational impact that for some would be incredibly difficult on so many levels to recover from.

From George Christensen, who has challenged the AHPPC advice on mandating the COVID vaccine for health workers, to NPAQ, which have questioned the science of the vaccines, this classic anti-vaxxer approach only serves to put First Nations people at even greater risk. The member for Mudgeeraba is a member of NPAQ and until this motion could not even give a simple yes/no answer on whether she supports the health worker vaccine mandate. The leader of the opposition, the member for Broadwater, could not give a straight answer until today either. If the LNP do not support this motion, if they do not actively repel the likes of George Christensen and NPAQ, they are putting Indigenous people, our cultural leadership and future generations at risk.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (4.29 pm): I am pleased to speak to this motion. The AHPPC, or the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, is an eminent body of significant health professionals whose health advice has strongly backed in and recommended that there is a mandate for vaccinating all workers in healthcare settings, those who are caring for the vulnerable, be they aged, in hospitals or in disability facilities. I back that advice. It not only makes sense; it is about the health advice that is publicly available.

I use my personal freedom to seek to protect those who are vulnerable. I am not a health professional, but I chose to get vaccinated back in May, as soon as it was available for my age bracket, which incidentally was the same time that the Premier was entitled to get her vaccination. The Premier has said that she did not want to jump the queue. She could have got it earlier, but she did not want to jump the queue. However, the queue for my age bracket, which is the same bracket as the Premier, was in May. I got it as soon as I could. I got my flu shot a month earlier than that and I got my AstraZeneca shot in May. I am so grateful to the scientists who have made this possible.

Why are we saying it should be mandated for those who are healthcare professionals? Some would say isn’t that taking away their personal freedoms? I have had people raise this with me and I have said to them, ‘You do realise that the elderly, the sick, the infirm, when they are in aged-care facilities, hospitals and disability facilities, do not get a choice as to who cares for them?’ They do not get that choice. They need to know that those who are caring for them are able to best protect them, and vaccination does help do that. Does it prevent all transmissions? No, but it does reduce the level of transmission of COVID. Does it ensure that health professionals are more likely to be able to perform their duties by not getting severely sick themselves? Yes, the science shows that vaccination reduces the likelihood of people being hospitalised.

My 92-year-old mother is one of my reasons I got vaccinated but, as I said, I also got vaccinated for the care of my community. We need our health professionals to be there to care for the vulnerable. We need to ensure that our health system is best able to perform. If more people are not vaccinated, the health system can be overwhelmed. If that is the case, they may not get an ICU bed even if they do not have COVID. That is why I back this motion. That is why we always have, and I do not appreciate being verbally by the Labor Party.

(Time expired)

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (4.32 pm): I rise in support of the motion. In my life before parliament I was a health professional. I worked as a pathology scientist in the public hospital system, so I understand full well the need for mandatory vaccination. It is to ensure that we keep our patients safe from COVID-19. It is also to ensure that we do not see what has happened in New South Wales and Victoria where patients have gone into hospital without COVID, caught COVID and have died as a consequence. We should be doing everything in our power, and that is mandating vaccinations for those healthcare workers in our hospital system and aged-care system.

I am also a representative of Redland city. Redland city is currently the second highest vaccinated LGA in Queensland behind Goondiwindi, and I would like to congratulate Lawrence Springborg for his leadership in that community in that respect. I have pushed hard for vaccinations in my local area. I believe I have posted more Facebook posts to push this vaccine and done more media out that way than anyone else because I understand it will save lives. However, when we look at the member for Oodgeroo's page, we can barely see a mention of it. The only time he mentions it is to criticise our rollout, and he makes plenty of comments about not forcing the vaccination.

We need all our elected representatives to be vaccinated, and the member for Oodgeroo is vaccinated. However, there is one elected representative in our area who is not, and that is the 'Andrew Laming volunteer' Councillor Rowanne McKenzie, the one who creates fake Facebook accounts. She is not vaccinated. Maybe her fake alias Scarlett Rivers is, but she is not and her personal profile is littered with anti-vax material. She is not game enough to put it on her council page.

I will go back to the hesitancy. Who can remember when the Prime Minister held that late-night press conference? That is when it all started. He said no more AstraZeneca for over-60s and then a week later it was over-50s. Then he said no-one will be getting AstraZeneca past October. Three different press conferences—no wonder there was hesitancy about AstraZeneca because it came from the top; it came from the Prime Minister.

Let's look at the vaccine rollout. We have had to come in and help the federal government with aged care. Do honourable members remember that they put in the mandate for aged care? They had a program whereby they went around to the patients and then forget about the workers. They had nurses going into aged-care centres to do vaccinations but did not worry about the workers. We had to come in and help out with the hubs, and now we are helping out with our First Nations people as well, going door to door. It is their responsibility. This is their rollout and we are helping them out and we are getting criticised for it. That is the issue—

(Time expired)

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (4.35 pm): The Greens support mandatory COVID vaccinations for healthcare workers. The member for Maiwar and I are fully vaccinated and we urge all Queenslanders to get vaccinated as soon as possible. However, the government does not need parliament's support or this motion to mandate this. This motion is designed to wedge the LNP and distract from the things the government should be doing but is not.

My office has had healthcare workers getting in touch about the dire state of our healthcare system: nurses worried about mental health and code yellows, doctors concerned about poor staff-to-patient ratios, paramedics concerned about understaffing and workers leaving the sector, workers saying things like, 'We cannot even handle the current workload that exists,' and, 'We do not have enough isolation rooms to even handle a small COVID exposure,' and, 'We have been asked to do even more with even less.' No matter how brightly they are presented in the Premier's Canva templates, Queensland's vaccination rates are sobering. It has been unnecessarily slow, which lies at the feet of both the federal and state governments.

A few months ago we had the government urging Queenslanders to get vaccinated even when there were limited appointments or places to do so. This has really changed in recent months. It has been amazing to see the government step up with big vaccination hubs and other dedicated measures to get Queenslanders vaccinated with thousands of people coming forward. I am worried about people who cannot just pop down to a vaccination hub or a GP. It is clear that people living with disability, who were knocked off the priority list, as well as First Nations folks have some of the lowest vaccination rates in our state. I have been speaking with organisations who advocate for them to get to the bottom of these issues and to start to look at how we ensure these Queenslanders are not left exposed when our state borders reopen.

Mandatory vaccination for healthcare workers is a no-brainer, but so is pulling out all stops to ensure our healthcare system is ready for the surges in case numbers and ICU admissions which the modelling tells us will come when Queensland reopens. Symbolic motions are not enough. We need

funding. We have a Labor state government, and health should be its bread and butter. The modelling shows our healthcare system will be severely stretched, and the reason our hospital system is not prepared is 30 years of underfunding from successive Labor and LNP governments. This government still has an efficiency dividend in place on the hospital system, forcing workers to do more and more for less. Even today we have had the minister blame the federal government for our underfunded hospital system.

The state-federal blame game is the oldest story in the book. The government needs to widen its vision. Full vaccination rates are crucial and when Queenslanders go out and get vaccinated, the government needs to actually fund the hospital system to do its job.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.38 pm): It might be an old story, but I will tell you a story that will never be heard and that is the story of the Greens funding anything ever to do with health care. I started my training in the eighties and I was required to have a chest X-ray, numerous vaccinations and even a psychiatric test. Ever since that time I have had to undergo further vaccinations and further medical procedures when I have started new jobs in various healthcare settings. While I had all of those when I was 17 years of age and I probably did not necessarily understand why I was having them, it did not take me long as a nurse to understand that what we were doing was (a) keeping myself safe but (b), much more importantly for nurses, keeping the people we care for safe. It has been a standard practice in health care for a very long time to require nurses and other health workers to have mandatory vaccinations.

The International Council of Nurses, the international body that represents nursing unions—I note that the fake union those opposite are fond of is not a member—has worked together with the World Health Organization to estimate the number of health workers who have died since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. I am sad to report that an estimated 115,000 health workers have died since March last year. The majority of those are nurses. What would those nurses say about mandatory vaccination? What would those nurses' families say about mandatory vaccination? I reckon they would want it. If we had it in March last year, that number would be a lot lower. I pay respect to all of those nurses and other health workers who went to work to care for people and made the ultimate sacrifice.

I think about police officers and have been reviewing the statistics today from the United States. Since the start of the pandemic, 473 officers in the United States have been listed as killed in the line of duty as a result of COVID-19. In the same period, 93 were killed in the line of duty as a result of gunshot wounds. Nearly five times as many have died from COVID-19 as have died of gunshot wounds. That is why we need mandatory vaccinations. I commend the health minister, the Premier, Dr John Wakefield and all of the people in Queensland Health who have taken the brave decisions to make sure we are following this advice and to mandate vaccinations. That is saving lives.

The only body that does not support this is that fake organisation owned by that LNP hack Graeme Haycroft. If the members for Mudgeeraba and Moggill are serious when they say that they will stand up at every opportunity and oppose this, they should go to those organisations and tell them to withdraw the lawsuits to try to stop mandatory vaccinations. Why don't you do that, member for Moggill, the next time you are at one of their conferences—

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, member.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the member for Greenslopes' comments personally offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr KELLY: I withdraw.

(Time expired)

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (4.41 pm): I am vaccinated. I want everyone in rural and regional Queensland to have easy access to the vaccine so that they, too, can get vaccinated. I support healthcare workers following the advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee in making sure they are vaccinated. It is a condition of employment to be vaccinated as is the case with many other vaccines for those who work in health.

Vaccination has to be above politics. Members opposite should stop the cheap political stunts and instead get on with the job of promoting the vaccine and helping people in rural and regional Queensland get access to the vaccine. Let's get the vaccine into the arms of Queenslanders. That is the real problem this government is not addressing.

If the vaccine is accessible to healthcare workers and community members, they will go and get vaccinated. We have seen that in the community of Dalby, where 200 people a day would go into the pop-up clinics. The Labor government has stalled on access for political purposes. Unfortunately, it has

been like pulling teeth from this Labor government to get pop-up vaccination clinics across the Western Downs. The Western Downs double-dose rate is 51 per cent. It is below the state average. I have fought for months for Dalby, Tara, Condamine, Meandarra, Moonie, Chinchilla and Miles to have more COVID vaccine clinics.

If the government wants to get vaccines out of the fridge and into the arms of health workers and community members, it should give them better access. We do not all live in the south-east corner or on the coast. Why was the Queensland Labor government slow to start with offering vaccinations at Bunnings? New South Wales and Victoria have been offering vaccinations at Bunnings since August. This Labor government was three months behind the other states.

The delays and reduced access are all about playing politics with vaccination rather than using vaccination as a path out of the pandemic. How does this Labor government expect healthcare workers and the vulnerable to get vaccinated when they just cannot get access in those local communities, especially those communities where there is no chemist or doctor such as Meandarra, Condamine or Moonie? There are numerous other communities in the same situation right across Queensland. Meandarra, Condamine and Moonie are still waiting for their pop-up clinics. This Labor government is creating vaccine hesitancy and delaying and slowing vaccine access to communities for people who want to get vaccinated.

Queensland has one of the lowest rates of vaccination in the country. It is a shame that the Labor government is making this a political issue in a pandemic. Given the unions, including the AWU, QTU and QNMU, have expressed their opposition—

(Time expired)

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (4.44 pm): I rise to speak in support of this motion. It is interesting to hear the member for Warrego talk about making the vaccine rollout political when we all know that the federal government had two jobs, both of which it failed at. The federal government did not deliver the vaccines to Queensland, they were worried about New South Wales—that was ‘gold standard’—and we did not even get a quarantine station. Those opposite should not forget that it was the federal government that failed Queensland miserably.

Around the world, healthcare workers have been on the front line in facing COVID-19. These workers have treated the sick, they have witnessed the terrible toll that this virus has had on individuals, families and communities and they have continued to roll out testing and vaccinations. I sincerely thank each and every one of them for their dedication, for putting themselves and their families at risk.

Sadly, the World Health Organization has estimated that COVID may have killed over 115,000 healthcare workers globally. This is tragic. That is why the AHPPC has recommended mandatory vaccination for all healthcare workers—to protect them, their patients, their families and their communities. That is why the Palaszczuk government has mandated vaccinations for all healthcare workers by the end of October.

Again, I thank the healthcare workers in my community, including my darling niece Millie, who are fully vaccinated, because we know vaccination is the only way to stop this virus. We want to ensure that our frontline workers are protected. We know that these dedicated workers such as Millie have an increased risk of catching the virus due to the nature of their work.

The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mudgeeraba continue to duck and dive around the issue. Whilst they have made statements today, at no point have they made any comments about mandating it. They have made elaborate statements around the AHPPC. Is this because they want to keep their backers at the NPAQ happy? Perhaps. This is an organisation that suggests health workers seek an exemption from the Queensland Health mandate on the basis that ‘the lack of engagement around the risks of the COVID-19 vaccine triggers concerns that this process is inconsistent with human rights’ and that the mandate is ‘forcing workers to undergo medical treatment without being provided with the information necessary to give my full, free and informed consent’. I call on those opposite to condemn these statements. Is it because they are backing George Christensen, who recently compared vaccine mandates to slavery and apartheid—he actually did say that—or could it be because they want to cosy up to—

(Time expired)

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (4.47 pm): I rise to speak to the motion moved by the Minister for Health. I will be voting in favour of this motion because, regardless of what anyone says, I actually believe in vaccination. I am fully vaccinated and I support the mandatory vaccination of workers in the Queensland healthcare system as a condition of employment, as recommended by the AHPPC. What we are seeing here today is a diversion from the real issue in my area and in rural and regional Queensland more broadly in terms of low vaccinations.

Mr Harper: What are you doing about it?

Mr LAST: I will come to that. Let's look at Townsville University Hospital, the largest hospital in North Queensland. Six additional ventilators were put into that hospital over the past 18 months. Now there are real concerns that our hospitals in rural and regional Queensland will not be able to cope in the coming months if there is an outbreak of COVID-19. That is a genuine concern given what has happened in other parts of Australia and, indeed, the world.

It comes down to communication, resources and the will in providing vaccine accessibility for all residents, regardless of where they live. There is no Bunnings in the Burdekin electorate. There are no free sausages in my electorate.

If someone in the Burdekin electorate wants to get the vaccine, they have to be prepared to drive. What if they are 80 years of age and live in Middlemount or one of those areas out there? I received a text message not 10 minutes ago from a worker on a cattle property out at Middlemount saying that it would be a four-hour round trip per vaccine—two four-hour round trips to go and get their vaccine. The rollout of the vaccine in those areas has left a lot to be desired, particularly when it comes to communication, because quite often the first time people know that a vaccine clinic is in town is when they drive past the pop-up clinic.

Mr Harper interjected.

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

Mr LAST: Just because people live in the bush should not mean that they have to put up with a lack of accessibility for something like a vaccine. I have a real concern that our healthcare system will not be able to cope if we have a large-scale outbreak of COVID in rural and regional Queensland. I have a real concern that our Indigenous communities are going to be exposed if we have an outbreak when the borders reopen and I do not know how our health system will cope with that, particularly in those rural and regional areas.

Ms Leahy: They'll be locked down.

Mr LAST: We now face the very real prospect of being in lockdown over Christmas, and I will stand up in this place on each and every occasion to fight for equality of services in health care because those of us who live in the bush deserve that in the same way that those who live in the south-east corner have it.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (4.50 pm): I rise to support the motion before the House. Queensland's health response to COVID-19 has led the nation. As a result, our economic recovery has led the nation. Why? Because our government has always followed the health advice, and on this matter we are no different. Our government endorses the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination of healthcare workers in line with the recommendations of the AHPPC, and the word 'mandatory' is the critical part of this motion. It is a word we seldom heard from those opposite. To his credit, the member for Buderim, who has more backbone than the rest of the LNP combined, was the only person who said the word 'mandatory'.

'We all believe in the AHPPC, just like we all believe in Santa Claus'. That is what we heard from the opposition. We all believe in the AHPPC. We believe in the AHPPC like we believe in democracy or life after love, but we do believe that vaccinations—no-one got it in the audience—for health workers should be mandatory—the member for Burleigh is awake—but on the LNP side they would not say it. The LNP is echoing NPAQ of course, which acknowledges that 'it is a condition of employment that many vaccines are received by health workers' but which also says that it opposes the mandatory vaccination of health workers. That is right: it recognises that some vaccinations are mandatory for employment, but it just does not support a vaccination that is mandatory for employment! Got it?

Queenslanders know where the Palaszczuk government stands, and that is with the people of Queensland. The contrast with the LNP could not be starker. Today when the Leader of the Opposition stood up, all he did was flick the autobabble machine to 'vacillate' instead of 'vaccinate', turned the dial to three minutes and let the autobabble rip. I know that sometimes the LNP and its accomplices talk in code—a certain number of words means this, a certain number of letters means that—but the people of Queensland just wanted to hear eight words from the Leader of the Opposition today: 'I support the mandatory vaccination of health workers'. Those words did not pass his lips.

A government member interjected.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the minister; it is a simple question that needs a simple answer, simple words that did not fall from his lips. The Leader of the Opposition cannot say it and his health spokesperson will not say it. They will not say it. In the case of the member for Mudgeeraba, I

think it is because she does not believe it. The LNP member for Mudgeeraba will not disassociate herself from NPAQ. I have more respect for her than for the Leader of the Opposition. The member for Mudgeeraba does not say 'mandatory' because she does not believe in it. The Leader of the Opposition does not say 'mandatory' because he is too weak to believe in that or anything else.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the next member, Treasurer, could I ask that you withdraw that last statement? We have ruled that using the term 'weak' is unparliamentary.

Mr DICK: I withdraw.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (4.54 pm): I rise to speak on behalf of the KAP against the government's motion. The KAP has been quite clear on our position. We respect the job that any government is trying to do in rolling these vaccinations out. From the start our message has been that we recommend that people consult their doctor or talk to their medical adviser and get advice from them and make their choice, and when they make that choice we respect that. We are a party that founded itself on personal freedoms and choices, so we are trying to be true to the principles that people voted for us on in that respect.

The government is faced with an extraordinary situation—we accept that—but there are some interesting points to reflect on in the context of this debate. I am told that childhood vaccinations are around 95 per cent, so no-one is holding a gun to their heads. When people trust the science and trust what people are telling them, they can make logical choices. What we are consistently hearing is, 'The more I'm being told by government I'm forced to do this, the more I don't want to get it. I've got nothing against vaccinations.' There is the question of trust here, because those of us in North Queensland have been fed garbage about tree-clearing science and we have been fed garbage about the reef science. Peter Ridd pulled out and was sacked for it, and no-one has proved him wrong. No-one is game to even try to prove him wrong; they just got rid of him out of the job. This is all flawing the trust in government and the science. It underscores the fact that under normal conditions people reasonably would say, 'Yeah, I'll get the vaccination. I've got no problem.' However, when the government starts forcing and saying, 'This is what's got to be done,' that is when it is encountering problems.

The other issue I want to raise is that, on reflection for me, we are having trouble keeping hospitals open in the electorate. Julia Creek was downgraded and I am told that it still will not go back to a 24-hour service. We cannot get nurses into hospitals in some areas. Some extra staffing does come, but if not they are still told to roll out this massive health program.

Someone said that it was only 20 per cent in Doomadgee. I rang up Doomadgee asking if there was a sentiment against it. I was told, 'No, there's not really a sentiment against it.' Therefore, I made the assumption that they had not had proper exposure to getting either education or having the vaccine there available to them.

Another family pulled me up in town the other week to say that their kids were given one day to go into Richmond to get it. They were told, 'You've got to go on this day to get it.' They said, 'We're mustering cattle. We're busy. We can't get in that day.' Tough luck!

Then there is the question of health services. If we cannot even perform the primary health functions in regional and rural areas, how can we be expected to roll this out on top? Before the government starts mandating and enforcing this, it has to lift its game on the other things it can be doing. There is a lot more that can be done before forcing this down people's throats.

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

Resolved in the affirmative in accordance with special sessional orders.

Queensland Building and Construction Commission

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (5.02 pm): I move—

That this House notes the widespread concern about the performance of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, including:

- (a) potential conflicts of interest of board members;
- (b) allegations of inappropriate intervention in the commission's affairs;
- (c) the resignation of respected and experienced officers from the commission;
- (d) inconsistent approaches to licensing builders in relation to the fit and proper person test; and
- (e) targeted campaigns against non-unionised builders

and calls on the government to launch an inquiry into the QBCC in the terms outlined by the member for Everton in the Legislative Assembly on 26 October 2021.

This motion is about the integrity of the independent building regulator in our state. No doubt the minister will get up in a moment and talk about the health of the construction industry. This minister has had no impact on the health of the construction industry in this state. In fact, the health of the construction industry has occurred in spite of this minister. This motion is about the integrity of the regulator.

Mrs Gerber: Or lack of!

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection from the member for Currumbin. What we are talking about is exactly that. The evidence is mounting every day that we must have an inquiry. It is important that Queenslanders, both builders and consumers, have confidence in the integrity of the building regulator. What has happened over the last few months is absolutely scandalous. We have had allegation after allegation after allegation. We have the example of preferential treatment being given to some associate of the minister so that he or his staff would intervene. A meeting was held with a person called Toni Bowler and within hours the QBCC acted—on the weekend—to make sure that they heeded the advice of the minister or his office.

This preferential treatment is reminiscent of what occurred when Jackie Trad was here. Remember when Jackie Trad had the phone number for the CCC chair and rang him on the weekend when he was sitting there in his trackie daks—his words—expecting preferential treatment? Dr Shaun McCrystal has also had issues with his neighbour. He was worried about the safety of that property. He wrote to the minister after he heard about Toni Bowler's preferential treatment asking for the same treatment. Of course that did not happen. His matter was simply passed on to the QBCC because this minister gives preference to people for some reason that he will not disclose. Who does he give preference to?

Mr Stevens: Labor mates!

Mr MANDER: Labor mates? Is it union mates? Is it members of the Labor Party? Who is it that he gives preferential treatment to? Recently we had the situation where a builder, who was a convicted sexual predator, in the course of his work perpetrated sexual crimes against women. The minister and his staff in the QBCC knew about this and did not act upon it immediately. In fact, he had the temerity to blame honest former employees of the QBCC who did recommend that this person should be finished up straight away. The minister threw these people under the bus because he had nowhere else to go. He got caught out.

On Monday, 1 November, we will have the disgraceful situation where hundreds of small businesses will be put out of work because this minister is doing the bidding of the trade union movement. He is not worried about small businesses and about employment. He is worried about making sure that his union masters are happy. He wants to be able to go to the CFMEU meeting and get the standing ovation he normally gets because of the work that he does for them. This minister is not concerned about the integrity of the regulator, he is concerned about making sure that his union masters are happy.

This minister will not support this inquiry because it will expose everything that we have just been speaking about. It will expose his incompetence. It will expose the fact that he has aided and abetted in all these issues that I have talked about—these conflicts of interest, this preferential treatment, this ministerial and board intervention into the operational matters of the QBCC. The evidence is building every day. This minister, this government and this Premier have no choice but to initiate a commission of inquiry. One of the first things that will come out of that inquiry will be that this minister must go.

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (5.07 pm): The member for Everton makes a good point: I am going to speak against the motion. As he did recognise, the Queensland building and construction sector has never been stronger. That is absolutely true. Queensland is the best place to build, to live and to work in the construction industry anywhere in the nation. That is what the independent regulator and its dedicated staff and leaders have delivered. While southern states have suffered months of lockdown, leaving construction sites empty and tradies out of work, here in Queensland the independent regulator works with builders and tradies to keep people at work. Queensland sites remained open. They built our economic recovery brick by brick. Whether the opposition like it or not, Queensland tradies are on the job—230,000 of them, 110 of them licensed by the commission. It means well paid jobs in a confident and booming industry.

I have mentioned indicators this week and I am happy to repeat them for the benefit of the opposition. Building approvals are up. There are more licensed contractors in Queensland than ever before. There are over 168,000 new homes and renovations. Eighteen and a half thousand apprentices

are on the tools. Our minimum financial requirements, which those opposite opposed, have recapitalised \$1.4 billion into the sector. Construction is strong and so is the regulator. Just yesterday I announced that the Queensland building and construction sector is up from \$45 billion to \$47.4 billion. It is because of Queensland's strong health response that our building and construction sector has continued to grow. It is now \$2 billion stronger. I apportion some of the credit for that to the strength of the regulator. It is right there, up and down the state, for those who want to see it.

Despite the LNP campaigning time and time again against our reform road map, the Queensland Building Plan, Queenslanders working in the sector have more confidence than ever that they will be paid for the work that they do. It is because of this government's nation-leading building reforms—with the streamlined trust account reforms at its centre—that Australian tradies working in this state are no longer left high and dry when developers, builders and ruthless head contractors walk away unscathed if a company collapses.

The LNP wants to see a system where they can continue to do that, where those builders can walk away without paying tradies and where developers can walk away without paying builders. That was the LNP's vision for the commission and from this motion it is clear that it remains their vision. This motion shows that the LNP will do anything to stop more tradies being protected in Queensland. Let the record reflect that the LNP will always tear down reform that protects working Queenslanders—they are trying to do it here again—even if they have to tear down an institution to do it.

The Palaszczuk Labor government will not waver. We will continue to expand the framework for project trust accounts to protect the private sector. Every school and hospital built in the state since 2015 has been built under a framework administered by this regulator. They are safe buildings, they are quality buildings and they are beautiful buildings all delivered under a framework regulated by this commission. We have also delivered big projects such as the North Queensland stadium that we are all incredibly proud of. We are delivering the Cairns Convention Centre and buildings such as the Performing Arts Centre and Queen's Wharf next door—all projects administered and successfully delivered by this regulator. Earlier today in this House I spoke about a young apprentice who is working on the Cairns Convention Centre. It is for people like him, his mates, his family and his community that we have the strongest industry regulator in the country.

We have backed our industry, our workers, their communities and the independent regulator every step of the way and we have done that despite repeated attempts by the LNP to undermine confidence in the construction industry. Put simply, this motion is about one thing: it is about undermining investor confidence in Queensland's construction industry and they are doing it by exploiting Queenslanders for their own political gain. The member for Everton has exploited a handful of unfortunate situations to attack the independent regulator for nothing more than cheap political gain. This motion is designed to perpetuate a campaign of exploitation. However, most offensive is that this motion attacks individuals of the commission in a forum in which they cannot defend themselves. That is unethical and unbecoming of a parliamentarian and it is incredibly self-serving. We reject the motion.

(Time expired)

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (5.12 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Everton. I can tell the House that there is not a 'handful' of cases, as the minister has just told us. There are, in fact, hundreds if not thousands of cases where the so-called independent regulator has failed the people of Queensland. What have we heard in the past couple of weeks? The minister was asked a question in parliament about a meeting he had in September 2019 with Toni Bowler, who some people would say is a family friend of the minister.

Mr Stevens: A former Labor councillor.

Mr HART: A former Labor councillor; I take that interjection. Within hours of that meeting, on a weekend the QBCC sent two senior staff to the Gold Coast, on overtime, which the minister says is normal practice. The minister stood in this place and told us that the meeting with Toni Bowler was about sport. During that 'sport' meeting apparently Toni Bowler said, 'My building is going to fall down.' The minister said, 'Well, that's a coincidence because I'm the minister for housing. I'll get on the phone now to the QBCC and we'll sort this right out for you, because that is what a minister does.' While the minister tells us that it is not the minister's job or the board's job to interfere with the so-called independent regulator, in this case ministerial intervention led to two senior staff going to the Gold Coast to look at the building.

The minister told us that the building was going to fall down, but we have since found out that the QBCC, in fact, reported there were no structural defects with the Kirra Vista building. It appears that he shut down the Groupline Constructions Maya building project for no good reason. In fact, Groupline

Constructions took the QBCC to court and won. They are about to sue the QBCC for something like, I am told, \$10 million. The interference of the minister and the board in this matter is going to cost the people of Queensland \$10 million.

The minister tells us that he is happy to meet with people who have issues with the QBCC. Let us talk about Linda Hartman and her daughter Paige. Linda had a house built for Paige at a cost of \$700,000. Apparently it had rising damp and it was demolished under the orders of the QBCC, as reported by *A Current Affair*. Linda tried to see the minister. She drove to the minister's office but was refused an interview with him. Then again, she is not a family friend.

Mark Agius lives in Townsville. I have been to Townsville a number of times to see Mark and I understand that the member for Townsville has also spoken to Mark. Mark would like to speak to the minister. He has a house on the side of a hill in Townsville. I have seen him there. He has wind issues because of the way that the house was constructed. A few days ago he told me that you can put a marble on the floor and it will roll across the floor. He spent \$1 million trying to get things sorted out through the QBCC. He would like to see the minister, but he cannot see him because he is not a family friend. He is not in any union. He is not an important person to the minister. He cannot get through the minister's door.

The member for Everton told us about Shaun McCrystal. He heard what the minister said in parliament the other day about meeting with anybody to discuss their issues, so he inquired about having a meeting with the minister. But, no! Instead of a meeting, Shaun received a response from the QBCC liaison officer in the minister's office. I table that correspondence, which Shaun sent to me only this morning.

Tabled paper: Bundle of emails regarding matter referred to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission regarding fire safety concerns [\[1825\]](#).

We have issues with the air-conditioning industry. The minister has organised for his union mates to take over the air-conditioning industry and the fire industry. All such industries have training provided by the Service Trades College, which is union run and funded by the government. The government has given them \$18 million here and \$20 million there to build a trade services college that will benefit the unions. That is what this is all about. It is all about benefitting the unions and not the people of Queensland. It needs an inquiry.

(Time expired)

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.17 pm): I will start by saying something that those opposite never will: I am really proud of Queensland's construction industry and I back the 230,000 jobs supported by Queensland's construction industry. I am disappointed that yet again the LNP is out to talk down that industry and those jobs. Every piece of infrastructure in my community has been built under a framework from Queensland's independent regulator, the QBCC, from the new classrooms at Centenary State High School—and there is more to come—and the Sumners Road Interchange Upgrade that I spoke about earlier today to the new housing community in Oxley. Every one of those projects is being delivered in such a way that tradies and subbies are paid fairly for the work that they do and they get to go home to their families safely. I think we can all agree that there is nothing more important than that. Queensland's construction industry is strong and so is its regulator.

I am really proud of the fact that more Queensland women are picking up the tools and hard hats for trade careers—women such as Susie Q from my community. She started her own painting company in Mount Ommaney about five years ago and is now training the next generation of lady tradies. Her business has been nominated in my small business awards. I never miss an opportunity to get in a brag.

Those opposite were happy to sit by when female participation in construction sat at two per cent. We do not have enough time to go through the LNP's problems with women, but since the Palaszczuk government's election in 2015 that number has doubled and now sits at around five per cent. There are 13,500 Queensland women in frontline trade roles and more than 800 currently in trade apprenticeships.

As someone with two daughters, I want them to grow up knowing that they can be whatever they want to be, but you cannot be what you cannot see. We have come a long way as a state in advancing women in construction, but we can do more. Our government will continue to step up and lead from the front because women belong on the front line of construction. We proved that with the Cannon Hill Exemplar project, a product of our government's strong partnership with the National Association of Women in Construction. Thirty-one per cent of the workers on that \$7 million project were women. Twenty-two per cent were on the front line as plumbers, electricians and painters. There were

architects, engineers, admin and professional services, proving that gender targets are achievable. I note that Minister de Brenni has announced that the next Women in Construction Exemplar project will be in Hervey Bay. I am very confident that this project will allow us to build on what we have already achieved and will drive us to where we want this industry to be for women.

We have also recently appointed Queensland's first female Government Architect in former Gold Coast City architect Leah Lang. I know that there will be many aspiring Queensland women architects, engineers, designers and builders who will follow in Leah's footsteps as leaders in Queensland's construction industry. This is all possible because Queensland's construction industry is strong and our independent regulator is strong. While those opposite will never admit that, on behalf of the 230,000 Queenslanders working in it I think the LNP should stop talking them down by undermining and exploiting it. Our tradies, and our female tradies especially, deserve better.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (5.21 pm): I again declare that I am a licensed builder under the QBCC Act and also a very proud tradie in Queensland. The reason we need to debate this motion tonight is not about female tradies and not about the regulator; it is about this minister, the mud, alleged corruption and all the issues that stink over at QBCC. There is one guy in this room tonight who is responsible. That is why this inquiry is—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): The member will refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr BENNETT: The minister. That is why we need to back the motion moved tonight. Those opposite can deflect all they like. I ask the minister: what are you afraid of? After all these years, after all the reforms, let's have an open, transparent inquiry into the QBCC and let's put all these issues on the table. I guess, from the way the government members are deflecting tonight, it is exactly the case that they do not want people to have a good, hard look at what is going on over there. They do not want to deal with the allegations and the issues around conflict of interests. That is why these calls are justified.

We need to go back to the beginning to understand what the QBCC is about. It is about dealing with home owners and it is about the industry and about navigating a way forward and being able to deal with disputes. Most of us who take any time to really understand what is going on know that most people leave that process very bitterly disappointed and aggrieved and usually end up on the wrong side of the QBCC. That is the problem we are seeing day in and day out.

We know that there are problems in the building industry. There have been for generations. The question is: why do we have so many disputes around dysfunction in Queensland right now? I guess it is about the regulations that the minister was spruiking before. Is it about the dysfunctional QBCC? Is it about the dysfunctional minister? Those opposite treat the QBCC as a plaything and have done so for years. I am sorry that former minister Schwarten is not still here in the chamber. We could talk about how he dealt with public works.

We have to acknowledge that you cannot treat such an important agency with so much disdain and so much cover-up. You need to be able to speak to people in QBCC. You need to be able to speak to someone that you trust, someone with integrity and someone with knowledge, and you want to know that they have your back. I suggest that a lot of builders and home owners do not feel like that after they have gone through a process with an industry regulator that is so far out of touch.

We know that both parties are often let down in this process. If members need an example, I refer to the issues around the fire protection industry. That will be talked about tonight. Can you believe that on Monday so many of the mum-and-dad businesses that are not backed by a big union will go to the wall? There will be bankruptcies, dysfunction and mass sackings. This is again about this union dominated Service Trades College. I predict here tonight that a lot more will come out about this so-called set-up. We know that work is being done on the background of this issue. That is another reason to have an inquiry into the processes and the decisions made by this board, this minister and this government. They are dodgy deals and they need to be held to account.

A local example is of Leanne, who has been trying to resolve an issue for eight years. She was told in writing by the previous commissioner that her house should be knocked down and rebuilt. I want to talk about home warranty insurance in a minute. This is a matter of deflection, of dragging the little person down and hoping they will go away. I say to Leanne: the QBCC has failed you. They have not provided adequate support. People need to have their say at a proper inquiry into the QBCC.

A matter that really gets everyone upset is the internal review process. If you get an internal review, usually it reverses the decision of the regulator anyway. How can we have trust? How can we have confidence in the process? This is nothing new, though. In 2017 there was a groundswell of support in the community for an investigation into how the QBCC was operating. Toxic culture was

mentioned. They talked about the issues of Queensland Rail in 2017 and called for an inquiry, so this is nothing new. This is just more evidence of why we need to turn a spotlight on how the government treats some of these agencies. We need to know about the 30 people who have left this agency—the commissioner, the deputy commissioner, three assistant commissioners and 10 directors—in the last 12 months. Something stinks over there and there needs to be an inquiry.

We really need to back the member for Everton's motion. It is sensible. If the government and the minister have nothing to hide, they should stand up, show some maturity and leadership, stop treating Queenslanders arrogantly and being out of touch, get rid of the nepotism and start the inquiry so that we can shine a light on the problems.

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (5.26 pm): I rise to speak against the motion. I suggest that, as he was a member of the Newman government, possibly the member for Burnett has short-term memory loss. Talk about integrity! Honestly, for too long those opposite have undermined Queensland's construction sector. They do not just talk down those who work in it; they talk down those who regulate it. Very little has changed on that side of the House since the Newman government days. As the member said, you cannot rewrite history. They took a wrecking ball to the construction industry.

Let's talk about the department of housing and public works under the member for Everton in the Newman reign. There were sackings across that department which saw the loss of a massive procurement and delivery knowledge bank—deputy directors-general, general managers. It was unbelievable to watch it unfold. Then there is QBuild. Again, there was absolute decimation. There were 1,500 jobs lost and industry confidence was shattered. Honestly, it is absolute hypocrisy from that side of the House. Those opposite should be backing our construction industry and giving confidence to the sector, rather than continuing to diminish it.

Queensland's construction sector is an economic powerhouse. We on this side of the House continue to lead the nation. Queensland is the place to be. The Urban Developer reported last week that tradies will flock to Queensland, like many other southerners will, and this is because our Palaszczuk government has led the nation in the health response to COVID which has seen our successful economic recovery.

The construction sector contributes \$47 billion to the state's economy and continues to go from strength to strength during the pandemic. It is stronger, fairer and safer as a result of the reforms delivered by our Palaszczuk government in partnership with the industry and overseen by the regulator. Reforms include our nation-leading security-of-payment framework that ensures subbies get paid for the work they do—I know that many tradies in my area are grateful for this protection—and the nonconforming building products laws that ensure that building products are safe and fit for use. No-one ever wants to see a Grenfell Tower tragedy again. Other reforms include the minimum financial requirements that ensure the financial health of licensees so they can grow their businesses and employ more Queenslanders, giving confidence to the sector.

I note that the regulator plays a very important role in keeping our communities educated and informed on the pitfalls of the building and construction sector. Sadly, although to be expected, those opposite do not want to hear the truth and only seek to exploit individuals and their unfortunate circumstances for cheap political gain. Let us look at the facts. It was the LNP and the former minister for public works, the member for Everton, who weakened the minimum financial reporting laws. This left the regulator blind to the financial health of licensees, often until it was too late. When builders go bust, it is a nightmare not only for their clients but also for the subbies working for them. They did this under the guise of red-tape reduction. They pushed the risk down the chain to the subbies while simultaneously cutting the wages of subbies.

It was the Palaszczuk government that reinstated minimum financial reporting requirements because we know how important it is to ensure that builders have the capacity to meet the contracts of their clients. We reversed the reckless changes made by the LNP and reintroduced mandatory financial reporting for Queensland's largest licensees. The regulator now has a direct line of sight to companies that may be in trouble and would not be able to pay their subbies or suppliers.

The reinstatement of the minimum financial reporting requirements has resulted in an injection of \$1.4 billion of capital into the Queensland building and construction industry. This is a great result. It is a result that gives tradies and employees of licensees more certainty, better job stability and peace of mind. It means that companies are operating within the law and within the QBCC mandatory financial requirements. At the end of the day, they will get paid for the work they have done—a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

The Queensland construction sector is so strong and so is the regulator thanks to the Palaszczuk government. The sector has continued to grow during the pandemic. We simply do not get that without a dedicated workforce or an effective regulator. It is time that those opposite stopped undermining confidence in the construction sector and started backing the Queensland construction sector. I reject this motion.

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (5.31 pm): Let me make very clear right from the start that this motion has nothing to do with the tradies and builders out there who are doing a great thing for our community. This is about the integrity of an organisation that the minister supports. I support the sensible motion moved by the member for Everton to hold an inquiry. The key driver for this inquiry is the performance of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and the independence of that watchdog. There are a number of allegations that call into question the performance of that organisation. No matter which way one looks, confidence in the commission has been damaged—perceived or real. I suggest to the minister that the only way to move forward and restore confidence in the commission is to support the sensible motion moved by the member for Everton and hold this inquiry.

I was keen to contribute to this motion today because the current make-up of the QBCC is a case study in how unions are dominating Queensland government agencies and are overstepping the traditional role of unions representing workers' rights in order to influence and run the government. I wanted to speak to the motion today to express my disappointment in the outcomes for some of my community members who have reached out to me and despite my representations to the QBCC, the Premier and the minister's office those community members have been broken, left largely out of pocket and in one case seen 40 workers out of jobs.

The government is beholden to the unions of this state. The QBCC has a membership dominated by current and former union organisers and officials—the national division president of the CFMEU, the assistant divisional branch secretary, a former ALP state president and a former state secretary of the Electrical Trades Union, which incidentally runs the Service Trades College with the plumbers union. The allegations made against the QBCC question its independence from government. I argue the close association of current and former union officials means the QBCC is too close to the Queensland government run by the ALP with union appointed delegates to each of its three caucuses.

As mentioned, some members of my community have reached out to me because the treatment of these members of my community falls well short of our expectations of the QBCC as an independent regulator. Troy Gentz from Statewide Transit Homes made a personal plea to me on the basis that his business needed assistance to save 40 employees. I wrote to the minister and sought his assistance with the QBCC. Mr Gentz, through his company, was extremely genuine and clearly upset that he had not been allowed to complete his contracts and resolve the issues raised by his clients. Mr Gentz holds the QBCC directly responsible for destroying his successful business and losing 40 employees. Mr Gentz now employs no-one.

In another local example, Mr Gary Boon wrote to the Premier, the minister and me seeking assistance after dissatisfaction with the QBCC's determination. Mr Boon had a contract with a local shed company to supply and erect a shed. He had paid a large sum of money. He also paid the compulsory QBCC insurance. After the company went bust, he called on the QBCC to make right the delivery of the shed. The QBCC engaged three builders and got five quotes only to be told a number of months later his claim was 12 days late. The QBCC has a right of review to allow claims up to 28 days old. That did not assist Mr Boon who was significantly out of pocket. His family is struggling to pay its debts. This is not in keeping with our community's expectations.

I ask the minister to have a look at the QBCC's purpose which is 'for peace of mind'. Its vision is 'to be a regulator that builds trust and confidence in all we do'. Minister, did the QBCC meet their purpose, vision and desirable behaviours? I believe they fell well short. Unions have a genuine place in representing workers' rights, but they should not run the government. I finish where I started this contribution: the confidence that the community holds in the QBCC—perceived or real—has been damaged. I suggest to the minister that the only way to restore confidence is to hold this inquiry.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Members, before I call the next speaker, I remind members of those members who are on a warning. They are the members for Logan, Buderim, Ferny Grove and Thuringowa.

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (5.36 pm): It is no surprise that I rise to speak against this motion and the constant attack on the QBCC and other government organisations. Our independent building regulator always works with industry to deliver the best outcomes for home owners, builders and

renovators. Those opposite do not like to acknowledge it, but there is a track record to prove it. Our government has worked with them. It has been mentioned before that we introduced legislation in relation to subbies' payments and chain of responsibility for nonconforming building products.

When home owners and builders were caught in the perfect storm of rising prices and material shortages, we set up a system through the independent regulator, the QBCC, to give Queenslanders access to free mediation services to get their homes built. The Accelerated Builder/Consumer Dispute service, the ABCD service, went live on 1 July, with professional mediators to help frustrated home owners and embattled builders find a way to get their homes completed. The Palaszczuk government took action after industry groups pleaded for help for their members—members who were caught between the toll of the pandemic on global supply chains and the boom in construction activity across the state. Critical shortages in timber and steel products as well as roofing workers added to a long list of hard-to-find products, meaning some builders were struggling to keep going on homes or faced huge cost increases to supply materials.

COVID, the home builder scheme and low interest rates, when added to our strong economic recovery from the pandemic, have drawn a lot more people to the state, creating a perfect storm for supplies and skill shortages. The Accelerated Builder/Consumer Dispute service gave home owners and builders a way to get together with the help of a professional problem solver and achieve what both sides ultimately signed up for—builders to get the job done and home owners to get into their homes.

The independent third-party mediation service was made available on the QBCC website. It is easy to get to. It is an example of a strong regulator working for the good of home owners, renovators, buildings and industry, because we put home owners, renovators and builders first. We do not exploit the unfortunate but a small number of cases where there is a dispute.

We want home owners moving into their homes, subbies paid for the work they do, workers going home safe at the end of the day—that is very important—and builders getting on with the job. Just on that, we hear a lot about unions from those opposite: 'We don't like unions. Unions this and unions that.' Unions make workplaces safe. They make sure that workplaces are safe. Every year, when I can, I get along to Workers' Memorial Day—28 April. Members should put it in their diaries. The minister has. In 2019, 183 workers were fatally injured at work—26 of them from Queensland. You know what I do not see at Workers' Memorial Day? I do not see any fake unions or any of those opposite. Put 28 April in your diary. Come along and see the good that unions do.

We did not just pluck the ABCD scheme out of thin air. It came from working with industry and looking for solutions, not cheap political points. When the Morrison government's HomeBuilder overheated the building market and builders were put under pressure, not of their own making, costs soared within contracts that were already signed. The work had to go on. QBCC continues to support them through the ABCD framework.

We have a fair, confident and safe building industry with a strong regulator. We have more licensed contractors doing business in Queensland than ever before. More than 168,000 Queensland Home Warranty Scheme policies have been issued in 2020-21 for new home builders and renovators. Our state has 18,500 apprentices on tools. We will not let those opposite undermine confidence in this critical part of Queensland's COVID-19 economic recovery plan. With 230,000 jobs and \$47.4 billion in economic activity, there is too much at stake to allow an industry to become captive to this endless political point scoring from those opposite.

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (5.41 pm): The Queensland Building and Construction Commission has let Queenslanders down, it has let my constituents down and it has let down the owner of an award-winning disability-friendly home. There are widespread concerns regarding the performance and integrity of the QBCC, as we have heard tonight in this chamber from several members. I want this House to hear from one of my constituents who is fighting tooth and nail to see his home made compliant and certified but has consistently faced barriers from the QBCC.

My constituent Scott Gordon is a C3 quadriplegic and an occupational therapist specialising in assistive technology. Scott has an incredible mind and a passion for engineering and he used these skills when designing an impressive multistorey accessible home that can be controlled and automated by people with high-level disabilities, including controls for high-level quadriplegics like himself.

Scott is an incredible advocate for the disability community. Turning his passion into reality, Scott creates extraordinary and practical occupational therapy gadgets. Scott has been involved in the creation of so many phenomenal gadgets including wheelchair accessible sidecars, allowing people the freedom to experience motorcycle travel. His home is the gadget benchmark—it is fully automated and voice controlled.

In 2019, Scott and his incredible home featured on *The Project*. *The Project* called Scott's home 'arguably Australia's smartest home'. Scott moved into his smart wheelchair accessible home over three years ago, but upon moving in Scott did not receive any compliance paperwork or certification from the QBCC licence-holding builder. That paperwork is needed to certify that the builder met minimum safety requirements when building the home. These certification documents are required for Scott to be able to do anything with his home—to insure it or to sell it down the track if he wants to.

Scott has done all the hard work to design and fit his home out with the technology he needs, and it was the QBCC licence-holding builder's job to ensure it was built properly. Scott has spent the past three years chasing the builder, chasing the certifier and subsequently chasing the QBCC to obtain these documents. Scott first contacted the QBCC in February 2018 with his concerns and, despite his matter not being actioned, the QBCC closed his case in July this year saying that the complaint was 'out of date'. Three years and no action was taken on behalf of Scott. That is not good enough. Queenslanders deserve better from the QBCC, and Scott deserves better.

As a result of the QBCC's delayed inaction, Scott had to restart his claim. That is not Scott's fault. That blame lies squarely at the feet of the QBCC and this minister. Finally, after three years of inaction, the QBCC notified Scott that they cannot assist. Scott's insurance runs out in December this year. Something must be done before then. I have written to the Minister for Public Works outlining Scott's case. I look forward to receiving a response. I hope that the minister is able to action it because we know that the minister has intervened in other matters that he has a personal connection to. Take the Kirra Vista Apartments, for example.

Last sitting week it was revealed that the minister's office will make personal representations to the QBCC, send senior staff to inspect a building on a weekend on overtime and will meet with complainants alongside his ministerial staff when they are a stakeholder of his previous portfolio or a constituent—but the minister is yet to even respond to Scott.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member for McConnel, cease your quarrelling across the chamber.

Mrs GERBER: Instead of Scott's complaint being met with responses directly from the QBCC commissioner within hours of a ministerial representation—just like when the minister referred the Kirra Vista Apartments to the QBCC late on a Friday night—Scott's complaint will not even be referred at all. A fast-tracked response within hours for the minister's friends involved in the Kirra Vista Apartment saga; three years of inaction for ordinary Queenslanders like Scott—this is not good enough. It is not good enough that after three years no-one is prepared to take responsibility for the lack of compliance in Scott's case. This minister needs to ensure that the QBCC does its job, not just in the cases that he has a personal stake in. He needs to do it for people like Scott.

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (5.46 pm): Week after week those opposite have come into this House and sought to undermine confidence in Queensland's building and construction industry, an industry which we learned this week now contributes \$47.4 billion to the Queensland economy. In fact, on my morning walk today not far from here I walked past the entrance to the Queen's Wharf development. It was early and I saw many construction workers in their hi-vis on their way to clock on for their shift. It is disappointing for the 230,000 Queenslanders working in the industry that we have an LNP focused on taking them down. As the minister has pointed out, it is nothing but petty exploitative politics.

The reality is that Queensland's building industry has never been stronger, fairer or safer—and so is our regulator. Despite those opposite, there is confidence in the industry: confidence that tradies and subbies get paid for their work, confidence that home owners can invest in building and renovating, confidence that the products on our construction sites are safe. That last point is important because every Queenslanders has the right to feel safe in the buildings they live in, work in and visit.

It was made even more real when flames engulfed London's Grenfell Tower in June 2017. Every state in Australia is faced with the complex issues of potential combustible cladding, but it was Queensland that was recognised by the Grenfell Tower inquiry as a global leader in our approach. That approach has seen 93 per cent of government buildings and 97 per cent of private buildings cleared of cladding risk.

The safety of Queenslanders will always come first. If those opposite were genuinely concerned about the industry, they would not be sitting here undermining its confidence. They would not be exploiting the unfortunate but small number of examples that they do not understand for political gain.

If those opposite were wanting to do something productive and improve regulation in the construction industry, they would get on the phone to Canberra. They would call Prime Minister Morrison and tell him to back in local manufacturing jobs by banning dodgy cladding at the border. It is not surprising that, when it comes to something dangerous coming over the border, the LNP are all for it.

When a major industry group like the Property Council and a Senate inquiry are both backing a ban, I think the message to the Morrison government is that it is common sense—but no, they continue to dodge this responsibility to the people of Australia.

It was the Palaszczuk government that introduced the most comprehensive chain-of-responsibility laws in the country, with an independent regulator now holding everyone in the building supply chain accountable for ensuring products are safe and fit for their intended use. It was the Palaszczuk government that banned flammable cladding with a PE core greater than 30 per cent on Queensland construction sites. It is our cladding materials library at the University of Queensland that provides fire experts with comprehensive information on the flammability of building products.

Queensland construction is strong and so is its regulator. You do not get a building boom like this, where more homes are being built and renovated, home owners are moving in happy and tradies are being fairly paid for the work they do, without an effective regulator. It is high time those opposite stop with the undermining, stop with the exploitation and start backing the 230,000 construction workers who are building a better Queensland.

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (5.50 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the shadow minister for housing noting widespread concern about the Queensland Building and corrupt—and Construction Commission and calling on the state government to launch an inquiry into the issue.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr MICKELBERG: That was a slip of the tongue; I take that interjection. As piles of evidence showing allegations of corruption and political interference by the Minister for Public Works continue to stack up, it should be clear to all Queenslanders that the QBCC can no longer call itself an independent building regulator. What Queenslanders have seen over recent weeks is evidence that the minister has been helping his union mates line their pockets for far too long while honest hardworking Queenslanders are being left for broke. How do they stand a chance?

It is small and family businesses across Queensland that suffer as union thugs attempt to squash anyone who does not join them, as union heavies and ALP mates use their influence over a minister who does not care about the little bloke and who only wants to look after his mates. The fire protection reform racket is a great example of looking after your mates. Out of nowhere, hundreds of Queensland's small and family businesses were surprised by a covert action designed to drive them out of business. All of a sudden, businesses right across regional Queensland that had operated safely for years now needed to complete a three-year apprenticeship to qualify to do the work they had been doing for decades. It gets worse: it turns out this training can only be done here in South-East Queensland at Beenleigh by a union owned company. The minister does not even try to hide the fact that he is owned by the unions.

Through their actions it is clear how little the state government thinks of regional Queenslanders, of hardworking small and family business owners and their staff. These businesses were given six months warning to complete a three-year course—six months to complete a three-year course! Maybe the minister needs to complete a three-year course in maths so he understands the logistics associated with that. More than 400 Queensland businesses are involved in the fire protection industry. That is 400 businesses that face bankruptcy on Monday. They will have to shut up shop and lay off staff if the minister and his mates get their way, as is likely.

The minister told an estimates hearing in August that the reforms were 'designed in consultation with the industry over five years'. Five years? It was more like seven months of consultation with union mates looking for a payday. Industry feedback makes it clear there was no consultation with the Fire Protection Association of Australia or any small business groups. The minister has no problem with misleading parliament and he certainly has no problem misleading Queenslanders. He has rejected all accusations of being in bed with the QBCC, but he has been exposed by the shadow minister. Telling an estimates hearing that neither he nor his office had any involvement in QBCC operational matters might be the biggest mistruth of all.

Speaking of helping your mates, the Cullen Group is alleged to have not been paying their subcontractors and this so-called building watchdog was aware of that, but those high up in the QBCC leadership did not pull their licence. The Cullen Group continued on its merry way, racking up millions

and millions of dollars in debt before finally collapsing. The minister's fingerprints are all over it once again, writ large in emails between his office and former QBCC commissioner Brett Bassett. In another case on the Gold Coast the judge found that the QBCC 'acted beyond its powers', as was mentioned by the member for Burleigh, where six conditions placed on small building company Groupline were invalid and imposed unlawfully. There were more emails between Mr Bassett and—you guessed it—the Minister for Public Works. This is just another example of looking after his mates.

Mr Minnikin: Bananacube?

Mr MICKELBERG: Bananacube indeed! Allegations of bullying and coercion within the QBCC should be taken very seriously. We have seen brave whistleblowers and former senior staff come forward. They were targeted by the leadership at the watchdog and would only be left alone if they toed the line. Well, they cannot do it any longer and they are leaving the QBCC in droves. They cannot stand it any longer, and neither will the LNP. The fact that the QBCC leadership keeps getting away with acts of bullying, coercion and alleged corruption goes to show how much influence they have with their mates in parliament—especially their best mate, the Minister for Public Works.

I would have thought the Minister for Public Works would prefer to have a parliamentary inquiry into the QBCC and his interference. After all, the alternative might be a CCC investigation into his actions, because the evidence is mounting day by day. Ordinary Queenslanders cannot have any faith that this minister or the QBCC leadership are working in their interest.

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (5.55 pm): I rise to speak against the motion. The opposition motion is aimed at nothing more than undercutting confidence in Queensland's critical \$47.4 billion construction industry and the 230,000 Queenslanders who work in it. On this side of the House we will not let the LNP undermine the achievements of the regulator, this government, industry, workers and unions. Together we have kept this industry going during what has been the most challenging time in living memory. While other states have been locked down and workers locked out of building sites, we have worked together to keep Queensland building booming. It has been our health response and focus on keeping Queenslanders safe that has allowed our homes to continue to be built and major projects to reach high into the air.

On top of that, we are investing \$52.2 billion into our infrastructure program, building a better Queensland, and setting us up for when we leave the shadow of COVID looking forward to the safe and strong future Queensland holds. It has only happened because we, unlike those opposite, have not given in to petty politics and cheap political point-scoring. Instead, with our strong independent regulatory and industry leaders, construction companies, unions, tradies and government, we have worked together and kept Queensland building.

We have kept construction sites open and tradies on the tools. Onsite, tradies have masked up, staggered start times and socially distanced in bigger crib rooms. The alternative seen in southern states has been devastating. At one point, Sydney's construction lockdown cost New South Wales at least \$1 billion per week. In Victoria it was \$455 million a day. In contrast, here in Queensland construction sites have stayed open. From day one tradies, subcontractors, major construction companies, suppliers, unions and employer groups have worked together to keep this critical sector working. With 230,000 jobs at stake, we will not allow the LNP to do what COVID could not: destabilise the construction sector. We are all focused on working together to ensure construction sites stay open, powering Queensland's economic recovery and not giving in to cheap political point-scoring. Our strong, fair and independent regulator has played its role.

Queensland's construction industry works best when it works together. COVID-19 is proof of that. Master Builders Queensland's chief executive officer Grant Galvin said that keeping the building and construction industry open has been critical and that the situation in other states showed the success of Queensland's COVID plan. The mighty Electoral Trades Union state secretary Peter Ong pointed to proper planning and implementation as well as education as what is required to keep workers safe and employed. Plumbers Union state secretary Gary O'Halloran said, 'We have been able to stay COVID-safe, keep people employed, keep apprentices coming through and projects going by doing the right thing onsite.'

Together, government, industry, the independent regulator and unions have not let Queensland tradies down. That is what makes it all the more disappointing when those opposite undermine and exploit this good work as only they can. This motion is a nonsense and it should not be supported.

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

AYES, 34:

LNP, 32—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Camm, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

KAP, 1—Dametto.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 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.

Resolved in the negative.

QUEENSLAND VETERANS' COUNCIL BILL

Consideration in Detail

Resumed from p. 3325.

Resumed on clause 13—

Clause 13, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 14 to 17—



Mr MICKELBERG (6.05 pm): I was going to cede to the shadow assistant minister, but I have no doubt that he can go next.

A government member interjected.

Mr MICKELBERG: The shadow assistant minister. Unlike those opposite, he is actually in the room—not like the Premier, who is the minister for veterans who has not even spoken on the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! As has already been established in the chamber this afternoon, it is the convention in this parliament to not refer to the absence of members. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr MICKELBERG: I withdraw. I have some questions on clause 14 for the Attorney-General, as she has carriage of the bill. The clause indicates that the minister will be required to give a veterans organisation a notice stating a reasonable period within which it may nominate a person for an appointment to the council. One of the concerns that has been expressed to me by ex-service organisations and veterans organisations is that many of them would be required to convene a meeting in order to determine who would represent them on something as significant as the Queensland Veterans' Council. Understanding what that reasonable period might look like is important to them so they are able to ensure they actually meet the requirements of the bill and have a nomination so the minister can appoint that individual. That is also important because two of the eight positions will come from veterans organisations and the rest will just be appointed by the minister, so obviously ex-service organisations want to ensure they make the nomination in a reasonable time frame so their individual gets up.

The other clause I want to speak to is clause 17, which deals with the conditions of appointment. I note that many members opposite criticised the LNP members, particularly the members for Burnett and Scenic Rim, for observing that potentially individuals should not be paid for their role on the Queensland Veterans' Council. I note that was actually supported by the ex-service organisations as well. The reason ex-service organisations are concerned about that fact is that independence will be compromised.

As paid employees of the state, will members of the Queensland Veterans' Council be able to speak on issues that are important in a public forum? We have seen with the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee the insertion of a clause in their most recent funding agreement which says that the recipient cannot make any public statement, though I note that the department can. That was a response to their criticism of the assistant minister for veterans. It is clear that the government do not want veterans speaking out. I table that document and I ask the minister to clarify if that is the case.

Tabled paper: Department of the Premier and Cabinet document, undated, titled 'Funding agreement in relation to the 2020-2022 Anzac Day Dawn Service and Brisbane Anzac Student Service between State of Queensland acting through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and ANZAC Day Commemoration Committee (Queensland) Incorporated' [[1826](#)].

Mr LISTER: I want to speak on clause 14 as well. Like the member for Buderim has very eloquently pointed out, this is a bit of a Pandora's box. We have a government here that are going to be selecting veterans who have been offered to them by the veterans organisations, or in the odd case that there are not sufficient nominations they will go out and choose their own. I would like to know what is going to happen here. I suspect these will be very popular positions and many good applicants will be before the government for these paid, prestigious positions on the Queensland Veterans' Council. How is the government going to do it? I would love it if the minister could inform us about the process she will use and how she will avail herself of what constitutes a good representative on this council.

We have a government here with a proclivity for appointing mates—union mates, Labor mates, just mates generally. How can we have confidence? How can the Queensland community have confidence? How can the veterans community have confidence that those selected to be representatives on the Queensland Veterans' Council will be good people and are not selected just because they are Labor Party mates, union mates or whatever? How can we be certain that the process spoken about in clause 14 is going to be scrupulous and above any suggestion of political favouritism?

I would also like to find out, as the member for Buderim said, whether these members are going to be free to speak openly in public. We have recently seen that councillors have not been able to do so without finding themselves hauled before the Office of the Independent Assessor. Will the same thing happen to the veterans who are on the Queensland Veterans' Council? Will they be free to speak out against the government or speak earnestly on behalf of veterans if it is not what the government wants to hear? Will there be consequences for them? These are legitimate questions.

I would say to anybody who is reading this record in future to look closely at what the minister has to say after I have spoken. If the minister has not spoken it would suggest that the government did not want us to ask the question. If the minister does speak, they should read closely between the lines and make sure they understand exactly what the government's intention is.

Mr WATTS: I am looking for some clarity around the clauses. Clause 14 states—

The Minister may give a veterans' organisation a notice stating a reasonable period within which it may nominate a person for appointment to the council.

The clarity I am looking for is: what is the process? Who is the organisation? Will it definitely happen and under what sort of process? What process does the organisation have to undertake? What happens if that falls outside a normal meeting period? Will it be a postal ballot? What are the mechanics involved here? These will be very important positions and I think they will be hotly contested. Others have suggested that there might be some political advantage sought in who is appointed to this. That is not as much my concern; I have left others to voice that. My concern is: what is the process so that various organisations, particularly those that might find themselves not as powerful as some other organisations, are also given the opportunity to put forward candidates who would be able to undertake this process?

I am also interested in the conditions of the appointment. I am seeking some clarity around travel arrangements for a regional member from some of the more far-flung places around Queensland who may find themselves in a nominated position. Will they be at a disadvantage because of the expense of travel required to participate in meetings? If the process requires votes from people all around Queensland, would there be any opportunity for them to engage in that travel or talk to the various organisations that might be making selections?

For me, it is about understanding the mechanics. It is not clear in this clause as to the mechanics that would be involved. I am keen for the minister to outline the mechanics to ensure there is a fair process that is equitable for all and that it is delivering the right member. These are prestigious positions and persons appointed to them will play a very important role in serving and respecting those who have served in the Defence Force. For that reason we need to make sure they are selected correctly in a fair, open and decent way. I would ask the minister to clarify some of that for us if she would.

Ms FENTIMAN: Clause 14, which is about how the minister may seek nominations for membership from veterans organisations, is very clear. I hear from the member for Southern Downs that somehow the term 'reasonable' is a Pandora's box. Let me suggest to him that the term 'reasonable' is probably found in every piece of legislation on the statute books.

Like with every other board, a minister engages with stakeholders and has discussions about suitable appointments. It will be up to the relevant organisations to determine how they put forward a nominee. The reasonable time frame will depend on that particular organisation, and any good minister who works with stakeholders will obviously set a time frame that the organisation can meet to put someone forward. It is actually a very simple clause that can be found in many statutes allowing ministers to make appointments.

In terms of clause 17, in relation to remuneration, I say to the member for Buderim that there are no amendments being put forward by the LNP that seek to alter this. Again, it is very straightforward. I think if the LNP really had a problem with this, there would be an amendment to that effect.

Clauses 14 to 17, as read, agreed to.

Clause 18—



Mr LISTER (6.15 pm): I move the following amendment—

9 Clause 18 (Chairperson)

Page 12, after line 13—

insert—

(6) The chairperson must be a member of the veterans' community.

This amendment is a very important one. It is about ensuring that the chair of the Queensland Veterans' Council must be a veteran. Of all of the omissions and mistakes in this bill, the most glaring one is that there is no provision in the bill or in the government's amendments that I can see to ensure that the chair of the Queensland Veterans' Council is a veteran. You do not need to be immersed in the veterans community or an expert on military service or military life to know that a board which is constituted for the benefit of veterans, for the advancement of their interests, for the protection of the interests of veterans and for advising government on veterans issues ought to have a chair who is a veteran.

I cannot think of another case in which the Labor government would be constituting a statutory authority where the chair was not from the relevant profession or relevant group that it was providing service for. For instance, in the case of a group which is supposed to look after the interests of violence against women, would we see a man as the chair of that board? What about if there were a board to look into Indigenous matters? Would we have a non-Indigenous person as the chair? The chair of this Queensland Veterans' Council should be a veteran. I challenge the minister in her response to justify how it could be that this would not be an absolute requirement.

Unless the chair of the Queensland Veterans' Council is a veteran who has served themselves, who has availed themselves of the unique nature of military service, who has put themselves on the line, who has lived a life where their freedoms of action are taken from them, where they have to obey orders under any condition, where they may have to use deadly force and put themselves in dangerous situations—if they are not a veteran, they are not such a person and they ought to be so that they can effectively represent the interests of veterans to government and they can have the confidence of the veterans community.

Mr MICKELBERG: My concern with this clause is probably slightly different to that expressed by the member for Southern Downs. My concern comes from the fact that ex-service organisations, veterans organisations, identify that they believe that the structure, as outlined in the initial bill, would create a disfranchisement of veterans in relation to the Queensland Veterans' Council. The government acknowledged that; that is why they have moved amendments with respect to the appointment of veterans to the Queensland Veterans' Council.

I would contend that that issue has not been resolved because the chair has a casting vote, as contained within this bill. If the chair is not a veteran, that will mean that those veterans who have been appointed to the council will still not have the ability to exercise control of the Veterans' Council, which is, of course, what the government wants. I understand there is political risk associated with allowing veterans to have influence on the Queensland Veterans' Council; it is a statutory body. However, I think all should accept—if they do not, I would hope they would—that veterans should be able to control their own destiny as it relates to issues that the government has acknowledged are important to veterans such as welfare and those sorts of issues.

Mr Skelton interjected.

Mr MICKELBERG: I can hear the member for Nicklin interjecting. He is big on interjecting but is not big on substance. As a veteran himself, he would be well served to jump to his feet and contribute to the debate. All we have heard so far from people like the member for Nicklin is superficial rubbish. Veterans see the member for Nicklin for what he is. He is a fake.

Mr SKELTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence at that remark. I have not been personal at all in my attacks. I ask the member to withdraw his comments.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Do you take personal offence?

Mr SKELTON: I do indeed, sir.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr MICKELBERG: I withdraw. As I said, the issue with respect to this clause is that the chair will be able to exercise control of the Queensland Veterans' Council.

Government members interjected.

Mr MICKELBERG: I hear interjections from those opposite, most of whom have not contributed to the debate—members like the member for Lytton, who likes to yell and carry on like a pork chop. Let us be honest: the member does not care about veterans.

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: That language was unparliamentary and I ask that the member withdraw.

Mr MICKELBERG: I withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does that satisfy your point of order?

Ms PEASE: No. I would like an apology. My point of order is that I take personal offence at that and I ask the member to withdraw to me personally.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has withdrawn.

Mr MICKELBERG: The minister has acknowledged that this is an issue, that veterans will be disenfranchised by the structure as it is currently set out in the bill. The chair position is key to that issue. I ask the Attorney-General to listen to the voice of veterans, to listen to the submissions to the bill which said that they believe that veterans should have at least 50 per cent plus one on the Queensland Veterans' Council. The only way that can be achieved in the current structure is for the chair to be a veteran as the chair has a casting vote.

Mr MELLISH: The government notes that the amendment as drafted proposed that the chairperson must be a member of the veterans community, which is different to what the members for Buderim and Southern Downs were arguing just now, so it would be interesting to know who drafted that amendment. The amendment as drafted says that it is a member of the veterans community but they now argue that it has to be a veteran, and that is what the explanatory notes say as well.

As the member for Buderim would know, being a veteran is a slightly different thing to being a member of the veterans community. Members of War Widows Queensland, for example, might not be veterans but are very highly valued members of the veterans community. Perhaps the member should spend more time reading the amendments and drafting them properly than insulting members of the government.

It is also worth pointing out that at the moment the chairperson of the Anzac Day Trust is not required to be a veteran or a member of the veterans community. I note that the long-serving director of the Australian War Memorial, Brendan Nelson, is not a veteran. I do not hear those opposite criticising Brendan Nelson. I also note that former federal veterans minister Chester, when appointing Dr Nelson's successor, stated quite clearly that the next director of the Australian War Memorial need not be a veteran.

Mr WATTS: The real turning point here for me is the casting vote. In a board of balanced membership, the casting vote is where the power rests. That is the case on the committees that we have in the parliament. If it is not important for the casting vote to be a member of the veterans community and therefore the veterans community has the ability to control the ultimate outcome of the vote, then that same logic should be applied to our parliamentary committees and the chairs of the parliamentary committees should not necessarily be government members. There is one exception to that, but that is a seven-person committee, as members would know.

For me personally, it is not so much about the chairperson as it is about the balance of the voting rights that are formed by this bill and how they might be used. I believe that the veteran community should have control over the vote on that board if they so expressed in a unity ticket. Ultimately, the entire bill is about the Veterans' Council, and the Veterans' Council's purpose is to make sure that we not only look after veterans. I spoke about some of the personal mental health challenges and other challenges that some veterans face, which I think should be spoken about more in the bill. When the council votes, the casting vote should not be under the control of the government. That is really what this turns on for me. I ask the minister to explain why that is not important and why it is not necessary for the chairperson to have that and/or to remove the casting vote part of the bill so that there is another remedy for a split vote. Minister, over to you; I am sure the veterans community will be listening.

Ms LAUGA: I draw the opposition's attention to clause 18 of the bill as it stands and note that there is nothing stopping the council from appointing a veteran as the chairperson under the provisions as they stand. There is no need to amend this clause. In fact, in terms of the opposition's amendment there is no guarantee that the chairperson would be a veteran, given that the provisions specify that the chairperson must be a member of the veterans community, which is a much broader community than just veterans specifically.

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

AYES, 35:

LNP, 32—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Camm, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

Grn, 2—Berkman, MacMahon.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 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.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Lister) negatived.

Clause 18, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 19 to 33, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new heading—



Mr LISTER (6.32 pm): I move the following amendment—

10 Part 2, division 6, heading (Veterans' reference group)

Page 20, line 5, 'Veterans'—

omit, insert—

Anzac Square

This amendment is to change the name of what is in the bill as the 'veterans reference group' to the 'Anzac Square reference group', and the need for this change will become apparent as further amendments are discussed. It is the view of the LNP opposition that the Veterans' Council should not be burdened with the day-to-day oversight of Anzac Square. Its role should be to concentrate on matters which are important to veterans, and I take what the assistant minister for veterans, the member for Aspley, said earlier. He talked about the Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson having been chair of the Australian War Memorial.

The point here is that the operation of a memorial like that does not require the same level of veteran expertise or oversight. What it requires is people who are experts in managing facilities like that in ensuring that it is promoted and it is made available to the people of Queensland because it is a very important memorial. I do not propose to suggest that it is not an important thing; it is a very important thing indeed. However, we feel that it is best entrusted to a group of experts selected for the purpose of managing Anzac Square, allowing the Queensland Veterans' Council to concentrate on matters which are important to veterans on a day-to-day basis—their welfare, matters like veteran suicide, aged care for veterans, veterans' health and so forth. In moving future amendments, I will have more to say about the composition of the Anzac Square reference group.

Ms FENTIMAN: The government does not support the amendment to remove the veterans reference group. The amendment proposed by the LNP actually reduces the voice of veterans on these important bodies from a minimum of 12, which includes four on the Veterans' Council following the government's amendments, and eight others on the veterans reference group. The amendments by the LNP reduce that to a minimum of only four council members nominated by veterans organisations. This will reduce the minimum requirements of veterans representation on the Queensland Veterans' Council and reference group to one-third of that which the government is proposing in the bill and our amendments.

The veterans reference group is an essential element of the Queensland Veterans' Council and is comprised of only members of the veterans community. The bill provides the veterans reference group with specific functions to support the Queensland Veterans' Council in the performance of its advisory functions. Proposed clause 35(1)(b) imposes the obligation on the reference group to help the

Queensland Veterans' Council to identify and consult with the veterans community—the very thing that the LNP is standing up in this House and saying that we should be doing. Given the number of ex-service organisations and veterans within Queensland, it is essential to have a body that can assist with the consultation so we can hear from as many veterans as possible. We do not support this amendment.

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

AYES, 33:

LNP, 32—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Camm, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 53:

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, McMahan, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

Grn, 2—Berkman, MacMahon.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Lister) negatived.

Clause 34—



Ms FENTIMAN (6.41 pm): I move the following amendment—

6 Clause 34 (Establishment)

Page 20, line 7, 'may'—

omit, insert—

must

This amendment gives effect to the Community Support and Services Committee's recommendation No. 3 that the bill be amended to provide that the minister must establish a veterans reference group. Therefore the amendment imposes an obligation on the minister to establish the group and this gives effect to the policy intent of establishing a veterans reference group with specific functions essential to supporting the council, as I have previously said, particularly in relation to consultation in the performance of the council's advisory function.

Mr WATTS: I support the amendment. I think it is very important that we clarify, as I spoke earlier, words such as 'may', 'shall', 'will' and 'must'. I thank the minister for changing it from 'may' to 'must' because I think it is very important that veterans' voices are heard and that the number is represented. It is in line with several other amendments that have been put forward—not all successfully—today. I thank the minister for making that change.

Mr BENNETT: I just want to put on record, as I did in my contribution to the bill, that this was a great recommendation of the committee and we welcome the support of the government, but I think it is important that we acknowledge the many submitters who did raise concerns about consultation on the bill. Those members who were called before the committee expressed serious concerns about the department's consultation. I think the fact that we have these issues now before us just goes to show that the consultation was not all it should have been.

I want to put on record the fact that this acknowledges the work of those people who did come before the committee who felt aggrieved and somewhat disrespected. Without repeating myself, I do want to say again that this bill was so important and to have the department try to indicate that something had happened that did not—the consultation process—I found quite offensive. It is great that the committee went through this process and the government has acknowledged this amendment, but I do want people to understand that consultation was something that was not acceptable.

Amendment agreed to.



Mr LISTER (6.44 pm): I move the following amendment—

11 Clause 34 (Establishment)

Page 20, line 7, 'a veterans'—

omit, insert—

the Anzac Square

This amendment is similar to the previous one I spoke to in that it renames what the bill provides as the veterans reference group to the Anzac Square reference group. In general terms for clause 34 I did listen to the government's point about veterans' voices, but I think that the points offered were as a consequence of an obsession with process.

Does the government assume that the members of the Queensland Veterans' Council would not consult widely? Is there a suggestion that they must confine their consultation to the veterans reference group? The veterans community is diverse. There are thousands of individual groups and many, many more veterans themselves. Simply saying that a dozen or so members of the reference panel would be the panacea for all consultation—it would not be.

The point is that those members who are veterans—in fact, all members of the Veterans' Council as proposed in the bill—ought to consult widely and they must not be confined to consultation with the government's proposed veterans reference group. That is why the LNP is satisfied that to repurpose what is known as the veterans reference group to the Anzac Square reference group is appropriate. It does not deny veterans a voice. In fact, it devolves to a body more properly constituted for the maintenance and the oversight of Anzac Square.

We have heard throughout the debate on the second reading of this bill that it is a great asset to Queensland. We have heard the history of it. I acknowledge the wonderful things that all members have said in the House about Anzac Square. I visited it myself. I have taken my family there. It is a marvellous thing. It should not be confused that its management, the oversight which the bill provides for the Veterans' Council to undertake, has much to do with the advocacy of veterans, advocacy for the issues that are important to veterans—some of the things I have spoken about before, such as veterans suicide, veterans' health, difficulties in terms of integrating back into the civilian community when members transition out of Defence and help for families of members of Defence. These are the sorts of things that the Queensland Veterans' Council should be concentrating on.

By renaming and repurposing the veterans reference group to the Anzac Square reference group we are liberating the Veterans' Council from the day-to-day oversight of Anzac Square and we are giving them the opportunity to focus on what is really important for veterans.

Mr MICKELBERG: I would like to speak in support of the amendment moved by the member for Southern Downs. I want to make the point, because it was made in contributions to the previous clauses in this section, that our intent here is not to do away with a veterans consultative body; it is to reverse that priority so that the Queensland Veterans' Council, the pre-eminent body, is empowered with that task and that Anzac Square becomes a subordinate task underneath the Queensland Veterans' Council. That is the view of the ex-service organisations that I have spoken to, which are many, and of the veterans community more broadly.

The intent here is not to do away with veterans consultation. It is a nonsense to suggest that we would come in here and seek to achieve that outcome.

Mr Mellish: You are.

Mr MICKELBERG: We are not. We are seeking, as I just outlined, to reverse the priority that the government have placed through this bill, as outlined in multiple contributions from those opposite in relation to this bill: the obsession with Anzac Square. Anzac Square is important; do not get me wrong. I have said that before. The focus should be on the welfare of veterans and the veterans community. We seek to reverse that with this amendment so that the Queensland Veterans' Council is given that as the predominant task and devolve the management of Anzac Square to the subordinate organisation which, in this bill, is the veterans reference group and which we would have renamed to focus on Anzac Square and have different functions.

To suggest otherwise is disingenuous. I would have expected better, to be frank, from the assistant minister for veterans, who I know has spoken to ex-service organisations. I am not going to pretend he has not. Let us be clear: it is their view as well that the government has got the balance wrong in relation to their focus through this bill. I would ask the Attorney-General to consider the amendment that has been put forward and support it.

Mr BENNETT: In rising to support the amendment proposed, I want to again put on the record how important this particular clause is. I do so sincerely on behalf of people such as the Bundaberg war widows, the RSL and the Royal Australian Regiment Association who all make contributions in this space. They and many more have made this sensible suggestion. It is in the committee report. It is nothing new. The committee identified that this suggestion is very important. On behalf of those people who made submissions to the committee and asked for this amendment to go forward, I ask that we

give it sensible consideration and pay respect to those people who took the time to give evidence at the inquiry hearings and make sure that things around the Veterans' Council reference group are acknowledged.

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

AYES, 32:

LNP, 32—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyce, Camm, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

NOES, 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.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Lister) negatived.

Clause 34, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 35—



Mr LISTER (6.55 pm): I move the following amendment—

12 Clause 35 (Functions)

Page 20, lines 12 to 20—

omit, insert—

The Anzac Square reference group's function is to advise the council about the council's actions, deliberations, decisions and responsibilities in relation to its functions mentioned in section 9(b) to (d).

I do not wish to proceed with amendment No. 13. Amendment No. 12 comes to the nub of the issue of repurposing what the bill describes as the veterans reference group as the Anzac Square reference group. On a number of occasions I have said that the roles and responsibilities of the Queensland Veterans' Council are quite onerous. In the view of the LNP opposition, they do not need to be diluted by giving attention to the minutiae of running Anzac Square, which should be more properly entrusted to experts in that particular field.

There are manifold difficulties that are faced by the veterans community in Queensland and throughout the world, of course. I draw the attention of the House to a report that RSL Queensland had prepared by the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation called the Australian defence community needs assessment. I hope that the government has seen a copy of that report and I encourage members to read it. They can get a copy from Rod Skoda at the Queensland RSL.

Veterans face a lot of difficulties coming into civilian life after leaving the service or returning from deployment. People have all sorts of injuries, psychological and physical perhaps. Also, they face challenges in adapting to and presenting their skills in a context that is constructive for civilian life and work. These are difficulties and challenges that are shared by their families and their loved ones. I am talking about the sorts of things that the Queensland Veterans' Council should be focusing on, such as veterans' health, veterans welfare, the transition from military service, employment after military service, veterans aged care and matters generally that affect veterans and their families.

By devolving the management of Anzac Square to an Anzac Square reference group, we give the Queensland Veterans' Council the chance to focus on those very important matters. The amendment inserts the words—

The Anzac Square reference group's function is to advise the council about the council's actions, deliberations, decisions and responsibilities in relation to its functions mentioned in section 9(b) to (d).

Those sections talk about the meat and drink of managing Anzac Square. It is about the finance, the facilities and the protection of what is a fabulous and much loved memorial in our state. I do not detract from the importance of that, but I feel that it is a function that is best given to experts, leaving the Queensland Veterans' Council to focus on the many very important things that affect veterans in our state. We have all talked about the difficulties and the challenges that veterans face. Here is an opportunity to make sure that those who are entrusted with the Veterans' Council can focus on those things.

Ms FENTIMAN: The government does not support the amendment to establish in the act a specific group to advise on Anzac Square simply because such an amendment is not required as the Veterans' Council has the power to establish committees to advise on matters relevant to the council's function. The government notes that, in considering the amendment proposed by the LNP, the proposed Anzac Square reference group may have a member with the knowledge of or skills and experience in heritage conservation and yet, under the proposed LNP amendments, that group does not have a function to support the council in managing and maintaining the cultural and heritage significance of Anzac Square. For those reasons we do not support the amendment.

Debate, on motion of Ms Fentiman, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Regional Queensland, Events; Paradise Dam, Business Case

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (7.00 pm): I rise to mention a couple of events that have been held across Queensland, one being the Dusty Day Out. I give a big shout-out to Joe Prendergast and all of his staff who worked so hard to put on that incredible music festival with capped numbers in the wonderful South Burnett wine region. It is a beautiful part of Queensland. I encourage anyone who has not tasted the wines of the South Burnett or enjoyed its lovely hospitality to do so. Well done to Joe and everyone involved in the Dusty Day Out.

I also give a big thank you to two incredible Queensland regional women, Elisha Parker and Kimberley Dennis. Elisha and Kimberley invited me to be the guest speaker at the Clermont International Rural Women's Day on the Friday of the last sitting week. What an incredible day it was. Over 170 amazing, strong, capable women from all over Central Queensland came along. We were very fortunate to have beautiful weather. It was a wonderful event that really recognised the best about regional Queensland and the women who make it their home. To Elisha and Kimberley, thank you so very much. I cannot wait for the next one. It will be great.

In the time remaining to me, I call upon the government to release the business case or whatever they are doing in relation to the debacle that is Paradise Dam. I stand with the people of Burnett and Bundaberg who are screaming out for that to be released. The member for Bundaberg has been completely silent in relation to this issue. We know that the minister and the member do not care what is going on in their region, but it is their livelihoods that are dependent on the outcome of that report.

Government members interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It may not mean much to them. I hear the interjections. They do not get it. I, along with the member for Burnett, Bundaberg fruit and vegetable growers and all of the local landholders just want to know what is going on so they can plan for the future—for themselves, their families and everyone associated with the agriculture industry. I questioned the minister at estimates. He appeared to distance himself from the comments of the member for Bundaberg in relation to the 'other infrastructure'. What is that infrastructure?

Redlands Electorate, Hydrogen Technology

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (7.02 pm): I had more fun than any of the Wiggles, Captain Feathersword or Dorothy the Dinosaur last week in the 'toot-toot, chugga-chugga' Big Red Car—our Queensland hydrogen car. Student leaders, STEM students and budding tradies across the Redlands loved the chance to check out the big red hydrogen car for themselves. They had some fantastic questions, reminiscing about the Hindenburg airship and its demise and whether the hydrogen vehicle would have the same fate on impact. I was pleased to report to them that the hydrogen tanks in the back were bulletproof and had less likelihood than the Pope of blowing up!

The Hyundai Nexa has broken records, travelling 887 kilometres on a single tank. It has been beautifully designed by Brisbane based Indigenous owned company Iscarlot Media. It looks really fantastic. There are a couple of little party tricks that run with it. You can drive the car from the outside with a remote control. The students were really interested in that.

I also had the chance to go out and refuel it at our Redlands temporary hydrogen refuelling station, which is part of the \$8.5 million QUT-led pilot scale renewable hydrogen plant project. While I was with the students, it was a fantastic opportunity to talk to them about all of the amazing research and development that is happening in the hydrogen space.

The station is supplied by Queensland based H2H Energy. I thank Matt so much for the most in-depth science lesson I have had in many years. I learned an awful lot about compression, hydrogen and chilling temperatures. It was really incredible. I was very grateful for that science lesson to understand how we can optimally refuel our hydrogen car. The Gateway Refueller is designed to supply commercial customers for early demonstration projects, fleet trials and vehicle testing. Our five QFleet hydrogen vehicles come out to Redlands regularly for their refuelling. Our site will support the opportunity for training and skills development with our Hydrogen Training Centre of Excellence at the Queensland apprenticeships centre.

It is a fantastic little ecosystem happening in the Redlands in terms of research and development in hydrogen, and it certainly has our students very excited about what a renewables future looks like—to be able to touch and feel and see it on the ground functioning and operating. I am extraordinarily proud to be the Queensland hydrogen champion. I am extraordinarily proud of all of the work that is happening in our Redlands patch. We were the first to export hydrogen to Japan back in 2018.

I thank the minister for inviting me to the Japan Chamber of Commerce. It was a full house of businesspeople from across Queensland who are excited about the hydrogen future.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms RICHARDS: I suggest that the member for Nanango get on board, because it is an exciting thing for Queensland.

Shipway, Aunty Lyn

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (7.05 pm): I rise to pay tribute to the life of Lynette Shipway, a proud Quandamooka elder of North Stradbroke Island who recently passed away. I attended Aunty Lyn's funeral on 15 October at the Dunwich Community Hall. The building was full and overflowing. This speech is based on the eulogies of family and friends, with permission.

Lynette Shipway was born in Brisbane on 10 January 1942 to parents Phyllis and Kevin Lynch. At a young age, her family returned to Dunwich, North Stradbroke Island to live with her grandparents on their farm. Lyn loved those childhood years on the family farm that she described as being like Old MacDonald's farm. Lyn was raised in a community and family oriented environment, with her grandparents running an oyster and fishing business which provided employment for their family and others. This focus on family and community would be a key part of Lyn's life. Lyn's life was shaped by both Western society and her Aboriginal heritage. She learned much from her grandmother about Aboriginal culture, developing a deep respect and concern for the oceans, the land and its people.

In 1961, the family moved for a short time to Sydney, where Lyn met her husband, Lindsay. In time, Lyn and Lindsay moved back to North Stradbroke Island, where they later started and raised their own family: four children—Bruce, Leif, Abraham and Rebecca. The blessings continued with 16 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren to follow.

Lyn was a devoted wife and mother. She believed in her children and loved sport. She was often seen cheering them on at school sports days. After supporting her daughter, Rebecca, to play softball at state level, Lyn took it up herself and played masters representative softball, travelling the country and the world. Lyn was also an avid Brisbane Broncos and Indigenous All Stars fan.

She was committed to education, becoming a teacher's aide at Dunwich State School. This was the start of an 18-year career in the education system. Lyn went on to co-author a book on bush tucker with Aunty Margaret Iselin. Lyn influenced the lives of countless Aboriginal children.

Aunty Lyn's compassion for others carried into her work as a carer at several aged-care facilities and in chairing and serving on the boards of numerous organisations dedicated to improving the lives of Aboriginal people. These included the Minjerrabah Moorgumpin Elders-in-Council, the North Stradbroke Island Housing Co-op, the Yulu-Burri-Ba Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health and the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health.

Lyn was instrumental in delivering many programs to the community, including childcare and mums-and-bubs programs, health and medical services, the first Indigenous ranger programs, cultural heritage projects and the provision of aged-care services.

In January this year, she was honoured with the Redlands Council Australia Day Citizen of the Year Award. Aunty Lyn, you will be sorely missed but warmly remembered by us all.

Kurwongbah Electorate, Schools

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (7.08 pm): I rise tonight to deliver the sequel to my speech last sitting week about what is going on in our awesome schools across the Kurwongbah electorate. We are continuing work at Lawnton State School. It was great to get to their P&C meeting last week. I have had plenty of opportunities to visit during school hours thanks to the millions of dollars our government has invested recently at Lawnton State School. This year we completed a \$5 million hall. I know the school community is absolutely loving it. At last year's election I also secured a \$10 million commitment for new classrooms and desperately needed disability access to the administration building. That required a total rebuild of that building. With these projects starting up and air conditioning and solar installation work continuing, Lawnton State School has the enviable problem of being a little bit too loved right now. The results for this school, which turns 55 next year, will be phenomenal.

Petrie State School's Fun Day and Twilight Markets went ahead on Friday, 15 October. It was touch and go, but I am happy to report that Mother Nature smiled on us. I got there in time to turn some sausages. Everyone was having a good time. I was able to admire from the oval the \$700,000 new security fence we installed at Petrie State School. If members think that that is an expensive fence, they should see the challenging terrain that this 140-year-old school campus has. They did a good job putting up that fence. Every dollar was well earned.

I welcomed back for term 3 students, parents, teachers and staff at Our Lady of the Way and Mt Maria College also in Petrie. My electorate officer represented me at Mt Maria's Evening of Excellence while I was here last sitting week. I am told it was a wonderful event, but who would ever doubt it would be.

Jinibara State School in Narangba has also been a hive of activity, with outdoor learning areas and the resource centre getting some love. Air conditioning is now operational in 39 school spaces and 180 solar panels have been fully installed.

Circling back to Burpengary, I give a shout-out to the high school, Burpengary State Secondary College. I got to their P&C meeting last week. The timing could not have been better as they had some new merchandise. I have a great new Burpengary State Secondary College mask, which I understand I cannot wear in the chamber. I thank the high school for participating in our Super Saturday school vaccination hub blitz over the weekend.

I conclude with a brief but heartfelt thank you to every member of every school community in my electorate and right across Queensland. The last two years have brought never-seen-before challenges that have impacted greatly on our schools. This year we added masks to what we ask of our teachers and staff and students over 12, not only on the school grounds but also in classrooms. I know it has not been comfortable and maybe even scary for some. On behalf of, I am sure, everybody in this chamber, I say: we thank you and we really appreciate you.

Since this Friday is World Teachers' Day, I will express my appreciation for our teachers again, this time with cake, but not on Friday because it is a public holiday in the Moreton Bay region. I will get the cake to them next week.

Lockyer Valley and Somerset Water Collaborative

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (7.11 pm): Tonight I speak on something that is very familiar to this House. I talk about the Lockyer Valley and Somerset Water Collaborative project. I have spoken about this project on a number of occasions. It is a critical time for this project. The collaborative has just become a company. It is now to be called the Lockyer Valley and Somerset Water Company. I congratulate all those involved.

This has been a great collaborative effort from the local governments through to industry. It is an important project for our industries in the Lockyer, but it is also vital to the South-East Queensland community because it will provide a necessary backup to urban water security. Our farmers are so engaged in this project that a demand analysis showed that they wanted 34,000 megalitres at a cost of \$1,500 per megalitre. That is \$50 million from our farmers. That is real money.

The consultants for this project said that it is the No. 1 water project across Australia. It will pay for itself in two years. It will create 390-odd jobs during construction and 1,900 ongoing jobs. That is a significant change to the South-East Queensland environment and not just that of the Lockyer. We can be world leaders, not just in terms of our irrigation practices in South-East Queensland while we continue to be the great farming community we are in the Lockyer but also in terms of helping create jobs right across our region.

The project will also deliver water to the Lake Clarendon, Atkinsons Dam and Lake Dyer irrigation projects. That is \$170 million of underperforming assets. This will also activate the tourism opportunities around those under-utilised assets. It is a well thought out project. I again congratulate and place on record my thanks to all those involved. I was on the Lockyer Valley Regional Council when this project started. It is been 25 years coming to fruition. With all of those who have gone before us, it has been a great team effort.

It is an important time for the project. We are seeing an application from the collaborative. Tonight I table a letter of support I wrote to the chair of the collaborative, Mr Graham Quirk, for their application to the state government and the federal government to see funding roll into the project.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 19 October 2021, from the member for Lockyer, Mr Jim McDonald MP, to the Chair, Lockyer Valley & Somerset Water Collaborative, Mr Graham Quirk [\[1827\]](#).

As I said, there is \$50 million from our farmers. There is some money that I understand is available from the federal government. I am calling on the state government to not play politics with this. It is too important for our region. Let us match that federal government money. Let us match the farmers' money. Let us show the importance of this project not just to our irrigators but to the whole of South-East Queensland. This is a water security project that is vitally important for the future of our region.

Bailey, Ms P

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (7.14 pm): I rise tonight to pay tribute to my great friend and a very hardworking far northerner, Pat Bailey. Pat, who is fondly known in the Far North as the mother of Rugby League, has decided that after 36 years she will retire from her position with the Cairns and District Rugby League. Pat has made what could be only described as a monumental contribution. She started her long career with the Cairns and District Rugby League, making the transition from basketball after being asked to be the secretary for the Ivanhoes football club. Pat joined the Cairns and District Rugby League executive in 1988 and has seen many great players and clubs come and go over her time in that organisation. I think it would be fair to say her biggest thrill has been seeing some of the young players she nurtured play at the top level. There are too many to name here this evening.

Pat was even part of the original committee that founded the North Queensland Cowboys in 1995. Originally, they were going to be called the Crocodiles.

Mr Harper: We already have the Crocs, mate.

Mr HEALY: Thank you very much for that. We will move on. In 2020 she was awarded the Order of Australia for her services to the Cairns community and was named Cairns Regional Council's Volunteer of the Year in 2017. Pat has also been on the board of the Northern Pride and is a life member of Ivanhoe Knights Rugby League Club, the Cairns and District Rugby League and the Queensland Rugby League Northern Division.

It is not just to Rugby League that this remarkable woman has made a contribution. Pat has been the vice-president of the Cairns Meals on Wheels, a member of the Cairns Hospital foundation board, a member of the Reef Hotel Casino Community Benefit Fund and a member of Building Active Connected Communities. She has also contributed as a member of the Cairns Regional Council's community grants board and a member of Cairns Regional Council's southern advisory board.

In 2011 Pat was named International Woman of the Year by the Cairns Regional Council for her devotion to the region's sporting landscape. She has received the Alan Ticehurst Memorial Award for Service to Queensland Sport and was nominated for the Harvey Norman Women in League Achievement Award.

I know the decision for her to retire was a difficult one. She has invested so much time and energy and love into developing sport in Cairns and surrounds. The clubs and players have almost become like family to her. Her contribution as a volunteer is an outstanding example to so many of what is vitally important to the fabric of our community. She is the true embodiment of the saying 'if you want something done, give it to a busy person'.

On behalf of our region's sporting community and the broader community, I take great pride in standing here tonight and acknowledging and thanking Pat for the outstanding contribution she has made in so many areas. She is a legend!

Feral Pigs

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (7.17 pm): I rise again to speak on the most environmentally destructive pest we have in Australia—that is, feral pigs. I have spoken about this numerous times in this parliament and governments have continued to dodge, weave and hide from the problem. The problem gets worse every year. The last estimate of feral pig numbers in Australia was over 24 million, with a large percentage in North Queensland. Feral pigs can produce up to 20 piglets per year, which reveals why numbers are in plague proportions.

During the last sitting week the government patted themselves on the back for acquiring another property to convert to national park. The problem is that these acquisitions are not managed at all and become breeding grounds for feral pigs and noxious weeds. Farmers with properties surrounding these state forests are experiencing mass destruction of crops and the spread of disease such as Panama and Lepto. Feral pigs are killing our cassowaries, digging up our turtle eggs and creating mass soil erosion by digging up our river banks, rainforests and prime agricultural land. It is at the point now where we have pigs digging up residential yards in Mission Beach because of the sheer number of pigs in the surrounding regions. I table an article.

Tabled paper: Article from *Cairns Local News* online, dated 1 October 2021, titled 'Feral pigs return to Mission Beach' [[1828](#)].

I want to acknowledge our recreational pig hunters, who do a fantastic job in their own time and at their own expense to combat the feral pig problem with one hand tied behind their back. The government not only gives our rural communities the gift of more vast breeding grounds for feral pigs but will not even allow access for recreational hunters to clean out the feral pigs.

There is a way to fix this. I call on the minister for agriculture to: issue special permits for recreational hunters to access state forests and national parks to cull the feral pigs; establish a feral pig bounty program; provide sufficient funding for aerial pig-shooting programs; invest to properly manage state forests and coordinate with surrounding property owners; and establish a grant program with both federal and state governments to assist farmers to manage feral pigs.

I would also like to point out that the latest research conducted by the University of Queensland shows that by uprooting carbon trapped in soil it is estimated that feral pigs are causing emissions to the equivalent of more than 1.1 million cars globally each year. This is considered a conservative estimate and could be three times higher. If the state government is truly serious about reducing carbon emissions by 30 per cent by the year 2030, then increasing funding to feral pig management is a logical place to start.

Weipa Town Authority; Coronavirus, Vaccinations

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (7.20 pm): I had the absolute pleasure of visiting Weipa recently, and while in community I took the opportunity to meet with stakeholders, community groups and businesses and visit some of the state funded projects being delivered in community. I met with Weipa Town Authority chair Michael Rowland and members of the authority to discuss our government investment in the community, COVID and of course the vaccination rollout.

To give a quick overview of Weipa, Weipa is known to be a mining town and does not sit under the local government structure. The town is run by the Weipa Town Authority, which sits under the administration of Rio Tinto and delivers essential services similar to those supplied by local councils which include road maintenance, water supply, town planning, garbage collection, parks, ovals, libraries and public swimming pools. While health and social services do not fall into their service provision, the Weipa Town Authority spoke passionately about keeping people and community safe.

I want to talk about the vaccination rollout, as it was clear from my meeting with the Weipa Town Authority that community safety was at the top of their priority list. The impact of COVID on Weipa—and we have seen in the restrictions placed on Cape York under the federal government Biosecurity Act—placed huge pressure on the health and wellbeing of individuals and families exacerbated by the already huge challenges of remoteness.

I acknowledge the impact on people's mental health because through my travels and in every conversation I have had I hear stories of people's experience to cope with the stresses and uncertainty of COVID and how it has affected people's ability to work productively and function fully in community. Take, for instance, Gemma and Mal of Western Cape Eco Tours. They took over the business just before COVID hit in March 2020. What was meant to be the most exciting time for this young couple soon changed as the decline of visitor numbers to the region carried huge financial loss to the business.

There is a way out of this pandemic, and that is through getting our community vaccinated. Our borders will reopen and COVID cases will rise, but getting vaccinated will put us in a much stronger position in the fight ahead against COVID-19.

I want to acknowledge and thank the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service and our roving vaccination team—a team of everyday people who sacrifice their time and take time away from their family to travel to communities in Cook, including Weipa, demonstrating strong commitment to the safety of people in community. They are out there working hard every day to make the vaccine accessible to people living in the most northern remote parts of Queensland. They do all this with one goal in mind—to keep individuals, families and community safe. We can all do our bit to keep ourselves, our family and community safe—that is, to get vaccinated and do not wait. We can do this, Cook. We are all in this together.

Veterans Groups

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (7.23 pm): I rise to speak about some of the groups and people I have encountered in my role as shadow assistant minister for veterans. I have endeavoured to meet as many veterans groups as possible. I met with Lieutenant General John Caligari, who runs an excellent program at The Oasis in Townsville.

Mr Harper: The man!

Mr LISTER: I take the acknowledgement from the member for Thuringowa. He has done great work there to help veterans acclimatise to civilian life, to help them with the transition and many other things. I met with Ted Mildren, the President of the RAAF Association, also in Townsville. He is a good man whom I served with. I met with Peter Hindle, who would be known to Townsville members. He is the President of the Vietnam Veterans Association.

Mr Harper: Zac's Place.

Mr LISTER: Zac's Place. He is a real character. I commend them on the housing they provide for veterans there and at Burpengary. I also met with Mrs Jennifer Gregory, President of the War Widows Queensland. I had a great conversation with her and learnt a great deal about her organisation.

I met with Ken Savage, from the Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex Servicemen and Women, who was able to fill me in on all of the issues that are important to those who have lingering injuries from their Defence service. Also, I met with Mr John Lewis, from the Defence Force Welfare Association of Queensland, who made quite a prolific submission to the committee's consideration of the bill that we have just debated. I met with Brendan Cox, the CEO of Legacy Brisbane, and Mr Rob Skoda, who is an old service mate of mine, from RSL Queensland. Thanks, Rob.

In the remaining time I would like to talk about the Stanthorpe RSL Sub Branch. I live just near Stanthorpe. I visited them recently to see that they have acquired a small property, a flat. They intend to embark on a program of providing housing for veterans and the veterans community. I congratulate them for that. They have done that off their own bat. I say to the member for Aspley, my counterpart, the assistant minister for veterans, that I would like to knock on his door at some stage and see whether there is something that the Queensland government can do to help the Stanthorpe RSL in that particular endeavour and perhaps could do for other groups.

There are so many ex-service organisations and veterans groups in Australia—4,000 or 5,000 of them. That diversity is a reflection of the diversity of experiences that veterans and their families have had. It is not an easy thing to say that you have your finger on the pulse of the veterans community. It requires constant engagement and listening to understand the issues that those particular individuals face and the individuals that they represent. I would like to thank the Queensland veterans community for their engagement with me in the time that I have been the shadow assistant minister for veterans. I look forward to meeting many more in the months and years ahead.

Mount Ommaney Small Business Awards

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (7.26 pm): It has been a rip-roaring start to our Mount Ommaney Small Business Awards, with over 1,000 votes pouring in in the first three hours when voting opened last Friday. We are now sitting at a few thousand votes and climbing rapidly. Voting closes on Monday, 1 November at 5 pm.

Last week my fabulous electorate team hit the phones to call the successful small businesses. One of them in particular took real delight in her opening line: 'My name is Karen and I need to speak to the manager.' Seriously, what a joy to call those local businesses who have pushed through a tough couple of years and share that the local community thinks so highly of them. A big thank you to my team—Rachel, Jess and Karen—for their work on these awards.

On Friday afternoon we hit the streets handing out information to newly nominated local businesses. While I was there, I took the opportunity to have a chat with our local business employees and make sure they have had the opportunity to get the job. Our local businesses know that vaccines equal freedom and a bumper Christmas shopping season.

I am so excited that this year we have a record 40 brand new first-time nominations for the awards including Can Graze Catering. You should check out their socials—it is gorgeous! We have Blue Groove BMX in Riverhills. They are long-term locals who are all about kids having fun—and the adults too! We have Delightful Moments & Balloons. They are party planners and a theming business. We have the Little Cupcakery, who are making cookies for a baby shower soon enough for one of my electorate officers.

We have Brooke's Blooms, who I must say have beautifully branded pink everything. We have Foundations Tax Accounting. I give a big shout-out to Bruce. He is the owner, but it is a double act with this family, because his daughter Georgia is also nominated in the hospitality customer service category for a different business. Finally, we have Seduire Beauty in Darra. It is not make-up; it is art! I could not do it.

As we head into the silly season, please remember that the people looking after you are doing their best. There is no excuse for poor behaviour towards hospitality and retail staff. As I visited the workplaces of our nominees, the excitement that they had at their positive recognition was so beautiful to see. As a former hospitality professional and proud UWW member, I remember the pride of a job well done. I ask every Queenslanders to remember that our staff are hardworking people. They give up their time with family and friends at Christmas. The staff serving you are hardworking professionals, even the 15-year-olds. If you are rude, I will sic Karen from my office onto you!

Finally, as we all plan to do our Christmas shopping, remember that we have just a few days to get the job and ensure it is effective before the borders open. Queenslanders, no-one does natural disasters better than us—and COVID has the potential to be the mother of all storms. Let's get it done!

The House adjourned at 7.29 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