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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 23 February 2022

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WEDNESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2022



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.

REPORT

Office of the Speaker



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay upon the table of the House a Statement for Public Disclosure: Expenditure of the Office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for the period 1 July 2021 to 31 December 2021.

Tabled paper: Statement for Public Disclosure: Expenditure of the Office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for the period 1 July 2021 to 31 December 2021 [\[177\]](#).

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Public Release of Committee Documents



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, today, in accordance with standing order 20, the Legislative Assembly will release to the public unpublished minutes of its committees from 1991 that have previously been in the custody of the Clerk of the Parliament for the last 30 years. This is the fourth annual release of committee documents under standing order 20.

Committee minutes from 1991 have previously been tabled for the Public Accounts Committee, Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review and Select Committee of Inquiry into Ambulance Services. Today's release consists of the 1991 committee meeting minutes of the Public Works Committee and the Travelsafe Committee. The Public Works Committee's minutes from its 1991 meetings shows that members sought to investigate capital works projects before they went to tender. The committee conducted an inquiry into the proposed new government building at 111 George Street. The Public Works Committee also inquired into housing for First Nations people, including a hearing in Mount Isa. The Travelsafe Committee's minutes reveal its work on a range of critical matters such as its inquiry into road safety education, traffic law enforcement and bicycle safety.

The Queensland parliament continues to uphold one of the cornerstone values of democratic society, that of accountability, with transparent committee scrutiny of government administration. The committee minutes released today from 1991 and information about the parliament's publication scheme are available on the parliament's website.

PETITIONS

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

Ravenshoe, Wind Farm

Mr Knuth, from 1,135 petitioners, requesting the House to block the proposed wind farm development at Ravenshoe [\[178, 179\]](#).

The Clerk presented the following e-petition, sponsored by the honourable member indicated—

Homeless United Program

Dr Robinson, from 833 petitioners, requesting the House to do all in its power to cause the reinstatement of state government support which will enable the Homeless United program to continue its vital work in assisting vulnerable homeless [\[180\]](#).

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

Trinder Park, Rail Corridor

349 petitioners, requesting the House to use the existing rail corridor between Kuraby and Wembley Road until such time to allow for proper community awareness and the conduct of an independent assessment on the proposed new rail corridor at Trinder Park [\[181\]](#).


Suttons Beach Pavilion

1,523 petitioners, requesting the House to halt the demolition plans of Sutton Beach Pavilion at Redcliffe [\[182\]](#).

Petitions received.


MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Coronavirus, Update

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.34 am): Today I report that we have had 6,300 new cases of coronavirus. That includes 3,524 positive RATs. Tragically we have to report that there were 37 deaths, 29 of these are due to being reported by the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages report to Queensland Health on a weekly basis and this reporting is reflected in today's data. Many of these people had underlying conditions and 22 were in aged care.

We have conducted 12,560 tests in the past 24 hours. There are 379 people in hospital and 35 in ICU. In relation to our vaccine coverage, 92.59 per cent of the population have had one dose, 90.66 per cent are double dosed and 63 per cent of the eligible population have received their boosters. On behalf of the House I express my condolences to all the families who have lost loved ones during this Omicron wave. There are many people who no longer have their loved ones with them. I know that everyone in the House also passes on their condolences. In relation to our 5- to 11-year-olds, 42.2 per cent of eligible young people have had their first dose. Of course we want to see that lifted up, especially as we approach 4 March.

Weather Events

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.36 am): Overnight the people of South-East Queensland experienced intense rainfall—it woke me up. There was intense rainfall throughout the Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast areas and in Brisbane. In some places 300 to 400 millimetres fell in a very short time with very little warning. There was 424 millimetres at Mount Wolvi, 356 millimetres at Pomona, 354 millimetres at Cedar Pocket Dam, 350 millimetres at Kin Kin and 343 millimetres at Cooran. The SES has already received more than 100 requests for assistance to respond to flooded properties and vehicles, mostly in the Sunshine Coast, Gympie and Noosa local council areas. Swiftwater rescue crews were called to 27 incidents overnight, including vehicles stuck in floodwaters in the Cooroy, Kin Kin, Gympie and surrounding areas. Some rescues are ongoing due to challenging and dangerous conditions. Tragically, I have just been advised that a 60-year old person has been found deceased after a vehicle was submerged in water just after 8 am this morning. This is indeed a tragedy.


A freight train has also overturned in Traveston south of Gympie. Crews are currently on scene. I am advised that the driver has been rescued with minor injuries. There is a diesel leak that is being managed and the transport minister will have a further update on that shortly. There are multiple road closures, so please heed the warnings, which are also affecting some schools. I am advised at the moment there are seven schools that are closed: Dagun State School, Gympie East State School, Kandanga State School, Kenilworth State Community College, Kia-Ora State School, Kin Kin State School and Pomona State School. Education Queensland and Main Roads websites will have the latest information as it becomes available. Please look out for updates.

Right now 15 Seqwater managed dams are at capacity with several spilling, including the Baroon Pocket Dam on the Sunshine Coast, Hinze Dam on the Gold Coast and the Leslie Harrison Dam at Redlands. A severe weather warning remains in place for areas between Maryborough to the Gold Coast and stretching west to Toowoomba. We have just had a briefing with the Bureau of Meteorology and the State Disaster Coordinator as well as police and emergency services. Heavy rainfall is predicted to continue today and into Thursday.

This has the potential to be a significant rainfall event for South-East Queensland. Locally, intense rainfall is possible and since many catchments are now saturated, there is an increased risk of dangerous and life-threatening flash flooding over the coming days. Over the coming days some areas will also see a month's worth of rainfall. We will continue to listen to the latest advice from the weather bureau, QPS, QFES and other authorities. There may be more road and school closures.

My ministers and I will be getting briefings throughout the day. Please, I cannot stress this enough: do not take any risks. Avoid unnecessary travel and stay well away from floodwater. If you require SES assistance call 132500 or triple 0 if it is a life-threatening emergency. Also remember: if it is flooded, forget it. We will be monitoring this situation very closely, especially in relation to schools. People who live near creeks should exercise due caution. We are hearing that the more intense rainfall is likely to come tomorrow. As the bureau has said, this can be a life-threatening weather event. I urge everyone in South-East Queensland to exercise caution over the next 24 to 48 hours.

Kindergarten


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.40 am): Every child deserves to have the best possible start in life. Today I am proud to announce the largest investment in kindergarten in Queensland's history. We will invest more than \$1 billion to give Queensland kids the best start in life. We will provide free or cheaper kindy to more than 40,000 Queensland children. Over five years we will deliver: \$33 million to expand our Kindy Uplift program from 400 services to 930 services; \$38.5 million to help remote and regional kindergartens attract and retain teachers; \$95 million for children with disabilities; and we will increase our annual investment in kindy from \$130 million to \$211 million. These reforms will kick in at the start of 2023. They mean that by next year a family with one child at kindy could save about \$3,200 per year, a family with two kindergarten aged children could save around \$6,400 and 14,000 children will access kindy for free.

Under my government more children are attending kindergarten in Queensland than ever before. Currently we subsidise kindy for 20,000 children across the state. The kindergarten participation rate has soared from 77 per cent in 2015, when we came to office, to 96 per cent today. That is a great achievement not only for our government but also for families. There is no doubt that kindy counts. The lessons children learn in their early years can set them up for life. I want kindy in Queensland to be not only world-class but also accessible and affordable for all.

These are the issues that matter to families across our state. There are thousands of Queenslanders who, through no fault of their own, find it difficult to make ends meet and struggle to afford kindergarten. As a Labor government we absolutely believe in equality and fairness, and this is absolutely going to be a proud legacy of our government. Well done to our Minister for Education.

The cost of kindy is a huge barrier for many children and a great burden for many working families across our state. I want to break down those barriers and give every child a chance to achieve their dreams. Social justice, equality, a fair go for all: those are core Labor values. They are the values that set us apart from those opposite. We will always invest in education because that is what good Labor governments do best. I cannot wait to see more children start kindy in 2023.

2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Legacy Committee


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.43 am): My government has always looked to the future and I firmly believe Queensland's best days are ahead of us. However, it is not enough to simply hope for it; we are planning for it. We are building the roads and rail, the schools and hospitals that our growing state needs. In just 3,804 days we will be hosting the biggest event on the planet. The 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be the greatest single transformational event our state has ever seen. Thanks to the IOC's new norm, we are able to spend the next 10 years investing in the infrastructure our state needs in preparation for the greatest games of all. However, it is also important that we look to the 10 years after the games by marking milestones and creating a legacy.

Today I am proud to announce that expressions of interest are being called for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games Legacy Committee. This is about our future. While we work alongside our partners to coordinate and deliver the infrastructure we need in time for the games, the Legacy Committee will have a different focus. The committee will have 12 members. All Queenslanders over the age of 18 are encouraged to apply, except for one position. It will go to someone aged between 16 and 18 years to provide the perspective of the younger members of our community. Four positions are reserved for those living in regional Queensland. However, I make it clear: I want to see a strong

representation from regional Queensland because this is an Olympic and Paralympic games for all of our state. I am particularly interested in those with experience in or backgrounds from arts and culture, business, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, community sport, tourism, health and wellbeing, people who have great ideas when it comes to innovation and we also need people who have expertise in trade. Advertisements will ask for applicants and a short list will be prepared by a recruiting firm.

One suggestion that has been made to me is that we include a Queensland pavilion among our Olympic venues to showcase to visitors the story of our state. Hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games is an honour that belongs to every single one of us. The Legacy Committee is another way that more Queenslanders can be involved with planning for this fantastic event. The Legacy Committee will ensure that planning for the games has a view to the future—long after fans leave the stadiums and the closing ceremonies are over. What will happen in the weeks, the years and the decades after the games are over? Those are exciting questions that the Legacy Committee will answer.


Weather Events

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure) (9.45 am): Every year we face the devastation caused by disasters and emergencies. Cyclones, storms, intense rainfall events and floods have all taken their toll in various parts of our state at different stages of this summer. Although our summer is nearly over, severe weather events continue to impact our state. Right now the south-east is experiencing an absolute deluge. In the past 24 hours alone, the Sunshine Coast has seen 300 millimetres to 400 millimetres of rain. With flood watch active across South-East Queensland, flood warnings in many parts of the south-east and the potential for further intense rainfall over the next couple of days, I take this opportunity to reassure Queenslanders that we are ready for whatever Mother Nature has in store for us.

As the most disaster affected state in the nation, we are also the most prepared. Queenslanders are renowned for our grit, determination, and resilience. While all manner of severe weather events can hit Queensland, the one constant is the response of our frontline emergency services people on the ground. We saw that again overnight and we are seeing it again today. Our elite Fire and Emergency Services swiftwater rescue teams have been out in the extreme weather saving lives. SES volunteers have been doing what they always do: braving the worst conditions to help their fellow Queenslanders in their time of need. Since noon yesterday there have been over 100 calls for assistance and I am advised that the call rate is increasing this morning. Overnight there were 23 swiftwater rescues carried out, saving Queenslanders from flooded homes and cars. To all of the frontline responders, on behalf of all Queenslanders, I want to say thank you.

When it comes time to help in the wake of disaster, Queensland is ready too. Queensland was the first state in Australia to have a permanent dedicated organisation to help communities recover following disasters. The Queensland Reconstruction Authority guides our state's mammoth reconstruction program. Since 2010-11 more than 90 natural disasters have affected our communities, leaving a reconstruction and recovery bill of more than \$17 billion. Already this season we have experienced significant floods, including in the Wide Bay-Burnett, southern, central, western and Far North Queensland regions. Currently, QRA officers are working with those communities to assist with recovery and reconstruction. They stand ready to deploy to wherever they are needed next. Wherever and whenever disaster strikes, Queenslanders can rest assured that the Queensland government stands ready to help our communities before, during and after a disaster on the road to recovery.

Economy

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.48 am): Our government stands ready to provide whatever assistance is required, from rescues to recovery, for the current weather event facing South-East Queensland. It is precisely because of the constant risk posed to Queensland by severe weather events that our government is so committed to rebuilding the resilience buffer in our budget. In the meantime, the sun continues to rise across the Queensland economy.

With restrictions lifted and international borders reopened, the Queensland economy is ready to roar. Our strong health response and economic recovery plan mean we have come through the Omicron wave in the best possible position. Now we are ready to capitalise. On so many measures, Queensland's economy is outperforming its pre-COVID self or outperforming the rest of the nation. Treasury analysis of major bank spending data shows household spending is well above the level in

previous years. In the week ending 11 February 2022, consumer spending in Queensland was up 26.5 per cent compared with the same week in pre-COVID 2020 and 10 per cent above the same week in 2021. Across the first six weeks of 2022, total spending in Queensland was 21 per cent higher than in the same period in 2020.

Importantly, this strength in consumer spending is showing up right across the state. Spending in every region outside Greater Brisbane is up at least 18 per cent in the first six weeks of 2022 compared to 2020. Earlier this month, ANZ research released its latest Roy Morgan Consumer Confidence Report. In Queensland, consumer confidence was up a nation-leading 6.5 per cent, nearly double the Australian average of 3.3 per cent. The latest Westpac-Melbourne Institute Survey of Consumer Sentiment Index revealed a level of 104.6 for Queensland, the highest of all states. That was a rise of 1.6 per cent at a time sentiment fell 5.7 per cent in New South Wales and 7.7 per cent in Victoria.

Of course, not all these surveys move in the same direction. The ominous title of the NAB monthly business survey for February was: 'Conditions deteriorate as Omicron peaks'. Sure enough, business conditions were down 20 points in Victoria, down seven points in New South Wales and down 14 points in Western Australia. In Queensland, NAB says conditions in Queensland rose six points, the only rise in the country. Across the nation, we led the rebound in confidence, up 22 points.

There are positive signs in the tourism sector, too. The most recent data from Tourism and Events Queensland indicate that hotel occupancy rates and hotel revenue in early February are above 2021 levels. The opening of international borders will support ongoing recovery in the tourism sector, especially in regions like Cairns and the Gold Coast. Through our \$200 million aviation attraction package announced by the Premier, our government is determined to ensure that our hospitality and tourism businesses get the opportunity to show as many international visitors as possible the best of what Queensland has to offer.

Kindergarten; Weather Events, School Closures



Hon. G GRACE (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.52 am): I am delighted to join the Premier today in announcing the most significant reform and boost to kindergarten funding in Queensland in over a decade. Over the next five years, the Palaszczuk government will invest more than \$1 billion, which will help around 40,000 kids to access more affordable—or free—quality kindy. That is nearly 70 per cent of families who have kids at kindy who will benefit from this landmark announcement. Kindy will be free for around 14,000 of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged families and kids.

The Palaszczuk government has committed to ongoing funding after those five years, so kindy in Queensland will be changed for the better. The increased funding is directed at four key priority areas. In regard to affordability, around \$615 million will reduce out-of-pocket costs for low-to-middle income families who need it the most. This is going to make a huge difference. For example, there are around 13,000 families who will save between \$16 and \$80 a week for the 40 weeks a year their kids are at kindy. That means savings of between \$634 and \$3,200 per annum. As I have said, there will be 40,000 families in total that get reduced fees or totally free kindy every single year.


We will look at the educational needs. Our successful Kindy Uplift pilot, which provides extra personalised support to kids that need it most, will get \$33 million to expand into an extra 530 long day care kindy settings. This brings the total number of settings receiving support to 930. Disability and inclusion will receive \$95 million in increased funding, extending disability funding support to the long day care sector for the first time. Remote and regional will get \$38.5 million for 300 services in remote and regional communities to attract and retain teachers through measures like accommodation support and relocation costs. I know this is a big issue for the sector. These are game-changing reforms that will make a real and tangible difference to the lives of Queensland families.

The department has briefed the sector—and it was great to catch up with them yesterday afternoon—on these changes and will consult in detail as part of a comprehensive and coordinated implementation plan ready for 2023. The sector has warmly welcomed the changes. I thank Louise Jackson—who sent a lovely email yesterday—the CEO of Lady Gowrie Queensland, who said the announcement was monumental. She was thrilled to be part of making history, working with a government that is taking the lead and putting our children first. Thank you, Louise. She is here in the gallery today along with Majella Fitzsimmons from the Australian Childcare Alliance Queensland, Sandra Cheeseman from the Kindergarten Association and Kellie Perren from Goodstart Early Learning. I welcome them in the gallery. It was great catching up with them yesterday afternoon. I thank them for all the excellent work they have been doing during the COVID-19 pandemic as well.

As the Labor minister for early childhood I am proud to deliver this announcement today—not only increased funding but funding that is clearly targeted to assist those who need it the most. This is what Labor governments do—investing in our future, investing in education—because we know the lifelong benefits of kindy. I look forward to working with the early childhood sector to implement the new package for 2023. Our kids deserve nothing less.

As the Premier has announced, there are seven schools currently closed due to flooding. They are in the Gympie, Nicklin and Noosa electorates. We are keeping an eye on further necessary closures due to rising creeks and floodwaters. My department is organising a briefing among themselves, me, SES and other necessary bodies in order that we get a clear picture and get out notices as soon as possible. Our website will be updated so we can inform families what will happen, say, tomorrow or the rest of this week in relation to schools opening or closing. Clearly, some schools may not be flooded but to access them would be very dangerous in terms of crossing creeks, flooded lakes, roads and the like. Early notification of the impact on schools is what we are aiming for. It is better to be safe. We want to make sure that we wish the best for all the schools and all the families. We will get information to them as soon as we possibly can.

Health Workforce; Elective Surgery

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.57 am): I am pleased to report to the parliament that a total of 795 new junior doctors joined the front line in January. I recently had the pleasure of meeting some of them at Redcliffe Hospital. Junior doctors have been recruited across 20 different Queensland Health hospitals—from the Far North right down to the Gold Coast. Of these junior doctors, I am very pleased to say that 56 were Queensland Rural General interns. This rural generalist program has been so successful; in fact, the rest of the nation looks to Queensland as far as this program in terms of how to attract more regional doctors into our rural and remote communities.

On top of this, our health workforce was bolstered further this month as we welcomed the next intake of graduate nurses into Queensland's health system. So far in 2022, more than 1,070 graduate nurses have been on-boarded in Queensland Health hospitals throughout the state. These graduate nurses and midwives will play an important part in ensuring Queensland Health continues to prioritise health care for our patients and provide an excellent experience for patients and their families throughout their care. I also want to acknowledge that before many of those junior doctors started in our hospitals and before our student nurses graduated they were helping in our vaccination clinics and our testing clinics. We had so many of them. It was wonderful to see all of these junior doctors coming out and helping in these clinics across the state.

Finally, I am pleased to advise the House of another boost this government has made to frontline resources to assist patients in need of an ambulance. We committed to funding 535 additional ambulance officers in this term of government, and we are well on the way to meeting this target. The Queensland Ambulance Service Education Centre has always been a hive of activity over recent months, with 345 new officers trained this financial year alone. The additional positions will enhance roster coverage and allow the QAS to remain agile and flexible in its ongoing pandemic response.

I want to welcome our enthusiastic new graduate nurses, junior doctors and ambulance officers who have stepped up at a time when Queenslanders need them most. This intake of new graduates reflects the ongoing commitment of our government to support our clinical workforce following its significant decline during the period between 2012 and early 2015. Since we came to office in 2015, we have added: 2,688 doctors, an increase of over 34 per cent; 9,744 nurses, an increase of over 35 per cent; and 5,093 allied health professionals, an increase of over 53 per cent. We have also added an additional 923 ambulance officers. More is to come as part of our four-year commitment from 2020 to add another 9,475 clinical professionals to the front line of our health system. As our record \$22.2 billion investment in our last budget demonstrates, our government continues to prioritise the delivery of quality health services to Queenslanders.

I can also inform the House that, in addition to the announcement we made yesterday around lifting further restrictions including mask wearing from 4 March, from next Monday, 28 February, we will have a statewide, staged restart of elective surgery in Queensland. While elective surgery has already started in some hospital and health services, this restart will mean that all Queensland health services will be once again performing elective surgery, initially focusing on the most urgent matters. The fact that we can restart elective surgery is a testament to the hard work of our health staff and all Queenslanders in battling against this Omicron wave, and signals our transition to the next phase of the pandemic.

2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Legacy Committee



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement) (10.01 am): The 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games are for all Queenslanders. Our games focus has never been exclusively about the four weeks of Olympic and Paralympic sport. The 2032 games will be transformational. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

We want to make sure that these games deliver a generational window of legacy in the decade before 2032 and in the decade after—a window for innovation, investment and inspiration. That is why, as the Premier announced today, the Palaszczuk government is putting together the Olympic and Paralympic Games Legacy Committee—a group of 12 outstanding Queenslanders to start planning what our state's games legacy will look like. We will have at least four committee members from regional Queensland and a youth adviser, representing experience from Indigenous Queenslanders, community sport, high-performance sport, tourism, small business, innovation, accessibility groups, health and wellbeing, arts, environment and sustainability, business and trade and investment.

Our golden decades of opportunity mean giving young Queenslanders the support to go for gold. It starts with You for 2032, the biggest science and data-driven athlete talent search in Queensland and Australian history. We are aiming to reach 50,000 prospects. From mid-April, the Queensland Academy of Sport's You for 2032 program will reach out to every corner of the state. QAS talent spotters will test the speed, endurance, power, agility and aptitude of up to 20,000 young Queenslanders. They will assess natural attributes to find natural fits for the sports that athletes might not have previously considered. We hope the QAS program will maximise podium-ready, young, homegrown, elite athletes to increase Queensland's chances of a record host state medal haul. That is what 2032 is about—making the most of a transformational opportunity for Queenslanders.

Weather Events; Road and Rail Infrastructure



Hon. MC BAILEY (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.03 am): The force of La Nina is being felt right now across South-East Queensland and north up to the Wide Bay, with some areas coping more than 400 millimetres of rain overnight. When wild weather happens the impacts on our transport system are often unavoidable. Unfortunately, this morning is no different.

More than 100 roads have been impacted by flooding and hazards, including the Bruce Highway. As the Premier outlined before, there has been one tragic consequence. We have seen major impacts on our rail network. We have had crews on the ground since early this morning working hard to assess damage and make repairs. On behalf of the government, I thank all of our first responders from Queensland Rail, TMR, RoadTek and emergency services and all others involved. They are doing a great job.

We saw them get the Ferny Grove train line reopened in less than an hour this morning after the wet weather caused an electrical fault. Right now, we have also got them assessing damage after a freight train derailment on the Sunshine Coast line. At 3.19 this morning a freight train came off the tracks between Cooran and Traveston. I am advised the driver has not suffered any major injuries, but the derailment combined with flooding has resulted in the closure of the train line between Caboolture and Gympie. Queensland Rail already has replacement buses up and running, but some stations, including Mooloolah and Palmwoods, have been difficult to access due to localised flooding of the local road network. At this time, we would ask people in those areas to only travel if it is absolutely necessary and to remember if it's flooded, forget it.

With more rain and wild weather predicted, we are expecting further impacts on our transport network this week. If people have to drive it is important that they drive super safely and get live updates on QLDTraffic. There will be live information about closures, openings and those sorts of things. It is important for people to be informed before they go out.

Extreme events will happen but they reinforce the need to invest in our road and rail network. The Palaszczuk government is doing just that with our record \$27.5 billion investment in roads and transport over the next four years. This includes: \$3 billion to deliver more Queensland Rail services than ever before; \$7.1 billion to build 65 trains in Queensland to transform our state into a rail manufacturing powerhouse; and \$1.1 billion towards Logan and Gold Coast faster rail, which was announced for the first time yesterday and not what was falsely claimed by the opposition's so-called integrity spokesperson, the member for Maroochydore—I will be writing to you, Mr Speaker, about that.

We are also delivering the \$550 million Beerburrum to Nambour line upgrade on the Sunshine Coast and the \$1 billion Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3—not to mention the \$5.4 billion Cross River Rail project; a project that will transform travel throughout South-East Queensland for a booming population and a booming economy. Combine this with our multibillion dollar projects on the M1—we do not ignore the M1; we invest in it—and the Bruce Highway. We are doing everything we can to futureproof Queensland's transport system, whatever is thrown at it by the weather. As we brace for more wet weather in coming days, I remind Queenslanders to be safe on our roads and if they do not have to travel then please do not.

Comments by Member for Kawana



Hon. SM FENTIMAN (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.07 am): Yesterday the member for Kawana, a former attorney-general of Queensland, used parliamentary privilege to discuss matters currently before the Supreme Court. Let me be clear, his comments, calling on the Premier to intervene and order a report be released prior to the decision of the court, would absolutely amount to contempt if said outside this place. I note that subsection (1) of section 233 of the standing orders explicitly states—

In general, members should exercise care to avoid saying anything inside the House which would be regarded as contempt of court outside the House and could jeopardise court proceedings.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, you will cease your interjections.

Ms FENTIMAN: As a legally trained former attorney-general, he should know better than to call for such a massive overreach of executive government. I also note that the member had the audacity to invoke the principles of Tony Fitzgerald in calling for this interference. If the member had any regard for the legacy of the Fitzgerald inquiry, he would know that Fitzgerald himself wrote in that inquiry—

The separation of judicial power from legislative and executive power is fundamental to the system of checks and balances designed to achieve a stable democracy. The distinction should not be blurred ...

He went on to write—

The primary responsibility of the judicial system is the provision of speedy and efficient justice according to law, and—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left, there is one person in the chamber who has the call and it is none of you. Attorney-General, you have the call.

Ms FENTIMAN: I am quoting from the Fitzgerald report—

... its capacity to perform that function is diminished by any requirement that it perform other tasks on behalf of the Executive.

The member for Kawana, in calling for the Premier to intervene in a matter before the courts, has failed to respect the most basic principle of our legal and political system. It seems that the member for Kawana, not content with already being universally scorned by the judiciary, is intent on securing his title as the most unprofessional and unknowledgeable person to hold the office of Attorney-General in this state's history.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under the standing orders.

Weather Events, Electricity Supply; Energy Industry



Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (10.10 am): We know nobody handles severe weather as well as Queenslanders. Queenslanders know nobody gets the power back on as quickly and safely as their publicly owned Energex and Ergon.

As the Premier has said, the Bureau of Meteorology has warned a slow-moving surface trough will again today produce intense rainfall with embedded thunderstorms which may continue in the coming days. Severe storms last night have already cut power to 4,500 homes and businesses across the south-east. Most of these were in the Sunshine Coast region, where trees and branches brought down powerlines. By eight o'clock this morning, Energex crews had reconnected all but 500 properties. I am advised that a further 100 have been reconnected since that time and they continue to work hard to get the power back on to all properties.

With yet another severe weather warning in place across the south-east, our crews are more ready than ever to roll out wherever they are needed. We have more crews on standby from neighbouring regions too. It is a terrific effort but, with the ground already saturated and more intense weather on the way, the work is not yet over.


It is only because Queenslanders own our power assets that we can guarantee that our Energex and Ergon crews get the training, the skills and the resources they need. We are investing in the future too. Just two weeks ago, the Treasurer and I personally met with some of the 114 new Energy Queensland apprentices who have joined the team in the most recent intake joining the existing 400 apprentices. These new recruits will soon be in the field, serving their communities in places like Cairns, Mulgrave, Barron River, Townsville, Mundingburra, Thuringowa, Mackay, Rockhampton, Keppel, Maryborough, Toowoomba, Condamine, Toohey and Algeester. Thanks to the Palaszczuk government's commitment to public ownership, they are on a pathway into secure, steady, long-term jobs—a career for life—serving Queenslanders.

The Palaszczuk government made this important promise when we were elected in 2015: a promise to keep Queensland's energy assets in public hands. By keeping our energy assets in public hands, we can keep downward pressure on electricity prices and ensure the best possible maintenance and repairs to the network. We only have to look to southern states to see the impacts of privatisation of the electricity network. The royal commission into their devastating Black Saturday bushfires found that their private electricity network had not taken on a new apprentice in a decade—a tragic event where 173 people lost their lives and 2,029 homes were destroyed.

When disasters strike, it is imperative that we learn from them. In Queensland, we have taken these lessons seriously. Not only can our newest apprentices look forward to a long and fulfilling career on the front line in Queensland; all Queenslanders can be assured that we are making sure that they, and the communities they live in, are as safe as can be.


ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Alleged Unauthorised Disclosure of Committee Proceedings, Referral to Ethics Committee

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (10.14 am): In accordance with standing order 268(1), I rise as the chair of the Economics and Governance Committee to report that a matter involving the potential unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings has arisen. The potential unauthorised disclosure of the committee proceedings relates to a transcript of proceedings from a private briefing with the Integrity Commissioner and various correspondence between the committee and others relating to the Integrity Commissioner. The committee has unanimously resolved to refer the matter to the Ethics Committee. I advise the House of the referral so that standing order 271 can be invoked.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Office of the Integrity Commissioner


 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (10.15 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House notes the reported concerns by the Integrity Commissioner with respect to the alleged interference by the Public Service Commission into her office and calls on the Economics and Governance Committee to immediately release all documents pertaining to this matter by close of business on 24 February 2022.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, question time will conclude today at 11.15 am.

Reports

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.15 am): My question is to the Premier. Does the Queensland government alter independent reports?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. If the member has any evidence, he should raise that evidence.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, Minister for Education!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I give a general warning to the chamber. I am not here for a haircut. If I call the House to order, I expect it to come to order.

State Archivist, Reports

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. I refer to differences between the original September 2017 state archivist report sent to the minister and the altered October 2017 report released by the minister and ask: who is altering independent reports?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. As the opposition might be aware, these matters have been referred to an independent QC to look at these matters independently. That report will be forwarded and that report will be released. Let me say this to the Leader of the Opposition: we do not cancel crime statistics reports so there are no reports. That is the legacy—

Mr Dick: Stop collecting data in health.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. We have not stopped collecting data in health like the LNP did. The LNP failed to provide a crime statistics report because they scrapped the report altogether. Before the Leader of the Opposition stands up here and starts grandstanding about reports, how about he look in his own backyard when they just decided not to have the report full stop. Do you know what, Mr Speaker? We brought it back.

School Infrastructure

Mr HUNT: My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier update the House on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to and investment in building new schools and upgrading existing schools in Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Caloundra for that question. What a great member for Caloundra he is! We also have a great member for Nicklin. We finally have two members who are doing something for the Sunshine Coast in this House. Where those opposite have done nothing, our Labor members are doing a mighty job.

Let me say to the people of Queensland that I know what matters to them. I know that families in Queensland—

An opposition member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You are just jealous because it is about 80,000 views. You only get a couple!

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, can I remind you, please, to put your comments through the chair just to avoid that kind of response.

An opposition member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Stick to your dancing. I am happy to embrace modern social media; they are not. They are just jealous.

Let me say that the things that matter to Queenslanders and families are quality of education and making sure we cater for the growth in communities across our state. Today we have made our fantastic announcement about kindergarten. For families who cannot always afford kindy, we are going to step in and make sure there is access for all.

When it comes to growing communities, we know that people want to come to Queensland and people are moving to areas of the Sunshine Coast. You cannot blame them. That is why our government has a proud record of building three new schools there. We have three new schools this year alone in Nirimba, Everleigh and Coomera which we visited with Minister Grace, the education minister. In 2018 on the Sunshine Coast we had the Baringa State Primary School, in 2021 the Palmview State Primary School, Palmview State Special School and Baringa State Secondary School, in 2022 there will be Nirimba State Primary School, plus next year we will be delivering another secondary school at Palmview. That is the record of Labor governments in this state. We are committed to education.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right! I hear members interjecting over there. You closed the Fortitude Valley State School. 'Let's put that up for sale.' That is what the LNP did. We saved that site and we built a state-of-the-art vertical school. That is what Labor governments do.

In further good news, today I can announce that construction contracts have been awarded for four new state school sites opening in 2023: Augustine Heights, Ripley Valley and Yarrabilba, as well as a new state high school at Palmview—

(Time expired)

Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to the Deputy Premier. The State Archivist's original report revealed ministers' widespread use of private emails, including the Deputy Premier. During estimates in December 2020 the Deputy Premier said he did not use a private email for work purposes. Who should Queenslanders trust, the Deputy Premier or the former state archivist?

Dr MILES: The matters that the member raises have been well canvassed and well investigated. I have addressed them at length on a number of occasions. I have nothing further to add.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you will cease your interjections, particularly those directed directly at other members.

Weather Events

Mr SAUNDERS: My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier update the House on flood recovery in the Wide Bay-Burnett region and other parts of the state and the possibility of heavy rainfalls again in some areas?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Maryborough for the question. What a great member we have in the member for Maryborough. He fights hard for his community, he stands up for his community and he is always around. I am so impressed because whenever I travel in the member for Maryborough's electorate people come up and say hello to him everywhere we go. He is a fine example of a—

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You are a disgrace. Mr Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: I am sorry, I was giving some advice to a member. I missed that. If a member has used unparliamentary language, I would suggest they come forward now and retract.

Mr MICKELBERG: I withdraw.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We had flooding there and I was able to go and see that firsthand with the member for Maryborough. There was flooding in isolated communities around there as well. There were 25 water rescues during that time. There were 15 SES flood boat rescues and more than 400 requests for help. QFES crews conducted 524 damage assessments. We know that heavy rainfall from that event and this event can cause loss of life, and that is why today I have pleaded with Queenslanders to make sure they take care on the roads when they are out and about during this wet weather event.

We appointed our former governor Paul de Jersey as the recovery coordinator in response to this. He has been working with individuals, primary producers, small businesses and councils. I know that the Deputy Premier has been up there as well as a number of my ministers to see how everything is going. I am advised that this week Main Roads has been inspecting damage around Gympie and Goomeri—

Opposition members: It's 'Goo-mary'.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Are you right? Children!

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Childish. Absolutely childish!

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I have advised the House previously that difficulties with pronunciations members may experience is not something that should be interjected upon. I am sure I will not have to provide that advice to the House again.

Ms PALASZCZUK: This summer season has so far brought four weather related disasters. Damage from tropical cyclones Seth and Tiffany as well as two separate rain events have caused flooding in Central, Southern and Western Queensland. I want to commend all of our emergency services workers who go out there. I had the opportunity to meet with many of them when I was on the ground with the Police Commissioner and the member for Maryborough. There were also storms earlier this month in the Scenic Rim and Logan areas, with the SES receiving over 220 requests for assistance. The SES does a fantastic job. In fact, 39 of Queensland's 77 local government areas have been impacted this season, with nine being impacted twice.

There is a range of state and Commonwealth financial assistance. So far, more than \$525,000 has been paid in personal hardship assistance grants to more than 2,100 individuals. For our producers, 151 applications for Extraordinary Disaster Assistance Recovery grants have been approved worth more than \$1.5 million. As members can see, recovery efforts are underway and we look forward to working with the communities to make sure—

(Time expired)

Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement

Mr MANDER: My question is to the Minister for Public Works and Procurement. In estimates in December 2020 and again last week in the media the minister said he did not use his private email for work purposes. However, the State Archivist's original report outed the minister for the use of private email. Who should Queenslanders trust, the minister or the former state archivist?

Mr de BRENNI: As I have said in this place before, I have met all of my obligations and responsibilities with respect to my ministerial duties.

Keppel Electorate, Infrastructure

Ms LAUGA: My question is of the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure. Can the Deputy Premier outline to the House what the Palaszczuk government is doing to support tourism and investment in Keppel, including Great Keppel Island, and are there any other alternative approaches?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Keppel for her question. We all know just how much the member for Keppel loves Great Keppel Island, and who could blame her? Last week I was fortunate to visit for the first time with the member for Keppel to see firsthand what a slice of paradise that island is. Known as Woppa to the traditional owners, with 17 pristine beaches making up 27 kilometres of coastline, Great Keppel Island is one of Queensland's best—but at this stage not fully realised—tourism opportunities. While there are still some fantastic resorts operating on the island, we are in the process of working to see if we can secure investment particularly from Tower Holdings, which has a number of existing approvals. A new investment there could see up to \$2 billion invested into the local economy and 1,500 jobs created.

The Palaszczuk government is determined, as the member for Keppel is, to see the island achieve its potential but to do so in a way that protects and recognises its environmental and cultural heritage and significance. We are working very closely with Gina Rinehart and Hancock Prospecting to see whether we can assist them to take over those leases and approvals. A senior working group is currently working together with her team to identify how we can best secure those approvals.

While we were there, we spent time with Woppaburra elder Bob Muir and heard how the local traditional owners hope to work with a proponent to recognise their aspirations for the island. We met with operators, residents and representatives of the local regional tourism organisation and heard how they aspire to have a new, world-class, environmentally appropriate resort on the island, while also still ensuring that everyday Queenslanders can access the island. It is a key part of our economic recovery for that region, and we share the aspirations of Ms Rinehart in having a resort there ready for the Olympics in 2032. We will continue to work closely with them. If we can secure that investment without an ugly casino, as those opposite wanted to put on the island, we will do it in a way that is environmentally and culturally appropriate in recognition of what is a beautiful part of Queensland.

State Archivist, Reports

Mr MINNIKIN: My question is to the Minister for Transport. The original State Archivist report contained sections discussing the minister potentially breaching the RTI Act and recommended that further consideration should be given for prosecution under the Public Records Act. This information was not in the report released to the public. Has the minister requested the altering of this independent report?

Mr BAILEY: I welcome the question from the member for Chatsworth—the first question I have had from him in 308 days. I was starting to wonder if he was still here.

Let us be very clear. This matter was looked at thoroughly in 2017—five years ago. A complaint was made by the opposition, and it was looked at fully by the independent watchdog. There was a report given by the archivist apparently, who says himself that everything he wanted in the report to the CCC was there. They had everything to look at. They said I had no case to answer. If they had had any issue with anyone else, I am sure they would have investigated.

The Leader of the Opposition has said he would be a different kind of leader, and here we are back to a matter that was closed in 2017. You do not show respect for our independent standing royal commission by making a complaint and then, because you do not like the outcome of the investigation, continue to try to revisit it, spin it and manipulate it. That is not respect for our institutions. That is undermining them. That is what this opposition does every single time.

This question is another attempt to go back and rewrite history from five years ago in a matter that was fully investigated by the independent watchdog and was closed. It was closed. They can try to manipulate all they like, but what they are doing is disgraceful. It is an undermining of the standing royal commission. I have no knowledge whatsoever of the matter which the member is raising here. This matter was closed five years ago.

Skills

Mr O'ROURKE: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer outline how the Palaszczuk Labor government is supporting skills development across Queensland? Is the Treasurer aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Rockhampton for his question. As the member for Rockhampton knows, we have a great responsibility as a government to deliver the services and infrastructure for regional and rural Queensland. We have a greater responsibility than any other state in the Commonwealth. That means better health services, more schools and roads and railways need to be delivered across the state. It means that we need to be very diligent in delivering those things that matter to Queenslanders, like energy and power.

That is why I was so pleased to join the member for Rockhampton and the member for Keppel, as the Minister for Energy indicated earlier, to greet a dozen of the more than 100 new Ergon apprentices who have started training this month. These apprentices will learn the skills to restore power to homes after storms and cyclones, which we have already witnessed in my electorate in the south-east recently, and to connect Queensland's ever-growing renewable energy generators to the grid. Their training and their skills are vital. They are life-saving, and we will see that in coming days in the south-east.

If you are going to get on the tools, you need to know what you are doing. Tradies across Queensland know this. Unions across Queensland know this. The only person who does not know it is Scott Morrison. Last week we witnessed the bizarre spectacle of the man who is supposedly the leader of the nation putting himself at risk of a welder's flash burn. He risked permanent damage to his eyes for the sake of a photo opportunity. It is not that he did not know it was dangerous; he had already admitted to burning his thumb during a previous welding attempt. Again, he was pretending to be something he is not. He was prepared well—

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr DICK: Unlike the member for Everton, I am the Treasurer. I did not have to pretend to be the shadow Treasurer.

The Prime Minister was prepared to put children at risk by letting them drive forklifts—until this brain explosion was completely shot down by the national cabinet. There has been a lot of criticism of the national cabinet; I think they are doing a great job. It is a wonder the Prime Minister has not suggested children drive trains in Sydney. Maybe Scott Morrison keeps pretending he is a tradie to distract himself from pretending to lead the nation.

Of course, the affliction of pretence runs through the LNP. It runs through this state. It runs through the Leader of the Opposition, who pretends to be outraged, who pretends to care. There is more confection coming out of the Leader of the Opposition than comes out of a lolly shop.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DICK: Ultimately, what does the Leader of the Opposition stand for? It is all pretence and show. Who does he represent? What does he stand for? Ultimately, nobody knows and nobody cares when it comes to the member for Broadwater.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Southern Downs, Leader of the Opposition and member for Moggill, you are all warned under the standing orders. I was not going to interrupt the Treasurer, as you were attempting to do.

State Archivist, Reports

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question is to the Minister for Housing. The State Archivist's original report provided to the minister ousted ministers Miles and de Brenni as well as ministerial staffers for their widespread use of private emails for official business. These references were deleted from the final report released by the minister. Who requested the altering of this independent report?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. I believe the member is referring to the report that I tabled just recently, which is the final report that the former state archivist had provided to the director-general at the time in 2017, just prior to government going into caretaker. Just to be clear, the position of State Archivist is a Public Service position and it reports to the director-general or their delegate. All reports must go through that chain of command, as the member would expect, and to the director-general. That is the standard approach. The final report—the one that I was able to table after receiving some advice from the director-general—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Nanango, you will cease your interjections. You have asked the question. The minister is answering the question.

Ms ENOCH: My current director-general was able to receive advice from the CCC about the release of that report—not to be in any way moving away from the requirements of a CCC investigation. That final report is the one that the then state archivist had provided to the then director-general in 2017—the one that he had absolutely agreed was the appropriate report to be provided to the director-general. That is the one that I was able to table after my current director-general was able to get advice from the CCC.

Sexual Consent Education

Mrs MULLEN: My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Will the minister please update the House on her department's work reviewing respectful relationships and consent education in Queensland schools and advise if there are any alternative approaches?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Jordan for this question. I know that she and many others in this House were moved and inspired by the address made by Brittany Higgins and Grace Tame at the National Press Club earlier this month. These brave women are shining a national spotlight on matters such as respectful relationships, consent and reporting. I also acknowledge the strength of Chanel Contos and everyone who came forward to sign the Teach Us Consent petition.

I put this matter on the agenda of the education ministers' committee across the country with regard to updating our curriculum for respectful relationships, consent and reporting. We need to ensure that strong, consistent information about consent is in the Australian Curriculum. I am pleased to report that we are nearly there with updates to the components of the health and physical education curriculum. However, at a state level, as usual, we are leading the country. In March last year, I instigated our own extensive review of curriculum, resources and materials to ensure they adequately address these issues.

We have consulted more than 180 stakeholders including teachers, parent bodies, the LGBTIQ+ organisations, experts in the field, as well as students. The most inspiring meeting I had was with my Ministerial Student Advisory Council where they made it very clear that they wanted a mature approach to this and an age-appropriate response. Students do not want gimmicks; they do not want

euphemisms. They certainly do not want consent compared to milkshakes or to tacos. They want real-life events. This is a very important issue, and I quote Brittany Higgins when she said it best, I believe—

Actions are what matter and what will be the true test of whether the government is committed to creating systemic change.

As I said, we cannot do this alone—we need a national response—but unfortunately the federal government is basically incapable of taking any action in this area. They are so out of touch on this and in so many other areas. They will never learn. They just do not get it. There are a number of things that we are relying on them to lead in this country, but unfortunately they are leaving our young people and women to fend for themselves in this area.

What did Scott Morrison, our Prime Minister, do to get information? He asked Jen. He wanted to know from Jen what it all meant and how we could do it. If that was not insulting enough, when we were out on the streets marching he basically said, 'Well, they are lucky they are not being shot,' which is a shame when you take an issue like this and as important as it is. They are all talk, no action. We expect action to occur. It is all photo op, no follow-up. That is the legacy of the LNP, both at a federal and state level, and we will implement what we want to do.

(Time expired)

State Archivist, Contract

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Minister for Housing. I refer to comments in this House from the minister that the former state archivist chose not to continue in the role as he was moving to New Zealand to take up another opportunity. This claim has been refuted by the former state archivist. Who should Queenslanders trust, the minister or the former state archivist?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. As I have already stated clearly to the House, the position of State Archivist is appointed under the Public Service Act. The employment matters regarding the position of State Archivist is the responsibility of the department. My understanding, and what I was informed by my director-general, is that the former state archivist was in fact offered an extension and that the former state archivist had not taken up that offer because of the fact that, as I understand it, he was moving to New Zealand. I understand that he is currently in New Zealand, so it seems as though that is the truth. It seems as though that would be the case; that he stepped away from that offer and that he did in fact move to New Zealand.

Coronavirus, Aged Care

Mr MADDEN: My question is of the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. Can the minister update the House on what the Palaszczuk government is doing to step up and support the age sector's COVID-19 response and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Ipswich West for his question. I know he is concerned about what we are all seeing in the aged-care sector across Queensland. We know that for some time the aged-care sector has been struggling to manage with the fact that they do not have proper nurse-to-patient ratios and that they are a low-paid industry. There is a Productivity Commission report with substantive recommendations to the Commonwealth about what needed to be done, and this was before COVID hit. We know that the vaccine rollout across aged care was extremely mishandled by the Commonwealth. Their job was to go into every aged-care facility, public and private, and immunise both the residents and the staff. They just forgot about the staff. They went to all those facilities, did the residents and then realised halfway through the year, 'Oh, none of the staff are vaccinated,' and turned to the states and territories, as they tend to do, and said, 'Can you help us?' We prioritised getting the staff vaccinated.

When I asked recently, 'What are you doing with the boosters; are you doing the staff?' the response was, 'This time we are vaccinating our staff as well.' There was a full acknowledgement that last time they completely dropped the ball.

What is concerning is that not enough have boosters. I am concerned that when the teams that the Commonwealth are sending go in, they are not advising families who can give proper consent. Many of these residents are not able to give consent themselves and fully understand what it is being offered to them. That consent and communication with the families is so important. The Commonwealth can tick off a box and say, 'This is how many facilities we have been to,' but there is not 100 per cent take-up. I am really concerned that in some cases there maybe 60 per cent or 70 per cent who have had it. We know the difference these boosters are making.

The Commonwealth announced that the Australian Defence Force is to come in to assist. They have been called in to at least three facilities so far to manage outbreaks. Now I hear that they are going to be calling volunteers to come in, so we are going from low-paid to no-paid people to manage our aged care.

We have been asked, as a state, to step in 216 times to assist aged-care providers with masks, face shields, gloves and gowns for emergency situations. We have been asked by the Commonwealth to do their job for them. Since the beginning of 2022, we have supplied over 900,000 pieces of PPE to the Commonwealth-overseen aged-care facilities. The Morrison government has had two years to manage this. We keep hearing about Jeta Gardens, but there is so much more happening out there; it is not just one facility. We need to turn our focus on disability as well because disability is not being discussed and I have just as equal concern, if not more, about them.

Coronavirus Vaccination, Schoolteachers

Mr ANDREW: My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. It has been brought to my attention that the teacher shortage in North Queensland caused by mandates has now reached the point that regional education office staff are being seconded to teach in schools. Why are regional directors not utilising the critical workforce shortage section of the public health directive to allow suspended teachers to come back to work?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for the question. Our back-to-school rollout has been absolutely incredible—the envy of every other state and territory, I might add—and my officers report that when they have hook-ups about how they are all going, they are envious about the position of Queensland, in spite of the fact that we have one of the most remote, diverse and regional states in all of Australia. Teachers, principals and staff at schools have done a remarkable job. The regional offices have done a remarkable job in not only ensuring that we have adequate teachers in our schools, but that where there are shortages, policies are put in place to replace those teachers.

This is a world health pandemic. We are in the middle of coming off a wave with regards to Omicron. We have children back at school following a two-week delay which was the absolute best decision that we have made in order to get more children vaccinated and ensuring that we can get them back to school as safely as possible.

Our teaching staff absences have been average—around 3.2 per cent. During the COVID pandemic over the past couple of years we have had no increase and the sky has not fallen in. Obviously, individual schools in regional areas may be more impacted, particularly when they are small schools—I accept the comments. We are making all the right policy decisions to ensure those children can still continue with face-to-face learning.

We are very proud of the fact that teachers are essential workers. If we are short and teachers are in quarantine—not isolating because they have COVID—we can bring them back. At this point in time we have not had a need to implement that, because there are 5,000 fully vaccinated teachers in our relief pool. They are more than adequately meeting the demand. The regional office has done an outstanding job in ensuring those teachers can be stood up if necessary so that we can have kids back at school, not impacting on families, and receiving quality education in this state.

I am very proud, and I think a lot of Queenslanders are. I have not had too many complaints about our back-to-school policy. I have not had condemnation about what we did. The system is working extremely well. It does not come from any manual or guide. It comes from good policymaking under the leadership of our Premier. We have back-to-school plans that meet the needs of families and students. Absences are well within the normal range in school years. Less than one per cent of students per week have been impacted by COVID. I wish them all the very best.

Anti-Corruption

Mr KING: My question is of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. Can the Attorney-General update the House on the work being done to ensure Queenslanders can have confidence in our anti-corruption watchdog?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for Kurwongbah for the question. It is absolutely vital that Queenslanders know that they can have confidence in the work of their anti-corruption watchdog. At every stage in Queensland's history, it is Labor governments that have stood up for integrity and ensured we have strong anti-corruption measures that are fit for purpose and inspire confidence. That

is why we acted quickly to establish a commission of inquiry into the CCC's charging powers and the use of seconded police officers. It will be headed by Tony Fitzgerald, the architect of our integrity and accountability measures. Mr Fitzgerald will ensure our anti-corruption watchdog is one we can all have confidence in.

This is in stark contrast to our federal government in Canberra. Like almost all Australians—apart from some of those opposite, it would seem—I was pretty frustrated to hear the Prime Minister announce that he has decided he will not implement a federal ICAC. I was frustrated not just because it is a broken election promise or because it was dropped off the agenda to politicise vulnerable children in schools but because it is so desperately needed. It seems that every day there is a new rort in the headlines, yet there is absolute silence from those opposite. Just last week the Auditor-General released a report finding that—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Are you finished? You are warned under the standing orders.

Ms FENTIMAN: It is no wonder they do not want to hear about the lack of a federal ICAC: not one member will answer questions about why they have not picked up the phone and asked Scott Morrison to implement one.

Coming back to their good friend Peter Dutton, the Auditor-General released a report stating that Peter Dutton and his assistant minister intervened in grant applications to award millions of dollars to organisations that failed to meet the criteria. Who could forget Bridget McKenzie's sports rorts of \$100 million or the more than \$400 million pork-barrelled into car parks? In fact, coalition seats received triple the funding of Labor seats. That is not to mention \$423 million—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Nanango, member for Mudgeeraba and member for Chatsworth, you are all warned under the standing orders. The level of interjection is unacceptable.

Ms FENTIMAN: Then there was Christian Porter's blind trust that they would not talk about and Angus Taylor's failure to disclose relevant financial interests while meeting with environment department representatives. Through all of this, Prime Minister Morrison still says we do not need a federal ICAC and the Queensland Leader of the Opposition still says we do not need a federal ICAC.

Of course, it is not about integrity; it is about cheap political stunts. Even well-respected journalist Phil Dickie, who was instrumental in the setting up of the Fitzgerald inquiry, said of the Leader of the Opposition—

... it will be easier to take you more seriously if you take up the cudgels with your coalition colleagues in Canberra for dragging down the whole country's performance and reputation on these issues.

(Time expired)

Toowong, Green Space

Mr BERKMAN: My question today is to the Minister for Education. The government's decision to locate the new inner west primary school at the former Toowong Bowls Club site leaves Toowong, Taringa and St Lucia residents in need of a new community facility and green space. Are the minister and the department working with council to ensure it is adequately compensated to deliver equivalent green space for local residents?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for the question. It is actually a very good question. We were very pleased to announce with the Premier recently that the Toowong Bowls Club will be the site of Queensland's first vertical primary school, which will be state-of-the-art designed to deliver for 900 students when stages 1 and 2 have been built. In response to the member's question, it is one of 11 new schools that we are delivering over the next three years, an investment, once again, of over a billion dollars.

The new school is needed in the growing inner western suburbs to ease the enrolment pressures, and I am happy to say we have been working very well with the member in relation to that. There has been extensive community consultation. I am pleased to say we are also consulting with the Brisbane City Council; it is their site. There was a meeting held as recently as 20 January between DoE and officers of the Brisbane City Council City Planning and Economic Development team, and my director-general recently wrote to the acting CEO. The outcomes of that were listed on 7 February as well as the plan going forward so we can negotiate with them not only about the site but also any extra green space that they might have.

I have to admit I am a little curious about a motion that was moved in council on 15 February which calls on the Queensland government to first purchase and then gift to council at no cost new land to offset the land required for the new school. The member and I have worked pretty closely together. If we can find that block of land in that area I think I would buy it and put a school on it. I do not know whether I would necessarily gift it back to the council at no cost, which is curious when we have had a meeting discussing the issue going forward.

I will make a couple of clear statements for the assistance of the local member. When acquiring land, the department must adhere to the Government Land Transaction Policy under the Acquisition of Land Act. We will ensure that the council is adequately compensated for any site acquisition. We have allocated an increased budget for this site of \$90 million, up from \$65 million, so we can deliver the state-of-the-art school and the land necessary on which to build the school, and council will be compensated. The land transaction policy ensures openness and transparency in the government approach that agencies take in acquiring land. Acquisitions must be in the public interest and ensure best value for Queensland. We will continue to negotiate the acquisition of the former site. We will look into whether there is another site, and I have had the discussion with the member for Maiwar in relation to the possibility of the Department of Education site. I hope we can have constructive negotiations going forward to deliver the school.

(Time expired)

Paradise Dam

Mr SMITH: My question is of the Minister for Water. Can the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's plan to build back Paradise Dam, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr BUTCHER: I thank the honourable member for the question because I know how passionate he is about Paradise Dam and the works that we are going to do to fix that dam. It is also good to see the community come on board with the member in support of this dam, especially with one of his good friends in Bundaberg Tom Marland also supporting the work that he has been doing. There are also members on the other side of the House who are extremely happy with it. The member for Burnett has written me a letter asking if we can build a platform overlooking the construction of the Paradise Dam because of how important it is to them as well, so it is a great day to stand here to continue to talk about this \$1.2 billion project for Bundaberg. It will create 250 construction jobs and provide long-term water security and safety for the Bundaberg region. This government will talk about Paradise Dam every day of the week because we are the only ones in this House with the integrity to front up to an issue, to talk to the community about it and to fix it, and the proof is in the pudding. The commission of inquiry report, the options report for the dam and the economic impact assessment are all available publicly.

Let us now look at the alternative from those opposite about which the member asked the question. The member for Nanango falsely claimed that the dam could be fixed for \$25 million, misleading the Bundaberg community during a really difficult time for that community. Those opposite have shown that they do not have integrity at all. They do not have the stomach to put people's lives above politics, and the people of Bundaberg know that. That is why they voted for Tom Smith in the election. Those opposite are only worried about their own ambitions and lining their own pockets, trying to find dodgy ways to get around donation laws and continuing to take property developer money.

Around the same time that the member for Nanango was making false claims about Paradise Dam she was also hosting dodgy fundraisers with prohibited donors in the lead-up to the 2020 election—so dodgy that her own party asked the ECQ to investigate her over this matter. But what do we expect from a party that is led by a leader who is Campbell Newman's protege, sitting over there throwing what was mud but is now dirt because it has been so long since they started throwing it at the Premier for the great work that she is doing in this state for Queenslanders every day of the week? This is a man who called the former chief health officer punch-drunk and power hungry when all she ever did was try and keep Queenslanders safe, including the people of Bundaberg. This is a man who did an off-the-books land deal benefiting an LNP donor when he was the local government minister—remember way back when. Those opposite have no business coming into this place slinging mud about integrity. Shame on all of you!

(Time expired)

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

Landfill Project, Approval Process

Mr O'CONNOR: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Former planning minister Dick rejected three requests from Ipswich City Council to call in landfill proposals. After Wanless's project was rejected by council, it hired Labor lobbyist Anacta and it was called in after just two meetings with the Deputy Premier's office. What made its landfill proposal of greater state significance than the others?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Bonney for his question. Of course much of the answer to his question is in the various documents that I issued as part of the proposed call in and ultimate decision to call in, but I am happy to, for the benefit of the House, go through those matters. There were a range of state interests triggered by the Wanless proposal, including the South-East Queensland Council of Mayors recent waste and recycling report where it called for recycling and waste facilities to be considered on a regional basis rather than on the needs of one particular local government area, so that project itself triggers economic, environmental and regional planning interests.

We are working within the planning system to identify waste and recycling precincts away from residential neighbourhoods where we can cluster these projects together, and it may well be the case that this project could be an anchor in one of those precincts. However, we also need to consider the needs of inland rail which has identified that as one of the possible locations for an intermodal terminal and that may well mean that the elements of the Wanless proposal that have been approved may not be suitable for that location because that land may be required for the state and national interests of supporting inland rail. We will not know until mid-2022 whether that is the case. That was one of a range of matters that need to be properly considered, as well as the needs of the wider region and not just the Ipswich City Council area, and whether this facility itself can help us advance our state's waste and recycling objectives. It is primarily a recycling park, although the proponent argues that they need to have some onsite landfill for the recycling component to be viable.

What was not included in the notice but I am happy to advise the House is that I did not discuss this project or the proposed call in with the lobbying firm the member mentioned. In fact, I was unaware that it was representing this particular organisation. I made the decision based on the advice of my department, which I will continue to do. That is how those on this side of the House govern, which is in stark contrast to the behaviour of those on the other side.

(Time expired)

Electricity Prices

Mr WALKER: My question is of the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement. Can the minister advise the House how the Palaszczuk government is working to put downward pressure on energy prices and whether the minister is aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for Mundingburra for the question because he understands that it is only Labor that is interested in delivering cheaper, cleaner electricity to Queensland households. Just last week we were proud to announce our sixth asset ownership dividend. Every household in the electorate of Mundingburra—in fact, every household in Queensland—will receive \$50 cash back in their pocket. This government has delivered our sixth asset ownership dividend because we can, and we can do it because Queenslanders own their electricity assets. For every Queensland household, their asset ownership dividend will see their annual electricity bill much lower.

We on this side of the House know that increasing the supply of renewables, especially more wind energy, will make power cheaper. Queensland now has 50 large-scale renewable energy projects operating, under construction or financially committed. That is approaching \$11 billion of renewables investment, more than 7,900 construction jobs, over 5,700 megawatts of energy and equal to 13.7 million tonnes of avoided emissions each year. By the end of 2023, we will deliver a further five new wind energy projects in Queensland, a further five new large-scale solar projects and 40 megawatts of community battery storage for Queensland. That is the equivalent of two massive new power stations for this state.

It is clear that our commitment to renewables is real, but one only has to look at the media headlines to see what Australians think of the Morrison government's commitment to renewables, and they think that it is a lot of hot air. One headline from the *Financial Review* reads 'Nationals expend hot air on coalition's net zero debate'. A *New Daily* headline reads 'Hot air and slogans are masking a government falling apart'. This headline is perhaps the most telling—'Most coalition MPs believe wind power industry is full of hot air'.

I was in North Queensland just the other day with the member for Cairns and the Deputy Premier when the turbines and blades arrived for the new Kaban wind farm and it was a stark reminder to all Queenslanders that the LNP tried to block this renewable energy project. It was a reminder that the Prime Minister and the LNP are even resisting a renewables manufacturing policy in this state. In fact, they have invested nothing new in new renewables in Queensland. All they have ever invested in is the one thing they are good at—that is, more hot air. They spent \$31 million on an advertising campaign to distract people from their renewables policy failures, zero dollars on actual renewable energy and \$6 million to consultants—\$31 million worth of condescending spin, \$31 million of hot air.

(Time expired)

Trad, Ms J

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Premier. The Attorney-General has confirmed in her ministerial statement this morning that there is a court proceeding involving Jackie Trad, as I raised in the House yesterday. Can the Premier confirm whether Jackie Trad has received a legal indemnity and has she had her legal costs covered by the taxpayer with respect to either the CCC investigation into the appointment of Frankie Carroll or current court proceedings?

Ms PALASZCZUK: On this side of the House we will respect the institutions of this state. The Attorney-General made a very, very clear statement in the House. I remind the member for Kawana that in a review that was done of their disastrous 2015 election, one of the recommendations was clearly that the institutions of state must be respected. That is a direct recommendation of the Borbidge Sheldon review.

Mr Mander: What about the institution of parliament?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I beg to differ that you do respect the institution of parliament.

Mr Mander: You hold it in contempt.

Ms PALASZCZUK: And didn't you swear on a stack of Bibles?

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Premier!

Ms PALASZCZUK: You swore on a stack of Bibles. The member for Everton swore on a stack of Bibles. We all know what came about from that. Thank you for the interjection. We will respect this parliament—

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

Ms PALASZCZUK:—we will respect the courts—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—and we will respect the separation of powers.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, can I ask you to resume your seat, please.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have finished my answer.

Mr BLEIJIE: I took a point of order before the Premier finished the answer.

Mr SPEAKER: I will hear the point of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: The point of order is on relevance, 118(b). I asked about whether legal costs had been paid for Jackie Trad. I did not ask about anything the Premier is talking about and I ask that she tell the parliament, if she believes in the institution as I do, whether the legal costs were paid for by the government.

Mr SPEAKER: The Premier has confirmed that she has completed her answer.

Cruise Ship Industry

Ms PEASE: My question is to the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement. Can the minister please detail to the House the steps the government is taking to help cruise ship operators to restart the cruise ship industry in Queensland and is the minister aware of any other approaches?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for Lytton for the question and note the member's enthusiastic support for growing Brisbane's bayside visitor economy. I have met with cruise ship industry representatives and certainly understand their enthusiasm to get back on the water and into

Queensland ports. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, cruise tourism was an industry generating more than a billion dollars for the Queensland economy. I equally recognise the industry's importance to travel agents in each and every one of our communities.

The Australian government is responsible for the country's international borders. Right now overseas flagged cruise ships are banned by the federal government's Biosecurity Act from entering Australian waters until 17 April. In the meantime, we are working closely with the New South Wales and Victorian governments on developing a consistent set of guidelines for the speedy and COVID-safe return of cruise ships to Australian ports. Queensland will lead the way on cruising's relaunch. Queensland has more ports to more destinations, the longest stretch of coastline and warm winter weather that is the envy of the south. We also have a brand new, state-of-the-art international cruise ship terminal ready to go. It delivers easy access to the region's many world-class visitor attractions. That state-of-the-art cruise ship terminal at the mouth of the Brisbane River will play a key role in the relaunch of the cruise industry. It delivers easy access to the region's many world-class visitor attractions, including those on the Gold Coast.

One tourism development that the cruise ship visitors will not see is the Skyride project, once proposed to run from Springbrook to Mudgeeraba. Who was behind Skyride? It was the member for Mermaid Beach, that is who. At the time the member was trying to get approvals for Skyride he was also assistant minister to Campbell Newman. The member sought the Integrity Commissioner's advice on the project but was less than forthcoming on the depth of his involvement in Skyride. There was no explanation of the nature of his A class shares, nor any mention of his responsibility as manager of government business for the passage of legislation that could have made Skyride's environmental approvals much easier.

The actions of those opposite prove that they cannot talk big on integrity because they just cannot be trusted. We have to make sure that we keep and respect the great institutions that have delivered integrity in government over the 30 years that we have seen Labor modernising the state and I look forward to supporting—

(Time expired)

Trad, Ms J

Mr POWELL: My question is to the Attorney-General. I refer to the Attorney-General's statement to the House this morning and ask: did the Attorney have prior knowledge of this matter before it was raised in parliament and has the Attorney or her staff spoken to Ms Trad about this matter?

Mr SPEAKER: The time for question time has expired.


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 2)

APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2)

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from 22 February (see p. 88), on motion of Mr Dick—

That the bills be now read a second time.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (11.15 am), continuing: In the Scenic Rim electorate local hospitality businesses especially suffer due to the regulations introduced on 17 December. One hotelier told me their income basically evaporated overnight because a huge number of their patrons could not enter the pub. Was there any support for these businesses? None. They were left to fend for themselves. A cafe in a shopping centre faces massive costs in policing mandates in a ridiculous situation where their seating in a common area is subject to a mandate while common seating two or three metres away is not. People can freely walk past the cafe within centimetres of patrons without restriction and yet the cafe has to bear all the costs of policing this.

People not surprisingly ask what is the point? What does this achieve other than imposing more costs on small businesses already suffering. The impact on businesses, individuals and family businesses from these measures have been truly horrific in some cases and that was even before the government's advice around the beginning to mid-January caused even fewer people to go out and spend in our local businesses. That led to what many small and family businesses reported as

conditions just as bad or worse than a lockdown. Was there any support for the community at this time from this government? No. None. Not a cent for these businesses, unlike in New South Wales, Victoria or South Australia that have implemented packages to support small businesses in these situations. This government time after time has imposed measures that cost businesses, cost livelihoods, cost families and without any transparency around the reasons or outcomes of these measures.

These businesses cannot come to parliament to plug the gap in their finances. They have to borrow, they have to cut wages and staff hours, they have to choose not to pay themselves sometimes so they can keep paying staff. I question the effectiveness and reason for all these restrictions and call on the government to provide more support for those people and parts of our economy affected by them.

All of this has already added to a huge red-tape regulatory burden in Queensland where people who want to start or expand a business are dealing with council planning schemes and other regulations, sometimes pointless reports produced for local government, for state authorities, just to get the application in. It means that if you want to go into business or expand your business you often have to have a lot of money just to start with. It puts it beyond the reach of a lot of people just starting out, if they want to go beyond being a small family or home based business. This must change if we want to grow Queensland's economy and unleash the potential of all small and family businesses. It is the engine room of my electorate, it is the engine room of many parts of Queensland and yet the red-tape burden is holding back our economy. There needs to be a dedicated project by the Queensland government at all levels, and local government as well, to reduce that burden going into the future.

Unlike those small and family businesses, there is one business that this government has seen fit to help along the way. Reports in the *Australian* today, which I table, indicate that the Deputy Premier's chief of staff was lobbied by Anacta Strategies and that led to the Deputy Premier calling in the application for a dump at Willowbank, where Wanless is the proponent, following those meetings with the Labor aligned lobbyist.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian*, dated 23 February 2022, titled 'Labor links in ministerial action' [183].

This happened despite the Ipswich City Council requesting that that project and other projects be called in and that request being knocked back by the government on a couple of occasions. It shows the dirty, rotten nature of this government. If you are a Labor mate on the inside then you can get the Deputy Premier to call things in. I have little doubt that that is what has gone on and that the dump will be approved—although I hope it is not. I have seen a document released under RTI that shows the correspondence requesting a call in was immediately placed in the minister's VIP correspondence list. If you are on the inside and if you have Anacta Strategies and Jim Soorley on your Labor team, you get VIP access to this Labor government.

How much would struggling small and family businesses love to get access to the minister's VIP correspondence list so that he can personally take care of them too? It stinks and that is before the dumps even get under way. The call in has been made, but the minister should deny the Wanless dump proposal, stick to the ICC approval of a recycling facility, and give the Ipswich people a break from dumps and the people of Willowbank some respite from having more traffic going through the Amberley interchange, which is bad enough as it is already. I remind members of the House that it was a Labor aligned Ipswich City Council that bought the dumps to Ipswich and created the dump problems that we have already. Now this Labor government is facilitating a call in for yet another landfill proposal in the Ipswich City Council area. This is a disgrace and it shows the true nature of this government: if you are on the inside, you get deals done.


Right now in Queensland we see business confidence plummeting, going down 16 per cent in the last CCIQ pulse survey. Sixty-three per cent of businesses report mental health challenges, but do they get added to the VIP list of the Deputy Premier? No, they do not get listened to at all! This government constantly ignores small and family businesses. We also see plummeting equipment investment in Queensland. The government is borrowing for operational expenses just to keep the lights on. Two-thirds of new debt is just to keep the lights on, not for capital assets that will actually bring a dollar into the state. It is completely unsustainable and they are living in a fantasy land. The government is living in a fantasy land if they think that this is the way to set Queensland up for the future. The fantasy valuation of the Queensland titles office and its use to offset state debt is a great example of the fantasy that they are indulging in and that they are indulging the whole of Queensland in.

However, while they are borrowing to keep the lights on, that borrowing does not extend to supporting a bus service to Grandchester State School that had been in operation for more than 60 years—until 7 February this year. That has left families in Mount Mort, more than 15 kilometres from Grandchester, in a terrible position. Working families are now having to manage work by splitting shifts

or relying on the grace of their employers to make sure their children get to school or to the bus in Grandchester that takes the high school kids to Laidley State High School. While I see an extra \$479 million being authorised in this bill, there are no small amounts to support bus services such as that.

It is a disgrace that the government is penny-pinching when it comes to our school kids' bus services. This is happening not only in Grandchester. In past years, all across the rural areas of the Scenic Rim electorate bus services have been cut or put together so that kids are on buses for longer each day, to and from school, and operators are having their payments frozen or, in some cases, even reduced while being asked to do more work for the local community. Country kids deserve school bus services just like their city counterparts. However, they are not getting the same service under this government, which is constantly penny-pinching when it comes to school bus services.

This government fails many Queenslanders through their budgets and there are many other areas of neglect. I will not be silenced in my fight for a fair share for all of the Scenic Rim electorate. I will call out the furphies and the fantasies of the government when they bring forward bills like this and when they bring forward budgets that simply do not deliver for small and family businesses and working families across all of Queensland.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (11.24 am): I support the bills. Before I get into discussing the substantive matters in the bills, I will respond to some of the contributions made in the House. Let us start with the one we have just heard, which was extremely far from the long title of the bill. Perhaps we do not have to worry about that anymore now that we have time-limited speeches, but we were not even close on that one.

I make no secret of the fact that I am a big fan of the member for Hervey Bay. He is a great local member.

Mr McCallum: There is a lot to like.

Mr KELLY: There is a lot to like; I take that interjection. As much as I am a fan of the current member for Hervey Bay, I will admit that there are times when I miss Ted. I was in the Labor movement for 30 years before I was finally called a communist. I had to wait till I came into this place and met Ted to achieve that accolade. I am pleased to say that in the member for Moggill we now have the new Ted. Yesterday, his contribution to the debate channelled his inner Ted. He was regurgitating a dodgy story from the worst sections of the Murdoch press about Albo being a communist. It was absolutely astounding—and I remind the member that he is on a warning. I will be working hard to get Albo elected, but from his contribution yesterday I can only draw the conclusion that the member for Moggill has already awarded the election to Albo if he is prepared to stoop to tactics such as that.

In his contribution, the member for Condamine posed a question about the mystery of Wellcamp. I want to talk about another mystery. I reckon in about 200 years—it probably will not be that long, but let us say 200 years—there will be a bunch of very disappointed archaeologists walking around Pinkenba, looking for the foundations of a so-called quarantine station. That is the real mystery that the member for Condamine should have been talking about. The mystery that most people in his electorate and right across Queensland are talking about is why the Morrison government completely and utterly failed when it came to quarantine. Why did they shirk their responsibilities in relation to that issue? That is the real mystery of Wellcamp. Why did we have to step in to fix another failure of the Morrison government? They not only shirked and abandoned their responsibilities in quarantine; I think we can find that answer in everything else that they have done: aged care as was outlined in question time, disability care and the vaccination rollout in First Nations communities. It is absolutely disgraceful.

I turn to the contribution of the member for Nanango. Apparently, the Palaszczuk government is addicted to debt. For the moment, let us put aside the fact that the member would not say 'boo' to the Morrison government about debt and clearly the member would not bother to point out that the Morrison government does not actually have an integrity system to review. Let us put all of that aside. Given the member's abhorrence for debt, I thought I would check last year's appropriation debate. LNP speaker after LNP speaker got to their feet and thanked Minister Grace—and so they should—for spending money on the schools in their electorates. People who, one after another, spoke about their abhorrence of debt were quick to thank the minister, and the list is long. I am not sure if this is an exhaustive list but it is all I could find in the time that I had available.

The member for Burnett joined the chorus. The member for Burleigh got on board to say thank you, as did the member for Surfers Paradise. The member for Kawana actually said thank you to Minister Grace. The member for Theodore said thank you. The member for Toowoomba North said thank you.

Mr Watts: And I meant it.

Mr KELLY: Indeed, he is continuing it here. Apparently there was some movement at Toogoolawah and Kilcoy state schools as well. The member who was on her feet yesterday abhorring government debt was on her feet last year thanking Minister Grace for new halls at Toogoolawah and Kilcoy state schools. That was none other than the member for Nanango.

I turn to the member for Southern Downs. His contribution involved peddling a tired old line about the private sector being the only creator of jobs. That is a little bit rich coming from a member who has served in the Australian Defence Force. The last time I checked, it was a public institution.

Mr Whiting: Not privatised yet by the Morrison government.

Mr KELLY: It is not privatised yet. I am not sure what other jobs the member has had so I will stop there. The line is not only tired; it displays a staggering level of economic ignorance. The past two years have been a resounding reinforcement of Keynesian economics and the need for government intervention in the economy. I will never forget the lines of people stretching around the block outside the Centrelink office in Stones Corner. It went on and on and on.

I would drive past that line each day, and I was worried that that would be there for years to come as I am sure were many in this House. That line only disappeared because governments created jobs and directly supported employers to keep jobs. The notion that only the private sector creates jobs is completely and utterly false. In Queensland, our health response was the first and the most important economic response of this government.

Many speakers have established throughout this debate the economic achievements of the Palaszczuk government. I certainly see the results of that diligent work in my electorate. Jobs are being created through investment in schools, public housing, electricity infrastructure, sporting clubs and of course the Cross River Rail. Skilling Queenslanders for Work continues to create jobs. Just today I saw the Institute of Culinary Excellence post on its social media channels about the first group intake of students via Skilling Queenslanders for Work, preparing students for the hospitality industry where we desperately need workers.

For the first time, the Premier made a significant announcement yesterday around fast rail. It is an important announcement in terms of the Olympics. I wanted perhaps to talk about a slower paced form of transport, at least when I engage in the form of transport. I am really pleased about the many cycling projects that are coming together in the electorate of Greenslopes and beyond. We have invested or are in the process of investing nearly \$90 million in making sure that cyclists get home faster and safer. The Veloway, stages D and E, including the Marshall Road overpass, has opened up cycling for Holland Park, Holland Park West and Mount Gravatt. The underpasses on O'Keefe Street and the overpass on O'Keefe Street open up better access for Stones Corner, Greenslopes and Coorparoo. The recently announced PAH Veloway will connect the existing cycleways to Dutton Park, Boggo Road, the Ecosciences Precinct, UQ, the Mater Hospital and many other places. All this is making cycling safer and better, and that is great for everyone. Truly, cycling in Greenslopes is getting better, safer and brighter.

I have copped a lot of jibes from members opposite, particularly in the LNP, about cycling infrastructure in the electorate of Greenslopes. I will never begrudge other members coming in here and standing up for better roads or better infrastructure in their electorates that will help to keep people safe, but the infrastructure that is needed in my electorate right now is cycling infrastructure—not just for cyclists but also for e-scooters—because the electronic vehicle revolution has already happened in my electorate. The number of people riding electric bikes and electric scooters is absolutely phenomenal. So we need that infrastructure in place to make sure that people are getting around safer, faster—I see the minister for the environment nodding her head—and in an environmentally friendly way as well. We only achieve this when we manage the economy well.

I commend the Premier, the Treasurer and the entire cabinet for the continued great work on economic management that is focused on making life better, safer and brighter for all people in Greenslopes and for all Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.



Mrs GERBER (Currumbin—LNP) (11.33 am): The LNP is undoubtedly the party for good governance, strong economic management and support for small and family businesses. The bills before the House today speak volumes about the Labor government's approach to financial management. The bills provide for approval of almost \$450 million of taxpayers' money to various departments for unforeseen expenditure that occurred last financial year. That is expenditure that was

not accounted for by the government in the last budget. The LNP will not be opposing the bills. The money has already been spent by the Labor government, but there are several concerning trends to which I wish to draw this parliament's attention.

First and foremost, Queensland's economy is suffering under this government's poor priorities, underwhelming investment in infrastructure and lack of support for small and family businesses. Queenslanders need strong economic management. This is paramount to the efficient functioning of every government and every service that a government is meant to provide. It is foundational to the delivery of tangible outcomes for communities. No amount of budget trickery or shifting of public funds around paper will hide the objective failure of the Queensland Labor government to spend public money wisely. The latest CommSec State of the States report has Queensland ranked fifth of eight jurisdictions overall for economic performance. Queensland has the worst state score for economic growth, the worst state score for equipment investment and the worst state score for unemployment. Business confidence has plummeted by 16.9 per cent while Queensland's debt has skyrocketed under Labor, on track to reach \$130 billion over the forwards.

Time and again we hear from those opposite that it is because of COVID, a favourite scapegoat of this Queensland Labor government. Never mind the fact that Queensland's debt had already increased under Labor from \$72 billion to \$102 billion pre-COVID. Never mind the fact that two-thirds of Queensland's new debt is being used to keep the lights on, paying for everyday operational expenses rather than lasting infrastructure for Queenslanders. Never mind the fact that Queensland lost its AAA credit rating under consecutive Labor governments. The Bligh-Dick government nor the Palaszczuk-Dick government with its Treasurer at the helm has been able to get it back. None of this can be blamed on COVID; all of this falls squarely at the feet of a Labor government which cannot be trusted with taxpayers' money.

While spending hard-earned public money and racking up an eye-watering debt, this Labor government has also introduced 10 new taxes at a cost of more than \$4 billion to Queensland families. This is despite repeated promises to Queenslanders that no new or increased taxes would be introduced this term. The introduction of the renters tax is yet another broken Labor promise. In addition to broken Labor promises from Queensland Labor, there is also a complete lack of transparency around the estimates process. I commend the LNP's policy announcement of a parliamentary budget office to restore transparency to the budget process. I encourage those opposite to reflect on this commitment to transparency and openness in government.

Sadly, the lack of transparency from this Queensland government regarding expenditure is hardly surprising. This is a government that has given up on integrity, given up on governing for Queenslanders, and none more so than the Treasurer. In the words of my colleague the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Toowoomba South, this is a Treasurer who is woefully out of touch with the lived experiences of everyday Queenslanders.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mrs GERBER: I take the interjection. This was demonstrated most recently by his appalling lack of empathy for those suffering through the current rental crisis. When asked by a journalist if he felt at least a little bit bad for the people doing it tough with the housing affordability conditions, the Treasurer replied, 'No, not at all.' This is the man in charge of the Queensland government's purse strings. Queenslanders deserve so much better. Given the budget blowouts we are debating today, one would think that some of these funds might have been spent supporting the backbone of the Queensland economy during the latest Omicron wave, our small and family businesses. Unfortunately, the Queensland government has not released any business support packages through the Omicron wave for our small and family businesses. This is despite quarterly reporting showing that business confidence is down 16.9 per cent, sales and revenue are down, profitability is down, employment is down and capital expenditure is down. Worryingly, 63 per cent of businesses have reported being impacted by mental health challenges.

Even after surviving two years of COVID our small and family businesses have struggled to get their customers back, with consumer confidence shaken and early 2022 sales dropping to rates worse than during the peak of COVID. The LNP was quick to support our business community, calling for the state government to urgently assist small business owners and their staff. We saw our neighbours over the border supporting their businesses during the Omicron wave with payment schemes for businesses, rent relief and grants. Queensland small businesses hoped for the same, hoped that this Queensland government would spring into action and support them. The LNP provided a variety of suggestions for ways the Queensland government could provide support including: sick leave pay, removing state government fees and charges for small businesses, and reducing payroll tax. None were taken up.

When this government is consumed by itself, they are not governing for the people of Queensland. They are not listening to the people of Queensland. This lack of proper support from the Labor government does not just affect the business sector. We are seeing the state government fail in the health sector too, particularly around mental health services in Queensland. Does any of the unforeseen expenditure we are looking at today include money for delivering better health services or mental health services? Nope! Too many Queenslanders are missing out on the support they need, falling through the cracks, because they must wait months for an appointment in a system that is at breaking point.

I truly believe the mental health issues facing our community, affecting every facet of our community, is the hidden pandemic. Presentations to emergency departments are reaching unprecedented levels. In comparison to mental health funding interstate, the Queensland government has failed to fund our mental health system adequately. It is not coping, just like the health system more broadly. It is high time the Queensland government stopped blaming everyone else for their problems and focused on fixing this crisis. Queenslanders just want to make sure their loved ones can access critical health services, treatment and support when they need it.

Government members interjected.

Mrs GERBER: I can hear the interjections from the other side. They think it is funny that the mental health system is not funded properly.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Currumbin, resume your seat for a moment please. Member for Hervey Bay, member for Nicklin and member for Everton, stop your quarrelling across the chamber.

Mrs GERBER: That brings me to another health issue that is very close to my heart—the lack of funding in this bill for spinal muscular atrophy testing in Queensland's newborn bloodspot screening program. I have spoken on this subject many times, but SMA testing for newborns is still not a reality in Queensland, despite the fact that the test would only cost around \$10 and despite the fact that in 2019 and again in 2021 the Australian Medical Association of Queensland estimated that the state government would only have to budget \$700,000 to make it a reality. That is all. The Queensland government has overspent almost \$450 million but could not find \$700,000 to save the lives of Queensland kids diagnosed with SMA each year. It makes me so sad to think the Queensland government continues to fail our children diagnosed with SMA each year by not implementing this test in our newborn screening program.


Lastly, I want to address the part of the bill regarding the unforeseen expenditure for the Queensland Police Service. There was nearly \$10 million in additional police expenditure to support the government's border policies. This is just the financial cost. The human cost of the border blockade will never be forgotten by my community. Locals lost their jobs and their livelihoods as a result of this Labor government's policy decisions. Some were left homeless and others were forced to go onto social housing wait lists. Families were separated with two hours notice when the Premier slammed the border closed. People were denied the ability to be by their loved one's side in their final hours—cruelly robbed of precious moments with loved ones.

The Premier got a glimpse of the devastating effect of this on my community when she held a press conference this month in Kirra with local Piers Booth telling the Premier about his dying father—

I did all the right things and your government locked me out of my home state. He was dying and you failed me. Your government failed me when he was dying and I will never, ever forget.

So, yes, this bill talks about poor government priorities, but do not let the government brush the human cost of its poor priorities under the rug.

(Time expired)

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (11.43 am): I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2021 and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 2021. The Appropriation Bill (No. 2) seeks parliamentary approval for supplementary appropriation for unforeseen expenditure of just under \$447.5 million in the 2020-21 financial year. The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) seeks parliamentary approval of supplementary appropriation for unforeseen expenditure of \$1.795 million incurred by the Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Service in 2020-21. This expenditure was largely incurred due to the costs of running the 2020 state election during the pandemic.

We have heard from many members on this side of the House that the Palaszczuk government's strong COVID-19 response over the past two years has resulted in a strong economic recovery for Queensland. Those opposite do not like hearing it, but the evidence is clear. For the last two years we

have kept people safe, avoided prolonged lockdowns and got over 90 per cent of our population fully vaccinated. Our staged and measured reopening of our border allowed Queenslanders enough time to get double vaccinated to protect themselves and their families, and it ensured our population avoided the Delta wave which locked down the southern states for months. This is another fact those opposite do not like facing. We all know what would have happened if they had had their way at the outset—constantly calling for the borders to be opened. How many times? It was 64 times.

While Queensland was a stand-out in our response to COVID, it was the nation's premiers who were leading the response, particularly in the crucial early months of the pandemic. In fact, it would be true to say that many Australian lives have been saved, despite our spineless and hoseless Prime Minister.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order! Member for Ipswich, you have used language that has been deemed to be unparliamentary in the past. I would ask you to withdraw and refrain from similar usage of it in the future.

Ms HOWARD: I withdraw. When Omicron hit here in Queensland we had preparation and good management on our side. We predicted a catastrophic case load of 5,000 patients admitted to hospital at the peak of Omicron, including 500 ICU patients. Instead, we saw a more manageable case load of 925 hospitalisations at the peak and 71 ICU admissions. While Omicron has hit some businesses hard—and I know how tough some are doing it at the moment in my electorate of Ipswich—Queensland's strong economy before the Omicron wave hit has put us in a much better position now to recover faster and to rebuild business confidence sooner. Our Mid-Year Fiscal and Economic Review late last year showed the enviable position Queensland is in, leading the rest of Australia on all economic data.

We have had the highest jobs growth rate out of any state or territory since March 2020, with just over 124,000 more Queenslanders in jobs today than pre-COVID levels. Queensland's unemployment rate has now dropped to 4.4 per cent—the lowest rate since December 2008. Employment growth in Queensland is also forecast to be up 4½ per cent in 2021-22, which is our strongest jobs growth in 15 years.

Queensland's strong economic position is the reason we are attracting more interstate migrants than any other state or territory in Australia. Dwelling commencements are up 40 per cent on before COVID, household lending grew 91 per cent in the last year and dwelling approvals increased by 25 per cent on pre-COVID levels. One only has to see this boom in dwelling construction in the suburb of Ripley in my electorate of Ipswich which is seeing some of the fastest rates of population growth year after year. In the last quarter of 2021, 118 new dwellings were built in Ripley and 363 new residents moved into the suburb. I thank the education minister and Premier for their great announcement this morning of another new school planned to be built in Ripley next year.

Our midyear review last year showed that Queensland's economy recovered faster than the national average. While Australia's economy grew by only 3.9 per cent in 2021, Queensland's economy grew by 6.1 per cent. Queensland is seeing a boom in private investment, dwelling investment and business investment with growth rates for each of these over four per cent while the national average growth rates for each of these indicators is less than one per cent.

People have confidence to spend more with household consumption growing by 2.9 per cent in the last quarter which is 1½ times faster than the rest of Australia. Retail sales are up 17 per cent on pre-COVID levels—higher than the national average. Underpinning this success has been our COVID-19 economic recovery plan which has focused on: safeguarding Queenslanders' health; creating jobs; and working together to support businesses, families and communities across Queensland.


Our COVID-19 economic recovery plan is delivering \$14.2 billion in recovery initiatives to boost Queensland's economy and keep Queenslanders in jobs. In the Ipswich local government area, we have welcomed significant investment, supported by the Palaszczuk government, from manufacturing companies like LAVO in Springfield—and my colleague the member for Jordan spoke about this in her contribution—which is going to manufacture hydrogen fuel cells, and, of course, Rheinmetall's Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence in Redbank in the member for Bundamba's electorate which is employing hundreds of skilled workers locally.

Extending the Works for Queensland program to South-East Queensland councils during COVID not only provided our area with jobs but also provided a necessary shot in the arm to our local economy. This, along with our world-leading health response to COVID-19, has meant that Queensland is now leading Australia's economic recovery.

The appropriation bills reflect the Palaszczuk government's robust economic management. The unforeseen expenditure which was incurred by six departments for the 2020-21 financial year represents only 0.74 per cent of the budgeted appropriation. This is less than half the amount of unforeseen expenditure incurred in the 2019-20 financial year when we saw COVID first hit and less than that incurred under the LNP which saw a peak of unforeseen expenditure of 0.94 per cent of appropriations in 2013-14.

Queensland's government departments are continuously improving their scrutiny and monitoring of expenditure. However, they can still incur unforeseen expenditure for a number of reasons including natural disasters, new government decisions and policies, a change in timing to Commonwealth payments, or accelerated project delivery. The majority of unforeseen expenditure in 2020-21 arose for a number of reasons. For instance, the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services contributed just over \$91 million in unforeseen expenditure primarily due to COVID-19 responses including quarantine accommodation—another result of neglect by the Morrison government—logistics and border control activities.

No-one can deny that these were necessary expenses. They were necessary because they kept Queenslanders safe. I want to take this opportunity to thank the Treasurer, the Premier and the leadership team for the excellent work that they have undertaken in the last couple of years to get us to the point that we are at now. Queensland would be a very different place if they were not in charge, and I thank them. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (11.51 am): I rise to make a small contribution to the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 2021 and the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2021. As has been said on this side of the chamber, we will not be opposing these bills. By way of quick history, on 15 September last year the Treasurer introduced the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) into the Legislative Assembly. We are debating these bills in cognate. They were referred to the Economics and Governance Committee for joint consideration, and the committee reported back on 1 November last year.

Before I go into detail with my contribution, I cannot help but at least put to the chamber today that I have played back a couple of times to different branch meetings that section of consideration in detail when the Treasurer got up late last year to try to unsuccessfully explain how to capitalise income. It pertained to the valuation of the state titles office. It was an absolute masterclass in how to not explain a concept which anyone who goes to an introductory business finance subject at QUT would learn pretty much in the third week of study.

It was absolutely staggering that we had the Treasurer of this state who was unable to disclose what a discount rate was. In fact, moreover, I do not know respectfully whether the member for Woodridge, the Treasurer, even understood what a discount rate was to capitalise an income stream. It is no wonder that yet again we have another unforeseen expenditure bill. I will highlight a concept that the member for Woodridge, the Treasurer, might also fail to grasp—that is, opportunity cost: what could have been done elsewhere. I will come to that a little bit later in my contribution.

I note that under this bill the Treasurer is authorised to pay just under half a billion dollars—\$447 million—from the Consolidated Fund, and that is for six different departments as stated for the financial year starting back on 1 July 2020. Queensland Treasury have provided the following amounts to the committee on unforeseen expenditure broken down by department: the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, \$188.9 million; the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, \$114.2 million; Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, \$91.1 million; the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water, \$28.9 million; the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, \$52.845 million; and the Queensland Police Service, just under \$10 million at \$9.8 million.

Under the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2), the Treasurer is authorised to pay \$1.795 million from the Consolidated Fund for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for the financial year starting 1 July 2020. This unforeseen expenditure occurred by the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service was advised by the Treasurer to be for the running of the election during the pandemic. At the end of the day, it probably is a case of the old famous quote attributed to Benjamin Disraeli—'lies, lies and damn statistics'—because we have seen opponents on the other side of the chamber cherry-pick certain key economic indices to further their argument. In the interests of a robust democracy, I will do likewise and tell another side of the tale.

Let us look at the key performance indicators for Queensland in the latest CommSec State of the States report. It is ironic that the member for Woodridge, the Treasurer, likes to cherry-pick when documentation from third-party organisations is admissible or not. There is a pretty easy indices for

that: does it support his argument or not? If the data does not support his particular argument then I guess you can wipe the basis of where that data comes from. Successive governments have used the State of the States report year after year. I find it galling that when there is a data set that you do not agree with you simply throw it out with the bathwater. No. We are not going to fall for that.

The fact of the matter is that, when you look at the State of the States report, Queensland is ranked fifth of eight jurisdictions—to be specific, fifth of six states—for overall economic performance full stop. At the end of the day—I will be fair with my comments here—the Treasurer can actually use what has occurred with this great state in the last two years with the insidiously evil COVID-19 virus. I again find it galling that members on the other side of the chamber want to be a bit loose with the truth as it pertains to who has really done the heavy lifting to get this state out of some of the mess and, more importantly, the future predicament that it faces.


I agree with the member for Greenslopes when he outlined lines stretching street after street after street. Whilst I disagree vehemently with a lot of his ideology, I find the member for Greenslopes to be fair minded. I think he would concur with this situation when I say that what he identified happening in his electorate could be repeated electorate after electorate throughout the state.

What really concerns me is the fact that the state government has spent or did spend around \$8.8 billion on COVID stimulus but again, in the interests of being fair, that is less than a third of what the federal government invested in Queensland of just shy of \$28 billion. If we are going to be fair dinkum in this chamber and we want to have a robust debate, we also have to make sure that when we stand at our respective lecterns we use our words to show both sides to try to make sure that we have some degree of balance.

The simple fact of the matter is this: pretty much no western democracy invoked Keynesian economic theory 101. There was virtually little choice. What concerns me is the fact that we have the situation now where money is being spent to literally keep the lights on in this great state. There is nothing wrong with debt. Too many politicians are spooked to get up and publicly say that debt is bad. Debt is not bad. Debt is not bad at all. It depends on how that debt is used. If you are using it to borrow to produce income-producing assets—big tick—there is nothing wrong with that. We are actually borrowing money because of a lack of ministerial performance in relation to keeping watch of their particular departments.

When we are borrowing money, particularly over the four-year forwards—those are not my words; they are in the budget papers—we are going to hit peak debt, including government-owned corporations, of \$130 billion. What is absolutely—for the third time—galling is the fact that we have a series on portfolio-by-portfolio scorecards, and when we look at the sad capital expenditure it is lacking.

I will now close by referring to the transport and main roads portfolio. We have a \$300 million blowout with Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3. We have about a \$630 million blowout as it relates to the Coomera Connector. I actually heard with dismay this morning only two hours ago the member for Miller, the transport and main roads minister, yet again refer to the '\$5.4 billion' Cross River Rail project. Nice try, member for Miller. Nice try, Minister for Transport and Main Roads. When it comes to credibility and integrity, there is going to be one word attributed to the member for Miller. When inevitably, like all of us, the sun sets on his political career one way or the other, people will know in one word the legacy of the member for Miller, the transport and main roads minister. The one word that will forever be attributable to that particular member is: mangocube.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (12.01 pm): The one word that comes to mind after listening to that contribution from the member for Chatsfield is mansplaining. I appreciate what the member said about what he learned in his property course. It was a good speech. You also did it at budget time, and I appreciated it then as well.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Direct your comments through the chair, please, member.

Mr WHITING: I rise to speak in favour of these bills. I listened carefully to what the members opposite have been saying or not saying, as the case may be. It reminds me that in 2022 there is a new truism in politics, and that is the economy will always be stronger under Labor and the best economic managers are Labor. If you want to see indifferent or incompetent economic management, 'Your Honour, I give you the LNP.'

We have heard a bit from opposition members about economic performance. I think the member for Southern Downs said we were regressive and the members for Nanango and Southern Downs criticised us for our debt level, but I do acknowledge the member for Chatsfield saying that—

Mr Minnikin: Chatsworth!

Mr WHITING: Chatsfield has a better ring to it. I do acknowledge that the member for Chatsworth has probably uttered an LNP heresy by saying 'debt is good'—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! The Speaker gave a ruling this morning about people misinterpreting, misusing or using language that was not quite right. I think we can all abide by that. I have experienced that myself, so let's just move on. The member for Bancraft—Bancroft has the call. There you go!

Mr WHITING: Well played, sir! Can I point out to those members opposite who have been speaking against it that the federal LNP doubled the national debt before the pandemic even began. We heard the Treasurer say that Scott Morrison doubled the national debt when he was Treasurer and Prime Minister. If we are talking about economic management, remember what the LNP did at the federal level in relation to the car manufacturing industry in Australia. Everyone was screaming at them to step in—

An opposition member: They killed it!

Mr WHITING: They did kill it; I take that interjection. Everyone was screaming at them to jump in and help save this industry, but they would not act. If they were back on the treasury benches here this is what we would see for the manufacturing industry in Queensland: no trains being built in Maryborough; no armoured vehicles being built by Rheinmetall at Redbank. We have a heavy vehicle manufacturing industry in Australia. It is centred here in Queensland. We will preserve it because we are better economic managers.

In terms of economic management, let's once again bring up the example of the renewable energy industry. Today the minister talked about what we have now in Queensland: 50 large-scale projects either completed or underway. They tried to nobble this \$11 billion industry when they were last in government and they would do the same again. Look at the case of the Kaban wind farm project. This \$373 million project can dispatch battery power but, as the minister said, the LNP tried to block it. That project would reduce electricity prices for Queensland consumers by \$461 million over the life of that project. I want to absolutely reject what the LNP has said here today in terms of them being better economic managers, because it is very clear they have lost interest in economic management in Queensland. They have abandoned the field to the party that is clearly much better at a comprehensive level, and that is Labor.

We have heard a couple of the speakers say, 'This bridge wasn't done in my area; we should have put money to that,' or 'Perhaps there could be more bus services in my area.' They pointed out that the government had to spend over \$450 million to fund new or different initiatives as part of this appropriation. When they talk about that \$400 million figure I am reminded of what they did when they were in government last time—that is, cut the QTRIP program. I think there were over \$400 million worth of projects that were cut from that program, and one of them was the Deception Bay road widening.

Ten years ago when I was a local councillor there I was briefed by Main Roads with a concept plan. 'This is what we would be doing on this project.' Then when I got into parliament I said, 'Where are we with this project?' They said, 'Sorry, that was cut from our program by the Newman LNP government.' It has taken us years to get that back onto QTRIP. We now have \$1.5 million for early preliminary investigation and design work on that project, but it could have been done by now if it had not been cut from QTRIP by the Newman LNP government all those years ago. Can I just point out that, if you want projects in as part of the appropriations, you should look at what you may have done previously. We will not forget what you have done previously to cut projects from this area.

In terms of economic management it is very clear how well we are doing. I think the appropriation and the budget papers show this. Once again we do have the fastest growth rate of any mainland state. Australia's economic output contracted by 1.9 per cent in the September quarter, but in the same quarter Queensland's economy expanded by 1.8 per cent. We are looking at an annual economic growth rate of about 3¼ per cent. We are also exporting more than ever under the Palaszczuk government. The value of our exports in 2021 was \$79.2 billion. That is an increase in value of 26 per cent from 2020, so we have had a rise in the value of our exports.

It is very clear that the confidence of Queenslanders in their state is booming under the economic management of the Palaszczuk government. We know that we are leading the nation in consumer confidence. Retail sales are up 17 per cent on pre-COVID figures, household lending is up an amazing 91 per cent over the last 12 months and dwelling approvals are up 25 per cent on pre-pandemic levels.

It is very clear that Queenslanders are confident about our economy and our future under this government. The opposition has talked about consumer sentiment. Let's look at the figures. Money is being spent. Look at where the money is being spent. People are voting with their wallets. Household expenditure is up and people are buying houses. This budgetary and economic performance is no accident. It is not luck. It is due to the economic management of the Treasurer, the Premier and the Labor team on this side.

We always knew that a good health response to the pandemic builds a foundation for a good economic response. We have been saying that for two years and we have been proved right. We know now that our world-leading health response has allowed our economy to stay open until Queenslanders had that sufficient access to vaccinations. We got our health response right and our economy has soared.

Once again, those appropriation figures show the strength of our economic performance. I will just reiterate the numbers. Under this budget, revenues are higher for this year and deficit and debt are lower. Net debt is expected to be \$7.2 billion lower than was forecast in the budget. The deficit for 2021-22 is expected to be \$1.49 billion, which is less than half of the \$3.485 billion forecast at the budget. I point out that a return to surplus is still predicted in 2024-25.


Mr Millar: It won't happen.

Mr WHITING: The interjection that it will not happen is very interesting. It is going to be a long time in opposition for you people over there. Please feel free to keep throwing stones because you will never get the experience of setting a budget yourself.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Direct your comments through the chair, please, member for Bancroft.

Mr WHITING: What does good economic strength mean? It means ultimately at the end of the day more jobs for Queenslanders. We have heard that Queensland is leading Australia in job creation. We have heard that 48 per cent of all new jobs in this nation have happened right here in this state. We have also heard—and I love this statistic—that over 1,000 jobs each and every week have been created in Queensland since we came to power. That is a total of 376,800 new jobs that have been created under the economic management and direction of Labor.

I will also quickly thank everyone in the government who has been involved in the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. There have been 41,000 Queenslanders placed into work because of this program. That includes 2,560 people trained in my area, with 1,665 locals in my area into jobs under this program. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (12.12 pm): I rise to make a small contribution to the bills before the House, in particular the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2021. Firstly, I would like to remind members of a number of things that I have been calling for for a long time. One of those is the construction of the northern section of the second M1. I am referring to north of Shipper Drive. Unfortunately, sadly, there is currently only \$11 million in the budget for the planning of something in the order of 24 kilometres of the second M1. That \$11 million will not go anywhere near it. I think \$30 million was required for the first 16-kilometre stretch, and that planning still is not complete due to the incompetence of the government in managing the actual corridor itself.

Fast-tracking the upgrade and duplication of exit 49 is another area of concern. I will talk to that a little later. We need funding for the upgrade and duplication of exit 38. The business case has been in place since 2018. Here we are four years later and there is not one dollar allocated for any expenditure at exit 38, and that is a desperately needed upgrade.

We need a full upgrade of exit 45, not just a slip lane. We are currently having a slip lane resolved at exit 45. Somehow they are going to spend \$20 million doing it. We really do need \$130 million to fully upgrade exit 45. It is in desperate need. It is costing commuters and local residents many hours every week just being stuck at exit 45.

We need a bigger commitment to the investment for the northern Gold Coast hospital. I am told that \$10 million is needed to properly put the business case together to do the master plan on it. Sadly, this government committed \$3 million just before the 2020 election, with a big banner saying they were going to build the northern Gold Coast hospital. They are not going to do that with \$3 million, and they are still talking two years later about that same \$3 million and there is not a cracker extra in the budget to do anything about that.

We need the fast-tracking of the railway station at Pimpama. That was promised before the 2017 election and was meant to be delivered eventually in 2024. That has been pushed out for delivery in 2025. We desperately need that. The state seat of Coomera is the fastest growing region in

Queensland, and that is centred on Pimpama itself. We also need some funding to go towards a Police Citizens Youth Club for that fast-growing region. We have more than 20,000 young people going to school in the Coomera electorate, which is the highest number of any electorate in the state. We have the highest population, with 84,000 people, which is far and above any other electorate in the state.

We need more bus services between the Ormeau and Coomera railway stations. Bus services from Beenleigh to the Ormeau Railway Station are desperately needed. We need a regular bus service out to Jacobs Well. I note the Gold Coast City council put \$11 million on the table two years ago. We are still waiting on a response from the government in relation to matching that funding to enable that to happen. That could have happened in 2020-21. It could have happened in 2021-22. Clearly, it is not happening any time soon.

There is one big tick I can give the government, and I thank the Minister for Education for this. I did speak to her numerous times about it on behalf of the Cedar Creek school community. We are now going to see the Albert Hall at Cedar Creek State School fully waterproofed and fully completed, at a cost of something like \$350,000. I made the point to the minister at the time that, although she talked about a lot of other school halls being built, poor little Cedar Creek, with about 285 kids—and it is a great little school—was not getting any funding. That funding is there now and it is going to happen this year, which is wonderful news.

I said a moment ago that I would come back to talk about exit 49. I have to say that I am disappointed. When one asks respectful questions of the people in Transport and Main Roads, one expects respectful answers. Before I go into the question that I asked, I would like to talk about something that popped up on Facebook. The member for Greenslopes talked about his bikeways earlier, and well done and congratulations on getting the funding for those. This Facebook post said—

A lot of constituents have spoken to me about adding an off-ramp to the original Velobridge design so it links up with the PA bikeway.

I've now spoken to Transport Minister Mark Bailey and TMR. The good news is that they've committed to look at adding this missing link to the project.

Compare the pair. When I asked a very respectful question of Transport and Main Roads—and I will read it out in a moment—the minister's response was that the member for Coomera is 'nothing but a hindrance to the Palaszczuk government'. He suggested that it might be best for engineers to do the planning for projects. Compare the pair. It is okay for the member for Greenslopes to put his suggestions forward, but it is not okay for the member for Coomera to fight for his people, his community, and ask the same thing. Let me read part of the letter that I very respectfully asked a question in. I wrote—

Following ongoing concerns outlined to me by local residents who use the Yawalpah Road/Exit 49 area on a daily basis, and given the indications by TMR that the expected delivery of the completed project will be 2024, I ask that consideration be given to commence construction of the newly proposed south bound on ramp, off Yawalpah Road, as shown in the TMR drawings on the website.

I went on to say—

... I see this as a real option, that will reduce incidents as outlined above, as well as improve safety, improve network efficiency, improve traffic flow, reduce peak hour congestion and reduce interchange queueing.

The response I got from the minister was that I am 'nothing but a hindrance to the Palaszczuk government'. I will continue to hinder the Palaszczuk Labor government—if that is what it is referred to. I will continue to ask for the fast-tracking of projects. I will continue to ask for more money to be committed to the Coomera Connector, the second M1, north of Shipper Drive—far more than the \$11 million that is there now. There was \$20 million—sorry, \$30 million required to do the planning for the first section, so \$11 million is not going to go anywhere near it.

I will continue to call for exit 38 funding. Where on earth is it? It has been four years in the making. The business case has been in the minister's hands for four years, and there is not one dollar available for anything to do with exit 38.

I will leave my contribution there in the interests of time. I ask the minister to please try to be more respectful when local members, such as the member for Greenslopes and me, as the member for Coomera, ask very relevant questions on behalf of our communities. It is only fair that we get reasonable responses and reasonable consideration of those requests. Thank you.



Hon. MC BAILEY (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (12.20 pm): I rise to support the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2021 and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 2021. It is always a pleasure to follow the member for Coomera, although I note that his rewriting of history is often very creative. It is no wonder his margin has fallen from 23 per cent down to one per cent because

absolutely nothing was done about the M1 when he was in power. When he was a member of the Newman government, they had a massive majority—he could have done anything—not a single new dollar got onto the M1.

Mr Crandon: You have been there since 2015. Where is the money?

Mr BAILEY: There he goes. The whinging has started already. It is only 40 seconds in and the whinging has started already.

Mr Crandon: Minister, you were not—

Mr BAILEY: He can dish it out, but he cannot take it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Order! The member for Coomera will cease interjecting.

Mr BAILEY: I heard his speech in silence, for most of the time. The M1 was ignored when he was a member of the Newman government.

Mr CRANDON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I do believe the minister has misled the House in saying that he sat in silence. It is clear that he was not sitting in silence. I ask him to correct the record.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Miller, resume your seat.

Mr CRANDON: I ask him to correct the record.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Coomera, if you feel the House has been misled, there are appropriate courses for you to take. I ask you to write to the Speaker about that.

Mr BAILEY: I did say ‘most of the time’. The M1 was ignored by the Newman government for three years. Not a single new dollar got onto it. That is a fact. He can cry crocodile tears all he likes. The member for Coomera is—

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Coomera.

Mr BAILEY: It is interesting. His submission here in his speech today was all about the M1 and Pimpama station. The Cross River Rail project was cut by the LNP government under Campbell Newman. Nothing would have happened under the LNP because they only cut. They only cut.

Mr Crandon: Promises that—

Mr BAILEY: Listen to him.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Coomera, this is your last warning.

Mr BAILEY: One of the most ineffective MPs in this House is the member for Coomera, and his electors are onto him. One per cent is his margin after having 23 per cent.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Coomera!

Mr BAILEY: He has lost support—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hold on, Minister. Pause the clock. Member for Coomera, you are warned under the standing orders. Member for Miller, I draw you back to the bill, please.

Mr BAILEY: Let’s look at the economic data here. It is what Paul Keating would have called a ‘beautiful set of numbers’. Economic growth is at 6.1 per cent—a six in front of it—compared to the national economy growth of 3.9 per cent. Household consumption is up, 1½ times the national average. We are seeing the economy itself grow, 6.4 per cent larger than it was before the COVID pandemic. Australia is 0.1 per cent and we are at 6.4 per cent under the Palaszczuk Labor government.

There have been 376,800 jobs created since we were elected, more than 1,000 jobs per week. That is a beautiful set of numbers. We stand for jobs. We do not stand for cutting; we stand for jobs. Dwelling commencements are 40 per cent higher than they were before the pandemic, higher than the national increase. Household lending in Queensland has seen a 91 per cent growth over the last 12 months—91 per cent—much faster than the national average. Retail sales are up 17 per cent on pre-COVID times.

No wonder we are seeing massive levels of interstate migrants coming to Queensland because they know we are the place to be. We managed the pandemic, the best jurisdiction in the world. Securing of the games means infrastructure flow for the next 10 years. There is a lot of confidence in this state and this government because of the leadership of this Premier. The value of our exports is up

26 per cent to \$79.2 billion. Our tax settings still remain very competitive compared to others: the average Queenslander pays \$628 less than the average Australian and \$1,100 less than in New South Wales. That is where we are.

Those opposite somehow find some criticisms of those beautiful set of numbers, but what we see is strong economic performance by the Treasurer, by the Premier and by this government, not just this year but consistently over time.

We understood that managing the pandemic was an economic strategy as well as a health strategy from day one. We did not undermine it like the Leader of the Opposition calling our health response tantamount to putting a doona over your head and sucking your thumb—that sort of juvenile analysis by the Leader of the Opposition. We were not just saving lives; we were saving jobs in this state because we are effective economic managers, and the numbers do not lie. Those are clear numbers.

What would have happened with an LNP government with the pandemic? I dread to think, to be quite frank. I dread to think. We made the right decisions, we made the hard decisions, and Queenslanders are benefiting from it.

We have announced a range of stimulus packages to support the creation of jobs. The jobless rate in Queensland is 4.4 per cent—an extraordinary number. It spiked to 7.1 per cent when the LNP were in power because they cut, cut and cut. That is all they believed in. Ideology drove their government. They did not respond to the times. We saw unemployment surge in this state. It is down to 4.4 per cent under Labor.

We have seen 17,400 jobs created in January alone. Our state is doing the heavy lifting. Without our job creation, this country would be going backwards in terms of job creation. The confidence in this state is absolutely key to the national economy. Why? Because we have record investments in things like road and rail. There has been a \$27½ billion commitment over four years in the road and rail space, and a lot of that into regional Queensland: Bruce Highway upgrades, Flinders Highway upgrades, Townsville Ring Road, Cairns Southern Access, the North Coast railway line—

Mr Harper: Riverway Drive.

Mr BAILEY: Riverway Drive and Townsville Ring Road stage 5, of course. They are big commitments there. We are getting the Coomera Connector going after it was blocked by those opposite when they were in power. Gold Coast Light Rail—you will only get it under a state Labor government. You will never get it under the LNP. They did not do anything when they were in power. The Commonwealth Games would have been a disaster without the light rail doing a lot of the work, and it has been warmly embraced by those on the Gold Coast. Cross River Rail was cut by the Newman government and promised to be cut again. It was an essential part of our bid for our Olympics. The economic credibility of those opposite is wafer-thin.

We are seeing things like the Townsville Northern Access project with the Northern Access intersections upgrade. South of Cairns, we are seeing active transport. We are seeing \$1.7 billion go into safety initiatives. The regional economy is going along very well. We are seeing good migration heading to regional areas, not just South-East Queensland, which is very pleasing as the nature of work has started to change significantly in the last two years. Regional economies are benefiting from migration. That is a really positive and a really good thing.


Some 35,000 people moved to Queensland in 2020 and 85,000 more are expected by 2024. With the Olympics and the Paralympic Games on the horizon, the infrastructure task is significant and that is drawing people into this state. Right now we have more than 2,500 people working across 15 work sites on the Cross River Rail project which will transform how people move. We have our investments into building trains in Maryborough. I note that the assistant minister is here, the member for Maryborough. He has been such a strong advocate for Maryborough. The member for Coomera might want to have a look at the numbers for the member for Maryborough who was elected on 26 per cent of the vote but now gets 53 per cent of the primary vote. That is a member who is doing the work, who is getting the job done, who has the confidence of his people, not losing a 23 per cent margin down to one per cent. That is what being a good, hardworking MP is all about.

We do not sack workers like the previous government did. Some 14,000 workers—public servants—lost their jobs. We saw \$1.6 billion cut from the roads budget. We saw power prices surge to 43 per cent. Do honourable members remember that 43 per cent increase under the LNP government? In comparison, this year there has been a small one-off increase due to a number of issues, particularly the explosion at one of the generators, and we got our \$50 rebate which the Minister

for Energy has brought in to support people. For years and years before that we saw decreases in power prices because we invested in renewable energy and new technology. We understand that new economy. Under those opposite we saw prices increase by 43 per cent.

The record of this government is very strong in terms of the economy and social reform. The Leader of the Opposition's record of undermining the health response was economically reckless and irresponsible. He is someone on the record as calling Campbell Newman 'someone special'. People should listen to that with a chill down their spine. He voted against voluntary assisted dying; he voted against women having the right to choose. He is one of the most conservative leaders of the LNP since Bjelke-Petersen. People need to understand what that means. It means that he is not responsible when it comes to the economy.

If people look at our government, they will see we have an economic plan for recovery from the COVID pandemic. We are protecting Queenslanders and protecting their jobs. They know that; they know they have a Premier they can trust. She has stood up for this state against intimidation by the current incompetent and deceitful Prime Minister, Mr Morrison. People are onto him; I can tell honourable members that much. They know that the Premier will always stand up for Queensland and the Treasurer will always stand up for our economy. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (12.31 pm): I rise to speak on the appropriation bills and I will utilise the opportunity while the Minister for Transport and Main Roads is in the chamber to talk about the great need for passenger heavy rail on the Sunshine Coast from Beerwah to Caloundra, to the beautiful part of Kawana and through to Maroochydore.

Mr Bailey: Why didn't you build it?

Mr BLEIJIE: I will get to that in a minute.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Member for Miller.

Mr BLEIJIE: Over the years successful Labor governments had promised the CAMCOS corridor, and I think it was Paul Lucas who said that the CAMCOS rail corridor would be delivered by 2009. Of course, we have not got the rail corridor on the Sunshine Coast. With a population increase—

Mr Bailey: Why didn't you build it? You were in power. You were attorney-general.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Member for Miller, I have already warned you once. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. The minister asks: what are we doing in Kawana? We built a \$2 billion hospital for the people of the Sunshine Coast. We brought it forward by six months and we saved the taxpayers \$200 million. We have a beautiful hospital. In the short period of time we were in government, 2½ years, we also promised we would build the Mooloolah River interchange. If it had not been for the federal government committing half of the funding, the Mooloolah River interchange, the MRI—which is not even a federal road and does not connect to a federal road—would not be happening. It is a state road that connects to Kawana Way and then the motorway. It has nothing to do with the federal government, but they have provided half the funding. I say thanks to Andrew Wallace, the federal member, and Ted O'Brien, the federal member for Fairfax, because if it had not been for the federal government—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Miller, I ask you to put your mask back on and you are under a warning. I just remind you of that.

Mr BLEIJIE: If it had not been for Andrew Wallace, the member for Fisher, and Ted O'Brien, the member for Fairfax, the Mooloolah River interchange would not even be at the planning stage. The state government either does not have the funds or cannot be bothered to build it. It is only happening now thanks to the federal government. I thank the two federal members for that.

As I say to the minister, we need heavy passenger rail infrastructure. If the 2032 Olympics is going to give the Labor government the kick up the backside to make sure we have that rail infrastructure, so be it. I will take that any day of the week so we can finally get heavy passenger rail. I say to the minister while he is in the chamber that what we do not want is this stupid light rail plan that the Sunshine Coast Council have been dreaming and fantasising about. We do not want the light rail down Nicklin Way. It will have huge impacts on business.

I also take the opportunity while the minister is in the chamber to address the issue of Nicklin Way. The Department of Transport and Main Roads have recently put out a plan to upgrade the Currimundi to Wurtulla section of that road. The impact on small businesses is going to be so detrimental to those businesses that will lose their on-street car parking. We battled this years ago with

Erang Street. We won that fight. Now despite the fact they have had a terrible two years with COVID and they are trying to get back to normal, make a dollar and employ people in my local community, small businesses in that area have now been hit with a letter from the Department of Transport and Main Roads saying that the on-street car parks are going to go under this project.

I say to the minister—I plead with the minister—on behalf of the small business community in Currimundi right up to Wurtulla: do not proceed with this upgrade if the businesses are going to lose their on-street car parking. There are better ways to do things that can save these businesses their car parks. I guarantee to the minister and the government that, if businesses along that stretch of Nicklin Way lose their on-street car parking, those businesses will likely not survive. I will do everything I can as the local member for Kawana to protect those businesses because if they do not survive people will lose their jobs.

I return to the appropriation bills we are debating today, particularly with respect to additional funding for the department of youth justice. I suspect that a lot of this funding has gone to the Caloundra youth jail, which was planned and funded and put in the budget. The community was consulted and it was all happening until Christmas, when it was not happening. The member for Caloundra all of a sudden said, 'The community does not want it. We do not want the youth jail in Caloundra anymore.' I can imagine the conversation that the member for Caloundra had with the minister at that stage after the minister had stood in this place and defended the Palaszczuk Labor government's plan for the youth jail in Caloundra. All of a sudden she had it pulled out from under her because they want to save a marginal seat in Caloundra. That is what this is about.

The youth jail was going to be built to apparently protect people of the Sunshine Coast and make it safer for those people of the Sunshine Coast. Now they are saying—get this—now the government line—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr BLEIJIE: Before Christmas the official government line was that the Caloundra youth jail will make people safer—

Ms LAUGA: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I would ask that the member come back to the long title of the bills and concentrate on the appropriation bills. I ask that he be relevant.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. Resume your seat. This has been a wideranging debate and I specifically heard the member for Kawana talk about the appropriation bill in relation to this.

Mr BLEIJIE: It is section 3.2.2.1 of the committee report for the member for Keppel's reference. It is the department of youth justice if she needs the reference.

Before Christmas the official government line was the youth jail in Caloundra would protect the citizens of Caloundra and the Sunshine Coast and then after Christmas the Caloundra and Sunshine Coast communities would be better protected because they are not proceeding with the youth jail. It is clear that it is a political fix for the member for Caloundra because he is in a marginal seat. I can guarantee this: the people of the Sunshine Coast did not buy it; they will not buy it. They never supported the youth jail. The member for Caloundra may have had a last-minute road to Damascus moment, but the people of Caloundra have already made up their minds about the member for Caloundra. I can assure the House of that.

I turn now to section 3.2.2.5 of the report, which talks about additional funding for the borders. Some of those border policies were a terrible reflection of an uncaring and inhumane government. I raised the issue of young Lenny and of Grant from my electorate. People were on the verge of committing suicide because they could not get back into their home state. I will never let members of the Labor government forget that they were the ones who were causing so much mental health and anxiety for Queenslanders stuck over the border. I will never let them forget that.

The committee report also says at section 3.2.2.6 under Queensland Police Service there was \$10 million additional expenditure to ensure the health directives were abided with. We have spent \$10 million for our police men and women to go around and check people have their masks on. That is what was spent—\$10 million. I say to the government that I would rather the \$10 million be spent on additional police men and women in the electorate of Kawana because we have a huge crime issue. We have people whose homes are being broken into and their cars being stolen.

Government members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: They all interject now. They do not understand or realise the real issue of crime that exists across South-East Queensland and in my electorate at the moment. Every day I am getting reports of hooning. People are so fed up. I am calling on the government, particularly in relation to hooning, to invest in CCTV cameras and their ongoing maintenance and to locate them in hooning spots right around Kawana. Not only will that deter people from committing hooning activities but also when they do it we will be able to catch them and prosecute them so they can pay the full price under the law.

I call on the government to give the Kawana electorate more police and more resources. Let us target these hoons through the provision of CCTV cameras. I have written to the police minister to ensure we can better protect the citizens of the Sunshine Coast, particularly in Kawana. I thank the people who have raised these issues of hooning and crime which are happening in the Kawana electorate. I note that some government ministers were laughing and interjecting but crime is a real issue on the Sunshine Coast. I am not going to let the government off the hook for that.

I refer to the report on Appropriation Bill (No. 2). Section 3.2.2.2 relates to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the payouts for the flood victims. I would like to know how much the government spent on legal fees for Jackie Trad in current Supreme Court matters and CCC matters. This appropriation talks about funding for legal assistance. I want to know how much taxpayers' money the Labor government spent to protect Jackie Trad. If it is the case—and the Premier did not deny it this morning—that the Labor government have spent taxpayers' money for Trad to attempt to block a report that should be in the public interest then that is a disgrace. The Premier owes it to the people of Queensland to say whether Jackie Trad did get legal assistance and whether it was paid for by the taxpayers. I heard that Jackie Trad is 'lawyered up' and sending threatening documents to journalists in Queensland warning them not to talk about this matter. That is a disgrace.

I will not be bullied by the Attorney-General who this morning came in here asking why I raised these issues. I am not going to be bullied by the Attorney-General for raising important matters when someone has run off to a court to try to hide documents that should be in the public domain. I am not going to be bullied and intimidated by a Labor Attorney-General who says that I should not have raised these matters. If I had the chance to do what I did yesterday again, I would. The only way we can get transparency in this matter is to let the sunlight in. I say to the Attorney-General: stop bullying people and stop bullying whistleblowers who want to come into this place and protect the people of Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Under the provisions of the business program agreed by the House and the time allocated for consideration of the bills having expired, I will now put all remaining questions.

Question put—That the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) read a second time.

Question put—That the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Appropriation Bill (No. 2) read a second time.

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2)

Clauses 1 and 2 and schedule agreed to.

Appropriation Bill (No. 2)

Clauses 1 and 2 and schedule agreed to.

Third Reading (Cognate Debate)

Question put—That the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) read a third time.

Question put—That the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Appropriation Bill (No. 2) read a third time.

Long Title (Cognate Debate)

Question put—That the long title of the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 1 December 2021 (see p. 3877).

Second Reading



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (12.44 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the State Development and Regional Industries Committee for its careful consideration of the bill. The committee's report on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 was tabled on 11 February 2022. There were five recommendations. The first recommendation was that the bill be passed. I appreciate the committee's support for the bill. I table the government's response to the committee's report on the bill and I will speak to the committee's recommendations in more detail shortly.

Tabled paper: State Development and Regional Industries Committee: Report No. 17, 57th Parliament—Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, government response [\[184\]](#).

The Palaszczuk government is committed to delivering a healthcare system that supports the community. This bill updates health portfolio legislation to ensure it is operating effectively to support the health of Queenslanders. This bill is about ensuring Queensland's health legislation is keeping up with best practice so Queenslanders continue to receive efficient, world-class health care. The bill also amends the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to ensure essential community infrastructure such as satellite hospitals may be constructed efficiently.

The bill makes a number of amendments to the Mental Health Act 2016. The primary objective of the Mental Health Act is to improve and maintain the health and wellbeing of persons who have a mental illness. It is one of the most complex legislative frameworks in the health portfolio. This includes persons who do not have the capacity to consent to treatment and the treatment and care of persons who are diverted from the criminal justice system due to mental illness or intellectual disability. The act was introduced in 2016. A 2019 evaluation of the implementation of the act found that it was working well and that no significant changes were needed. However, there are always opportunities to improve and the bill aims to strengthen the rights of individuals with mental illness and enhance its alignment with the Human Rights Act 2019.

The bill will improve the process for approving electroconvulsive therapy, ECT, by providing additional safeguards to protect the rights of people who cannot give informed consent to ECT or who may be vulnerable in doing so. The bill will amend the test applied by the Mental Health Review Tribunal for approving the performance of ECT to a more rights based approach, in line with contemporary practice, by requiring the tribunal to have regard to the wishes and preferences of the prospective patient. The bill also inserts additional oversight for persons subject to treatment authorities to ensure they have given consent to ECT and for forensic patients who may be susceptible to believing they are required to consent to ECT as a requirement of their order.

The bill amends provisions in the act that regulate the transfer and transport of patients to and from interstate mental health services. These amendments provide a stronger rights based approach for patients requesting interstate transfer and will better support patients to participate in decisions about their potential transfer. The bill will also allow the Mental Health Review Tribunal to approve international transfers for a person who is subject to a forensic or treatment support order in the rare circumstances that this is required.

During consideration in detail I will be moving amendments to the act to support the Queensland government's role to provide essential health support to Norfolk Island under the Intergovernmental Agreement on State Service Delivery to Norfolk Island. Queensland Health is now providing clinical governance and coordination services relating to health care for the Norfolk Island community, including

mental health services. A technical issue has been identified with the interaction between the Queensland Mental Health Act and the Norfolk Island Mental Health Act 1996. The amendments will enable involuntary mental health patients to be transferred to Queensland for treatment which may be required for certain acute or complex matters. This is important because Norfolk Island may not always have the capacity or infrastructure to assist people who require acute or complex mental health care. The amendments will achieve this by allowing Norfolk Island mental health legislation to be prescribed as a corresponding law under the Queensland Mental Health Act. This will then be reflected in any amendment to the regulation.

The bill promotes better health outcomes by extending access to Queensland Health's public healthcare information system, the Viewer, to more allied health professionals. The bill amends the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 to enable a broader range of allied health professionals to have secure read-only access to the Viewer, with the relevant professions to be prescribed by regulation after commencement. Those of us who have been to hospital or supported someone at or after hospital know that it can be a stressful time, especially for emergencies, complex issues or repeat visits.

After hospital treatment, when a patient is visiting their allied health professional for follow-up care, they might be asked for specific information about their time in hospital and results. This is so the healthcare provider can make a professional judgement on how to give them the best possible care with access to accurate and up-to-date information like blood test results, medical imaging results, medications given and ongoing prescriptions. It is intended that audiologists, social workers, dietitians, speech pathologists, exercise physiologists, orthotists and prosthetists will be prescribed in the regulation to enable their access to the Viewer.

Hospital records will often contain sensitive and personal information and the privacy of this information is crucial. I note that allied health professionals with access to the Viewer will not have unfettered access to all records held in the system. Rather, searches can only be undertaken based on a set of unique patient identifiers to ensure that the patient is known to the allied health profession. All access to the Viewer is logged and regularly audited. Extending access to a range of allied health professionals will improve the continuity of care a person receives after they leave hospital and visit their allied health professional. Ultimately, this will promote better health outcomes for Queenslanders.

I will now briefly touch on some of the other amendments in this bill that will improve processes in the health portfolio. The bill will update the Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003 to reduce red tape for businesses with infection control licences such as body piercing services and tattoo parlours and increase flexibility for local governments that administer the legislation. The bill will amend the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and Criminal Code to enable students on clinical placement to assist with a termination under the supervision of a prescribed practitioner to ensure students can gain necessary experience. The bill makes a minor clarification to the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979 to provide that donated human milk is not human tissue that is prohibited from trade. Donated human milk is essential for treating vulnerable preterm infants.

Turning to the committee's report and recommendations on the bill, I acknowledge the work of the committee and the secretariat and thank the stakeholders who provided valuable feedback during the committee's inquiry. The committee has recommended that the bill be passed and I appreciate the committee's support for the bill. In relation to recommendation 2, the government supports recommendation 2 which requested that I provide detail on how instances of environmental nuisance relating to a ministerial infrastructure designation as exempted by the amendment to the Environmental Protection Act 1994 would be investigated and regulated. Whilst this is the portfolio responsibility of the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure, I am advised that the proposed amendments do not change the existing compliance and enforcement arrangements under the Planning Act 2016. Under the Planning Act, failure to comply with the requirement of an infrastructure designation may be a development offence. Administration and enforcement are the responsibility of local governments, reflecting their experience and expertise to investigate and regulate these matters.

The committee's third recommendation was for Queensland Health to examine enhancing the functionality of the Viewer in consultation with key stakeholders to allow individuals to have greater control over who can access specific information or categories of information. The Viewer does not currently enable individuals to selectively limit access to specific records or categories of healthcare information. However, there are options available for individuals who wish to generally limit access to their information. If a person does not want their health professional to have access to their public healthcare records, they can call 13HEALTH. Patients may opt out from all health professionals accessing their information or limit access to specific categories of health professionals.

I also reiterate the privacy safeguards I mentioned earlier which ensure allied health professionals are only able to access appropriate patient files. However, I acknowledge that some stakeholders considered that patients should have greater control over the information on the Viewer, including the ability to limit access to particular parts of their medical records. The government supports this recommendation. Queensland Health will examine the functionality of the Viewer to see whether changes could be made to give patients increased control over the information that is shared. This process will include consultation with clinicians and health consumers and will consider the technical feasibility and cost of any system changes.

The committee also recommended at recommendation 4 that Queensland Health deliver a comprehensive and accessible engagement campaign to inform the community about what health information is available on the Viewer and how they can control it and who can access it. The government supports this recommendation and Queensland Health will develop a consumer engagement strategy developed in consultation with Health Consumers Queensland to inform patients and the community about the changes to the Viewer. Health Consumers Queensland has significant experience in consumer engagement and communications between health services and consumers and its expertise will be invaluable in delivering information in a way that is accessible and connects with patients.

The committee's final recommendation, recommendation 5, is to clarify some details about the amendments to allow students on clinical placement to assist authorised health practitioners with terminations of pregnancy. These amendments are to ensure students can legally assist the healthcare professionals performing the procedure when they are on clinical placements where terminations of pregnancy may happen. The purpose of this is to provide students with appropriate learning opportunities before they become qualified health practitioners. Students, like registered health practitioners, can conscientiously object. Tertiary education providers are responsible for curriculum and qualification requirements for study. However, I can confirm that the bill does not make it compulsory for students to assist with or observe terminations of pregnancy to complete their qualifications.

Preventing students who conscientiously object from being able to fulfil clinical placement requirements would raise questions of compliance with the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief under the Human Rights Act. The point of the amendments is not to prevent completion of training; it is to enable opportunities for those who wish to take them. The committee inquired about alternative study options for students who express a conscientious objection. There is no shortage of clinical education options for students who do not wish to assist with termination of pregnancy. Students undertake clinical placements in numerous settings, including large hospitals that provide a diverse range of services.

I also confirm that students will be supported to express a conscientious objection to assisting. Queensland Health is working with higher education providers to encourage them to develop tailored material to support students. The conscientious objection process is well understood in healthcare settings, as the termination of pregnancy laws have been in place for several years now. There are many resources to support health practitioners to understand the process of conscientiously objecting and these will be updated to incorporate students. In practice, it is likely that students would be informed about the possibility of assisting with termination of pregnancy before they start a clinical placement. This means that they will have the option to conscientiously object well before a placement begins and be provided with alternative learning opportunities. Current and prospective students can be assured that their studies will not be limited on the basis of their conscientious objection.

As I have outlined, this bill makes wideranging amendments to health portfolio legislation. The amendments are diverse, but what they have in common is that they are designed to ensure high-quality health care, up-to-date practices and procedures and enhance human rights. I again thank the committee for its detailed consideration of the bill and the stakeholders who provided submissions to the committee's inquiry and engaged with the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Sitting suspended from 12.57 pm to 2.00 pm.



Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.00 pm): I rise today to make a contribution to the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. At the outset I will say that for the most part the bill is largely uncontroversial and some of the changes within are straightforward and are common sense. It is for this reason that the LNP will not be opposing this bill.

Today as we discuss the laws that govern our health system, I would like to pay tribute to my fellow nurses and other frontline workers. To my fellow nurses, you are the heroes who have supported us through the roughest surges in this rolling pandemic. To the frontline workers who go home after

12-hour shifts, or double shifts, dehydrated, nauseated and physically marked from wearing PPE to allow them to comfort and treat Queenslanders in our health system, I see you and I pay tribute. I understand how you feel when you have to zip up a body bag on your shift or watch a person suffocating to death from COVID, or the challenges of nursing a patient prone or feeling ribs breaking from doing CPR on someone's family member. I share the pain you feel when you have been punched in the face as you try to assess your patient or the anguish you feel when you have looked into a loved one's eyes or held them when they crumble as the doctor calls the time of death on their relative. I understand that you tell your family that your shift was fine, to spare them from what you saw that day.

For years nurses have been undervalued and no-one seemed to care. Now that the health system is on the brink of collapse everyone is concerned. Nurses are leaving the profession in record numbers, utterly fed up with being asked to do more with less while calling for higher staff-to-patient ratios in already crowded hospitals. I hope this government will consider nursing staff retention rates and working conditions as we move through and out of this pandemic.

I now turn to the bill. The bill amends health portfolio legislation as well as some pieces of legislation outside of the portfolio. It is quite a lengthy list, including the Ambulance Service Act 1991, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, the Mental Health Act 2016, the Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003, the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018, the Criminal Code Act 1899, the Radiation Safety Act 1999 and the Transplant and Anatomy Act 1979.

It is not my intention to talk to each of the changes which are being made across each piece of legislation. Instead I intend to focus my contribution on the parts of the bill the opposition sees as contentious. I want to start with the changes to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011. The bill will allow certain designated persons and prescribed health professionals to disclose confidential information to a person performing functions under the Mental Health Act 2016.

Secondly, the changes to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 enable more allied health professions to access the Viewer which forms part of the Queensland Health patient information system. The opposition supports in principle the increased access to the Viewer by allied health professionals. If we can arm our clinicians with more information about the patients they are treating then that is a good thing. With that increased level of visibility for clinicians should come improved patient outcomes and the opposition is supportive of that. In short, it should mean that a clinician can tailor their treatment based on the healthcare history of the patient and that is a good thing.

The health information of Queenslanders is very sensitive and accordingly it should be treated with respect. I acknowledge the submission made to the State Development and Regional Industries Committee by the office of the Integrity Commissioner and the Privacy Commissioner. Their submissions identified ongoing needs to strengthen privacy and security safeguards around health information technology systems. That is fair and reasonable feedback from important statutory bodies and any good government should always be looking to improve how that sensitive healthcare information is protected. Some suggestions for operational improvements to the Viewer were made in the submissions of the office of the Integrity Commissioner and the Privacy Commissioner.

The committee has made two particular recommendations about this part of the bill and they are as follows: that Queensland Health examine enhancing the functionality of the Viewer, in consultation with key stakeholders, so that an individual may have greater control over who can access specific information or categories of information; and that Queensland Health, in consultation with relevant providers, deliver a comprehensive and accessible engagement campaign to inform the community about what health information is available on the Viewer, who can access their health information and what options they have to control it. This is where the opposition will be watching very closely and this is why: when it comes to Labor governments, Queensland Health and IT projects, well, let us say it is a chequered history. Who could forget the electronic medical record rollout, the ieMR? The project blew out by close to \$300 million and it has been on ice for years. What about the \$70 million pathology system that was mothballed? Then there was the \$135 million purchasing system which blew up when it was turned on. The icing on the Queensland Health IT bungle cake is, of course—and no-one will forget—the Queensland Health payroll debacle: \$1.25 million gone forever. They have a chequered history indeed.

The Auditor-General also recently made some scathing findings about the low uptake of information systems in the *Improving access to specialist outpatient services* report in relation to the low uptake of the smart referral systems by GPs. The point is that this government has history of bungling IT projects and it is costing taxpayers billions of dollars with no real benefit to clinicians or the

community. If the government does go ahead with the expansion of the Viewer, the laws of probability suggest that there will be some form of cost blowout. It is not that the opposition disagrees with the idea of expanding the functionality of the Viewer, because we do not; we are concerned about the execution of the changes by the government because, as we all know, very rarely does it go to plan under the ALP. The opposition will be watching carefully.

I also want to speak about the changes to the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and the Criminal Code Act 1899. I listened to the contribution by the minister and I thank her. The changes will enable students registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law who are undertaking a clinical placement with a health service to assist in a termination of pregnancy. My views on pregnancy termination are well known inside this place and outside and I am not going to speak about those today, but I will speak about the practicalities of these changes.


I will start with what the committee recommended about these changes. The committee has recommended that the minister take the following action: make clear that it will not be compulsory for students to assist with or observe terminations of pregnancy in order to complete their qualifications; that there is no forced requirement for clinical students to assist or observe termination of pregnancy and that those with conscientious objections are appropriately supported; information be available on alternative study options for students who express a conscientious objection to assisting in a termination of pregnancy; and identify what measures will exist to ensure that students feel supported in exercising a conscientious objection. These are entirely reasonable recommendations and the opposition supports each of them. No clinician in training should be forced to partake in these procedures should they not wish to do so. This is an area of health care which is niche, which is sensitive and is unlike any other procedure. Should a training clinician object to their involvement in this type of procedure that should always be respected. Their wishes should be upheld and the appropriate support and protections should be in place.

I also want to use my contribution to briefly speak about the changes to the Environmental Protection Act 1994. The changes will provide that development or use of premises that cause environmental nuisance is not an offence under the Environmental Protection Act if it has been assessed and is regulated by a requirement of an infrastructure designation by the planning minister. Others will speak more on this, but I do want to share some concerns that I have.

The committee has recommended that the minister provide more detail on how instances of environmental nuisance relating to a ministerial infrastructure designation as exempted by the amendment would be investigated and regulated. That is fair too because this is quite an extraordinary power. The examples given to the committee by departmental officers during committee hearings make sense, but that does not take away from the fact that, if unchecked or taken advantage of, the changes could prove to be against community interests. The powers need to be used with the greatest of respect and should never be abused by any minister.

I know many think it is always adversarial in this place. It is the opposition's job to hold the government to account and I have and always will do just that. Everyone in this chamber knows I will never shy away from that. However, I also will not shy away from acknowledging changes to legislation that the government introduces that serve the common good.

The changes proposed in the bill to the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979 are good sensible changes. The bill proposes to exclude human milk from the definition of 'tissue' in the act to ensure that sick and preterm infants can be efficiently provided with donated human milk to prevent or treat serious health conditions. Looking after preemie babies is a tough gig but it is a rewarding one. The LNP hopes that these changes will make it simpler for staff to provide breastmilk to preemie babies and that is important. To round out my contribution, the LNP will not oppose the bill but we will be carefully watching some of the changes to ensure the government is acting appropriately.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (2.10 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the bill before the House and I do so as the chair of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee, which had the pleasure of examining the bill and preparing the report that members will be referring to. We were happy to help the Health and Environment Committee on this. We recommended that the bill be passed and we made some other minor recommendations that we think will aid with the implementation of the bill.

When examining the bill we found it heartening that the issue of the rights of Queenslanders was always close to the surface of the bill and the amendments contained within it. We found that the most time-consuming part of examining the bill related to the Viewer, which is the health record system of Queensland Health. We examined the proposal to extend access to the Viewer to a greater range of

health professionals and allied health professionals, to not only doctors and nurses but also dietitians, speech pathologists, audiologists and exercise physiologists. For example, an exercise physiologist will be able to see a patient's records before recommending a suitable rehabilitation program; they will be able to make sure that the patient has not suffered from previous injuries before recommending that program. There is a lot of value for patients when allied health practitioners are able to access that information.

Obviously expanding access to the Viewer to more people in the system means managing confidential information. That quite rightly raised matters of privacy protection amongst many of the people listed as stakeholders. After examining the matter and asking many questions of the witnesses, we were satisfied that the current system works well and that the amendments will work well. As I said, we spent a lot of time discovering the answers to our questions. For example, questions were raised about whether the Viewer would work better as an opt-in system, where the patient chooses whether they want the information recorded, or an opt-out model, which is the current model where you have to actively choose to opt out if you do not want your information recorded. At this point the Viewer is an opt-out system. We saw how it works, we agree with it and certainly that is echoed in our recommendations. We want people to understand that they can call 13HEALTH to opt out of that system if need be. More information will be coming from Queensland Health about that.

I make this point: I am a little uncomfortable using the term 'health consumers'. Obviously the word 'patients' is problematic as well. I will probably use the word 'patients' rather than the words 'health consumers'. We thought that patients or consumers could be better informed about the option of opting out and that patients should or may be able to control information that goes into the system. That is why we recommended that Queensland Health build an awareness campaign and better functionality so that people can opt out.

I hear what the member for Mudgeeraba says about IT systems. That relates not only to Queensland Health; it also relates to, for example, councils and other large organisations. IT is always an interesting beast. We always need to be vigilant in ensuring that new systems are value for money and that they do work. Having said that, we have seen how the Viewer works and it works well, so we are on a solid basis moving into the future. While on the issue of information, the committee looked at how information is managed. For example, searches made on the Viewer are recorded and there is an audit system or trail for people who access the Viewer, which was heartening to see. We also heard about the appropriate penalties that may be administered for breaching the confidentiality requirements for using the Viewer.

Another important aspect of the bill relates to the rights of Queenslanders when it comes to the operation of the Mental Health Act. The bill proposes changes to the Mental Health Act that cross a range of issues. For example, the Mental Health Court will not make a decision as to whether a person is of unsound mind when or if there is a dispute over a fact relied upon by an expert witness. In that case, the matter can be returned to the criminal courts to determine the facts. That is one of the changes proposed in the bill. It is a welcome and very understandable change. As we have heard, the bill proposes some welcome changes to improve the transfer process of mental health patients, whether that be interstate or overseas.

The committee spent a lot of time examining the proposed Mental Health Act changes that alter the process of approving ECT. We heard about the benefits of ECT, including a description of how it is a much better therapy than it was in previous years. The bill will improve the process for approving ECT, making sure that the patient's views are better taken into account. I refer members to page 18 of the report, which gives a great summary of adopting the rights approach as opposed to best interest. We asked Professor Allan about acting in a person's best interests. He said—

You have hit right at the heart of the debate ... One of things that is important to understand is that under the Human Rights Act we can no longer act in a person's best interest. That is considered to be too paternal. The Human Rights Act instructs us to take the person's interests, as stated there, into account.

...

We have all sat around and talked about it. I would probably say that personally I would have thought that a few years ago too—that is, doctors know best, get on with it, let us get it done, the person wants the treatment so let us just do it. The issue that I have realised is that we do need to ensure we are quite meticulous about our attention to human rights, because if we say that it is okay for a doctor to make a decision at one point then we might lose some focus on human rights at another point.

I think that sums up well the difference in approach that is embodied in this bill. I do recommend those changes to the Mental Health Act.

The committee wanted to be very clear when covering the minor amendment involving medical students and the termination of pregnancy. When examining the bill we were at pains to make sure that there was no confusion and no doubt about requirements for medical students to assist in the termination of a pregnancy. On a couple of occasions in testimony from department officials we clarified that it will not be compulsory for students to assist or observe and that they will not have to do that as part of their assessment or to graduate. I commend the Queensland Health staff for covering well the need to make sure that we accommodate the human rights of those who have a conscientious objection to such a procedure. I want to clarify that we took great pains to understand the nature of this amendment and I commend the committee for that, including the member for Bundaberg and other members who were quite insistent that we find out exactly what that clause means.

Lastly, another issue in this bill worthy of mention is that QAS staff are now covered by the same duty of confidentiality obligations as other employees of Queensland Health. They have the authority to disclose information about the patient in their care in the same way as other members of Queensland Health. Obviously, QAS personnel operated under their own act. Certainly, they now are brought together with members of Queensland Health and the boards in those terms. They are actually operating under the same system. Once again there will be no confusion about the obligations of confidentiality exercised by the members of the Queensland Ambulance Service.

I thank our secretariat for their work on this bill. Health bills are always really interesting. They are quite comprehensive and a lot of stakeholders gave us quite a lot of information to digest. I commend the members of the committee for the time they spent going through this. I point out that the committee's report was without reservations. We worked closely together. We wanted to make sure that we got this one right. The issues contained in this bill are very important for the ongoing health of all Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr McDONALD (Lockyer—LNP) (2.21 pm): I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Firstly, I thank our shadow minister for health, Ros Bates, for outlining the opposition's position on this bill. Of course we will not oppose the bill, but those articulated points she made I will reinforce in terms of our concerns. The chair just said that there was no statement of reservation on this bill. There was almost a statement of reservation, but I thank the committee for working together to outline some of the recommendations to make sure that our concerns were best appeased. Thanks also to the secretariat for the way in which they conducted their role in putting together this report and the inquiry. As we know, they work so hard and did a great job on this bill.

At the outset, I place on record my great thanks to all the health professionals out there for the wonderful work they have done on the front line, their hard work in the face of the pandemic, particularly in terms of the Gatton Health Service, the Laidley Health Service and the West Moreton Health Service that cover my area. I appreciate and say thanks to all those workers.

As I mentioned, the secretariat did a great job. We received 14 submissions to this bill and the committee put together five recommendations. I also thank my colleague the member for Burleigh for his hard work on this bill in terms of the recommendations. There are five recommendations. I will go through them in more detail shortly but, essentially, the first recommendation was that the bill be passed. The second relates to approvals and some really significant powers that the minister will have. The third and fourth relate to access to the Viewer, which is information about patient records. The fifth regards the termination of pregnancy. As I mentioned, there were 14 submissions on this bill, which amends nine pieces of legislation. I will not go through each of them but will focus on the importance of the ones about which we have a great deal of concern.

The first one relates to the ambulance act and the amendments around privacy information. That comes about because of the movement of the Queensland Ambulance Service into Health. We know there are a number of problems across Queensland. We really appreciate the ambulance officers out there doing a great job. I know that our community share their frustration in terms of having to sit on ramps, but this example of privacy information and changes to the act is just a very small part of a change in the cultural and administrative arrangements of ambulance officers. Again, I thank them for their hard work.

The second recommendation that the committee made was that the minister provide more detail on how instances of environmental nuisance relating to the minister's infrastructure designation as exempted by the amendment would be investigated and regulated. This is quite an extraordinary power. It is fair to place on record this recommendation because, to me, we want to make sure that there is no

slippage, that it does not get applied to other matters recklessly or that it is not taken advantage of. This recommendation really bypasses the role of local governments through a planning process. I understand the need for that, but communities certainly should have a say.

The next matter I will move to relates to access to the Viewer. This is the patient records system that has been in use for some time. I am informed that the Viewer will be made available to allied health professionals, which make sense. If you are going to receive care, your health professionals should get the best information. The committee recommended that Queensland Health, in consultation with the relevant providers, deliver a comprehensive and accessible engagement campaign to inform the community about what health information is available.


The committee took a long time and received some really good information from the department because of our concerns with regards to the Viewer. Our committee had mixed opinions with regards to the opt-in and opt-out options. That was all on the public record. I thank the department for taking us through that process. I remember one of the questions we asked the department was, 'Is there any other models across the country or internationally that you can give us regarding using the opt-in situation?' They actually could not give us one. It makes sense that people's information is available to be exchanged with health professionals. Of course, they can call 13HEALTH to ask to opt out of that. Importantly though, as per the recommendations, we have asked the department to really look at the functionality of that so that a patient could ask for mental health records or things that might not be relevant to be restricted from access by allied health professionals. Obviously, if it is a matter of going to a physio—and you have some problems with your bones and muscles—you would be quite happy to see that information released to the allied health professionals.

One concern we have—as our shadow minister for health articulated—is that there has been a long line of failures in IT in Health. We do not want the Viewer to be another one of those. These are not little sums of money; these total about \$1.5 billion of cost to the taxpayers of Queensland. That is quite extraordinary. Of course, the biggest part of that came from the health payroll debacle of \$1.2 billion. That is money that could well be spent on a new hospital for the Lockyer Valley for instance. As I said, we want to make sure that there is not another cost blowout of any magnitude. I appreciate the committee's work in that regard.

A couple of other points of real tension that the committee talked about involved the issue of mental health. A few years ago, you would not have been able to tell me any different that a person certainly has rights but, if they are in a mental health institution, many of those rights are placed in the doctors and nurses caring for them. I refer to the new legislation or the changes in regards to how the Mental Health Court deals with some of these disputes and appeals. When you ask yourself the question about a mental health patient's capacity to understand, let alone comprehend, the decision of what is in their best interest, shifting that onus from their health professionals to the patient is a really complicated situation. It is one that I can only see being a lawyers picnic in the wrong hands of challenging health professionals' and patients' rights. I really hope that that does not happen.

The other point of tension in regards to this bill concerned the Termination of Pregnancy Act, the Criminal Code and enabling students registered under the health practitioners regulation who are undertaking clinical placement to be involved in the termination of pregnancy. We went to great lengths to question the department and then followed up with the registered training organisations regarding requirements for these students. I am satisfied that those who conscientiously object to the termination of pregnancy will be catered for in this legislation. Certainly, that is why we sought assurance that those students have that ability to conscientiously object regarding their studies. I am assured that their studies would not be affected or that it is not a prerequisite or requirement for the students to be able to do that.

In closing, I thank committee members for the work we have done on this bill. The bill has some quite sensible amendments, but there are some wide-reaching powers that we will be keeping an eye on. We want to make sure that, in the best interests of Queenslanders and the best service delivery, our community has the best information available to allied health professionals and also that the abuses of process through local government are not sidetracked through those additional powers given to the minister. I hope the government keeps its word on these changes. If it does not we will hold them to account.

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure) (2.30 pm): I am pleased to speak today in support of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. Part 2, division 3 of the bill amends the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to include a reference to ministerial infrastructure designations in schedule 1 of that act.

Queensland is the place to be. Following our strong health response to the pandemic, we have seen a rush on our state from people wanting to take advantage of our booming economy and our wonderful lifestyle. We have had more interstate migration than other states or territories, with 30,000 people relocating to Queensland in 2020 alone.

Thanks to the sacrifices made by so many Queenslanders, we have an unprecedented head start on economic recovery and we are working to take advantage of that head start and create jobs for Queenslanders. Our COVID-19 economic recovery plan is working, with more Queenslanders in jobs now than ever before. Just last week the Treasurer announced that Queensland had created 17,400 jobs last month. Australia as a whole created just 12,900 jobs in net terms. That means that without Queensland Australia would have gone backwards. Now that we are on our way to becoming an Olympic city, that will mean thousands more jobs in the lead-up to 2032 and beyond, making Queensland even more desirable.

We are investing in infrastructure that unlocks development, generates construction activity and creates long-term employment throughout the state. If we are going to power on with our economic recovery, we are going to need sensible planning to make sure development is keeping up with the boom. We want to make sure we seize the opportunity this influx will create to increase social infrastructure and make our cities and regions even more livable.

Ministerial infrastructure designations are an important tool under the Planning Act 2016 to facilitate the development of critical infrastructure. They allow us to streamline the development processes for facilities like schools, hospitals and police stations. They are also a vital planning tool for surges in population growth, as assessment time frames for a ministerial infrastructure designation are normally around four to five months whereas a typical development assessment process could take up to 12 months.

A proposed ministerial infrastructure designation is subject to careful evaluation by the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, including consideration of relevant planning documents. A ministerial infrastructure designation can only be made if, as the planning minister, I consider that it addresses community expectations for the efficient and timely supply of the infrastructure. Before making a designation, I must also be satisfied that there has been adequate assessment and consultation undertaken.

The minister's guidelines and rules, which is a statutory instrument under the Planning Act, require substantial public notification of proposed designations, including through publication of public notices, posting signs on the premises and direct notification of key stakeholders including the immediately surrounding community. Consultation is also undertaken with affected landowners and the relevant local government.

A designation may include requirements which act in a similar way to conditions of a development approval. A requirement may regulate the physical form of the development such as design, scale or height. It can also regulate the resulting ongoing use—for example, through limiting hours of operation or imposing environmental standards. This ensures that any environmental or other issues identified in assessing a proposed designation can be adequately addressed through enforceable limitations on the development and use of the infrastructure.

The Environmental Protection Act regulates environmental harm. Environmental nuisance is the lowest level of environmental harm and includes nuisance caused by contaminants such as dust and noise. The regulation of nuisance is substantially devolved to local governments. For example, the Environmental Protection Act establishes default noise standards but allows local government to vary these through a local law. Contravening a noise standard is an offence carrying a penalty of up to 1,665 penalty units.

However, the Environmental Protection Act schedule 1 prescribes a number of instances of nuisance which are not an offence under the Environmental Protection Act, including nuisance regulated under other laws. This reflects the expectation that the regulation of nuisance under those laws allows for a more tailored and fit-for-purpose approach than the general noise standards and offence provisions under the Environmental Protection Act. Among the matters already included under schedule 1 are development approvals and exemption certificates under the Planning Act. However, schedule 1 has so far excluded ministerial infrastructure designations, despite the ability to explicitly evaluate and deal with nuisance impacts under designations in the ways I have already described.


The proposed amendment to the Environmental Protection Act addresses this by including a reference to ministerial infrastructure designations in schedule 1. Under the amendment, the existence of a ministerial infrastructure designation does not of itself displace the offence provisions of the

Environmental Protection Act. For this to occur, the designation must contain a requirement that explicitly regulates the nuisance. This is similar to the existing exemptions for development approvals under schedule 1 and is designed to ensure that the impacts of the nuisance have been specifically evaluated and addressed through a requirement of the designation.

I also emphasise that the use of this provision, in the same manner as the corresponding power is used in respect of development applications, is likely to be used as an exception rather than be invoked on a regular basis. In situations where this new provision may be considered, it would be expected that the proposed ministerial infrastructure designation would be supported by relevant technical information and studies to justify alternative requirements in respect of managing environmental nuisance. These details would be made available during the public consultation on the proposed ministerial infrastructure designation, ensuring stakeholders are aware of the proposal. This will ensure transparency and appropriate input in the exception where this new provision may be used.

I note that the report of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee into the bill recommends that the minister provide detail about how instances of environmental nuisance relating to a ministerial infrastructure designation as exempted by the amendment would be investigated and regulated. Under the Planning Act, failure to comply with requirements under a designation is a serious offence, attracting a penalty of up to 4,500 penalty units. This is more severe than the penalties of between 600 penalty units and 1,665 units under the Environmental Protection Act for causing environmental nuisance.

The Planning Act clearly prescribe enforcement authorities in relation to a range of offences. For failure to comply with an infrastructure designation, the enforcement authority is the relevant local government. This reflects the significant experience and expertise most local governments have in investigating and prosecuting offences under the Planning Act, particularly in relation to development approvals. It is particularly relevant to nuisance as local governments already have significant responsibilities, expertise and experience in this area under the Environmental Protection Act. Local governments are already afforded significant powers of investigation under the Local Government Act 2009 which can be used to investigate and prosecute offences, and they are best placed to respond in a timely way if noise related nuisance occurs. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (2.39 pm): I rise to make a relatively brief contribution to the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Having been a part of that committee, I thank the committee staff for their assistance in trying to do our best to review elements of this bill. I am going to go through a couple of recommendations made by the committee and add some commentary on behalf of the KAP.

The amendments to the Ambulance Service Act drew some attention. In the QAS and other emergency services, including the police, when people have to retire at 60 we often lose good people. Even if they are non-operational, they can add value. We have that experience in western and remote areas. Often something is better than nothing. Even people who do not have to retire have a desire to. We have a need out there. I think that could offer a lot of benefits to remote areas in the Traeger electorate and in other regional areas of Queensland.


The amendments to the Mental Health Act drew some attention. I am on the Mental Health Select Committee at the moment, and it turns the spotlight on a wide variety of issues in that space. Listening to the member for Lockyer, I express the same sentiment of concern with the application. We would recommend that we proceed with caution in the operation of the legislation.

The amendments I felt most strongly about are those that relate to the Termination of Pregnancy Act. The KAP has made its strong philosophical position on this issue very clear. We consider ourselves uncompromising when it comes to anything to do with this issue. The committee has recommended that the minister provide more detail. Conscientious objection is the issue as we see it—that is, the objection for reasons of conscience to comply with that particular requirement. That is the issue we see that is invoked here with students being forced to operate. I would almost go so far as to say that we find it abhorrent that students would be forced into doing that. That raises all kinds of issues. We desperately want students to get into medicine. If it does not suit them to do that through their training, that creates a problem. Like I said, we have a strong philosophical opposition to anything of the sort.

Even if the minister gave an explanation that was satisfactory to many, I would say that the government has shown its true colours on this issue. When the whole abortion debate was going on in parliament, it was made very clear by the government—whether it was in public hospitals or private hospitals—that there was no latitude allowed on this issue. I expect that the same sort of attitude would apply to students when they are doing their training. There is zero trust from our end on there being

enough latitude provided to students who want to choose to not participate in this sort of activity. That is a strong point for us and we will be seeking to vote against it in the passage of the bill. I want to put on record our strong objection to that.

The rest of the activity in this omnibus bill did not raise any concern. It seems to effectively address some issues that are there and we are likely to support it.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (2.44 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020, which was introduced to this parliament by the Minister for Health on 1 December. I also support the minister's proposed amendments. As detailed in report No. 17 of the 57th Queensland Parliament tabled earlier this month, the State Development and Regional Industries Committee, the committee on which I serve, recommended that the bill be passed. The committee also made a number of recommendations.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions made by my fellow committee members: the chair, the member for Bancroft, as well as the members for Lockyer, Bundaberg, Burleigh and Traeger. I would also like to acknowledge the support provided by the committee secretariat, led by Stephanie Galbraith, as well as submitters and Hansard.

Since being elected to state parliament in 2015 I have been pleased to see the Palaszczuk government introduce a wide range of reformist and groundbreaking legislation. This includes the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021, the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and the Criminal Law (Historical Homosexual Convictions Expungement) Act 2017. The reformist legislation also includes updating existing legislation and regulations when required. This is what this bill does.

The acts that will be amended if this bill is passed by the parliament include the Ambulance Service Act 1991, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, the Mental Health Act 2016, the Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearances Services) Act 2003, the Radiation Safety Act 1999, the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018, the Criminal Code of Conduct Act 1889 and the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979.

The amendments to the Ambulance Service Act 1991 align disclosure of confidential information requirements for QAS employees, authorise a designated officer to disclose confidential information and remove the age restriction on the appointment of the commissioner. The committee was satisfied that the proposed amendments to the Ambulance Service Act 1991 are reasonable and fit for purpose.

The amendments to the Environmental Protection Act provide an exclusion to environmental nuisance limits for infrastructure designations. The committee called for submissions from the relevant stakeholders including the local government sector and industry representatives, but no submissions were received. The committee is satisfied that the proposed amendments to the Environmental Protection Act are reasonable and fit for purpose, but the committee recommends that the minister during the second reading debate provide details on how instances of environmental nuisance relating to a ministerial infrastructure designation as exempted by the amendment would be investigated and regulated.

The amendments to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 include extending access to the Viewer to allied health professionals. The Viewer enables continuity of care when transferring patients from acute care to community care. Submissions were received by the Office of the Information Commissioner, the Queensland Human Rights Commission and the Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health.

Several inquiry participants commented on the need for greater patient control of the information on the Viewer. The committee therefore made two recommendations regarding the Viewer. The committee acknowledges stakeholder views on a patient's right to privacy and an expectation to have greater control over their private information. The committee welcomes the advice from Queensland Health around the tried and tested safeguards in place to protect a patient's privacy.

Therefore, the committee recommends Queensland Health examine enhancing the functionality of the Viewer in consultation with key stakeholders so that an individual may have greater control over who can access information and also the categories of information that are kept. As well, the committee recommends that Queensland Health, in consultation with the relevant providers, deliver a comprehensive and accessible engagement campaign to inform the community about what health information is available on the Viewer, who can access the health information and what options they have to control it.

The amendments to the Mental Health Act 2016 detailed in the bill will provide and maintain the health and wellbeing of persons who have a mental illness who do not have the capacity to consent to treatment. It will enable persons to be diverted from the criminal justice system if found to have been of

unsound mind or unfit to stand trial at the time of committing an unlawful act and protects the community if persons diverted from the criminal justice system may be at risk of harming others. The bill provides key amendments relating to Mental Health Court matters. In my former life as a lawyer I regularly represented defendants in the Magistrates Court. Often the defendant's mental capacity was at issue and the Mental Health Court played a key role in this regard. I am pleased that the committee is satisfied the proposed amendments to the Mental Health Act are reasonable and fit for purpose.

The bill also amends the Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003. This act regulates personal appearance service industries in Queensland to minimise the risk of infection that may result from the provision of hairdressing, beauty therapy and skin penetration services. These are collectively referred to as personal appearances services. The policy objectives of the bill are to provide greater flexibility in the licensing arrangements of higher risk personal appearance services as regulated by local government. The committee was satisfied that the amendments were fair and reasonable.

With regard to the amendments to the Radiation Safety Act 1999, a person or corporation that applies for an act instrument such as a radiation possession licence must provide evidence of their identity or, for certain applications where the applicant is a corporation, a nominated person's identity. Currently the Radiation Safety Regulation 2021 must prescribe the type of identity documents that are accepted as evidence of the applicant's identity. The chief executive must consider the application and either grant or refuse the application. This creates an administrative and procedural burden because the regulation must be updated every time the department wishes to rely on a new or improved form of identification. The bill removes the requirement for identity documents to be prescribed by the Radiation Safety Regulation. The committee is satisfied that the amendments are fair and reasonable.

The bill amends the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and the Criminal Code of Conduct Act 1899. The Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 regulates the termination of pregnancy in Queensland. The act prescribes who may perform a termination and who may assist. Registered health practitioners who may assist include a medical practitioner, nurse, midwife, pharmacist, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner or other registered health practitioners. Currently, students are not permitted to assist in the performance of terminations, which limits the ability of students to learn or gain experience in performing terminations. The committee therefore recommends that the minister make it clear in the second reading speech that it will not be compulsory for students to assist with, or observe, terminations of pregnancy in order to complete their qualifications. There will be information on alternative study options for students who express a conscientious objection in relation to assisting in a termination of pregnancy and what measures will exist to ensure students feel supported in exercising a conscientious objection.

The bill also amends the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979, which prohibits the trading of human tissue to prevent the trafficking of human organs and tissue for transplantation. The current definition of 'tissue' includes human milk, which leads to uncertainty about the application of the act in relation to the legitimate use of human milk to assist vulnerable infants. Quite sensibly, the bill will exclude human milk from the definition of 'tissue' under the Transplantation and Anatomy Act to clarify that hospitals can use human milk to treat vulnerable infants.

Finally, the bill will make consequential amendments to the Corrective Services Act 2006 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to remove references to the Health Act 1937 and the Pest Management Act 2001. Both acts have been repealed. I commend the bill to the House. I also commend any amendments.



Mr HART (Burleigh—LNP) (2.54 pm): I rise to add to the debate on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. Speaking of health, can I congratulate all of the Queensland Health and allied health services that have kept us safe during COVID, especially those on the Gold Coast, who I think have been under a bit more stress than anyone else in Queensland. I would especially point out our ambulance officers and paramedics, because they have done a fantastic job under the circumstances.

The other members of the committee have pretty well outlined the majority of the things in the bill that I wanted to speak about, so I will limit my contribution to the amendments the committee made. Recommendation No. 1 was that the bill be passed. The opposition supports that, but I do have some reservations I would like to outline. Recommendation No. 2 states—

The committee recommends that the Minister, during the second reading debate, provide detail on how instances of environmental nuisance relating to Ministerial infrastructure designation as exempted by the amendment, would be investigated and regulated.

I noted that the health minister really was not able to articulate very well how that would be dealt with. I appreciate that she did attempt to and that she said the planning minister might add to that. I listened intently to the planning minister and, believe it or not, I am completely satisfied with what he had to say. Is everybody amazed by that? I am completely satisfied with what he had to say. Although he only got to his explanation in the last minute of his speech, I think he did explain the position quite well.

The committee had quite a bit of conversation about the Viewer and we did have some concerns about that. The report states, 'The Viewer is currently only accessible by health practitioners registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law,' but now it is going to be extended to other non-registered health practitioners who will be designated under regulation. It raises a concern with me every time this government extends something under a regulation because the parliament does not have complete oversight of that unless somebody picks it up when the regulation is done. The regulation applies straightaway and it sometimes takes the parliament weeks and months to look at those regulations and possibly move to disallow them.

The committee had two recommendations around the Viewer. One was that the department have a look at the functionality of the Viewer and maybe give some people the opportunity to pick and choose exactly who has access to their particular information. We thought about a few examples which we discussed with the department. As the shadow minister has outlined, this government is not very good with IT programs, so I will not be holding my breath to see whether this functionality comes into place. I doubt whether the government has enough money to spend on IT to fix this problem, but we will see. One of my concerns is that, if this applies to some regulated allied health professionals, they may have access to information that they really should not be concerned about. I understand that this is audited and regulated and there are heavy penalties involved for people who abuse the system, but nevertheless I am a little bit concerned about how that may go.

I am sorry to see the health minister go, because I was going to praise her in a minute as well. Maybe someone can pass it on to her later.

Recommendation No. 4 was that there be a comprehensive engagement campaign to tell people how the Viewer works. The department produced a flyer that they said would be the education program. I hope that is not all it is going to be because, quite frankly, I think people are a little naive about this whole Viewer situation. At the moment, they can only opt out, whereas I would like to see the possibility of them opting in and opting in on various levels of the Viewer. The only thing they can do is ring 13HEALTH and opt out, and that means they opt out of the complete system which is not a good idea in my opinion.

The real contentious recommendation involves the termination of pregnancy. The committee's recommendation stated—

The committee recommends that for the avoidance of any doubt, the Minister make clear in the second reading speech:

- that it will not be compulsory for students to assist with or observe terminations of pregnancy in order to complete their qualifications.
- information on alternative study options for students who express a conscientious objection to assist in a termination of pregnancy
- what measures will exist to ensure students feel supported in exercising a conscientious objection.


Knock me down with a feather, but the Minister for Health fully explained that and I am completely satisfied with her explanation again. I hope that this trend continues on some level.

I now turn to the criticism of the government. It seems to be a growing trend that the government comes in here at the last minute with amendments to its legislation which could have been put to the committee for consideration. The amendment that is in place now revolves around Norfolk Island and what happens with the health situation out there. As we know, Queensland is taking over the health and education area that New South Wales had control over for the last number of years—I think it was seven years. This was negotiated back in June last year. The bill only came to the House in December, and the committee only had the Christmas period to consider it and report on it. I do not see why the government could not have given those amendments as part of the bill so the committee could have considered them.

There is nothing contentious in the amendments, mind you. We only got those amendments just over an hour ago, and I have had a look at them. I do not see anything contentious in there, but I think it is worth raising that the government seems to do this more and more. We are seeing these last-minute amendments put forward and then the opposition and crossbench do not have the time to fully consider them. Those items have not been ventilated in public, and people who are concerned with these bills

have not had the chance to make either a written submission or a verbal submission to the committee for consideration and then we cannot offer any amendment to that at the last minute. I think the government is doing this deliberately in some instances to sideline the opposition and to sneak amendments through—not in this case, but in other cases.

I highlight that to the House and say that we need to be particularly careful that this is not an increasing trend we see with the government. Also, we need to be careful that the government does not use regulation as an increasing trend to avoid scrutiny of a full bill in the parliament and the committee system. The committee system has been praised by the government over recent weeks. I differ in my opinion of how the committee system works. It is, after all, controlled and chaired usually by a Labor member and they control the numbers. Every committee in this House is controlled by the government, so the government outcomes are the ones that win every time, regardless of what the opposition and crossbench think. I think we need to be careful of that.

 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (3.04 pm): I rise to contribute to the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. I begin by acknowledging the health professionals in the Bundaberg region and across the greater Wide Bay region, especially over the Christmas and new year period, where we saw up to 600 tests each day at our Bundaberg Hospital. That obviously placed a strain on our health staff, but they carried through with professionalism. We very much appreciate the work that all of our health professionals do across Queensland.

This bill is a very wide-ranging bill that has a lot of amendments across different acts. I will focus my contribution in the debate on only a few—the Mental Health Review Tribunal and electroconvulsive therapy, the Termination of Pregnancy Act and I may touch a bit on protection orders of individuals deemed unfit for trial.

I think it is important to have on the record exactly what electroconvulsive therapy is, and I will use the Queensland Health fact sheet for this. It states—

Electroconvulsive therapy is the application of an electric current to specific areas of the head to produce a generalised seizure for the treatment of a mental illness. The seizure is modified by general anaesthesia and the administration of a muscle-relaxing agent.

It was wonderful to have Associate Professor John Allan at the hearing to provide a bit more detail about what the general public consider ECT to be. We think about its pop culture record and what we have seen in movies and on TV, but it is a much more refined and scientific treatment. There is a lot more caring for patients who undertake this. It is very much a last resort treatment. When medication does not seem to be a solution for a patient, this is a last resort in an emergency situation. It is a regulated treatment. There are provisions for when electroconvulsive therapy can be undertaken. The fact sheet states—

Electroconvulsive therapy can only be undertaken:

- where the patient is an adult—with the patient's informed consent
- where the patient is an adult who cannot give informed consent—with the approval of the Mental Health Review Tribunal
- where the patient is a minor—with the approval of the Tribunal, or
- in emergency circumstances.

For patients with the capacity to provide informed consent, they have the protection given by their own right to choose the treatment or to say no to ECT. The crux of these amendments comes down to two key phrases—that is, 'informed consent' and 'best interests'. It is about providing better protections for patients. Currently, that informed consent does not have to be reviewed by the Mental Health Review Tribunal. Amendments proposed will install future safeguards to ensure that the tribunal is satisfied that the patient understands the treatment following an appropriate level of information being provided. That is important because it is one thing to agree to a treatment and it is another thing to understand what the treatment will do and the manner in which it is performed by practitioners. For patients who are unable to provide informed consent to general treatment, subsequently they are placed on a Mental Health Court order or treatment authority. This amendment becomes critical to not only their treatment but their human rights as outlined in the Human Rights Act 2019.

As it stands, if a patient is on a treatment authority because they are not able to provide informed consent to general treatments, the practitioner must seek approval from the Mental Health Review Tribunal to treat the patient with electroconvulsive therapy. The tribunal assesses the patient against the criteria, with a key element considered being the 'best interests'—and 'best interests' is the phrase that is written in the legislation at section 509 of the Mental Health Act 2016. This is the great ethical debate that has brought about the amendment.

As I mentioned, ECT is a regulated treatment, not just a general treatment. Patients find themselves on a treatment authority when they are determined not to have capacity to provide informed consent to required general treatment—thus that treatment becomes involuntary. However, the test for regulated treatments, such as ECT, is a time specific test for capacity and therefore is distinct from the test for capacity for generalised involuntary treatment orders under a treatment authority. This distinct testing, in correlation with the act recognising that capacity during a treatment authority can actually fluctuate, is the catalyst for this amendment.

The safeguards for this amendment come through the Mental Health Review Tribunal being satisfied that a patient on a treatment authority or Mental Health Court imposed forensic order has been assessed for capacity at the time so that they can be provided with the information to give them an ability to have informed consent pending the capacity. An additional safeguard is that the tribunal must respect the patient. If in that time of that test the tribunal believes there is informed consent and the capacity for informed consent, then the tribunal must respect if the patient chooses not to have electroconvulsive therapy.

I will move onto the termination of pregnancy amendments. These amendments will allow students registered under the health practitioner regulation national law and on the clinical placement to assist with terminations under the supervision of a medical practitioner or other prescribed practitioner lawfully assisting the student's primary clinical supervisor.

There were many questions raised during the public hearing, and they were very fair questions, from myself, from the member for Ipswich West and also the member for Burleigh. Firstly, my question to the department was in regards to whether this covered both medical and surgical forms of termination of pregnancy. The member for Ipswich West sought clarity as to the role in surgical termination by students to the effect: would they be using instruments and participating in the active performance of surgery? Personally, if it came down to the health authority saying that that was appropriate, then I would support that. However, as we found out through a further line of questioning, that is not what will happen here with these amendments. I will refer to the director-general's response around what is a performance of a student in terms of this amendment.

The director-general, in the questions on notice response, said that—

Students will not be physically involved in a termination procedure. At no point would a student be asked to hold or use an instrument or assist in the performance of a termination. A student would observe the process. Typically there is a provider and an assistant involved in a surgical termination. A student would be in the theatre observing. In the case of a medical termination, this would again be the clinician involved and the student would be observing the process.

I note that the minister has already addressed that in her second reading speech, and the committee thanks her for that.

Conscientious objection is a very important part of this amendment as students need to have the rights that qualified health practitioners have, which is to have that conscientious objection there. It was important—and the member for Burleigh raised this during the hearing and it was very fair—to make sure that there was an understanding that should a student choose to enact that conscientious objection, it would not have any bearing on their qualification and becoming a registered health practitioner. As I mentioned, the minister has already addressed that. A conscientious objection to a termination of pregnancy will have no impact on a health practitioner becoming fully qualified and registered.

In the time I have left, I will touch on the protection orders for individuals who are deemed unfit for trial. As it stands currently, if a person is alleged to have committed a crime and is charged with a crime, they may, depending on their mental health status, be deemed unfit for trial through the Mental Health Court. When that occurs, they can be put onto a treatment authority—a forensic order—which, based on the individual case, you may well find the person on the order who effectively becomes a patient is either treated in community or could be treated in a health facility.

I think there is room for a further discussion—this was a little bit outside the committee's final scope—as to: is it fair in Queensland that someone is on that order and may be put into a mental health facility for a longer time than what the maximum sentence for the alleged crime could be? I think this is worth a discussion, and it is worth a discussion at another time, but the person is only on that order because of the alleged crime which, because they are deemed unfit for trial due to their mental health status, cannot prove either guilt or innocence. I think it is a fair question to ask: should we be able to put someone on a long-term health order that is longer than the potential maximum sentence for their alleged crime? I support this bill.



Dr MacMAHON (South Brisbane—Grn) (3.14 pm): We always get really excited when we see a bill that has ‘health’ in it. We have a looming health crisis. We have had so many healthcare workers getting in touch with us to say how stretched our healthcare system is, and there has never been more urgency to fund the system to do its work. As the Queensland Greens health spokesperson, I heard from stakeholders across the state with feedback on the exposure draft for this bill. Naturally, the government does not extend us the same courtesy, so we had to wait for it to hit parliament. Was it worth the wait? This bill does not really touch funding for our healthcare system to take care of Queenslanders. Members may remember the big bank levy that I introduced last year was promptly knocked off when we tried to introduce the idea that we should fully fund our healthcare system.

There are a few features of this bill that I would like to shine some light on today. Interestingly, in a bill about health, this bill also amends the Environmental Protection Act to provide an exemption for developments and uses of premises that cause environmental nuisance. Basically, under these changes, they would not be an offence under environmental protection legislation if they have been assessed and regulated under a ministerial infrastructure designation, or an MID.

Why is this? I guess the government does not think that there are enough carve-outs in the MID process already. MIDs are a key focus of reform for the Queensland Greens because our planning system is broken and we want to put people back at the centre, not developers.

I know in the past MIDs were exclusively for government bodies to build things like schools, fire stations, arts and sports facilities, but now private entities can apply to build things like aged-care centres, private hospitals and for-profit facilities. MIDs remove these developments from normal local government assessment processes and creates a less rigorous assessment process.

The applications do not have to comply with local planning codes and requirements, the approval time frames are shorter, there is no application fee, and infrastructure charges which are the funds that our councils need to provide crucial local infrastructure may not apply. Applications do not need to include detailed plans. There are no rights of appeal once a decision has been made.

One consultancy described MIDs as ‘planning gold’—no longer bestowed only on the public sector entities and infrastructure designation is an opportunity to designate a premises for the development of essential infrastructure and services faster, at lower cost, and without the risk of appeal. Sounds great for a developer, does it not?

The Deputy Premier talked about MIDs facilitating critical infrastructure, but I think there are some serious questions about whether private, for-profit entities should be able to access this kind of fast-tracked development approval. On top of a less rigorous assessment process, we now have proposed laws for less rigorous environmental standards for MIDs.

MIDs are just one loophole in the Swiss cheese that is Queensland’s planning laws that puts property developers, private hospitals and for-profit organisations ahead of community need. In my electorate in South Brisbane, we have private entities being ushered through under MIDs, while local schools, our most critical infrastructure you could say, have been crying out for new facilities and upgrades, and have been ignored.

As a minimum, we want to see MIDs reformed so they do not undercut local planning rules. They should require the same standard of detail, community consultation, public notifications and assessment by local councils. Obviously we do not think they should be exempt from environmental nuisance laws.

This bill also makes some important reforms to the Mental Health Act in the direction of a rights based approach, rather than the older decision-making framework where a patient had their best interests decided by other people. These improvements are things like how the Mental Health Court can proceed if there is a dispute of fact on which an expert has based their opinion. The process for approving electric compulsive therapy, or ECT, by providing additional protections and ensuring patients’ views, wishes and preferences are taken into account, is a step in the direction of a rights based approach, ensuring least restrictive practice in the apprehension and transfer of absent patients and promoting a stronger rights based approach for decisions about patient transfers between services.

In the inquiry into this bill the Queensland Human Rights Commission raised important points on some of the human rights elements of this bill. Importantly, they submitted that sections 790 and 791 of the Mental Health Act, which limit the publication of reports of the proceedings of the Mental Health Court and the Mental Health Review Tribunal and the publication of identifying information of any of the parties to those proceedings, should also be amended in order to reflect a rights based approach, not the now outdated best interests approach.

I also reiterate the urgent need to increase funding for our mental health sector. We have heard about months-long waits to access eating disorder treatment, young people going without support and stress among healthcare workers. In the wake of last year's budget the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists made this very clear. They expressed their disappointment that in the 2021-22 state budget there was nothing substantial for mental health. They said the funding that has been announced are promises that had already been made in previous budgets and are yet to be delivered.

During the public hearing for the Mental Health Select Committee, Associate Professor John Allan from Queensland Health pointed out that Queensland has one of the lowest per capita expenditures on public specialised mental health services across Australian jurisdictions. He pointed out that, while per capita the public hospital and health spend has grown by 62 per cent since 2009, comparable mental health spending has grown by just 10 per cent. He said that demand for treatment and care through our hospital and health services, funded NGOs and community controlled organisations is greater than existing resourcing. Services are unable to meet existing need and keep up with this demand. The inevitable direct consequence of this is that unwell people miss out on help; the human and societal costs cannot be justified.

We also welcome the amendments to the Transplantation and Anatomy Act to exclude human milk from the definition of 'tissue' to ensure breastmilk donations can effectively occur. Of course, fed is best and human babies can thrive on breastmilk, formula or any combination of these. However, breastmilk donation is on the rise in Australia in light of how beneficial breastmilk can be to infants, especially those who are sick or preterm and those who are not able to be breastfed by their parents. This change reflects modern community standards and empowers people to donate their breastmilk when they are able and willing.

Another area where I would love to see law and policy in Queensland catch up to modern community standards is around homebirth. On behalf of some very passionate constituents and advocates with whom I have met, I have asked this government several times whether it is considering adding publicly funded homebirth to the suite of options available to birthing parents in Queensland. I look forward to movement on this front. Of course, hospitals like the Mater Mothers' Hospital down the road from my electorate office are fabulous places for many people to give birth but, for those with trauma relating to past birth experiences and other medical issues, it is appropriate to provide a wider range of options.

Expansion of midwifery programs to ensure midwifery continuity of care is crucial as is the expansion of child and baby health clinics including access to home visits from zero to six weeks postpartum, a proper review into obstetric violence in Queensland, a review by the Queensland Audit Office of maternity care services and enhanced funding for rural maternity services. It is so important that we invest in maternity care here in Queensland. Investing in babies and their parents at the earliest opportunity pays dividends in so many ways and relieves pressure on other parts of our social support system like education, youth justice and our mental health system.

There is so much more that we as lawmakers could be doing to support the health system in Queensland. For a start, following on from the speech I gave yesterday around the appropriation bills, we need to fund our health system to do its job. Our healthcare workers, the absolute heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic, are telling us loud and clear that they need our support. It is this government's job to ensure that the system is robust with the ongoing funding that we need.



Mrs GILBERT (Mackay—ALP) (3.23 pm): I am pleased to contribute to the debate and give my support to the passage of the Health and Other Legislation Bill 2021. This bill will amend a number of health acts to support the delivery of high-quality health care in Queensland. I thank stakeholders and the State Development and Regional Industries Committee for their comprehensive consideration of the bill. The Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and Leader of the House has already outlined the major amendments contained in this bill. I will take this opportunity to highlight some considerations regarding the Viewer and to comment on the Mental Health Act amendments.

There has been much discussion of the bill's amendments to enable more categories of allied health professionals to access the Viewer. The purpose of these amendments is to improve health outcomes for Queenslanders. The read-only information on the Viewer can already be requested by allied health professionals, for example, by submitting requests in writing. However, this is a manual process and it takes time. We know how important information sharing is across many sectors, not just in health care. When information is not shared efficiently, opportunities are lost. Of course, there must be privacy safeguards in place.

Queensland Health already has a stringent pre-access registration process, terms and conditions of access and auditing scheme for the Viewer. A health professional must also enter specific patient details into the system before any records are made available to ensure that a relationship exists between the patient and the professional. Unauthorised access by a practitioner can lead to the loss of access to the Viewer, an investigation by the Health Ombudsman, criminal prosecution and a hefty fine of 600 penalty points, which currently equates to \$82,710. All of these safeguards will apply to the new cohort of allied health professionals that are proposed to be able to access information on the Viewer.

I now turn to the amendments to the Mental Health Act. As the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services said, the act has been found to be implemented well. It already takes an approach that supports human rights. The bill makes targeted amendments to improve the operation of some provisions and strengthen the consideration of patients' rights when making certain decisions. These amendments were developed in consultation with stakeholders. I note that in its submission to the committee, the Queensland Law Society commended Queensland Health and the government for the manner in which they engaged and consulted with stakeholders in the formation of the bill.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to delivering high-quality mental health services in Queensland. Each year the Queensland government invests approximately \$1.8 billion in mental health. Last week we announced a new \$8 million program to support a pilot of on demand mental health support services for young people. Let's not forget the \$74.5 million that was invested in the mental health and wellbeing package to respond to the mental health demands of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In my electorate the refurbishment of the Mackay community mental health facility, a \$6.6 million investment, will provide a safe and private clinical environment for patients. It will deliver clinical spaces that improve patient management and provide clear and safe separation of clinical and public access from staff-only areas.

The White Cloud Foundation has launched its Meals for Mums and telehealth services in Mackay. The Queensland government has committed to providing \$250,000 to support the expansion of the White Cloud Foundation's Meals for Mums program. This funding will enable its program to be extended to regional areas outside South-East Queensland. Meals for Mums provide important telehealth services that will complement the existing mental health services in Mackay.

This government also established the Mental Health Select Committee to conduct an inquiry into opportunities to improve mental health outcomes for Queenslanders. We look forward to receiving the recommendations from that inquiry. I note that the select committee will be provided with suggestions from stakeholders for mental health reform which are outside the scope of this bill from the State Development and Regional Industries Committee to consider. With Queensland's new satellite hospitals reaching their milestones, it is timely that this bill will amend the Environmental Protection Act to ensure that essential community infrastructure such as satellite hospitals may be constructed to operate outside the environmental nuisance limits of the Environmental Protection Act if regulated by an infrastructure designation made by the planning minister under the Planning Act 2016. The amendment gives the planning minister the same powers as an assessment manager for a development application.

The people of Queensland recognise the Palaszczuk government's commitment to health care, which is why they supported our \$265 million commitment at the 2020 election to build seven satellite hospitals. Our Satellite Hospitals Program is a reflection of how our government innovates and is focused on delivering health care closer to home and meeting the changing health care needs of the community.

I will briefly note some of the other important reforms in this bill. The bill will amend the Ambulance Service Act to ensure that the framework for managing confidential information is robust, clear for officers and aligned with the Hospital and Health Boards Act. It will also remove the requirement for the Queensland Ambulance Service Commissioner to be no more than 65 years of age.

The bill will remove the prescriptive identity verification requirements in the Radiation Safety Act. These will be addressed through departmental policies, informed by the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs best practice guidelines for identity verification. The amendments in this bill are the result of extensive consultation, and stakeholders have described them as workable and practical. I take this opportunity to thank all health workers who cared for our communities before and during the pandemic. Thank you for your work. I commend this bill to the House.



Dr ROWAN (Moggill—LNP) (3.32 pm): I rise to address the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. This legislation was introduced by the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services on 1 December 2021. It is legislation which seeks to amend nine separate acts across both

the health and environment portfolios. This bill was ultimately referred to the State Development and Regional Industries Committee for its consideration. At the outset, I thank all who contributed to the examination of this legislation, including Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health, the Queensland Human Rights Commission, the Office of the Information Commissioner, the Queensland Law Society and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists. They all provided submissions to the committee.

On 11 February 2022, the State Development and Regional Industries Committee tabled its report with five recommendations, including that the legislation be passed. As indicated by my colleague the LNP shadow minister for health and ambulance services, the Liberal National Party will not be opposing this legislation. However, in my contribution today I would like to reflect on a few matters pertaining to this legislation.

As articulated in the bill's explanatory notes, the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 will be amended to enable allied health professionals to access the Viewer program in order to achieve improved health outcomes for patients and to allow designated persons and prescribed health professionals to disclose confidential information to a person performing functions under the Mental Health Act 2016. Under the remit of Queensland Health's e-health initiatives, the Viewer collates data from multiple Queensland Health systems and sources and enables access by healthcare professionals, including general practitioners, to patients' information in a timely manner, thereby avoiding them having to log into separate information systems. This will certainly enhance clinical care and operational efficiency.

In considering those amendments that would extend access to the Viewer, it is worth noting that multiple stakeholders provided the committee with their views on the right to privacy of patients and the extent of control over their individual private information. To that end, the committee did recommend that Queensland Health investigate enhancing the functionality of the Viewer in order to provide patients with greater control over the type of information that can be seen by health providers and ensure that any changes relating to the Viewer be complemented by a comprehensive community engagement program. This is certainly a sensible recommendation.

The Liberal National Party provides its in-principle support for initiatives that provide patient access to health care, including digital health initiatives. Throughout the COVID-19 health pandemic, we have seen the innovative use of modern technology, including telehealth and videoconferencing, to support improved clinical care. These have been important advances, but at all times it has been imperative that improved clinical outcomes be balanced against the protection of patients' private information. I certainly hope that the Labor state government comprehensively takes note of stakeholder views and committee comments on the protection of privacy and related appropriate safeguards.

Queenslanders also know that Labor has had a number of issues when it comes to the implementation of information technology projects within the Queensland hospital and health system. Labor's track record on IT projects has been at times absolutely abysmal, with an obscene amount of taxpayers' dollars wasted over many years. This includes the problematic rollout of the electronic medical record, known as ieMR, with a cost blowout of close to \$300 million. It has effectively been shelved. There was the failure of the \$135 million purchasing system, which on day one was unable to function; the \$70 million that was spent on a pathology system which was ultimately mothballed; and the incredible \$1.25 billion disaster that was the Queensland Health payroll debacle under the then Bligh Labor government. Therefore, any move that the state Labor government makes to expand this e-health initiative, the Viewer, must proceed with absolute care and due diligence and with increased attention given to the protection of patient privacy and safeguards around such patient information technology systems.

I would also briefly like to note that the legislation before the House seeks to make amendments to the Mental Health Act 2016. These amendments pertain to the Mental Health Court and Mental Health Review Tribunal, specifically the transfer of patients, as well as other amendments to improve the operation of the Mental Health Act. As identified by the State Development and Regional Industries Committee—

The recently established Mental Health Select Committee is conducting an inquiry into mental health services to understand the needs and pressures on Queensland's mental health system. It is expected to report by 31 May 2022.

In the interim, the Bill proposes a series of amendments to improve processes for patients and enhance the rights-based approaches to mental health care in Queensland.

As the state member for Moggill and as an appointed member of the Queensland parliament's Mental Health Select Committee, I acknowledge the broad support of these recommendations by various stakeholders and the State Development and Regional Industries Committee comment—

The committee is satisfied that the proposed amendments to the Mental Health Act are reasonable and appropriate.


I also take this opportunity to briefly acknowledge the important work of the Mental Health Select Committee that has already been progressed to date. There are many members in this House including the chair, the member for Greenslopes; the deputy chair, the member for Southport; the member for Pumicestone; and many other members of both sides of the House who are progressing some very important work on that committee. I acknowledge and thank those submitters who have provided information and have appeared before the committee to date. There is certainly plenty more work to do, with a number of public hearings to be held, but certainly there are many important matters which are being raised there with respect to funding, workforce, and collaboration and coordination which will be addressed in due course.

In returning to the bill, I again note that this legislation broadly offers sensible amendments and changes which are common sense and necessary. There are also amendments with respect to electroconvulsive therapy. I know that they have been canvassed by a number of contributors to the debate so far, including the member for Bundaberg and others. Without relitigating all of those comments, these amendments are sensible. They strengthen informed consent and they certainly ensure best practice with respect to clinical care. Therefore, I support those.

That all being said, there is substantially more work that needs to be done to fix the current government's health and hospital crisis in Queensland and certainly the Liberal National Party has offered positive solutions to address those matters, including real-time data reporting for our hospitals, improved triaging and investment in additional inpatient beds as well as empowering frontline clinicians to make local decisions to ensure our public hospitals operate efficiently and effectively and in the best interests of patients.

Earlier the member for Mackay also highlighted the important work that our frontline clinicians—our doctors, nurses and allied health professionals—have been undertaking throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge all of the work that they have done. Whether that is those working in primary care and hospitals, those who have been vaccinating Queenslanders, those undertaking COVID-19 screening—our pathology providers—and those who have contributed to many of the services that have been provided in communities right across Queensland, it has been a tremendous effort by those health professionals over the last two years and there will be a lot more work to be done in relation to those who have had delays in surgical procedures or other care that has not been able to be provided for a variety of reasons over the last two years to ensure that they now get the optimal care that they need and getting those other health conditions back on track.

In closing, I thank all members of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee for their consideration of the legislation. I know that the LNP members—the deputy chair, the member for Lockyer, and the member for Burleigh—as well as other members of the committee have all done an immense amount of work, as have the committee secretariat and staff. They also do a huge amount of work on behalf of democracy here in Queensland in preparing a final report and contributing to scrutiny and oversight of the legislation, and I take this opportunity to thank them for all of the work that they do.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (3.41 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. From the outset, I also acknowledge all of the health workers in Townsville who have done a fantastic job with dedication and professionalism, particularly over the last couple of years in dealing with COVID. I also take the opportunity to thank the chair and members of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee for their examination of this bill and for doing the work that is normally given to the Health and Environment Committee. Currently we are doing a big body of work around what is going on in our public hospitals, and I look forward to speaking to that in a couple of months when we table it and maybe open the eyes of those opposite who just want to play the blame game, but there are a lot of causative effects that we are seeing. Anyway, I cannot speak to that just yet because we are not quite finished.

The committee's task was to consider the policy to be achieved by the legislation and, following its examination, the committee recommended that the bill be passed with five recommendations. The bill amends various acts within the health portfolio and covers a diverse range of policy areas. Issues addressed include the management of confidential information and access to the Viewer, which is

effectively a health portal that connects the GP to the hospital and health system and is available to a range of health practitioners such as nurses, specialists, GPs, paramedics, midwives, you name it. They can actually see what is going on in one space and I think it is commendable work.

The bill also covers legislation relating to the use of human milk for sick infants, licensing arrangements for personal appearance services and proposes a series of more substantial amendments to improve the operation of the Mental Health Act 2016 in Queensland. Outside of the health portfolio the bill proposes amendments to the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to ensure that ministerial infrastructure designations can be implemented effectively. The bill, as I said, amends various acts within the health portfolio. They are the Ambulance Service Act 1991, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, the Mental Health Act 2016, the public health and infection control act 2003, the Radiation Safety Act 1999, the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018, the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979 and the Corrective Services Act 2006—a very broad range of acts that the committee did some work on.

There was consultation on the bill. According to the explanatory notes, the bill has been informed by consultation with stakeholders over a number of years, with the exception of the amendments to the Environmental Protection Act which were added to the bill more recently. Targeted consultation took place in 2021 with representatives from the medical, nursing, pharmaceutical, mental health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sectors. According to the explanatory notes, the stakeholders were generally supportive of the proposed amendments.

It will come as no surprise to the House that I want to focus my contribution on the amendments to the Ambulance Service Act 1991. The bill amends the act to ensure the framework for the management of confidential information by the Queensland Ambulance Service is robust and clear. The bill amends the Ambulance Service Act to remove the requirement for the QAS Commissioner to be no older than 65 years of age, so there might be time for me yet! The Queensland Ambulance Service was established in 1991 under the act.

Mr Whiting interjected.

Mr HARPER: I take that interjection. In 2013 the QAS was amalgamated—and I certainly remember those days—with Queensland Health which had the effect of QAS employees being subject to information confidentiality provisions in both the Ambulance Service Act and the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2016. There are several differences in the definitions between the two acts for the disclosure of confidential information. Queensland Health advised that this can create uncertainty for QAS officers about which act applies—that is, whether they are authorised to disclose information in any presenting situation and what information they can disclose. This raises the risk of officers unintentionally disclosing confidential information without proper authority. To address this issue, the proposed amendments are to clarify that all QAS staff are bound by the duty of confidentiality regardless of whether they are employed under the Ambulance Service Act or the Public Service Act 2008; to make the duty of confidentiality provisions in the Ambulance Service Act consistent with the Hospital and Health Boards Act; and align reasons where confidential information may be disclosed under the ambulance act.


The bill also seeks to strengthen safeguards around the disclosure of information by expanding the definition of ‘confidential information’ to include information that could identify a person, even when the person is deceased; provides that if an officer discloses confidential information the person who receives the information will not be permitted to disclose it unless required by law; and increasing the maximum penalty of an unauthorised disclosure to align with the maximum penalty in the Hospital and Health Boards Act. In authorising a designated officer to disclose confidential information under the ambulance act, the chief executive—the director-general of Queensland Health—has the power to authorise a designated officer—an ambulance officer—to disclose confidential information if it is necessary to assist averting a serious risk to life, health or safety of a person; in the public interest; and made for the purpose of research which has the approval of the appropriate ethics committee. However, under the Ambulance Service Act, this power cannot be delegated. This also means that the QAS Commissioner cannot authorise their own designated officers to disclose confidential information in the same circumstances.

The bill amends the Ambulance Service Act to align powers of the Queensland Ambulance Service Commissioner with the powers of the director-general of Queensland Health under the Hospital and Health Boards Act. Accordingly, in the explanatory notes this amendment reflects that the commissioner has oversight and direction of most of QAS’s operations and aligns the provisions within the Hospital and Health Boards Act. The explanatory notes also state that any disclosures made in the public interest will not be required to be included in the Queensland Health annual report. Of course,

removing the age restriction on the appointment of the commissioner was important. Currently the Ambulance Service Act stipulates that a person is disqualified from being appointed or from continuing in the role as commissioner of the QAS where the person is or attains the age of 65 years. The bill removes this age restriction from the act as age is not considered relevant to the role of the QAS Commissioner. I take this opportunity to congratulate Craig Emery on his recent appointment as the new QAS Commissioner.

I want to quickly comment on the Hospital and Health Boards Act. The Viewer, as I said earlier, is Queensland Health's read-only web based application that displays a range of a patient's clinical and demographic information from a variety of Queensland Health systems. It includes, amongst other things, admission and discharge histories, pathology results and tests ordered, My Health Record, mental health data, operation notes and elective surgery waitlist information, oncology information and advance care planning. We saw how important advance care planning was when we held the palliative care and aged-care inquiry. When you are dealing with someone who is very unwell, who ultimately has a terminal diagnosis, to be able to look at the Viewer and see they have an advance care plan is certainly helpful in dealing with a range of situations when patients face end of life.

Queensland Health advise that the Viewer allows a continuity of care when transferring patients from acute care to community care settings. However, the Viewer is currently only accessible by health practitioners registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, such as doctors, physiotherapists and psychologists, and it cannot be accessed by allied health practitioners. The bill proposes to expand access to the Viewer to allied health professionals not registered under the national law. Allied health professionals will be prescribed by regulation and are expected to include audiologists, social workers, dietitians and speech pathologists. With the time remaining I say well done to the committee. It is a broad scope of work that it has considered. I thank its members very much for their work. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (3.50 pm): Firstly, with your indulgence, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to congratulate and thank all our health professionals across Queensland, especially regional Queensland, for their work over the last two years. The last two years will be something we will remember for a very long time. Regional, rural and remote health professionals and allied health professionals have done a wonderful job in keeping our community safe. They have done more than they probably thought they had to, but they have certainly got through this and I thank every health professional for what they have achieved over the last two years.

While the LNP will not be opposing this bill, before addressing specific amendments I must voice my protest against the constant use of these omnibus bills by the Labor government. It makes it very difficult for Queenslanders to follow the myriad of administrative changes being put in place during this golden age of bureaucracy. The bill amends nine separate pieces of legislation. We need to find a better way of doing this. Having said that, the amendments to the Ambulance Service Act 1991 to align the requirements of the management of confidential patient information with those in the Hospital and Health Boards Act is timely and will hopefully assist with patient handovers at a time when ambulance ramping is becoming an issue.

The amendment comes in the same bill as the amendments to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 to enable more allied health professionals to access Queensland Health's digital patient information systems. At face value this is an important recognition of the way modern health care is increasingly being delivered in a team based manner. As we move forward, many of the team members delivering such care in rural and remote settings will be doing some or even all of this patient care via telehealth. This offers great potential to decrease the gap in health service availability to my constituents.

Timely access to patient and digital records will help all team members deliver the best patient-centred care possible. I welcome this amendment, but I have one little caveat. In this digital age we are our data. In a technical sense Queensland Health may hold the data and see it as something it controls, but Queensland Health patients must be able to opt out at any stage or have some control over their own health records. It is one thing to sign up when you have a sporting injury and get an x-ray, but the stakes are somewhat higher when some years later you may suffer from a period of depression which goes on your record for all to see in the future. Patients should be able to opt out at any point or exercise control over parts of their record they want to keep private.

In stating this reservation, I do see that making comprehensive health records more widely available has been welcomed by such groups as the Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health. They value this as a way of delivering more patient-centred care, particularly in rural and


regional settings. It is also important in delivering patient-centred care to an aging population, which is where we find ourselves. We must never put patient confidentiality at risk simply for the convenience of a health IT system. To date, IT systems have not had a particularly good record in protecting citizens' privacy.

For these reasons I welcome the committee's recommendation that Queensland Health deliver a comprehensive and accessible engagement campaign to inform the public about what health information is available on the Queensland Health Viewer, who will be able to see it and what options they have control of. This is absolutely vital and I ask the Minister for Health to ensure this happens effectively. In doing so, the minister should pay particular attention to the joint submission to the committee by the office of the Integrity Commissioner and the Privacy Commissioner which identifies the need to strengthen privacy and security safeguards in our existing health information technology systems, let alone ones with expanded access.

Finally, I make a comment on the changes to the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and the Criminal Code Act 1899. These will enable medical students to register under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law to assist in a termination of pregnancy procedure whilst undertaking a clinical placement with a health service.

The Central Queensland Health and Hospital Service provides hospital and health services to my constituents on the Central Highlands too, so I have been aware of the excellent response of the Central Queensland Health and Hospital Service when it comes to COVID-19. As I said at the start of my contribution, I thank all the health professionals and what they have been able to do over the last two years. It has not been easy for them. There has been a lot of overtime needed, a lot of people on board to achieve what they have achieved. I thank them.

It would be remiss of me, when we are talking about health infrastructure and what we need in rural and remote and regional Queensland, not to raise the issue of the Blackwater Hospital. In the budget we were aware that we were looking to start the planning and the building process of a new hospital for Blackwater. The hospital that is there at the moment is over 45 years old. It started when Utah Construction and Mining came out to the Bowen Basin. We need a hospital to cater for the Blackwater people and I call on the Minister for Health, the Treasurer, the Premier and the Labor government to deliver what they promised the Queensland Resources Council and other people in the community in Blackwater, and that is a hospital. I call on the minister and everybody to come together, let us work on a plan, let us put a new hospital in Blackwater. They deserve it.

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.56 pm): I rise in support of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill which supports the continued provision of world-class health services across Queensland. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all of our health heroes who have gone above and beyond time and again throughout the course of this health pandemic, with the latest significant challenging period being over Christmas and New Year and throughout January as we met the challenge of the Omicron wave. Whether it is our local health staff out in Ipswich, the Goodna public health unit, whether it is people working at testing centres, whether it is our GPs who have been administering vaccinations or our local community pharmacies, I would like to publicly extend mine and the Bundamba community's gratitude for their outstanding work.

While this bill makes amendments to a range of bills, I will focus my remarks mainly on the amendments proposed for the Ambulance Service Act, the Hospital and Health Boards Act and the confidentiality provisions around the Mental Health Act. The Palaszczuk government has a proud and proven track record of investing in frontline services and infrastructure so that all Queenslanders can continue to receive quality health care no matter where they live. We have a world-class public health system and we are committed to keeping it that way. Our record \$22.2 billion investment in health is about recruiting record numbers of frontline health staff, building new and upgraded health infrastructure and continuing to protect the state throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It is this health infrastructure that is going to benefit from some of the provisions that are contained within this bill, as the planning minister and Deputy Premier made clear during his contribution to this debate.

We are investing in our local clinical workforce with an extra 9,475 frontline health staff, including 5,800 nurses and midwives, 1,500 doctors and 1,700 new allied health professionals over the next four years. Once again, these health professionals, particularly some of the allied health professionals, will be affected by some of the amendments in this act around the Hospital and Health Boards Act.

There is significant ongoing investment in bricks-and-mortar projects with a \$1.352 billion capital spend that will continue to improve health care for communities across the entire state. For my community, in Ipswich health funding has increased by a staggering 64 per cent under the Palaszczuk

Labor government. Our \$750.5 million investment in Ipswich health includes over \$100 million for construction projects to expand and improve facilities at the Ipswich Hospital precinct, including a new 50-bed acute mental health unit—and I will come more to the topic of mental health later in my contribution when I deal with the amendments to the Mental Health Act. There is a \$7.2 million contribution towards a 26-bed expansion at the Ipswich Hospital and \$5.3 million to secure additional bed capacity on top of that. There is also initial funding towards a brand new dedicated alcohol and drug rehabilitation centre.

In a huge boost for our local community, South Ripley will be home to one of our brand new satellite hospitals to be built at Barrams Road. The delivery of that hospital will be made easier and facilitated by amendments in this bill. In fact, early works are underway right now at the 2.7-hectare site for this community healthcare facility that will include ambulatory, low-acute and day therapy services and other services such as renal analysis, chemotherapy, complex wound management and urgent care for minor illness and injury. Our local community will be further supported by a \$177 million investment for a 174 public bed expansion at the Springfield hospital.

We are also delivering \$3 million to progress a new ambulance station at Ripley. Recently it was great to see the concept designs for the new Ripley ambulance station, which is progressing and is well underway. Those designs went out for community consultation. All of that means more world-class health services closer to home in my local community.

The amendments to the Ambulance Services Act seek to strengthen safeguards around the disclosure of confidential information and reduce the potential for confusion about interaction with the Hospital and Health Boards Act. Under the Ambulance Services Act, the director-general of Queensland Health has the power to authorise a designated officer, for example, an ambulance officer, to disclose confidential information in certain situations, including to assist in averting a serious risk to the life, health or safety of a person or in public-interest circumstances. However, under the Ambulance Services Act that is not possible. That power cannot be delegated.

Currently, the Queensland Ambulance Service commissioner cannot authorise his or her own designated officers to disclose confidential information, even if the commissioner is satisfied that it is in the public interest or would assist in averting a serious risk to the life, health or safety of a person. Clearly that is inconsistent with the practical operation of the Queensland Ambulance Service, where the commissioner, rather than the director-general of Queensland Health, has oversight and direction of the Ambulance Service's operations. In accordance with the role of the Ambulance Service commissioner, the bill aims to allow the commissioner to authorise ambulance officers to be able to disclose that information in limited important circumstances such as I have outlined.

The amendments also remove an age restriction for the Ambulance Service commissioner. Currently the Ambulance Service Act stipulates that a person is disqualified from being appointed or from continuing in the role as the commissioner of the Ambulance Service when that person is or attains the age of 65 years. I am glad to see that that is being addressed.

Mr Harper interjected.


Mr McCALLUM: It is time for the member for Thuringowa to ascend to that lofty position? I take this opportunity to formally congratulate Commissioner Craig Emery ASM who was recently appointed as the new Ambulance Service commissioner. Commissioner Emery has spent over 30 years in a long and notable career with the QAS since joining in 1990 as a paramedic when the service was known as the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade.

As a government we have committed to delivering record numbers of paramedics across the state, with an additional 60 on top of our commitment to delivering 475, taking the total number of new paramedics in Queensland to at least 535. The Ambulance Service has experienced an extraordinary growth in demand and our continued investment in more paramedics, stations and resources will help ensure that our ambulance services are as responsive as ever to our communities' needs.

The bill amends the Hospital and Health Boards Act by replacing the definition of 'prescribed health practitioner' with 'prescribed health professional'. This will enable allied health professionals who are not registered practitioners under the national law to access Queensland's Viewer, the patient healthcare information system. That has been covered in depth by many other speakers.

I conclude by saying that ultimately this bill is going to support the continued world-class healthcare delivery for all Queenslanders. It strengthens and streamlines existing acts and it builds on our record health budget—a budget that includes record numbers of frontline staff and new and

upgraded infrastructure across our state. It comes as we continue our safe and strong recovery from the COVID pandemic and it supports our health workers, who have done such an outstanding job in keeping Queenslanders safe. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (4.06 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill before the House. Before I make my contribution, I want to thank our many health professionals, particularly those who work in hospitals on the border. We have had a situation where the Palaszczuk Labor government has not been able to get doctors to a number of those hospitals, for instance, Mungindi, Cunnamulla, Quilpie and Augathella. The health professionals have kept the doors of those hospitals open. I commend them for the work that they have done. It has been a difficult situation for them. I would like to see the government providing more support to get doctors into those communities. Certainly over Christmas it was not an ideal situation at Cunnamulla when they did not have a doctor in that community. In the past four months, Quilpie has probably had more days without a doctor at the hospital than with a doctor. I call on the government to look very closely at that and make sure that we have a doubled-down effort to get doctors into the smaller regional hospitals.

As outlined earlier, the LNP will not be opposing the bill. The bill amends nine acts to improve the operation of the Health portfolio and support the provision of health services in Queensland. I thank the committee members and the secretariat for their work in considering the bill. That brings me to the committee's recommendation No. 2. The committee recommended that the minister, during the second reading debate, provide detail on how instances of environmental nuisance relating to a ministerial infrastructure designation as exempted by the amendment would be investigated and regulated. The ministerial infrastructure designations are used regularly. They are used for hospitals, schools, fire stations and ambulance stations. I can recall a number of them being used for fire and ambulance stations across my electorate and I fought very hard for that new infrastructure.

In their report the parliamentary committee noted a situation at Logan involving a hospital that was approved under a ministerial infrastructure designation. The only way to carry out works was to do so overnight, meaning that there would be noise outside the 6.30 am to 6.30 pm proposal. The committee asked a very good question about how that designated infrastructure with an exemption would be investigated and regulated. I ask the minister to clearly outline how that would be done by the state government. I hope the state government will not be cost shifting those investigations and regulations onto local government. I look forward to the minister's giving an assurance that there will be no cost shift or regulation shift to the local governments for these investigations and regulations as a result of this amendment.

I do urge caution with this amendment, because tucked away on page 29 of the explanatory notes are the details regarding the lack of consultation. The explanatory notes state—

The Bill has been informed by consultation with stakeholders over a number of years, with the exception of the amendments to the Environmental Protection Act.

The explanatory notes further state—

In September 2021, targeted consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders on the Bill. Stakeholders consulted included representatives from the medical, nursing, pharmaceutical, mental health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sectors. At this time, the Bill did not include the amendments to the Environmental Protection Act.

We have seen enough of the two-minute-to-midnight amendments that cause great concern and difficulty for local governments. We have to make sure there are no adverse outcomes from the Labor government from these sorts of amendments, especially for the local government sector.

When there is a noise complaint, constituents often call their local councillor or their local council. It concerns me that these councils have not been consulted in relation to this particular amendment. This is quite an extraordinary power. If unchecked or taken advantage of, it could prove to be against community interest. We all know too well that this Labor government has given up on integrity. When governments give up on integrity, they give up on consulting on a lot of these issues.

The bill amends further pieces of legislation which impact the health portfolio—the Ambulance Service Act 1991 and the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011—to enable more allied health professionals to access the Viewer, Queensland Health's patient information system. This will allow certain designated persons and prescribed health professionals to disclose confidential information to a person performing functions under the Mental Health Act 2016. There is a need for Queensland Health, in consultation with the relevant providers, to deliver a comprehensive and accessible engagement campaign to inform the community about what health information is available on the Viewer, who can access their health information and what options they have to control it. The public will want to know what this change means: who can access what, when, where and why.


However, the track record of Labor governments with IT is seriously lacking. Labor has not done well in implementing IT projects within the health system. Unfortunately, that poor form relates to a waste of taxpayer dollars. For instance, the electronic medical record project blew out by close to \$300 million and has been on ice for years now. Then there was the \$70 million pathology system that was mothballed. Then there was the \$135 million purchasing system which blew up when it was turned on. Of course, there is the icing on the cake: the Queensland Health payroll debacle, where the Labor government did not pay the doctors and nurses. That \$1.25 billion is gone forever.

The LNP will be watching and holding the Labor government to account with the expansion of the Viewer system. The Office of the Information Commissioner and the Privacy Commissioner provided a joint submission which identified ongoing needs to strengthen privacy and security safeguards around health information technology systems. Given the Labor government picks and chooses what advice it accepts—it says it takes the health advice but will not take the Integrity Commissioner's advice—we will see where this advice lands, although if it is independent public advice then I do not like the chances.

The bill also provides a number of amendments to the Mental Health Act 2016 and the Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003 to improve the process for renewing licences for higher risk personal appearance services. The amendments increase the time frame for when a person can apply to renew a licence prior to its expiry from at least one month to 60 days. That will be of assistance to local governments that consider these licenses. These licences are assessed by the local government and involve but are not limited to beauty therapy, application of cosmetics, manicure, pedicure, epilation including by electrolysis or hot or cold wax, body piercing and hairdressing, to name a few examples.

The bill also provides amendments to the Radiation Safety Act 1999, the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and the Criminal Code Act 1899 enabling those undertaking a clinical placement with a health service to assist in the termination of pregnancy. With regard to this amendment, the minister must make it very clear that it will not be compulsory for students to assist with or observe terminations of pregnancy in order to complete their qualifications. There should be no forced requirement for clinical students to observe or assist in terminations of pregnancy, and those with conscientious objections should be appropriately supported.

The bill also amends the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979 to exclude human milk from the definition of 'tissue' in the act to ensure sick and pre-term infants can be efficiently provided donated human milk to prevent and treat serious health conditions. I look forward to hearing the minister's explanation in her summing up of the matters I have raised, particularly those in relation to local government.

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (4.15 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The bill before us makes a range of amendments to improve the operation of health portfolio legislation, including in the critical areas of mental health, information sharing and confidentiality. I am very pleased to see expansion of the Viewer, Queensland Health's read-only application, which displays a consolidated view of patients' clinical and demographic information from a range of systems. I know how frustrating it can be as a patient when you have to repeat your health story over and over again. The changes proposed by the legislation will allow a range of allied health professionals to also have access to patient information, including audiologists, social workers, dietitians, speech pathologists and a range of other health professionals.

The department provided examples of a number of real-life case studies that demonstrate the positive impact that this increased access could contribute to patients, to their family and to an efficient and effective health system. It is clear that a range of safeguards are in place to manage privacy, including significant fines for unauthorised access and ensuring that access is only available through the secure portal known as the Health Provider Portal. The changes proposed to the Mental Health Act are also aimed at improving processes for patients and continue to deliver rights based approaches in mental health care in Queensland.

We know that the past two years have presented a huge challenge to our community's health and to health systems. Health systems across the world have had to change, sometimes literally overnight, and in Queensland tens of thousands of staff across the health system mobilised together to ready Queensland. As everyone in the chamber recognises, Queensland was the first jurisdiction in Australia to declare a public health emergency on 29 January 2020, and we moved quickly to activate established disaster management arrangements enabling planning for changes in service delivery to ensure continuity of care and preparations to lift health system capacity for the surge of cases we experienced across our state.

Our government committed an additional \$1.2 billion in health funding to support the health response to the pandemic. This additional funding supported the expansion of fever clinics, more paramedics and ambulance services, new infrastructure for and better utilisation of existing hospitals, expansion of community screening, contact tracing and 13 HEALTH services, the backfilling of health staff exposed to the virus, additional regional health services and more aeromedical services for regional remote communities as well as the provision of elective surgery in both public and private hospitals.

As my colleague the member for Bundamba outlined in his address, there has been incredible investment in the West Moreton region. I thank the minister for her support. Whether it is our brand new hospital in Springfield for which plans are currently with council for approval, the satellite hospital in Ripley, the mental health facility currently being built or the alcohol and drug rehab facility, these are all vital services for people in my electorate. I cannot wait to see them all delivered by a Labor government.

We are at the point of the pandemic, after two long and difficult years, when we can take a small moment to reflect on how far we have come in Queensland. At the height of the Omicron wave, Queensland recorded 928 hospitalisations and 71 ICU admissions instead of the worst-case scenario modelling of 5,000 hospital beds at the start of the Omicron peak and up to 500 ICU beds. Early indicators are that, despite a significant and highly contagious variant in Omicron, Queensland's early preparedness meant that it was well prepared to lead the public health response and manage the impact of the pandemic on the delivery of health services.

We must of course also reflect on the fact that this cruel virus has now taken the lives of 505 Queenslanders, and our deepest and most heartfelt condolences must go to the families who grieve the loss of their loved ones. The Omicron variant has also challenged our testing regimes, our supply chains and our general sense of safety and comfort here in Queensland after two years of relative freedom.

I want to acknowledge the work of our mighty health workers. For me personally it is the incredible efforts of those in West Moreton Health and Metro South that service the Jordan electorate, whether in testing, vaccination delivery, health in the home or in our hospital. I am very grateful to each and every person in every field who has been part of our COVID-19 response.

As the Premier announced, 4 March will see a further easing of restrictions across Queensland. There is a degree of cautious optimism in our communities as we emerge from the last two years of the pandemic. It is hoped that COVID-19 will in fact become an endemic and allow us to move on with some confidence with ongoing vaccination protection.

Whilst here in Queensland we have sought to continually improve our health systems, as evidenced by the bill before us, a critical area of early intervention in health is, of course, in primary care. I fear the federal government is failing when it comes to the everyday health of Queenslanders and it is failing some of the most vulnerable in our community.

I recently attending the Logan public hearing held by the parliamentary Health and Environment Committee into the provision of primary, allied and private health, aged care and NDIS care services and its impact on the Queensland public health system. I would like to thank the committee for visiting the Logan region, which is representative of the burgeoning outer metropolitan areas of South-East Queensland, with its own unique needs and challenges.

We know that access to general practitioners is becoming increasingly difficult, and this has been exacerbated during COVID-19 and most recently during the Omicron wave. In general, GPs are increasingly reporting they are working longer hours and seeing more complex patients, including a higher number of patients per day. The Deloitte Access Economics General Practitioner Workforce Report 2019 found that Australia is heading for a significant undersupply of GPs in both urban and rural areas by 2030. The report highlights that there will be a 37.5 per cent increase in the demand for GP services between 2019 and 2030. By 2030 there is projected to be a shortfall of 9,298 full-time GPs, with the deficiency of GPs to be most extreme in urban areas with a shortfall of 7,535 full-time GPs—that is, 31.7 per cent—by 2030. It is clear that the number of new general practitioners entering the market will not keep pace with increasing demand for health care. One of the determinants of the shortfall results from limitations on the number of overseas trained medical graduates.

Patient waiting times for both GP and allied health appointments are lengthy—sometimes several weeks to months and, in some cases, not available at all. I am regularly contacted by my local constituents despairing at the inability to access GP appointments for themselves or for their family members. Only last year in Springfield we saw the sudden closure of a super clinic that had serviced

local patients for over a decade. Those patients were advised that their health records would be transferred to a clinic in Forest Lake—four suburbs away. Service consultation availability and affordability are significant barriers for people.

I have a particular concern for our outer metropolitan regions. As we know, there are substantial differences in access to primary health services between outer metropolitan growth areas and established inner and middle suburbs. In general, communities living in outer metropolitan areas are more diverse, with variable but substantial CALD, refugee and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, have poorer health outcomes, lower socio-economic status and less access to health services. Private billing models, common in primary health care, form barriers to people seeking care. Outer metropolitan areas have fewer general practitioners so patients have to wait longer for appointments, becoming sicker as they wait.

General practitioners have little choice but to work longer hours to see as many patients as possible, even though they are treating patients with complex needs that require more effort and resources to manage. Over the last eight years the Morrison government has repeatedly cut and undermined Medicare, but in 2019 Scott Morrison also cut the access of outer metro and regional Australia to bonded and overseas trained doctors, making GP shortages much worse.

Federal Labor has, of course, taken up the fight for our local communities, confirming that, if elected, they will expand the overseas trained and bonded doctor access to Medicare, ensuring more GPs work in outer suburban and regional centres such as Ipswich. Labor will do this by designating areas like Ipswich as distribution priority areas for these GPs through the Modified Monash Model. I want to particularly thank our federal members—Shayne Neumann MP, member for Blair, and Milton Dick MP, member for Oxley—who have been incredible advocates and have been campaigning strongly on this issue since 2019.

Only a few days after Labor's announcement, the Morrison government finally caved in to the pressure and announced they would support the changes to the model. Access to GP services should not be reserved for those who live in our biggest cities—something the Morrison government has had to finally concede, but only because there is an election around the corner.

I wish to commend the Minister for Health and Ambulance Service for her strong commitment to progressing continual improvements to our health system in Queensland, as evidenced by the legislation before us. I also wish to thank the minister for her incredible work during the most challenging period that we have faced in Queensland—with an Omicron wave, increased infections and, sadly, more reported deaths. I know the toll that this takes, and I wish to place on the public record my appreciation of her efforts and those of her staff and the department. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr ANDREW (Mirani—PHON) (4.24 pm): I rise to speak on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. I wish to address some of the aspects of the bill that make changes to the Mental Health Act 2016, the MHA, particularly in relation to the treatment of people judged to have an impaired decision-making ability. The Queensland Human Rights Commissioner said in his submission on the bill—

Involuntary patient admission is a significant limitation on the rights to liberty and security, freedom of movement, and privacy, family, and home.

What the commissioner's submission makes clear is that people who are made the subject of an involuntary order hold fewer rights than any other group within the population, including our prisoners. This raises an important point that many people may not be aware of. The vast majority of people subject to involuntary orders in Queensland are people who have committed no crime, have no criminal record and are completely unconnected with the criminal justice system.

It is important to keep this in mind when looking after their treatment within the Queensland health system, especially when it comes to the current practice of carrying out electroconvulsive therapy, ECT—shock treatment—on such people without their fully informed consent. I acknowledge that the bill seeks to address this issue by adding a proviso requiring a person's views, wishes and preferences to be taken into account before the approval of ECT treatment is given. However, the wording of this provision is so vague that it offers no real safeguard or protection for such a vulnerable group. A proper and enforceable safeguard is definitely needed when it comes to a procedure which is as highly controversial as electroconvulsive therapy, ECT—shock treatment, in old terms.

During the procedure the patient is sedated and electrodes are attached to their head through which an electric current sends pulses through their brain. The treatment causes seizures in the hope that they will somehow alter the brain's chemical make-up. These brain seizures can last up to a minute each time as the shock is administered.

According to a 2008 UN resolution on torture and degrading treatments or punishment of persons with disabilities, the practice of ECT may constitute torture or illegal treatment. The resolution also states that it is of vital importance that ECT be administered only with the free and informed consent of the person concerned, and this consent must include detailed information on its risks, which include heart complications, brain damage, memory loss and, in extreme cases, death. Many medical experts have condemned the use of ECT treatment, particularly on young adults and children, due to its known risks and side effects.

A close relative of mine underwent ECT treatment in Queensland some years back. I witnessed firsthand many of the adverse effects he suffered as a consequence, some of which he has never fully recovered from. That is why I feel very strongly that under no circumstances should shock treatments be used on a child.

Currently, the Mental Health Review Tribunal can approve the use of ECT for minors without their consent. Ironically, under clause 22 of the bill a child is said to have the capacity to consent when it comes to disclosing information if they are of sufficient age and mental and emotional maturity to understand the nature of consenting to the disclosure of confidential information. Elsewhere in bill, clause 63(b) states that the performance of electroconvulsive therapy may be carried out on a minor if the tribunal has approved its use under section 509. There is no opportunity given to minors to demonstrate the same capacity for consent given to minors elsewhere in the bill.

This means that under the act a child of 11 may be judged to have capacity for consent for the purpose of disclosing information, while simultaneously allowing a young adult up to the age of 18 no rights whatsoever to withhold their consent to a highly invasive and potentially dangerous medical procedure. I do not see much logic there. It is a contradiction that appears throughout Queensland health legislation and it needs to be addressed.

Other provisions in the bill are aimed at expanding greatly the number of people and groups who are given access to the Viewer. The Viewer displays a comprehensive view of a patient's clinical and demographic information collected as a result of all of their interactions with Queensland Health. This information can include radiology and pathology results, pregnancy terminations, emergency department discharge summaries, medications and alerts, outpatient appointments, as well as instructions regarding patient treatment.

Originally, access to the Viewer was restricted to prescribed health practitioners; namely, GPs. In February 2020 this was widened to include a whole range of other health practitioners including midwives, nurses and paramedics. In September 2020 allied health practitioners registered under the national law were added to this list. Now in this bill the term 'health practitioner' is being discarded in favour of a vast array of health professionals who are not registered under national law.

This wholesale sharing of a patient's health information with so-called allied health professionals across the non-government and private sector raises huge privacy and security concerns around the danger of misuse and unauthorised access. As the Information Commissioner pointed out in her submission, community concerns over privacy and the third-party use of people's data has the potential to 'undermine community trust and confidence' in the whole system.

A patient's medical record may contain social or other information that a patient may not necessarily know is contained in their medical record and accessible by a broad range of health professionals. This may include highly sensitive information such as mental health history, sexual health information or history of substance abuse. As the Information Commissioner wrote in her submission—

... is it reasonable and necessary for an audiologist to have access to mental health information, sexual health history or Advance Care Planning information about a patient for the purposes of providing audiology services?

Section 25 of the HR Act protects a person from arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy. This wholesale collection, use and disclosure of people's private information by the government therefore has the potential to limit this right, if not abolish it altogether.


I am against the unwarranted expansion of the third-party access to people's sensitive medical information without their express knowledge or consent. A lot of information contained in those records could lead to discrimination and stigma when it comes to the quality of health service a patient is given.

The bill should at least be amended to make it mandatory for a person to whom the information belongs to be made aware of whom their private information is being accessed by and why. I also agree with the Information Commissioner's recommendations that only health professionals specifically covered by the Australian Privacy Principles should be allowed access.

They should also be working in the health service within the scope of authority of the Health Ombudsman, who can then handle any complaints or breaches of privacy against registered and unregistered health service providers. I also agree with the commissioner's comments that the existing process of 'opt-in' for Queensland Health patients is a much stronger consent model than 'opt-out'. It ensures that the patient's consent is 'informed, voluntary, current and specific'.

By way of contrast, the bill amends the Ambulance Service Act 1991 to set stricter limits on its own confidential information being disclosed and under what conditions. The bill also expands the definition of 'confidential information' and increases the maximum penalties for disclosure from 50 to 100 penalty units. All of this reminds me of our former governor-general Sir Zelman Cowan's statement that the hypocrisy of an authoritarian government is that it claims privacy for its own doings and allows none for its citizens.

The case for secrecy in any democracy is rarely justified, and increasingly we are seeing the principle of confidentiality used to shield the government from all criticism, especially in relation to controversial information they are worried public officials may disclose. Government ministers need to remember that the integrity of the Queensland health system is not just a matter for the government or even their health officials; it is a matter for the Queensland people.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.33 pm): I support the bill. It is another fine example of the Palaszczuk Labor government's outstanding achievements in health, but I will come to that later if I get the time. I did want to rebut or talk about some of the things that the member for Gregory raised in terms of his ongoing concerns with omnibus bills. I would urge the member to go and read any one of the 70 omnibus bills that were introduced into this House during the mercifully short time of the Newman government—

A government member: Seventy!

Mr KELLY: Seventy omnibus bills. There are many members on that side of the House who raised concerns about omnibus bills, but they seem completely oblivious to the fact that this is a completely normal and standard way of conducting parliamentary business not just in this parliament but in parliaments that use the Westminster system.

I want to spend some time on the contribution of the member for Mirani. He gave a fairly detailed description of the practice of ECT. This bill rightly provides significant improvements in protections for people who are undergoing ECT. Unlike the member for Mirani, I have not garnered my information from 4chan or some other conspiracy website. I have actually been involved as a nurse in the practice of ECT since the 1980s, not on a frequent basis but enough to have somewhat of an understanding of the context of ECT.

It disturbs me greatly when I see depictions of ECT in popular media which are wildly different to what happens in practice. The member cited some documents. I suspect, having looked at some other things that he has said in the past, these documents are of limited evidentiary value from a clinical perspective. The clinical evidence around the use of ECT is quite clear. Yes, it is controversial. Yes, it is certainly confronting for people to consider this concept. If I sat here and gave the House a detailed description of deep brain stimulation, of a knee replacement, of a coronary artery bypass graft or of what we do in a bone marrow transplant, that would also be pretty concerning for people. Most of the things we do in health are pretty unpleasant, and the consent around them is extremely important and is fundamental to healthcare professionals.

When a person is incapable and unable to consent, the protections around that are immense. One of the most important protections is the ethics and the professionalism of the healthcare professionals involved in the practice. It really disturbs me because, when I hear the member for Mirani talking, it is like there is this great conspiracy going on where nurses, doctors and allied health professionals are standing around when a patient comes in who is unable to consent saying, 'Oh great! What can we get away with with this person?'

I have been there when a patient has come in from a road accident unconscious with multi-systems trauma. We cannot seek consent from that person. We probably cannot seek consent from anybody around that person, but we know what that person needs. We are not conspiring against that person. I want to tell the member for Mirani and I want to tell everybody in the community that clearly there is a conspiracy going on in health care. We have been at it for thousands and thousands of years. We have been conspiring to make people live longer. We have been conspiring to try to stop people living with pain. We have been conspiring to try to cure all forms of maladies that afflict the human. It is a conspiracy I am going to continue to be a part of. Trust me.

Mr Skelton: You're the Illuminati now.

Mr KELLY: I take that interjection. This notion that ECT is different and should be treated separately to other types of procedures that we do in health care I think is deeply misguided. On the occasions when I have been involved in the practices of ECT—I have been in the theatre as well as caring for patients on both sides of that procedure—the outcomes that I have seen match what I have read in the literature around the effectiveness of the treatment.

I have literally seen people who were completely and utterly catatonic, completely and utterly unable to move their legs, arms or get out of bed, go through one session of ECT and regain full use of their bodies and in two sessions of ECT be well enough to be discharged into the community. If we are going to deny people the opportunity to have treatments that we know work—we may not know how they work, and that is not uncommon in health care either. We do not know how Panadol works, but I am sure you have all taken one—we would fail in our duty of care as healthcare professionals. I think this notion that we need to place ECT in a different category to whatever else we do in health care is wrong. It is ridiculous. We treat every single procedure that we do in health care with the utmost care and attention. It does not mean that procedures cannot damage you. It does not mean that we do not get things wrong. It does not mean that people intentionally set out to do the wrong thing, but more frequently they do the wrong thing through human error. Of course all of that happens. It is terrible and tragic when those things happen, but the vast majority of people who undergo ECT receive good outcomes and it makes a difference to their lives.

Turning to this bill, there are a couple of other things that I want to touch on. Firstly, the provisions around the Transplantation and Anatomy Act are really quite important. I was really pleased to have the Australian Breastfeeding Association based in my electorate for a number of years. It is sad that they moved, but they came to see me very early on in the piece. I am pleased to say that since their visit my office has been a breastfeeding-friendly office. That has only been taken up on a couple of occasions, but I am glad that when those occasions arose people were able to do that. We all know the absolute benefits of breastfeeding, and this provision will make it much easier to ensure that sick and preterm babies have access to breast milk. We also know how difficult it is for some women to breastfeed, and we know that putting other things in place at that time is perfectly acceptable as well.

You know you are charting the right course as a government when you have the member for Moggill calling us communists and the member for South Brisbane calling us crazy right-wingers. That suggests to me that we must be the party of the Sensible Centre. The member for South Brisbane will come in here and talk about a whole range of things they will never be able to deliver, and that is why I am proud to be part of a government that has introduced safe nurse-to-patient ratios and re-opened the health centre down at Wynnum. I want to acknowledge the member for Lytton and the fantastic campaign that she ran in relation to that. I want to acknowledge the satellite hospitals that are underway which are dealt with under the ministerial designation provisions of this bill. I want to acknowledge the introduction of nurse navigators, who have made a huge difference to people right across the state, including my mother. I want to acknowledge all of the great work that we have done in rebuilding the health workforce. I want to acknowledge the great work that the previous chief health officer and our Governor did in terms of rebuilding our capacity to respond to a global pandemic, because that was utterly decimated under the Newman government. If the previous chief health officer had not gotten into the ears of successive health ministers and rebuilt that system we would have been in a much, much more difficult situation. I am proud to be part of this government. We deliver in health care. We are going to continue to deliver in health care.

I was so pleased to hear about the number of new doctors who are in the rural training program. That should be something the member for Gregory celebrates—and I know he will—because it means more doctors where we need them: regional and rural Queensland. I look forward to those doctors. I think he said 56 or something like that. That is amazing. Even if we can get half of them to stay it will be a fantastic outcome and something that I am sure we are all very proud of. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr MOLHOEK (Southport—LNP) (4.44 pm): At the outset I would also like to acknowledge the great work rural health professionals do. My son is a rural health specialist in the seat of Gregory and currently the acting district medical officer in the Emerald Hospital as well. I believe that the Minister for Health was out there just a couple of weeks ago and popped in and said hello. It goes without saying that as a dad I am very proud of my son and daughter-in-law and the work they do in Queensland Health. I want to add to the many voices in this House who have commended health workers and frontline workers right across the state for their incredible hard work, their commitment and their

dedication through particularly the past couple of years and the challenges that they have faced in dealing with the pandemic. In many areas they have not had to deal with it but they have nonetheless had to be prepared, and just being prepared for the inevitable has created stresses and tensions for many of our health workers.

I rise also to speak in support of this bill. I note that the LNP is not opposing the bill and that most of the amendments and changes that are proposed are fairly uncontroversial. I want to pick up on the comments that the member for Greenslopes made around ECT, electroconvulsive therapy. The other day in a public hearing of the Mental Health Select Committee—I can talk about this as it is a matter of public record—a family came and shared very deep and personal aspects of their journey with their son. I am so grateful and humbled that they were prepared to come and share their story with us. I am sure they too would support what is proposed in this legislation by way of amendments.

They also raised with us the need for greater support for families who have family members with mental health issues, particularly in extreme cases where ECT is required. They reflected on the need for perhaps a centre of excellence to be established here in Queensland. There are services available, but there is no one central service that acts as a centre of excellence for those families who do have family members who need this sort of therapy. They certainly expressed the view that there would be benefits in having such a centre because there would be other families and specialist trained doctors, nurses and other allied health workers with the specialised skills to provide the best possible care.

The other issue in the legislation that I did want to touch on relates to the ability of allied health professionals to access the Viewer to achieve better health outcomes for patients. This issue surprisingly has come up a number of times through the health inquiry as we have travelled around the state meeting with health services and speaking with doctors, general practitioners and allied health workers. One of the challenges we have is that in areas that can ill afford a duplication of services, or have to order or require additional services or extra tests when the tests may well have already been conducted, there are significant issues around information flow. That runs across a range of platforms, including My Health Record and the actual records that are maintained by Queensland Health and the IT systems that they run. At times there also cases where patients are released from public hospitals, and when they go back to see their local GP a week or two later the GP has no information about their health visit because there have been significant delays in uploading or sharing discharge summaries and information. Right across the board, apart from the many other issues that are raised in this House from time to time, there certainly is a need for greater information sharing between the public health sector and the private health sector, particularly in regional, rural and remote Queensland, where services are really at a premium. That would also, on occasion, save duplication.

We heard GPs talk about occasions where a patient would come to see them, they would identify a need, they would refer them to the local public hospital because that is the only place they could have those tests undertaken in some of the remote and rural areas of the state, and then because of the system they would be required to make another appointment to see a GP within the public system, who would then arrange for the tests, and then sometime later the patient may go back to their private GP and those test results would not be available because of shortfalls in the system.

I probably digress a bit from the point of this particular amendment. It actually deals with the ability to share information in respect of mental health. The amendments also talk about information sharing with the Ambulance Service and privacy provisions. All of those things need to be in place, but we are in an era now where we have smart devices and we can access so much information. In fact, these days when you have a pathology test or X-ray, some clinics will send a password and a file to your phone and you can click on it, type a password in and control and maintain your own health records. There is certainly a need for the health system to take a bit of a leap forward, particularly in a state where resources are stretched and distances are so great. We absolutely need our general practitioners, public health doctors and allied health workers to have the best possible access to information.

The amendments deal with a range of other issues. There is quite a bit of detail around amendments to the Ambulance Service Act. I commend our frontline workers and paramedics for the work they do. Information is so important. On Monday of this week, representatives from the paramedics were at the public hearing into mental health and they said that information and data is important to them in their call centres. There has been a sharp increase in the number of people requiring mental health support and the demand from people with mental health issues. Some of those people are well known to the Ambulance Service.

I was pleased to hear that they have embedded within the service trained psychologists and workers who from time to time are able to access important information through the Viewer and other systems and then use that information to talk with the person on the phone and identify whether they are a person at risk and an ambulance needs to be dispatched or they are a person who has a tendency to call the Ambulance Service a bit too frequently. Given the challenges we have seen in the last two years or more with ambulance ramping and the demand on the Ambulance Service, anything we can do to improve the systems within the Ambulance Service and that sharing of information between the public health system is so important. That goes without saying.

I could talk for an hour about some of the issues within Queensland Health. They are well documented here in the House and they have certainly been well discussed in the media. It is a great privilege to be on the Health and Environment Committee. While we did not get to review this bill because we are busy with the health inquiry, I want to pass on my thanks to the committee that reviewed this and to the parliamentary staff for the work they continue to do. I acknowledge that it has been a trying time for everyone as some people have had to do their work remotely. Some of the committee staff have had to work from home and still provide information, resources and support. I pass on my thanks to them as well.



Ms HOWARD (Ipswich—ALP) (4.54 pm): I rise to speak on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. This bill amends a range of acts to improve the operation of our Health portfolio legislation and support the delivery of health services in Queensland. I want to thank the committee for the body of work they have done on this bill and of course our wonderful health minister.

Before Christmas last year, I had the opportunity to visit the Ipswich Hospital. I wanted to drop off some gift hampers to the frontline health workers to thank them for their service and commitment to the Ipswich community. While I was there, I visited the hospital's new 26-bed ward, which had just been completed and is now fully operational. Can I say how proud every single member of the staff was of this exceptional ward. It is the hospital's first new ward in seven years and it is part of the first stage of the Ipswich Hospital's \$166.9 million expansion project. The new 26-bed ward is a testament to the Palaszczuk government's proud track record of investment in health infrastructure and frontline services.

Much like our record investment in health, the amendments in this bill reflect our ongoing commitment to quality public health care for all Queenslanders and they deliver health legislation that meets their needs. The Palaszczuk government has a strong track record of passing health legislation that enhances Queenslanders' access to quality health care and promotes public health measures to keep people safe. You only have to look at the way we have managed the COVID pandemic to see that Labor governments put the health and safety of Queenslanders front and centre. You also just have to look at our track record of health legislation passed since forming government. When the LNP were in government for one term, they managed to pass only nine pieces of legislation related to health and they ransacked the public health and hospital system by sacking 4,400 health workers, including 1,800 nurses and midwives. There is some fantasy island stuff going on in here.

In the Palaszczuk government's first term of government, we reformed and rebuilt our public health system by passing 13 pieces of legislation relating to health care and public health. Since 2015 we have rebuilt Queensland's health system by employing 8,407 more nurses and 2,841 more doctors—and I will have my proud parent moment by saying that my daughter was one of them. This bill has undergone extensive consultation over a number of years with stakeholders from the medical, nursing, pharmaceutical, mental health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sectors, as well as government agencies and statutory offices.

Ambulance officers in Queensland are doing a tremendous job each and every day, responding to an ever-increasing number of callouts from the community and responding to the challenges brought on by the Omicron wave this summer. I join my neighbour, the member for Bundamba, in being very excited about the new ambulance centre that is being built. We are excited.

In order for ambulance officers to continue doing their job effectively, the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill will amend the Ambulance Service Act 1991 to strengthen safeguards around disclosing confidential information, as well as align confidentiality provisions with the Hospital and Health Boards Act. Differences between those two acts have caused confusion for officers regarding confidentiality obligations. Aligning the Ambulance Service Act with the Hospital and Health Boards Act will ensure consistency with regards to circumstances when confidential information may be disclosed—for example, in cases where it involves the protection, safety or wellbeing of a child.

Part of having an efficient and effective world-class health system is making sure our health workers are able to have access to timely and consistent patient information. This supports better coordination for patient care between public hospitals and community health practitioners. Under this bill, access to the Viewer—a web based patient data application—will be expanded to allied health professionals who are not employed by Queensland Health or registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. These allied health professionals include, for instance, audiologists, social workers, dietitians, speech pathologists, exercise physiologists, orthotists, orthoptists and prosthetists. Extending access to the Viewer will improve information sharing and collaboration between health professionals and improve the process of transferring patients from acute-care settings in hospitals to community care settings. This can only lead to better health outcomes and quality of life for patients in Queensland.

The Palaszczuk government takes its commitment to mental health services seriously. The demand for mental health treatment has never been greater, and we are responding to that need by bolstering our mental health services and infrastructure. For instance, we are investing in frontline mental health care by delivering a new 64-bed acute mental health unit in Ipswich and expanding the mental health co-responder program into more regions across Queensland so that patients experiencing a mental health crisis can get timely and appropriate support.

Just last week we announced an \$8 million pilot program called Q-MOST, which aims to enhance mental health support services for young people. This bill will amend the Mental Health Act to improve processes for mental health care patients and to promote the human rights and dignity of people with a mental illness by taking a rights based approach to mental health care in Queensland. The bill will amend processes for approving electroconvulsive therapy, ECT, for patients, and I want to make note of the contribution of the member for Greenslopes about ECT and just what it means.

Debate, on motion of Ms Howard, adjourned.

MOTION

Office of the Integrity Commissioner



Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (4.59 pm): I move—

That this House notes the reported concerns by the Integrity Commissioner with respect to the alleged interference by the Public Service Commission into her office and calls on the Economics and Governance Committee to immediately release all documents pertaining to this matter by close of business on 24 February 2022.

It is somewhat ironic that we have seen the Premier furious and upset about people casting their concerns about integrity into the public arena, but she has not shown the same fury and anger about the raids on the Integrity Commissioner's office. Therein lies a hint as to what is wrong with the information that is being hidden.

This motion is about getting information out into the light. I do not know all the information that is before this parliamentary committee. We have not seen those transcripts or those minutes to know what has in fact been referred there or what has been discussed there. That is part of the major problem here. When the Premier talks about matters having been referred and matters being before a committee, we do not know exactly what matters are before that committee.

Ms Grace: That is the point of the committee.

Ms SIMPSON: It is time it came out into the light. There should be no more of this shady darkness—

Ms Grace interjected.

Ms SIMPSON: I note that the Minister for Education seems to be happy with this. It is time that these committee records were released. It is a major issue when the office of the Integrity Commissioner for Queensland has been reportedly raided, a laptop has been taken and has been erased of very sensitive material and there are reports about her office having the security permissions changed. However, there are also reports doing the rounds, which I am concerned about, that when these public servants, these brave officers of Queensland, stand up and say, 'This is not right,' there is a black ops dirt unit of government that goes around briefing people against them, seeking to defame them in the shadows while the information that would clearly disclose what is going on is kept under lock and key.

The standing orders provide that if matters are not released by a published minute of the parliamentary committee they can be locked up for 30 years. We heard just this morning about the standing orders. That is why a number of years ago when the committees were reformed there was an understanding that more of the minutes of those proceedings should, by default, be done publicly. Information should be released more immediately. Instead, we have seen under this dodgy Labor government an effort to use the government controlled numbers in a number of committees to seek to keep under lock and key the debate that happens behind closed doors. That is not right.

It is also a dirty little secret that, under the standing orders, members can talk among themselves, as long as they do not talk publicly, which is just bizarre. It is about time that everyone has the information publicly and that orders are made to get this information out there. Stand up for the Integrity Commissioner. Say no to the black ops dirt unit that is trying to undermine her in the corridors and shadows of this government. It is a disgrace.


We have seen other brave public servants stand up and speak up—former public servants who have lost their jobs, who did not have a renewal of contract because this government did not want them, such as the former state archivist, who has spoken out bravely. This is not a political being; this is someone who upheld their duty to keep the Public Records Act, yet this government once again has sought to blacken his name. It is time there is an independent inquiry in this state that seeks to get to the bottom of and to fully inquire into all these issues.

The Premier has fake outrage when she claims these matters are before committees and she cannot talk about it. She does not want to talk about it, and there is a growing suspicion that her fingerprints are over this. Until we see that information, how will we know otherwise? Who took the laptop? When was it taken? When did the Premier know about it? When did the Premier know that there was a serious and significant issue with her Public Service Commission interfering in the role of the Integrity Commissioner? There are other senior, well-respected public officers who are speaking out, such as the Forensic Disability Service's former director, who also did not have her contract renewed and I believe was undermined by the then minister with defamatory comments publicly because she spoke out about interference in her role—

Mr SPEAKER: The member's time has expired.

Ms SIMPSON:—and she had written to the Premier and got no action.

Mr SPEAKER: The member's time has expired! I will give a general warning: you have an allotted time to speak; you will not take up further time from other speakers.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (5.05 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'notes' be omitted and the following inserted:

1. matters pertaining to the Office of the Integrity Commissioner have been referred to the Economics and Governance Committee and the Crime and Corruption Commission for their consideration and/or oversight;
2. the convention and standing orders to allow parliamentary committees to undertake their work without interference; and
3. the importance to uphold the Fitzgerald principles and doctrine of separation of powers under the Westminster system in Queensland.

The amendment to the motion reflects the respect that this House rightly has for our parliamentary committees and the committee process. We on this side of the House respect the vital work that our committees do in ensuring government integrity and accountability, but clearly those opposite do not. We understand that it is not the place of this chamber, or any member in it, to interfere with the operation of committee business and investigations. Those opposite do not. We understand that good government means having independent checks and balances. Those opposite do not.

The motion the member for Maroochydore has moved today demonstrates a complete disregard for proper parliamentary process and procedure. The modern parliamentary committee system that we have in Queensland today is a direct result of the Fitzgerald reforms of three decades ago. To overstep the mark, like those opposite would have us do, is a slap in the face of the integrity of the Fitzgerald reforms and is a slap in the face of a committee that your own members are on.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Southern Downs will not interject directly to any member.

Ms FENTIMAN: As much as I am sure some of those opposite would like to, we on this side of the House refuse to go back to the days of Joh Bjelke-Petersen. We refuse to water down our committees and stamp out their independence by commanding them to do our bidding. We refuse to discard the fundamental tenets of our democracy by ignoring the separation of powers. I know that the member for Kawana has a little bit of trouble with that one, but I am sure he will begin to grasp it eventually. Only Labor governments have stood up for integrity in Queensland.

I know I have said this a lot over the last few days, but let's again go through some of our reforms, particularly around donations: restored \$1,000 as the donation threshold after they made it \$12,000; implemented real-time disclosure of donations; banned property developer donations; and reintroduced electoral expenditure caps after those opposite abolished them. How did they vote on those important integrity reforms in this House? They voted against each and every one of them.

We should not be surprised, though; those opposite have a long history of trashing the committee process. Nobody who respects the work of our committees would come in here at midnight and sack the PCMC. No-one who respects our committees would do that. They would not have appointed and then repeatedly reappointed the chair of the Crime and Misconduct Commission without consulting the committee. They would not have tried to cut two weeks of estimates hearings to two days. Clearly, the LNP have absolutely no respect for our committee system, and the proof of that is the motion they moved. Two days for estimates! That would mean less time for the member for Kawana to reveal his failure to declare meetings with lobbyists. Time and time again the LNP have demonstrated they have no respect for parliamentary process and for our committee system.

Mr Lister interjected.


Mr SPEAKER: The member for Southern Downs is warned.

Ms FENTIMAN: It is not just committees they went to war with when in government. They went to war with the judges, the lawyers, the doctors, the teachers, the nurses and the firefighters. They would have gone to war with kindergartens had they had half a chance.

The matters that have been raised have been appropriately and properly referred to the Economics and Governance Committee and the CCC, so let's let them do their job. This is the correct course of action, it is the process that members are expected to follow and it is the process that we have properly followed. Again, this motion is nothing more than a cheap political stunt and it is just another opportunity to try to get some headlines, to get in front of the cameras.

The Leader of the Opposition continues to roll out his half rate shadow cabinet, but Queenslanders remember their record in government and we remember that the Leader of the Opposition stood with Campbell Newman.

(Time expired)

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (5.10 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the shadow minister for integrity calling on the Economics and Governance Committee to release all documents pertaining to concerns of the Integrity Commissioner about alleged interference by the Public Service Commission—alleged interference where a laptop was seized by the Public Service Commission. We have heard those opposite say that it was not seized, it was just provided to the CCC at their request. However, the Deputy Premier and others are being a little bit misleading with their characterisation of what went on. It has been reported that the laptop was taken from the Integrity Commissioner when she was ordered by the Public Service Commission to stay home. It was taken from the Integrity Commissioner when she was ordered to stay home presumably so she could not interfere or object to the seizure of the laptop.

It has also been reported that the Crime and Corruption Commission only requested the laptop be provided to them after the laptop was seized and after a complaint was made by the Integrity Commissioner. The question has to be asked why the most senior members of the Palaszczuk Labor government are again trying to distort what really happened. Why did the Premier feel the need to seek to discredit the Integrity Commissioner by referring a two-year-old allegation about her in the days following a complaint from the Integrity Commissioner about interference by the Public Service Commission involving the Premier?

What is on the laptop that has made senior members of the Labor Party so nervous? Is it information that explains why senior Labor figure and former Brisbane lord mayor Jim Soorley received a brown paper bag with \$2½ thousand in it to lobby the Minister for Transport and Main Roads even though he is not a registered lobbyist? Is it information about the links between Anacta and the

government? Did the Integrity Commissioner find out what went on in all of those commercial-in-confidence meetings between Labor lobbyist Evan Moorhead and ministers like de Brenni, Bailey and the Deputy Premier? Who knows?

What Queenslanders do know is that the Palaszczuk Labor government is nothing but an arrogant, tired, third-term government who are only interested in looking after themselves and their Labor mates; an arrogant, tired government who have given up governing for all Queenslanders and now more than ever are just focused on the maintenance of power and looking after their mates. Queenslanders deserve better.

Queenslanders deserve better than the hollow excuses presented by a weak Premier. They deserve better than ministers who are not held to account when they do the wrong thing. Queenslanders deserve better than a culture that seeks to hide any information that is inconvenient for the government. Queenslanders deserve a full-blown commission of inquiry into the corruption and maladministration that permeates through this government. Every day the Premier ignores them, Queenslanders know that the Premier cares more about looking after her dodgy Labor mates than she does about governing for all Queenslanders.

Over recent weeks we have seen all manner of inquiries initiated by the state government, each a response to mounting pressure from the media and the public to do something.

Mr SPEAKER: Time—

Mr MICKELBERG: I think I have five to go, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: No, I believe that the time may have been incorrectly entered. You have two minutes to go. Thank you.

Mr MICKELBERG: Unfortunately, as we so often see from the Premier, it was too little too late. Every single announcement has been crafted to solve a political problem or a media problem rather than to solve what are very clearly significant failings of governance and integrity within this Labor state government. Who is advising the Premier on these things? Who thought that appointing the Premier's own director-general to complete a review was a good idea, a director-general who the Premier said yesterday she meets with every single day? How could Rachel Hunter ever hope to be able to independently investigate the integrity crisis engulfing this government?

When that did not work, someone came up with a bright idea to appoint a Labor donor and a former Labor Party member to complete a review into corruption and integrity failings of this Labor state government. It is pretty hard to imagine a scenario where the Premier's staff did not know that Peter Coaldrake was both a Labor Party donor and a Labor Party member in the past, particularly given it is on the public record in the most recent term by the member for Gympie, who spoke about it in 2018. If fact, if members type it into the parliament's internet search engine, it is one of the first things to come up.

I do not know Coaldrake, but I do know that no inquiry examining this Labor government's integrity failings and the interactions between Labor lobbyists and the like can be considered independent in any way when it is being conducted by a person who donated a considerable sum of money to the same politicians who have now appointed him and who was a member of the same Labor Party. The Premier keeps saying that the Coaldrake review will be able to investigate these issues, but the facts are that Coaldrake has no power to compel witnesses and will not be investigating individual complaints.

The Premier keeps saying that the Crime and Corruption Commission is a standing royal commission, but we have seen in recent days how the former deputy premier has fought to suppress a report of the Crime and Corruption Commission because it is inconvenient. How can Queenslanders have confidence in this government and their integrity failings when they clearly do not have confidence themselves?



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement) (5.15 pm): I rise to support the amendment moved by the Attorney-General, which speaks to the core of the dysfunction and ignorance of the LNP. Let me reiterate. The three points made in the amendment are: matters relating to the Office of the Integrity Commissioner have been referred to the Economics and Governance Committee and the Crime and Corruption Commission for their consideration and/or oversight; the convention and standing orders allow parliamentary committees to undertake their work without interference; and the importance to uphold the Fitzgerald principles and the doctrine of the separation

of powers under the Westminster system in Queensland. These points call out the flagrant disrespect and contempt that the LNP hold for our trusted institutions in Queensland. These bodies, committees, conventions and standing orders exist to perform important functions unfettered and without interference.


The mock outrage of those opposite shows their disbelief that these trusted institutions can perform their duties. That shows that the LNP are either guilty of stupidity or deception. I say the 'mock outrage' because those opposite are either deceiving the Queensland parliament and the public when they feign ignorance about the duties of these bodies, which have been established to investigate and are already investigating these matters, or those opposite are guilty of stupidity for genuinely not knowing the roles and functions of these established institutions. Which is it: stupidity or deception?

The same question could have been asked when in 1988 the then premier of Queensland, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, failed to answer Michael Forde's questions during cross-examination in the Fitzgerald inquiry about the premier's understanding of the doctrine of the separation of powers under the Westminster system. The then premier's response was, 'The Westminster system? The stock?' He went on, 'I don't know which doctrine you refer to.' Finally Bjelke-Petersen said—

Well, the separation of the doctrine that you refer to, in relation to where the Government stands, and the rest of the community stands, or where the rest of the instruments of Government stand. Is that what—?

I think it is easier here to ascertain that the then premier was acting deceptively or stupidly, but perhaps it is less clear cut for the modern-day LNP. The continual calls of those opposite to release information which is currently being investigated either by the CCC or the parliamentary committee reeks of wilful ignorance, deception and political opportunism. Rather than letting Queensland's trusted institutions perform their functions unfettered, those opposite would prefer to politically interfere with the independent statutory authorities or established parliamentary committees—statutory authorities that are commonly formed out of a belief that certain objectives of government are better pursued free from political interference. The Crime and Corruption Commission is a perfect example. We have more examples than that one from 1988 of how those opposite regard our trusted institutions and established institutions such as the statutory bodies and parliamentary committees.

When last in government, Campbell Newman's chief media adviser called the then acting head of the CMC to arrange an op-ed in support of the LNP government and its failed VLAD laws. When in government those opposite also sacked the parliamentary oversight committee of the then CMC in the middle of the night after committee members questioned the level of the government's interference in the then CMC. The LNP shows a pattern of disrespectful and political interference into Queensland's trusted integrity institutions. It shows this pattern in a period dating back over 50 years, but now we see that it is all mock outrage from those opposite. The real question is: is it deception or is it stupidity? I think that that is up to the people of Queensland to judge. There have been plenty of examples over the past seven years, including not much longer than seven years ago, when they made that judgement. For some I think it was deception; for others it is clearly stupidity.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (5.20 pm): I want to pick up on one thing from the previous speaker, the member for Sandgate, in relation to trashing integrity and trashing parliamentary procedures and values. I stand to be corrected, but I believe it was the member for Sandgate who was the self-appointed architect of the changes to CPV with 18 minutes notice. To come in here and to—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr MINNIKIN: Yes, 18 minutes notice; I take the interjections from the entire LNP. Normally at this juncture during the parliamentary sitting week sometimes this five o'clock to six o'clock debate is referred to as the one-hour scream, but I am going to be pretty measured and careful with the words I use tonight because it is pretty obvious that when you look at the body language this week of particularly the backbench of the ALP they know that this whole notion of integrity is really starting to bite. Most people do not really care a great deal what goes on in this chamber, but do members know what? When it comes to issues like the laptop, in my electorate this particular issue is the one that is resonating. I absolutely support the motion moved by the member for Maroochydore because, at the end of the day—

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr MINNIKIN: They only accept people of integrity, so I am sure we could probably get you in, member for Sandgate. The reality is that we have a situation here where this can be absolutely cleared very quickly because the Attorney-General said that it is the committee system that rules supreme. I believe it is the floor of parliament right now that rules supreme. We are the ones, collectively, who

make the rules here. This is the House. The committees have an important role to play, but this is where we make the decisions. The choice is pretty straightforward for those opposite including the member for Sandgate, who purports to be the purveyor of all things historically correct in relation to Queensland, but I would take him up on the facts and suggest that it is probably fifty-fifty what he actually gets right.


The simple fact is the best way for this to be cleared is for these documents to be released, because there are many questions that are yet to be answered. I will go through a couple of them. What did the Premier know before she referred the matter to the committee? Did she know that the CCC had previously investigated the matter? What were the matters that were referred to the committee? How old were the matters that were referred? It goes on though: has the committee finalised its investigation? Were there any adverse findings from the committee? Information that has come out of question time in the last couple of days is absolutely damning on the office of the Premier. Everyone is innocent until proven guilty—we all know that fact—but the reality is that there are questions that need to be answered here.

The simple fact of the matter is this: what goes around can sometimes come around. I am old enough to know what it was like to go home and watch the TV channels back then—Seven, Nine and Channel 0 before it became Channel 10 and then later the ABC—to see what had unfurled that day at the Fitzgerald inquiry. It was damning and the Fitzgerald report absolutely needed to be done at that time. Here we are now 30 years later where we have a three-term government where hubris has well and truly kicked in. It has certainly kicked in. There was one particular former member who thought that this was her own personal playground. No-one is above the law and no-one is above—

Government members interjected.

Mr MINNIKIN: I have not named the member. The fact of the matter is that no-one is above the law and no-one is above this chamber. The simple facts of the matter are this: we have an integrity crisis which goes to the heart of the way this government is now operating and the essential question that needs to be asked is what difference does that make to everyday Queenslanders' lives? Everything, because when we have a government that is so focused on trying to cover-up, shuffle things around, have a Clayton's investigation—you know, the investigation you have when you are not trying too hard to have a real investigation—the people of Queensland suffer, with ministers not being on top of their briefs and delivering the services that Queenslanders, who pay their taxes, deserve.

(Time expired)

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (5.25 pm): We have now had 15 minutes of fluff and absolutely no substance. I will not be lectured to by those opposite when it comes to integrity because when you look up the Queensland dictionary under government corruption you see the National Party of Queensland, you see a picture of Sir Joh, you see a picture of Driscoll, you see a picture of Russ Hinze. There are too many and I only have 4½ minutes. There is a reason those opposite have been sitting on the opposition benches for the majority of the time since 1989, and that is because Queenslanders remember just how corrupt they were.

When Queenslanders had a little lapse in memory in 2012 and elected those opposite for one term, did they not give the people of Queensland a sharp, quick reminder about how they conducted this state and how they were with regard to integrity? What did those opposite do to the integrity commissioner at the time, and I will use the then integrity commissioner as an example? They sent the chief of staff of Newman to give him an ill-informed, abusive rant. That is how they treated the integrity commissioner back then. How did they treat the CMC? What did they do when they first got into government? Some 26 staff were axed straightaway. They wanted to cut the CMC off at the knees from doing its investigations into important misconduct and corruption in local government and government.

What else did those opposite do? They appointed and then reappointed an acting chair because they wanted to bypass the Crime and Misconduct Commission, and how badly did that turn out with that acting chair? That acting chair was then investigated for misleading the parliamentary committee. What did they do to the parliamentary committee when it started investigating it? They sacked it in the middle of the night, and then what did they do? Did they appoint another independent chair? No, they went to a government chair—the former LNP member for Capalaba—and that was a complete disaster. Who can forget him getting on radio and talking about his drug and alcohol abuses and that just because he had found God and an LNP membership that was all wiped away? He admitted to having day-to-day dealings with bikies. He also admitted that he picked up the phone to the sergeant-at-arms—this is who they put in charge to oversight the CMC—

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr BROWN: I knew you would bite at this.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Everton, you are warned under the standing orders and the member for Capalaba is warned under the standing orders for directing your comments directly back at the member.

Mr BROWN: They put a man in charge who had the direct number of the sergeant-at-arms to get a bikie member disciplined. What would a regular punter do? They would call the cops or the CCC. What did the former chair do? He picked up the phone to the sergeant-at-arms to get the bikie disciplined. That is what they thought of the parliamentary committee. They put that man in charge of the oversight, and I am glad they only had one go at it.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nanango!


Mr BROWN: We only have to look in this small corner of Queensland—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

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

Mr BROWN: They love this. We only have to look at the small corner of Redlands City at every single level to see the integrity crisis and corruption that happens at every level of government. There is a very good reason the federal government does not have a federal ICAC, and we only have to look at the federal member for Bowman. He awarded a \$550,000 grant to a local Rugby club connected to his staff but did not declare a conflict for—guess what—female change rooms for a club that did not have any female teams. Guess what? That club still does not have any female teams and not a single toilet has gone in there.

Let us look at the local government area and the report that was doctored by an LNP mayor. She was caught out not putting into an annual report her misconduct charge and had to come back in and amend it. She failed to declare a conflict of interest when it came to planning a power plant in her backyard in Mount Cotton. Every single level of government—federal, state and local government—when it comes to the LNP, just as in Redland City, are corrupt to the core and lack integrity. I will not be supporting this motion. I will not be lectured to when it comes to integrity in this state. There is only one side that stands up for integrity in this state and that is this side of politics.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (5.30 pm): Hypocrisy is in the DNA of the ALP, is it not? Five minutes is really not going to be enough.

Mr SPEAKER: That is all you are going to get, member.

Mr HART: Keith Wright, Bill D'Arcy, Gordon Nuttall—all of them crooks, if those opposite want to see some crooks. The Attorney-General comes in today and negates the whole motion. Years ago that was not possible. The Labor Party changed the rules of the parliament to allow for this to be negated. Our motion tonight is about the Integrity Commissioner and the interference of the PSC. There has been a computer taken and wiped. What was on this computer? Maybe it is this draft report of the former state archivist. I table that for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Queensland Government: Report, dated 5 September 2017, titled 'State Archivist report to Hon. Leeanne Enoch, MP, Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy, and Minister for Small Business: Statutory investigation into allegations of unauthorised disposal of public records by Honourable Mark Bailey MP, Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Bio Fuels and Water Supply' [185].

Earlier today the Minister for Transport said, 'There is nothing to see here. It has all been investigated,' but when one goes to page 2 of this document there are 1,199 private emails that were investigated by the CCC and the state archivist; 660 of those were public records, 355 of them were required to be kept for seven years. This document says Minister Bailey had no authorisation to dispose of these 660 public records and their disposal, if actioned, would be deemed to be occurring without appropriate authorisation which could be a breach of section 13 of the Public Records Act. The CCC then assisted the minister to undelete his email. They 'unbroke' the law on his behalf. Otherwise this minister would be in jail with his other crook mates. The minister supposedly gave all his emails to the CCC. The state archivist's report shows that not all of those emails went to the CCC. The former state archivist, in fact, asked the minister for copies of his emails.


Mr BAILEY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence to those inaccurate remarks and ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence. Will you withdraw?

Mr HART: I withdraw. The former state archivist asked the minister for those emails. He was able to provide them because they were not in his private email account anymore, they were hidden somewhere else. The former state archivist, in his report, says that the minister was not forthcoming with everything to the CCC. That would intimate that the CCC probably did not have all the information they needed to make their determination, but the state archivist did and what happened to him? He was sent packing. He was ordered back to New Zealand.

This document makes for really interesting reading. People should have a look at the time line. It says Minister Bailey deleted his account 16 days after being told by the Premier not to use his private email accounts, and 11 days after his office was told, there was a RTI out to try to obtain that.

The Labor Party likes to instigate inquiries that they can control. When they cannot control it what is the next best thing? A scapegoat. Rob Setter appears to me to be the scapegoat. The other night Rachel Hunter sent out an email to a select group of public servants who could help her to protect Rob Setter. They have been friends for over 30 years apparently. Rob Setter has a two-year extension to his contract. He is on \$600,000 a year. If the Labor Party scapegoat him he is in for a \$1.2 million golden handshake to walk away. What better could you ask for? I would love \$1.2 million to walk away from this place.

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (5.35 pm): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the member for Maroochydore and support the amendment moved by the Attorney-General. When it comes to the issue of integrity there is a really well-worn saying that I am sure we are all familiar with: integrity is doing the right thing when nobody is watching, but for reasons I may never understand, those opposite work in complete contrast to this sentiment. Not only do they not do the right thing when nobody is watching but they do the wrong thing when everybody is watching. Let us look at their track record on integrity. I will start with the most recent estimates process which illustrates their disregard for the systems of integrity in our political processes. In the lead-up to estimates the LNP were fairly consistent in arguing that they ought to be afforded adequate time to scrutinise ministers and senior public servants. Maybe I should not say this, but I completely agree with them. They should have time to hold the government to account. It is this necessary tension that creates good government and creates a public service that serves Queenslanders.


The Legal Affairs and Safety Committee that I am proudly a part of ensured that the opposition were, in fact, allocated a majority of the time during the estimates process. But I have to say I was genuinely taken aback by the shallow nature in which the opposition explored many of the big issues across Queensland's justice system. They were all over the place. Members were on their phones, they were whispering, walking in and out and continuing to focus on areas that were outside of government priorities and programs. To publicly decry the lack of time allocated and then to not use the time allocated to its fullest advantage does not sound like acting with integrity to me. But, okay, that is how they act when they are in opposition so I will cut them a little bit of slack. Surely when they were in government they acted honourably. Well, computer says no. I literally googled, 'Does the LNP have integrity?', and it came back, 'No.' That is not to say that when they were in government they did not do much, they achieved a lot. They sacked 14,000 public servants, cutting services delivered by some of their most experienced and capable people. They stood down entire teams, programs, units and divisions, many of which had been building industry relationships for decades. Many had been evaluated and proven to work. It did not matter; they were wound up.

What is really concerning is the approach they took to Queensland's political regulatory framework. We have already heard today how they sacked the PCMC late into a parliamentary sittings evening. Their reason? They did not like how the committee was monitoring and reporting on the CMC at the time. But wait, is not the point of a parliamentary oversight committee to provide oversight? The sacking of the PCMC was a remarkable event, unprecedented in Australian political history at the time. But do not take my word for it. Political analyst Paul Williams said the mass sacking was a remarkable event, unprecedented in Australian political history at the time. He described it as testing the boundaries of democracy.

This is a party that has voted against every Palaszczuk government integrity measure that has been put up: real-time disclosure laws, computer says no; property developer donation ban, computer says no; electorate expenditure and donation cap laws, computer says no. Not only does this motion demonstrate their duplicity, but it demonstrates they are out of their depth. It is clear that those opposite do not understand parliamentary process or integrity. It is clear that those opposite just want to come in here and stir things up when the matters they are referring to are already before the appropriate bodies. The Fitzgerald inquiry was a watershed moment for Queensland. It introduced improved

administrative structures, governance and systems for our state. It highlighted the importance of the separation of powers under the Westminster system and now those opposite are wanting to erode those systems under the guise of greater integrity. It would be funny if it was not so serious.

This week we heard the Premier say that she acted on Solicitor-General advice and referred certain matters to the appropriate bodies upon receiving that advice. She did that because our Premier respects the institutions of the parliament and the law. That is the appropriate thing to do, it is the prudent thing to do and it is what should be done. To argue for something less than that response is inappropriate. Those opposite now come in here wanting the Legislative Assembly to interfere with the committee process—a process set up to scrutinise legislation and other matters; a committee system introduced and set up by a Labor government. Those opposite should be ashamed. There is a convention that when matters are referred to a committee they are considered by the committee and the committee reports back. I say to those opposite: let the committee do its job.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (5.40 pm): I must say that one of the bad things about speaking on such a motion later down the list is that often my colleagues have already covered some of the points I was going to raise and I do not want to go back over them. However, one of the benefits is that I get to hear some of the inane contributions—some of the silliest and most ridiculous contributions—from those opposite that I can then respond to. Therefore, before I get to the substance of the matter, I need to take the member for Sandgate to task.

When talking to this motion the member for Sandgate spoke about the issue of the separation of powers. That has to be the biggest furphy and the biggest red herring ever because this motion speaks to directing a parliamentary committee—a committee of this assembly—to do something at the order of the parliament. It does not involve the executive and it does not involve the courts, yet the member for Sandgate came in here and tried to muddy the waters by talking about the separation of powers. I think I heard him also pose a question about people being perhaps deceptive or deliberately stupid. I am going to pose that question to the member for Sandgate. Are you being deceptive or deliberately stupid for posing that red herring about the separation of powers?

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Scenic Rim, direct your comments through the chair.

Mr KRAUSE: I will. Is the member for Sandgate being deliberately misleading or stupid in trying to muddy the waters when it comes to the separation of powers and this motion? This has nothing to do with the executive and nothing to do with the courts. It does not reflect well on him. Let us never forget that he is the fellow who brought electoral law changes to this House with 18 minutes notice. Do not talk about respect for this institution when it is your government that brought in electoral law changes—perhaps it was the member for Redcliffe and she deserves disapprobation for it too—with 18 minutes notice. The member for Sandgate said that we should let the committees do their jobs. The committee was not allowed to do its job in that instance. That was a disgraceful performance. Again I ask: is the member being misleading or deliberately stupid?

While we do not need to focus on that tonight, I will not be lectured to by the Labor Party. This is the same Labor Party that made it legal to lie to parliament. That is what they did years ago, in the Beattie years. They made it lawful to lie to parliament to protect Gordon Nuttall and Keith Wright.

Mr SPEAKER: Member, I ask you not to use that word. It is unparliamentary.


Mr KRAUSE: I withdraw and I apologise for straying into unparliamentary language. This motion really is a simple matter. If the Economics and Governance Committee received a referral against the Integrity Commissioner and decided to take no further action, as has been reported in the media, in the interests of transparency and given the situation we now have those documents should be released. That may not always be the case. Sometimes there are situations when an investigation goes on and, especially if no further action is taken, documents should be kept private. However, the Integrity Commissioner herself has said she would be open to having those documents released. There is no reason for them not to be released. In fact, fairness demands it: fairness for the Integrity Commissioner, fairness for all Queenslanders and fairness for this parliament given the issues and questions raised about integrity matters in Queensland.

How are members of this House meant to inform members of the public if we do not know what has gone on? The chairman of the committee said, 'I'll show you the documents.' That is all well and good, but under the standing orders I cannot inform members of the public about those sorts of things. That is why we have moved this motion tonight. The failure to release those documents raises a really important question: who are the Labor members of the committee protecting? On Monday the member for Mermaid Beach gave a press conference at which he said what he was going to do in that committee meeting. We do not know what went on in that committee meeting. It was a private committee meeting

and we have not seen the documents. Why won't the Labor members of the committee release the documents? Just as we may well ask what was on the laptop, we want to know what is in the documents. The Integrity Commissioner should have the benefit of seeing what was in the complaint about her.

There is no doubt that this refusal is all about protecting the Premier who controls the government and controls the committees through her members. So much for integrity. So much for transparency. What was in the documents? What was on the laptop that was taken from the office of the Integrity Commissioner? This is a cover-up. This is a cover-up in committee, it is a cover-up in this parliament and all Labor members opposite should hang their heads in shame.

(Time expired)

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (5.45 pm): Wow! There really is a benefit in following on and hearing what others have to say. The member for Chatsworth said that the backbenchers' body language spoke volumes and I can tell members why. It is because of the waffle that we have had to listen to from you lot over the past few days.

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, member.

Ms RICHARDS: I rise to oppose the motion moved by the member for Maroochydore and support the amendment moved by the Attorney-General. We on this side of the House believe in integrity and transparency in this state. Honestly, the audacity of those on the other side to come into this House and lecture our government on integrity beggars belief as does the mudslinging that has been going on. I would love to see a show of hands from those on the other side of the House. Of those opposite, 17 members—50 per cent of the LNP opposition—stood shoulder to shoulder with Campbell Newman and 12 of them sat around the cabinet table as ministers, including the Leader of the Opposition. I will tell the House what they did: they took a wrecking ball to Queenslanders' confidence in the government's integrity, standards, transparency, accountability and good governance. Those on that side have form and you cannot rewrite that history, I am afraid. They have not practised what they preach and yet, as I have said, they have the audacity to come into this place and lecture our government on integrity.

Our government came in and picked up the pieces after the failed Newman government. It was one of the worst governments in history, level-pegging with the Bjelke-Petersen days. It was a government so marred with controversy that its reputation today in all of our electorates continues to tarnish those opposite. It was a government whose integrity—

Mr Saunders interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Maryborough, I ask you to withdraw that comment.

Mr SAUNDERS: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Be very careful. You are close to a warning.

Ms RICHARDS: I have spoken a lot in this place about track record and legacy because they really are the most important things that we leave behind us when we leave this place. Let us look at the integrity legacy from the Newman days: cutting staff from the CMC, sacking the PCMC in the dead of night, calling the acting head of the CMC into the premier's office to get him to write an opinion piece to support their cases, failing to delegate responsibility for right-to-information requests to their departments—and yet they want to talk about keeping Queenslanders in the dark. Wow! Look at your track record. Seventeen members on that side of the House know exactly what they did.

The headlines spoke volumes about what was at the core of their LNP values when it comes to integrity. The irony that we have the member for Maroochydore come in here today with this motion, disrespecting convention and the processes of this place, is absolutely beyond hypocrisy. We heard the member for Burleigh talk about hypocrisy. I will send you the definition for the—

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

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member, please resume your seat. There is a point of order. What is your point of order?

Ms SIMPSON: I take offence. The member is ignorant of the rules but—

Mr SPEAKER: Stop trying to make a statement.

Ms SIMPSON: I take offence and ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: I did not hear the exact statement, but I ask you to withdraw as the member has found it offensive.

Ms RICHARDS: I withdraw but, Mr Speaker, I take offence—

Mr SPEAKER: No, unconditional withdrawal; there is no 'but'.

Ms RICHARDS: I give an unconditional withdrawal. I take offence at the member for Maroochydore's comments about me.

Mr SPEAKER: In terms of providing commentary, the member has asked—

Ms SIMPSON: I withdraw.


Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. Member, you have two minutes and 15 seconds remaining.

Ms RICHARDS: When we talk about standing up for the Integrity Commissioner, we only need to look at what was done and said. There are articles about Campbell Newman's chief of staff's abusive rant on the outgoing integrity commissioner and about calls for a judicial inquiry after the Queensland government sacked the PCMC. Honestly, the fake outrage on that side, based on their track record and their legacy, beggars belief.

Talking about public servants, of the 17 members sitting opposite how many stood up for the 14,000 sacked public servants at the time? There was silence; we heard crickets. Again, in terms of their track record, they voted against real-time disclosure laws. Those opposite demonstrated how much they value integrity in this state by voting against real-time disclosure of donations, electoral expenditure and donation cap laws and laws banning property developer donations. They took that all the way to the High Court. They established the Diamond Members Club after they knew the donation laws had been passed—just incredible!

Labor will always respect the need for strong, independent integrity measures. We know that they are fundamental to a functioning government. Minister Grace spoke well this morning when she quoted Brittany Higgins saying that actions speak louder than words. Our achievements are in stark contrast to those of the LNP. We established ministerial guidelines, the ministerial code of ethics, the original legislation enabling freedom of information, whistleblower protections and the Office of the Integrity Commissioner. I know our Premier. Queenslanders know our Premier. We know that she is a person of the utmost integrity. She always has been and she always will be. Seriously, we have listened for two days. If members of the LNP have something, they should put up or shush up. There are appropriate mechanisms. If they have an allegation, they should make it. They should stop wasting parliament's time.

(Time expired)

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (5.52 pm): Trust is one of the most important qualities that the Queensland public looks for in its government. Once that trust is lost, it is extremely difficult to win it back. Is there any greater example of a lessening of trust than what happened with the Bligh government in 2009? Within a few short months of election the government sold the assets of this state—a government that had the Premier and the Treasurer as part of its cabinet.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Minister for Public Works and member for Theodore, you both are warned for quarrelling across the chamber.

Mr MANDER: In the words of that well-known philosopher Benny Elias, it's déjà vu all over again. The alleged interference in the Integrity Commissioner's office is symbolic of the integrity issues plaguing this government. The fact that the government will not support this motion tonight shows that the integrity rot has set in and will not go away.


As is the case with all governments that eventually have serious integrity issues, they start off small and grow as people get bolder and bolder. When you have the Treasurer of the state claiming that he found the Binna Burra bell, emerging from the parched, fire damaged woods in pristine clothes—when you get away with that sort of thing, you start thinking you can do other things. When you have the police and corrective services minister using families of homicide victims as political pawns, you start thinking you can get away with a bit more. When you have ministers using private emails to conduct government business, you start getting bolder and think, 'We can get away with anything.' It gets bigger and bigger and we get more significant breaches of integrity.

What about when the Deputy Premier as health minister bodgied up a poll to justify the name change of the Lady Cilento hospital? When the Premier's chief of staff receives a government grant for his private company and then resigns mysteriously a couple of months later, you wonder why they do not start getting bolder and bolder—as they have. Then we have the queen of them all, Jackie Trad: buying properties that will appreciate in value because of government development; ringing the CCC

chair on a Sunday to talk about a matter before the CCC that involves her; and, of course, the interference in the appointment of a school principal. The Premier came into this place and talked about respect for the institutions of this state, but she will go down in history as the only Premier in Australia to have been held in contempt of parliament. That shows that these words are totally and utterly hollow.

What happens when you continue this form and breach integrity over seven years? They think they can get away with it, but eventually it comes home to roost when good, honest public servants in control of bodies that oversight the integrity of the state come out and say, 'Enough is enough.'

As my colleague the member for Scenic Rim said, members opposite try to mix the separation of power with the role this parliament plays. The parliament is not a subcommittee of the Economic and Governance Committee; the parliament is the ultimate committee. We represent the people of Queensland and we decide what should happen. What they are crying out for now is what the Premier promised seven years ago: transparency and openness. I do not know about my colleagues, but now when I travel anywhere this issue is on everybody's lips: 'What the heck is happening in there? Why do we have to wait 2½ years for an election?' Unless those opposite support motions such as this, they will continue to be known as the most corrupt, dirty, rotten government since the Bligh government.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (5.57 pm): Wasn't that a rant? We have heard a number of statements from those opposite. The member for Maroochydore said that 'the House is in control of its own destiny', the member for Chatsworth said that 'the chamber reigns supreme' and we just heard the member for Everton say that we are 'the ultimate committee'. All of those statements are correct, but with that power comes responsibility. I have not heard anyone taking responsibility for what they are asking this chamber to do today. This motion has to be taken seriously. Of course, I support the amendment moved by the Attorney-General and oppose the motion moved by the member for Maroochydore.

The motion moved by those opposite asks for all documents to be released by the Economics and Governance Committee by close of business on 24 February. It does not call for all documents other than certain serious confidential documents that are protected by law or should be redacted—just all documents. They do so knowing what they are asking to be released. They do so openly knowing what they are asking.

The Premier made a statement in this House that the matters she referred to the Economics and Governance Committee had been assessed as a public interest disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act. The act contains protections for whistleblowers to encourage disclosure of wrongdoing in the public sector. The protections provided by the act include confidentiality protections which extend to the identity, occupation and address of a person who makes a disclosure as well as the subject matter and detail of the matters disclosed. Breaches of those confidentiality protections constitute offences which attract serious criminal consequences under the act. The committee was informed that the matters had been assessed as a public interest disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

That is what we are debating here today. I hope the members of the crossbench are listening to this as well. We are being asked to not respect the processes of a committee that can make those decisions based on all of the information that it has before it—the respect that we have always shown parliamentary committees—and override that and ask for a public interest disclosure to be revealed in this chamber and to remove that person's right as a whistleblower to protection and use the privilege of this House to do it. I will not use and abuse that power the way those opposite are asking us to.

Aside from the objects of the act which are to promote the facilitation of public interest disclosures for wrongdoing in the public sector and afford protection from reprisal to persons making a public interest disclosure, I go to the standing orders that we are operating under in this chamber today. Schedule 5 relates to public interest disclosures. We can release public interest disclosures under privilege and not be caught by privilege and contempt. It goes on to say—

... but members are called upon to adhere to these guidelines so as to ensure public interest disclosures are properly investigated, that those making disclosures are protected and that no person's reputation is unnecessarily damaged before the investigation of the allegations has been finalised.

It is wrong to suggest that that person's rights under these standing orders and under public interest disclosure should be ignored because we want to see what is before the committee.

We have to look at this behaviour because it is not just related to this motion. Yesterday the member for Kawana said—

I call on Premier Palaszczuk to order the immediate release of this Crime and Corruption Commission report.

We will just say to the CCC, 'You ignore whatever else is going on. I know it is your report. I know you are an independent body, but we are going to the Premier to say it should be released.' They are doing this in opposition. The people of Queensland should look very closely at what they are proposing to do in opposition because imagine what they would do if they were in government. We have seen this arrogance before.

What we need to do is respect process. We need to respect the integrity bodies. We need to ensure that if anyone has any evidence 'they put up or shut up', stop prosecuting things with trial by media and make sure that they put it to the relevant authorities. I am summarising what the member for Kawana said.

(Time expired)

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

AYES, 49:

ALP, 49—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, Richards, Russo, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

NOES, 37:

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

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

Pairs: Pugh, Nicholls; Ryan, Robinson.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

AYES, 49:

ALP, 49—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, Richards, Russo, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

NOES, 37:

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

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

Pairs: Pugh, Nicholls; Ryan, Robinson.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House notes:


1. matters pertaining to the Office of the Integrity Commissioner have been referred to the Economics and Governance Committee and the Crime and Corruption Commission for their consideration and/or oversight;
2. the convention and standing orders to allow parliamentary committees to undertake their work without interference; and
3. the importance to uphold the Fitzgerald principles and doctrine of separation of powers under the Westminster system in Queensland.

HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 181, on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (6.10 pm), continuing: ECT can be an effective treatment for some types of mental illness, including severe depressive illness, as we heard from the member for Greenslopes earlier. It is a regulated treatment meaning there are additional approvals needed before it can be performed. For people needing ECT who are unable to give informed consent, the bill safeguards and enhances their human rights. This will be done by requiring the Mental Health Review Tribunal to have regard to a person's capacity to consent to ECT, even if the patient's doctor has assessed the patient as having given informed consent.

The tribunal must also have regard to the views, wishes and preferences of adults to the greatest extent practicable, replacing the current best interests test and aligning the Mental Health Act with the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000. These protections will also extend to people subject to treatment authorities, forensic orders or treatment support orders. These new requirements respect a person's right to dignity and self-determination while promoting access and necessary and sometimes lifesaving mental health treatment.


The Public Advocate has come out in support of these amendments, stating in their committee submission that they ensure that a person's views, wishes and preferences are now taken into account when it comes to mental health treatment and further 'recognises the right of everyone to express their position and encourages supported rather than substitute decision-making'.

Another amendment to the Mental Health Act expands the categories of authorised persons who may apprehend or transport a person absent from an interstate mental health service—for instance, in circumstances where a clinical response is more appropriate and does not warrant police involvement. The bill will also allow the Mental Health Review Tribunal to approve an international transfer of involuntary patients to ensure they can access support from family and carer networks overseas. Currently the tribunal can only approve interstate transferrals.

The bill makes necessary amendments to the Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003 to streamline licence processes for businesses and local government. We know that COVID has hit some small businesses hard. Personal appearance services affected by this amendment such as tattoo parlours and body-piercing services will certainly benefit from the improved flexibility of these new changes which will extend licence renewal time frames and allow business owners to easily restore their licences.

This is a robust bill. I thank the committee again for their work. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Before I call the next speaker, I remind members of the list of members who are on a warning: the members for Southern Downs, Everton, Capalaba, Nanango, Springwood and Theodore.


 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (6.13 pm): I rise to give my contribution to the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. Before I start, I would like to point out that again we are presented with an omnibus bill that lumps together a number of acts. This is disappointing. This type of bill denies members their due right to debate each change to an act individually and vote on their merits. For example, I fully support some amendments under this bill but not others, yet I am expected to vote either yes or no en bloc on these issues under one bill.

The amendments to the Ambulance Service Act to remove the requirements for the QAS Commissioner to be no older than 65 years of age is good news. This gives the QAS the ability to retain valuable knowledge and experience of members in our community who still offer a lot. They are out there at all hours of the day and night and they do a valuable job.

The amendments to the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and the Criminal Code Act 1899 allow students registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law who have undertaken a clinical placement with a health service to assist in a termination of pregnancy. It is no secret about my position and that of my fellow KAP members on abortion. I am completely against these changes. Under these changes there are serious questions about whether assisting with abortions will be compulsory for students to finish their clinical placements.

We are aware that other members have raised this today, but the committee has recommended that the minister outline in the second reading speech that students of medicine or other health studies will not be forced to participate in pregnancy termination. The recommendation went further to state that the level of detail in the explanatory notes and statement of compatibility about this part of the bill could lead one to question the nature of 'assistance' expected of students, acknowledging that a

mechanism for a conscientious objection is in place. Despite the government stating that they had checks and balances in place when the abortion bill was passed in this parliament, here we see the start of the watering down process. I wanted to bring that to the attention of the House.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (6.15 pm): I rise to support the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Like many members on both sides, I wish to acknowledge the incredible work of our health workers. I especially want to recognise those who worked in the vaccination centres. I know you, Mr Deputy Speaker Kelly, worked shifts in the vaccination centre, reassuring people and helping them to understand that getting their vaccination meant that they were less likely to spread the disease, less likely to catch the disease and, if they did catch it, less likely to be severely ill and much less likely to die.

I spoke before of the enormous feeling of guilt I would have if I had not done everything I could in order to save those around me or to not spread it to those around me. That is the attitude that we should have in this place—that is, that we are doing it for others, and the evidence is really clear that it is also much better for yourself. I want to thank those who worked in the vaccination centres, especially those who worked in the Logan Entertainment Centre. When I took my two teenagers there, it was an extraordinary honour to see people from all walks of life, from all social climes, lining up together because they were doing something for Queensland. They were met with fantastic professional staff in the Logan Entertainment Centre.

I want to recognise the Queensland Health workers at the Grand Plaza car park in Browns Plains. I did put my two cents worth in to advocate for this. It was fantastic that Metro South and the health minister's office made vaccinations accessible. They had people giving vaccinations in a tent at the Grand Plaza car park at Browns Plains. People were queued up. Again, everybody from all over Browns Plains were coming to together to make a fantastic contribution. Making vaccinations easy meant that vaccination rates shot up. I can see the member for Algeester nodding. I know she was instrumental in getting that centre up and running, as well as the fantastic Acacia Ridge centre, which I know she is really passionate about.

Having vaccinations available at schools was fantastic. When it was made available at Park Ridge State High School or Browns Plains State High School or Yarrabilba, it made an enormous difference to those communities. It meant that teenagers were the ones who were dragging their parents to the high school to get vaccinated, making their return to school even safer. We have seen fantastic results with the return to school. Unlike the member for Mirani, who implied things but did not give facts about a particular school this morning, I rang around all the schools in my electorate. I am pleased to say that all of them reported really great results.

All of them had very few people absent, but what was more important was that they were facing less sickness. That is an incredible credit to the teachers, teacher aides and support staff, because they were taking the advice of Queensland Health and taking care of themselves, which meant that even in the midst of a COVID breakout there were fewer teachers who needed to be replaced due to sickness than during normal times.

We still face challenges ahead, and that is why I also want to recognise the hardworking people at the testing centres. I do not think you did any testing, Mr Deputy Speaker. I want to talk especially about Gary Cully, the principal of Parklands Christian College. When they had their outbreak, this inspirational leader asked all of the community to follow instructions and get tested. I have spoken before about that fantastic school and the way they include the entire community around them. They certainly were inclusive in keeping the rest of Park Ridge and Logan safe by getting their school community—which is an inclusive and fantastic community—to do the right thing and get tested. The Logan West and Browns Plains community health centres did a fantastic job, and let's not forget the Logan Hospital where thousands of people were tested, including myself, during that period. That meant we were doing our bit to detect cases and stop it spreading.


So many people have raised doubts about things they learn on the internet or from a friend. When they ring me I really want to speak to them, and I always take the time to ring them back because I want them to do the best thing they can to keep their community safe. I want to talk about the common sense of the PCR test. I have read papers about PCR tests and I have watched the videos they have pointed me to. I have looked at all of the science behind it, but I want to talk about the common sense of it. In the United States up to one in three PCR tests were positive. At times in Queensland it was one in 50,000 because we knew we did not have it, so the claim that PCR tests have a lot of false positives is disproved by that fact alone. High rates amounts of COVID in the United States resulted in a very

high number of positive tests. Unfortunately, they took that fact from the internet and their American friends and said, 'There's a high percentage of false positives,' but because of our successful closure of the borders we had as few as one in 50,000 at times. It is quite clear that using the same standards for PCR tests could produce completely different results.

Furthermore, ordinary Queensland health workers were doing contact tracing. They would reach out to those around them and say, 'Who have you been in contact with?' In cases where they found people who also tested positive on a PCR test they would test positive on a rapid antigen test but then would get quite sick with a severe respiratory illness that did not meet the clinical descriptions of their other illness. I want to say to those people who have doubts about PCR testing in particular that we can look at it as a commonsense thing. We can look at the results of that. It is really important that you tell your friends it is common sense that PCR testing works, your government is doing great things with contact tracing, and if you do have a positive test you can make a difference.

The member for Mirani talked about mental health and the really difficult issues of ECT. I want to recognise the member for Southport and the member for Greenslopes, who spoke so passionately about ECT. This is not easy. It is quite a confronting process. It is not done as a first choice or a flippant choice: it is done with a lot of critical guidelines. Certainly there have been lessons learned from its use in the past and they are very careful about how they do it. As we heard, for some patients it makes an enormous difference. It is a very confronting thing to know that there are non-verbal children who cannot give full consent to the standard doctors require. The committee heard about a really powerful case and I urge every member to read it. It is not easy; I do not pretend that it is. If we are to leave that person trapped in a non-verbal and difficult situation facing enormous mental hurdles and not be able to do what the medical community and parents think is the best course of treatment—and this is certainly true of other consent situations with children who are non-verbal, children who have problems communicating or children who have disabilities—if we are to rule out treatments that we think are the best and can get great outcomes then we are going to hurt ordinary children. Although I recognise that this is not an easy issue, I have confidence that we will use ECT carefully to get better results, especially for those children whom I know we all care about.

I want to speak about the Viewer. I had a very confronting case in my electorate. An elderly gentleman lost his daughter because she was in an accident interstate. She was given a drug that conflicted with a drug she was already on for another condition and it caused her death. If that information is readily available to medical practitioners they can make the best decisions. I am a big supporter of having that information out there, especially in that time where you are too stressed or in such a state that you cannot describe it to the doctor. I commend the bill to the House.


 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (6.26 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. Like many speakers before me I also want to acknowledge the work of our health staff and professionals in my electorate of the Burdekin, who have certainly been challenged over the last couple of years with this COVID pandemic.

By far and away health issues comprise the majority of the workload that comes through my electorate office. When you consider that for four long years we have been battling to get a permanent doctor at Clermont and places like Dysart and Collinsville, you start to appreciate the challenges of providing a health service in rural and regional communities. For four long years Clermont has been serviced by locums, with the Mackay health service having to scramble at times to find locums to go and service that community. That community used its own initiative and formed Clermont4Doctors, and Janelle Otto and her team are currently out there doing a fantastic job. It is an indication of just how difficult it is and the lengths these communities are going to to attract a doctor that they have sought and secured funding from a mining company and the local community to try and put together a package to attract a doctor to that locality.

I have listened to the contributions of those opposite, who have crowed long and loud during the course of this debate about all of the extra doctors in Queensland, how fantastic it is, and the Rural Generalist Pathway, but that does not necessarily apply in places within my electorate. There is no medical superintendent at Clermont, Tieri or Dysart. The one doctor at Dysart starts at 7 in the morning, finishes at 11 at night and works all weekend. There is no second doctor at Collinsville. The doctor there is overworked. It got to the stage where I brought the federal government's National Rural Health Commissioner through my electorate last year. She was mortified at the workload these doctors are subjected to and the fact that after four years we are still calling for permanent doctors in localities across some of these areas.

When you talk to Clermont4Doctors—I know they have been working recently with the Mackay health service to come up with an alternate model—it comes down to putting together a package that will attract doctors to these areas that will meet their needs. It is one thing to get their interest; it is another thing to attract them to move to these localities and stay and work in those localities. It is not as if you can just drive up the road 10 minutes to the next hospital or to the next doctor. If you live in Clermont you have a four-hour drive to Mackay, an hour plus drive to Emerald. When you have elderly residents who do not normally drive being forced onto the highway to drive to those localities, you appreciate just how dangerous that is. It disappoints me that at the last election this government made a commitment to put dialysis chairs in Clermont and then reneged on that commitment. If you need to access dialysis and you are forced to drive to Mackay or heaven forbid Townsville, then that becomes a huge burden on those individuals and their families.

I want to highlight today that we still have a rural doctor crisis. We still have enormous challenges in securing permanent doctors to these localities across Queensland—not only in my electorate but in a lot of rural areas of Queensland. There needs to be a real commitment to address that. As I often say, just because you live in the bush, it should not mean that you are subjected to a lack of health services when you need them. We are trying to attract people to the bush, and one of the first questions they ask is what are the medical services and what is the schooling. If you cannot put a tick in those two boxes, people will not go there. I am not about to give up that fight. On behalf of Clermont4Doctors, I want to reaffirm here tonight the need for a permanent doctor to be placed in these localities, in particular Clermont, because they have done it so tough for so many years.

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (6.31 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 amends various acts within the health portfolio and covers a diverse range of policy areas. Issues addressed include the management of confidential information, access to the Viewer, the assistance provided by students for termination of pregnancy procedures, the use of human milk for sick infants and licensing arrangements for personal appearance services. It proposes a series of more substantial amendments to improve the operation of the Mental Health Act 2016 in Queensland.

The Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and the Criminal Code Act 1899 are proposed to be amended to allow students registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law who are undertaking a clinical placement within a health service to assist in the termination of a pregnancy. Under the Criminal Code Act 1899, it is an offence for an unqualified person to perform a termination of pregnancy or to assist in a termination. The bill makes consequential amendments to the Criminal Code to ensure students who are authorised to assist with the termination of a pregnancy are not captured by the Criminal Code offence. Currently, students are not permitted to assist in the performance of terminations. According to the explanatory notes, this has led to 'implementation challenges for hospitals as students on clinical placements must be excluded from any activities relating to terminations'. This in turn limits the ability for students to learn and gain experience in performing terminations'. The amendments will ensure students have lawful opportunities to gain knowledge and training in terminations in preparation for their entry into the professional workforce, and I commend the bill in this respect. This training and knowledge are incredibly important to building capacity and safe access to terminations in regional and rural areas, which I am very passionate about.

The last parliament passed the Termination of Pregnancy Act to allow for the decriminalisation of abortion in Queensland. It was an historic moment for this parliament and for women and children right across Queensland. However, it was an absolute tragedy recently when the Marie Stopes termination clinic in Rockhampton closed last year. That clinic provided safe and accessible termination of pregnancy services for women in Central Queensland for years, so it was devastating that, even after the last parliament passed an act to make termination of pregnancy a legal medical procedure in Queensland, our regional clinic closed.

The closure of our clinic means that women and children have to travel to access a completely legal medical procedure. The closure of this clinic impacts not only women and children but anyone who has sex. Sex is part of human nature and, as long as no form of contraception is 100 per cent effective, unplanned pregnancies will occur. All of the challenges of travelling to access procedures—like getting time off work, privacy from partners, family or domestic violence relationships, and the financial cost of travel—make it very difficult for women and children to get access to termination services when they need them. I am determined to ensure that termination of pregnancy services in regional Queensland are restored and improved for regional women and children.

Whilst I support the amendment in the bill to enable students to gain the knowledge and skills for termination of pregnancy procedures, I have concerns about the committee's recommendation No. 5, particularly the parts which require Queensland Health to offer alternative study options for students

who express a conscientious objection and for Queensland Health to ensure students 'feel supported' in exercising a conscientious objection. I do not agree, because the student would not be actually performing the medical procedure. The student, as confirmed by Queensland Health and outlined in the committee report, would merely be providing care as a student health professional to a person undergoing a legal medical procedure. They may be consulting with the patient, pre-surgery preparation, medical advice, post-op care or aftercare for a medical termination in the days after the medicine is administered. The International Council of Nurses adopted its code of ethics in 1953 and it states—

The nurse's primary professional responsibility is to people requiring nursing care.

Similarly, the doctors' code of ethics specifically states that doctors must 'respect the patient's right to make their own health care decisions'. Students would not be required to undertake the surgery but only to observe and provide care, so I do not believe the conscientious objection provisions really should be required in line with the codes of ethics of the nurses and doctors. There is also no clarity around the type of termination of pregnancy procedure that students would be able to object to. In accordance with the committee's recommendation, not only would students be able to decide they do not want to observe a doctor prescribe a medical termination or support a woman or child in the aftercare, they would also be required to 'feel supported' for making that decision. Where is the patient focus? Where is the commitment to helping that woman or child feel supported?

There has also not been any clarification about when a student is able to decide that they object and the impact on a woman or child they are observing the treatment of. There is nothing stopping a student from, right in the middle of a consultation with a patient, deciding they suddenly conscientiously object. Imagine how frightening and intimidating that would be for the patient who is seeking an already uneasy and fully legal medical procedure.

This bill also seeks to amend the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979 to exclude human milk from the definition of tissue in the act to ensure sick and preterm infants can be efficiently provided donated human milk to prevent or treat serious health conditions. This act currently prohibits trading in human tissue, such as buying tissue or advertising relating to buying and selling tissue, and rightly so. The prohibition on the trade in tissue is intended to prevent trafficking in human organs and tissue for transplantation.

However, the current definition of tissue in the act does not clearly exclude human milk. This has led to uncertainty about the application of the act to the legitimate use of human milk. Human milk is an incredibly important treatment for preterm babies—and all babies, might I add, not just preterm babies—and any delay on the part of hospitals sourcing human milk could have serious health implications for these infants.

In fact the use of the term 'purchasing' human milk in the explanatory notes interests me because human milk is currently donated to milk banks, hospitals or direct to the infant's parent or carer across Queensland—not purchased. This amendment seeks to remove human milk as a tissue for the purposes of the Transplantation and Anatomy Act and it will continue to be regulated under the Food Act 2006. I understand that the two operating milk banks will not be impacted by the amendment, as it will merely clarify the application of the Transplantation and Anatomy Act. I would love to see more milk banks across Queensland, and I hope that this amendment improves the efficiency and availability of human milk for babies in our hospitals across Queensland.


We do not have a milk bank in Central Queensland. I was fortunate enough to visit the milk bank at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital a couple of years ago. It was quite amazing to see women across South-East Queensland donate so selflessly to that milk bank to help preterm babies and other babies who need human milk in our hospitals. I thank the staff of our milk banks in Queensland for the work they do helping to ensure that those babies get access to that milk.

While I am on my feet, I take this opportunity to thank all of the healthcare workers who have worked so incredibly tirelessly and diligently over the last two years through this pandemic. I know that they are exhausted and that they have had a really rough time, but they have done so well to help keep our communities safe. I thank the people who work in our testing clinics, the people who work in our vaccination hubs, the nurses and doctors in our COVID wards and right across the hospitals, the GPs in our GP clinics and their nurses, the pharmacists and pharmacies who had an awful time over the last couple of months trying to source RAT tests whilst the community was so desperate for them, and also all of our paramedics who supported our healthcare system. Some people in my community who were COVID positive were transported from their homes to hospital by paramedics. Those paramedics are at risk when they are transferring those patients from their homes to our hospitals. We cannot forget

them when we are thanking our healthcare heroes for the work they do to keep our communities safe. They put themselves out there to keep us safe. They put themselves at great risk of transmission of COVID-19 and other illnesses every single day in the work that they do.

I thank the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service in particular. The acting CEO, John Burns, has done a great job whilst the former CEO, Steve Williamson, has returned to the UK and whilst we keenly await the arrival of our new CEO, Dr Emma from New South Wales. We are very excited to have her, particularly given her experience in emergency medicine in Western Sydney. I know that the board chair, Paul Bell, and deputy chair, Dr Lisa Caffery—I congratulate Dr Lisa Caffery on her recent PhD Award at CQUniversity—are excited with respect to the recruitment of Dr Emma from New South Wales as well. Thank you again to all of the healthcare heroes in Central Queensland. I look forward to this wave receding.

I also thank the teachers, as well as all of the education workers, who returned to school. They have done the right thing. We are seeing some absences, but not huge amounts of absences because people are doing the right thing, including teachers. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (6.41 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. I want to thank the State Development and Regional Industries Committee. This is a very diverse and eclectic bill. They have done some great work with stakeholders. I understand there was some targeted consultation on a draft bill with stakeholders, including representatives from the medical, nursing, pharmaceutical, mental health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sectors, as well as government agencies and statutory office representatives. It is great to know that with such a diverse field there was some generally very good support for the amendments that have been proposed.

I was looking at the list of the 10 acts being amended by this bill, just to improve the practical operation, I guess, of Queensland's health portfolio. There is the Ambulance Service Act, the Hospital and Health Boards Act, the Mental Health Act, the Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act, the Radiation Safety Act, the Termination of Pregnancy Act, the Criminal Code Act, the Transplantation and Anatomy Act, the Corrective Services Act and the Water Supply Safety and Reliability Act. There are several of these acts in particular that I would like to speak to, if time allows. The message to me from seeing such a diverse range of amendments was just how much hard work has been happening in the health system on top of, and in spite of, the enormous burden which has been placed on it by COVID in the last two years. It filled me all over again with admiration for the work of our health workers in so many different ways, either those working directly for Queensland Health or the many health and allied health professionals who have been part of that.

I have to start with a big congratulations to the Minister for Health, the member for Redcliffe, who has stood up nearly every single day since she took over the portfolio from the previous health minister. Both of them have shown leadership and encouragement while they have had that enormous responsibility of helping to steer us in the right direction and make sure we were safe but also make sure that all of these other things could keep on going. I have so much admiration for both of them. I want to say thank you on behalf of my local community for everything they have done.

I also want to take this opportunity to shine a light on the ambulance workers and the allied health professionals—all of the people who are part of all of these acts and the works undertaken—who just kept on going with enormous stress around them, probably having far fewer resources than they normally would. We are just so fortunate in this state that we have people like that who are able to operate in probably a much easier environment than many of their colleagues in the other states. Certainly none of us wish upon anybody some of the stories we have heard from some of the other states, and certainly from around the world, and the enormous strain on the healthcare system, even pre Omicron, of having so many people dealing with deaths and terrible illness, including ICU placements. It is an experience that has just been huge for all of those people.

Quite aside from those people, I really want to thank the hospital workers and those in Queensland Health who have also been involved in the COVID response who do the housekeeping behind the scenes to make sure the world still ticks over with all the things that need to be done.

I thank the paramedics and the general practitioners. The member for Keppel was just talking about her local GPs and their staff. The pressure on them has been absolutely enormous. Many of my local GPs have relayed to me the stress they and their amazing staff have worked under. I want to call out their efforts and say thank you very much for keeping that community response so strong.

I also want to talk about a couple of other businesses and organisations. I have QML Murarrie in my electorate. Many people might know about that. It was the place you went to knowing you were going to get a really good and efficient response: it would turn things around quickly and it was going to be really reliable. Unfortunately, it was almost a victim of its own success and professionalism because when the Omicron wave hit it was one of the centres where people lined up for hours on end, and some quite unfortunate incidents happened there. I just want to say a big thank you to all of those staff at QML.


I was very fortunate to visit there. Before COVID hit was the last time I had been out there for a full visit. They do a huge range of testing. The strain they were under during that period was absolutely enormous. I want to say thank you and congratulations to them. I also say thank you to the other businesses in the complex. They certainly felt the impact of having so many people queued up for testing during the Omicron wave. I know that they were very patient and tolerant and they understood what was going on, but it nevertheless had an impact. I want to say thank you to all of those Metroplex businesses.

A number of members have talked about teachers. The work they have done to make sure our kids have had uninterrupted learning is amazing. I was talking to a number of local teachers in the two weeks we delayed the children going back to school, and every teacher I spoke to was not complaining. They were not saying anything untoward; they just could not wait for the kids to come back. Those are the sorts of teachers we have in our state. We are so lucky.

I want to thank my electorate office staff. I am sure many other members feel the same. There has been a lot of anxiety in the community around COVID. It is only just now that my electorate office staff are saying to me that they feel like people are starting to ring about matters other than COVID. They can see it coming off. If the staff of any other member around the state are like mine—and I bet they are—they have really copped a lot. There is obviously a lot of anger out there, too, from a certain section of the community. There have been many weeks when my staff have been in tears. They are the most beautiful people; they do their job because they really care and they want to help people. I want to say thank you to Anne-Marie and Madonna, and also to Patrick, who is filling in at the moment, and the other volunteers who have been in my office. I really appreciate it, as do the people who have contacted my office.

I also want to give a big shout-out to the people who are working in businesses where people have been abusive towards them. We launched the Be Kind campaign to encourage the best in people and to be kind if they are going into a business. People might not happen to agree with the government mandates and they have the right to choose not to be vaccinated, but it does not give them the right to treat people poorly. Unfortunately, I still hear far too many stories from young people particularly who are working in retail or the hospitality sector who are being abused. I want to say thank you to them for working so hard to do their job and putting up with that sort of behaviour. I also thank their employers, who try to look after them. I encourage everybody to continue to be kind.

I also want to give a really strong mention to Dana and Caleb from Everyday Office National at Stafford. Jimmy Sullivan, the member for Stafford, took me out there. They are doing clear masks so that kids with special needs and other people can see through those masks and actually connect with people. They are just a couple of the many wonderful people dealing with COVID.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (6.51 pm): I rise to make a couple of points on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. One section of the bill amends the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and the Criminal Code. Whenever we talk about these things it needs to be done carefully and in a considered way. I am seeking the minister's assurance that these provisions will be enacted the way they are written.

This relates to the recognition that any student who may be involved in a procedure or may be requested to be involved in a procedure has the absolute right to exercise their right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, just as other health practitioners do. Under no circumstances should it cause any difficulties with their studies or their grades. I do not think anybody should be compelled to be involved in a medical procedure that goes against their conscience. I seek the minister's reassurance verbally that under no circumstances will that happen to anybody in Queensland on any occasion. That is fundamentally important when we are looking to modify this particular bill. Students who are learning how to save lives should be protected from acting against their conscience under any circumstances.

I am also interested in making sure people's rights and freedoms are protected in another area. I am a supporter of the sharing of medical information amongst medical professionals so that people can receive the very best treatment and all medical professionals are aware of people's circumstances, particularly if a patient is unable to communicate or family members cannot be contacted and things

need to be done in a rush. I speak of the part of the bill that deals with the Viewer. I would like to ensure that someone who does not wish their medical records to be shared and wants to maintain some privacy around their medical records will also be protected within that system. I absolutely support the medical records being available, but over and above that support I think the patient's right to privacy is fundamental and I would very much like to ensure that that is protected. Those are two things on which I would like to hear from the minister to reassure us that those protections are in place.

Another part of the bill talks about mental health. Forensic patients in terms of mental health is a very difficult thing to manage. The rights and obligations that we as a community have around those patients are fundamental. The people who work in those facilities have a very difficult time managing some of the circumstances that arise. In my electorate we have a forensic ward at Ridley on the Baillie Henderson campus. I have visited that facility. On some occasions it has been a difficult facility for people to work in. In the past there have been security issues which have put nursing staff in fearful positions.

Whenever we are considering provisions surrounding forensic mental health it is very important that this House takes clear note, is very transparent about what it is we are trying to achieve in their favour, and ensures that the processes are there to both protect their rights and ensure they are receiving the treatment that is necessary. I see the bill does that and I am comfortable with what is proposed in the bill. Toowoomba is a place where these patients will come. If problems or difficulties arise, my office is one of the places that will be contacted. I would like to make sure we are getting the legislation correct in and around those forensic patients.

The Baillie Henderson site where Ridley is located is a wonderful site. Queensland Health has 180 acres of land there and it is a wonderful opportunity for us to build a new hospital for Toowoomba. Toowoomba desperately needs a new hospital, although the committee I am currently on is looking at the causes of bed block. There are some things we can do to improve bed block. The simple facts are that the main structure of the hospital that we depend on now is reaching the end of its useful life. Because it will take a number of years to build this facility, it is time now to fund this facility and get on with it. The heritage of the site should be protected. Anything we do should protect the history of the Baillie Henderson site and the historic buildings there. We need a new, modern facility that is fit for purpose to serve the people of Toowoomba and the Darling Downs.

I know that the budget is tight. Again, I look to the minister and the cabinet to seriously consider a PPP process so we can get on with this job. I do not want to see a situation for my community where people lose their life because we do not have the medical facilities available. At the moment the hospital is one of the best performing hospitals in Queensland. The staff do an immense job but they are under pressure. The local ambulance staff do a fantastic job, but we find them ramping. Whilst we can do some things to mitigate that in the short and medium term—and that may well lead to some aged care expansion—the most important thing we can do is look to take that pressure off by building a facility that is fit for purpose and has the built environment that our doctors, nurses and other medical professionals need in order to provide the healthcare services we so desperately want to see delivered on the Downs.

Currently there are a lot of people on the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme who travel to Brisbane to see specialists, receive treatment and do other things. Whilst I fully understand that that may well continue, that skews the numbers in terms of where the need is. It shows that those procedures are taking place in Brisbane, so people might think, 'We need more services in Brisbane.' Maybe we do not; maybe we need those services to be delivered closer to where the patients live. The Toowoomba Hospital looks after a lot of people from the Western Downs. A lot of those people do not want to go to a big city to receive their treatment.

Whichever colour of government it is, we know that this facility will have to be built. We cannot keep limping along with the built environment that we have. Doctors and nurses are performing to the absolute maximum they can and COVID has shown where there are some stresses in the system. It is clear that the hospital is now beyond its use-by date, and that is only going to get worse. For my community's sake, the Baillie Henderson campus needs to have the new hospital built on it and it is quite comfortable with that being done by a PPP, if that is what was decided by the government. I think the people of the Darling Downs are not as interested in how it is funded; they are just interested in it being funded and built.


This bill makes sure that people's conscientious objections are respected, makes sure that people's privacy rights are respected and makes sure that those forensic patients who are in the care of the state at a facility such as Ridley are being looked after. These things are all fundamentally

important to the people of Toowoomba and my electorate of Toowoomba North, as is a new hospital for us in Toowoomba. It is desperately needed and I implore the minister to seriously look at it in the very short term.

Debate, on motion of Mr Watts, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Social Housing


 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (7.00 pm): Five years ago the Labor government announced a so-called \$1.8 billion investment in social housing. Over that same period of time the social housing waiting list has gone from 29,000 people to 50,000 people—a blowout of 70 per cent. How has the government responded to that crisis that we have at the moment for our most vulnerable people? Despite all of those grand announcements and despite the promise for major investment, five years after—that is halfway through this program—the number of social housing bedrooms has increased by less than one per cent.

Out of all of our local government areas, in 22 of those local government areas the number of social housing bedrooms has actually gone backwards. Brisbane—a city the size of Brisbane—has had a miserly 59 extra social housing bedrooms added over the last five years. We have heard different members of the cabinet get up in here at different times and talk about how they are a champion of the working class, how they are a champion of the vulnerable and how they will build the social housing that is required. The evidence suggests the opposite. This is data that comes directly from the department of housing given to us through a question on notice answered by the department.

Let us have a look at some of the electorates that the ministers represent. In the minister's own electorate over the last four years there have been five extra social housing bedrooms added. What about the former minister, Minister de Brenni from Springwood? Over that period of time there have been six extra bedrooms added. What about the Treasurer, who waxed lyrical a couple of sittings ago about how this is a government that really sticks up for the vulnerable? In his electorate there has been a 0.4 per cent increase—an increase of two bedrooms—over the last four years.

Turning to Minister Grace from McConnel, there has been no addition; it has gone backwards by 12 bedrooms. What about the minister who is the member for Gaven who talks about the federal government and blames it? In her electorate there are 34 fewer social housing properties than there were four years ago. In the Deputy Premier's electorate there are 15 fewer. Worst of all, in the seat of Inala—the Premier's seat—there are 102 fewer social housing bedrooms than there were four years ago. This government's housing policy is a hoax and vulnerable Queenslanders are the victim of its inability to produce and provide social housing.

Rockhampton Electorate, Apprenticeships


 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (7.03 pm): I had the pleasure of welcoming 12 new apprentices undertaking their training at the Ergon depot in Rockhampton. Across Queensland there are 500 apprentices at Ergon and Energex currently doing their training. Energy workers support communities across Queensland during natural disasters including storms and cyclones, restoring power in dangerous conditions, showing their dedication and exceptional standard of training. Energy apprentices are also the forefront of Queensland's transformation to a renewable energy superpower. Queensland's publicly owned energy companies have a 9,500-strong workforce which is at the heart of the economic activity and prosperity of the state. The Palaszczuk government is keeping Ergon and Energex publicly owned to continue investment in skills and training and regional jobs. The Queensland government continues to invest heavily in training to equip more Queenslanders with the skills they need for the jobs of both emerging and traditional industries. We have invested \$320 million over four years to continue the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative and \$80 million a year beyond that.

Under Stronger Choices, the LNP tried to privatise our publicly owned electricity companies. Privatisation will only result in higher prices, fewer jobs in the regions and worse safety outcomes. This is backed up by the royal commission into Victoria's devastating Black Saturday bushfires which found that its private network had not taken on one single additional new apprentice in 10 years and, as a result, a lack of skills and a lack of investment led to tragedy.

It was not only the energy sector that the LNP wanted to destroy. It also shut down the QBuild depots. A lot of good people lost their jobs. The Palaszczuk government has rebuilt QBuild to create secure employment and develop trade skills for Queensland's future. The Rockhampton depot was

reopened in 2020 and QBuild has restored the existing depots across the state, providing facilities for a growing number of field staff. Since then, QBuild has hired 40 new apprentices and 150 trade qualified staff. In December QBuild launched its latest recruitment campaign for an additional 90 tradies and 20 apprenticeship positions to be filled in 2022. Interviews are now underway, with successful applicants to start in March.

Queensland Building and Construction Commission

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (7.07 pm): The QBCC has completely failed the people of Queensland and the sham inquiry that the minister has set up is not going to help anybody. I ask members to listen to what Mark Agius in Townsville has to say. He says—

My home is entirely unsafe to occupy and is a significant safety risk not only to my family but to every member of the public living nearby, but from day one, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission ... refused to do its job because it disregarded the standards and regulations which it's required to regulate.

I was forced to respond to civil proceedings launched against me to collect the final invoice by the builder after the QBCC would not enforce the National Building Code ... once it was discovered the wind rating had been downgraded by an engineer.

On advice from the QBCC, in 2018 I paid the final invoice in the hope that the QBCC would have my home rectified. Instead, I was left with a home in a state that was even more dangerous than before the direction, yet the QBCC didn't feel it reasonable to ensure it met standards.

The QBCC is failing Queenslanders, homeowners and tradies alike and the relevant Minister Mick de Brenni, who was fully aware of my case, has done nothing to help me. I also reported the activities of the QBCC several times to the CCC only to have those allegations sent back to the very person in the QBCC who the allegations were levelled against, and the investigations were closed.

Over four excruciating years, instead of directing the builder to comply with Australian Standards for the Building Code, the QBCC determined in its decisions that it had no jurisdiction to direct the builder—

what is it there for?—

citing an obscure interpretation of the Regulation that the construction of his home was 'not building works'—


construction of a home is not building works; wow—

opting time and time again to wait for the civil matter to unfold in the QCAT.

Mark eventually spent more than a million dollars on top of the \$400,000 that his house cost him in professional fees for engineers, inspectors, solicitors and barristers.

During his case he also commissioned 18 independent reports. Eventually Mark won against his builder. How did the QBCC allow a situation to get so bad that a home owner had to prove his case before a tribunal over four years costing nearly \$1 million whilst the QBCC preferred to sit on the fence and enjoy an all-out David and Goliath battle to cover its own defective administration? Mark has tried to meet with the minister, Mick de Brenni, and he has been told no. Maybe that is because he did not have a sports grant that he wanted to achieve or maybe it was because his father was not a friend of the minister. That is the only way to get a meeting with this minister and get anything done.

North Queensland, Coronavirus Vaccination

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (7.10 pm): I rise to talk about the importance of vaccinations in North Queensland. Right now Townsville sits at about 90 per cent double vaxxed, which is absolutely fantastic. Unfortunately, the capital of North Australia lost the race to 80 per cent double vaxxed to its little brother Cairns which means I lost my bet with my good mate and member for Cairns Michael Healy. As a result I am stuck wearing a Northern Pride jersey under my jacket today, something that I am not particularly thrilled about. I assure members I have the permission of Mr Speaker, who is also from North Queensland.

Mr Watts: Take the jacket off!

Mr Minnikin: Table it!


Mr STEWART: I am not going to table this body with it, let me tell you, member for Chatsworth. I take the interjection from the member for Toowoomba North. I cannot reveal the rest of it because it does have sponsorship on it. That was the agreement with Mr Speaker. I am thrilled about the vaccination rates not just in North Queensland but right throughout our state. While the member for Cairns and I had some pretty good fun around this on social media, it seems the member for Burdekin lost his sense of humour because he threw a jab and three weeks later he threw another jab and then

a couple of months later he threw in a booster. Bad dad joke, I know. The battle between the member for Cairns and I through social media was absolutely fantastic. The real winner from this is the community. These high vaccination rates mean that we can get on with the real job of our economic recovery and Townsville is certainly leading the race when it comes to this.

In the *Townsville Bulletin* today it was revealed that home building approvals have soared by 40 per cent. This demonstrates that more people want to call Townsville home and it shows the Palaszczuk government's commitment to economic recovery is strong and is working in North Queensland as we emerge from the Omicron wave. Projects like the \$232 million upgrade of the Port of Townsville are creating hundreds of jobs for local people and creating a multitude of opportunities for our city. This project will help grow our resource industry, particularly in the North West Minerals Province, abundant in new economy minerals that will power our future and create even more jobs in the north of the state as we recover from this global pandemic. The Queensland Country Bank Stadium, which the Palaszczuk government built, has been a key part of growing Townsville's economy. It has hosted 31 events since opening, including the State of Origin last year. What a great event that was—until they ran out onto the field. More than 440,000 have walked through the stadium gates since it opened, injecting millions of dollars into our economy.

The only reason Townsville can get on with growing its economy is because people have rolled up their sleeves and been vaccinated. I might have lost the bet to the member for Cairns, but it has certainly helped encourage a few people to go out and get vaxxed. Well done, member for Cairns.


Currumbin Electorate, Crime

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (7.13 pm): This week the spotlight has rightfully been on the disgraceful integrity crisis that has gripped the Premier and her government. But this is only the latest crisis in a long list of failures plaguing the Queensland government. Our community has been battling the crime crisis for a long time now. While our police were having to babysit Palaszczuk's border, crime has spiralled out of control and the blame lays squarely at the feet of this Labor government. Many Currumbin residents are living in fear following a spate of carjackings, hooning and theft. Just this week constituents of mine were traumatised by armed thieves and carjackings. I will not go into the details, but what I do want to highlight is the truly amazing generosity of our local community in supporting the Garnars who were victims of this crime.

Hugh Garnar was held at knifepoint and the family car was written off by police while trying to stop the carjacking. Hugh and his wife Alex have a young son Mason. Mason is four years old and he has been battling a rare form of cancer for four years. Little Mason needs to travel to Brisbane for his cancer treatments and with the family car destroyed the Garnars were left scrambling to find a way to get Mason to his treatments. That is where our community stepped up. The Tweed Heads and Coolangatta RSL used their courtesy bus to get Mason to his medical appointment in Brisbane yesterday. I spread the word that the Garnar family needed a car. The von Bibra team at Robina answered that call. They arranged for the Garnars to have the use of a loan car for as long as they need or until their own car can be repaired or replaced. Mason can now get from the Gold Coast to Brisbane for his cancer treatments. The Garnars said this generosity has restored their faith in humanity. Hugh said, 'I lost all trust the other night and this is opening me up to say there are good people out there.' I put on the record my thanks to the von Bibra team for turning hardship into hope for the Garnars and our community.

In recognition of the crime problems our community is facing, in conjunction with the member for Burleigh I have organised a community crime forum to be held on 9 March. The forum is open to all community members. The details are on my Facebook page and there is also a registration link there. The forum will allow residents to raise their concerns directly with local representatives and allow residents to propose solutions and receive information from senior police. Forums like this bring communities together and are vital to allow our community to voice the severity of the crime problem and give them the opportunity to work together to be part of the solution. There is only so much we as a community can do to solve the problem of crime. It has been allowed to fester as a result of police not doing their ordinary duties because they have been on the border. We really need the state government to step up and give us the resources we need to control crime in Currumbin.

Aged Care

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (7.16 pm): I rise to express my deep disappointment at the experience of Queenslanders living in aged-care facilities managed by the LNP federal government. I know that responsibility for aged care sits primarily with the federal government, but there is no denying

our government is a key stakeholder in aged-care discussions because they concern the treatment of Queensland residents and because, as operators and regulators of our own aged-care facilities, we have some expertise in the area.

Before I go further though I want to extend my sincere and heartfelt sympathies to families who have lost loved ones to COVID-19. When we opened the borders at the end of last year we did not hide that we were in for tough times. As much as we hoped it would not happen, all the evidence pointed to the likelihood of more COVID in the community, particularly amongst older Queenslanders. As a member of this place I listened, and my staff listened, to the turning of the tide of public opinion about our border policies throughout the latter part of 2021. It went from the majority wanting to keep them closed to an ever-increasing desire to see them open. The call to reunite with loved ones interstate, to travel for work and recreation, to relocate across the country, all without quarantine costs and requirements, was strong from the community. I can understand that. I have family in Western Australia and I have lost family in Western Australia during COVID-19.

Despite the pressure on our government to throw open the borders—pressure from the media, pressure from the LNP and pressure from the Prime Minister—we maintained our position that every eligible Queenslanders should have the opportunity to have two doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccine before we reopened. I thank the Premier, the health minister, our former and current chief health officers and our leadership team for standing strong on that. I have no doubt it saved lives.

We ran pop-up vaccination clinics right across the state in addition to regular vaccination hubs, encouraging Queenslanders to get the jab. By contrast, I have heard stories from locals with loved ones in aged-care facilities about last minute rescheduling of planned vaccination days and about vaccination days being cancelled altogether. If I was hearing these stories I am sure LNP federal members were hearing them too. I know for a fact they heard them on the occasions when my office passed on the details. So when we hear that over one half of the COVID-19 deaths in Queensland have been residents of federally subsidised aged-care facilities, I cannot fathom how the federal LNP government failed these victims and their families so badly in their duty of care in their own facilities in a sector that, for the most part, they regulate and control. But then again, getting along to the cricket, laps at Bathurst and ukulele lessons probably take up a bit of time. It makes me really mad and sad to think more lives could have been saved if the LNP had spent more time mitigating the risk of COVID-19 and less time criticising our government for doing exactly that.

South Brisbane Electorate, Development



Dr MacMAHON (South Brisbane—Grn) (7.19 pm): Back in 2016 this government introduced Queensland's Planning Act. In that same year Queensland Labor took \$270,000 in donations from property developers. Our planning laws are now so ridiculously stacked in favour of property developers that the community barely gets a look-in. This is all before the Olympics, which will only supercharge overdevelopment and drive up rents, rates and house prices, reinforcing inequality in Queensland.

Now everywhere you turn in South Brisbane it seems there is another developer applying for a tower that is two, eight or 14 storeys over the neighbourhood planned height limits and too often it is being waved through. A particularly outrageous example is the two 26-storey towers proposed to be built right next to Davies Park in West End. The height limit for the site is 12 storeys, but given that our performance based planning scheme is so deeply broken a developer reckons they have a shot at getting 26 storeys approved.

I will read a few excerpts from over 600 community submissions opposing the development. One local resident writes—

I struggle to understand how the limits of six stories and 12 stories is put aside for a 26-storey building. It will set a terrible precedent.

The Kirkwood family writes—

What is the point of planning regulations if developers are pandered to and rules broken?

Julie in West End writes—

Not one resident in this area that I have spoken to is in favour of this development. A better use for this site would be to extend Davies Park to provide more green space for residents.


They are telling our planning minister that, if our performance based planning system is here to be flexible to community needs, this development application needs to be thrown out.

What the community needs is for land to be bought by the state government and council to extend Davies Park. I am really pleased to table a petition from 1,155 locals calling on the planning minister and the Lord Mayor to work together to stop this development and to buy the site for parkland.

Tabled paper: Nonconforming petition regarding the purchase of 281-297 Montague Road for public parkland [186].

Development does not have to equal more traffic congestion, parking issues and crowded green space. It does not have to equal skyrocketing rents and house prices. However, that is what we have been left with after years of a state planning system that was written to maximise developer profits. It is well past time that we overhaul our state based planning laws, make neighbourhood plans binding and put the community at the heart of decision-making. It is time this government removes the caps on infrastructure charges paid for by developers and invests that money in local infrastructure and green space. It is time for inclusionary zoning that prioritises public housing and a planning system that puts the needs of the community ahead of the profits of big developers.

Bundamba Electorate, State and Federal Government Support


 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (7.22 pm): When it comes to investing in upgraded public transport infrastructure, our local community is on the fast track. We have an express trip towards a \$38 million upgrade of Bundamba train station. It is something that I was extremely proud to advocate and secure for our local community. It gives me great pleasure to inform the House that the first round of public consultation is now open with the release of artist impressions.

I want to ensure that everybody in my local community can access Bundamba station safely and without barriers. The upgrade will deliver major accessibility improvements including full-length raised platforms, a new overhead bridge with direct lift access, upgraded CCTV and station lighting, extended platform shelters and a host of other improvements. It is a huge boost for our local rail commuters and also for our local economy, with over 250 jobs supported during construction. It comes hot on the heels of the completion of our recent \$2.5 million safety upgrade of the Bundamba section of Brisbane Road and it is all part of our ongoing commitment to better roads and public transport in Ipswich.

While we are supporting Queenslanders, the federal LNP Morrison government continues to turn its back on Queensland communities like mine. We have seen the blatant mishandling of our national pandemic response with not enough vaccines, no rapid antigen tests, cutting Medicare in the middle of a pandemic—the list is practically endless. Scott Morrison is always missing in action when there is a crisis. He only responds when he is under pressure and bases every decision on his own political interests instead of what matters to local communities like mine. Under the Morrison LNP government we have had our hospital funding cut and Medicare slashed. We are paying more and waiting longer than ever to see a GP. We cannot risk more of Morrison's spin and excuses. We need a federal government with a real plan for secure jobs and better health care after COVID.

That is why over the weekend we saw such a strong show of support from the local community for our two hardworking local federal members of parliament, the member for Oxley, Milton Dick, and the member for Blair, Shayne Neumann. I was proud to join our local dedicated volunteers who were out in force right across Ipswich to fight for a federal Labor government that will be on the side of ordinary working Australians; a government with two hardworking local champions from our community in Milton Dick and Shayne Neumann.

Southern Downs Electorate; Shaw, Mr R

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (7.25 pm): Tonight I rise to offer an explanation to the electors of Southern Downs as to why they have heard from me but have not seen me much over the past couple of months. I am very pleased to inform the House that on 6 December my wife gave birth to a healthy baby girl, Amelia Grace Barbara Lister. I thank members on all sides of the House for the generosity of their congratulations over the past couple of weeks, particularly the member for Mount Ommaney who we know is paired this week. She gave me a lovely muslin swaddling cloth to give to Amelia, which is wonderful. I have maintained my work in the office but I have not been out and about.

I also take this opportunity to sincerely thank my family for their support at this time. I have three kids now: Jeremy who is aged 11, William who is about to turn eight and Amelia who is 11 weeks old. Looking after them is my wife, Belinda. With a local member of parliament as a husband she takes on the vast majority of the workload in keeping our family together because more often than not I am in a motel in Millmerran, Bungunya, Allora or somewhere similar or I am down here at parliament. It is no small thing to have a small baby and two rowdy boys to look after at the same time.


Mrs Gerber: It takes a village.

Mr LISTER: It does take a village; I take that interjection from the member for Currumbin. I express my great gratitude to and love for my wife, Belinda, for the wonderful job that she does. She could still be in the Air Force but decided, instead, to be a mum and a great support to me in the electorate of Southern Downs.

I thank those constituents who have lent help and given us gifts, particularly Carol Clark and Esther Plath who have babysat at short notice and my own parents who live in Stanthorpe. I thank my mum and dad, Jenny and Paul—particularly my mum. Belinda's mum and dad have also been down. In fact, it has been great to have June Powell come down to help out. She has come all the way from Townsville on three different occasions, which has been wonderful.

Lastly, I refer to the statement today by our good friend, Ryan Shaw, who was the LNP candidate in the federal seat of Lilley. Members are probably aware that he made a statement today that he is pulling out of his candidacy to look after his mental health and his family. I take my hat off to him. That is a difficult decision to face. I think that by taking that decision and publicly acknowledging that he needs help, he has shown true leadership. I wish him very well and I am sure I speak for all members in doing so.

Stretton Electorate, Infrastructure

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (7.28 pm): My electorate of Stretton is a fantastic place to be. We have great schools, businesses and communities but it is about to get even better with the excellent news that the Palaszczuk government is putting forward record investment in my local area with two major announcements. Firstly, we will build a brand new satellite hospital in Eight Mile Plains that will provide high-quality health care close to home and, most importantly, will take pressure off our major hospitals.

Secondly, yesterday locals were very happy to hear the news from the Premier and the Minister for Transport that we are putting over \$1 billion towards the Kuraby to Beenleigh rail upgrades. The project will include removing five level crossings including one in my electorate, the Kuraby level crossing on Beenleigh Road, which locals know so well. This will greatly improve traffic in my local area, allowing mums and dads to get to work, do the school drop-offs and pick-ups and get home much quicker.

Both of those announcements are great news for my community and will improve the quality of life for people who live in our growing area. They also reflect the Palaszczuk government's commitment to continued economic recovery because both of those projects will stimulate the economy and create jobs. The Palaszczuk government has always focused on creating good, secure jobs for Queenslanders. I note that the unemployment rate is down to its lowest level since December 2008, falling to 4.4 per cent.

The new hospital will be built on Levington Road, right next to the RACQ building, located halfway between the QEII Hospital and the Logan Hospital, and is part of an Australian-first initiative where seven new satellite hospitals will be built across high-growth areas in South-East Queensland—a \$265 million investment that will create over 700 jobs during construction and, importantly, provide ongoing, secure jobs for doctors, nurses and support staff right here in our local area. I am sure that there are a few health staff who live in Stretton already interested in transferring so that they can work closer to home. Like all members on this side of the House, I will always fight for high-quality, universal health care that is accessible to everyone. I believe that these high-quality, world-class healthcare facilities are vital for our community. I am proud to support quality health care for locals.

In news from yesterday, the second major investment in our local area is the removal of the Kuraby level crossing on Beenleigh Road. This has been included in the \$1.1 billion commitment from the state government. I join with the Premier and Minister for Transport in calling on the federal government to match our funding commitment to ensure we can deliver this important project for the people of Queensland. I note that Infrastructure Australia has listed improvements for the Gold Coast rail line between Kuraby and Beenleigh on its infrastructure priority list since March 2018. I very much look forward to seeing these positive investments in our community. The Stretton electorate is a fantastic place to live.

The House adjourned at 7.31 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyce, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Camm, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gerber, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Healy, Hinchliffe, 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, O'Connor, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Skelton, Smith, Stevens, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Watts, Weir, Whiting