



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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Phone (07) 3553 6344

## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

### Tuesday, 15 March 2022

Subject	Page
<b>ASSENT TO BILL</b> .....	<b>305</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 8 March 2022, from Her Excellency the Governor, to the Speaker advising of assent to a certain bill on 8 March 2022 .....	
	305
<b>PRIVILEGE</b> .....	<b>305</b>
<b>Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House</b> .....	
	<b>305</b>
<b>SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>305</b>
<b>Panel of Temporary Speakers</b> .....	
	<b>305</b>
<b>School Group Tours</b> .....	
	<b>306</b>
<b>APPOINTMENTS</b> .....	<b>306</b>
<b>Opposition</b> .....	
	<b>306</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Appointments of the Opposition shadow ministers and other roles .....	
	306
<b>PETITIONS</b> .....	<b>306</b>
<b>TABLED PAPERS</b> .....	<b>307</b>
<b>MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>309</b>
<b>Queensland Floods</b> .....	
	<b>309</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document, undated, titled 'Review Terms of Reference, South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding February-March 2022' .....	
	310
<b>Employment</b> .....	
	<b>311</b>
<b>Queensland Floods</b> .....	
	<b>311</b>
<b>Queensland Floods, Economic Impact</b> .....	
	<b>312</b>
<b>Queensland Floods, Emergency Services Personnel</b> .....	
	<b>312</b>
<b>Queensland Floods, Schools</b> .....	
	<b>313</b>
<b>Public Trustee</b> .....	
	<b>314</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document, dated November 2021, titled 'Considering Human Rights in Decision Making: Evaluation of the Introduction of Structured-Decision Making Framework in the Public Trustee Queensland' by Professor Christine Bigby, Professor Jacinta Douglas and Dr Elizabeth Smith, La Trobe University, Living with Disability Research Centre .....	
	314

## Table of Contents – Tuesday, 15 March 2022

<b>State Archivist, Annual Reports</b> .....	<b>314</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document, dated 4 March 2022, from JD McKenna QC, titled 'Review of the Allegations Attributed to the former State Archivist about the Queensland State Archives' Annual Reports for 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20' .....	
	315
<b>Queensland Floods, Road and Rail Infrastructure</b> .....	<b>315</b>
<b>ABSENCE OF MINISTERS</b> .....	<b>316</b>
<b>PERSONAL EXPLANATION</b> .....	<b>316</b>
<b>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</b> .....	<b>316</b>
<b>PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE</b> .....	<b>316</b>
<b>Crime and Corruption Commission, Documents</b> .....	<b>316</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Crime and Corruption Commission: Certified copy of the Register of Reports and Recommendations to the Minister for Police, Ministerial Directions and Tabled Ministerial Reasons 2021, pursuant to section 4.7 of the Police Service Administration Act 1990 .....	
	316
<b>COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE</b> .....	<b>317</b>
<b>Report</b> .....	<b>317</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Community Support and Services Committee: Report No. 16, 57th Parliament—Criminal Law (Raising the Age of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2021 .....	
	317
<b>APPOINTMENT</b> .....	<b>317</b>
<b>Panel of Temporary Speakers</b> .....	<b>317</b>
<b>QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE</b> .....	<b>317</b>
<b>Workplace Behaviour, Comments by Premier</b> .....	<b>317</b>
<b>Integrity Commissioner, Public Interest Disclosure</b> .....	<b>317</b>
<b>Queensland Floods, Recovery</b> .....	<b>317</b>
<b>Public Service Commission, Workplace Behaviour</b> .....	<b>318</b>
<b>Water Infrastructure</b> .....	<b>318</b>
<b>Workplace Behaviour, Comments by Premier</b> .....	<b>319</b>
<b>Queensland Floods, Recovery</b> .....	<b>319</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Extract from estimates transcripts for the Budget 2012, titled 'QRA Staffing Cuts—Budget 2012' .....	
	320
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Extract from 2012-13 Queensland State Budget—Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Reconstruction Authority, page 71 .....	
	320
<b>Integrity Commissioner</b> .....	<b>320</b>
<b>Job Creation</b> .....	<b>320</b>
<b>Workplace Behaviour, Comments by Premier</b> .....	<b>321</b>
<b>Queensland Floods, Schools</b> .....	<b>321</b>
<b>Workplace Behaviour, Comments by Premier</b> .....	<b>322</b>
<b>Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order</b> .....	<b>322</b>
<b>Queensland Floods, Housing</b> .....	<b>322</b>
<b>Queensland Floods, Climate Change</b> .....	<b>323</b>
<b>Queensland Floods, Road Infrastructure</b> .....	<b>324</b>
<b>Chief Health Officer, Public Health Directives</b> .....	<b>324</b>
<b>Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order</b> .....	<b>325</b>
<b>Legal Profession</b> .....	<b>325</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article from the <i>Brisbane Times</i> , dated 10 July 2014, titled 'Queensland chief justice selection process "failed": judge' .....	
	325
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article from the <i>Brisbane Times</i> , dated 26 March 2015, titled 'Justice Alan Wilson slams Chief Justice Tim Carmody' .....	
	325
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article from the <i>Guardian</i> , dated 7 July 2015, titled 'Tim Carmody saga is a "lesson for all governments", former judge says' .....	
	325
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article from the <i>Guardian</i> , dated 27 September 2015, titled 'Campbell Newman says Tim Carmody appointment is his biggest regret' .....	
	325
<b>Workplace Behaviour, Comments by Premier</b> .....	<b>326</b>
<b>Queensland Floods, Emergency Services Personnel</b> .....	<b>326</b>
<b>Workplace Behaviour, Comments by Premier</b> .....	<b>326</b>
<b>Queensland Floods, Community Sport and Recreation Clubs</b> .....	<b>327</b>
<b>Public Trustee</b> .....	<b>328</b>
<b>Water Infrastructure</b> .....	<b>329</b>
<b>POLICE LEGISLATION (EFFICIENCIES AND EFFECTIVENESS) AMENDMENT BILL</b> .....	<b>329</b>
<b>Second Reading</b> .....	<b>329</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article from the <i>Gold Coast Bulletin</i> , dated 25 October 2020, titled 'Queensland Police denies shortfall in party precinct in response to concerns aired by Surfers Paradise MP John-Paul Langbroek' .....	
	346
<b>MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST</b> .....	<b>346</b>
<b>Queensland Floods; Integrity in Government</b> .....	<b>346</b>
<b>Queensland Floods; Liberal National Party, Performance</b> .....	<b>348</b>
<b>Palaszczuk Labor Government, Integrity</b> .....	<b>349</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Extract, undated, from the Instagram account of tradeinvestQLD depicting the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment, Hon. Cameron Dick, at Expo 2020 Dubai .....	
	349
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Extract, undated, from the Instagram account of natcook_official depicting the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment, Hon. Cameron Dick, at Expo 2020 Dubai .....	
	349
<b>Queensland Floods, Miller Electorate</b> .....	<b>350</b>
<b>National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence</b> .....	<b>351</b>
<b>Queensland Floods, Bundamba Electorate</b> .....	<b>352</b>
<b>Coronavirus, Noosa Electorate</b> .....	<b>353</b>
<b>Women; Queensland Workforce Summit</b> .....	<b>354</b>

Table of Contents – Tuesday, 15 March 2022

<b>Public Trustee</b> .....	<b>354</b>
<b>Queensland Floods, Cooper Electorate</b> .....	<b>355</b>
<b>Workplace Behaviour, Comments by Premier</b> .....	<b>356</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 15 March 2022, from the CEO, Hearts of Purple, Ms Michelle Beattie, regarding comments made by the Premier and Minister for the Olympics, Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, in the media .....	357
<b>POLICE LEGISLATION (EFFICIENCIES AND EFFECTIVENESS) AMENDMENT BILL</b> .....	<b>357</b>
<b>Second Reading</b> .....	<b>357</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article from the <i>Gold Coast Bulletin</i> , dated 30 June 2020, titled ‘Hooning Gold Coast: Opposition vows to fight against hoons and safety issues’ .....	358
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 5 October 2021, from a constituent to the member for Coomera, Mr Michael Crandon MP, regarding firearms licence fees .....	361
<b>Consideration in Detail</b> .....	<b>377</b>
Clauses 1 to 41, as read, agreed to .....	377
Schedule, as read, agreed to .....	377
<b>Third Reading</b> .....	<b>377</b>
<b>Long Title</b> .....	<b>378</b>
<b>SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER BILL</b> .....	<b>378</b>
<b>Second Reading</b> .....	<b>378</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION (REVERSAL OF GREAT BARRIER REEF PROTECTION MEASURES) AMENDMENT BILL</b> .....	<b>384</b>
<b>Second Reading</b> .....	<b>384</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Bureau of Meteorology report, dated 26 October 2021, titled ‘Trends in sea level at Cooktown, Great Barrier Reef: Mean sea level change at Cooktown, Great Barrier Reef, Queensland’ and graph titled ‘Monthly sea level at Cairns, QLD’ .....	385
<b>ADJOURNMENT</b> .....	<b>400</b>
<b>Western Queensland, Housing</b> .....	<b>400</b>
<b>Queensland Floods, Ipswich Electorate</b> .....	<b>400</b>
<b>Palaszczuk Labor Government, Integrity</b> .....	<b>401</b>
<b>Stafford Electorate</b> .....	<b>401</b>
<b>Mermaid Beach Electorate, Development</b> .....	<b>402</b>
<b>Pine Rivers Electorate</b> .....	<b>403</b>
<b>Coomera Connector</b> .....	<b>403</b>
<b>Great Barrier Reef Experience</b> .....	<b>404</b>
<b>Toowoomba Royal Show</b> .....	<b>404</b>
<b>Queensland Floods, Waterford Electorate</b> .....	<b>405</b>
<b>ATTENDANCE</b> .....	<b>406</b>



## TUESDAY, 15 MARCH 2022

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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

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

### ASSENT TO BILL



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

The Honourable C.W. Pitt MP  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Speaker

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

Date of Assent: 8 March 2022

A bill for an Act to amend the Ambulance Service Act 1991, the Criminal Code, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, the Mental Health Act 2016, the Mental Health Regulation 2017, the Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003, the Radiation Safety Act 1999, the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018, the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979 and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes

This bill is hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely  
Governor

8 March 2022

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 8 March 2022, from Her Excellency the Governor, to the Speaker advising of assent to a certain bill on 8 March 2022 [\[258\]](#).

### PRIVILEGE

#### Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 2 March 2022 I tabled a ruling relating to a complaint by the member for Burnett alleging that the member for Keppel deliberately misled the House on 20 November 2021. I ruled that the matter did not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee. I now refer to the matter so that if any member wishes to exercise their rights in respect to this matter under the standing orders they should do so immediately.

### SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

#### Panel of Temporary Speakers




**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, management of order in the House is the collective responsibility of all members. In this House the responsibility of holding the chair is the collective work of myself, the Deputy Speaker and our panel of temporary Speakers. Standing order 16 gives the

Deputy Speaker and the temporary Speakers the same power in the chair as the Speaker. Consequently, the Deputy Speaker and the temporary Speakers must be given the same respect in the chair as myself at all times they hold the chair.


I acknowledge that some temporary Speakers are learning on the job constantly. Therefore mistakes can and will be made. Members should understand that when mistakes occur I shall ensure appropriate guidance is provided to temporary Speakers. Members on the floor and whoever holds this chair both have a role in ensuring order in the House. I ask that all members remember this when participating in its proceedings.

### School Group Tours

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to advise members that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from Moorooka State School in the electorate Toohey, Mater Dei Primary School, Toowoomba in the electorate of Toowoomba North and Mount Samson State School in the electorate of Pine Rivers.

## APPOINTMENTS

### Opposition

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.32 am): I advise the House that yesterday the member for Kawana was elected as Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Members to my right, I was surprised to hear the cheer coming from this side. The House will come to order. Leader of the Opposition, please continue.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** It follows the resignation of the member for Toowoomba South from that position. I place on record my appreciation for the contribution and support of the member for Toowoomba South as deputy leader since the 2020 election and advise that he remains shadow Treasurer and shadow minister for investment and trade. The deputy leader will also be shadow minister for state development, infrastructure and planning, shadow minister for olympic and paralympic infrastructure and jobs and shadow minister for industrial relations. The member for Maroochydore has been appointed as shadow minister for finance and better regulation as well as shadow minister for integrity in government.

Further changes include the appointment of the member for Glass House as Manager of Opposition Business, the appointment of the member for Toowoomba North as party room chair and shadow cabinet secretary, the appointment of the member for Theodore as Opposition Whip and the appointment of the member for Currumbin as Deputy Opposition Whip. I table a list of the shadow ministry.

*Tabled paper:* Appointments of the Opposition shadow ministers and other roles [\[259\]](#).

## PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, sponsored by the Clerk—

### Beerwah State Forest, Logging

234 petitioners, requesting the House to block the imminent logging of Beerwah State Forest Lot 1 AP 22457 [\[260\]](#).

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

### South Burnett, Pain Clinic

**Mrs Frecklington**, from 723 petitioners, requesting the House to consider the provision of a Persistent Pain/Chronic Pain Clinic in the South Burnett [\[261\]](#).

### Off-the-Plan Developments, Sunset Clauses

**Mr Boothman**, from 659 petitioners, requesting the House to make legislative changes to stop developers selling off the plan to deliberately delay progression of the development to enact sunset clauses for financial gain [\[262\]](#).

### David Low Way and Petrie Creek Road Intersection, Pedestrian Lights

**Mr Purdie**, from 230 petitioners, requesting the House to install pedestrian lights at the intersection of David Low Way and Petrie Creek Road, Diddillibah [\[263\]](#).

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

**Coronavirus Vaccination, Children**

55,865 petitioners, requesting the House to provide the people of Queensland with reasons why the COVID-19 vaccination of children should not cease immediately [\[264\]](#).

**Coronavirus, Treatment Protocols**

1,872 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the provision of information as to what treatment protocols are being actively administered, or made available to all Queenslanders infected by COVID and its variants [\[265\]](#).

**Personal Health Decisions**

4,379 petitioners, requesting the House to note the people of Queensland abhor discrimination and have the right to make their own health decisions without reprisal and/or discrimination [\[266\]](#).

**Caloundra, Transport Corridor**

1,112 petitioners, requesting the House to call on the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, in consultation with the community, to reconsider existing plans for the Caloundra transport corridor [\[267\]](#).

**Vaccines, Adverse Reactions**

4,419 petitioners, requesting the House to legislate to allow people to seek legal remedy for adverse reactions from vaccines [\[268\]](#).

**Seniors, Drivers' Licences**

1,762 petitioners, requesting the House to abolish the discriminatory requirement for annual medical checks for Queenslanders aged 75 or older in order for them to be able to continue to drive on our roads [\[269\]](#).

**Integrity, Commission of Inquiry**

10,120 petitioners, requesting the House to establish a Commission of Inquiry with terms of reference to investigate allegations of integrity and the failure of independent action [\[270\]](#).

Petitions received.

## TABLED PAPERS

### PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS (SO 31)

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

25 February 2022—

[219](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 22, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 15 September 2021 and 16 November 2021

1 March 2022—

[220](#) Education, Employment and Training Committee: Report No. 17, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 13 October 2021 and 30 November 2021

[221](#) Health and Environment Committee: Report No. 17, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 13 October 2021 and 16 November 2021

2 March 2022—

[222](#) Ruling by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Curtis Pitt—Alleged deliberately misleading the House by the member for Keppel

4 March 2022—

[223](#) Community Support and Services Committee: Report No. 14, 57th Parliament—Inquiry into social isolation and loneliness in Queensland, interim government response

8 March 2022—

[224](#) Auditor-General Report 13: 2021-22—State finances 2021

[225](#) Legal Affairs and Safety Committee: Report No. 24, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 16 October 2021 and 6 December 2021

10 March 2022—

[226](#) Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, explanatory notes: Erratum

11 March 2022—

- [227](#) The Public Advocate—Annual Report 2020-21
- [228](#) Coroners Court of Queensland—Annual Report 2020-21
- [229](#) Public Interest Monitor—Annual Report 2020-21
- [230](#) Office of the Public Guardian—Annual Report 2020-21

14 March 2022—

- [231](#) Drugs Misuse Act 1986: Drugs Misuse (Fees for Commercial Production of Industrial Cannabis) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 6, Amendment of industrial cannabis legislation, Decision regulatory impact statement, October 2019

#### TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

##### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990:

- [232](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Notice 2022, No. 8
- [233](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Notice 2022, No. 8, explanatory notes
- [234](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Notice 2022, No. 8, human rights certificate

Local Government Act 2009:

- [235](#) Local Government Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 10
- [236](#) Local Government Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 10, explanatory notes
- [237](#) Local Government Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 10, human rights certificate

Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Act 2021:

- [238](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 11
- [239](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 11, explanatory notes

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990:

- [240](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Repeal Regulation 2022, No. 12
- [241](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Repeal Regulation 2022, No. 12, explanatory notes
- [242](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Repeal Regulation 2022, No. 12, human rights certificate

Transport Infrastructure Act 1994:

- [243](#) Transport Infrastructure (Ports) (Port of Maryborough) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 13
- [244](#) Transport Infrastructure (Ports) (Port of Maryborough) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 13, explanatory notes
- [245](#) Transport Infrastructure (Ports) (Port of Maryborough) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 13, human rights certificate

Weapons Act 1990:

- [246](#) Weapons Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 14
- [247](#) Weapons Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 14, explanatory notes
- [248](#) Weapons Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 14, human rights certificate

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994:

- [249](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Drought-related Assistance Schemes) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 15
- [250](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Drought-related Assistance Schemes) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 15, explanatory notes
- [251](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Drought-related Assistance Schemes) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 15, human rights certificate

Housing Legislation Amendment Act 2021:

- [252](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 16
- [253](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 16, explanatory notes

Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995, Environmental Protection Act 1994, Forestry Act 1959, Marine Parks Act 2004, Nature Conservation Act 1992, Queensland Heritage Act 1992, Recreation Areas Management Act 2006, Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011:

- [254](#) Environmental Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 17
- [255](#) Environmental Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 17, explanatory notes
- [256](#) Environmental Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 17, human rights certificate



## REPORT BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

[257](#) Report pursuant to Standing Order 169 (Acts to be numbered by the Clerk) and Standing Order 165 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Clerk, prior to assent by Her Excellency the Governor, viz—

**Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021**

Amendments made to Bill

**Short title and consequential references to short title—**

*Omit—*


'Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021'

*Insert—*

'Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022'

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Queensland Floods

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.36 am): Once again our state has faced a monumental natural disaster. Tuesday, 22 February 2022 will be a date we will never forget. That night heavy rain began falling between Gympie and the Sunshine Coast, a train was derailed and seven schools were closed. The following day I stood in this place and warned that what was to come had the potential to be a significant rainfall event for South-East Queensland and there was an increased risk of dangerous and life-threatening flash flooding over the coming days.

No-one could imagine what happened next. In those early stages forecasters feared a month's worth of rain. What we got was two-thirds of our annual rainfall in just a matter of days. No-one who saw it will forget it: torrential, monsoonal, unrelenting rain. Ordinarily nature reserves her fury for a single location, but not this time. It was as if a river dropped from the sky across the entire south-east. A total of 22 local council areas and seven cities were impacted. In Gympie I met business owners whose walls record the handwritten markers of floods dating back more than a century. This one reached higher. The waters rose around Noosa and the Sunshine Coast, Ipswich, the Lockyer Valley, Maryborough, Toowoomba and, of course, the streets, the city and the suburbs of Brisbane, Logan, Moreton Bay and the Gold Coast.

It happened with terrifying speed. The swiftwater teams performed 657 rescues. I met Paul Edwards and his wife who were saved from their home in Ashgrove. Paul, his wife and three neighbours suddenly found their houses surrounded by raging torrents like rapids in the middle of a river. A swiftwater team pulled them through windows and off their roofs. They owe their lives to those teams. There were countless more rescues performed by neighbours and passers-by.

Queensland has more heroes than it can count. There are no words to express the respect, admiration and gratitude that we owe to those who risked their own lives helping others in their most desperate hours of need. State Emergency volunteers, and I stress these are volunteers, answered 13,685 calls for help. One of them, former nurse Merryl Dray, lost her life on her way to help others. I extend to Merryl's friends, family and members of the Lowood SES my profound sympathies and those of this House. Twelve other people lost their lives and one person is still missing. Tragically, many of them were trying to reach the safety of home when their cars were swept from flooded roads. Our hearts go out to their families and loved ones.

Numbers often tell a story that words cannot. In this event, a total of 16,703 damage assessments have been completed on flooded properties. At this stage, four homes have been completely destroyed. 1,810 houses and commercial buildings were severely damaged—2,554 with moderate damage and 3,514 with minor damage—and 87 schools were damaged. To date, 80,233 insurance claims have been lodged to the value of \$1.2 billion. In six days 792.8 millimetres of rain fell in Brisbane, which is 137 millimetres more than in 1974. That is the highest six-day figure ever recorded. Fifty-six locations received more than 1,000 millimetres. Mount Glorious received 1.8 metres of rain. Wivenhoe Dam did the job it was built for, holding back an amount of water equivalent to four Sydney harbours. I hate to think of the impact if the dam did not exist.

That is what happened to us, but it is what we have done to respond that shows the true strength of Queensland. During the past two weeks I have travelled north, south, east and west. I have talked to people whose every worldly possession was piled up on the footpath, destroyed: people such as

Stacey and Kim in Scarborough; Tahlia and Ariteo in Logan; farmer Troy Qualischefski who lost his crop and some of his machinery in the Lockyer Valley; and Karen and her friends who lost the entire stock of the Gympie Toy Library. In Goodna, I met Lois and her neighbour Dan. Dan had come all the way from Collingwood Park to help out. 'Dan the Mill Street man' found himself the accidental foreman, directing the flood clean-up. Despite her losses, Lois is not leaving the home and the neighbours she loves. She is part of the community.

I am proud to say that, when the people of this state needed their government, their government was there to help them. I want to pay tribute to our outstanding public servants who perform this vital work. The department of communities and housing established 23 community recovery hubs directly in the neighbourhoods worst affected by the floods. Here they helped people access Emergency Hardship Assistance Grants of \$180 per person or \$900 for a family of five to cover food, medication, clothing and other essentials. There is also the essential services hardship assistance grants of \$150 per person and \$750 per family. At last count they had processed 61,702 applications. They have made 25,570 payments worth more than \$10.6 million, benefitting more than 58,804 people in this state. 1,167 people have been helped into emergency housing. Under joint arrangements with the federal government, more than 620 small businesses and not-for-profit organisations have been paid \$50,000 each in recovery grants. To date, 70 primary producers have accessed grants worth \$75,000 each. Small businesses are also able to access extraordinary disaster assistance loans of up to \$250,000. Nineteen local councils will receive \$1 million each to assist with clean-up costs. \$32 million has been announced to help sporting and recreation clubs back on their feet.

Queensland Rail has already repaired 2,000 metres of track at 26 locations. Maritime Safety Queensland has salvaged more the 2,000 tonnes of debris from the Brisbane River, including 41 vessels. Despite frequent and savage storms, 180,000 homes that had lost power were reconnected by 8 March. The \$6 million flood levy, jointly funded by my government and the Fraser Coast Regional Council, saved the city's CBD from a repeat of the floods it suffered in January. But perhaps the greatest example of Queensland resilience can be found where it is most commonly on display. On 28 January, the playing field of Suncorp Stadium was under water. Eleven days later it hosted the NRL curtain-raiser and the Broncos won.

The job of recovering and rebuilding is ongoing. That is why I have appointed Major-General Jake Ellwood as our flood recovery coordinator. Major-General Ellwood led recovery efforts after the summer bushfire disaster. He has been with me to see for himself the size of the job ahead. He has also been with the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer to listen to the stories of those impacted. As with all natural disasters, our response to this one will be reviewed by the Inspector-General for Emergency Management. The terms of reference include dam management and emergency alerts. I table the terms of reference for the benefit of the House. It is expected that the review will also include public submissions.

*Tabled paper:* Document, undated, titled 'Review Terms of Reference, South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding February-March 2022' [271].


I welcome this inquiry. It is how we continually improve so that we can better serve and protect the people of this state. It is why Queensland has one of the best disaster management systems in the world. We have appointed a permanent State Disaster Coordinator. Our mayors chair local disaster management groups, which are the backbone of our emergency response.

Finally, on behalf of the people of Queensland, I thank the 1,183 men and women of the Australian Defence Force who came to our aid. I note the arrival of the US Navy and I extend my thanks and gratitude to them. One hundred sailors from the USS *Frank Cable* are assisting with our recovery.

Thank you to all who have donated to our Queensland Floods Appeal. So far it has raised more than \$15 million to be distributed by the Salvation Army, Red Cross, GIVIT, Lifeline and St Vincent de Paul. Another \$25 million was raised in last weekend's Australia Unites telethon, to be shared between New South Wales and Queensland. Members will have the opportunity to add to that tally when the parliament hosts our own flood appeal on the Speaker's Green on 30 March. I thank the Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition for participating. I urge members to get their tickets early.

When the worst happens in Queensland, it brings out our best. When the history of this flood is written it will not only be the scale of the disaster we remember; it will be how the spirit of our communities rose to meet it. One act of nature was tempered by thousands of acts of kindness and generosity that make Queensland what it is. Long after the flood waters are gone, that is what will be remembered. We will remember who Queenslanders are and what we stand for. We are strong, defiant and always together.


## Employment

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.46 am): Creating jobs and filling jobs are a responsibility my government takes seriously and I am proud of our achievements. In January, Queensland led the nation on job creation. Unemployment is now at a 13-year low of just 4.4 per cent. Queensland has the highest number of Seek job vacancies on record. Since we came to office, there have been 376,800 more jobs and modelling by Jobs Queensland forecasts another 280,000 new jobs by the middle of 2025. That is more than 650,000 jobs over a decade.

There is dignity in work, whether times are good or in times of trouble. As we recover and rebuild from the latest natural disaster to come our way, we need workers to fill jobs. That was one of the key points of our Workforce Summit last week, organised so well by the Minister for Employment. As I told the summit, creating jobs and growing the economy brings new challenges. We need to develop skills for growth over the short term and, as the world transitions from COVID-19, we must create high-value secure jobs to sustain economic growth over the long term.

There is also the here and now: we need to find the workers we need right now for flood rebuilding. We have shown how to do this before. There is our very successful Work in Paradise campaign for the tourism industry, which I know the minister will talk about later this week, and I have announced another strong and aggressive campaign, this time to attract trade workers to Queensland. We have a big job ahead of us after the floods. Insurance claims are already at more than \$1 billion. We have more than enough work to go around. So if you are a tradie living in another state, we want you to come to Queensland—although not from New South Wales because we know they also need to rebuild at this time. I say to tradies from elsewhere, we want you to fly, drive or even run to paradise.

## Queensland Floods

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure) (9.48 am): Since the House last sat, South-East Queensland, Wide Bay and the Fraser Coast have experienced catastrophic flooding that has now swept down the east coast of Australia. It hit us first and it hit us hard. Tragically, 13 Queenslanders lost their lives. Thousands of families have lost their homes. They are now living in emergency accommodation or are staying with family or friends. The floods also damaged businesses, farms, schools and sporting facilities from Maryborough, south to the Gold Coast and west to Toowoomba. In many areas, the devastation was worse than the 2011 floods 11 years ago.

Through all the rain, mud and tears, the Queensland spirit has shone through. I want to pay tribute to the disaster and emergency services staff who worked around the clock to keep Queenslanders safe. I thank our police, ambos, firies and their swiftwater rescue teams. I thank our energy workers and road workers who kept us safe during the floods and worked so hard to get the power back on and the roads open again. I especially acknowledge and thank our volunteer state emergency services, including Merryl Dray who lost her own life serving the Queensland community.

I want to thank the dam managers. They held back four Sydney Harbours worth of water from smashing its way through the city. As the skies cleared, we moved rapidly into clean-up and recovery—something Queensland is very experienced at. We have after all done it more than 90 times since 2011. We appointed Major General Jake Ellwood to lead the disaster recovery. I only met the major general a week ago, but I have been impressed with his genuine empathy and his quick problem-solving. I know he is determined not to work from an office. He wants to spend every day in the field visiting a flood affected community. He spent the weekend in Goodna, Bundamba, the Gold Coast and Ashgrove after visiting Gympie with me on Friday. We opened 23 community recovery hubs led by dynamos like Ariana from the department of communities whom I met in Gympie. She had barely slept, but the hub there was buzzing with staff and volunteers helping hundreds of people with whatever they needed.

The Palaszczuk government secured an initial \$558.5 million funding package to provide support to communities in need. In addition, we injected \$1 million into each of the 19 affected councils to assist with urgent clean-up works, and \$24 million of recovery funds have been advanced to the 14 most affected councils. Queensland's focus this past week has been to ensure the financial support is getting where it is most needed—people, families, small businesses and primary producers and also the not-for-profit organisations that are themselves supporting our communities.

Over the past week, personal hardship grants have been made available for more suburbs across the affected areas. The time frames have also been extended, giving people more time to apply. Some 620 small businesses and 70 primary producers have applied for recovery grants. QFES and QRA have

now completed damage assessments across 22 local government areas. The data confirms the extent of the damage: of nearly 16,500 assessments undertaken of homes and buildings nearly half have some level of impact, with 1,811 assessed as having severe levels of damage or totally destroyed; 2,548 with moderate damage; and 3,500 with minor levels of damage.

These floods came on top of an already intense summer disaster season with five prior natural disaster events already flooding much of Queensland since November last year. While the recovery has started, there is a long way to go. Queensland has the world's first standing disaster recovery authority in the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. The Palaszczuk government will ensure flood affected communities do not just build back but build back better like we did in 2011, 2015, 2017 and now 2022.

### Queensland Floods, Economic Impact



**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.53 am): The impact of the weather event that struck the south-east just over two weeks ago is still being felt by many Queenslanders. Each day, they are making heart-wrenching decisions about which possessions they can salvage and which they must throw out. Seldom has there been a natural disaster in our state that has inflicted so much damage on Queensland in such a short period of time. Preliminary estimates from Queensland Treasury are that the impact of that three-day event on the state budget this financial year will be between \$2 billion and \$2½ billion. This includes money for disaster response and recovery and support measures. It is anticipated that around \$1 billion of that will be required to restore public infrastructure, including roads, rail systems and bridges. In addition, Queensland Treasury analysis suggests the impact on the economy is around a quarter of one percentage point of gross state product. That equates to around \$1 billion in lost economic activity.

It is important to recognise these are early estimates that could very well rise. Mercifully, despite the carnage and cost, the impact on our state's economy will be less than other historical weather events such as the 2011 floods and severe Tropical Cyclone Yasi and severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie. This is because north of Wide Bay there was virtually no impact on our mining and agriculture sectors. This is no comfort of course to Queenslanders cleaning mud and silt from their homes and businesses.

Our government will do what Queensland governments always do after natural disasters. We will help individuals, families and communities get back on their feet. We will help businesses get back on their feet. We will help Queensland get back on its feet. We will ensure that we can restore the strength of the Queensland economy as soon as possible so together we can continue our path to economic recovery.

On that point—and for the benefit of those opposite when it comes to matters of parliamentary strategy—later this week I will be updating the House on the importance of continuing to grow Queensland's international trade and investment relationships even in times of natural disaster.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Members to my left.

### Queensland Floods, Emergency Services Personnel



**Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (9.55 am): The recent extreme weather event that engulfed South-East Queensland impacted lives and property. Many are grieving the loss of loved ones, including our own SES volunteers who lost one of their own. Lowood SES volunteer Merryl Dray lost her life as she was going to the aid of others trapped by floodwaters. I send my deepest condolences to Merryl's family, friends and colleagues. Merryl's selfless giving of her time to her community as an SES volunteer will always be remembered and honoured.

During the emergency, the State Emergency Service responded to more than 13,000 calls for help—help that was sorely needed and greatly appreciated by those impacted by the devastation. While sadly there were lives lost to the floods, there were also many lives saved during that devastating event. The fire and rescue service with its professional emergency staff performed more than 600 swiftwater rescues.

I am advised that one of the more remarkable rescues happened at Nundah. Swiftwater rescue team leader Adam Martin and his crew responded when a car was washed into floodwaters at Nundah. It was dark. Adam and his crew waded through chest-deep floodwaters searching. After nearly half an hour, they had had no luck. Time was ticking by, minute by critical minute. Then a resident on a nearby

verandah called out and pointed in the direction of something he had spotted. Adam and his team responded immediately and, as improbable as it might sound, they spotted a light shining through the water. The light was being cast by a mobile phone inside a car completely submerged under floodwaters. Adam and his team dived under the water, smashed open the car's windows and discovered a young woman and a young man inside the submerged vehicle.

Every second counted, and there were only precious moments of oxygen left in the car. Adam and his team pulled the couple out, got them to the surface and then managed to get them through 400 metres of floodwaters to safety. It had been a very close call. The young woman had used her mobile phone, the one the swiftwater rescue team saw shining under the surface, to send her last goodbyes to her loved ones. Fortunately, they were not her last goodbyes. Thanks to the tenacity, spirit, professionalism and dedication of Adam and his swiftwater rescue team, two people are still alive today.


During the south-east's time of emergency, the Rural Fire Service was also there to help, supporting emergency responses, running makeshift evacuation centres and, importantly, helping with the enormous clean-up effort, including conducting washouts of flood impacted properties. The Queensland Police Service was also incredibly busy, with officers on the ground throughout the emergency assisting with swiftwater rescues, evacuating residents, searching for missing persons, conducting marine and waterway rescues and patrols, and establishing and monitoring road closures.

Our collective thanks to all of these courageous Queenslanders who have served our state's police and emergency services and to those working in disaster management, the defence forces and other essential frontline roles for what they have done during the recent emergency.

As the Premier announced, whenever there is a major natural disaster we will call upon the Inspector-General Emergency Management to conduct a review. The Inspector-General Emergency Management will examine the response to the floods and look for any lessons that can be learned or improvements that can be made. The review will examine the timing and effectiveness of emergency alerts and will assess cooperation between all agencies at a local, state and national level. The review team will also assess other issues like measures taken to manage dam operations and to protect life and property. The Inspector-General Emergency Management will be inviting submissions from the public. I understand he also intends to host some public forums.

In conclusion, to all of our essential, frontline and emergency services personnel: thanking you for keeping Queenslanders safe.

### Queensland Floods, Schools

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.59 am): I would like to put on record my deepest sympathies to those impacted by the recent floods. I have lived in Brisbane my whole life and this rain event—this rain boom—was like nothing I have ever seen or heard before. Almost 800 millimetres fell in just six days in Brisbane—that is the highest ever recorded. For our schools it meant over 1,000 buildings affected; thousands of metres of carpet, wall and floor coverings damaged; and 15,000 rectification tasks needed, including cleaning debris, roof repairs, ceiling repairs, wall repairs, drainage, electrical safety checks, cleaning and decontamination. I visited a number of damaged schools and it was devastating to see.


But when disaster hits, the Palaszczuk government steps up quickly and gets on with the job. At one point we had over 600 state schools that were not able to open due to the flood event which included floodwater on site, power outages—it is a bit hard to open a school when there is no power—access issues, fallen trees and dangerous roads. In less than a week we got that number down to just six. This is a remarkable achievement.

My thanks go to school communities, principals and staff and my departments and also to QBuild, Energex, disaster emergency services and transport workers, to name a few, for their dedicated hard work. At the height of the clean-up we had 350 QBuild staff and contractors on school sites doing a remarkable job. Everyone came together and worked incredibly hard and got our impacted schools open again quickly. For those six schools still unable to fully open, I personally visited each one—and others—to discuss flood mitigation infrastructure planning.

As industrial relations minister, we had the Electrical Safety Office and others providing advice and support to make sure that when the clean-up started it was happening safely. As racing minister, I announced \$500,000 in flood relief funding to provide some financial relief to trainers affected by increased costs for transport, food, forage and bedding for their animals due to abandoned race meetings.

We have had floods and we have had COVID but we are still delivering Queensland's plan for economic and post-disaster recovery. That is because the Palaszczuk government gets on with the job of delivering for Queenslanders no matter where they live.

### Public Trustee

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.02 am): The personal experiences described by the people featured in the *Four Corners* report last night were difficult for all of us to watch. All clients of the guardianship and administration system deserve the highest quality service and experience. The guardianship system is an important part of our community, intended to provide safeguards for our vulnerable members against abuse.

As part of Queensland's guardianship and administration system, the Public Trustee has, under new leadership, been on a significant reform journey—in fact, the most significant reforms in decades if not its history. It is working hard to transform into a more modern, customer-centric organisation. While much positive change has already been occurring, there is still work to be done.

I take the stories of Mr Pearson, Mr Vandenberg and Mr Ristic featured in last night's *Four Corners* story very seriously. All three of these clients' matters have now been referred by the Public Trustee for an extensive independent review. In an Australian first among state trustees, the Queensland Public Trustee established the Office of the Customer Advocate in 2021 to consider complaints and appoint independent external reviewers where appropriate. I can advise the House that the two independent external reviewers for these matters are Mr Forbes Smith, the former energy and water ombudsman and former CCC chief executive, and Mr Andrew Brown, the former health ombudsman. As a result of the stories last night, the Public Trustee has also directed the Customer Advocate to commence an internal investigation into the Public Trustee's systems and practices. I have spoken to the Public Trustee this morning and I can advise the House that I will table the findings of that internal review once finalised.


The allegations featured on *Four Corners* highlighted a number of damaging past practices by the Public Trustee stretching back decades. I can assure Queenslanders that under the leadership of our new Public Trustee, Samay Zhouand, practices such as charging customers for legal fees when complaints are made have ended and, as a matter of practice, the Public Trustee no longer opposes any client wanting financial independence. In addition, the biggest review in the history of the Public Trustee of fees and charges is underway and is due to be completed by June.

The current Public Trustee also introduced a structured decision-making framework, designed to ensure the Public Trustee considered its customers' human rights in decision-making. I am pleased to table a report by the La Trobe University's Living with Disability Research Centre dated November 2021 which evaluated the adoption of the structured decision-making framework in the everyday work of the Public Trustee with its customers and whether its practices had changed.

*Tabled paper:* Document, dated November 2021, titled 'Considering Human Rights in Decision Making: Evaluation of the Introduction of Structured-Decision Making Framework in the Public Trustee Queensland' by Professor Christine Bigby, Professor Jacinta Douglas and Dr Elizabeth Smith, La Trobe University, Living with Disability Research Centre [\[272\]](#).

The review found that the Public Trustee has already successfully implemented a new, more rights based and customer-centric way of working. Following the Public Advocate report last year, the Public Trustee and government have already actioned a number of recommendations from the report and we are continuing to respond to the report. As part of this work, legislation was introduced to establish an advisory and monitoring board which will increase transparency and public accountability. I was pleased to table a progress update from the Public Trustee last sitting week. I thank the Public Advocate for shining a light on these important issues and for their ongoing work to help protect vulnerable Queenslanders. The government is absolutely committed to ensuring vulnerable Queenslanders are supported and protected when they need it most.

### State Archivist, Annual Reports

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.06 am): On Friday, 4 March we received Mr John McKenna QC's report into allegations made by the former state archivist, Mr Mike Summerell. The former state archivist made some concerning allegations regarding the

drafting processes of annual reports, and we acted to ensure that the matter was resolved appropriately. In appointing independent and highly respected barrister Mr John McKenna QC to investigate these claims, the Premier ensured Queenslanders would continue to have confidence in the integrity of the office of the State Archivist.


In that report, which I will table now, Mr McKenna found 'no reasonable suspicion that any of the persons involved in the preparation of these annual reports acted other than lawfully and appropriately'.

*Tabled paper:* Document, dated 4 March 2022, from JD McKenna QC, titled 'Review of the Allegations Attributed to the former State Archivist about the Queensland State Archives' Annual Reports for 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20' [\[273\]](#).

He found that the three annual reports of 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 were all prepared by the Queensland State Archives and reviewed by departmental officers prior to the finalisation of the reports. There was no involvement of the minister or his staff. He found that interactions between senior officers of the department and the former state archivist regarding the contents of the report were in line with regular work undertaken when preparing annual reports and constituted 'good administrative practice'. Mr McKenna QC notes that departmental officers only ever respectfully requested that the former state archivist consider making particular changes, and that none of these requests were inappropriate or motivated by improper reasons. He also highlights that the ultimate decision-making responsibility for the final text of the annual reports always rested with the former state archivist.

I would like to thank Mr McKenna QC for his report into this important matter. It is pleasing to hear that no improper conduct has occurred. I am also pleased that we can all continue to have faith in the integrity of the office of the State Archivist. Queenslanders can continue to take comfort in the knowledge that this government operates to the highest standard of integrity and accountability. Queenslanders know that when concerns arise we take them seriously and deal with them appropriately.

### Queensland Floods, Road and Rail Infrastructure

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.09 am): Queenslanders have endured a lot—years of COVID and now floods since the last sitting of this House. It is the second major flood event for the south-east in 11 years and the second flooding of Maryborough in one month and one that has had a devastating impact on our road network.

On Friday, 25 February, the Bruce Highway was cut in multiple places. On 28 February, we saw over 1,000 roads closed and the Brisbane River later peaked at 3.85 metres. The Mary River at Gympie exceeded the peak of 1999. It was a year's worth of rain in a few days—the most rain in a three-day or seven-day period since records began in 1840. It overwhelmed our rivers and waterways. It swallowed our roads and rail, people's houses and businesses, cutting off communities and leaving them isolated. Boats and kayaks replaced cars for transport in many locations, including in my own electorate of Miller, where people in Fairfield, Chelmer, Graceville and Sherwood were 'islanded' by the floodwaters.

Many areas copped it badly such as Bethania, Logan, Yeerongpilly, Graceville, Sherwood, Goodna, Yeronga, Chelmer, Oxley, Rocklea, Bundamba and Windsor, to name but a few. From the Wide Bay to Toowoomba to the border, the rain just did not stop. Major arterials were cut off—the Ipswich and Centenary motorways, the Bruce Highway, the Warrego Highway, the D'Aguilar Highway, the Bremer River bridge—and 10 bridges across Logan, Gold Coast and Scenic Rim were all heavily affected with large sections submerged and damaged. The Palaszczuk government stepped up. Our hardworking frontline workers were out doing the heavy lifting, keeping Queenslanders safe, rebuilding and repairing our network and getting us moving again. We cannot thank them enough.


Transport and Main Roads conducted 188 bridge safety inspections before reopening them all safely. Our south-west crews delivered 194 tonnes of plant mix for pothole repairs to keep freight flowing inland when the M1 was closed in New South Wales. Last week I was out at Chuwar with the member for Ipswich West where we met with TMR inspector John who led a work crew through the night to get bridges like Colleges Crossing open for the community as soon as floodwaters receded. I thank John and all of our frontline workers across Queensland for their incredible efforts.

The Palaszczuk government is proud and committed to protecting and standing by Queenslanders in a time of crisis and to get them back on their feet after natural disasters strike. We did this straight away by removing tolls from our major roads like the Airportlink Tunnel and the Gateway Motorway to help the recovery and by making public transport free to assist with the clean-up effort.

It is regrettable and unjust that Queensland flood victims will only receive one-third of the financial assistance that flood victims will receive just across the border in the federal coalition-held seat of Page. They will get three \$1,000 payments while Queensland flood victims will only get one \$1,000 payment from the Commonwealth. This is a disgrace and is utterly indefensible by the Morrison government.


Now we are getting on with major repairs, as well as delivering more resilient roads through our record \$27.5 billion transport plan. The Palaszczuk government does this because the health and safety of Queenslanders are our priority. We stood by Queenslanders to beat COVID, and we will stand by them now and into the future.

## ABSENCE OF MINISTERS

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (10.13 am): I advise that the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs will both be absent from the House this sitting week. The Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure will take any questions relating to the portfolio of the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services during question time. The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence will take any questions relating to the matters within the portfolio of Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs during question time.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### Deputy Leader of the Opposition

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (10.13 am): Let me start by offering my congratulations to our new deputy leader, the member for Kawana. He will be a formidable figure who enjoys the wholehearted support of our team. I am delighted to serve under his deputy leadership and honoured to continue with my portfolio responsibilities.


Every family faces its challenges and we are no different in that regard. Every family makes its choices, and the choice that I have made to step back from being the deputy leader is the right decision for all of us at this time. For me in the end it was a straightforward decision that will help preserve what I hold most dear. Yes, politicians generally talk about spending more time with their family at the end of their career not part way through, but I am at peace with the decision and am in no doubt that it is the right thing to do.

I would like to acknowledge the support of my colleagues and the understanding and compassion of my mate the Leader of the Opposition. From the moment I raised the possibility of stepping back with him, his chief concern has been for my family's welfare and we will be forever grateful for it. Just before we resume political hostilities, I would also like to acknowledge and offer my sincere gratitude to those government members who have reached out to me and that includes you, Mr Speaker. I am very thankful for it. All of us and our loved ones have sacrificed something for us to be here in this House and to serve our communities. That is one thing we all share regardless of the differences in our political viewpoints.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

## PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE

### Crime and Corruption Commission, Documents


 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (10.15 am): As chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee, I lay upon the table of the House a certified copy of the Register of Reports and Recommendations to the Minister for Police, Ministerial Directions and Tabled Ministerial Reasons 2021, and related correspondence. The register notes no communications were made which qualify for recording in the register in 2021. The register was furnished without comment from the acting chairperson of the Crime and Corruption Commission. The committee received the register on 9 February 2022 and, as required, is tabling the register within 14 sitting days of receipt.

*Tabled paper:* Crime and Corruption Commission: Certified copy of the Register of Reports and Recommendations to the Minister for Police, Ministerial Directions and Tabled Ministerial Reasons 2021, pursuant to section 4.7 of the Police Service Administration Act 1990 [274].



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### Report


 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (10.16 am): As chair of the Community Support and Services Committee, I lay upon the table report No. 16 of the Community Support and Services Committee titled *Criminal Law (Raising the Age of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2021*. The report presents a summary of the Community Support and Services Committee's examination of the Criminal Law (Raising the Age of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2021.

*Tabled paper:* Community Support and Services Committee: Report No. 16, 57th Parliament—Criminal Law (Raising the Age of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2021 [275].

The committee heard from young people's representatives and advocates, carers, teachers and defenders, and I would like to acknowledge their ongoing work to improve the lives of Queensland's children. The committee made a number of recommendations in relation to the important issues around youth justice reform in Queensland. I commend the report to the House.

## APPOINTMENT

### Panel of Temporary Speakers

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, this morning I received the resignation of the member for Currumbin from the Panel of Temporary Speakers. In accordance with standing order 11, I advise that I have appointed the member for Southern Downs to the panel.


**An honourable member:** Less warnings—that I can see.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I think you mean fewer warnings.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, question time will conclude today at 11.18 am.

### Workplace Behaviour, Comments by Premier

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.18 am): My question is to the Premier. I refer to comments made by the Premier in relation to a complaint of bullying by the Integrity Commissioner, and I ask: can the Premier explain to anyone who has been the victim of misogynistic slurs why they should just 'get in a room' with a bully and sort it out?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. If the member had listened to the press conference yesterday, he would be well aware that I said, 'I don't think anyone should be called names. I'm quite sure they can get a mediator or a negotiator. People do that in workplaces at all times.'

### Integrity Commissioner, Public Interest Disclosure

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** My question is to the Premier. The opposition can today reveal in May last year that the Integrity Commissioner provided the Premier's hand-picked director-general a public interest disclosure outlining the specific complaints of bullying and misogynistic comments by the chief executive of the Public Service Commission. Given this was nearly a year ago, why won't the Premier take action against the Integrity Commissioner's cry for help?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I say to the Leader of the Opposition that if a public interest disclosure has been made then those matters cannot be discussed because by their nature they are a public interest disclosure. The Leader of the Opposition would understand that is the whole purpose of the act.

### Queensland Floods, Recovery

**Mr McCALLUM:** My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier please update the House on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to support communities throughout South-East Queensland as they recover from the impact of recent floods?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Bundamba for that really important question. I know that is a topic that a lot of people out in the community are talking about—that is, how they recover from the floods they have just experienced and rebuild their lives. From the outset can I thank all members of parliament who have been out there with their communities day in, day out. It makes me so proud to see the community-led response happening on the ground.

The member for Bundamba and I were at the recovery centre at Goodna. We met with the major general and some of the ADF troops. I went with the local federal member and local member to one of the streets that was severely impacted. I went there and witnessed it firsthand myself. I saw people's entire lives basically on the footpath and the impact that has not only on them but also on their neighbours and their community. People have come from around different parts of Queensland to help people in need. I remember talking to Lois, who told me how she wants to rebuild her life. She wants to stay in the community she loves so dearly. I have seen the community support. The local Westpac branch set up a tent to help with recovery. People need to also reflect on the fact that cleaning up a person's life from their front doorstep and footpath does not take minutes; it takes days. The Army came in to help and the community helped. From memory, member for Jordan, one of your local Springfield basketball teams was set up there to provide water and food. A local foreman, Dan, appointed himself to assist with the trucks going in and out. To see the community in one street and to know that is what is happening right across the south-east gives me heart.

We have a really strong community in this state, and I went through that in my ministerial statement. To see people just pick themselves up and say to me, 'We're going to get on with our lives. This disaster has happened, but we're going to rebuild,' to see all of the agencies come on board to help out so quickly, the community recovery centres set up so quickly, the money out the door so quickly, all of the emergency personnel responses happening so quickly, and then to see the generosity of Queenslanders giving to the flood appeal—I want to say from the bottom of my heart: thank you, thank you, thank you.

### **Public Service Commission, Workplace Behaviour**

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My question is to the Premier. The CE of the Public Service Commission is accused of levelling a misogynistic slur against Queensland's first female Integrity Commissioner, is under investigation by the Crime and Corruption Commission after he oversaw the raid on the Integrity Commissioner and the wiping of a laptop, and is accused of releasing a misleading statement as part of an attack on the Integrity Commissioner. Despite the mounting evidence, can the Premier explain why she is protecting the bully instead of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I say to the member for Kawana that I reject his allegations. A number of these issues have ongoing inquiries that are happening.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you have asked the question. I would like to hear the answer.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We want to await the outcome of the CCC. I understand it has matters before it. Also let me say this—and I said it clearly in my opening answer to the Leader of the Opposition and I said it at the press conference yesterday: where there are workplace issues—and it happens in any workplace—there are avenues available for a mediator to come in and—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Members to my left, the Premier is being responsive to the question asked. You may not like the answer, but the Premier is responding.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I expect there to be respect in the workplace. I expect a high standard—

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Ms Boyd** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Members to my right, order!

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Nanango, I had called the House to order. You are warned under the standing orders. Member for Everton, you will cease your interjections. Member for Pine Rivers, we do not need your counsel either.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** These are very serious issues. That is why the director-general is more than happy to organise an independent mediator to look into these issues.

### **Water Infrastructure**

**Mr O'ROURKE:** My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier please outline the Palaszczuk government's commitment to delivering new water infrastructure for Queensland?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Rockhampton for the question. On this side of the House we are more than happy to build the dams and weirs that the people of this state need. We are more than happy to back the farmers of this state as well. Those opposite, by the elevation of the member for Kawana, have absolutely signalled the end of the once great National Party in this state. The once great National Party, which used to roam these halls of parliament, has now basically slid into oblivion with the elevation of—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. On this side we're happy to look after the bush. The farmers' friend is sitting behind me—

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I am not sure who you are taking to the bush with gel blasters, but your comments are coming to me and I do not want to go.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Getting back to the Rookwood Weir and the member for Rockhampton's question: the \$367 million Rookwood Weir project will deliver water security for thousands of homes. Concrete pours began in September last year. At the moment, work is focused on the riverbank and development of a fish lock at the weir. Currently, around 100 workers are on this site and this number will balloon to 250 jobs as construction ramps up. Today I am proud to announce that we have more jobs up for grabs on Queensland's largest water infrastructure project. We will recruit an extra 40 workers in coming weeks for the project. If you are a labourer, a form setter, a steel fixer, a concreter, a rigger, a crane operator, a sparky or a formworker, we want to hear from you.

The infrastructure build that we do in this state brings about jobs. On that side of the House they are only interested in their own jobs. They are not interested in the jobs of Queenslanders. All they have been focused on for the last week was who was going to become the Deputy Leader of the LNP. Can I say, Mr Speaker, that we are very happy with their choice.

We will continue to invest in infrastructure—whether it is the \$600 million we put in for Paradise Dam or the \$215 million for stage 1 of the Haughton pipeline in Townsville. In fact, we put \$195 million into the next stage because the federal government reneged on that. We have also invested \$16.5 million for the business case to raise the Burdekin Falls Dam, \$20.9 million to modernise an existing open channel irrigation scheme on the Atherton Tablelands and \$3 million to get Big Rocks Weir construction ready with a further \$27 million. We are consulting with locals on the proposed Toowoomba to Warwick pipeline. We will stand up for regional Queensland. We will provide the water security out west because those opposite have abandoned their constituency.

*(Time expired)*

### **Workplace Behaviour, Comments by Premier**

**Ms CAMM:** My question is to the Premier. Respected domestic violence specialists Hearts of Purple and anti-domestic violence advocate Kelli Martin have labelled the Premier's comments as damaging, unhelpful and potentially dangerous and that they could deter women from coming forward if they are victims of workplace misogyny. Will the Premier apologise to brave whistleblowers who speak out against bullies?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I think the member for Whitsunday should look at the transcript of what I said yesterday. I said I was more than happy to facilitate a mediator, which is exactly what we are doing.

### **Queensland Floods, Recovery**

**Ms BUSH:** My question is to 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 Queensland Reconstruction Authority is doing to help communities like mine rebuild after the floods? Is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

**Dr MILES:** I thank the member for Cooper for her question. I have seen firsthand just how she is supporting her local community through the floods. I have been in Rosalie and Milton—I had flashbacks in Rosalie actually—to be there helping them clean out those shops again. We stopped by Milton Common as well. I have seen how the member for Cooper, as well as our members right across the Wide Bay, the south-east and the Fraser Coast, are serving their communities in the aftermath of this disaster. They will be well supported by our Queensland Reconstruction Authority. Queensland is very

well served by our QRA. People travel from right around the world to see how a standing reconstruction authority can work. In fact, the federal government modelled their recently formed new standing reconstruction authority on the Queensland one.

The QRA have overseen now more than 90 recoveries from natural disasters over the last 10 years. They have overseen more than \$17 billion in reconstruction effort. That means that in every single corner of this state there is infrastructure—roads, bridges, buildings—that has been rebuilt thanks to the highly professional team at the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. As soon as a disaster approaches, the QRA swings into action and gets ready. I want to congratulate their chief executive officer, Brendan Moon, and his entire team on the work they have been doing so far.

On this side of the House, we acknowledge that disasters are going to keep coming. We need a standing reconstruction authority. Let us never forget that those opposite planned to wind up the QRA—first in 2013 and then in 2014. I table the estimates transcripts where the LNP acknowledged that it was their government's policy to wind up the QRA.

*Tabled paper:* Extract from estimates transcripts for the Budget 2012, titled 'QRA Staffing Cuts—Budget 2012' [276].

They started by cutting 18 per cent of the staff of the QRA in their very first budget. I table the budget paper for the benefit of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Extract from 2012-13 Queensland State Budget—Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Reconstruction Authority, page 71 [277].

On this side of the House, we support the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. On this side of the House, we back the Queensland Reconstruction Authority because we know that when Queenslanders need it after disasters the QRA is there for them and the Palaszczuk government will work with them to build back after this natural disaster, as we have done with so many before.

### Integrity Commissioner

**Mr PURDIE:** My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier release the legal advice she claims is stopping the Integrity Commissioner from continuing her role until the end of the year, or is the real reason she is being denied this opportunity to continue to serve linked to her pursuit of Labor lobbyists?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The Integrity Commissioner resigned. It is an effective resignation. She will be continuing in that position until early July as per her resignation letter.

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition!

**Ms Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier. I do not need any assistance.

### Job Creation

**Mr POWER:** My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer update the House on how unemployment growth is impacting job vacancies in Queensland?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the member for Logan for his question. I am pleased to report to the House that Queensland remains the job-generating powerhouse of the nation. We are 19 per cent of the national economy, but in January we generated 48 per cent of all jobs for the entire nation. The February employment report from Seek reveals another record increase in job ads in Queensland—up 2.2 per cent month on month. Job ads rose for February an astonishing 36 per cent in the year from February 2021.

Our government recognises the importance of that challenge, which is why we convened a state Workforce Summit on Friday. I join with the Premier in commending the minister for employment and training for convening that summit. It is why the Premier is developing a plan, as she said, to lure tradies to Queensland—to help with the growth of our economy and also with reconstruction.

I have been asked about job vacancies, but the vacancy I am concerned about is the vacancy in the seat occupied by the Leader of the Opposition. It was four years ago yesterday that Verity Barton, the former member for Broadwater, that icon of the 54th and 55th parliaments, boarded a plane for a new life in the United Kingdom. The man who took that woman's job promised a new approach. He was not going to be like the past. Remarkably, he said that there would be no whingeing, just positive contributions. Well it did not work out that way, did it?

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** All we hear from the Leader of the Opposition now is the whingeing and the complaining, with the auto babble dialled to 11. 'I'm not comfortable ... something, something, something.' 'Parody with confusion ... blah, blah, blah.' In recent weeks the Leader of the Opposition has been so happy to align himself with Campbell Newman and the great work he did as a minister in that government. He is telling everyone he would have done things better; he would have been in there defusing the rain bomb if he had a chance. I am happy to talk about the Leader of the Opposition's role in the Newman-Crisafulli government every single day of the week.

He might hold the title of Leader of the Opposition but the position itself is functionally vacant. On social media every single day, he keeps using the word 'laptop'—not because he is interested in integrity but because he wants to pander to the Trump-loving members of the extreme right to support his party and to support his position as leader. That is what it is all about. It is not leadership. It is not vision. There is no plan and no idea. They are not fit to be in opposition, let alone fit to be in government.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Everton, on multiple occasions you have not directed your comments through the chair. You are warned under the standing orders. Member for Theodore, you are also warned under the standing orders. Member for Mermaid Beach, you may be down the back but I can still hear you. You are warned under the standing orders.

### Workplace Behaviour, Comments by Premier

**Ms SIMPSON:** My question is to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's media statement of one year ago where she said that her government will continue to fight to tackle unfairness in our workplace for women. I ask: how does the Premier reconcile that statement with her comments yesterday in relation to the Integrity Commissioner?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I say to the member for Maroochydore what I have said very clearly—and this is at least the third time now—in relation to the issue that has been raised before the parliamentary committee, and let me say that the parliamentary committee also has the opportunity to report on that matter that was raised by Dr Stepanov. I have said that my director-general is more than happy to provide a mediator.

Yesterday I said there could be a mediator provided as well. I said that yesterday. I said that yesterday very clearly.

**Ms Bates:** The DG knew about it for a year.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Mudgeeraba will cease her interjections.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As I said, these are serious issues. There are issues before—

**Mr Crisafulli:** Imagine the outrage.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I expect there to be respect in the workplace and I expect there to be respect in this parliament as well. I ask my members to show that. It would be nice for the Leader of the Opposition to do exactly that because we know that it was not a hallmark of the former LNP.

**Mr Dick:** A bunch of bullies.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will cease his interjections.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. I take that interjection. These are issues that have been canvassed at length. The proper course of action is for them to be looked at.

### Queensland Floods, Schools

**Mr SAUNDERS:** My question is to the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Can the minister update the House on arrangements made to keep our students and school community safe during the recent extreme weather event, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms GRACE:** I thank the member for the question. It was excellent to visit with him the school that was severely impacted, St Helen's in Maryborough. I believe that there was only one GLA that was fit for purpose and that the rest of them had been completely inundated and flooded. It was great to speak to the students while they were waiting for the buses to take them to the near Maryborough West State School where they were continuing their face-to-face learning, and to keep those students safe, and that was put in place very quickly and very early. They were in great spirits, looking forward to their bus

trip. We were there to ensure that, whatever we do going forward, we flood-mitigate these schools a lot better than what they are currently. I will work with the local member for Maryborough. It was excellent having him, the principal and the regional officers all on site talking about a strategy for flood mitigation and further work to be done at that school.

When we have these extreme weather events, it is absolutely essential that safety comes first. Safety is not just during the event, it is post the event as well. When you go into some of these schools and you see what is happening around them on the streets, on the sites and the contamination, you have to take all of that into account. Decisions are always made in the best interests of students, their families, and just as importantly, staff safety in getting to the schools, to be able to open the schools, to be able to supervise and teach those children and also to be able to make sure that the schools run effectively. I am very proud, as Minister for Education, that the safety of students and families come first, each and every time.

We work just as well with the non-government sector in making sure that we work collaboratively together and that, when decisions are made, they are made in the best interests of all schools and the safety of all of those who access those school communities.

When it comes to an alternative policy in relation to this, there is nothing coming from those opposite other than whingeing and whining. Aren't they all experts with the benefit of hindsight? They are all geniuses with the benefit of hindsight. You only have to compare what we do here in Queensland under the leadership of the Premier to what happened in New South Wales and the federal government's response to the flood victims in New South Wales and Queensland. It is chalk and cheese! There is not an original thought there from those opposite.

**Dr Rowan** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Moggill will cease his interjections.

**Ms GRACE:** What do we have now? The old boys are back. The Campbell Newman boys are back. All the ministers of the Campbell Newman government, bereft of any ideas, unable to do anything, kicked out after three years—they are all back. We thank the Leader of the Opposition—great pick!

**Mr SPEAKER:** The minister's time has expired. Member for Moggill, your interruptions to the minister, interjections wise, were designed to distract and interrupt. I did not want to do that to the minister. You are now warned under the standing orders.

### **Workplace Behaviour, Comments by Premier**

**Ms BATES:** My question is to the Minister for Women. As the Minister for Women and a former employment lawyer, does the minister support the Premier's call for victims of misogynistic verbal abuse to get in the room with their alleged abuser and sort it out?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 115. It appears that the member for Mudgeeraba is seeking a legal opinion from the Attorney-General. I ask for your consideration of that matter before directing the question.

**Honourable members** interjected.

### **Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members! I am about to rule. The fact is that whether there is a legal opinion sought or a general opinion sought both are actually seeking an opinion. Therefore, I will rule the question out of order.

**Mr POWELL:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The question stated, 'Does the minister support'. It was not asking for an opinion at all.

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, Acting Leader of the House. The preamble to the question led me to believe that it was looking for a legal opinion. I am happy to find that that is not the case. However, on that basis I will rule the question out of order.

### **Queensland Floods, Housing**

**Mrs McMAHON:** My question is of the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts. Will the minister update the House about the government's housing response to the floods?

**Ms ENOCH:** I thank the member for Macalister for what is a very important question and a question that many members on this side of the House—and in fact all members of the parliament—have been very much concerned about with regard to this weather event. We know that all of us have been working with our communities to ensure that they are recovering soundly and that they have a roof over their heads.

That is why this government so swiftly moved to recovery, why we set up our activations in terms of our hardship payments so quickly, and we have seen already more than \$10 million paid to people through those accounts. We have also swiftly moved to set up recovery hubs—that happened within days. I had Housing staff deployed to the evacuation centres. They have been working hard in the recovery hubs to work directly with people impacted by the weather event. We have been able to support around 570 households who have requested and have been assisted with emergency housing. That is more than 1,290 people.

I expanded the eligibility for the department's bond loans and rentals grants so that more Queenslanders could access our private rental products. We had QBuild on the ground swiftly repairing social housing quickly so we can take care of our tenants. I announced \$600,000 of Rapid Response Fund to deliver enhanced housing and homelessness services in impacted areas. On top of all that, I convened the emergency housing security meeting with key housing stakeholders, including QCOSS, Tenants Queensland, RTA, the Associated Residential Parks Queensland, Q Shelter and REIQ to discuss innovative ways to be able to support the housing market going forward. We will continue to have those conversations.

This swift action to recovery and all of these actions that we have taken are against a backdrop of a federal government who has completely vacated the housing space in this state. The Morrison LNP government has stripped nearly \$100 million from housing and homelessness funding in Queensland over the last few years, at a time of unprecedented pressure on housing nationally. They have ceased the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, and they have cut the funding attached to that.

They are discontinuing the National Rental Affordability Scheme with no alternatives. That will mean some 10,000 properties in this state alone will come off that scheme, putting more pressure on the system. They refuse to forgive historic housing debt, like they had for Tasmania and South Australia, even though we asked consistently for them to do that. If they were to do that today, we could invest in another 950 properties in Queensland alone.

I have written to the federal minister many times with very little response. It is time for the LNP opposite to stand up for Queensland and for our fair share. That is what we will do. We need them to do the same.

### **Queensland Floods, Climate Change**

**Mr BERKMAN:** My question is to the Premier. After the tragic floods that hit so many of our constituents, the Premier has quite rightly said, 'Let's face it. It is climate change.' Does the Premier accept that unless we urgently phase out coal and gas in an orderly way by 2030 we are making the next floods even more deadly and destructive?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. I know there are people impacted in his local community as well. He also would share the views of members of parliament who have been out and about that people have been severely impacted and their lives have been absolutely and completely turned upside down. From having to deal with a pandemic, the COVID pandemic, to then deal with these life-threatening floods of natural disasters is not something I think anyone would like to deal with one after the other.

Can I say to the member for Maiwar that I have publicly said that during my time as Premier I have seen far too many natural disasters in this state. Of course climate change is real and climate change is happening. These are challenges for all governments. The time for governments to acknowledge that and to step up is absolutely now.

That is why we have a 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030. I say to the House that it is something that every single one of this team of my government is absolutely focused on. We know that our 50 per cent renewable energy target is achievable if we put all of our efforts into that, and we are seeing huge amounts of investment. When it comes to renewable energy, we have our \$2 billion renewable energy fund. We are still yet to see any matching contributions from the federal government.

Next week members of the World Heritage Committee are coming out to inspect the Great Barrier Reef. It is going to be absolutely vital that we put our energies into minimising the impact of climate change to protect one of our greatest assets—the iconic Great Barrier Reef. Again, this is something I

know the Minister for the Environment is incredibly passionate about. I understand that the Deputy Premier and the Minister for the Environment will be meeting with members of the World Heritage Committee to talk about our investment in tackling issues that are real and tangible in terms of climate change. It is a pity that some of the young people who were sitting in the gallery have left, because even in schools they understand how important climate change is.

We have a federal election coming up. I look forward to hearing the ideas, especially of those opposite, in terms of what they think about climate change. For so many years their head was in the sand when it came to any tangible methods to counter what is happening.

I thank everyone once again for their hard work in working with their community as part of the flood recovery.

### **Queensland Floods, Road Infrastructure**

**Ms PUGH:** My question is of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister update the House on how many roads closed during the South-East Queensland floods and how TMR worked to get Queenslanders moving again?

**Mr BAILEY:** I thank the member for Mount Ommaney for her question. I would like to acknowledge her incredible hard work on behalf of her constituents, particularly in Corinda and Oxley, who were very badly impacted by the Oxley Creek catchment. It is such a pleasure working with somebody who is so embedded and supportive of her community.

We have had more than a thousand roads closed, some due to the flooding and some due to hazards. We have seen a huge impact across our road network. It was an incredibly dangerous time to be on our roads, particularly as the rain was falling. That is why our advice to people for safety reasons was to stay off the roads as much as possible. Of course, some people had no choice. As their homes flooded, they needed to move about. In my electorate of Miller we had 136 streets impacted by flooding and of course there were thousands of streets across Queensland impacted as well. Many streets were no longer roads or streets; they were actually waterways for quite a number of days.

In Brisbane, a city of a million people and suffering those kinds of impacts, we saw only two evacuation centres for a city of that size. It just was not enough. In contrast, the Moreton Bay Regional Council put in place six evacuation centres for a population of about half a million—much more appropriate. It was impossible for people in my electorate to get to Chandler at times because of road closures and it was even worse for people in the Mount Ommaney electorate. Road closures and distance meant people could not get to the evacuation centre itself.

We saw some evacuation centres spring up organically. In my electorate the Wellers Hill Bowls Club started one and put up 30 people overnight at short notice with community input. I thank them from the bottom of my heart for the work they did. Let's be clear. We need at least four evacuation centres in Brisbane during an event like this, particularly for those on the south side and the south-west. They need access to an evacuation centre, and two for a city of this size is not enough.

Sadly, the Wellers Hills Bowls Club evacuation centre was shut down the next day by the council. There was also a school in my electorate that received a call from the council and was told not to become an evacuation centre when they were not planning to. It is hard to work out what the priorities of the council were when they were doing those kinds of things.

We certainly need a sweeper collection out there for a lot of people who put things out on the footpath. If they had a narrow footpath they literally did not have enough space. It has been collected, but we need the council to get in with some sweeper collections. A lot of roads look like they have snow on them from the debris that has been taken away.

In active transport we see cycling infrastructure still closed to this day. We have to start treating active transport infrastructure in the same way as roads and rail; otherwise it just contributes to the congestion. That is something we need to address.

*(Time expired)*

### **Chief Health Officer, Public Health Directives**

**Mr ANDREW:** My question is to the Attorney-General. With respect to the Chief Health Officer's powers under the state emergency powers legislation, are the CHO's public health directions subject to judicial review, and will those directions which have not been enacted in parliament cease to have lawful effect once the declared emergency ends on 26 March 2022?



### Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

**Mr SPEAKER:** Again, the member, who has been in this place for some time now, has asked for a legal opinion. I will rule that question out of order under standing order 115(c).

#### Legal Profession

**Mr MELLISH:** 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 inform the House on how the Palaszczuk government is supporting Queensland's legal profession, and is the Attorney-General aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I thank the member very much for the question. On this side of the House we value the legal profession and their contributions to our state. That is why I regularly engage with peak bodies such as the Queensland Law Society and the Bar Association as well as the heads of jurisdiction to discuss matters facing the profession.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Kawana.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** We also make an annual contribution to the National Judicial College of Australia to fund—

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Kawana, I have given you some additional latitude because of the new role that you now hold. That latitude is finished. You are warned under the standing orders.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** We also support the judiciary with a wide range of programs ranging from judicial wellbeing to court management. We fund specific family violence training for the judiciary because on this side of the House we respect the role of Queensland's legal profession. That extends to respecting the hardworking lawyers at Crown Law. They are trained professionals who comply with rigorous professional standards, including the solicitor conduct rules. They work day in, day out to provide up-to-date legal advice to government. They are public servants and their job is to serve in the best interests of Queensland.

That is why I cannot, for the life of me, understand why the member for Kawana would get on the radio this morning and imply that the solicitors at Crown Law are nothing more than partisan, clueless yes-men and yes-women. It is absolutely shameful that the new deputy leader has accused Crown Law of providing the advice that government wanted to hear, regardless of how valid it was, contrary to every legal principle they are obliged to uphold. His attack on the lawyers at Crown Law is absolutely appalling and as Attorney-General I am offended on their behalf. Should we be surprised? Really? The member for Kawana has absolutely no respect and we have the headlines to prove it.

Who could forget the headlines from the worst attorney-general in Queensland's history: 'Queensland chief justice selection process "failed"'. I table that article.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Brisbane Times*, dated 10 July 2014, titled 'Queensland chief justice selection process "failed": judge' [\[281\]](#).

'Justice Alan Wilson slams Chief Justice Tim Carmody'. I table that article.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Brisbane Times*, dated 26 March 2015, titled 'Justice Alan Wilson slams Chief Justice Tim Carmody' [\[280\]](#).

'Tim Carmody saga is a "lesson for all governments", former judge says'. I table that article.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Guardian*, dated 7 July 2015, titled 'Tim Carmody saga is a "lesson for all governments", former judge says' [\[279\]](#).

'Campbell Newman says Tim Carmody appointment is his biggest regret'. I table that article as well.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Guardian*, dated 27 September 2015, titled 'Campbell Newman says Tim Carmody appointment is his biggest regret' [\[278\]](#).

This is the attorney-general who went to war with judges and the legal profession. The Bar Association president resigned. The Solicitor-General resigned. Amazingly, yesterday the member for Kawana said he had learned a lot and he has changed since he was last in government. Yet in the first radio interview he does he slams the hardworking lawyers in Crown Law. You sacked public servants when you were in government and now you are slandering the hardworking public servants in Crown Law—the worst attorney-general in Queensland's history!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before calling the member for Nanango, Attorney-General, your comments will be directed through the chair or you will be under a warning.

### Workplace Behaviour, Comments by Premier

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My question is to the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development. As the Minister for Employment, does the minister support the Premier's call for victims of misogynistic verbal abuse in the workplace to get in the room with their alleged abuser and sort it out?

**Ms FARMER:** I thank the member for her question. I think the Premier has answered that question across a range of queries from those opposite and I support the Premier totally in her actions.

### Queensland Floods, Emergency Services Personnel

**Mrs MULLEN:** My question is to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. Will the minister explain the efforts of our frontline emergency workers to protect the community and their property during the flood emergency and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches to community safety?

**Mr RYAN:** I thank the member for the question but also for her efforts and the efforts of her colleagues during the most recent disaster emergency. I know the member for Jordan was out and about seeing lots of people, providing help to her constituents and her community, including, of course, members of the Queensland Police Service and our Fire and Emergency Services as well as other colleagues from non-government organisations and other government organisations. I do have to commend our emergency services and our police for the efforts that they demonstrated during the most recent emergency. They were out and about very quickly responding to the emergency, providing advice to the community around how they can best prepare for the emergency and respond to the emergency, but also assisting with life-saving efforts. We saw police officers and members of our emergency services engaged in swiftwater rescues and the evacuation of residents from homes, also searching for missing persons, conducting other rescues and establishing and monitoring road closures—life-saving work and work that Queenslanders truly appreciate from police and emergency services.

In fact, members would be interested to know that during the emergency period from 24 February to 7 March almost 10,000 calls for service were received by the Queensland Police Service in response to people needing help during the most recent natural disaster emergency. Some of those calls included 1,300 people in danger, 22,000 for welfare checks, 24,000 for flooding notifications and almost 300 calls related to marine incidents throughout the period. It is with a heavy heart we note that there was loss of life during this emergency as well. Thirteen people lost their lives and one person is still missing. We pass our condolences on to the family and friends of those people.

There might be a question about why Queensland is so well placed to respond to natural disasters. It is because this government resources our emergency services and our police to have the capacity to respond to events like this. We made a significant commitment at the last election—a record commitment, an historic commitment—to the Police Service of more than 2,000 extra police personnel. Those extra police personnel will deliver the capacity that our state needs to continue to respond to natural disasters. We have seen it in the most recent emergency: police there on the front line with their colleagues from emergency services. Every time there is a disaster like this we can rely on our emergency services.

There is a contrast. One thing rings true: there will always be more police under Labor in Queensland. We can prove that because of the commitments at the last election. Those opposite committed to less than half. We committed to more than 2,000.

### Workplace Behaviour, Comments by Premier

**Mr POWELL:** My question is to the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts. Does the minister support the Premier's call for victims of misogynistic verbal abuse in her department to get in the room with their alleged abuser and sort it out?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a matter suddenly arising. I find that absolutely offensive. That is not true and accurate and I ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Can I ask, if you find the question offensive, that you ask that the specific matters be withdrawn. Rising on a matter of privilege suddenly arising is a separate matter. If you are looking to do so I would suggest you would be following through with something in writing to myself.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find what the member said personally offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

**Mr POWELL:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. This is the third question to use a direct quote. It is a direct quote of the Premier from her media conference yesterday.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Having heard the question, and given the pattern of questioning today, I will allow the question, but I will allow the minister to respond any which way she likes.

**Ms ENOCH:** I thank the member for the question. If the member had bothered to listen to the whole interview that the Premier had yesterday he would understand—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms ENOCH:** If he had read the whole transcript and listened to the whole interview he would have seen that there was a great deal that was said during that time and the Premier was very much clear about the issues being workplace related. That is where the issue lay and that is where the Premier was directing her comments.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Members to my left, the question has been asked. I have allowed the question to be asked. Obviously there is a difference of opinion in terms of the facts in the question itself. I have given the minister latitude and I will ask that members to my left hear the answer from the minister.

**Ms ENOCH:** Clearly the opposition are spending their time misrepresenting what the Premier had to say yesterday. That is a misrepresentation of the facts. That is exactly what we see from those opposite constantly—a misrepresentation of the facts. That is their calling card—misrepresentation. ‘You have nothing to fear’, they say to public servants—misrepresentation. This is what we get from them all the time. They have no ground to stand on when it comes to equality and women. Look on this side of the House: almost 50 per cent on this side of the House are women. Look at all the boards across our state: 50 per cent of board members are women. Have a look on the other side. You can count them on one hand. What is going on? Was there an elevation to the leadership? What happened there?

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. The Treasurer will cease his interjections. The member for Whitsunday will cease her interjections. Member for Mudgeeraba, I have already cautioned you. You are warned under the standing orders.

**Ms ENOCH:** It is pretty clear, on this side of the House, the value of women in leadership, the value of women in these positions. The fact that we set targets as a government for board membership to ensure there were 50 per cent women on our boards, and we reached that target, shows the commitment to women on this side of the House. That side could not even muster some votes for a woman to be elevated into a deputy leadership position. They had to go crawling back into the past and bring it back to the future.

**Mr Dick:** Too many women on the Parole Board.

**Ms ENOCH:** I will take that interjection from the Treasurer. The member for Everton made it clear that he had an issue with too many women being on the Parole Board. Those opposite come in here and misrepresent the words of the Premier who stands up for integrity, who stands up for people in this state every single day. Every day this woman, the Premier of this state, wakes up and works hard for the people of Queensland. That is what this woman does. Every day men and women on this side will support this woman.

### **Queensland Floods, Community Sport and Recreation Clubs**

**Mr SULLIVAN:** My question is of the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement. Can the minister tell the House how the government is supporting not-for-profit community sport and active recreation clubs to get back on their feet after the recent floods and is the minister aware of any other approaches?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I thank the member for Stafford for the question. I particularly acknowledge the way in which communities along Kedron Brook, Enoggera Creek and Downfall Creek in his electorate have been significantly affected by the recent weather event. Many of the clubs and not-for-profit sporting and recreation organisations in his electorate are among the more than 1,500 Queensland organisations hit by floods from the Tweed border through to Maryborough, Gladstone and west to Goondiwindi. Clubs lost sheds, sporting equipment, floor coverings, electrical equipment and, in some

cases, entire clubhouses that were completely and utterly inundated. That is heart-wrenching to witness, particularly when you appreciate the amount of volunteer hours and activity that have gone into those organisations and facilities over many years.

Again, we see the extraordinary and remarkable resilience of Queenslanders as they turn out to start their local clubs' recovery. Whether it is playing fields, courts, BMX tracks, running tracks or goalposts and nets that have been damaged or destroyed, there are recovery bills of a couple of thousand dollars for some clubs through to millions for other clubs. More than 100 applications for a \$5,000 emergency grant have been received through the Palaszczuk government's level 1 Sport and Recreation Disaster Recovery Program. Those grants support clubs with clean-up costs, including for the provision of cleaning supplies, PPE gear and skip hire. Some clubs could qualify for the 50,000 Extraordinary Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants from the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority and, from mid next week, up to \$20,000 will be available through the jointly funded Commonwealth and state disaster recovery funding arrangements. That funding can help with the cost of a Gerni and other clean-up equipment or the repair and replacement of damaged infrastructure.

The reality is that, with a net satisfaction rating of minus two, the member for Broadwater knows that it is make-or-break time for his leadership. The member could not resist turning the distress of flooded Queenslanders into profile-building photo opportunities. There are around 25 flood related photo-ops on the member for Broadwater's Facebook page, plus videos. It seems he was learning very strongly from the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, who was also doing photo-ops everywhere he went. While the Prime Minister was slow off the mark to include Queensland in a national emergency declaration, he was not slow off the mark in getting out there to lean on a mop. I was quite surprised to see him sweeping up the water at Auchenflower, where they were actually trying to keep the court wet to preserve it. That was an unusual thing.

*(Time expired)*

### Public Trustee

**Mr NICHOLLS:** My question is to the Attorney-General. It has been a year since the Public Advocate's damning report on excessive Public Trustee fees and charges. At the time the Attorney said an internal review was underway into those fees and charges. Now the Public Trustee says we will have to wait until at least June for a review to be delivered. When will this government stop reviewing and start doing to deliver fairer fees and charges for Public Trustee clients?

**Ms FENTIMAN:** As I said this morning, work is well underway on making sure the Public Trustee is a modern public trustee office and has decision-making frameworks that respect the human rights of many vulnerable Queenslanders. As I also said, it is good to see that the Public Trustee has been on a reform journey for more than two years. At the time that we announced the fees and charges review we said it would take at least 12 to 18 months, and I have been on the record as saying it would be completed by June.

Since the Public Advocate report was released last year, we have actioned a number of recommendations. As recommended by the Public Advocate, legislation was introduced to establish an advisory and monitoring board. Work is underway on the recommendations for government. I tabled a progress report from the Public Trustee last sitting week. I am pleased to advise that the Public Advocate noted in their implementation update published last week that the *Preserving the financial futures of vulnerable Queenslanders* report has led to some significant changes in the operations and governance of the Public Trustee over the past year. A comprehensive independent fees and charges review is underway and some fees and charges changes have already been made. Several transparency initiatives have also been developed, including a new customer investment strategy and the establishment of the Office of the Customer Advocate. There is much work underway. I have also tabled a report from La Trobe University into decision-making frameworks in the Public Trustee that said that they are leading the country. However, I acknowledge there is clearly a lot more work to do.

As I said earlier in my ministerial statement, last night's *Four Corners* program was very uncomfortable viewing. The three gentlemen whose cases were highlighted last night clearly had unacceptable experiences. It is not acceptable for any Queenslanders to have that experience. I want Queenslanders to have the utmost confidence in a service that is designed to protect the most vulnerable Queenslanders.

I do want to give credit to the Public Trustee and the staff as the office has undergone huge changes in the past few years. It is not easy to navigate and transform an organisation like the Public Trustee. However, I am very confident that that change is well underway and I am very confident, as I

said, in the reviews that are underway. Again I am very happy to table not just the fees and charges review but also the internal review that the Public Trustee announced this morning into some of their practices and policies so that Queenslanders can have confidence that every matter raised in that *Four Corners* story is being investigated by some very experienced former ombudsmen. It is an external independent review and I think that is appropriate to give Queenslanders confidence.

### Water Infrastructure

**Ms HOWARD:** My question is of the Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water. Will the minister update the House on the government's plan to deliver upgraded, safer dams here in South-East Queensland?

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

**Mr BUTCHER:** I could talk about dam safety all day. When it comes to flood mitigation and upgrades, as a government we decided to prioritise dam safety in Queensland. We have been going full steam ahead with that since 2017, working on dams such as Cooloolabin Dam, Ewen Maddock Dam, Wappa Dam, Leslie Harrison Dam and Sideling Creek Dam. In the short time that I have I will say that, when it comes to throwing mud about dam safety and new dams in Queensland, the LNP have sent out their old friend Campbell Newman and it looks like he is still calling the shots.

Let me get some facts on the record for those opposite. Campbell Newman is a has-been. He has never built a single dam in Queensland, but they did cut a dam. They announced 100 dams when they came into government but did not build one dam. What they did do, though, in their time—and good on them for doing it—was cut a dam. That was their record: one dam cut.

*(Time expired)*


**Mr SPEAKER:** The period for question time has expired.

## POLICE LEGISLATION (EFFICIENCIES AND EFFECTIVENESS) AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 18 November 2021 (see p. 3743), on motion of Mr Ryan—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (11.18 am): Today I rise to speak on the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. As is always the case, I would first and foremost like to thank the secretariat for their usual tireless output. I have come to learn that the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee is a very busy committee and the support afforded by the secretariat is quite exemplary. Naturally I acknowledge the contributions of my fellow committee members, the members for Toohey, Cooper, Noosa, Glass House and Currumbin. I acknowledge that, by and large, we are a fairly collegiate bunch.

In September last year stakeholders were invited to make submissions, and seven in total were received. Throughout COVID-19 it has become even more apparent that the QPS has played a vital role in protecting the community, not just in its usual capacity but against the worst ravages of the pandemic. They are always and will always be critical to our response. As Queensland opens up, the QPS will be pivotal yet again.

It is true that the title of this bill will not set the heart racing at first glance, but this belies its very critical importance. The seemingly innocuous amendment around the Oaths Act 1867 will, according to the explanatory notes, have a potentially huge and positive effect. The explanatory notes detail that this change will potentially save anywhere between 5,000 and 20,000 hours of QPS officers' time per year. This saving of hours is significant in any setting, but in regional areas with smaller stations and a smaller complement of staff this single change will be the difference between an officer spending time in the community or spending time in clerical work. Think on that for a moment—thousands of hours that can be redirected into traditional community policing. That single amendment makes this bill alone worthwhile.

Further, the changes proposed in this bill will enable a senior police officer to witness prescribed affidavits electronically in addition to a physical document where the officer is physically present. It will also enable a senior officer to witness the prescribed document via an audiovisual link. However, when

it comes to bail affidavits, witnessing via audiovisual link will be restricted to circumstances in which it is not reasonably practicable for the senior officer to witness the affidavit in person. The senior level of the police officer further reinforces the importance of ensuring the contents of the affidavit are truthful, lawful and accurate and that the oath or affirmation is properly administered when witnessing the signing of the affidavit. Further protections include the offences of perjury, falsely verified statements and false declarations in the Criminal Code which would apply to a police officer who lied in an affidavit witnessed by a senior police officer in the same way as if the affidavit were witnessed by a JP.

Further, under the PPRA, police have powers in relation to the examination of a seized thing. However, as stated by the QPS, technology has enabled new methods of offending, including enhancements in encryption and electronic storage of information, that have made it easier to conceal and prevent access to evidence. To this end, the bill proposes amendments to section 154A of the PPRA to: enable a police officer to apply to a magistrate or Supreme Court judge for an access order where the digital device was lawfully seized under the provision of the PPRA, including under a search warrant issued by a JP; and to enable a magistrate or a Supreme Court judge to make an access order where they are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that device information from the digital device may be evidence of a crime scene threshold of an offence against Criminal Code sections 223, distributing intimate image; 227A, observation or recording in breach of privacy; and 227B, distributing prohibited visual recordings.

At this point it is worth noting the comments provided by the QPS in relation to these changes when they say—

Any potential for self-incrimination is minimised and is justified in order to ensure that police can effectively investigate offenders who are increasingly using encryption, passwords and remote storage to avoid detection ...

The proposed legislation will enable us to put the evidence before the court. We still have to lawfully seize it, whether it is under the PPRA or under a JP's warrant. The level for us to get it is far higher than if we went to the magistrate or the judge in the first place, because it has to be that crime scene threshold offence rather than an offence. It is still getting judicially considered. It is at a higher level which I think increases the safeguards around it. There is still that judicial overseeing of it. Then once we do have it, we have a range of protections and safeguards in place to protect the confidentiality of the information.

If a police officer saw an inappropriate photo on a phone and released it, they have then committed an offence for either unlawful disclosure, misconduct, or even computer hacking around unlawfully accessing the seized device where they could face imprisonment. Misconduct can also come into a whole range of things.

It is a higher threshold ... but we would have protections around as it would if we seized the device under the magistrate's warrant to protect the privacy of that information anyway.

The committee notes that the amendments will allow for the effective investigation of serious criminal offences—namely, that the police already have the power to seize, examine and search a digital device—but that the bill will extend this to include the power for a magistrate or a Supreme Court judge to make an order where a digital device is seized under a search warrant issued by a JP or otherwise lawfully seized under the PPRA. The bill only permits the making of an access order where a magistrate or a Supreme Court judge is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that there is evidence on the digital device of a crime scene threshold or an offence against sections 223, 227A and 227B of the Criminal Code.


In response to the Weapons Act 1990, the committee notes it is satisfied with the QPS's response that the bill's provisions to allow a licensed firearm dealer to retain and deal with an anonymously surrendered firearm or prescribed thing would support the firearm's amnesty by reducing the unnecessary risks and business impacts associated with transporting such an item to a police station. The committee notes a stakeholder suggestion to introduce a blanket approval for firearms dealers to accept amnesty firearms rather than relying on individual authorities from the QPS's Weapons Licensing unit. However, the committee supports the QPS view that individual authorities from weapons licensing is the best approach to ensure the provenance of firearms continues to be established for surrendered firearms, which can only be done by Weapons Licensing as they have access to the restricted information and to information across jurisdictions.

The committee notes stakeholders' comments regarding category R weapons. Firearm dealers may not accept these weapons under the amnesty as they must transport them to a police station rather than have the ability to retain and deal with them. However, the bill does not change the existing legislation that allows dealers to accept category R weapons and firearms and then arrange for them to be delivered to a police station. The committee notes that following provenance checks a licensed armourer can collect a surrendered category R item from police in order to make the item inoperable or for another lawful purpose.

As I said, the bill at first glance is not exactly the stuff of legend, but it is a very significant body of work for getting police back into the community. These efficiency measures build on the efforts of the government to back frontline workers, including our police, and including, might I add, a highlight during this term—the proposed construction of a police station in Caloundra South, a commitment I was delighted to give while standing with the minister in Aura during the 2020 campaign.

We are supporting our police through a record police budget and a significant infrastructure pipeline and the biggest investment in policing personnel in three decades—2,025 additional police over five years. This is an incredible investment that will, like this bill, see more police out in the front line keeping Queenslanders safe. On that note, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Before calling the next speaker, a reminder for those members on a warning after question time. They are: the members for Nanango, Everton, Theodore, Mermaid Beach, Broadwater, Moggill, Kawana and Mudgeeraba.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.28 am): I too rise as a member of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee to make a contribution on the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. As the previous speaker, the member for Caloundra, acknowledged, I too acknowledge my fellow committee members led by our chair, the member for Toohey, but I also acknowledge Renee Easton and the members of the secretariat who do a fantastic job of supporting us and assisting us collect all the various submissions from stakeholders across the state who take an interest in legislation.

To be fair, as the member for Caloundra said, this was one of the least controversial pieces of legislation the committee has dealt with for some time. Having said that, still there were a number of submitters who raised concerns on various aspects of the bill. I focus my attention on where the member for Caloundra left off, that is, the amendments to the Weapons Act 1990, as I believe they will have the most relevance to the people of Glass House.

It is fair to say that I, like a lot of members who have rural components to their electorates, am often called upon by my constituents to assist with weapons licensing matters and to deal with the Weapons Licensing branch within the Queensland Police Service. In nearly all instances those issues are eventually resolved in a timely manner. The intent of these amendments is to hopefully bring a level of efficiency that will see an improvement in the processing of licensing matters within that branch. It is also fair to say at the outset that these amendments probably have not gone as far as many stakeholders and constituents of Glass House would have liked. We would love to see—I will come to this towards the end of my contribution—a far more efficient process and one that does not get bogged down in bureaucracy and does not seem to take inordinate amounts of time. There are things in these amendments that are raising concerns among the peak bodies representing firearm owners that may give that branch more scope to drag their heels when it comes to weapons licensing.

Clauses 32 and 33 of the bill proposes to extend the three-month temporary possession period to six months. This provides unlicensed owners with an appropriate time to address the reason for temporary storage. Some of the reasons may be a person's weapons licence expires—often because they are waiting for a renewal—it is suspended due to court or serious health matters or it relates to the administration of a deceased estate. That last one is one that has popped up a number of times through my Glass House electorate office. That provision is to allow an extension to occur before administrative processes are reinstated.

Whilst most stakeholders support this extension of time, the Shooters Union is concerned about the impact this amendment will have on service standards for issuing licences and that higher fees may have to be paid by the licensees. The Shooters Union stated—

Sometimes, temporary storage will be with a licensee's friend or family member. Currently, when that 3 months period expires, the firearms must be surrendered to a licensed firearm dealer for storage, which involves a fee which can vary from dealer to dealer according to individual commercial arrangements. Weapons Licensing Branch has 42 days after expiry to decide an application for renewal of a licence and after that period, the person is unlicensed and must also surrender their firearms to a licensed dealer for storage. With 8000 licences outstanding, some of which must be the result of late renewals and the amendment proposing an extension of storage to 6 months and licences not even being assessed until 5 months have passed, it would seem that the service standard for the issue of licences by Weapons Licensing Branch is already far exceeding the 3 months temporary storage requirements.

This really is a case of is this legislation the tail wagging the dog. Are we bringing this in because of inefficiencies within the Weapons Licensing branch rather than addressing the inefficiencies? I echo the concerns of the Shooters Union. I understand why this provision is being brought in, but let it not become the new service standard for the Weapons Licensing branch. They need to be meeting the

42-day requirement. If they do that, they will get through the backlog of 8,000 licences awaiting renewal and hopefully the temporary storage changes will not be required. The Firearms Dealers Association expressed similar concerns as did the Shooting Industry Foundation of Australia. The feedback was fairly consistent.


The QPS acknowledged that there has been an increase over the past 18 months in the time it has taken to process licences. They stated that it was due to a variety of factors, including recruitment and the effects of COVID-19 on the workplace as well as a significant increase in the number of applications being received. The committee took on board the comments made by the various stakeholders and the QPS. As a member of that committee, I will continue to keep an eye on this and will report back to the minister based on feedback I receive from my constituents. We will certainly be keeping an eye on those standards to ensure that they are not slipping and that it is not giving the Weapons Licensing branch a further excuse to delay.

Other amendments provide civilian technical officers with the ability to issue evidentiary certificates for the Weapons Act 1990. Stakeholders were concerned that civilian technical officers will not have the skills or expertise required to undertake such a task. We put that to the Queensland Police Service. Their response was that the provision provides the commissioner with the ability to appoint police officers and Public Service officers with the necessary experience or expertise as approved officers for the Weapons Act and that a copy of that document must state the classification of the weapon to be signed by the police officer or Public Service officer and must include their qualifications and experience. With that in mind, the committee will take a wait-and-see approach to see whether the stakeholders' concerns play out. It is clear that the QPS acknowledges their concerns and is making efforts to address them.

Another amendment enables approved licensed firearms dealers to retain and deal with an anonymously surrendered firearm or prescribed thing. This is important when people bring forward weapons during an amnesty. It provides the ability for firearms dealers to deal with that. Again, whilst there is some support for this amendment there were concerns that it does not go far enough. There was conflicting feedback from stakeholders in terms of how this could potentially be dealt with. Weighing all of that up, the Queensland Police Service responded that what we are looking at here is a reasonable and balanced risk approach. I see both sides of the argument. I am willing to take that as something the Queensland Police Service is monitoring closely, but we will be keeping an eye on it.

As I said earlier, a number of stakeholders went to great lengths to say that the amendments to the Weapons Act do not go far enough. I come back to my comments that clearly what is occurring is an inability to meet existing service standards and existing legislative requirements within the Weapons Licensing branch. There is no question about it, COVID has thrown a curveball at many departments and line agencies dealing with customers in the front office. Having said that, there is now an opportunity to address some of those inefficiencies and improve the way weapons licences are processed. If there are continuing bureaucratic or regulatory impediments around how that is being done then let us bring the legislation back and have another look at it. Let us first look at whether the practices and policies are in place within these offices to allow them to do what they have been tasked to do and that they have sufficient resources to do what they have been tasked to do.

There is nothing more frustrating for a law-abiding firearm owner than to be mucked around by five months of bureaucracy. It makes many of them feel like they are being treated as criminals. We know they are not. In the Glass House electorate the vast majority are rural property owners. They are using firearms for their own farming practices but also to keep pests under control. They do not want to be treated as criminals. They do the right thing. They want their weapons licence renewed efficiently. Let us not let these legislative amendments make that slip out even further. Let us address the root cause.

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (11.37 am): I rise in support of the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021 which supports the Palaszczuk government's unite and recover objective to deliver world-class frontline services in community safety. The demands placed upon our Queensland Police Service are ever increasing. Across the state there continues to be an increase in the number of calls for service, increasingly complex social issues, growing community expectations and ever-increasing disaster management support. I have seen this firsthand across our local community of Bundamba during the recent extreme weather event and I take this opportunity to publicly thank QPS officers—along with all of our emergency service workers, volunteers, rural fires and SES who did an amazing job in my local community and right throughout South-East Queensland—for their ongoing response to flooding in areas like Goodna and Bundamba.



These events place significant pressure on our resources. That is part of the reason we have delivered record police personnel since 2015. We are building on that with the biggest investment in community safety in over 30 years that includes 2,025 extra police personnel and 1,450 sworn officers, including over 150 in our local community of Ipswich.

We are also investing in the digital transfer of frontline services, supporting an efficient and effective approach to community safety. This involves modernising practices and service delivery and enhancing the use of modern technology. We recently launched a new mobile interface to enable our frontline officers to respond to domestic and family violence incidents with easily accessible information that they need to respond effectively to those situations.

We are also providing our frontline police with next generation integrated load-bearing vests to improve the safety of their operational uniform. Just last month we announced two new Polair helicopters to keep our communities safe, along with a 10-year investment in operations. Today we are further improving the delivery of policing services, reducing administrative processes and streamlining police operations which will increase productivity and improve the detection, prevention and disruption of crime.

I turn now to the section of the bill that authorises senior police officers to witness affidavits. Thousands of hours of police officers' time are consumed by having to locate and attend before a justice of the peace or a commissioner for declarations—I take this opportunity to acknowledge the tremendous contribution of our JPs and commissioners for declarations, who provide an excellent community service; I truly thank those volunteers—to swear an oath of service or declare or affirm the veracity of information contained in a document. Significant timesaving for frontline police officers can be achieved by authorising senior police officers to witness affidavits made by other police officers in relation to proving the service of documents, bail proceedings under the Bail Act and sworn applications made in compliance with particular provisions of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act.

This bill, as a result of the comments provided by stakeholders—and I thank them for their feedback and engagement—was amended to restrict the level of police officer who can take an affidavit for prescribed documents to that of a senior police officer. A senior police officer is defined as an officer in charge of a station, establishment or watch house—or the officer nominated to be in charge—a watch house manager or a police officer of or above the rank of sergeant.

In addition to that, QPS policy will specify the obligations on senior police who are able to witness affidavits and will ensure there is no conflict of interest by restricting a senior police officer who was involved in the investigation or a witness to the events set out in the affidavit from witnessing the affidavit. They are excellent safeguards. The measures in the bill will enable the witnessing of affidavits on a physical document; in the form of an electronic document, including using the use of electronic signatures; and by audiovisual link.

I turn now to the provisions that relate to access orders for seized digital devices. We know that technology has enabled new methods of offending. Enhancements in encryption and electronic storage of information have made it easier to conceal and prevent access to evidence. The current digital access order scheme does not permit a magistrate or Supreme Court judge to make an order where a digital device is seized under a search warrant issued by a JP or otherwise lawfully seized under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act.

This bill will amend the relevant sections of the PPRA, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, to enable a police officer to apply to a magistrate or Supreme Court judge for an access order where the digital device was lawfully seized pursuant to the PPRA including under a search warrant issued by a JP; and to enable a magistrate or Supreme Court judge to make an access order where they are satisfied there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that device information from the digital device may be evidence of a crime scene threshold offence or an offence against the Criminal Code sections 223, 227A and 227B.


The proposed amendments will not provide police with unfettered access to information on a person's storage device as the scope of information accessed will be limited by the offence for which a storage device has been seized. That is very important. For example, if police seize a device due to reasonable suspicion it contains child exploitation material, they would not be able to apply for an access order requiring passwords for a person's bank accounts. Judicial oversight will ensure the access sought and granted is relevant to the offence or the offences that are being investigated.

I turn now to the sections that relate to QPS alcohol and targeted substance testing. When police officers and certain unsworn staff under the current Police Service Administration Act are involved in a critical incident, they may be required to submit to alcohol and targeted substance testing. A 'critical

incident' can include discharging a firearm in circumstances that caused or could have caused injury to a person, a death of a person in custody, a vehicle pursuit, or a workplace incident at a police station or police establishment where a person dies or is admitted to hospital for treatment of injuries.

The QPS's Ethical Standards Command identified that the current definition of 'critical incident' is too limiting when the need for oversight of an officer's action is legally required or necessary to ensure public confidence in police. The current definition of 'critical incident' also does not capture the situation where a police officer accidentally discharges a firearm in circumstances that caused or could have caused injury to a person. This bill will provide amendment of the meaning of 'critical incident' for the purposes of triggering alcohol and targeted substance testing to cover those situations.

The Palaszczuk government continues to invest in record numbers of police personnel, support workers and the latest digital technology. We are committed to creating an operating environment that allows our dedicated frontline police officers to go about their important job of keeping the Queensland community safe as efficiently and effectively as possible. The measures contained in this bill help achieve exactly that. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (11.47 am): Our police services work really hard to provide safe and secure communities enabling Queenslanders to undertake their daily pursuits confidently and safely. To achieve this, these services must be accessible and responsive to community needs, disaster and emergency management. Their workload is enormous and comes with great personal risk and many challenges.

They investigate crime and identify and apprehend offenders, target operations to reduce traffic offences, and attend and investigate horrific traffic accidents, suicides, murders and domestic violence. Additionally, they support the judicial process including the provision of safe custody for alleged offenders and respond to general community needs and disasters whether fires, floods or pandemics. For nearly two years they also manned borders and managed hotel quarantine without appropriate levels of resources and now our devastating floods. That is just a small sample of what they do. Our communities expect our police to do their job in an equitable and efficient manner, yet on a daily basis the dreaded thick red tape often meets the thin blue line, making their jobs that much harder.

In 2020 a time and motion study was undertaken with plain clothed units to identify the time taken to locate an available JP to finalise bail documentation. This analysis of 6,321 bail affidavits revealed that the time taken ranged from 30 minutes to two hours, with an average of 60 minutes to have a document sworn and signed. The impact for policing in remote localities is often more significant. On some occasions an officer's entire shift is spent driving to a regional centre to have the objection to bail documents witnessed. Enabling a senior police officer to witness an objection to bail would potentially save between 4,591 and 21,924 hours of officers' time annually, which can then be spent where needed.

The Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021 authorises senior police officers to witness affidavits made by other police officers in relation to proving the service of documents, support bail proceedings under the Bail Act 1980 and the Youth Justice Act 1992, as well as make sworn applications in compliance with the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000.


QPS advises that the police witnessing amendments contained in the bill would make certain temporary measures introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic now permanent. This includes document reforms allowing for electronic signing and witnessing via video link for affidavits and statutory declarations and general powers of attorney for businesses, deeds and particular mortgages. The Youth Advisory Centre opposed certain amendments, stating that an independent judicial officer should continue to undertake this role. The YAC also stated that if this recommendation was not accepted senior police officers needed to be appropriately trained. In response, the QPS committed to develop a policy framework to guide senior officers in the performance of the new witnessing functions. The policy will: stipulate procedures to be undertaken; include a prohibition against exercising functions in circumstances that are a conflict of interest; and initiate an independent review once they have been in operation for a period of 12 months.

As we have heard, technology has enabled new methods of offending. Enhancements in encryption and the electronic storage of information of course have made this easier to conceal. The bill will allow a Supreme Court judge or magistrate to make a digital access order requiring the provision of passwords or assistance to access digital devices. We note the concerns of stakeholders regarding these amendments; however, QPS already has the power to seize, examine and search a digital device. This bill will extend this to allow a magistrate or Supreme Court judge to make an order where a digital device is seized under a search warrant issued by a JP or otherwise lawfully seized under the PPRA.

The bill also proposes amendments relating to testing police officers and certain unsworn staff under the Police Service Administration Act 1990 when they are involved in a critical incident. Illegal substances can be detected in urine days to weeks after consumption. Current technologies allow police to conduct a saliva test to provide an immediate indication of the presence of certain dangerous drugs with further testing being undertaken following a positive indication.

The proposed amendments to the Weapons Act 1990 will streamline the operation of the permanent firearms amnesty Queensland currently has in place to allow firearms dealers to retain firearms or other prescribed items that have been surrendered to them anonymously. Concerns regarding whether this would facilitate illegal sales saw reassurance around the procedures already in place.

The majority of submitters supported this bill, with any elements of concern addressed through responses from QPS and the department. I want to thank my LASC chair, fellow committee members and our secretariat, submitters, the QPS and attendees to the public hearing and briefing for all their efforts. We send our gratitude to all who risk their lives daily to keep us safe. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (11.53 am): I rise to speak in support of the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. This bill proposes a number of important amendments to boost the capabilities of our police to do what they do best: keep our communities safe. The Queensland community witnessed their great work throughout the global health pandemic on our borders, in our airports, on our roads, at quarantine hotels and in our communities through compliance checks. In fact, there has been such demand for these services that the QPS is now allocating specially trained Queensland protective services officers for courthouses, quarantine facilities like Wellcamp, and many other key locations right throughout Queensland. This ensures that this work is carried out by highly trained and specialised professionals under the umbrella of the QPS. They are keeping us safe.

I have nothing but praise for the work of our local police in protecting my community during the recent floods. They worked hand in glove with other emergency services in my community and many others. When I raised the concerns about looting in my community that community members had raised with me, the police were very swift to respond. They set up a command centre in Oxley. They were highly visible, and that presence was so reassuring. I commend the police in my local area for their proactive patrols of my flood-affected areas. They worked around the clock to disrupt and prevent opportunistic looters from targeting local homes and businesses in my community. People who prey on vulnerable Queenslanders are the worst of the worst. The police minister was right in saying that they are not Queenslanders. In fact, at that press conference with the Premier he said more but, Mr Deputy Speaker, it would be unparliamentary of me to repeat those words in this House and so I will not.

Looters stole from people whose homes and livelihoods were devastated by the floods. As I walked around the streets of Oxley I was disappointed to hear not only of people taking things from the kerbside but actually going into people's properties and taking jewellery that community members had hidden and concealed really well. They rifled inside their homes for the last vestiges of their personal property and they took it. It is disgusting! I back the minister and support the police in taking a zero tolerance approach when it comes to looting. I am advised that, since Operation Nash commenced on 1 March, 10 people were arrested on 14 anti-looting charges. Six others were arrested on various other charges.

While I do not know the locations of these arrests, the police have had a very strong presence in my community and it had a very strong deterring effect. As I walked through the streets of Oxley and Corinda in recent weeks checking on those flood-affected residents, the officers were on horseback right there beside me to ensure that anyone driving through those streets with nefarious intent was deterred by their strong presence. Locals in my community told me how happy they were to have this visible show of support. Operation Nash conducted more than 1,000 deployments involving more than 800 land based deployments and almost 200 water based deployments. There was a highly visible police presence right throughout flood-affected areas in Queensland because they were out and about helping people, supporting other—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Member for Mount Ommaney, can I draw you back to the long title of the bill, please.

**Ms PUGH:** Absolutely, Mr Deputy Speaker; thank you for your counsel. Police were out and about helping people, supporting people in the worst of times, and that is what this bill is all about. It is about making sure that our police resources are free to conduct operations like Operation Nash. We need our police out there on the front line, not doing paperwork. That is what this bill is all about.

I now turn to the changes proposed in the bill to provide more support to the police. These changes include measures that will make it easier for certain documents to be witnessed. That has already been canvassed by other members of the House, and I join the member for Bundamba in his fervent appreciation of JPs and the good work they do in our community. That was once a job that was often performed by local members and local police, and having those volunteers in our community frees up man-hours for a lot of different public servants. It is very important. This measure is expected to free up 22,000 hours of valuable police time. It means they can spend more time on the front line in our communities with things like Operation Nash.

This proposed measure will strengthen the ability of police to obtain orders that allow access to devices such as mobile phones. This is going to enhance the ability of police to investigate crimes like the non-consensual sharing of images, upskirting and filming in change rooms. Criminals need to know they cannot conceal their crimes behind a pass code.

The Palaszczuk government backs our police. We back our police by delivering a record investment in more police and more police resources. We have delivered a record \$2.6 billion overall police budget—an increase of almost 20 per cent since we came to government. We will have 2,025 extra police personnel, including 1,450 sworn officers who will be deployed to the front line. We will have more police liaison officers active in my community. We will have more support personnel, including injury management officers for a new QPS wellbeing centre, and more mobile police beats.

As I said, it was great to see these police stations on wheels in my electorate. They could be specially deployed to flood-prone areas so they were right there at the end of Oxley Road in the worst, most ravaged, most hard-hit flood areas. It was so reassuring for my community. Our \$300 million investment in the police infrastructure pipeline will deliver new police facilities across the state.

This government will always back our police. We are investing in jobs. We are investing in infrastructure. We have had COVID, we have had floods, but the Palaszczuk government is delivering an economic plan to keep us on the road to recovery—and that includes our fantastic QPS. We are modernising our laws so that we can stay one step ahead of the law-breakers and criminals. We are creating a better, more efficient operating environment for our police so they can spend more time on the front line and in our communities.

Members on this side of the House with flood-affected communities like mine have been speaking in recent days. There are a lot of Queenslanders doing it tough right now. These everyday Queenslanders who have experienced this flood appreciate that we are freeing up those police resources so they can be out in the community doing what they do best. We have passed tough laws to protect Queenslanders. What is clear from this bill and other measures that we have introduced since we came to government is that community safety is first and foremost. We will support our police so that they can do what they do best—that is, protect Queenslanders and keep our communities safe because that is what Labor governments do.

In the time I have left, I especially want to thank my local police. The officer in charge at Mount Ommaney, Peta Comadira, has been a particular advocate for these kinds of efficiency changes. When we meet, these are the kinds of things she raises with me on a regular basis. As an officer in charge, she is really passionate about making sure that we have those efficiencies in place so she can deploy her officers where they are needed. I am very lucky in Mount Ommaney to have two fantastic officers in charge. Over in Sherwood, Mick Coulson and his team played a huge role in the clean-up after the floods. They did that frontline work barricading off roads so that the flood-affected streets of Oxley could be cleaned up quicker.

I meet with my local officers in charge regularly. They are passionate about making sure they can have the maximum amount of time on the front line in our communities and they are finding new ways to serve our community and engage with our community better. They have a proactive and community focused approach which starts right from the time our kids start school. They like to be in the schools creating those relationships with our young people, and they work all the way through at all ages and levels in our community—for example, with the Jindalee Neighbourhood Watch and conducting those community catch-ups and visits.

I think this is an excellent bill. It is going to make such a difference in our communities and to our valued members of the QPS. I commend the bill to the House.



**Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (12.03 pm): I rise to contribute to the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. Firstly, I want to thank all of the police officers across my electorate. There are many who serve in one-man stations. These officers have spent many cold nights in winter and hot days in summer on border crossings along the New South Wales and South Australian

border—sometimes with very limited facilities. These officers have had two jobs: one has been the long shift away from their colleagues and their family on border control, and the other has been back in their communities dealing with the day-to-day policing matters. I am pleased that they are back in their communities and I thank them for the service they have done. Many did that on a lengthy basis and travelled a lot of kilometres to do it.

The objectives of the bill are: to improve the delivery of policing services; to reduce administrative processes; to increase productivity, although I do have a question about that when it comes to the Weapons Licensing section; to improve the detection, prevention and disruption of crime; and to free up valuable police frontline time by optimising existing systems and processes. The bill does this via a number of amendments which are predominantly administrative in nature. They relate to: authorising senior police officers to witness specific affidavits; allowing access orders for seized digital devices—and more and more digital devices are involved in crimes as more and more devices become available; providing the Queensland Police Service with alcohol and targeted substance testing; enabling special constables and non-state police officers to exercise the powers available to Queensland police officers; extending the time period for temporary possession of weapons to six months; allowing civilian technical officers to issue evidentiary certificates for the Weapons Act 1990; and enabling approved licensed firearms dealers to retain and deal with an anonymously surrendered firearm or prescribed thing. That is actually an improvement because occasionally people go through a home and find a firearm they just did not know was there, and they may not have a licence for it but they do need to surrender it, so I think that is a worthy amendment.

The job of our local police is becoming more difficult because of the increase in crime and also, particularly across my electorate, an increase in drug use. We are seeing an increase in youth crime which I think is very disappointing. I regularly get complaints from businesses and victims of youth crime who are horrified by the Labor government's soft-on-crime approach, particularly towards those recidivist offenders who are taking up so much police time and not actually receiving any penalty.

Police at the front line are being pushed to the limit—not only because of the increase in crime but also because of the additional COVID related duties they have had to perform. Despite all of this extra work and coupled with the inaction by the current Labor government, particularly when it comes to breach of bail, local police officers continue to work for the benefit of those they serve—the Queensland community. We owe them our gratitude.

There is a part of this bill that concerns me, and that is in relation to the amendments for extending the time period for the temporary possession of weapons to six months. Firearms are tools of the trade for many farmers and farm workers who operate feral animal control businesses and macropod harvesters. My constituents regularly raise complaints about the under-resourcing by this Labor government of the Weapons Licensing branch.

A constituent from St George raised with me the following issue of delays. He has been a licence holder for more than 20 years. His father was selected for the Australian Commonwealth team to compete in the Auckland games. He submitted an application for a category H licence, which was only approved after five letters to the minister and five months later. On contacting the Weapons Licensing branch to inquire as to the progress of his application, he was told that they were experiencing a significantly larger number of applications but not to be concerned as he was an existing weapons licence holder. However, it would take 16 to 20 weeks to get to the front of the queue. He has two questions for the minister. Firstly, does Weapons Licensing lack the resources to process applications? Secondly, why are existing licensed persons placed in the same queue as new applicants? I hope the minister will look at that because that constituent would like an answer from the minister, particularly given that he is a very passionate weapons licence holder.

Another farmer from Mitchell contacted my office about his category H licence application. He applied well before his licence expired as a precautionary measure against delays. Again, it took four months for his licence to be approved. It does not get any better because another farmer from Mitchell contacted me about his category D weapons licence application. Graham emailed to say—

I had lodged my application around the end of August last year with Weapons Licensing via email.

I didn't receive any confirmation that they had received it. So I made a call and was advised it was there.

My concerns are around the length of time it is taking to assess an application, when you go onto their website it advises that it could be 5 months before it is even assessed, this is absolutely ridiculous.


They are his words. He continued—

I have gone through the process of applying for this licence so that I have the right type of gun to eradicate feral pigs on my property as we breed lambs.

The impact from feral pigs on their lambing is significant. He has held a gun licence for many years and it is not as though he is applying for a new licence; it is an addition to the categories. Graham emailed me last week, some eight months after his initial application, to advise he finally received his licence. Eight months to get a licence for a tool of trade is not acceptable. These are unacceptable delays. These delays are happening under this government. They show that this government is failing law-abiding weapons licence holders. It is not a criticism of the staff of Weapons Licensing. They have seen a gradual erosion of the ability to provide the necessary service to their customers. A thorough and efficient weapons licensing system is critical to the proper management of firearms in this state. The government must ensure that this occurs. It is also critical for our food and fibre producers who have to use firearms to deal with pests and feral animals that kill and maim their livestock. Often there are no other options available to control pests. They have to have these licences.

I remind members opposite that the staff at the Weapons Licensing branch are dealing with people who are doing the right thing—people who want to comply with the law and are law-abiding citizens who simply use firearms as a tool in their day-to-day jobs. All this Labor government is doing is making it harder for those law-abiding people, causing delays and disappointment for those weapons licence owners who try very hard to do the right thing and who are extremely frustrated by the lack of resourcing from this government.

The minister cannot put his head in the sand and claim there are no problems with Weapons Licensing, because there are three constituents of mine who have recently experienced those problems firsthand. This police minister should step up and take responsibility for the failings that are occurring under his watch.

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (12.11 pm): I rise today to speak to and support the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. In Queensland we have a world-class frontline service in the men and women who serve in the Queensland Police Service. We know that there are many demands, and ever-increasing demands, placed upon them. There are calls for a lot of things that the Palaszczuk government is stepping up and providing for the service. Those demands are around the growth that is happening in the service at the moment. We see increasing complexities with regard to social issues right across our communities. Our Police Service does such a wonderful job in disaster management, both with health emergencies and with natural disasters. There is a growing community expectation in relation to a QPS officer's role and responsibilities right throughout our community.

When thinking about the contribution that I would make today, my mind was taken back to 24 November last year when I joined with the Minister for Police, the commissioner and the member for Bancroft at the Moreton Police District Medal Service at the Norths Leagues Club. Medals were presented there to sworn and unsworn officers. These included the National Police Service Medal, the National Medal and clasps, the Queensland Police Service Medal and clasps and other awards and certificates. To sit in that room and to hear in many instances the very longstanding, remarkable services that were made by those men and women was truly a humbling experience and highlighted to me the risk and the responsibility of the role that our Queensland Police Service men and women take on each and every day.

I would like to officially congratulate those officers who received medals, clasps, awards and certificates at that ceremony, and also to congratulate the service on the recovery effort that we have seen throughout the February flood event which my community experienced. That extreme weather event saw a combined effort from the Queensland Police Service, the QFES, the SES, our Rural Fire Service and also community volunteers. I want to particularly thank, on behalf of the community of Pine Rivers, all of those officers who were involved in response to that particular weather event. I particularly single out Inspector Lee Jeffries and Sergeant Ken Robinson for their community efforts. The support that they provided for our homes, businesses, farms and sporting clubs was absolutely remarkable.

I note that the member for Aspley is here in the chamber. We needed to get some intervention on Linkfield Road to ensure there was a smooth flow of traffic while Strathpine Road, the AJ Wylie Bridge at Petrie and Youngs Crossing were closed. Our roads were really decimated during that weather event. I thank those officers who stood up and helped out at that particular juncture during the events, and I thank the member for Aspley for getting that resource reinstated.

In my community today there are still roads that are not open. One of them is Mount Nebo Road. As it is a closed road on such a steep incline, with many landslips and many obstacles on it at the moment, we have had to call on officers to be present and to ensure the safety of the community. I know that they are doing that in an ongoing way. I thank them very much for that.

I turn to the amnesty that has been outlined by many other speakers on this bill. Through my long dialogue and regular meetings with the Shooters Union, this is something that they have raised with me. It is great to see that there will be a permanent national firearm amnesty. I commend the minister on joining with his counterparts in other jurisdictions through the ministerial council to have this as something to continue on in our community. These amnesties have provided great success in the past for people to identify. I know that before weapons licensing came about, I lived in a house that had a couple of firearms. They were given up through amnesty rather than Licensing. They were firearms that existed in our house due to my family having a rural background and the use for which they were needed, but that use was no longer there as our circumstances changed.

I know that there are many families who, either through bereavement or other means, end up with firearms. The amnesty provides the community with a great amount of confidence. It also relieves the unnecessary day-to-day burden on our police officers in that, rather than having citizens walking into police stations, they can enlist the help of firearms dealerships where firearms can be surrendered. I could only imagine, but I am sure that citizens walking into a police station with firearms would be a cause for alarm. I also acknowledge the folks in my community who are firearms dealers and who run these businesses for the work they are doing on an ongoing basis.


I also lend my voice in support of the initiative to extend the period of time for temporary possession and the application for obtaining a licence out to six months. We know that there is a really fine balance that exists, and it is a really big responsibility to get the balance right, between providing and weighing up community safety with the processing time. We know that checks and balances need to be in place and that it is not just a tick-a-box exercise. We know that people's circumstances change, whether that be individual health circumstances or other things. To have the duration doubled is a really sound provision—one that I am sure will provide the community with the certainty it needs and provide some surety around where licensed firearm owners go next.

I turn next to thanking the committee for the work they have done. Although I have not spoken about it in any detail, I would also like to thank the justices of the peace throughout our community as well as the commissioners for declaration. I was speaking with a group of them the other day about this very matter, bail affidavits. Through the time and motion study done in 2020, we know that it took an officer between 30 minutes and two hours to get 6,321 bail affidavits completed with an average time of 60 minutes. We know that if we make some adjustments in this particular area we can save 22,000 hours of police time annually.

I know through talking to local officers in my community that community policing is something they have really honed in on. They are putting in a lot of time and effort and are dedicating energy to it. I know making changes to these provisions around bail affidavits will free up that time and ability.

I also thank those who appeared before the committee and those who submitted to this bill and also the folks who attended the public hearing from the Shooters Union, the Shooting Industry Foundation and the Queensland Law Society. I think this bill is a really thorough piece of work and makes the changes that are needed for a modern, flexible and adapting Police Service.

I will finish my contribution by thanking all of our emergency services, particularly our Queensland Police Service for the really tough job they do day in and day out. They literally put their lives on the line every single time they put on their uniform. We are extraordinarily indebted to them. On behalf of the community I represent I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (12.22 pm): This is the first opportunity I have had to speak in this House since the devastating floods hit the Lockyer Valley a couple of weeks ago. It would be wrong if I did not, at the beginning of my contribution, pay tribute to Merry! Dray, who paid the ultimate sacrifice as a volunteer in the SES when she and a couple of colleagues went to assist and rescue members of the community who needed help. Our thoughts are with her family and friends.

I would like to also pay tribute to all of the first responders for their wonderful efforts through the disaster response, which is moving into the recovery area now. I place on record our appreciation of both the Lockyer Valley and Somerset Regional councils and their local disaster management groups for the work they have been doing.

I turn now to the bill. As those in the House know, my experience in the Police Service is quite well recognised. I am very proud of my time in the police. My 13 years as officer in charge of police at Laidley gave me a lot of understanding about resourcing and the importance of resourcing police correctly. Leading and managing police is a very interesting profession and something that I found very rewarding.

Under my leadership, I was proud to take the police station from comprising myself and eight staff in 2004 through to 24 staff and myself, as we also had a CPIU and the station received an upgrade. In fact, the service funded a master's study for me in improving the sense of purpose of operational officers. It might be surprising for those in the House to know that police actually like catching and stopping people from doing the wrong thing. Giving them the opportunity and the tools to do that as often as possible is very important.

I once again call on the minister to ensure that he fights for every dollar in cabinet to see the police budget increased. I say that respectfully because in the 2012-13 budget the total operational police in the state represented against 100,000 population was 290. The 2021 report on government services outlined that it was now 285 police per 100,000. When you talk about a population of 5.3 million that Queensland is approaching, that five police per 100,000 equates to 500,000 additional hours that police could use in stopping offenders from what they are doing.

Proactive policing, or discretionary policing, is one of the most valuable tactics when it comes to stopping recidivist and repeat offenders. I know that police would welcome that extra 500,000 hours. Again, I call on the police minister to see the additional resources committed to police and to fight for that around the cabinet table.

I do want to pay tribute to my local police from the Darling Downs and Ipswich police districts who serve our community. We certainly appreciate the work they do day to day. We have general duties officers in Gatton, Laidley, Lowood and Helidon. We have a Criminal Investigation Branch and a Child Protection and Investigation Unit, and we are also served by the Forest Hill Stock Squad, as our local community calls them.

I turn now to the bill. It is designed to eliminate some red tape which ties police to their desk rather than having them out in the community investigating crime and apprehending criminals. This is one reason why police join the job, and any distraction from this core business is frustrating. Police understand accountability, but when it is unnecessary or contradictory to other powers they have, it engenders frustration.

One manner in which this unnecessary and burdensome red tape will be removed is by authorising senior officers to witness oaths of service and bail objections rather than having officers attend before justices of the peace or commissioners for declaration. This is especially important as often this type of paperwork has to be completed outside of business hours and regularly in the middle of the night. I believe a better and more efficient strategy would be to simply make all officers JPs and commissioners for declaration by virtue of their appointment. This would mean any officer would be able to formally witness or certify any document. It would also have an advantage for members of the public, who could attend their local police station when they need important documents witnessed. In fact, historically police were not allowed to be JPs. When those rules were changed, I took the time to become a JP (Qualified). It was very helpful to our local community.

The bill also fixes a loophole in relation to forensically examining digital devices. Police officers often seize mobile phones and other electronic devices, and with modern-day encryption and the security built into those devices, it is not possible for police to examine them without attaining access codes. The proposed laws will now allow police to apply to a magistrate or a Supreme Court justice for an order requiring an individual to provide access codes in circumstances where the device has been seized. Previously, such access orders could only be obtained through a special clause in a search warrant under which the device was seized. These amendments will fix that problem and will now allow police to forensically examine any device they have seized. My police sources inform me that drug dealers, paedophiles and would-be terrorists are increasingly using encrypted devices to attempt to defeat law enforcement. These new access powers are a step in the right direction to combat those criminals.

I am also pleased to support the changes to the drug- and alcohol-testing regime. These powers are used following critical incidents where, for example, police have been forced to shoot someone in self-defence. Previously there were drawn-out delays as those officers had to wait for a specialist nurse to attend from Brisbane to take urine samples. Now, under these new amendments, a breath test will be able to be performed by the Ethical Standards investigators instead. This will greatly speed up the process and remove the need for police to wait around for hours following being involved in such a horrifying event.


The critical incident testing definitions will also change so that the use of less than lethal beanbag rounds will no longer require officers to be subject to testing unless that round caused a significant injury in the form of GBH, or grievous bodily harm, or death. I know this is something the union has



been particularly requesting on behalf of its members and I am pleased the government has finally listened. Allowing police to go home sooner following their involvement in a critical incident is in the very best interests of their welfare.

The bill aims to fix drafting issues with regard to the Police Service Administration Act to make it clear that special constables are able to exercise all of the powers of a state police officer. It expands the powers that non-state police officers can exercise. At the moment, the commissioner can authorise police officers from other jurisdictions to assist the Queensland Police Service but those officers' powers are limited to the powers which are provided under the Public Safety Preservation Act and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. These new provisions will remove those limitations.

Finally, I will speak in regard to the weapons licensing amendments. Importantly—as some of my colleagues have pointed out—there are farmers, particularly from my area, who use weapons as part of their day-to-day work. They are being hampered by the assessment processes of Weapons Licensing. I have nothing but praise for the staff at Weapons Licensing, who are doing a great job with the limited numbers they have. I recognise that there is a call on the website for the recruitment of additional staff, but in my community we are seeing people wait for 20 weeks to be assessed. That is not acceptable and it is not good enough. These are good members of our community who have done nothing wrong, who probably have been able to use firearms under the supervision of their parents. They are now waiting 20-odd weeks just for an assessment. I remind the minister to properly resource the Weapons Licensing branch in order for those problems to be fixed. I note that the Weapons Licensing branch recognises that COVID is one of the reasons for the delay. There were many delays before COVID came about and we need to see that problem fixed.

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (12.31 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. I put on record my appreciation for the women and men in the blue uniform who do a sterling job on a daily basis. This was particularly evident throughout the COVID period, the ongoing COVID situation that we face in this nation and state and during the recent flood event. We see officers on the streets who are proudly and effectively making sure that we are cared for and are able to sleep in a relatively safe environment on a nightly basis.

I thank the chair and members of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for their work in examining this legislation in the committee hearings that took place before this bill came back to the House.

The Palaszczuk government has always been a strong supporter of the Queensland Police Service and its members; that has been reflected on many occasions. We know how critical this high-performing service is to the people of this state. We know how important it is for police to know that we have their backs as well. I tell them that on a regular basis when I engage with my local police station in Ferry Grove. I take pride in the way that I have personally supported police. I supported them as a representative of the Queensland Police Union of Employees; as an industrial advocate in the Industrial Relations Commission; at medical assessment tribunals at the workers compensation board; and in workplace health and safety. I acknowledge Ian Leavers and Mick Barnes for their leadership of that union and for the sterling work that they do.

It is my privilege to serve as the acting Minister for Police on the rare occasion that my ministerial colleague takes some leave. I take pride in this role, given that my father was a serving police officer who retired at 55 as a sergeant 2IC. He went through phases of wearing the khaki uniform and then the blue uniform. I remember him making me smile when he returned home safely. Like many in this chamber, I always respect and admire the work police officers do, the courage they show and the professionalism they exhibit.

The COVID-19 pandemic has tested many of our state services, and our Queensland Police Service has been no different. We only need to look at the vital roles that they played in supporting the COVID safety measures that the government put in place based on the health advice of the Chief Health Officer. While those demands have lessened somewhat, we know that the pressure and the demands on the force remain. Their duties range from fighting organised crime to targeting those in the community who would seek to do our state and nation harm, addressing the scourge of domestic violence, keeping our roads safe and ensuring communities are supported.

This legislation will play a vital role in ensuring our police can continue to meet and exceed our community's expectations. The ability of our Police Service to be efficient, to use up-to-date policing technologies and to adapt to evolving community standards is vitally important. Enabling senior police officers to witness affidavits will be an important efficiency measure. Currently many hours—thousands each year—are lost with officers needing to find and visit a justice of the peace or a commissioner for

declarations to make appropriate affirmations to verify documents. This will be a natural evolution of the current process and it follows previous initiatives to cut down on the amount of police time that is lost. We know that police join the Police Service to catch criminals, and this aim is best served by spending less time dealing with paperwork and more time catching criminals. This measure will bring state legislation into line with the Commonwealth legislation that allows police officers to witness statutory declarations. Court proceedings that require affidavits of proof of service of documents can be time consuming because of the sheer volume of documents that are required in these proceedings.

The process of police opposing bail is often for critical community safety reasons, and it is therefore vital that we make that process as smooth as possible while ensuring all of the appropriate legal protections remain in place. With a 2020 analysis of more than 6,000 bail affidavits showing the time taken to find and access a JP averaging 60 minutes and sometimes up to two hours, it is clear that we need a process that does not see police potentially unable to oppose bail for dangerous offenders because of an access issue. Enabling senior police to do this removes this obstacle in many cases. We need our police officers to be free to do their job, not spending large chunks of their shifts driving back and forth to have paperwork signed.

In another example of how the realities of modern society have moved past existing legislation, under current legislation a police officer requiring a prescribed authority must either have the approved authority delivered by fax or have the terms of the approved authority described to him or her while the officer writes it down. Amendments in this bill will allow for applications for a prescribed authority to be sought by phone, fax, radio, email or other appropriate form of communication if the officer deems that the circumstances are urgent. This is a practical support for our police officers because it means they can use the technology available to them to get the job done when it needs to be done. Practical measures like these are about making it easier for our police to do their job. They are proud of what they do, they do an excellent job and they should not be bogged down in older technology in the process of carrying out their duties.

Sensible and effective firearms laws are important to community safety in Queensland. This bill's amendments to the Weapons Act provide for important efficiencies in the administration of important processes in this regard. It will allow for non-sworn technical officers to make technical contributions to documents prepared for court proceedings, such as providing technical assessment of the firearm category that a weapon might fall into. Another important measure is the extension of the period that a weapons licence holder can hold a weapon for another person, from three months to six months. These provisions exist for cases in which a weapons owner suffers a serious health condition or is subject to extended legal matters that preclude the owner from holding the weapons. This provision can also apply in the cases of deceased estates, where it can often take more than three months for estate matters to be finalised or resolved. This is commonsense, compassionate and more efficient in that it will save the paperwork for multiple applications and approvals.

We know that the opportunities that have been created through digital technologies have seen incredible advances in medicine, in business and in recreation in Queensland and, indeed, across the world. We also know that criminal groups, individuals with criminal motives and those who would prey on the vulnerable have also used these technologies to advance their criminal endeavours. One impact of this legislation will be to streamline the process of accessing the communication devices of alleged offenders where there is a reasonable belief that they contain evidence of certain offences. Those can include evidence of the distribution of intimate images, observations or recordings that are in breach of privacy or distributing prohibited recordings.

I cannot let this opportunity pass without praising the incredible work our police do in my electorate of Ferny Grove. The officer in charge, Jeannie Murray, and all her fellow officers at that station do an excellent job. They can be seen out on the road on a regular basis. I take pride in my engagement with them over several times throughout the year. I will never stop that process and I am sure many of the members in this chamber would do the same thing. It is always a privilege to hear firsthand some of the challenges they face and the pride they take in their work on a daily basis keeping us safe as citizens of Queensland. This bill shows why it will always be important work of this chamber to always be looking to do things better. When it comes to police processes it is vital that we ensure legislation continues to support our police and keep up with a changing society.

In conclusion, in response to the member for Lockyer's comments about policing and resources, as we heard today in the ministerial statement from the minister, Labor has committed to record numbers of police: 2,000 police. I reflect on the time when those opposite were last in government. They actually sacked commissioned officers. They diminished our regions in terms of support of senior ranks of our Police Service. That is the legacy of those opposite. You will never see that coming from

this side of the chamber. We support our women and men in the blue uniform and will continue doing that on a regular basis, whether it be support through resources or boots on the ground. That is what Labor governments do. I commend this bill to the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): Before I call the next member, I advise members that we are joined in the gallery today by student leaders from the Brisbane Bayside State College.

**Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (12.41 pm): I rise to address the debate on the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. I wish to begin my contribution today by acknowledging the incredible service and dedication of the men and women of the Queensland Police Service to our state of Queensland, in particular, the western suburbs of Brisbane and the electorate of Moggill. These men and women go above and beyond the call of duty each and every day and this was on full display in the electorate of Moggill during South-East Queensland's recent severe weather and flood event. On behalf of our local community I would like to thank Senior Sergeant Shane Hancock, Senior Constable Paul Bagnall, Senior Constable Chris Tetley and Senior Constable Lachlan Scott-Preimonas for their tireless efforts to support and assist residents in suburbs across the electorate of Moggill. Can I also specifically acknowledge and thank Senior Constable Michelle Schreiber and Constable Belinda O'Brien, and so many other Queensland Police Service officers, who were invaluable to our communities of Karana Downs, Mount Crosby, Lake Manchester and Kholo during the recent flood event.

I know the Minister for Police, Hon. Mark Ryan, and also the shadow minister for police, Dale Last MP, would be incredibly grateful for the service provided by not only those officers, but all officers across Queensland. It also needs to be acknowledged that our local Queensland Police Service officers and all of those across Queensland are part of a larger emergency service effort to protect and serve residents during such natural disasters. To that end, I also take this opportunity to acknowledge local volunteer members of the Moggill State Emergency Service unit, including Colin Alley, Julie Francis and the Bellbowrie-Moggill Community-led Disaster Management Group Coordinator Mark Kerle, as well as all the members of the Queensland Ambulance Service and also the Brookfield Rural Fire Brigade, including First Officer Mark Farmer, Brookfield Show Society President Cath Fullerton, also Jaimee Morgenbesser and many more for their efforts.

In turning to the legislation currently before the House, the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021 was introduced into the Queensland parliament on 16 September 2021. As outlined in report No. 16 of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, the key policy objectives of this legislation are to: improve the delivery of policing services; reduce administrative processes; increase productivity; improve the detection, prevention, and disruption of crime; and finally, free up valuable police frontline time by optimising existing systems and processes. To achieve this an oaths regulation will be created along with amendments made to the Oaths Act 1867, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Police Service Administration Act 1990 and the Weapons Act 1990.

Perhaps one of the most transformative aspects of this legislation is the creation of an oaths regulation. The enacting of such a regulation and amendment to the Oaths Act will enable senior police officers to witness affidavits of other police officers, specifically concerning affidavits which prove the service of documents, affidavits that are used in bail proceedings under the Bail Act and Youth Justice Act and sworn applications that are made in compliance with Section 801 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act.

It is envisaged that this change will achieve significant time savings for our frontline police officers, as will the removal of the requirement for police officers to locate and attend before a justice of the peace or commissioner for declarations to swear an oath of service. Whilst it is expected that such efficiencies will be created in a genuine attempt to ensure that our police officers are afforded more time in an operational capacity than performing administrative functions, this regulation cannot and should not be in place merely as an attempt by the Queensland state government to make up for any shortfall of resources available for our police service.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge some of the concerns raised by stakeholders in relation to this amendment and regulation and the authorisation of senior police officers to witness specified affidavits. I note that the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee has commented in its report, advising that the Queensland Police Service will introduce a policy framework to guide senior officers in undertaking their new witnessing duties and that the Queensland Police Service will conduct an independent review of the amendments after 12 months.

In my remaining time I wish to address those amendments pertaining to the Weapons Act 1990. Before I do that I declare that I am a member of the Shooters Union of Australia in accordance with my declaration of interests on the parliamentary register. As advised by the Queensland Police Service to


the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, the purpose of the amendments to the Weapons Act is to streamline the operation of the permanent firearms amnesty that Queensland currently has in place. These amendments are recognition of the fact that the current firearms amnesty framework in Queensland is significantly more onerous than it needs to be, with participating dealers currently unable to retain firearms that have been surrendered to them anonymously.

It is disappointing that it is only now that such amendments are being legislated: two years after the National Firearms Amnesty was agreed upon. In this time the Queensland state government has placed unnecessary burdens on both our Queensland Police Service and licenced firearms dealers. It has been widely reported that the Weapons Licensing branch under the Queensland state government continues to suffer serious processing delays and as the local state member for Moggill I have received plenty of correspondence from licensed firearms owners and firearms applicants detailing a range of issues as they genuinely attempt to do the right thing and abide by all regulations and procedures that are in place.

In no way is this a criticism of the staff of the branch, but rather it is an acknowledgement of the growing erosion of their ability to provide the necessary service and support to their customers and applicants. It is imperative that the Labor Minister for Police and Corrective Services acknowledges the significant shortfalls of the Weapons Licensing branch under the Queensland state government and ensures that sufficient resources are made available in order to provide the level and efficiency of service that Queenslanders deserve.

Finally, I once again wish to place on the parliamentary record my sincere thanks and appreciation to all of our Queensland Police Service officers, as well as all emergency service officers and local volunteers who worked around the clock in extraordinarily challenging circumstances to protect our community during the recent South-East Queensland severe weather and flood event. Whilst acknowledging their exceptional efforts during this significant natural disaster event, it must be said that these men and women perform an invaluable service to our local community each and every day, rain, hail, or shine. For that both I and the entire Moggill electorate community are eternally grateful.

In closing, I thank all stakeholders who contributed to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's consideration of this legislation and all committee members, including the deputy chair, the Liberal National Party's member for Currumbin, and the member for Glass House.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (12.49 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. Throughout the pandemic our police have done an incredible job keeping Queenslanders safe. Whether it be work on our border entry points and quarantine facilities or in enforcement and compliance, they are to be commended for their role in our nation-leading response to COVID-19. They have done that while continuing to maintain an exceptionally high standard of service to the people of Queensland and we are proud to support the work that they do. This government is proud to support the work that they do and I am proud of the record that this government has in supporting the Queensland Police Service.

To continue to support the efforts of police to keep Queenslanders safe now and into the future, the Palaszczuk government has committed to providing the QPS with additional police personnel. In the south-eastern police region that I represent, this will mean at least an additional 150 frontline police across the districts of Logan and the Gold Coast. The bill builds on our significant commitment to the QPS by optimising existing systems and processes to free up frontline resources and to modernise existing practices so that police can spend more time on the front line, serving and protecting Queenslanders. The bill achieves that in a number of ways. However, the two aspects that I would like to focus on today relate to the creation of the Oaths Regulation 2021 and expanding instances in which digital access orders can be made by courts.

Police work does not end with the identification and apprehension of an offender for an offence. In fact, many police would argue that most of the hours of police work lie in the completion of paperwork and all its processes. The service of documents, properly witnessed and endorsed, is a significant component of that. Currently, several documents to be served by police require locating a justice of the peace or commissioner for declarations in order to endorse the service of the document. That may seem like a simple step but the actual logistics of locating a JP, often outside of work hours, attending the address, going through the documents in person and returning to the station to continue further paperwork processes can take anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours, and in some cases in regional Queensland an entire shift.

Considering that a review in 2020—just of plain-clothes units and relating only to the witnessing of bail affidavits, which is a small portion of the large amount of paperwork that needs to be signed—found that, in one year alone, with one category of service personnel, this represented 6,341 instances

where JPs or commissioners for declarations had to be located. That equates to thousands upon thousands of police hours spent just to obtain a witness to a document. Those are thousands and thousands of hours in which officers could have been on the road or continuing further investigations to apprehend offenders.

This bill will allow for senior police—that is, an officer in charge of a station or someone acting in that position, a watch house manager or a police officer of the rank of sergeant or above—to be able to witness those documents. I understand that in their submission the Youth Advocacy Centre raised concerns that the rank of sergeant was not senior enough within the service. However, I would respectfully attest that, given attaining the rank of sergeant usually requires at least 10 years service, a significant amount of personal study and annual competency training as well as in-service courses, that is a significant amount of service and seniority.

I mean no disrespect to our community JPs and commissioners for declarations—and I make it a priority to meet all JP and commissioner for declaration applicants in my electorate—but few would have that level of experience or study in such specific areas of knowledge as bail requirements. I note that safeguards remain such as the offences in the Criminal Code relating to false declarations and those would be just as applicable to any senior police witnessing documents as they would be to JPs and the like.


The other aspect of the bill that I would like to focus on is modernising existing practices so that police can continue to disrupt crime. We all acknowledge that crime continues to evolve in the digital age and as technology advances so does the MO of offenders. Our laws must evolve so that we can keep ahead of offenders. Increased policing resources must be complemented by enhanced measures for disrupting crime so that our officers can continue to keep the community safe.

Evidence that was once kept physically can now be stored completely electronically. Technology based offending leaves a digital trace, not only a physical one. The legal framework can make it difficult for police to obtain an access order where devices are seized other than under a search warrant issued by a magistrate or Supreme Court judge. This adversely impacts investigations of serious offences like the non-consensual sharing of images and upskirting. Just to be clear, I point out to the House that upskirting does not actually require the victim to be wearing a skirt. It is important that these issues be addressed so that police can protect victims.

The reforms in this bill, through amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, will expand the circumstances in which a magistrate or Supreme Court judge may issue a digital access order requiring a person to provide a password or encryption code to allow police to access information stored on a device such as a mobile phone. Being able to properly investigate those events strengthens the laws introduced by this government that made acts like revenge porn a criminal offence in Queensland.

Under the proposed amendments, police will now be able to seek digital access orders in circumstances where they suspect offences against the Criminal Code, including distributing intimate images, observations of recordings in breach of privacy and distributing prohibited visual recordings. If police locate a person using a mobile phone to take unauthorised pictures of another person—in a communal change room, for example—they may lawfully seize that mobile phone at that location and they will be able to apply for a digital access order to gather evidence of the offending behaviour. This is critical to investigating and solving those crimes and to keeping the community safe.

As our response to the pandemic shows, community safety has been at the forefront of everything that this government has done. We must continue to support our police and the vital work that they do, including not only increasing their resources and capacity but also giving them the ability to properly investigate crimes in increasingly complex digital environments. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (12.56 pm): I rise to speak on the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. As previous speakers have, I begin by acknowledging and thanking the Queensland Police Service. I thank members of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for their work on this bill. I also thank the administration officers and volunteers for their outstanding contributions to the community. We value the sacrifices made to keep our people safe and we endeavour to support them in this challenging and often thankless job.

Over the past 12 months and for the years that I have been in this place, I have always advocated for the improvement of police services on the Gold Coast. Through my previous service at the Surfers Paradise chamber of commerce, I was involved in the community consultative committee that used to meet at the police station. That gave me an insight into what happens behind the front doors of the Police Service. Those who live within our Surfers Paradise electorate can testify to a recent increase in

incidents of youth offenders being out of control, thefts threatening the safety of citizens, and residents being fed up with hooning and fewer vehicle confiscations. Time and time again I have risen to speak on the prevalent issue of hooning. In October 2020, I made a call to action. The *Gold Coast Bulletin's* Luke Mortimer wrote an article following that press conference. I table a copy of the article.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, dated 25 October 2020, titled 'Queensland Police denies shortfall in party precinct in response to concerns aired by Surfers Paradise MP John-Paul Langbroek' [\[282\]](#).


The tabled article outlines that I had received a personal message from a police source detailing how my electorate's local police did not have the manpower to have rostered officers on the roads of Broadbeach or Surfers Paradise for two consecutive nights, although admittedly that was during the worst of the pandemic. Police services could not be provided in my electorate and across the Gold Coast, which continues to face an ongoing hooning epidemic, leaving in its wake frustrated residents whose voices are not being heard. While crime is being enabled by the absence of frontline police officers who are suffering under a great burden of administrative work, I refuse to sit idly by and, therefore, I bear witness to it. The LNP welcomes any bill that will improve the detection, prevention and disruption of crime as outlined in the objectives of the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill. We know that our police officers are hardworking people.

Debate, on motion of Mr Langbroek, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### Queensland Floods; Integrity in Government

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): As this is the first opportunity I have had to rise to my feet in this place since the devastation that we have seen in a large part of our state, I place on record on behalf of the opposition our heartfelt sympathies to the families of those who have lost lives in the flooding tragedy, to those who have had their family home inundated or their business destroyed—and in many cases without any form of insurance to give them a helping hand—and to those community groups who have been forced to go in and see decades of work washed away. On behalf of us all, we acknowledge what a significant event it was. We give our heartfelt sympathies to the SES, the councils, the state government employees, the Army and the team from the Rapid Relief Team—wonderful to see those red shirts during a disaster—who always mobilise. Again today, we ask the government to make sure that this review is a serious review.

There are three things that we particularly want to see that will make the way that we handle disasters better in the future: messaging, mitigation and betterment. As I went around the state and spoke with people, the common theme was that they took comfort from the Premier's statement on Saturday that things were not going to be as bad as 2011. That messaging was not up to scratch. So, too, was the schools messaging, things changing across different platforms, a different name of a different recovery coordinator in the space of one tweet—messaging must be improved.

Secondly, I speak of mitigation. We must get back to a culture in this state where we are prepared to build infrastructure to protect communities: levees, dams, drainage. Those things matter in the hour of need, and they have been absent for the past seven years. Finally, I speak of betterment—an ongoing program that we will continue to build resilience in our infrastructure so we do not keep replacing the same things in the same location to the same standard and expect a different result.

Another issue that needs betterment is the integrity of this government. Today we saw the next level of a Premier who is prepared to put her head in the sand. I have seen and expected the deflections, attacks and all of the games that have been played, but to have the leader of the state say to a whistleblower who had reported allegations of misogynistic and disgraceful comments to 'get in a room' was an absolute disgrace. We have seen the support groups today bravely speak up, because no doubt they will be getting phone calls and will get heaved from those opposite. What about some of the comments from Hearts of Purple where they said—

In our view the Premier's comments are damaging and could deter women from coming forward if they are a victim of workplace misogyny. We call on the Premier to immediately retract her statement and encourage victims of misogynistic workplace bullying to follow the correct protocol to ensure all women can feel safe and supported in the workplace.

The Premier has taken great comfort—somehow from her transcript yesterday—that it was not as big a train wreck as everybody in this place and in the gallery thought it was. There they are this morning trying to quote from the transcript. The beauty about it is that it is whole. It started with the Premier saying they should get back to work and they should sort their issues out. Then the clanger,

'How would you suggest they sort it out?' 'Well, they could sit in a room and have a full and frank discussion.' I am sorry, but the bit about a mediator or negotiator did not happen until right at the end of the press conference when a Channel 7 representative said, 'Would it really be appropriate for her to sit in a room with Mr Setter?' That is when the idea of a mediator came on. We will return to that subject in a moment.

First, I ask this question on behalf of every Queenslanders, because it is the one that people want to know: why is it that the Premier would make a judgement call to tell a victim of bullying to get in a room with a perpetrator? Well, there are only two reasons: one, the Premier is so out of touch with reality these days, her judgement is so clouded, that she believes that to be the new normal—she believes that whatever she says is the way that things just have to be; or, two, Mr Setter must be protected at all costs, because Mr Setter knows about Labor lobbyists. Mr Setter knows about the hit job on the Office of the Integrity Commissioner. Mr Setter knows about the backgrounding that has been going on from the 30 media spinners. Mr Setter knows about the raid. I reckon Mr Setter knows what is on the laptop. Why is he a protected species? Because Mr Setter has become an anvil around the ankle of this government. If he goes down, the Premier goes down. As a result, he is being protected at the expense of a whistleblower.

Can you imagine the cries from those opposite if it had been someone other than their own who levelled an allegation such as that? Just on the mediation that the Premier says she is so passionate about, the Integrity Commissioner asked for it a year ago! A year ago this week, the Integrity Commissioner asked the former director-general for it. Then the current director-general was made aware of it—and yet nothing. Yet yesterday because they needed a bit of a pressure relief valve, that became the buzzword: 'Well, get some mediation.' No, this was not about providing real mediation; it was about how things look rather than how they are. That has been the consistent throughout this.

It was a failure of leadership. It was a disappointing press conference but what is more disappointing is that, having made that mistake, the Premier came into this place to double down on some of the worst, most offensive comments made by a leader in this state. That is wrong. That is a lack of leadership. The Integrity Commissioner wants to continue to serve in this role, because the Integrity Commissioner wants to get to the bottom of an integrity inferno burning through this government. Yet yesterday the Premier said that she will not—because there is a culture in this place: if you speak up, you get chased out the door. We have seen it all too many times. We have seen it with the state archivist, with independents—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order!

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** A culture where they get chased out the door.

**Mr Bailey** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Miller!

**Mr Harper** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Thuringowa!

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Mr Deputy Speaker, please do not accept the nonsense that the Premier cannot rescind this resignation. For goodness sake, she lost one from her chief of staff once! That one was with filed in the wrong place. There is nothing stopping the Premier allowing a brave public servant to continue, aside from the fact that she is asking questions that hit a little too close to home—questions about Labor lobbyists operating in a government funded building, questions about a system where ministers are nothing but a puppet, a play thing, where people can get money in a brown paper bag and then make the minister dance like a little teddy bear. That is the culture that she wants to blow the whistle on.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr Bailey** interjected.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** In the one minute I have remaining I make this plea to every Queenslanders: we will not waver on our quest for a government that values integrity and transparency.


**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Miller!

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I will say why: because when governments give up on governing with integrity, they give up on governing for you. It becomes about their mates. It becomes about how things look rather than how they are. In this state, we have to end this.

This integrity inferno is burning this government to a crisp. What we have seen from the Premier was an abject failure of leadership—asking a whistleblower who has raised misogynistic slurs to get in a room with the bully. The Integrity Commissioner in this state wants to know about Labor lobbyists. She wants to know what is on the laptop. The Integrity Commissioner wants a royal commission into this—

*(Time expired)*

### Queensland Floods; Liberal National Party, Performance

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure) (2.10 pm): Queenslanders have just been through the worst natural disaster in more than 10 years. People across South-East Queensland are picking up the pieces, volunteering in the gruelling clean-up or, worst of all, mourning loved ones lost in these devastating floods. The Palaszczuk government spent the last weeks visiting and supporting the hardest hit communities, and we have seen firsthand the devastation. We will work with every individual community to address their specific issues and build on their resilience in case something like this ever happens again. That is what Queenslanders care about. They care about getting their families back in their homes. They care about putting their communities back together. They care about getting their lives back.

What are those opposite doing for them? They are doing what they always do. They are talking about themselves, playing politics and navel-gazing. After seven years in the wilderness it is back to the future again. Just over a year into the Crisafulli era, which he said would be positive and above petty politics, they have replaced one of the few shadows who was not in the Newman government with one who is synonymous with the Newman government.

The member for Kawana was not just a senior member of that government—he did not just oversee the debacle when it comes to the handling of the justice system and judicial appointments; he has, since 2015, continued the same childish, arrogant approach that people remember Newman for in his management of this place. He might have assured the party room that he has grown up, but he showed us all this morning that he has not. In promoting two former Newman ministers, the Leader of the Opposition demoted one of the few women in his team. Who can forget the fanfare when he appointed the member for Maroochydore the shadow minister for integrity. Today he dumped her seven spots. It seems the only thing that could trump his supposed concern for integrity is his misogyny.

I am ever the optimist. I came in here today thinking with another new look team—they look a lot like the last ones—something would change. How disappointing it was. An hour of question time and there was not a single question about the No. 1 concern of Queenslanders right now—not a single question about the floods or flood recovery. That is what we came here to talk about. The only non-government question about the floods came from the Greens.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Dr MILES:** We would think that even if those interjecting and the strategy group do not care about the floods they could have at least given their MPs whose communities have been affected a go. Nowhere has been hit harder by this disaster than Gympie—not once but twice. They did not let the poor member for Gympie ask a question. The same goes for the member for Lockyer and even the member for Moggill. For all their talk about being positive and talking about the things Queenslanders care about, nothing has changed.

It is probably lucky for them because when the member for Broadwater does talk about the flood recovery he makes a right fool of himself. He claimed to be the only minister to have implemented a betterment fund. He boasted about the \$35 million he had in it. I am surprised he did not know that we have had betterment funds after every disaster since 2011. All he had to do was google it or ask his colleagues.

The member for Burdekin could have talked about the \$3 million we invested to widen and seal May Downs Carfax Road to increase resilience there. The member for Scenic Rim would have said Jerome Bridge on Upper Coomera Road and Bennett Bridge on Illinbah Road were both built back better thanks to the \$1.8 million also invested in 2017. If he had any mates left in Townsville they could have told him that the council got \$13 million to seal and upgrade a stretch of Mill Road to allow communities there to stay connected during future weather events.

The Leader of the Opposition should apologise for lying about the QRA's betterment work. Queenslanders deserve all of our focused support right now, but those opposite show time and again that they only care about themselves.

*(Time expired)*



### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Integrity



**Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.15 pm): May I thank my colleagues for electing me as Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I look forward to taking it up to the government.

**Mr Mander:** Unanimously.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection from the member for Everton—unanimously electing me as deputy leader. I thank David Janetzki, our former deputy leader. I look forward to the challenges ahead as we take the fight up to the government in terms of accountability.

I just listened to the Deputy Premier. I wonder why the Deputy Premier does not want to talk about integrity this week. They want to talk about anything but integrity, but guess what? To talk about integrity you have to have integrity. They have none of it—absolutely none of it. The Deputy Premier paraded around for 12 months when he was first elected making out that he was a doctor of medical practice. That was until we all found out he was a doctor of union encouragement and membership—which I add is declining across Australia. He has a thesis in why union membership is declining. I will tell him why union membership is declining. It is because the left wing socialists in the Labor Party are driving workers away from the Labor Party. That is what is happening. They do not like their type of politics. In order to talk integrity you have to have a little bit of it. None of them over there have it—absolutely none of it.

Talking of a lack of integrity, what more could they do to this poor woman—the Integrity Commissioner? How much more could they put on her? Imagine the pressure she is under—a whistleblower. Labor members would stand in here ordinarily and defend a woman who has alleged bullying in the Public Service. Instead of defending her—

**Mr Mander:** The sisterhood has gone silent.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection. The sisterhood is silent. Where is Emily's List? Where are the Labor women? Where is the member for Pine Rivers defending a woman in the Public Service? The member for Pine Rivers sits silently as the Premier cannot defend the Integrity Commissioner. It is an absolute disgrace. Not one of them stood up for the Integrity Commissioner. It is a disgrace. Why? The Labor Party only defend some women but not other women. That is disgraceful. It is not a matter of he-said, she-said, like the Premier said. A whistleblower has alleged serious bullying and this government and this Premier does not take it seriously.

Talking about taking things seriously, we had Treasurer Cameron Dick facebooking about the floods in his area. Do his constituents know that he was nowhere to be seen? He was in Dubai sipping champagne. He was nowhere near the floods. He faked all these Facebook posts to make out he was amongst the flood victims. He was not. Not only was he not there; he chose to stay in Dubai when Queenslanders were in their hour of need. A leader would have got on the first plane back from Dubai.

As he was posting photographs on his Facebook account about his electorate in Logan having suffered the worst flood in 40 years, let us look at what he was actually doing. Here he was living it up with a stuffed koala in Dubai.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order! Member, you will table those or you will put them down.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Absolutely. I will table one from Trade and Investment Queensland which shows the Treasurer with a big, happy grin on his face, smiling in Dubai as his community was flooding and suffering the worst floods in 40 years.

*Tabled paper:* Extract, undated, from the Instagram account of tradeinvestQld depicting the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment, Hon. Cameron Dick, at Expo 2020 Dubai [\[283\]](#).

Did he come home after seeing the photographs and after his office posted photographs? No, he stayed there. Do members know what he did after that? He dressed up. He got in a suit. I table a copy of that.

*Tabled paper:* Extract, undated, from the Instagram account of natcook\_official depicting the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment, Hon. Cameron Dick, at Expo 2020 Dubai [\[284\]](#).

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member, I asked you not to use those as a prop and you have continued to do that.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I apologise, Mr Deputy Speaker. He is casually promoting himself in all of those selfies. He did not post those on his personal Facebook though. He did not post those on his MP page. They were on Trade and Investment Queensland. I wonder how long they are going to last on Trade

and Investment Queensland. That is why I tabled them because in a minute he will be downstairs saying, 'Get it off! Get it off! Get it off Trade and Investment!' That is what he will be doing because this is the Treasurer who walks out of the Binna Burra forest with a shiny bell. He spent more time shining the bell than carrying the bell out of the forest for that photo. There was not a skerrick of burnt dust on his shoes. What a fake! What a fraud! This is the government we are dealing with. Queenslanders expect better. The Integrity Commissioner deserves and expects better and we are going to hold them to account.


**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members! The chamber will come to order before I call the next speaker.

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, Acting Leader of the House! You are a bit out of practice.

### Queensland Floods, Miller Electorate

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (2.20 pm): Since the last sitting we have seen the most rainfall over a three-day or seven-day period since records began in 1840. That has meant a lot of suffering for Queenslanders from Wide Bay to the border and out to Toowoomba. In Miller, 136 streets had flood impacts. I have been in the field for about two weeks—from the Saturday when the first QDMC, Queensland Disaster Management Committee, happened. Before it happened I was out there looking at things and ensuring my constituents were safe.

On the Saturday it was clear that the water was rising. By the late afternoon the Brisbane River was breaking its banks and heading towards my constituents' houses on Nadine Street, Graceville, and Pamphlett Bridge was about to go under. A boat was already stuck under the bridge. We were helping people get out very quickly—people like Patricia, who had no plans and no intention of leaving her home and was at grave risk. I mentioned earlier that we needed more evacuation centres. We needed an evacuation centre on the south side and in the south-west for people to be able to get to quickly. That is something that needs to be rectified in the future.

On the Sunday we had a torrential downpour all day. Another issue I need to outline, aside from evacuation centres, is the need for more sandbagging locations that are more spread out. We needed sandbagging very quickly for The Village Yeronga aged-care and retirement village, whose ground floor was getting flooded. We could not access sandbags because the nearest depots were at Morningside and Darra, which we could not get to. We could not get to either one of them. There were too many flooded streets, so we were simply unable to get to them. The south side was let down by a lack of sandbagging facilities and evacuation centres and that needs to be rectified going forward.

On the Monday of the crisis there was a period where everyone was a bit stunned and stopped because the floodwaters were there but no-one could get to their houses. There was this hiatus where everybody took stock of the roads that had become canals, lakes and waterways. Kayaks and boats were being used to get to people who were 'islanded' at places like Chelmer, Fairfield, Graceville, Sherwood and Rocklea. Some people were 'islanded' for four or five days in Rocklea. It was a pretty difficult situation.


By Tuesday we saw the floodwaters go down sufficiently for people to get to their houses. It was inspiring to see people from all over South-East Queensland helping their friends, their relatives and their workmates deal with the horror—and it is a horror—of seeing floodwater through people's houses two- or three-feet high. The water level was not as high as 2011 but it makes no difference when your house has been devastated, when your photos are out on the footpath, when it is your high school certificate in a frame that has been destroyed. When all of those things are out there on the footpath, it is devastating for everybody involved.

A lot of people did not think about financial assistance. They were just getting the job done. The Yeronga Community Centre has done an enormously fantastic job. I want to thank Melinda and Billy and all the volunteers out there who are doing so much fantastic work. I want to thank Anthony and Dick from Wellers Hill Bowls Club; Dean from Tarragindi Tigers; the families and members who helped to rectify a lot of our sporting clubs that were impacted—the South District Cricket Club, the Yeronga Devils AFL, the Sherwood Magpies, Olympic FC, the Yeronga Eagles and the Brisbane Knights; and all the families and staff from Sherwood State School, Milpera State High School, which was severely impacted, and Graceville State School, who did a lot of outreach as well.

I want to thank Timothy and his team at Yeronga State High School who organised their own mud army and took in the students from Milpera State High School and still do; Paula and John and their volunteers from Benarrawa; Pauline and Cassie and their team at The Clubhouse Moorooka, who are hosting community recovery; parents from St Sebastian's who drove around on the Tuesday and onwards helping people with food and drink and supporting them; Yeronga State School, who helped provide meals for students and families; and the Sherwood Neighbourhood Centre, who are also hosting community recovery staff from not just my electorate but Mount Ommaney who are impacted.

I want to thank the Premier, Minister Grace, Minister Hinchliffe and Minister Enoch for all of their support of our communities in various ways—for visits and resources. We are working with the Brisbane City Council to deal with the Drift restaurant situation. It is a very big and dangerous job. We are working with the Lord Mayor. I have had my criticisms of the council, but they are working well with us. They asked for our support. I immediately agreed to it. We are working through the difficulties there to clear what is a very important piece of infrastructure.

### National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (2.25 pm): I rise to inform the House that this Friday in fact is the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence, and I do so to inform the state's Premier, who clearly demonstrated in the last 24 hours simply how out of touch she is when it comes to workplace bullying, that continuously repeating that it is a serious issue is no longer good enough nor is it acceptable on behalf of Queensland women.

When third parties like Hearts of Purple—and I hope we see their wheelie bins continue to be in the Queensland parliament over the coming months—highlight, 'The first female Integrity Commissioner of Queensland has raised serious allegations about workplace misogyny,' it must be clear that this is a very serious matter for countless women across our state. KLM Solicitors' Kelli Martin, who is a very credentialed advocate when it comes to family and domestic violence prevention and who has served on the Red Rose Foundation and also as legal counsel for one of the most horrific domestic violence tragedies we have seen in this state, outlined, 'To tell a woman to get into a room with her accuser and have a "full and frank discussion" is dismissive and entirely inappropriate.'

I urge the Premier and her department to contact Ms Martin so that perhaps she can better inform and educate the Premier, her staff and her 30-strong media team how inappropriate that advice to Queensland women was—that you should be vulnerable and get into a room with your alleged perpetrator to sort things out and have a frank and fearless conversation. It just demonstrates how out of touch this Premier is.

In fact, I had high regard for some of the ministers on the other side until this morning when the Attorney-General rose and was then silenced by the member for Sandgate, who did not even respond to what women across this state are crying out for—and that is leadership; when the Minister for Employment stood up and shamefully backed the Premier; and when the Minister for Housing stood up and backed the Premier and defended the Premier's comments.


We have read the transcript and I have watched it on the Premier's own Facebook page twice. The message was loud and clear to women: 'This is not a serious issue. This is not a serious issue for this government.' We, as Queensland women, are tired of the government paying lip-service with no action and no protection. In fact, what we heard from the Premier was nothing but ill-informed and, I would say, inexperienced when it comes to workplace bullying and harassment. What does it look like to keep women safe in Queensland? According to this government, it is offering all the announcements, platitudes, reviews and task forces in the world but no action that actually leads to change to protect women.

I also wanted to highlight the comments of Robert Setter, the Chief Executive of the Queensland Public Service Commission, when he said that he was 'surprised' that the Integrity Commissioner used parliamentary privilege.

Perhaps there is a reason the Integrity Commissioner used parliamentary privilege. Females across the state know what it means to speak up against a workplace bully, someone who may be superior, someone who may be protected. To educate the Premier, the ministers opposite and the government as a whole, it is called victim blaming. As one of the most senior public officials in this state, Robert Setter victim blamed one of the most credible professional female public servants we have seen in this state. For that we demand that the Premier withdraw her comments, apologise for her comments, and instructs Robert setter similarly to apologise to the Integrity Commissioner.

When it comes to women's safety this government is all talk. As we explore the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce documents, this government should see it as a scathing performance review on their last eight years in power. It should be a scathing reminder of the ineffective action and policies they have undertaken to protect Queensland women. We saw that further demonstrated by the Premier's own words yesterday.

### Queensland Floods, Bundamba Electorate

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (2.31 pm): Determination, resilience, mateship—these are the foundations of our local Bundamba community. They remain unbreakable in the aftermath of the recent floods that have rocked our local community and much of South-East Queensland. Our homes, businesses, sports clubs and community groups have once again been inundated by floodwaters and we are responding the best way we know how—by standing side by side, supporting each other and going forward together.

The floods have been devastating and the impacts have been felt right across our community. They will continue to reverberate for a long time to come. Homes and businesses in Goodna, particularly along Woogaroo Creek where it meets the Brisbane River, were completely inundated. Access points to the Ipswich Motorway were under water. Homes and businesses along Mill, Parker and Enid streets and Cox and Spalding crescents went under. Businesses on the northern side of Smiths Road also went under. It was the same story in Bundamba along Bundamba Creek, where homes and businesses in and around Mining Street, Bergins Hill Road and Thomas, Hanlon, Hart and Egerton streets were impacted. Residents in Riverview were affected, cut off by floodwaters from Six Mile Creek. Impacts were also felt in Blackstone and Dinmore. All parts of our community have been affected by this terrible extreme weather event.

I have been out on the ground supporting our flood-affected areas over the last two weeks helping with the clean-up and recovery and helping community members as they work to salvage what they can. It is impossible to truly convey the devastation in words. People have lost their homes; they have lost their livelihoods; all of their worldly possessions and precious memories lost to floodwaters, sitting in a pile on the sidewalk until a rubbish truck comes to collect them. Then begins the process of starting again. It is deeply traumatic, and for some in our community it is not the first time it has happened.

We will not let this keep us down. We are getting back up and we are getting on with the job. Even in the short time since the flood it has been a privilege to share some touching, extremely personal heartbreaking moments and amazing examples of courage and determination. Wingy, Sarah, Joselin, John, Lois and Tanya at Goodna; Greg, Karen, Glenn, Jill and Scott at Bundamba; Western Pride Football Club, Ipswich Men's Shed at Bundamba, Goodna Street Life, Goodna Netball Association, Little Athletics, Ipswich Knights Soccer Club and Goodna Services Club are just some of our locals and community groups who have been impacted.

Yet through the devastation and despair, no matter how bad it was there was one prevailing message: 'I'll be right. There's plenty worse off than me.' Never was there a clearer example of selfless community spirit and concern for others. The response from our local communities to support and assist those who need help has been nothing short of magnificent. Hundreds from near and far heeded the call to help. They joined our incredible emergency service responders, power workers, rescue personnel and volunteers to lend a hand in the darkest hours—in some cases, literally. Volunteers from the Electrical Trade Union's Operation Energise are out in our community right now performing free electrical safety checks to restore power for flood victims.

I would like to thank every single community volunteer, firefighter, rural fires, SES orange angel, police officer, frontline energy worker and incredible Australian Defence Force personnel for the work they have done to date and the work they will continue to do.

We are committed to getting people, businesses and community organisations back on their feet as soon as possible. The recent appointment of a dedicated recovery coordinator will help ensure we continue to receive the on-the-ground support our community needs going forward. Our hardworking and dedicated community recovery workers have been on the ground to help individuals and families access financial assistance and the support services they need to assist with their recovery along with food, water, cleaning products and volunteers.

Mostly, though, I want to pay tribute to our local community—our residents, businesses and community groups—because it is thanks to their grit and resolve that shock has given way to hope for the future. Despair has been replaced by determination and steadfast resolve. While we have started our first steps towards recovery there is a long, tough road ahead, but we will walk that road together.

## Coronavirus, Noosa Electorate



**Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (2.36 pm): After the devastating floods that impacted my community and South-East Queensland it seems totally inappropriate that during recovery efforts I stand here to speak again on COVID instead of applauding our incredible frontline workers, agencies and local heroes as the member for Bundamba was able to; however, I have no choice.

While masks come off and vaccine mandates drop for some front liners, there are unanswered questions. Remaining mandates without relevant medical or scientific rationale still impact our financially vulnerable, including our agricultural shows, and there is silence regarding the strategy moving forward. Human rights can only be limited when reasonable and justifiable, and clarification is required immediately on this. If we do not speak now on what has occurred, how do we prevent it from happening again?

The trauma inflicted on Noosa over the holidays as a result of ineffectual planning, modelling and foresight by levels of government meant there was no joy from borders opening nor the needed reprieve for businesses and residents. Regardless of pleas leading into this period, including the use of RATs as options for risk management to access much needed staff and services, we experienced the worst. Testing sites and businesses were closed because of service shortages due to a lack of staff or close contact directives. Superspreading occurred in vaccinated-only facilities, which led to our aged-care homes going back into lockdown, again relegating our loved ones to their rooms for weeks on end. Communications during this time were appalling. Dropping the reporting of exposure sites without a clear explanation created enormous outrage and confusion. That the Queensland app was reduced weeks after Queenslanders stopped using it makes one wonder whether the government waits until no-one abides by it or that a mandate is unmanageable before announcing it has been relaxed.

That is not how we need to manage a pandemic. It led to further trauma, noncompliance and anger. The ongoing divisions in our families, workplaces and communities over that time included the pitting of business against business. In desperation to survive many did not abide by venue mandates, leaving those that did targeted by extremists and empty of customers. Inconsistent policing of mandates further enabled this. We do not need any more hardship: we need to recover. This includes allowing residents back into their cafes and jobs, tackling unacceptable waitlists for mental health professionals, elective surgery and the horrific increases in my community of domestic violence as well as our ongoing housing emergency.


What about our small businesses and their workers? They have abided by directives, subscribed to the belief assistance was coming, borrowed money and endured as best they could. Many have gone broke, lost their homes and mental health as well as their dreams as a result of decisions made by those on high salaries who can work from home—unlike Queenslanders who have to be physically there on the job. It was insulting to them that the government has just released small business support in the form of another loan.

As part of our recovery, we need to rebuild trust and surety into the future by doing three things. Firstly, we need to provide the requested data and information on which decisions are being made, as well as rationale as to why the two remaining contentious vaccine mandates have not been relaxed. Clarity, accountability and transparency will restore confidence, improve mental health, decrease the extremist views out there and reconnect our communities before future waves and potential variants arrive.

Secondly, we need to allow our businesses to return to managing their resources, including their unvaccinated staff and patrons. The speed at which Omicron swept across South-East Queensland—regardless that border crossers, staff and patrons were double vaccinated—clearly demonstrated that it is the contagious status, not the vaccination status, which is vital to know in preventing spread to our vulnerable. Thirdly, if we are to face another two years of waves as well as potential variants, the government needs to communicate clearly to Queenslanders how this will be managed, including guaranteed compensation to small businesses and workers for loss of income as a result of determinations by government.

Enough is enough. It is time to learn from our successes as well as our errors, analyse the modelling and objectively critique mandates that divided our communities unnecessarily. We need proper oversight and external reviews. We need to repair our broken families, repair our faith in decision-makers and, most importantly, ensure our logistics and operations specialists are part of determinations. All people matter—they really matter—and we cannot move forward and believe that we are in this together unless they and their MPs have a voice.

### Women; Queensland Workforce Summit

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (2.41 pm): I wanted to speak today about the Queensland Workforce Summit which was held last Friday. I wanted to talk about it and thank some people because an enormous amount of work went into it and many people in my department are very proud of what they achieved. However, I cannot start that conversation without addressing some of the issues that have been raised by those opposite this morning and in this MPI debate this afternoon.

I think I speak on behalf of everyone on this side of the House when I say how offensive it is for people on that side of the House to think they have any right whatsoever to talk about misogyny, sexism, harassment or bullying of women when their record is absolutely woeful. Not once, not one single time, under the leadership of Scott Morrison have I heard one single person on that side of the House, including the very few women they have got, say anything about Kate Jenkins's Respect@Work report and the fact that Scott Morrison never implemented it and had to be dragged kicking and screaming finally to actually look at it—when it showed endemic bullying and harassment of women across the entire Public Service.

Not once did we hear any of them talk about Brittany Higgins, who actually made allegations of rape under the auspices of a ministerial office. Not once did we hear anybody on that side of the House mention any outrage or offence or say that change or reform had to be made. They pilloried that poor woman. They let her suffer that indignity and that grief. Not once did they say anything about Grace Tame—not once—and we know who leaked that photo trying to allege that she was smoking a bong. How do you actually try to discredit somebody who has been a sexual assault victim? Not once did we hear them say anything about that.


I will not sit here and let them take the moral high ground over issues around gender equity when this Premier has done every single thing she possibly could to make sure that we have female role models and that we are upholding the highest standards of respect. We have implemented the *Not now, not ever* report. We have commissioned Justice Margaret McMurdo to do a wide-reaching Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, and she is going to be bringing out a report later in the year about attitudes to women in the criminal justice system. The LNP cannot give us that. When the LNP start sticking up for people every time they have a problem, that is when we want to hear from them. That is when we know they have a track record.

I want to go to the Workforce Summit. Unlike those opposite, we are not talking about tearing down Queensland every single time something happens. At every single opportunity, they are going out there and saying what the problems are and why people did things wrong, that it is terrible and a calamity, and that all these people mucked up and did terrible things—instead of talking about how we can work together for the good of Queensland.

Last Friday the Premier and I hosted the Queensland Workforce Summit. We had nearly 400 people, including some of our workforce leaders and most of our government ministers, and I thank them for their contribution. It was to address what is a really critical issue for all of us—that is, workforce shortages. We have enormous economic opportunities in front of us now and in the future, and we need to have the workforce to make sure we can take advantage of those.

I want to thank all of those people who came together. We left with a joint sense of responsibility and resolve to solve the issues in this unique set of circumstances where our economy is absolutely booming but we are faced with labour shortages, both skilled and unskilled, across every sector and every region. I want to thank some of the people who helped with the summit including the following people: Maria Karatzis, Sue Tierney, Monique Lillicrap, Brett Hall, Brad Flanagan, Robyn Reeve, Katrina Hunt, Jaclyn Fellows and Sean Felsman; the staff from Jobs Queensland; all of the directors-general who attended; deputy DGs Leighton Craig, Rebecca Atkinson, David Lucas and Stephen Koch; my DG, Warwick Agnew; and my staff who worked so hard. I look forward to updating the House on this important event and the initiatives coming out of it.

### Public Trustee

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (2.46 pm): 'Something stinks.' They are the words of psychologist Inge-Marie Piekkala's concluding remarks to last night's disturbing *Four Corners* report on the operations of Queensland's Public Trustee. They are remarks that echo the words I spoke in this chamber on 23 March last year, when I said—

There is clearly something rotten with the Office of the Public Trustee here in Queensland.

Something does stink, and the stink from the operation of the Public Trustee will not disappear simply because it now wants to move to flash new premises away from 444 Queen Street, and the stink will not be fixed with an internal review announced by the Attorney-General. What this system needs is a full, independent review in the manner of the review undertaken into the Tasmanian Public Trustee by former Commonwealth solicitor-general Damian Bugg. We need this because I fear what we see in Queensland's Public Trustee is what Mr Bugg found in Tasmania. In his report, Mr Bugg found that the Office of the Public Trustee in Tasmania had misunderstood its core function to act in the best interests of its clients. He said—

The responses on all occasions lead me to conclude that for 26 years the Public Trustee has genuinely misunderstood the duties of an administrator ...

After watching last night's story and hearing the many cases that have been brought to the opposition, the case is compelling that the same fundamental misunderstanding is happening here in Queensland. The government have turned a blind eye to the issue for years now, preferring to say there is nothing to see here and acting only when bad publicity forces them to do so. First, it was the old Labor mate Peter Carne, who was appointed by the former attorney-general and now subject to a Crime and Corruption Commission report he is so afraid of he has gone to the extraordinary length of going to the Supreme Court and after being hosed out there has now appealed to the Court of Appeal to prevent its publication but who was not too embarrassed to pocket over \$300,000 for a year while he was waiting for a show cause notice to expire and who conveniently resigned on the day the show cause notice was due.

There was the Auditor-General's scathing 2020 review into the Public Trustee. Some of its findings were: that the Public Trustee does not measure or report on response times and does not know how many complaints it completes; that its complaints management system is not properly designed for people with impaired capacity—the very people it is meant to look after; and that it is not easy enough to navigate or be understood by its customers which could stop them making a complaint. Then there was the 360-plus page report of the Public Advocate into the fees, charges and practices of the Public Trustee—a Public Advocate, I might say, who was not reappointed to the job. I wonder what happened there. The report was damning nonetheless. What did it say? It said—

... the complaints and concerns of these people raised some serious issues about the level and complexity of the Public Trustee's system of fees and charges, its lack of transparency, the Public Trustee earning revenue from clients' funds and its use of external professional advice to justify investments in its own products.


What response do we have? The dulcet tones of the Attorney-General this morning, an Attorney-General who, by the way, must be daily cursing the inaction of her predecessor and who is trying desperately to paper over the cracks with yet another review, this time one that is already underway into fees and charges. A year later, after this supposed review—there is still no outcome and no changes to an obscure and opaque fee structure while clients get ripped off, as last night's report showed, sometimes for tens of thousands of dollars and in one instance a million dollars.

Now we hear more promises—promises that it will be delivered in June, conveniently after the budget is brought down, so any changes will not be implemented for yet another year. The government avoids for another year contributing to the cost of the Public Trustee.

I have been raising this issue in this place and talking to Queenslanders on this issue for over a year, as my predecessor did before me. We have held public meetings throughout Queensland and we have been overwhelmed by the number of people paying the high price of having their affairs controlled by the Public Trustee. Seventy-three per cent of complaints about the Public Trustee in the last year were on financial management. Of the 639 complaints, only two resulted in a process change.

This is a body that needs change. The Public Trustee cannot fix itself. Glossy brochures and consultant determined mission and customer statements do not cut it. The government has to step up and reform the Public Trustee. The government should stop reviewing and start doing. Vulnerable Queenslanders deserve nothing less.

### Queensland Floods, Cooper Electorate

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (2.51 pm): I rise to make a contribution to today's debate. Like so many suburbs across Queensland in the past three weeks, my electorate has been profoundly impacted by the recent flooding events and off the back of a global pandemic. I think our communities have experienced so much and continue to show such perseverance, resilience and strength.

In our electorate we received about a year's worth of rain over a weekend. While fortunately the majority of us had pretty minor impacts—road closures and roof leaks—there were a number in our community who were profoundly impacted. The homes of some people have been completely

destroyed, as we all know—walls torn apart, floorboards soaked and swollen—but I think it is probably the loss of contents, for me, that has been quite profound and revealing. I do not think anything quite describes, particularly as a new member, the feeling of walking down a street and seeing a person's entire contents of their home, through a whole row, spilled out onto the road. It is quite a confronting scene.

Like many members, I have been helping out with the clean-up. It is surreal to see people having to toss out birthday presents, jewellery and photos because these are not things that they can keep with them—really treasured items. It has been such an extraordinary couple of weeks for many.

In our electorate, we have the Enoggera and Ithaca creeks. Ordinarily these are sanctuaries where kids can play and dogs can swim, but as a result of what we are calling the rain bomb that sat over Brisbane, the Enoggera Reservoir went from 109 per cent to 244 per cent capacity overnight, which is simply extraordinary. It broke a record. This, coupled with the rain that sat over Brisbane, completely inundated the creeks around us, causing flooding in areas in our local community where we have never seen flooding before.

The Premier spoke this morning of the swiftwater rescue of Paul and Debbie from Ashgrove Avenue. It is incredible footage. We all have very busy lives, but, if you have a moment, hop onto the Premier's social media and have a look at it. It is an extraordinary thing to see a rapid river running through the suburb of Ashgrove. Water went from puddles to a waist-high, fast-moving river in about 3½ hours. It was not only the pace that the water was moving but also the debris, the barbed wire, garden sheds and tools which had been picked up and were washing through.

I really want to acknowledge the actions of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and SES who completed about 600 rescues over that weekend—extraordinary work from very brave men and women who get about their job without the need for a thank you; incredible acts of heroism.


I would also like to thank the Premier for coming out and speaking with people who were impacted and speaking with our QFES officers who conducted the swiftwater rescues in Ashgrove. It was great to see her out and speaking with people. It really lifted the spirits of our community.

We also had a visit from our Prime Minister who visited one of our sporting facilities—the basketball courts where my daughter plays in Auchenflower. A shout-out to my partner, Matt, who is my daughter's coach. I do not know how he does it—it is a great club. Obviously the PM was looking for a photo opportunity and, as the Minister for Tourism stated this morning, they quickly put him hard at work and gave him a mop to start mopping up a floor that they have been trying to keep wet during this period to stop it from cracking and swelling. We all had a chuckle when we saw that photo. Honestly you could not make this stuff up; it is quite remarkable.

As slapstick as that is, the decisions made by the federal coalition government are really nothing to laugh at, nor their inability to acknowledge, let alone address, that climate change is impacting on our communities now. The once-in-100-year flood is fast becoming a once-in-a-decade flooding event. This is a government that repeatedly fails to listen to expert advice, whether it is in relation to managing COVID or any one of Australia's natural disasters. There are 80 recommendations of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements that are still awaiting implementation. The \$4 billion natural disaster fund has barely been tapped. The Queensland state government recommended 20 projects for funding and just three were approved.

One of the projects not approved was an early warning communications project which, I can tell you, would have made a real tangible difference to people in my community, in my electorate, who only received a text message from Brisbane City Council that they were about to be flooded 24 hours after they were in fact flooded, just adding insult to injury.

### **Workplace Behaviour, Comments by Premier**

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.55 pm): I will quote the Premier of the state: 'Sit in a room.' That is what the Premier said: 'Sit in a room and work it out.' I am here today to tell Queenslanders that that statement is not okay. In fact, it is shameful. I have been in this place a good while now, and I am racking my brain to recall a time that a premier of our state has said something so dismissive, so reckless and so destructive about something which is so, so serious. What was said yesterday beggars belief.

The Premier told an alleged victim of workplace bullying to sit in the same room as the alleged perpetrator to sort it out. Yes, that is what she said. Let that sink in. What is more, the alleged bully is said to have used offensive, derogatory and misogynous language. Let me remind the House that the



alleged victim is our state's first female Integrity Commissioner. That is who we are talking about. The position she holds is one of the key pillars of government integrity and accountability in Queensland. Just for doing her job, she says she has been demeaned and told that she was on a witch-hunt.

I cannot repeat in this House the five words strung together which were allegedly spoken to her, but that language is not on. The alleged perpetrator who uttered those words was the Premier's hand-picked chief executive of the Public Service Commission. He fronted a press conference yesterday reading a pre-written statement. To me, in that statement it appeared the bullying continued. In that statement there was a slanderous insinuation that the Integrity Commissioner was hiding behind parliamentary privilege. What was the Integrity Commissioner meant to do? Was she supposed to mislead members of parliament when asked if she had ever been the subject of a misogynous slur?

I say this to the chief executive of the Public Service Commission: if you are going to make insinuations like that publicly, you better be prepared to face the music before parliament yourself. I would urge the chief executive to remember that there are severe penalties for misleading the parliament, though I am sure such a senior public servant would well understand.

No woman should ever be the subject of misogynous language anywhere, let alone in the workplace. Yet here we are in 2022 and this is still happening in the Queensland Public Service. Yesterday the Premier okayed it; that is what she did. It was an abject failure of leadership. Even on the most human level, the Premier failed to show any level of compassion or empathy. She failed to even look like she even cared about bullying at the highest levels of the Queensland Public Service.

We know that the Premier sees herself as blameless in every situation. However, when one is so willing to blame someone else for their own problems, eventually they will end up blaming the wrong person. In her effort to try to just brush away the latest chapter of her government's own integrity crisis as some inconsequential workplace bickering, the Premier got it hopelessly wrong. It cannot be understated how damaging these words were.

Think about the message it sends. How should women across Queensland deal with misogynistic slurs made against them? They should sit in a room with the accused? Even if you take gender out of it, it is still appalling. Think about the effect of those words on any public servant who has been the subject of workplace bullying. What are they to do and how are they to feel? Are they to just sit in a room with a bully, too?

People in this place know that I am a survivor of domestic violence. I am proud to stand on my record of standing up for women who have suffered at the hands of this scourge. I have worked with groups across the sector for long enough to know that when they call out comments as damaging and asked for the comments to be retracted it is because they really mean it. That is because there are real consequences. As Michelle Beattie of Hearts of Purple put it, 'It could deter women from coming forward.' I table the statement from Hearts of Purple today.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 15 March 2022, from the CEO, Hearts of Purple, Ms Michelle Beattie, regarding comments made by the Premier and Minister for the Olympics, Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk, in the media [\[285\]](#).


The Premier and her Public Service Commission chief executive have some serious questions to answer after yesterday. I think the Premier should take some of her own advice. She should sit down—but her and her alone. In private, she should consider the effect of her words yesterday on women across the state. Once the Premier has reflected on that, she should stand up and apologise.

## **POLICE LEGISLATION (EFFICIENCIES AND EFFECTIVENESS) AMENDMENT BILL**

### **Second Reading**

Resumed from p. 346, on motion of Mr Ryan—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (3.00 pm), continuing: We know that our police officers are hardworking people who go above and beyond to keep our communities safe. We know that they deserve to be provided with systems and processes that allow them to attend to their job to the best of their abilities. We know that work needs to be put in immediately to do just that. The Labor government is late to the party with this amendment bill. It is well and truly overdue. Police have been pushed to the limit with unforeseen COVID related duties and youth crime. It is the responsibility of the government to resource the police effectively and efficiently in favour of upholding Queenslanders'

rights to feel safe. We will not stand for Labor's failings a second longer. Police have been pushed to the limit because of not only crime but their additional COVID related duties as well as domestic violence duties, as we heard about recently in a coronial inquest.

Queensland is in dire need of more police, traffic patrols and vehicle confiscations for illegal modifications as well as reckless hooning. An inactive government has resulted in communities being the poorer for it. We need to look at improving police efficiency through reducing administrative processes. The processes of administrative burden continue to take over the bulk of shifts for police. It makes sense that with officers engaged in monitoring borders and hotel quarantine over the last couple of years, other elements of their duties cannot be ignored. Despite the additional work coupled with an inaction by the current government, the commitment of local police and police across the state to serve remains unwavering. The LNP supports anything that can be done to return police to their rightful place on the front line.

The Gold Coast and my Surfers Paradise electorate have fallen victim to a devastating deluge of hooning incidents. The correlation between diminished traffic police presence on our local roads and juvenile delinquents wreaking havoc can only be attributed to officers being bombarded by other jobs and other priorities. Since I rang the alarm bells in my speech to the address-in-reply debate 12 months ago after the 2021 budget my constituents have not ceased contacting me out of concern.

The Palaszczuk government have only now noticed the desperate cries of the Gold Coast, once again developing a profile as a Brisbane-centric Labor government. The Gold Coast is being neglected. The Palaszczuk government has not adequately resourced the Police Service and is failing our people. Labor is leaving the Gold Coast to fend for itself. Other electorates in the city are feeling the heat of hooning. I saw an interesting article of an interview Paul Weston from the Gold Coast Bulletin conducted with the member for Burleigh, whose constituents share the concerns that a lack of a police presence is having. The member for Burleigh said that his constituents are seeing all these hoons, reporting them to police but no action is being taken. He explicitly agreed, saying—

There's not enough coppers on the road looking at this stuff. The last time I saw a transport department checkpoint was years ago.


The bill's objective to increase the productivity and, ultimately, the prominence of police must become a reality. I table a copy of that article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin*.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, dated 30 June 2020, titled 'Hooning Gold Coast: Opposition vows to fight against hoons and safety issues' [286].

It has never been more timely for Labor to step out of the Dark Ages in terms of our Police Service and into an efficient, modern era. The bill's amendment to allow access orders for seized digital devices to be made in a timely manner will apply pressure to perform the balancing act between rights and investigating crime with precision.

Police officers are local heroes, self-sacrificing public servants who risk their lives in favour of protecting ours. How do we repay them? Often by chaining them to administrative processes and other demands that pull them away from the front line. It is time for an improvement in productivity.

The police legislation bill claims to improve the delivery of policing services, disrupting criminal activity. The opposition will monitor the implementation of the bill with an eagle eye. We will continue to stand up for our local residents because we must protect the people who protect our people.

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (3.04 pm): I rise to support the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. Before I go into detail I would like to echo the sentiment of everyone in the chamber and say how grateful we are in my electorate to have the serving men and women of the Queensland Police Service. As someone once said, they are the thin blue line that separates order from chaos. This is true whether they are dealing with crime, natural catastrophes or their everyday policing duties.

The purpose of this bill is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Queensland Police Service, hence the title, by providing the requisite legislative authority to streamline operations through the reduction of unnecessary administrative processes and travel while increasing productivity by improving the detection, prevention and disruption of crime. The bill seeks to achieve this by authorising senior police officers to witness specified affidavits, reducing the need to attend a justice of the peace or a commissioner for declarations. After speaking to some JPs in my electorate I know how much time and hassle this enhancement will save not only for the Police Service but also for our hardworking community volunteers.

In regional Queensland the police are possibly the only public servants for miles, so this is a really important piece of legislation. Instead of waking up a JP at three in the morning to swear an oath of service or declare or affirm the veracity of the information contained in the document, senior and experienced officers can now handle the process themselves. The police do not need to spend hours driving around trying to find an available JP.

The bill will also allow search warrants to be sent to applicant police officers via electronic means, changing the way access orders to seize digital devices are applied, reducing loopholes that would prevent officers from accessing devices in various circumstances. This is really important. The Queensland Police Service has a wonderful history of foiling digital crime. Changing the definition of a critical incident will enable the Queensland Police Service to provide better oversight of an officer's conduct. The bill will also allow authorised special constables and non-state police officers to undertake their duties in a similar fashion to Queensland Police Service officers, reducing red tape for cross-border actions and staffing of major events, disasters and terrorism incidents.

It will extend the time for the temporary possession of a weapon to six months before application to acquire the weapon must be submitted. I know there are some delays with weapons licensing. Hopefully improved efficiencies will have a positive effect. It will also allow trained civilian technical officers to determine the category of weapons for the purposes of providing evidence to the courts, providing better workload management. It will enable licensed firearm dealers to better facilitate the permanent firearms amnesty in Queensland by retaining and dealing with weapons anonymously surrendered without the need to transport them to a police station where an authorised officer from Weapons Licensing, QPS approves the licensed dealer to do so. They have a lot of trouble with finding space for these things.

We all know the Queensland Police Service has done an outstanding job making sure our communities are safe throughout the pandemic. We have seen our police officers take on extra duties, manning border checkpoints, assisting health authorities, taking on the border pass system, giving up time away from home, away from friends and family, to take on extra shifts to keep our community safe.


I thank the member for Morayfield, the Palaszczuk Labor government's police minister, for alerting the House when the QPS nicked Australia's most wanted criminal recently. Our Police Service is a world leader in combatting crime. I hope that this legislation provides the service with the means to work in a more efficient and effective manner by reducing the amount of time that officers spend away from loved ones whilst still providing a world-class service to the people of Queensland.

This legislation seeks to build on the strong foundations of the existing reforms and support provided by the Palaszczuk Labor government. This Labor government started the current term by providing a record police budget—the biggest boost to policing in 30 years—through the addition of 2,025 extra police personnel over the next five years. On top of that, the government is providing 5,000 new QLITE devices, 4,500 extra body-worn cameras and 250 new police vehicles over the next five years. This will allow our service to remain agile, flexible and responsive.

The Palaszczuk Labor government have launched the Australian-first Exit program for former outlaw motorcycle gang members who want to leave their gang. This move is in addition to tough new legislation to reduce youth offending and recidivism as well as expanding Project Booyah and the School Respect program across the state. The aim is to stop juvenile offending before it starts. New anti-hooning laws have been passed to ensure registered owners of vehicles are responsible for their operation—unless they can prove otherwise. Mobile police beats have been deployed around the state to boost the presence of police in the community and to strengthen frontline interaction.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has introduced the toughest parole laws in Australia for child killers and multiple murderers. In addition, it has introduced harsh penalties for individuals who attack faithful crime-fighting police dogs and horses. In my own electorate, construction has nearly finished on the new \$9 million police station. It will provide our officers with the infrastructure they need to get the job done. There have been delays due to COVID and the floods. I cannot wait for it to be open.

The Palaszczuk Labor government acted swiftly to guarantee the safety of Queenslanders in response to the pandemic. It is providing police with the necessary legislative amendments so they can keep our communities safe. This government makes no apology for supporting the needs of our Police Service. I thank our Police Service, and I acknowledge our justices of the peace and commissioners for declarations for their voluntary work in our community. I thank the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee and the stakeholders who contributed to these sensible changes. This legislation is yet another example of the Palaszczuk Labor government getting things done for the people of Queensland, especially those who are working in our best interests. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (3.13 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate of the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. We are grateful for the police and the work they do, particularly during the recent floods. The new police officers on the northern Gold Coast have been out and about, working in the community. I am grateful for Commissioner Katarina Carroll, who, just six weeks after stepping into the role of Commissioner for Police, saw the need and announced a new police station at Pimpama. It was wonderful news. It came after a long—

**Mr Lister:** How many petitions?

**Mr CRANDON:** There were probably eight petitions. The first petition was made by the Hon. Margaret Keech, the then member for Albert, in 2011. She ran that petition all the way back then. I supported the then member for Albert at that time. We worked very well together in that local area. I thank her for her efforts, although they did not come to fruition. The efforts of the then member for Albert and now member for Theodore were combined with my own over an extended period of time—from 2016 right the way through to 22 March this year, the date of the official opening. The Minister for Police, Commissioner Katarina Carroll, and I invite all members to come along to this very important occasion.

The Pimpama Police Station was the never-to-be-built police station. It was never going to happen; I was told that many times. Very fortunately, the new commissioner came along and said, 'We're going to build one right next door to the Fire and Emergency Services station.' Of course, she had previously been the commissioner for Fire and Emergency Services. I recall having a conversation with the then minister for fire and emergency services about that block of land in Cox Road, Pimpama. Some advisers to the minister were in the room at the time and said that, yes, they had been having conversations with Police in relation to the availability of that land next door. It was a huge effort, from 2011 right the way through to 2022. It was 11 years in the making.

This is the cream on the cake: for the first time in history, according to the local police right through the ranks, we are getting 36 additional police thanks to Katarina Carroll and her understanding of all of the representations that we made to her—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr CRANDON:** I was stopping expecting you to call the room to order, Madam Deputy Speaker Bush, but I am wasting my time now.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Member for Logan! Order, members!

**Mr CRANDON:** Now I have lost my train of thought. I will have to start again. I want to start by saying how excited we are on the northern Gold Coast. We have 36 additional police coming to the northern Gold Coast. I met with Deputy Commissioner Doug Smith after I wrote to Katarina Carroll directly and she asked him to come and speak to me. He went through it all and said, 'Member for Coomera, you can tell the people that you are getting 36 additional police. There will be not one loss at Coomera station, Beenleigh station or any other station around the area. You are getting 36 additional police for the northern Gold Coast.' What does that mean? We had 81 police thanks to the hard work of getting 14 additional police put into the northern Gold Coast and Coomera a couple of years before. We had been calling for 50 and this 36 rounds it out to that 50. It takes us to 117 police on the northern Gold Coast, thanks to the operational decision-making of Katarina Carroll.

As I said earlier, I am sure the minister will join with me in inviting every member of the House to the opening on the 22nd. There will be room. Just let us know that you are coming and we will make sure there are some extra doughnuts and scones there for you.

Returning to the bill, I bring to the attention of the House concerns about changes to the Weapons Act 1990, specifically the proposal to extend the three-month temporary possession to six months—not so much the change, but the potential consequences of the change. Will it mean the QPS Weapons Licensing branch will continue to be poorly resourced to the extent that long delays in granting licences will continue? I read from page 19 of the committee's report. The Shooters Union stated—

With 8000 licences outstanding, some of which must be the result of late renewals and the amendment proposing an extension of storage to 6 months and licences not even being assessed until 5 months have passed, it would seem that the service standard for the issue of licences by Weapons Licensing Branch is already far exceeding the 3 months temporary storage requirements.

The report further states—

The Firearms Dealers Association—Qld Inc (FDAQ) expressed similar concerns stating that while it 'appreciated the proposed extension' for temporary storage, it should be accompanied with shorter processing times for the issuing of a new licence. SIFA held similar views: 'extending the timeframes permitted for temporary storage must not have the effect of extending the time taken to process routine licensing applications.'

Late last year I had a good example of this brought to my attention. On 3 November I received correspondence from a constituent which I forwarded to the minister on 8 November. The constituent advised he first applied on 17 June for his licence. He was then advised on 4 November—the day after I received the correspondence from him last year—that his licences were approved. As at 18 November he was still waiting for the licences—more than a further two weeks. It was about four weeks, or six months from the time he applied for the licence, before he actually got his licence. Then, of course, he had to wait another 28 days before he could access the firearms. These processes have impacts on the individual. In the minutes I have left, let me read from his letter, which I will table—

We understand that this is simply the situation and that a new licence application is required to move our firearms to Queensland and re-engage in our sport. We accept this as a consequence of moving and starting afresh. The problem we have encountered is the delay in getting our licences approved. We understand the 28 day 'cooling off' period which appears standard in all states, however it's stated online that there's a wait time beyond that period of at least 20 weeks in Queensland. When I called the QPS Weapons Licensing Branch I was informed that the 20 week delay was in fact a conservative minimum time. We are looking at around six months to get re-licensed despite being highly vetted and licensed already in WA.


I did some simple sums and concluded that our licencing for two clubs (required for the different classes of firearms we own), storage fees (before we are able to utilise our gun safes) and police licencing fees—

and so forth, will amount to something like \$1,792. He further states—

We don't feel as though this is reasonable and wanted to let you know. I honestly can't think of any other group in the community that's treated like this by any government agency. I don't expect my case to be expedited or any special treatment. We are actually about more than half way through the wait time but are interested in commencing with our clubs.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 5 October 2021, from a constituent to the member for Coomera, Mr Michael Crandon MP, regarding firearms licence fees [\[287\]](#).

The point is that these folk are waiting far too long and we need to make sure that we speed that process up. Thank you. See you on the 22nd!

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (3.22 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. The Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services tabled the bill on 16 September 2021 at which time it was referred to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for review. Before I speak to the bill I would like to take this opportunity to thank the police in the Ipswich police district led by Superintendent Dave Cuskelly for keeping the community of Ipswich West safe during the recent flood. I would also like to thank our other emergency services officers, the officers of the State Emergency Service, the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, the Rural Fire Service, as well as the staff of the Ipswich and Somerset councils. Tragically the flood saw the death while on duty of Merryl Dray, an SES officer at the Lowood State Emergency Service. A dedicated SES officer over the last four and a half years, Merryl had volunteered more than 520 hours of her time. My condolences to Merryl's family and friends. There is a wide range of people and other groups I could thank today, but I will return to the bill.

The Legal Affairs and Safety Committee chair, the member for Toohey, tabled the committee report in November 2021. The report made only one recommendation and that was that the bill be passed. The objectives of the bill are to improve the delivery of policing services, reduce administrative processes, streamline police operations, increase productivity, improve detection, prevention and disruption of crime as well as freeing up valuable police frontline time by optimising existing systems and processes. The bill will amend the Oaths Act 1867, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Police Service Administration Act 1990, the Police Service Administration Regulation 2016 as well as the Weapons Act 1990.

The bill creates an Oaths Regulation 2021 to enable senior police officers to witness specified affidavits of other police officers. This removes the necessity of police officers to locate and attend before a justice of the peace or a commissioner for declarations to swear an oath of service that will lead to significant time savings by police officers. For example, it is estimated that in major centres it can take between 30 minutes and up to two hours for a police officer to locate an available justice of the peace or commissioner for declarations and have an objection to bail witnessed. In remote localities the time frames may extend to the full-time of the officer's shift. This amendment alone has the potential to save up to approximately 22,000 hours of frontline officer time annually.

The bill also enables a Supreme Court judge or magistrate to make a digital access order requiring provision of passwords or assistance to access digital devices, which requires a person to provide a password or an encryption code to enable police to access information stored on or accessible from a digital device such as a mobile phone or computer. Currently the digital access order scheme does not permit a judge or magistrate to make an order where a digital device is seized under a search warrant issued by a justice of the peace or commissioner for declarations or otherwise lawfully seized under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act.

The bill will amend section 154A of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act to enable a police officer to apply to a magistrate or a judge for an access order. The bill will allow the Police Commissioner to authorise special constables or non-state police officers to exercise any or all powers available to a Queensland police officer. The bill amends the Police Service Administration Act to clarify that special constables or non-state police officers are able to exercise the powers of a Queensland police officer subject to limitations imposed by the Queensland Police Commissioner. Special constables are primarily interstate officers who, because of their location or the type of work they participate in, require authorisation to enable them to perform their duties effectively within Queensland.


The bill amends the meaning of critical incident in section 5A.2, 'Definitions for pt 5A', of the Police Service Administration Act for the purpose of triggering alcohol and targeted substance testing by police officers. The current definition of critical incident is too limiting. The bill will enhance the targeted substance testing scheme for police officers and certain Public Service officers by providing a saliva test as an alternative to a urine test. Urine testing can produce positive results in those who are no longer impaired but may have taken a selected drug days, or even weeks in some cases, prior to testing. This is currently referred to as a lifestyle test. Current technologies allow the police to conduct an oral fluid—that is, saliva—test which provides an immediate indication of the presence of certain dangerous drugs. Further follow-up testing is then completed following a positive indication.

The bill will extend the time frames under which an appropriate licensed person can temporarily hold a weapon on behalf of another weapons licensee from three months to six months. The current firearms amnesty framework in Queensland does not allow participating firearm dealers to retain firearms or other prescribed things that have been surrendered to them anonymously. As a result, participating firearm dealers must transport any anonymously surrendered firearms immediately to a police station. This approach creates unnecessary risks due to additional transportation of firearms and the need to store increased numbers of firearms at police stations.

The amendments contained in the bill will allow licensed firearm dealers to surrender firearms surrendered to them anonymously under amnesty in circumstances where approval is provided to them by an authorised officer in the Weapons Licensing branch. The bill will enable non-sworn authorised technical officers to use evidentiary certificates in relation to the categorisation of weapons. The bill will also allow an authorised officer with the QPS Weapons Licensing division to approve a licensed firearm dealer to retain or deal with firearms.

The Queensland Police Service continues to do more and more every day to keep our communities safe. The government is supporting their efforts with record police budgets and the biggest investment in policing in three decades, as outlined by my colleague the member for Coomera. That investment that will deliver more than 2,000 extra personnel.

As I have said previously in this place, I am always prepared to support good law reform. The amendments proposed by this bill will modify existing laws to reflect the social values of society that we feel are important. The law cannot stand still. As social values and public interest change, the law should change. This bill provides good law reform for a wide range of acts. I thank the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services for introducing this important bill. I thank the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, the committee secretariat, the submitters and Hansard. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (3.31 pm): I rise to speak on the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill. The bill's policy objectives are to improve the delivery of policing services, increase productivity and free up valuable time for the front line. This is expected to be achieved by reducing administration, improving existing systems and processes, and improving the detection, prevention and disruption of crime. The explanatory notes state—

To address demand issues and increase frontline effectiveness, the QPS needs to optimise existing systems and processes to free up frontline resources. This involves modernising practices and service delivery, and enhancing the use of modern technology in delivering policing services. The cumulative effect of the measures outlined below, is to assist the QPS to deliver policing services more efficiently and effectively.

These goals will be addressed through amendments such as authorising police officers to witness specified affidavits, amending access orders for seized digital services, amending matters relating to testing police officers and unsworn staff, and addressing weapons issues.

Without doubt, police face increasing demands from complex social issues, disaster management and changing community expectations. For the past two years, police resources and personnel have been diverted to deal with government policies regarding COVID-19, such as manning the border and some of the increasingly inconsistent and contradictory rules. Many communities do not have sufficient police resources to adequately address the required workload, let alone be proactive. I

am not criticising the police; it is a reality of what is available. In Gympie we need additional police and resources in the Mary Valley, at Imbil Police Station and at Rainbow Beach where the police station operates from underneath a house. If the minister wants to improve the delivery of police services in Gympie then he should urgently address those concerns. He should not fob them off with the excuse that he has no say in the matter.

One of the most frequent issues I deal with in my office is that of firearms. Many landholders and primary producers use firearms to deal with feral animals and pests such as wild dogs and pigs, to protect crops and to humanely euthanase animals. Firearms are a tool of trade. It is unconscionable that primary producers must jump through manufactured hoops to continue to use those tools of trade. The Weapons Licensing branch is underperforming and failing everyone it should service. On numerous occasions I have raised issues in the media, in the parliament and with the minister. The minister's default response is to flippantly dismiss those concerns. State government manufactured delays and excuses have made dealing with Weapons Licensing a nightmare for law-abiding firearm owners. Paperwork is frequently lost, addresses are mixed up, delays are unreasonable, requests for further information never arrive and paperwork that is self-explanatory is ignored.

I had personal experience of this when renewing a weapons licence. I had seven days to meet a request for further information. Within two days I supplied the information via registered post. Despite that, Weapons Licensing rang me to say that it was not provided and they would assess the renewal on the original application. Thankfully I had the Australia Post receipt and the time it was delivered and accepted. Eventually, Weapons Licensing reluctantly admitted they had made an error. The term 'further information' is often a cover for the fact that nothing is being processed. I have seen cases where applicants have clear evidence that further information was provided and were advised that their application was being processed, only to receive another request that the same information was needed again. The minister says that Weapons Licensing requires the same medical reporting conditions as for a driver's licence. Despite that, I have been advised that a licence renewal was denied because the firearm owner had postnatal depression 15 years earlier. Two applicants were refused because they had diabetes. One licence holder who fell down the stairs had to prove that it was because his bifocal lenses were incorrect. He had held a licence since 1990.

The government cannot even properly implement a permanent national amnesty. Three years ago Australian ministers agreed on a permanent national firearms amnesty. It was too much for the government to deal with. All it did was add more paperwork to licence dealers who are trying to do the right thing. The explanatory notes say that this process places unnecessary operational burdens on local police stations, many of which are in regional or remote communities with small staffing establishments, so now we have amendments to try to make it work. That admission proves that the government has failed firearm owners, it has failed dealers, it has failed local police and it has failed Queenslanders.

There have been problems within the Weapons Licensing branch for years. The ability of staff to deliver the necessary services is continually eroded. Applicants face excessive delays for what should be routine applications. Applications could be handled in a timely manner but applicants are being done over by a bureaucracy that does not want to make things easy. Since 2020 they have used COVID as an excuse for slow processing, restricted contact times and branch staff working from home with highly sensitive information. The branch did not even operate every day. They have admitted that there was a massive backlog that we are told will be fixed with amendments extending the time frame that a licensed person can temporarily hold a weapon on behalf of another from three to six months. This amendment proves that the Weapons Licensing branch is not delivering. It is an admission that the branch does not have the resources, the personnel or the funding to deal with the workload. You pay a fee for the service which presumably is to cover the cost, so the branch should be adequately resourced.

The President of Shooters Union Queensland, Graham Park, told the committee—

However, we are deeply concerned that the reason this is being introduced is that the Weapons Licensing Branch are so far behind in the processing of licensing. They are literally months behind any other state in Australia. You can get licence applications processed anywhere from two to 12 weeks around the country. By their own statements, the weapons branch are not even beginning to look at processing an application until at least 20 weeks after it is submitted.

Queensland is months behind states that have been more severely impacted by COVID, which proves that COVID is not the reason; it is simply an excuse. Mr Park also highlighted the lack of expertise in the branch, saying—

We believe that there is simply not the expertise within the weapons branch to cover all of those. That is not criticism; that is a fact.

It does not matter if you already own a firearm or have a licence; the delays in getting a licence, renewing a licence or obtaining a permit to acquire are ridiculous. Processing paperwork should be a relatively straightforward process, but the turnaround time is unacceptable. If an application is made in July, the applicant is lucky if their request is dealt with before the next year, let alone by Christmas. In one case an applicant was told to wait 15 to 20 weeks—that is, four to five months—before his application was dealt with, which was 12 weeks after he had already applied for a permit to acquire and a new license. That makes it somewhere between 27 and 32 weeks or an eight-month turnaround.

The government constantly demonises firearm owners and the industry. In 2020 the police minister and the agriculture minister could not close gun shops quickly enough. They used the cloak of COVID-19 to unilaterally close licensed dealers and armourers. They gave no notice to farmers, primary producers or affected businesses.

**Mr RYAN:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order relating not only to misleading the House; I also find it personally offensive and I ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr PERRETT:** I withdraw. The minister did not know that those in agriculture and pest control—  
**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Order, members! Direct your comments through the chair.

**Mr PERRETT:** The minister did not know that those in agriculture and pest control industries need firearms to manage properties and operate their own businesses.

**Mr RYAN:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is continuing on the same matter. I find it offensive and it is also misleading. I ask for it to be withdrawn.

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mr RYAN:** And the bully over there.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Everton, you are warned under the standing orders for that comment.

**Mr POWELL:** Madam Deputy Speaker—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will have you pause for a moment while I deal with the point of order here, member for Glass House. If you take your seat, I will deal with this point of order first. Member, the minister is taking offence. I ask that you withdraw.


**Mr PERRETT:** I withdraw.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Member for Glass House?

**Mr POWELL:** Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister keeps referring to 'misleading statements'. The minister knows the process. If the comments are misleading, there are processes for that. It is not a point of order.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Yes, I will remind the minister that he can write to the Speaker on that.

**Mr PERRETT:** The minister should own up to the failings of the Weapons Licensing branch and ensure that proper resourcing is allocated to address the serious shortcomings. It is important that these amendments are not simply to massage statistics on performance and meeting service delivery obligations by extending delivery time lines. The big question is: what does the government think is a reasonable service within a reasonable time frame? A properly resourced and efficient weapons licensing system is critical to the proper management of firearms. The government must ensure the system works. I support the amendments.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (3.42 pm): I intend to make a positive contribution to the debate of the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. From the start, I thank and acknowledge the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for the work it did on this bill and the work it does in this area. I managed to meet with committee members in Townsville during public hearings, and they do some sterling work. I also thank very much the Minister for Police, Mark Ryan, who is in the House today, for his vision to build and strengthen our Queensland Police Service with a commitment of over 2,000 more police in this state, the single largest investment in 30 years. I know how important that is to all of our communities. I know that it is also supported very much by the Queensland Police Union.

The Queensland Police Service is world class. It has done a remarkable job in keeping Queenslanders safe during the COVID pandemic. Police have done much during the pandemic and it is important that, with all the challenges they are expected to address, we give them the best, most



efficient operating environment. If we can streamline processes relating to certain documents and get police back on the front line faster, we should do so. This is one measure this bill proposes in relation to witnessing certain documents. It is anticipated—we have heard it from other speakers—that 22,000 hours of police time will be returned to the front line annually. If we can ensure the right frameworks exist to disrupt crimes perpetrated using mobile phones and other electronic devices, we should do so. This bill does that and, in doing so, builds on the laws passed in 2019 in relation to non-consensual sharing of images—crimes that we know have a lasting impact on victims.

I have seen the difference a well-supported Police Service makes to my community in Thuringowa. Thanks to the Palaszczuk government's historic investment, Queensland will benefit from those thousands of additional police personnel. At least 150 extra police officers will be deployed to each of the state's policing regions including the northern police region, which takes in our city of Townsville. This means that this financial year alone the northern police region will get an extra 50 police officers. That is in addition to the almost 130 extra officers already delivered to the northern police region under the Palaszczuk government. Even more are on the way. I thank the minister. There are more than 900 police officers permanently based in the northern police region, and it will not be long before it is over 1,000. I have formed relationships with police in my current role, but I have known police for many years on a personal level in my former career as a paramedic with the Ambulance Service. I know that always draws—

**A government member:** Really?

**Mr HARPER:** Yes, I was. From conversations I have with police I can say that they are extremely impressed with what the Labor government is doing to build infrastructure and deliver more police in our regions and communities.

**Ms Pease** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** I take that interjection from the member for Lytton. For the first time ever, a deputy police commissioner is now permanently based in North Queensland. I give a shout-out to Deputy Commissioner Paul Taylor, Assistant Commissioner Mark Wheeler and District Superintendent Craig Hanlon. Each one of them—and the men and women who each day put on the police uniform—helps keep our community safe in sometimes really challenging conditions. I thank each of those fine senior officers who keep me regularly updated on police operations as they continue to tackle head-on crime in our community. I have every confidence in our police in Townsville that they do indeed apprehend offenders and hold offenders to account. They also go above and beyond, particularly in times of disaster. We saw it in the 2019 Townsville and North Queensland floods and we have seen it again recently with the South-East Queensland and Brisbane flood disasters. I am incredibly proud of their commitment to our community and of what they do across the state.

Our increased police presence in the region is further bolstered by our police having the right resources. As opposed to the LNP, which told police to tighten their belts and pay for their own body-worn video cameras, in Townsville we have delivered close to 5,000 QLITE devices to frontline police, close to 600 body-worn video cameras, 335 tasers, 130 police vehicles and six vessels. I again thank the minister for making Townsville a priority.

When we talk about police efficiencies, I must remind members of the announcement earlier this year when the Premier and the minister visited Thuringowa to announce our government's commitment to build a brand new, \$30 million Kirwan police precinct at the site of the 1300SMILES Stadium. This will be fantastic for our city. That is just stage 1. There is more to come. I will have more to say on that as it progresses. This is a government that puts community safety as an absolute priority. We are supporting more police and new facilities to accommodate them.

Some years ago I lobbied hard with the minister for the two police beats in the Upper Ross—they had single officers and could only work day shifts—to be amalgamated and to deliver a brand new station in Rasmussen which now has 10 officers and serves that community beautifully. Hats off to each one of those officers for the work they do.

The Palaszczuk government's significant investment means that police have the support and resources they need to do their jobs. Members of the LNP love to talk tough when it comes to policing and crime but, really, they have no idea. I am not blaming them—they had a crack—but they failed. Fewer police, less resourcing, privatisation and failed boot camps with high reoffending rates are not the ingredients for a safer community. Like I said, I am not blaming the LNP. Granted, they tried, but their efforts failed. Failed breach of bail laws saw 90 per cent of offenders charged and reoffending. Our government has the balance right. Those opposite like to talk integrity, like they did in the House

this morning. The well and truly documented Lincoln Springs failed boot camp provided a \$5,500 donation to the LNP just days before the announcement. If those opposite want to talk integrity, they should have a look in their own backyards.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** You weren't even around.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Order! Member for Buderim!

**Mr HARPER:** The member for Buderim was not even around. He has no idea of the secrecy, the lies and the mistruths of the LNP in getting donations to deliver failed boot camps. They should hang their heads in shame.

**Mr WATTS:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member has used an unparliamentary term.

**Mr HARPER:** If I have, I apologise.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, member.

**Mr HARPER:** In Townsville we have strengthened our Police Service. Additional police have been deployed right across this great state. We give the police the resources they need to keep our community safe and, as this bill demonstrates, we put the right frameworks in place to support the police to do what they do best—that is, being on the front line, engaging with the community, disrupting crime and, above all, keeping Queenslanders safe. I am very proud of the deliveries that we have been able to advocate for. My friends in Far North Queensland and Mackay all work together to get more police in our communities to tackle those issues. We do it with the support of the police minister. We do it with the support of the Premier. This is what Labor governments do.

This is in stark contrast to what we saw under the LNP Newman-Crisafulli-Bleijie government. They took helicopter trips. You thought Julie Bishop was bad! It was the brand new then attorney-general—

**Mr Watts** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** I take your interjection. The brand new then attorney-general got a helicopter to fly him up to Lincoln Springs—he charged taxpayers \$15,000 for that. That is an absolute disgrace. Those opposite have made him Deputy Leader of the Opposition. There are integrity issues all around him. The man hired a helicopter to transport his shiny backside up to Lincoln Springs—look at me, look at me—and it failed. The people involved reoffended. He spent \$15,000 of taxpayers' money. How has that man been promoted within their party? How did he do the numbers? Did anyone in the LNP look at that?

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Member, I will ask you to come back to the bill.

**Mr McCallum** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** I take the interjection from the member for Bundamba. I was asked on radio in 2014-15, 'Have you ever been in a helicopter?' I said, 'Yes, for thousands of hours in a rescue helicopter looking after people.' I was not wasting taxpayers' money.

**Mr WATTS:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Anything relevant to the bill would be useful from the member.


**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am listening very closely.

**Mr HARPER:** We back our police; we do not sack our police. We will keep doing it every day. That is in stark contrast to the dismissal failures of the LNP when they were in government. You got it wrong—admit it. We are doing a better job. We are delivering more police. I am proud of the Labor government. It is about time they started working with the government to do more.

**Mr McCallum** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** There are three new police helicopters—how good is that. There are more drones. There are a lot of drones on that side of the House! They are dragging the chain like an anchor—the anvil of disappointment.

*(Time expired)*

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (3.52 pm): After listening to the member for Thuringowa, I remind him of some of his colleagues who have been keeping police very busy. They would be better off tucked up in bed at home rather than going out and getting into a biffa at local nightclubs. If the member wants to talk about integrity, he does not have to look very far to see some of the issues in his

own ranks. A member of the Labor Party in North Queensland suddenly does not want to talk about recordings of their recollection of dodgy late nights out—keeping our police busy rather than allowing them to get on with the job of looking after our communities. What a waste of time to have police looking after dodgy Labor MPs who are on the sauce rather than looking after their constituents.

I want to address the issue of hooning which is at crisis point in many communities. On the Sunshine Coast we have seen a surge in people driving dangerously on our roads. I hear these stories from other parts of the state as well. When I have raised this with the transport and police ministers they say, 'Look at the legislation.' The legislation is over 12 months old. They still say, 'Look at the legislation.' We see no evidence that the police have been resourced to enforce the legislation.

Most concerningly, what has come to my attention is the lack of joint operations by transport officers and police. The bill before the parliament is the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill. People would think that if we want police to be efficient and effective we would empower them, resource them and allow them to work with other agencies that are also empowered and resourced to do their jobs.

I have had transport officers blow the whistle on this government and say that they are not allowed to go out and pull over light vehicles to check for unregistered drivers. They have said that they are not allowed to pull over people driving a dangerous vehicle—a clunker—that could potentially kill other people. They have been told that they are not allowed to do that. I am calling on the transport minister to explain whether there has been a directive given to transport officers to not pull over light vehicles and therefore do their job which is to keep people safe on our roads. I am hearing from whistleblowers that they have been directed not to do that.

If we want the police to be effective and go out and crack down on dangerous driving at a time when we have seen, in some communities, a record number of deaths on our roads we want them to do it with the full force of the law behind them and fully resourced. Other agencies also need to be able to do their jobs. There should be joint transport and police operations. I have raised this with the transport minister and with the police minister. I received a letter back from the police minister. I thank him for his response on this. I acknowledge that there are some good measures. However, I had also asked about joint operations with transport officers. I do not believe that was addressed in the letter. I raised it with the transport minister and he claimed that there were joint operations. I have asked my local police about this. They would love to see joint operations.

It was the whistleblower transport officers who told me to ask the question because they have been told not to pull over light vehicles even though under the legislation they have been empowered to do that for years. Why is this happening? The government must come clean. All agencies should be fully resourced to do their job. If there is a problem with the law then fess up. Tell us what is wrong so it can be fixed. The secrecy, silence and deliberate mistruths about what is happening with those resources has to be addressed by this government.


Hooning destroys the amenity of local communities, but it is also dangerous. What we saw happen during COVID was the removal of police from our streets to work on the borders and look after quarantine hotels. It is good to see those police back in our local communities. There were times when there were no police on our roads. I am not exaggerating. The word I had from police was that they were stripped away from our communities to undertake other duties.

We want to see them fully resourced and able to do their job. We have to empower them. This government has a terrible track record in regard to resourcing and empowering police with the right laws. We have also seen this around juvenile justice issues. They are complex issues, but the proof is in the pudding. Breakouts, youth gangs and children carrying knives are issues we need to address in appropriate ways. We need early intervention. We need to address these issues at a younger and younger age, unfortunately. That is the word I am getting back from my community. This is happening in other communities as well.

I would ask the police minister to talk to the transport minister about getting back police and transport joint operations. Let us see the outcomes of those joint operations published. They have to be run not once but many times because people will get the message when they see action. They will get the message when they see vehicles pulled off the road and they see the full force of the law being brought to bear on those endangering the lives of others.

Hooning is not a fun activity. It is dangerous. It endangers the lives of other people. We also have people driving clunkers—unregistered vehicles; those missiles of potential death—on our roads. They need to be pulled off the road. We need to ensure that people are only driving safe, registered vehicles on our roads.

I am calling on the transport minister and the police minister to get together. The stories do not quite align with the correspondence. We need to see these operations take place. Hooning has to stop. We need our roads to be safe for our communities. We need to respect other drivers who are doing the right thing. They need to drive with the full understanding that police and transport officers are empowered to do their job to keep our community safe.

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (3.59 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021, a bill with the stated objectives of improving the delivery of policing services; reducing administrative processes; increasing productivity; improving the detection, prevention and disruption of crime; and optimising existing systems and processes.

At the outset I would like to thank the men and women of the Queensland Police Service for all that they do to keep our communities safe. Their job is a difficult and dangerous one. I am grateful to the police officers who go above and beyond in their job, especially when their resources are too frequently limited. Their job has become even more difficult in recent years due to the increase in crime and, in particular, youth crime across Queensland. We have seen young thugs thumb their noses at the law and cause chaos in communities, all too frequently making Queenslanders feel unsafe in their homes or out and about in their communities.

My electorate of Buderim has experienced this. There has been a recent spike in break and enters and car thefts in Sippy Downs, Palmview and Brightwater. No community should have to live with this. Despite the best efforts of our local police, crime continues to be a problem which is frequently a cause for concern among residents in my electorate. It is an uphill battle for our Queensland police who have inadequate resources to do the job that is asked of them. There are too few police on the Sunshine Coast, and the number of police on the coast is not keeping up with the considerable population growth that we are experiencing. Those few police who are out on the beat fight against a system plagued by weak laws and the state government's catch-and-release approach to crime.

The effect of a failure to provide adequate police on the Sunshine Coast is that our police are too stretched and are unable to do sufficient work proactively engaging with our community to deter crime. It is important that we free up more police resources by reducing administration processes and get officers back to doing what they signed up for—fighting crime and making our communities safe. This bill seeks to achieve that but, like so many policy announcements that this state government seeks to trumpet, the proof will be in the pudding.

My constituents are concerned about a lack of police presence in our community. Those few police that we have are too frequently tied up doing administration, rather than being on the road. The LNP will always support measures to get our police back on the streets and in the community. I know that our local police officers want to be out there on the road, not stuck at their desks doing unnecessary paperwork.

Access to police is becoming more and more difficult for people in my community. People in my electorate of Buderim want to see our police on the streets patrolling and responding to calls for service—not just the most serious offending but all calls for service—and they want to be able to walk into a police station and talk to an officer to report crime or to discuss how to keep our community safe. Buderim residents value their local police beat, which this Labor state government closed and sought to hide the decision from our community. Our police beat, which has been there for many years and was manned for five days a week, has now been reduced to an occasional mobile police beat—and I had to fight to even get that—and is manned two days a week. It is a cut to police resources in Buderim and it makes our community feel less safe.

My office has also received several complaints about the Sippy Downs police station, which is open to the public only for short hours and perhaps most disappointingly, frequently during those hours it is open, people are not welcome to come in and report and are instead told to call Policelink. I understand the use of Policelink to free up resources, but I also believe it is important for people to have the option of attending their local station for face-to-face communication. This is particularly vital for our elderly population.


This is not a criticism of the hardworking police officers at Sippy Downs or anywhere else on the coast. This is about a lack of resources and a lack of staff. I know that our local police leadership are working to address the issues that have presented at Sippy Downs Station, but our community for too long has not had the level of service required to instil public confidence and to keep our community safe. I ask the Minister for Police to ensure that local stations like Sippy Downs have the resources they need to be able to meet the needs and expectations of our growing communities.

This bill aims to improve the delivery of services, and I hope it means we will see more old-fashioned policing, with police having the time and the inclination to work collaboratively with the community to tackle community safety. We do have some great community minded police officers who help groups like our various local Neighbourhood Watch groups—Neighbourhood Watch groups like the Mountain Creek Neighbourhood Watch, which has been capably led by Wendy Walker for many years and which has strong engagement across the suburb of Mountain Creek. We have also seen the Sippy Downs and Palmview Neighbourhood Watch re-established under the leadership of Margaret Bertoldo recently. Given the property crime, hooning and antisocial behaviour that we have seen in suburbs like Sippy Downs, I believe that our Neighbourhood Watch groups perform an important link between the community and the Queensland police, and I will continue to support them.

I have been disappointed that the state government has not appointed a school based police officer to Chancellor State College or to Mountain Creek State High School, which the LNP has committed to and I will continue to fight for. School based police officers are an important way to connect with communities, especially with young people who might be heading down the wrong track. At those two schools we have more than 6,000 students who could be connecting, working and developing a positive relationship with police rather than their first interaction with police being when they are in trouble. Our school based police officers do a great job at being proactive and perhaps, if more resources become available, the state government may revisit this issue in the future.

Before I finish my contribution today, I would like to address the amendments around alcohol and targeted substance testing. I support these measures, but I believe that, as elected representatives, we should be leading by example with respect to measures such as substance testing. I find it difficult to accept that we can be here debating the requirement for police to subject themselves to alcohol and targeted substance testing when neither the Premier nor the police minister or any member of parliament are subject to the same requirements. We all should be. All members of parliament should be required to submit themselves to alcohol and targeted substance testing on a regular basis just as our police are. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the same standards should apply to us as apply to them.

Again, on behalf of my community and the electorate of Buderim, I would like to thank everyone who puts on the blue uniform each and every day to keep our community safe. We need to do more to support and provide them with the resources that they need to make their job easier and more efficient.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (4.06 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. In the most part, there seem to be some constructive amendments and efforts by the government to tidy up some areas. I would like to focus on the one I am most familiar with—that is, weapons licensing.

Firstly, I wanted to make mention of the fact that a lot of this is about the efficiencies of police services. Not to be forgotten, or perhaps it is an omission, is police accommodation. It is never as much of an issue in places such as Townsville or on the coast—not that it is not an issue in those places, but it is a really big issue in places such as Mount Isa, where they have old, decrepit accommodation. We can still force the first-year connies to go to Mount Isa to make up the numbers in our district, but when they are shoved in an old building in Mount Isa in their first year it is not the best way to attract more people to go out there and stay out there. We need to think more broadly about the issue of policing. Mount Isa is an anomaly. As I understand, a lot of the housing is done privately and QPS officers have their own housing on the coast. Mount Isa has a large station that relies on its own police housing. That is a big issue.

I wanted to focus on weapons licensing. I do not want to be critical of the minister here. I do not think that the minister has been forcing too much of the problem in weapons licensing, but there is a problem in weapons licensing. There is no question about that. When you talk to anyone in the regions, there is an embedded ideology that licensed firearm owners are a problem and that they are an inherent risk. That is a reflection and I would go so far as to say an ignorant attitude of people not familiar with the use of firearms and licensed firearm owners. It is an attitude born out of ignorance. I know this because I know people who own firearms and I have friends who do.

Most people in the city do not interact with firearms. I do not blame them for having that view. They take a one-dimensional look at this issue and they think it is a problem, so it seems to be modus operandi to get rid of as many firearms as we can and that will make things safer. Unfortunately, that is wrong. It does not make things safer. The evidence is there. There is a tonne of empirical data to decisively instruct people otherwise that that does not enhance safety.

Putting effort and energy into licensed firearm owners does not improve community safety. Until you get past that, we are always going to be short-changed in efficiencies dealing with weapons licensing. There is a lot of effort put into chasing up the likes of Rob Katter or the farmer out at Boulia or Birdsville, 'Have you done your licence yet?' We have 8,000 licences sitting there in Weapons Licensing because they are running after people in rural areas. They are never the problem; they never have been. There is an in-built prejudice. 'We don't know them very well. We don't deal with them, so let's just make it really hard.' We went through all the rigmarole with category H, which has only been won back through the courts and QCAT. We are winning back ground.

If you want to see the hypocrisy and contradictions in relation to weapons licensing, it is easier to own and operate a pistol if you live in Brisbane than Birdsville. It is much easier to belong to a pistol club in Brisbane than it is in Birdsville—there is no pistol club in Birdsville—but that is a legitimate use of a pistol. It is much easier for me to move to Brisbane to buy a pistol so I can go to a shooting range once a week or once a month to keep current. In Birdsville you would not bother, so you are much more likely to have people using pistols in the city, where I presume you do not want them, than you do in western areas. You multiply that by a matter of degrees as you go to more remote cattle stations. They do not go out to join pistol clubs or get weapons licenses. Primary producers do not think that is a good use. We just do not think that. It is a subjective call. They do not find it difficult. So you are taking guns off them, but it is still just as easy in the city. There is a contradiction in these efforts.

Many people saw the *Four Corners* program years ago where Glocks came in in containers from overseas. That is your problem. It is the criminals who are getting this stuff. That is where you want the police effort—not chasing Nick Dametto or Rob Katter who are licensed firearm owners who shoot at the range or only approved places and who lock up their firearms every day. That is not the problem. You are still getting bits of that here. You say that dealers cannot take category R machine guns. I am not comfortable with seeing machine guns around the place either, but saying a dealer cannot hold onto that because that is unsafe, well, let's break that down. I am not saying is it the worst thing in the bill, but what you are saying is that 'Outback' Dave in Mount Isa with his big lockable safe that has never been broken into—and is never likely to be broken into—is unsafe. Let's get the guy who has tried to do the right thing. He thinks, 'What do I do with this? I'll go into the gun shop to work this out, and hopefully I can just give it to him and get rid of it.' He goes in there and says, 'Mate, take it home with you.' What is the sense in that? 'Take it home with you and we'll try and work it out.'


I applaud the efforts of Paul Taylor with regard to this. He is trying to get sensible solutions for us. As I understand it, now the police officer will go to that person's place, pick it up and take possession of that. That is not a bad outcome, but let's stand back and just look at it. What is the aggregated risk of that happening for the limited number of times it is going to a dealer? Just let them deal with it with the dealer's weapons license. But again that prejudice, 'this is all so dangerous, we're so risk-averse', keeps coming up. I am not so sure that is the most efficient outcome, but it is better than it was.

We are talking about lengthening the term that you have licences, and that is good. It responds to the acute problem but it really does ignore the greater problem, which is why there is this big backlog. Rodger Jefferis is out at Elrose Station, and they are doing topographical studies on his cattle station to see if it really is legitimate that he uses a pistol when he is out checking fences on his horse. This is serious. They had a four- or 10-page document going into all this detail on Rodger Jefferis, but he is not the risk. That is not the sort of thing you worry about. Someone has gone to all this trouble and wasted all of that time and resources. That is why you have 8,000 cases there—because you are spending too much effort in the wrong place. It is making us unsafe when we do have criminals getting handguns. That is where we want the effort. That is where the real efficiencies come into play. That is the low-hanging fruit. We can track down that person. We have an address. We have a safety check. Let's just do all that. But that is never where your problems are coming from. The effort needs to be where the criminals are.

I think the government really needs to get beyond that ideology. I know there are a lot of people in this House who would like to see firearms out of the whole atmosphere and not accessible to anyone in the public, and that is fine. You are entitled to that view. But understand and educate yourself on the real risks and empirical data. Everything needs to be evidence based. Do not rely on this subjective stuff out of Weapons Licensing, because there is an embedded bias against licensed firearm owners. That is why you have 8,000 licences there. I think the minister is trying to do his bit to tidy this up. I think Paul Taylor is trying to tidy it up in Weapons Licensing, but there are big problems there and they need big solutions.

We are a long way off optimising community safety. I think we can all agree that we want community safety around firearms. I have a very strong view, in fact, that the supporters of licensed firearm owners would actually have a lot more in common with anti-firearm people in terms of

community safety. We all want community safety around licensed firearm owners. We would love to work together on all of these initiatives, and the permanent amnesty is a product of that. The licensed firearm association said, 'Good idea! We know we're not the problem. We've got nothing to hide.' That was a good example of where we can work together on things that actually do contribute to community safety. But when everyone is holding in their trenches and saying that licensed firearm owners are the enemy, there is this embedded prejudice that is highly prevalent in so many instances and dealings. Our offices—and I am sure any of the regional MPs who are not in government—are full of complaints relating to weapons licensing issues. So many of these people are just decent, hardworking people who use them as tools. You are talking about mums on stations taking a pistol when they are going to check the bores or fences when their husbands are away driving a truck. That is what you are talking about.

 **Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (4.16 pm): I would like to rise to give my contribution on the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. From the outset I will make some comments around the member for Traeger's notes earlier about myself being under the eye of Queensland police when it comes to firearms. I am a proud category H weapons licence holder in Queensland. There is a lot of rigour that goes with that, a lot of checks and balances that go with that. Like Robbie said earlier, it is harder to own a firearm or a category H weapon all the way out at Birdsville than it is in Townsville, but I can tell you that it is even difficult there. There are a lot of checks and balances that go with that. I am proud as a KAP member and a regional member to hold one of those firearms licenses.

The bill aims to do a number of things and makes a number of amendments. The aim of the bill is to improve the delivery of police services, reduce administrative processes and streamline police operations, which is great. Our QPS officers need to spend more time on the beat, more time policing, more time out there interacting not only with the people they are out there to protect but also with the people they are trying to lock up. There is no use having police officers sitting behind desks. It is funny that comes to light, as we do see there has been a commitment to a large police facility in the Townsville area. Earlier last year we put a question to the police minister on behalf of the people of Bushland Beach asking for a Police Beat to be installed in that area to deal with a large amount of petty crime or vehicle theft, home innovations—a police presence to help with that community's safety. Unfortunately, that fell on deaf ears. I would agree with the police minister's response to this. He said, 'We would rather see more people out on the beat and more officers in vehicles. That is where the policing needs to be done.' Like I said, it was a little bit of salt in the wound for Bushland Beach residents to hear that new station at the old 1300SMILES Stadium site announced. It is very confusing.

There are other amendments that will help police in their efforts, including an expansion of the circumstances in which a magistrate or Supreme Court judge may issue a digital access order. That is great. We have criminals right now operating on multiple platforms, and giving them access to make sure they can tie up some of this crime and organised crime will go a long way to making Queensland a safer place, I would have to imagine. It will also allow police to seek digital access orders for phones. Being able to access any information on those phones could help police officers unlock crimes that have been committed and enable them to investigate to make sure they can put a stop to that.

The amendments to the Weapons Licensing section have raised concerns in the KAP. As we said earlier, there are some problems within Weapons Licensing. There seems to be an entrenched issue where we have up to 8,000 licence applications and renewals in backlog at the moment. The fact is that things have changed internally in Weapons Licensing. The whole fit-and-proper person requirement is sending a shock wave through licensed firearm owners in Queensland. People are being told that they did something 10 years ago that disqualifies them from holding a licence today, and they cannot fathom this. This is a licence they have had for five years and they have gone to renew it but something from 10 years ago has been brought up. They think, 'Why did I have a licence for the last five years?' It does not make sense to them.

People are being picked up because of health issues. I remind members in the House and anyone from Weapons Licensing who is listening now that we are trying to bring mental health out of the shadows and we are trying to encourage people to get help for their mental health issues. If someone puts their hand up and goes to see their GP for postnatal depression, depression or something that happened in the workplace, such as bullying or harassment, all of a sudden that sends up a red flag when they go to renew their weapons licence because people start saying, 'Sally has had postnatal depression. Should she have her weapons licence revoked?' That is scary.

We are trying to bring mental health out of the shadows. In our last term we actually brought legislation before the House that protected our doctors and allowed them to come forward and talk about their mental health issues without ridicule or fear of losing their licences. Now we have

law-abiding citizens in the community who have done the right thing to get a weapons licence—they have jumped through all the hoops and tried to make sure they are getting help for their mental health issues—being held under the blowtorch. The mind boggles.

As the member for Traeger said earlier, the firearm owners out there who are causing trouble are not licensed firearm owners. Those people are very rarely spoken about in the media because the fact is that they are not causing the problems. Have a look at how many shipping containers come into this country that are not being searched and it is pretty simple to see. I would love to see the statistics of how many unregistered firearms that are used in organised crime across Queensland actually belong to licensed firearm owners. I reckon those statistics would favour my argument. Anyone who goes through the rigour of getting a firearms licence and does their best to keep it at the moment—sorry, the member for Mermaid Beach is interrupting my thoughts with his theatrics.


**Mr Stevens:** I'm a licensed shooter.

**Mr DAMETTO:** I will take that comical interjection. The reality is that there is a lot of rigour around this. We are trying to do the right thing as licensed firearm owners. We just want to work with Weapons Licensing to make sure we are pulling up some of the things that are going on within the branch at the moment.

The first thing that was brought on during the COVID restrictions was that you could not even make a phone call to Weapons Licensing anymore. The answering machine said that police resources were being sent somewhere else because of COVID and the restrictions and that they could not take a phone call. People just want a hand to go through the application process, especially when there is sometimes only seven days to respond to some of the information and some of it is not completely clear. Firearm owners just want to work with the Weapons Licensing branch to make sure we are doing the right thing as Queenslanders.

It is great to see the National Firearms Amnesty continue, but there are a couple of things here. First, in relation to the Weapons Licensing branch having 48 days after expiry to decide an application for renewal, it is great to see that pushed out but I feel that is kind of self-serving. If more people were put within the Weapons Licensing branch to manage this or do these applications, this would not need to be pushed out. I know that licensed owners will be happy with that, but I think it is self-serving. If they were not going through with this new fit-and-proper person application process, we would not have half the problems that we are seeing right now.

There is also that part of the amnesty that affects you if you turn up with a machine gun to a licensed firearm dealer. That dealer has all the right gear to store it and look after it, and they are there to act on behalf of Weapons Licensing to reduce the amount of work they need to do, so they should be given the opportunity to do that. Do not tell the poor guy who is probably sweating bullets, excuse the pun, to bring in his machine gun that he probably should not have had on his property and then tell him, 'Now you've got to take it to the police station or call the police to come and get it.' He is more likely to take it home and put it underground again. The reality is that we should be making it easier for people to do the right things, not harder. Let firearms dealers help police do their job. Let them hold these firearms until someone can come and grab them. Do not burden the QPS, which is already burdened with keeping crime off our streets.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (4.26 pm): I rise to speak on the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. I would like to state at the outset that I am the patron of the Inglewood gun club and the Warwick Pistol Club. I take the point that was made by the member for Traeger and the member for Hinchinbrook that it is easier to own a category H firearm in Brisbane than in Birdsville. I note that the minister is in the chamber and I know he is very chummy with his local gun club. They come to Warwick and compete from time to time. It is the case that they have much easier access to a category H firearm than somebody in the bush who might also need one.

We have heard a great deal about the failings in the Weapons Licensing branch. I get a lot of complaints from constituents, from fine upstanding people who have been on the land for generations and are of impeccable character, who have had their category H firearms licences taken off them. One of them was Lawrence Springborg. He had one for 30-odd years as a primary producer. It is ironic that, once he left the parliament and became a primary producer probably seven days a week instead of two, he had his firearm taken off him on the grounds that he did not satisfy the requirements anymore. His occupational requirement had actually improved, his character remained as impeccable as it always was yet it was taken off him. These sorts of arbitrary decisions—which mercifully we have seen overturned at QCAT to some extent—give rise to a great deal of upset, angst and depression amongst people in my community who get put through the wringer regarding firearms licences.



I listened to what the member for Gympie said earlier about the specious grounds on which people are being put through the wringer when it comes to renewing firearms licences—someone with diabetes, someone with postnatal depression, someone who had fallen over and, I understand from what the member for Gympie said, had to justify that it was due to their glasses and not something else. This is madness.

I note that the minister took personal offence to a few remarks earlier. I will say something which I feel there is no prospect he could take offence at—the buck stops with the minister. How is that? If he does not object to that, then it means that not only does the buck stop with the minister but so do these licence applications. There are 8,000 of them, according to Graham Park, the president of the Shooters Union. When we see an expansion of the period of time that a firearm can be held temporarily from three months to six months, this is more about adapting the regulations and the law to the poor performance of the Weapons Licensing branch—the performance of which is the responsibility of the minister. The department under his administration is letting down firearms owners throughout Queensland. It is disgraceful that it takes months and months to have a renewal of a firearms licence completed.

A very fine, upstanding member of my community—I will not mention this person's name because I have not cleared with them whether they would like to hear it or not—had for many years had firearms for sporting shooting purposes. On the most recent occasion he submitted all of the required documentation. The Weapons Licensing branch asked for more, which he supplied by the given email address. He was told sometime down the track that none of the material had been received and that his firearms licence had been cancelled.

I make no reflection on the staff of the Weapons Licensing branch as individuals, but the functions of the branch are a disgrace in inefficiency, with the most appalling customer service. Basil Fawty gives better service than the Weapons Licensing branch. It is a very common complaint in my electorate that good firearms owners—good people who need the firearms for sporting purposes or for occupational purposes—are treated like criminals. People who have had no cause to be seen in that light are put through the wringer. As the buck does stop with the minister, I suspect the minister has simply said, 'Just don't approve them. Don't come to me and say, "I need an amendment to the act." Just don't do it. Just make it as hard as possible.'

**Mr RYAN:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is making a very serious allegation. Unless the member has some evidence to back it up, he should withdraw that. In any event, I take personal offence at the matter and I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Member for Southern Downs?

**Mr LISTER:** I withdraw. The buck stops with the minister. The minister is responsible for what happens. Good firearm owners in this state have been treated very poorly indeed. It leaves open the question: has the Weapons Licensing branch been told, 'Don't tell us how it needs to be done. Just find ways to make it as hard as possible for firearm owners'—good, lawful people who have used firearms for many years—

**Mr Ryan:** You be very careful.

**Mr LISTER:** I take the interjection from the minister to be very careful. I am very careful, and so are the many firearm owners who are routinely disadvantaged by the department under his stewardship.

I would like to move on to the question of crime. We have heard much debate in the chamber today regarding crime and the various positions of the various major parties on that. I heard the member for Thuringowa talk about how the LNP has failed in terms of crime. I would suggest that if the member for Thuringowa were to go to Goondiwindi or Warwick in my electorate, where there are growing amounts of crime, they may well tar and feather him because everybody there knows that we need breach of bail restored as an offence for youth offenders. It is not good enough that they are let off over and over again.

I want it to be on the record that my view is that someone will eventually be hurt or killed as a result of the growth in crime. People may feel that they have to take matters into their own hands to protect themselves, and that would be a tragedy, but I want to say now—and I have put in writing to the minister in the past my concern that that will happen; I believe the mayor of Goondiwindi has done so as well—that we need—

**Mr Ryan:** The police responded.

**Mr LISTER:** I take the interjection from the minister saying the police responded. Yes, we had some mounted police in Goondiwindi which was of great benefit, but they are not there anymore. We need a 24-hour station in Goondiwindi, but we do not have one. I have made a point of recounting on many occasions in this House the problems of crime in Goondiwindi and Warwick and how legislative change is necessary, but the government resists this. The government obviously is dominated by the bleeding-heart left who say, 'Offenders are victims and we can't put them away. You just have to tolerate the crime until we have solved the social problems which have given rise to it.'

**Ms Boyd** interjected.

**Mr LISTER:** I take the interjection from the member for Pine Rivers. Has she ever been to Goondiwindi?

**Ms Boyd:** Yes.

**Mr LISTER:** Has she walked the streets in Goondiwindi and talked to them about—

**Ms Boyd:** Yes.

**Mr LISTER:** I doubt that very much.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui):** Member, direct your comments through the chair.

**Mr LISTER:** I will continue to put my remarks through the chair.

**Ms Boyd** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Pine Rivers, order!

**Mr LISTER:** There is one point I want to make about the provisions of this bill regarding the special constables and the status and powers they are given when coming to Queensland. As I represent a border electorate—I have about 400 kilometres of border country and represent towns like Texas, Goondiwindi, Stanthorpe and Warwick—I can say that it is a matter of importance to them. I welcome any improvement to the ability to give special powers to interstate police and—

**Mr Ryan:** Finally you recognise the issue.


**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr LISTER:** I have not finished speaking yet.

**Mr Ryan** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, Minister!

**Mr LISTER:** I have not finished making my observation yet, so I welcome that. I also say that we need a cross-border commissioner, which has been LNP policy for the last two elections. The local police and the local authorities, be it local government, health or whatever, are saying that we need to have a cross-border commissioner, just like New South Wales does, and I will continue to advocate for that for as long as I can.

 **Mr BERKMAN (Maiwar—Grn) (4.35 pm):** I rise to make a brief contribution to the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill. I will not be opposing this bill which, I believe, mostly contains pretty commonsense provisions around police processes and will improve the operation of the national gun amnesty framework in Queensland. However, I want to take the opportunity to highlight some concerns about the new access order provisions for digital devices. The bill expands the relevant police powers, allowing them to apply to the court for an access order for a digital device, either in a search warrant or after a device has already been seized under a warrant or left at a crime scene. What we are talking about here is basically an order to compel someone to unlock their phone or laptop or face a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment.

The bill would allow police to apply for one of these orders when they seize a device under any provisions of the PPRA if there is a reasonable suspicion that information on the device will be evidence of an offence. Right now, police need to have seized the device either under a search warrant issued by a magistrate or judge or at a crime scene as evidence of a crime scene threshold offence which is an indictable offence with a maximum penalty of at least four years imprisonment or involving deprivation of liberty.

Police have quite broad powers under the PPRA to seize devices, so allowing these access orders beyond search warrants and crime scenes is a fairly significant expansion, I would argue, but I do acknowledge that the latter—that is, expansion of powers in relation to crime scenes—is still confined to crime scene threshold offences plus a few additional offences under the bill; namely, distributing intimate images, observations or recordings in breach of privacy or distributing prohibited visual recordings.


Arguably, the amendments in the bill about accessing digital devices are pretty minor and narrow, and I appreciate that fairly strong safeguards remain, but it is worth highlighting these issues because the persistent creep of ever-expanding police powers is a real problem in this state. It is commonly acknowledged that this only goes in one direction. You will pretty much never see police handing back any of their powers once they have them.

As much as the major parties are still unwilling to admit it, experiences of policing and the criminal system are still very different and often traumatic for marginalised people in Queensland. It is especially the case for First Nations people, LGBTQIA folks and disabled people. This is an institution with an ongoing history of systemic racism and homophobia. It is an institution which has an effective legal monopoly of coercive violence. That is not meant to be an incendiary statement; it is an honest reflection on our system as it stands. It does mean that we must always be critical of where and how police can use their significant powers and how they might be used not just to protect vulnerable people but also to harm them, whether intentionally or otherwise.

The Queensland Law Society, the Council for Civil Liberties and the Youth Advocacy Centre all raised concerns in their submissions about the device access order provisions. The Law Society referred to the argument that, when it comes to police access, our laws should treat mobile phones in a similar way to private homes. That is especially true given the enormous scope of personal and professional information that most of us store on our devices today.

There are some very practical safeguards that the government could put in place to prevent or at least mitigate unreasonable privacy infringements and unintended consequences. The Law Society suggested that detailed records should be kept by police of what information is accessed; that access to the device should be limited to information on the device itself and not, for example, information on cloud services that could be accessed via the device; and that the ability to make a complete copy of information on the device that can be accessed later should be further constrained. The Queensland Council for Civil Liberties recommended greater transparency around how these orders are used to reflect equivalent legislation in other jurisdictions like New South Wales. That could mean a requirement for police to, within a reasonable time, give the court a written report about whether the order was executed and the results.

To reiterate, this is not a bill that I will actively oppose, but I urge the government to consider introducing these safeguards alongside the changes in the bill. When giving police more powers, we must ensure there are additional checks and balances in place to prevent the abuse of those powers.

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (4.39 pm), in reply: I take this opportunity to thank members of the House for their contributions to the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill. We have all heard of the courageous and collective might of our first responders in protecting Queenslanders in the worst floods to hit the south-east in living memory. Tragically, 13 members of our community were lost, including one of our own, SES volunteer Meryll Dray. Many lives were saved, though—the positive.

Today in this House we heard of the heroics of our first responders putting the lives of others before their own. That is what they do every day. Our police and emergency services personnel, our firefighters and their elite swiftwater rescue crews, our State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service volunteers, Polair, the Water Police—all of them collectively were on the ground, in the air, in the water reaching out a lifesaving hand to their fellow Queenslanders.

It is this government which backs each and every one of our first responders. We back the police with the laws they need to keep the community safe and we back the police with record police budgets year after year. In our record \$2.6 billion police budget we are rolling out more than 2,000 extra police personnel, which includes an additional 1,450 sworn police officers. That equates to, as determined by the commissioner, at least 150 additional sworn police in every police region. There is an extra 300 civilian staff to support frontline policing. We are going to establish a new Policelink call centre in Townsville with 50 Policelink call takers. There is 125 additional police liaison officers and school based support officers, and an additional 100 frontline support personnel, which also includes, importantly, at least 10 additional injury management officers for the police wellbeing centre.

We are rolling out more police resources including more than 12,000 integrated load-bearing ballistic vests in a nation first, more than 5,000 additional QLiTE iPads, 4,500 additional body worn video cameras to bring the total fleet to more than 12,000, 250 additional police vehicles and more mobile Police Beats so that police are out and about and more visible in their local communities. This was certainly the case during the floods with Police Beats deployed to the worst affected communities, reaching out to help and support those communities.

We have our \$300 million police infrastructure pipeline, which is delivering new and upgraded police facilities right across Queensland including in places like Cairns. I note in today's *Cairns Post* local businesses were commending the planned establishment of a new police facility in west Cairns and there is other Palaszczuk government investment in places like Townsville at Kirwan with the new \$30 million facility.

In a recent investment there are three new helicopters to patrol the south-east as part of a 10-year contract with Surf Life Saving Queensland from 2024, which will take us through to the Olympics and beyond. This new longer term contract will also save police because the new helicopters provide vastly improved safety, technology, cameras and night-vision capability. This new arrangement will also deliver Australia's first Bell 429 training simulator, and there is more with remote piloted aircraft for Cairns and Townsville.

It is about more reinforcements for the police and added protection for the community. Because we have had COVID and we have had floods, the Palaszczuk government is delivering an economic plan to keep us on the road to recovery. The efficiency measures in this bill will enable more police to spend more time helping and supporting their local communities.

I will now take a moment to address some of the issues raised by members during debate on the bill. Some members asked about the amendments to special constables and non-state police officers. This bill allows special constables and non-state police officers to exercise the powers of a Queensland police officer under the provisions approved by the Police Commissioner. As a result, this will create operational efficiencies and remove any uncertainty about the role of officers from other jurisdictions when they come to Queensland to assist with major events or disasters. It is a safeguard and it is all about being able to boost the policing response if required. It is an arrangement which exists right across the nation.

Special constables will also be subject to the same oversight as Queensland police officers. They must comply with Queensland law while in our jurisdiction. They must comply with the safeguards provided under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act and through any national arrangements. They may be investigated and subject to disciplinary processes in their home jurisdiction.

I note there was also some commentary about the amendments to the Weapons Act in this bill. That extends, for instance, to the period for the temporary safekeeping of firearms. New licence application time frames have changed over recent times. I am advised by the Queensland Police Service that this is largely due to the effects of the global health pandemic on the workforce and an increase in the number of applications being made. I am advised by the QPS that they are working on a number of strategies including recruiting more client service officers and a new online tool to reduce the number of incorrect or incomplete applications coming through to the Weapons Licensing branch.

A number of members also raised the need for more police and more police resources. Madam Deputy Speaker, as you know, this government is delivering more police and more police resources including our more than 2,000 police personnel. Of course, we recall what those opposite promised at the last election. They would be delivering less than half that amount. How quickly and conveniently they rewrite history, even recent history. The government, the Labor Party, is the party that when in government boosts resources and backs our police. Those opposite, when in government, cut police resources and slashed police budgets. They have a very poor track record.

I do acknowledge—and I will particularly note—the member for Coomera for his very positive feedback about this government's investment in the new \$6 million Pimpama police facility and the extra policing resources for the northern Gold Coast. I look forward to joining the Police Commissioner next week to officially open that outstanding new facility.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr RYAN:** I acknowledged him. He was invited. He was on the invite list. I invite all local members. Unlike a previous government that was petty and did not invite non-government members to official openings, I make sure every single local member is invited to official openings—every single one.

**Mrs Frecklington:** This would be the only minister who does it if he does.

**Mr RYAN:** I do. The member opposite is an example. She can say that I do. There were three openings in her electorate.

I take this opportunity to thank members of the Firearms Advisory Forum for working closely with me on amendments to the firearms amnesty under this bill. Their input and advice are valued and respected. In relation to the weapons amnesty amendments in this bill, the president of the Firearms Dealers Association of Queensland has said—and he is happy for me to quote him—

The firearms dealers industry has worked closely with the government to ensure these changes are in the best interests of our members.

I am pleased with where these changes have landed.

We have always been a willing partner, working with government to ensure weapons don't end up in the wrong hands because our members are responsible and remain committed to community safety.

And we believe the framework in place in Queensland is the best in the nation.

I thank him for his comments. I thank him also, as well as all members of the Weapons Advisory Forum for their cooperation and participation in this process.

May I take this opportunity to acknowledge all the hard work and dedication of members of the Queensland Police Service who work tirelessly day in, day out to ensure the safety of Queenslanders. I am going to embarrass one particular officer now. I would like to thank Senior Sergeant Bob Utz from the legislation branch. He is sitting in the bill box there. I am told that this bill is known within the Queensland Police legislation branch as 'Bob's bill'. I will get to that in a minute. In Bob's bill, he will be very proud to see, there will be significant reforms and legacy including: enhancing the ability of police to investigate serious crimes by enabling them to access evidence kept on digital devices such as mobile phones; supporting efforts to enhance firearm safety; efficiencies that will free up police to spend more time on the front line, enabling senior police to witness affidavits, which is particularly important for officers in rural and remote areas. This will ensure that the need for police officers to locate a JP will be removed, which will deliver significant time savings for the police—in fact, more than 20,000 hours of additional officers' time annually.

There will, of course, be appropriate checks and balances and safeguards in place to ensure the integrity of this reform. There is also reform in this bill to expand the circumstances where a magistrate or Supreme Court judge may issue a digital access order requiring a person to provide a password or encryption code that in turn enables police to access information stored on a digital device such as a mobile phone. This would apply, for example, to circumstances involving offences which are colloquially known as upskirting or revenge porn. There are also amendments to streamline the operation of the permanent firearms amnesty.

I will now go back to Bob. Senior Sergeant Bob Utz approaches the end of a long and distinguished policing career that will span 40 years of service to Queensland. I think more courageously, Bob has dedicated 18 years of this career to the legislation branch. Well done, Bob! Bob's great expertise and knowledge have been instrumental in the development of this bill and many other bills. In fact, long after Bob's retirement these laws will continue to have a positive impact on the people of Queensland. Bob, I take this opportunity on behalf of all of us to wish you well in retirement and thank you very much for your service to the people of Queensland. Well done, Bob! Community safety is paramount to the Palaszczuk government and this bill delivers on our unwavering commitment to ensuring Queensland is a safe place to live, work and visit. I commend the bill to the House and I encourage all members to support Bob's bill.

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

Motion agreed to.


Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 41, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

### Third Reading

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (4.52 pm): I move—


That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

## Long Title

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (4.52 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.


Motion agreed to.

## SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 24 February (see p. 298), on motion of Ms Farmer—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (4.53 pm): I rise in support of the Small Business Commissioner Bill 2021. Before I go on I would like to thank all of our small businesses during these challenging times. I know many businesses have helped out charity groups and many businesses have stayed open so that people could get their essential services and supplies. I thank all those businesses in my region and across our a great state, and indeed the country, as we struggle with this weather event.

The establishment of a permanent Small Business Commissioner in Queensland supports our state's over 450,000 small businesses. The main objectives of the proposed bill are to enhance the operating environment for small business in Queensland and to reduce the time and cost associated with resolving disputes involving small businesses. The permanent establishment of a Small Business Commissioner and a supporting office are also key initiatives under the Big Plans for Small Businesses Strategy. The Small Business Commissioner Bill 2021 will give effect to the government's commitments. The bill provides a legislative basis for the commissioner's dispute resolution functions relating to retail shop leasing disputes under the Retail Shop Leases Act and to other small business leasing and franchising disputes on an opt-in basis.

We know that dispute resolution can be costly and stressful for small business owners. Prior to the temporary commissioner being appointed, in the past Queensland's small businesses had to negotiate multiple pathways in the dispute resolution process. The government has consulted with Queensland small businesses, with jurisdictions that have existing small business commissioners and with key industry stakeholders in determining the permanent commissioner model. Consultation was conducted with over 2,500 small business owners and industry representatives across Queensland through the Small Business Roadshow. I thank the minister for hosting those in our region. The roadshow included a series of face-to-face and virtual forums and an online survey on the Business Queensland website. The message received from small business and industry is clear: small businesses want one-on-one support that is easy to access. Consultation with other small business commissioners included those in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia, as well as with the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman. This was undertaken in March and April 2021 to help inform the permanent commissioner model.

Consultation with a large range of peak bodies occurred from late May to mid-June 2021 and helped inform the permanent commissioner model. Key industry stakeholders contacted in relation to the proposed role and functions of a permanent commissioner consisted of Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland; Australian Industry Group; Queensland Hotels Association; National Retailers Association Limited; Franchise Council of Australia; Restaurant and Catering Industry Association; the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Queensland Branch; Master Builders Australia; Master Grocers Australia; Queensland Social Enterprise Council; Queensland Law Society; Institute of Public Accountants Limited; Australian Retailers Association; Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand; and Certified Practising Accountants Australia. As you have just heard, there was a rather extensive consultation list.


Key policy issues raised with stakeholders included the functions and role of the commissioner, the scope of disputes within the commissioner's remit, mediation fees and the definition of small business. Other issues contemplated during consultation included the permanent commissioner's powers and the importance of the permanent commissioner's independence. Stakeholders were unanimous in their support for the permanent establishment of the commissioner and were generally supportive of the elements of the proposed approach, noting comments in the following area: through

the permanent commissioner's office, Queensland small businesses will have a clearly identifiable single point of contact in Queensland to provide advice and assistance to help them understand their options in a dispute. One of these options will be mediation for retail shop leasing, other small business leasing and franchising disputes. The commissioner's office will also be able to provide initial advice and information to small businesses about any type of dispute and connect them to relevant assistance and support. Queensland's small businesses will have a permanent, one-stop shop for tailored small business advice here in Queensland.

The temporary commissioner's office has fielded thousands of requests for assistance and has helped to successfully navigate tenants and landlords through leasing disputes. Under permanent arrangements, tenants and landlords in retail shop leases will have a clear and easy process for connecting and finding solutions before progressing to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal or the courts if required. Where parties to a small business dispute about things other than small business leasing or franchising want to try mediation then that will also be offered by the commissioner, in addition to a range of informal resolution options to resolve disputes.

The bill will allow the Queensland government to permanently establish the Small Business Commissioner role to deliver small business engagement and support, including advocacy and dispute resolution support. The bill also provides for other important aspects relating to the Small Business Commissioner, including a ministerial statement of expectations, ministerial directions, reporting requirements, terms of office and arrangements where a vacancy occurs. The commissioner will also work with the Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction to continue to deliver small business regulatory reform in Queensland.

Having a permanent Small Business Commissioner brings Queensland into step with every other mainland state in Australia and has been a terrific initiative by the Palaszczuk Labor government. I thank the minister, the department and all of the stakeholders that made a contribution towards the establishment of this role. I also thank the committee secretariat and Hansard for doing what they do in taking all the submissions and so on. They are amazing. We will continue to listen to the over 450,000 small businesses that make Queensland the place to do business. With that in mind, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (5.01 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Small Business Commissioner Bill 2021. A key focus of my contribution will be on the fact that it is excellent to finally see in this House some attention being assigned to small business. Throughout the past 18 months there has been an underlying theme that small business has been forgotten or, if not forgotten, there has been no clear and strategic plan to support it not only through the pandemic but also most recently with the storm and flooding events. While the bill will not be opposed by the opposition—in fact, we applaud making permanent the role of the Small Business Commissioner—I want to highlight a range of areas where small business has been forgotten.

It does not matter how often the small business minister establishes a task force, undertakes consultation, publishes a glossy brochure, has a strategic discussion or organises a summit. The truth is that, over the past 18 months, time and again it has been members on this side of the House who have been speaking about small business. We have been getting out on the road to draw attention to the challenges that small businesses are facing during these most extraordinary times. I pay tribute to the shadow minister for small business, the member for Buderim, and the opposition leader for being at the forefront in meeting with small businesses across Queensland.

One thing that has been missing from government, but that we have been focused on, is clarity of message and evidence of a plan that small businesses can rely on. Time and again we have stood with small businesses to contrast our approach with the Queensland government's plan to support small businesses, whether through the pandemic or most recently through the storm and flooding events. What has been the Queensland government's plan to support them? Time and again, under pressure, the government has been silent.

I contrast the treatment of the small business sector in Queensland with the support packages on offer in other jurisdictions. In New South Wales there is the payment of a certain amount of payroll costs according to certain turnover thresholds. In Victoria a link was made to support commercial tenancies. There are direct grants and subsidies of other kinds. Time and again, when we have called out the government for their package and asked what they will do to support small business, there has been silence. I am not sure whether that is because of the ineffectiveness of the small business minister in the cabinet. I am not sure if the voice of the small business minister is simply not loud enough or persuasive enough. Perhaps the Treasurer has not been listening to the small business minister. But time and again, when put under pressure to outline their plan, there has been silence.

The member for Buderim, the Leader of the Opposition and I have travelled. In the first couple of months of this year I personally travelled to Cairns a couple of times as well as to the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast to meet with chambers of commerce. If the small business minister and the Treasurer listened carefully to small businesses, they would understand the need for support and the need for clarity of message.

When I was on the Sunshine Coast I met with Graham at the Mooloolaba Chamber of Commerce. In Cairns I met with tourism operator Roddy Rees, who is simply calling for clarity of message, consistency and support. The Leader of the Opposition visited our chamber of commerce in Toowoomba and met with business leaders, and I will return to that. In Cairns we heard that, particularly with the Omicron wave, the January month of trade was the worst ever month. That is pretty astounding given the past couple of years and the challenges that businesses have faced. In Cairns, and anecdotally across the state in many sectors, January was the worst ever month of trading. At a time when one would expect the government, the small business minister and the Treasurer to stand up for businesses and speak out on their behalf, there was silence.

We know of the dire situation that businesses have been facing, particularly small businesses. In the middle of February the CCIQ pulse survey results came out, which again led us to have some grave concerns. There was a 16.9 per cent drop in business confidence as against the previous quarter and a 6.9 per cent drop in sales and revenue as compared to the previous quarter. Most tellingly, after two years of battling the pandemic there has been an increase in businesses reporting an impact on mental health. In the CCIQ pulse survey released in the middle of February, 63 per cent of businesses reported mental health challenges. In my opinion, the government has been far too flippant about that, which is obvious because there is no plan.

Tonight I want to read into *Hansard* some of the personal stories of those who contributed to the pulse survey. We heard the Treasurer try to discredit this. He has already tried to discredit the CommSec reporting and now he is trying to discredit the CCIQ pulse survey as self-nominating. Just because the government does not want to hear the information or the feedback from businesses around Queensland does not make it any less valid. I want to read these comments into *Hansard* because we know of the challenges to mental health. A Cairns retail staff member states—

Neither my husband or myself sleep through the night. For the first time ever, I have started to worry that we will lose everything we have, which isn't much now as we have both put our superannuation into the business, plus our savings and even sold our home ...

From Central Queensland—

Several employees suffering stress directly related to conditions created by COVID. Management team is also affected due to significant additional workload to try and understand the constantly changing requirements and managing the risks to the business.

From the Sunshine Coast—

COVID has all but destroyed my business. I had a staff of four before COVID and now I only have myself. I held onto staff for as long as possible.

From Brisbane—

Managing as best we can given no traffic in the CBD. Pre COVID we would take \$2,500.00 during a normal COVID day we would be taking \$1300. We are currently down to \$350 per day ... The situation is dire.

On the Gold Coast—

Total breakdown every night, don't want to carry on, don't see a way out. want to close the doors. Can't afford to keep going.

In Townsville—

Government ignoring small business, Little or no support interest in helping.

**Mr Harper:** Rubbish.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I take the interjection from the member for Thuringowa simply because, again, that interjection betrays the lack of care and concern the government has had for small business. Over the past 18 months or two years—

**Mr HARPER:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at the member's comments and ask him to withdraw.


**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui):** Member for Toowoomba South, the member for Thuringowa takes offence. Do you withdraw?

**Mr JANETZKI:** I withdraw. If there is one thing that is abundantly clear from chambers of commerce across Queensland, whether it be in my home town of Toowoomba, the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast or Cairns, it is that they wanted to have trust in their government. They wanted to have



confidence in their government, that it understood the travails facing small business. Time and time again, members will hear from this side of the House that small business and the chambers of commerce had no confidence in the government to deliver a plan and to deliver certainty and clarity of message.

When we compare the performance of other states, whether it be consistency and clarity of message or whether it be a vision for small business, other states and jurisdictions were acting because they clearly wanted to see their small businesses get across the final threshold and survive through COVID to the end of the pandemic—they wanted to see their small businesses thrive and prosper—but in Queensland we had silence from the government. Yes, the Small Business Commissioner Bill 2021 is an important measure, but small business under this government is languishing without a vision and without a plan. There is no glossy brochure that will ever fix that.

 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (5.12 pm): Another cure to insomnia from the member for Toowoomba South! This is my first opportunity to speak since the severe weather event that affected parts of Wide Bay, the south-east corner and into New South Wales. Even though in large part Bundaberg was quite lucky compared to our friends and neighbours in Gympie, Maryborough and further south, members of my community understand how devastating floods can be not just to communities but also to businesses. It is important to recognise that many businesses out there right now are hurting but will be using the Small Business Commissioner moving forward as they regrow their businesses into the future.

I also touch on the events over the summer where we saw Omicron spread right across Queensland, especially in my community of Bundaberg. About a week before Christmas we were hit very hard by a major outbreak. We were conducting 600 PCR tests a day at the Bundaberg Hospital. This meant that on any one day up to 1,000 people were off the streets, isolating and waiting for their test results. That clearly had an impact on our businesses. It stretched right throughout January as well. It was really tough on our CBD traders, our supermarkets and all of our small businesses, not only because of people being cautious of COVID but also because of people having to isolate because of the test. I am glad to say that we are starting to kick back into gear in Bundaberg. Our businesses and the CBD district are starting to grow and pick up again. It is because of the strong economic recovery plan that this government has put in over the past two years that we are in the position to recover from COVID.

Small businesses are important to our economy, especially our regional economies. This bill aims to make permanent the role of the Small Business Commissioner and thus make permanent the support provided to Queensland businesses since the inception of the commissioner. Small businesses provide opportunities not just for jobs but also for young people and the more vulnerable in our communities. I think about the fantastic Back to Work program. The minister has secured a further four years of funding, up to \$140 million. I also mention Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. Groups such as Angels Community Group and Impact Community Services in Bundaberg are delivering outcomes for young people and for vulnerable people to get into work. Much of that work is in small businesses.

This is a good time to pause and reflect on the fact that many people's first jobs in Queensland are jobs in small businesses. In many ways they are the training grounds for those who will eventually go on to form their own businesses and give that opportunity to young and vulnerable people once again.

Importantly, many small businesses are family businesses. It is mum and dad toiling away day after day and well into the night so that they can give their family a better opportunity than they had. I am very proud to say that I come from a business family. The families of both of my parents were business families—owners and operators of pubs and tourism businesses. In fact, my grandfather on my dad's side ran the pub in Nanango, the Fitzroy Hotel, in the late 1980s. We understand how tough it can be for those small businesses.

**Mr Hart:** It's a good hotel.

**Mr SMITH:** I take that interjection from the member for Burleigh. I also foreshadow that the member for Burleigh played a part in my family's business later on. I think he knows what that will be.

**A government member:** Tell us the story.

**Mr SMITH:** I will indeed. What is important is that my family was a business family but with deep roots to always voting Labor, because they knew that Labor looked after working people. Small business people are working people. They are the battlers in our community who provide for more

battlers as well moving forward. That is what is so important. My mother's father, my pop, was a working man. He took over a small houseboat company on the Coomera River in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Through the family lineage, it grew to be the largest houseboat tourism operation along the Gold Coast and indeed probably in the country.

**Mr Hart:** Another good business.

**Mr SMITH:** I take that interjection as well. I am glad that the member for Toowoomba South spoke about how great the LNP is. After federal Labor left office and the Abbott government came in, any support for that business on the Gold Coast dropped away. I remember my father telling me how he could not even meet with an LNP councillor for months and months. When he did, the councillor said, 'You need to understand that the time I have to meet with constituents is very small in my role.' That is what the LNP are. That is what they are about. I will not say that they completely did not support the business because, as I foreshadowed, the members for Burleigh and Mermaid Beach were frequent guests on the houseboats. I think I probably even served them some ice and bait at some point. At least there were two contributors from the LNP to the family business! There is not much further than that.

Labor supports small businesses because small businesses support our communities. That is what it is all about. I think of someone like Joey Caruana from the Windmill at Bargara. The other week the Queensland Tourism Industry Council board were in the Bundaberg region and there was a breakfast at Joey's place. He was so proud to show off that every single item of food on that menu was a local product. He made sure that he gave every single grower and producer the credit whenever he brought out the food. He was so proud, because it was a Bundaberg business spruiking Bundaberg growers and Bundaberg product. That is what it is all about. We support our small businesses because they support all of our businesses and all of our growers. I think about Lincoln at the Seafood Smokery, who is proud to support local fishermen. The other day Lincoln addressed the state development committee hearing. You could see how proud he was of his small business, because it gives back into our community.

This bill is so important. We have an economic recovery plan from COVID-19. We know that COVID-19 had an impact on businesses. The lockdowns were absolutely necessary for the health of Queenslanders, but they did affect our businesses. That is why we needed to provide support. We saw \$196 million in COVID adaptation grants go to our small businesses. I think about Kristy from Grindstone Coffee House, who put \$10,000 into her business and expanded out the front—new tables, new chairs, new umbrellas. It completely revolutionised her business, from an internal cafe to a cafe that stretched out along the street. Members should see how busy it is. Madam Deputy Speaker Lui, I invite you to come to Bundaberg. We will take you to Kristy's for the best bacon and egg sandwich you will ever have.

We also saw \$1.3 billion in payroll tax and land tax relief and \$1 billion in low-interest jobs support loans. Businesses need confidence. That is why they turn to the Palaszczuk Labor government. The LNP opposition want Queenslanders and Queensland businesses to trust them, but the LNP cannot even trust themselves on this matter. We have seen this with the recent reshuffle and the own goals in question time. Who can forget the last question time last sitting week which was an absolute disaster? The entire backbench disappeared. We come in this sitting week and the backbench looks a little different. There are new positions. How can the poor old member for Toowoomba North trust the LNP? It is twice now that he has been shafted by the LNP. How can small businesses and Queenslanders trust the LNP if their own members cannot trust them.

We had the scare campaign that all Queenslanders were subjected to and that affected Queensland businesses at the height of the pandemic. We had the now Leader of the Opposition say that the Chief Health Officer was punch-drunk. How is that integrity when dealing with public servants?

**Mr HART:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. This is all very interesting but completely irrelevant.


**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui):** Member for Bundaberg, I ask you to come back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr SMITH:** COVID-19 has brought about the reinstatement of the Small Business Commissioner. It was a Labor government that was responsible for the economic recovery plan that the Small Business Commissioner is a part of. What people did not see from the Labor government in terms of policies around the Small Business Commissioner was scare campaigns calling for the borders to be opened which would have released COVID-19 on an unvaccinated population. That would have absolutely crippled businesses. That is what we got from the LNP 64 times. There was also a big yellow billboard.

**Mr HART:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. You just gave the member a direction and he has gone straight back to what he was talking about.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Bundaberg, you may continue.

**Mr SMITH:** I did think it was quite skilful. I pay tribute to a fantastic minister who is absolutely leading the way in showing support for our small businesses—not just through this bill, not just through Back to Work, not just through Skilling Queenslanders for work, but by getting out and talking to businesses in regional Queensland. When Minister Farmer comes up to Bundy I take her around to a whole range of businesses and I love the way she can speak to them. The minister knows how to talk to mum and dad operators. She knows how to talk to sole traders. She knows how to talk to the young kids at TAFE who are aiming to get a job and the opportunity to pull themselves out of a difficult situation. Labor governments support businesses. That is why I support this bill.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (5.22 pm): It is interesting to follow the member for Bundaberg who made a bit of commentary on the speaker previous to him. I can assure him that if there is a reshuffle on the other side he will still be sitting where he is. That is the important thing for the member for Bundaberg to remember. He went around the world in his contribution. He will be staying there. He is a first-term member going nowhere. He went all around the world telling us a few of the things he has gleaned from question time and a few things he has gleaned from the paper. He comes back to the bill, goes off the bill and then comes back to the bill. He will be staying right there.

**Mr SMITH:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I rise to speak on Small Business Commissioner Bill 2021. I thank the member for Buderim, the shadow minister, for his contribution.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Lui): Member for Surfers Paradise, I ask you to pause, please. Member for Bundaberg, do you have a point of order?

**Mr SMITH:** Do not worry, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Surfers Paradise, you may continue.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I think he thought about it, but he thought 'Maybe I won't,' which is probably pretty smart for a first term.

I was acknowledging the contribution of the member for Buderim. I thank the Education, Employment and Training Committee for their consideration of this bill. The bill, as its title suggests, looks to permanently establish a Queensland Small Business Commissioner and a supporting office. The bill provides a statutory basis for the commissioner's dispute resolution functions relating to retail tenancy disputes and to other small business commercial leasing and franchising disputes on an opt-in basis. The main objectives of the bill, as detailed in the explanatory notes, are to enhance the operating environment for small businesses in Queensland and to reduce the times and costs associated with resolving disputes involving small businesses.

We have heard a lot about individual electorates and the effect the last couple of years has had on small businesses in those electorates. I will not be an exception to that. I want to speak about the Surfers Paradise electorate and the Gold Coast generally. The number of small businesses vary depending on the assessment of what a small business is. There is a definite acknowledgement on the Gold Coast that it is the engine room of small business. We have about 70,000 small businesses on the Gold Coast. We have a variety of small businesses. They include health care, social assistance, construction, retail, hospitality, tourism, creative industries, education, ICT, marine, food and beverage, advertising, graphic design and marketing. They are all very important.

Within the construction industry there have been significant challenges for subcontractors who contract to major contractors that are going through significant challenges at the moment and that have been well canvassed in the media. Those businesses deserve to be supported by a commissioner who acts in their best interests and effectively advocates on their behalf. With regard to the scope of this bill, this means a commissioner whose functions include advocacy and dispute resolution support.

Over the last couple of years we have heard from those opposite and those on this side of the House about the challenges that businesses across the state have faced. On the Gold Coast border closures posed significant challenges. There were challenges for Cairns and the Far North where people really have to fly to get to those areas in significant numbers. Advocacy will be very important because those businesses have been suffering.

For those of us who have fond memories and have been reminded by other people about the significance of Surfers Paradise to growing tourism in the 1960s and 1970s will see that Surfers at the moment is a shell of its former self. The Council of the City of Gold Coast and new Councillor Darren Taylor are coming up with significant plans, but that does not help the businesses there at the moment.

Unfortunately, it is really not looking the best or as it has in the past. Whilst the Small Business Commissioner will not be advocating specifically on behalf of those small businesses that are there, it is certainly an issue for the future and a challenge for the Gold Coast at the moment.

With respect to the commissioner's advocacy functions, the bill is rather silent on the minutia, particularly when one compares this to the detail provided for the commissioner's dispute resolution functions. Several submitters questioned what the commissioner's advocacy functions might specifically entail. In response to these comments, the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training advised—

The bill purposely does not define 'advocacy' as by doing so, it may inadvertently narrow the scope of the Commissioner's advocacy function.

Therefore, it remains to be seen what the advocacy function as provided for in the bill will involve. With respect to the proper performance of the Small Business Commissioner's functions and having regard to clauses 17 to 20 in particular, the LNP questions—and I know the shadow minister has mentioned this—whether the commissioner is sufficiently independent from the government. As it currently stands, the commissioner appears to be an offshoot of the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development. Per clause 17, the minister is empowered to issue a direction as to the performance of the commissioner's function, which the commissioner has no choice but to comply with. Per clause 19, the commissioner reports to the minister who may request from the commissioner information relevant to the functions and activities performed by the commissioner.

These concerns were similarly raised by a number of submitters to the bill. The Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman contended—

The concern with the ministerial direction power is that it might be used to guide the Commissioner away from subject matter that might be awkward or difficult for the government of the day.

With the respect to the reporting power, the Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland stated—

To truly advocate on behalf of business is likely to be a challenge for the office, given that it is a body that reports to the Minister. In relation to submitters' concerns with respect to the independence of the commissioner's role, the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training stated—

The power for the Minister to issue directions is not intended to undermine the Commissioner's independence, but rather to increase the Commissioner's responsiveness to emerging issues as needed to support Queensland small businesses. The Bill also requires under Clause 17(3) that the Commissioner must include details in its annual report of any Ministerial directions during the financial year and the actions taken by the Commissioner as a result of the direction. This provides for public transparency and accountability.

The department's advice provides little comfort when it comes to transparency and accountability. In order for the Small Business Commissioner to operate for small business, this bill must provide for requisite independence.


Debate, on motion of Mr Langbroek, adjourned.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION (REVERSAL OF GREAT BARRIER REEF PROTECTION MEASURES) AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 22 February (see p.104), on motion of Mr Dametto—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (5.30 pm): I rise to make a contribution to and support the Environmental and Other Legislation (Reversal of Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) Amendment Bill 2021. Before I begin, I declare I am a landholder. These holdings are on the eastern fall of the Great Dividing Range, situated in the Fitzroy River catchment area. The details of my land holdings can be found on my statement of interests.

The original bill passed by the Labor government was to 'amend the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to strengthen the Great Barrier Reef protection measures to improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef'. It was based on the 2017 Scientific Consensus Statement, which places the blame for poor water quality squarely on the shoulders of agriculture in Queensland. Page 11 of the 2017 Scientific Consensus Statement states—

Sugarcane areas are the largest contributors of dissolved inorganic nitrogen and pesticides, while grazing contributes the largest proportion of sediment and particulate nutrients to the Great Barrier Reef ...

Expansion of agriculture in the Great Barrier Reef catchments will increase pollutant loads delivered to the Great Barrier Reef. The recommendation is to continue to prioritise agricultural sources of pollutants in the Great Barrier Reef catchments—in short, blame the farmers.

Acknowledgements at the back of this paper recognised James Cook University TropWATER with contributions from the Australian Institute of Marine Science; the University of Queensland, Central Queensland University and Griffith University; and the Queensland departments of agriculture and fisheries, environment and heritage protection, natural resources and mines, and science, information technology and innovation—in short, the government.

There is a long list of co-authors. They are all funded by the departments of environment and heritage and energy—again, in short, the government. Nowhere is there any recognition of producer bodies or agricultural people who are affected. I ask: were they even consulted? It appears to me that the government has commissioned a paper with a predetermined outcome.

Dr Hardisty of the Australian Institute of Marine Science was questioned in the federal Senate inquiry by Senator McDonald about a letter written by his department that said, ‘Coral calcification rates are not significantly impacted by agricultural activities.’ Dr Hardisty answered—

... there were questions about whether or not climate change was something that we were blaming on farming activities ... ‘No, we’ve never said that those things are connected.’

Again, when questioned by Senator Roberts on the same subject of coral growth rates, Dr Hardisty answered—

... coral growth rates ... which you’re talking about, we have never connected with anything to do with farm run-off.

A few minutes later Dr Hardisty said—

... if you want to get into growth rates of *Porites*, that’s a whole other story. As we’ve said, it’s not connected to farm practices—we don’t believe it is.

Here is proof of the staggering inaccuracies and conflicting statements that have come from the federal Senate inquiry in relation to the 2017 Scientific Consensus Statement on which reef legislation is based and what is actually happening on the reef.

I believe the government has deliberately demonised agriculture for political gain to appease the environmental left. Reef legislation is based on manipulated, inaccurate science and modelling that cannot be replicated.

The Queensland government has spent \$330 million on misleading campaigns denigrating the \$19 billion agriculture industry that puts fresh food and fibre on the plates of Australians. The damage caused to the image of the Great Barrier Reef as being denigrated and the subsequent cost to the \$6 billion tourist industry has not been considered with the implementation of reef legislation.

International spokespeople with no idea have now assisted the Chinese-led UNESCO push to have our great national asset deemed as ‘in danger’. The Queensland government has created this problem and only the reversal of this damaging legislation can solve it.

Rising sea levels is frequently mentioned as likely to endanger the Great Barrier Reef. I have heard it said by many people on that side of the House. In a paper written by Dr Bill Johnston analysing data gathered by the sea level tide gauge at Cooktown in Far North Queensland, he concluded as follows—

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) claims that due to global warming, sea level is increasing and that the fastest rate of sea level rise is in the northern sector of the Reef. Further, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts sea level will rise by around 26 to 29 centimetres over the next 9 years ...

Dr Johnston said—

Satellite data depended upon by IPCC do not stack up with tide gauge data or aerial photographs taken between 1969 and 1994 compared with high-definition Google Earth Pro Satellite imagery of the same sandy beach.

Satellite aerial photographs of Cherry Tree Bay at Cooktown taken in 1969 overlaid on satellite imagery taken in 2018 show no encroachment or change in exposure due to rising sea levels over the last 49 years. Satellite data upon which speculation relating to sea level rise depends is preloaded with trend and should not be used for critical studies, for spreading alarm or for forming government policy. It is a ridiculous notion that sea levels will increase by almost 300 millimetres during the next nine years.

I would like to table that report for the benefit of the House. Furthermore, I table a paper of monthly sea level graphs at Cairns issued by the Bureau of Meteorology from 1958 to 2022 which indicate no discernible sea level rise.


*Tabled paper:* Bureau of Meteorology report, dated 26 October 2021, titled ‘Trends in sea level at Cooktown, Great Barrier Reef: Mean sea level change at Cooktown, Great Barrier Reef, Queensland’ and graph titled ‘Monthly sea level at Cairns, QLD’ [288].

The Great Barrier Reef is a living treasure and every effort should be made to ensure its health and longevity. There is an abundance of evidence the Great Barrier Reef is in and enjoys good health. Since reliable records began, the amount of coral on the reef and coral growth rate has not declined despite the fearmongering and alarmism promoted by environmental groups and the Labor government. The Labor government has deliberately targeted agriculture with its misguided and badly thought out reef legislation. The Labor government has made no attempt at recognising the vast changes and huge leaps forward the agricultural sector has made in its management and farming practices over recent years.

In contrast, the federal Morrison government has committed moneys in the order of a billion dollars to ensure the reef's health and prosperity. It has not apportioned blame to the agricultural sector, rather it is helping it deal with its challenges and will do so into the future.

Another point that I would like to raise concerns the renewable energy industry. If we are to see the transition to alternative energy sources and the construction of wind farms and solar farms, this will require vast tracts of land in the reef catchment areas. The land will have to be cleared and developed and access roads and power connections built. Why then does the renewable energy sector industry not have to comply with the same regulation as the agricultural industry? This is just one example of the inequities of this misguided reef legislation.

To close, I am here to defend the agricultural sector and to try to put some sense to this argument. I support the KAP bill.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (5.39 pm): I am always pleased to follow the member for Callide. It is always pleasing when he says something. He did not say a word for four hours in estimates last year at my committee. I understand there was a water forum last week up in Central Queensland, and he did not say a word during the whole of that either. There were lots of questions and queries. The member for Callide, again voiceless, did not say a word. He did the Marcel Marceau stuff he is so renowned for. It is always good when he actually says something.

I rise to speak against this bill, obviously. Let's call it for what it is. This is a Katter wedge on the LNP. Actually, they are doing a pretty good job of it. When you look at the seats the Katter party has, they actually have more North Queensland seats than the LNP: Hinchinbrook, Traeger and Hill versus Burdekin and Whitsunday. Tactically, they seem to be on the right track in terms of their objective to cannibalise the LNP in North Queensland.

However, the merits of the bill are simply not there and are reprehensible. We have seen today that the new deputy leader is not from the National side of the LNP for the very first time. We now see the little Newman leadership team—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Members, there is way too much noise and interjection across the chamber. I am interested in what the minister has to say. I was interested in what the previous member had to say. I am interested to hear the rebuttal.

**Mr BAILEY:** Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker; I always appreciate it. The LNP has decided to oppose this bill because they want to be seen to be supporting the reef, but when they vote on legislation put up by this government they always oppose it when it matters. We have a case of the opposition wanting to be seen to be doing a certain thing, roping the Nats in to say 'We have to be seen to be doing something for the reef,' and once again the Nats get done. They have lost out on the leadership team. We have the little Newman leadership team now running the LNP. There are no Nats in there. They demoted the most senior Nat in their ranks. The member for Maroochydore has been set back about six or seven spots. She is their shadow integrity spokesperson. They talk about integrity and they have just demoted their shadow integrity spokesperson. That is extraordinary behaviour.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Miller, can I draw you back to the bill, please.

**Mr BAILEY:** This bill is just political posturing and positioning from the Katter party in their ongoing and clear strategy to cause damage to the LNP and take LNP North Queensland seats off them. If I was the member for Burdekin or the member for Whitsunday I would be quite concerned that the Katters were after me because—

**Mr DAMETTO:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The bill was put together because this is what farmers wanted. I take personal offence and I would like the member to withdraw.

**Mr BAILEY:** When we look at it, this government is committed to protecting the Great Barrier Reef. We have a very strong record of supporting the integrity of the reef, our tourism sector, jobs and the economy that goes with it. We know that it contributes \$6.4 billion to Australia's and Queensland's economy. Sixty-four thousand jobs depend on it. It is one of the unique natural wonders of the world. Action on climate change is the most effective thing we can do. The run-off of chemicals as a result of agricultural activity has an impact, and we have to consider what the evidence is. It is of immense environmental significance. This government, through a whole range of measures—certainly in my area in terms of our ports—has made sure there are strong measures to ensure the protection of the reef.

It is pretty extraordinary that the Katter party, at a time when climate change is biting—we have just been through a terrible flooding disaster from Wide Bay to Toowoomba and west, down to the border and right through New South Wales to Sydney through Lismore—is trying to wind back environmental protections. We have to get serious about the science and about the action. This bill is absolutely contra to what we need to do as a responsible government. To the extent people vote for it, whatever the motive might be to oppose this bill I think that is appropriate.

Just so people are aware, there are: 1,600 types of fish on the reef, 600 types of coral, 30 species of whales and dolphins, and more than 70 traditional owner groups are involved. We have invested more than \$700 million to protect the reef since 2015, including \$270 million to continue the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program, which is having very strong outcomes. We introduced regulations in 2019 to further strengthen protections for the reef, especially in terms of water quality, and that has been effective. The Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce recognised that transformational change was needed to reduce pollution from agriculture in our reef catchments, so we would be an irresponsible government not to do something about that. The Katters really need to join the 21st century on this, with all due respect to the member for Hinchinbrook. We have seen the impacts of climate change. We have seen a number of natural disasters in the seven years we have been in power. We have seen the impacts of more voracious and fast-forming cyclones in Queensland in a way that we have not seen before.


We are a developed First World economy with smart people and resources. We have to work together to act on climate change. This kind of bill is taking us in the reverse direction. It is not the way forward and I urge all MPs to oppose this Katter bill because it is reprehensible. It does not deserve support. It might be a political wedge, but I do not believe that gives it any integrity whatsoever. Our regulations are designed to bring all agricultural operations up to minimum practice standards and to ensure that new or expanded activities do not further worsen the water quality program. The regulations are a critical component of Queensland's commitment under the Reef 2050 Plan.

Only last year the UNESCO World Heritage Committee indicated an intention to list the reef as being in danger. Having the Great Barrier Reef listed as World Heritage in Danger would not only damage Australia's international standing but also put in jeopardy the recovery of Queensland's tourism industry, which has suffered enormously as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. While we are able to avoid this classification, the World Heritage Committee has asked for further information on action being taken to protect the reef. Reversing the reef protection regulations introduced by this government would not only undermine our efforts to improve reef water quality; it would also negatively be regarded by the World Heritage Committee, that is, the window out on to the rest of the world.

Let's be clear: the proposed changes to these protections would increase agricultural run-off into the reef, causing further damage to this already fragile natural wonder. The irresponsibility is incredible. We know that, alongside climate change, run-off is one of the leading threats to the ongoing health of the reef. Two consecutive years of extreme sea surface temperatures, mostly due to climate change, caused mass coral bleaching in 2016 and 2017. The extent and severity of the coral bleaching was unprecedented, impacting two-thirds of the Great Barrier Reef and causing large numbers of coral deaths. A mass bleaching event was again recorded in 2020. The threat is very, very real.

Under the Queensland Climate Action Plan we are addressing climate change, pursuing three key climate change commitments: powering Queensland with our 50 per cent Renewable Energy Target by 2030; achieving zero net emissions by 2030; and achieving emission reductions of at least 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. Understanding the modern economy is what this government is all about. If you are interested in jobs, if you are interested in prosperity and expanding the economic pie, you have to understand the new economy. In the meantime, it is more important than ever that other threats to the reef are reduced, particularly in the short term, including by improving reef water quality. Science shows that good water quality is essential to boosting the resilience of the reef to better withstand the impacts of climate change.

The Palaszczuk government cannot work alone when it comes to protecting the reef. We need the Morrison-Barnaby LNP federal government to work with us to take real action on climate change and secure the future of the reef, but they do not have any record on that to date. We also need producers to play their part for improved local water quality and a healthy reef. We acknowledge those producers who have invested effort into improving their practices. This is just political tactics from the Katter party. It is a step back into the past. It is a step back into the 20th century. It deserves to be voted down and I oppose the bill vehemently.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (5.50 pm): It is important that we continue to raise the issues of regulations that attack our farmers. I welcome the opportunity to talk about the reef regulations. I also take the opportunity to talk about the sugarcane industry which has been vilified over a long period under Labor governments. We have to remember that farmers are the best custodians of their land; it is not governments and it is not bureaucracy. If I can stand up and talk about the great people in my electorate, I will do that every day. Our canegrowers recognise the need to reduce the impact of farming on the nitrogen and chemical loads in our waterways, but at every turn they are attacked. The last time Labor introduced reef legislation, the stress and anxiety was evident on farmers who were facing that brutal, heavy-handed legislation. I will talk more about that later.

Of the many problems with the drafting of the Katter bill before us today—and one is the complete rollback of the regulation to 2009—one is the lack of acknowledgement of the work that has happened in environmental and technical advancement in best practice over the last 13 years. I am proud of those advancements and those growers who have progressed work with accreditation programs. All of those advancements would be lost. The LNP amendments recognise and protect those growers. The Katter bill retains the extreme penalties for breaching the regulations of up to \$13,000, so amendments are needed to make sure we have some sort of a level playing field or accreditation for our growers.

As consumers, corporates and businesses embrace sustainable products and socially responsible production, how can we justify the potential risks to the industries that many of us in this place represent if we are perceived to be removing reef protections? Smartcane BMP meets the requirements of international and corporate sustainability standards. It is important we think about our markets and where our growers send their sugar, including Bonsucro, Czarnikow, VIVE, ProTerra and Coca-Cola Amatil. That would be at risk if we start to talk about rolling back reef regulations. Policies need to promote and celebrate the excellent work our growers do to ensure we future-proof the industry, not put that industry at risk.

The KAP bill also gives an independent regulator very broad powers. We know there is a problem when the Environmental Defenders Office is supporting the establishment of something like this. It ends up being harder on farmers, with organisations always breathing down their necks.

**Mr Andrew** interjected.

**Mr BENNETT:** It is a bit hard when the member for Hinchinbrook is right behind me. I am not sure if he is going to jump up and slap me, but I take it on good faith that he will not. It is important that I make this contribution because I am from a sugarcane growing area. I am from a irrigated high-value agriculture base, so it is very important that those people in my electorate understand my rationale when I am talking about my objections to the KAP bill.

The number of growers accredited in Smartcane BMP continues to grow and we will double numbers. That is about recognition of those growers. Canegrowers also brought in the Cane Changer project to better understand the behaviour and needs of growers. There is no acknowledgement of that, but it is leading to increased adoption of best management practices.

I want to make sure I am on the record as saying that the Burnett Mary catchment should never have been included in the 2019 broader reef regulations. There are many things about that particular issue of the Burnett Mary. It is so far below the Southern Great Barrier Reef that it does not even impact on the reef, but we did not get our outcomes when we put that to the committee and the government at the time. The Burnett Mary catchments are outside the Great Barrier Reef. It is 70 kilometres from the mouth of the Burnett River to Lady Elliott Island, which is the most southern coral cay of the Great Barrier Reef, so it is a long way. Based on Bureau of Meteorology current forecasting models, the ocean currents from Mackay flow south so there is very little risk to the reef from the Burnett River, the Kolan River and the Burrum River.

There has been no formal monitoring of the inshore coral reefs. After my trips to the ocean with my grandkids over Christmas, I can assure members that there are a lot of soft corals replenishing and there are a lot of inshore corals, so I do not accept the science that is being used to justify it. I want to do a shout-out to the Burnett Mary Regional Group and the Gidarjil Sea Rangers who are monitoring



these inshore reef areas. That is making sure that science and the facts are articulated. There is no marine water quality monitoring in the Burnett Mary region, with the nearest marine monitoring station at North Keppel Island which is 235 kilometres to the north.

Based on the water quality target information for the five subcatchments I mentioned before, we are really up against it when we try to justify the issues. It is also a big slap in the face to those growers who put so much into making sure that there are low levels and minimal run-off. They do not acknowledge that over 70 per cent of all farm run-off in my area goes through at least one tailwater dam before it enters a waterway. The majority of these dams were built before 2004.

Six Easy Steps and nutrient management workshops were developed in Bundaberg to assist growers to understand their soil tests. I have to say that none of these farmers put fertiliser on wanting it to wash down a creek, yet they are accused of being vandals, and that is why we are insulted by this. They have been doing soil monitoring and have been putting in probes without any help. I want to give a shout-out to the 100 leading growers that have received a nutrient management plan in 2013, 2016 and 2019. The crown of thorns are not an issue for us. The Swains Reefs are over 250 kilometres out to sea and do not have the issues that are being reported.

I want to quickly talk about the 2019 bill in the time I have left. The bill gave the government more power and we are waiting for that heavy hand to be applied. It is not reasonable that a growers' ability to farm profitability is affected by legislation. Minimum standards for sugar cane already exist in law so there are questions about why we needed it more under section 81, particularly when there was no RIS done to support bringing that in.

I want to acknowledge the Six Easy Steps program. As I said before, it is about trying to make sure nitrogen is used efficiently. The proposed regulation of sugarcane growing in the Burnett Mary region is unjustified based on its low significance for reef water quality outcomes. It has been proved time and time again that we do not have those issues that have been reported. Section 79 of the bill brought in the Burnett Mary, and as long as I am here I will be fighting to get that removed. The bill provided the government with unrestrained power to demand and use data. I remember AgForce and their very stoic protest which deleted all of that. I still congratulate them for that day when they stood up to big government and big bureaucracy.

In closing, I take this opportunity to congratulate our growers who contribute so much to our community. I will continue to stick up for our farmers and fight against the vilification that continues to be applied. I want to put on the record my thoughts to those growers who have approached me and my office about supporting the Katter bill. My interpretation of what is being proposed does not do them any favours. Those growers need to make sure they continue to work strongly and use their innovation and sustainable outcomes to ensure the Bundaberg region continues to be a big sugar grower. It is not quite as big as Whitsunday—

**Mrs Gilbert:** Mackay.


**Mr BENNETT:** Sorry, Mackay. We have been reminded a couple of times that we are only of low volume. It is important that I acknowledge the member for Mackay and the team that put together last night's Friends of Sugar. It is ironic that we are here today talking about this. I know that this is about water quality and reef regulations, but the people who usually get attacked and caught up in this mess are those in the canegrowing industry. It is important that they were there last night. The Friends of Sugar is an important initiative to bring parliamentarians, the milling industry and canegrowers together in a more collaborative way so we can better understand the way forward and ensure the sustainability and viability of the sugar industry. I want to do a shout-out to the Isis mill and the Bundaberg sugar guys who were there last night. I acknowledge all the other mills as well, but the Isis and the Bundaberg guys are the ones who vote for me so I have to make sure I give them the plug. In all seriousness, we will continue to fight for those farmers and the sector that puts so many billions of dollars into our economy.

**Mr Knuth** interjected.

**Mr BENNETT:** I will take that interjection from the Katter boys. If they had sat down and worked with some sensibility about what this could have looked like, we could have put canefarmers together—

**Mr Knuth:** You supported this eight years ago.

**Mr BENNETT:** I take that interjection. Eight years was a long time ago when we have moved positively forward as an industry. I am sticking up for my canefarmers and I will make sure that what we do in the future does not allow pieces of legislation like this to potentially put them all at risk.

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (5.59 pm): I want to acknowledge the member for Burnett. I thought that was a wonderful speech. At the very end, with 48 seconds to go, he said 'but seriously'. I am not sure what part of the speech we need to take seriously, but I recognise all of those very valid points. I

take that all in the cut and thrust of it. I think it would be a waste using science, so I will stick to some pretty small words. The objective of this proposed bill is to repeal the 2019 Great Barrier Reef protection bill, which was introduced fundamentally to strengthen the reef protection regulations. That is pretty straightforward; you cannot really get that one mixed up.

I say from the outset that, not only as the member for Cairns and not only as somebody who has worked in marine tourism for 17 years but also as an environmentally concerned citizen, I totally oppose this bill—absolutely every bit of it.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr HEALY:** I know! It will come as a great shock to those who are not familiar with the science. However, I can say that I am aware of the fact that the reef protection regulations have been subjected to strong opposition from the agricultural sector and my learned colleagues are feeling the pressure; I acknowledge that. The member for Burnett has even indicated that these people vote for him, and I get that. I also understand that the sugarcane industry is the dominant land use in the Hinchinbrook electorate. However, to say that we are attacking farmers is like saying that DUI laws are having a go at those who manufacture alcohol. There is an enormous and impressive inconsistency, and that is what I find enormously concerning—

**Mr Dametto** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Member for Hinchinbrook, you will get another go shortly. Can we hear the member in silence, please.

**Mr HEALY:** I appreciate your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. The reef protection regulations have been subject to strong opposition, and I understand that, but at the end of the day we have to think broadly and look at it from a far broader perspective. The introduction of the Great Barrier Reef protection measures by the Palaszczuk government in 2000 are simply that: they are there to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

The Great Barrier Reef is an economic powerhouse. I remind each and every member here that it contributes more than \$6.4 billion each year to the Australian economy. Prior to COVID, it was generating 64,000 jobs. It is absolutely enormous. The fact that I personally have made a living and have done quite well over it does not taint my views. I see young kids—my daughter and my 14-year-old son—wanting to get into the marine tourism industry. In my role as the Assistant Minister for Tourism Industry Development I travel up and down the east coast of this great state and I see the future for young children and I see the future for people in businesses. This is not about attacking anyone; this is about finding a balance, which is what we do through a significant process of consultation.

The objectives of the current reef protection regulations commenced on 1 December 2019. The idea is to strengthen Great Barrier Reef protection measures by improving the quality of water entering the reef. The reef protection regulations were in direct response to the 2016 recommendations of the Great Barrier Reef Water—wait for it—Science Taskforce and the best available consensus reef science. One of the main causes of poor reef quality water is cumulative contributions of nutrient and sediment, pesticide being one of them, and run-off from agriculture in reef catchments. Locally, significant contributions from industrial land uses—we are talking sewage treatment, waste disposal, mining activities and also aquaculture—also contribute to the water quality problem. It is in a wide range of areas. The Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce recognised that transformational change was needed to reduce and diffuse source pollution from agriculture into our reef areas. The regulations are designed to bring all agricultural operations up to at least minimum practice standards and ensure that the new and expanding cropping and industrial activities do not further worsen the water quality issues. The regulations are a critical component of Queensland's commitments under the Reef 2050 Plan.

If anybody meets the regulated minimum practice standards across the main commodity types, it has been modelled that this would mean around 80 per cent of the target would be dissolved inorganic nitrogen, which is a good thing. That is what we are targeting. The regulations are also key to the federal government's response to the World Heritage Committee.

I want to touch on the federal government and their contribution in this area because it is impressively disappointing. The federal LNP donated \$443 million to a private foundation which has only six staff but has links to big resources companies. May I add, the private foundation's managing director, Anna Marsden, said that the investment by the federal LNP was an absolute surprise when this money was controversially donated to this unknown foundation in 2018.


This is the same federal LNP government that appointed Warren Entsch as the special envoy to the Great Barrier Reef. This is the same Warren Entsch who told the ABC that 'warm water originating from the Northern Hemisphere and flowing across the Pacific to the reef was the chief cause of mass coral bleaching'. If I had the time, I would read it again. He also claimed in the interview with ABC presenter Fran Kelly that attempts to clean up the water over the reef meant corals were more exposed to more sunlight, making the bleaching worse. The science is intimidating. Coral and ocean scientists have described statements on coral bleaching from the government's reef envoy Mr Entsch as 'far-fetched' and 'ill-informed'. I love the—

**Mr Power:** That is good—

**Mr HEALY:** I take the interjection from the member for Logan. I do love the restraint. I would have described it very differently outside of this chamber. However, it is expected—and I make this note—that the UNESCO World Heritage Committee will be meeting in the very near future and they will make their determinations on the reef and the status of the reef, so we will be able to see whether Mr Entsch and his LNP federal government have made any significant contribution at all. Reversing the reef regulations would be negatively regarded by the World Heritage Committee. Repealing the reef protection regulations would increase the burden of regulation for some growers.

If the private member's bill was passed—I can guarantee members that it will not because we have not lost one since I got here—we would be reverting to the outdated requirements for environmental risk management plans for priority catchments from the past. The environmental risk management plans are no longer considered as best practice regulation. They have been replaced with outcomes focused minimum practice standards. The new standards make clear the requirements to be complied with and do not require paperwork that is not directly linked to the outcomes. Even the agricultural sector opposed the reintroduction of the environmental risk management plan. I suggest that those promoting this really need to go and talk to the environmental sector and see where they are going. Removal of this recognition framework would undermine the work by accredited farmers.

I also take this time to acknowledge those farmers—and there are so many of them out there—who recognise the challenges, recognise the responsibility they have and understand the importance of the reef. It is about finding that balance. As a government, through a process of consultation and through a process of engagement—not through a popular and a politically motivated stunt—we are working towards the best outcomes. I would like to register in the strongest possible terms that I oppose the bill in its entirety.

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (6.07 pm): I am pleased to speak in support of the Environmental and Other Legislation (Reversal of Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) Amendment Bill. I would like to state at the outset that the old fellas like Jim Edwards and John Turnbull, who have lived on the reef since they were 17 with their fishing boats, told me about the cyclones that they witnessed and how they were tied up inside the small lagoons on the reef. After the cyclones had passed over their boats, the reef was smashed to pieces and dead fish floated to the surface of the water. There is not one dollar or any legislation that we can pass in this chamber that would change those outcomes. The reef fixes itself.

The bill seeks to reverse changes brought in by the government as part of its Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Act. The act, passed in 2019, introduced a set of highly restrictive regulations on industry in reef-adjacent regions, mostly agriculture. Under the new regulations, cattle, cane, banana, crop and grain producers have been regulated into a Big Brother style system of control, most for the first time. The new regulations unfairly target all farmers in the reef regions irrespective of what is produced or where, with very little evidence provided as to how these draconian restrictions will benefit anyone, let alone the reef.

The draconian act gives power to the environmental chief executive officer to change minimum practice farming standards in any way at any time with no regard for the devastating impacts the regulations will have on farmers or regional communities. The act holds no mechanism for review or appeal of any changes made and no requirements that the changes be evidence based. In fact, the whole system is little more than a grab for valuable private business data and control by Brisbane's power hungry and unaccountable bureaucrats. It is a shame.

International and wealthy green groups like the WWF assisted with the drafting of the new regulations whilst agricultural industries and farmers—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr ANDREW:** I am not taking any interjections, thanks.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. The background sound is getting out of control. I would like to listen to what the member for Mirani is saying. You are welcome to combat it afterwards, but let's hear what he has to say.

**Mr ANDREW:** Agricultural industries and farmers were excluded from the lawmaking process. Every amendment they asked for was ignored and every request for input dismissed. If allowed to stand, the regulations will destroy—

**Ms King** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Pumicestone, I just warned everybody. You are now warned under the standing orders.

**Mr ANDREW:** If allowed to stand, the regulations will destroy all chance of expansion, productivity and innovation in Queensland agriculture.

Queensland farmers are struggling to remain viable with an increasingly hostile policy environment in Queensland. Already crippled by the skyrocketing water and electricity costs, farmers have said these new reef regulations will be the final straw for many. Provisions in the bill will soften some of the worst aspects of the 2019 act, particularly around record keeping, first offence penalties and the farmer's liability for mistakes made by their employees. The new bill also returns the enormous powers that the act had delegated to the CEO to the minister, who is at least accountable to parliament for the decisions they make.

As it says in the bill's explanatory notes, there is a growing scepticism around much of the science on water quality and the role played in all of it by agricultural run-off as we do not know to this day if there is actually a baseline. Most of the scientific research says that there is no baseline. The state and federal governments have spent billions on reef health research over the past decade. In fact, by 2023-24 the combined total spend by both will have been \$3.52 billion since 2015. That is a staggering sum to spend. I also suspect that science has very little to do with any of it.

If our governments really cared about the science and the environment, why have they allowed our beaches and waterways to become clogged and polluted with plastic PPE waste for the last two years? According to last week's record from the World Economic Forum, PPE waste has added 144,000 tonnes of waste to the environment, and most of it is plastic. On top of that, there is an additional 2,600 tonnes of general rubbish, tonnes of hazardous waste and 731,000 litres of chemical waste. However, they are not telling regional Queenslanders anything they do not already know. For two years now we have become used to seeing discarded masks and plastic gloves littering the state's pavements, roadsides, creeks, beaches and oceans, and that all goes into the sea.

Farmers increasingly believe the science that they are being given on the health of the Great Barrier Reef's water, and the role played by their industry activities is both deeply flawed and compromised. I heard speeches mention Peter Ridd. Peter Ridd and his team have done more sampling of water quality of their own volition over the last 30-odd years than all the other testers combined. That came from Mr Ridd. He was also in charge of making the instruments that sampled the water. I say that for the record.


The most recent science act reference dated from 2017, and even that was based on model conclusions which have never been thoroughly checked or independently verified. We only have to look at the websites like Retraction Watch to see all the scientific papers written by peer reviewed experts that subsequently have to be retracted each year. As the former chief scientist Alan Finkel said in relation to scientific research, 'The people who pay, the taxpayers, are no longer prepared to take us on trust.'

There is simply no credible evidence that there has been any significant decline in water quality on the Great Barrier Reef. There are scientific papers going back 50 years which show sedimentary loads from land based run-off almost never reach the Great Barrier Reef itself. The massive flow of water in and out of the reef waters from the Coral Sea quickly dilutes any nutrients or sediments in outflows from our rivers and waterways. In fact, more water flows in and out of the reef from the Coral Sea over eight hours than is released from all of the Queensland rivers combined during an entire year. That is why only trace elements of land sediment have ever been found in the Great Barrier Reef's waters where 99 per cent of the coral's reefs are located. While there are few coral reefs located inshore, these make up as little as three per cent of the total number of reefs. These inshore reefs do occasionally show slightly elevated amounts of sediment and nutrients, but there is simply no way of knowing how much of it comes from pesticide use and how much of it is natural land run-off. Most of the time sediment and nitrogen are virtually undetectable in reef waters even when using the most sensitive of testing equipment.

Queensland farmers have the right to expect that the science underpinning the government's reef regulations is 100 per cent independent and verifiable. That is why I strongly support the bill's establishment of an independent scientific body to provide advice on the implementation of any new standards that go to the reef. Right now there are far too many vested interests, hidden agendas and rent seekers involved in reef science in Queensland. The heavy reliance on modelling especially needs to be reviewed and subjected to rigorous scientific testing. Continual water monitoring, real-time and stream monitoring in particular are urgently needed to gain a clearer picture of water quality standards on the reef and the role played by agricultural run-off. Without that, farmers will continue to suspect that all of these models are simply saying what the government funded experts, wealthy foundations and international NGOs want them to say.

It is hard to overstate the danger posed by these reef mandates or the destructive impacts they will have on the farmers and regional economies when they are rolled out. Tightening the regulatory screws like this will only lead to more bankruptcies, more family break-ups, more suicides and more heartbreak for our state's primary producers. Right now confidence levels in agriculture, particularly amongst the cane and dairy farmers, are at record lows. We are losing them all the time. Wielding a big stick against them in this way will be counterproductive for both the reef and farming.

Ultimately the impact of the new laws could even threaten food security in Queensland. If farmers are not given a decisive voice in managing their own land and government continues to involve green groups and dodgy models in its decision-making process Queenslanders will start seeing empty shelves in their supermarkets in the not-too-distant future. If nothing else, the last two years have taught us the critical role played by agriculture and farming in providing us with the necessities of life here in Queensland. Farming is an essential service like no other, and farmers deserve much better treatment than they are getting at the hands of this government and its so-called partners in private NGO sectors. We need our farmers. If we do not fight for them today, we will end up in a world where our food comes from some genetic lab—not fresh, not wholesome, not the beautiful food that Queensland produces. I congratulate the Katter party for introducing this bill and defending the rights of the Queensland farmers. I will be voting in favour of it.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (6.18 pm): I rise to speak to the Environmental and Other Legislation (Reversal of Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) Amendment Bill 2021, introduced into the House on 21 April 2021 by the member for Hinchinbrook, Mr Nick Dametto. The bill proposes to: revert to the previous definition of an agricultural environmentally relevant activity; reverse the consolidation of a single offence for failing to comply with an agricultural ERA standard; establish an independent regulator; introduce changes to the operation of the offence about fertiliser application; limit the required period that documents for an agricultural ERA record must be kept; transfer the power making an ERA standard from the chief executive to the minister; and publish new ERA standards and recommendations made by the independent regulator. As already stated by the shadow minister for environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Mr Sam O'Connor, the LNP will not be supporting the bill and will instead be moving an amendment to the reef regulations to recognise and support farmers who have adapted their farming practices and are following best management practices.

BMP is not new in agriculture. It has been around in various forms for a number of years. Support for these measures was mentioned by a number of submitters. Some stakeholders argued that a voluntary, industry-led approach would be more appropriate than the current regulatory framework, claiming it is more likely to foster innovation. For example, the QFF submitted—

We consider regulation is a high cost, simplistic instrument that supports minimum standards of compliance, and does not encourage or foster a culture of long-lasting practice change. By contrast, voluntary industry-led farm management systems (such as BMP programs) and other water quality improvement projects have proven to be the enablers of such cultural changes.

Bundaberg Canegrowers Ltd referred to a lack of recognition of the high level of innovation and adoption of practices by growers in the Burnett-Mary region to minimise run-off, outlining the following current practices: over 70 per cent of all farm run-off goes through at least one tail water dam before entering a waterway; the majority of these dams were built in 2004; Six Easy Steps and nutrient management workshops were developed in Bundaberg to assist growers in understanding their soil tests; and the Bundaberg region has been the leader in irrigation program development—Watersense was developed with the assistance of the Bundaberg region.

The network of soil moisture probes and weather stations with central access via a central website and available to all growers was developed by and is still maintained in Bundaberg. These soil moisture monitoring probes are used to assist growers in determining when to irrigate to minimise run-off and deep drainage. The weather station provides localised records for temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction to assist in completing records for chemical application. A soil test survey of

the district has meant that 100 leading growers have received a nutrient management plan in 2013, 2016 and in 2019. A Far North Queensland sugarcane grower, Mr Mario Quagliata, also agreed with a voluntary approach and stated he has already adapted for a number of years BMP farming methods such as laser levelling paddocks, using trash blanketing and installing wetlands to reduce erosion, and is SmartCane BMP accredited. He has also installed a bioreactor in a joint project with the MIP government appointed group to gather data.

During my farming career I watched and participated in these changes in cotton, grain and cattle. Many of these changes were driven by the industry itself. This is particularly so in the cotton industry. The cotton industry recognised that it had an image and sustainability problem as far back as the late seventies, regarding pesticides and water use in particular. This led to changes in pest management, investment in research and variety development and more efficient uses of water. These advancements have been nothing less than astounding, particularly in chemical usage. Growers regularly attend field and precision ag days to stay abreast of the advances that continue to be developed in this industry. This has led to not only better environmental outcomes but also a significant increase in productivity.


The beef industry also started down this path in the seventies when the honourable Vic Sullivan, the then member for Condamine and the agriculture minister under the Bjelke-Petersen government, introduced cattle tracing through the introduction of tail tags. It is fair to say that this innovation was not universally welcomed in the cattle industry, but lifetime tracing remains to this day and without it many markets would now be closed to us. Likewise the statutory declaration that accompanies the livestock stating that any veterinary products used on those livestock comply with the withholding period. Grain growers also need to provide similar documentation with any grain that leaves their property, whether it is for livestock or human consumption.

As I have said, some producers took some convincing of the necessity of these changes. I well remember implementing some of these changes on my farm when I was in partnership with my Uncle Des. Des was old school and did not accept change readily. One of these changes was stubble retention, as Mario spoke of now being practised in the sugar industry. When the wheat and barley harvest was concluded, the stubble would be set alight by dragging a set of fire harrows around the perimeter of the paddock. These stubble fires were spectacular to see and Des was a big supporter of this practice. I introduced stubble retention so it could be incorporated in the soil or left standing to be replanted with the next crop using minimum or zero till, but Des was not finished with the fire harrows.

One day after the harvest I had to go and pick up parts in Dalby. As I got close to home I could see a big black cloud of smoke and thought, 'That looks like it is coming from our place.' Sure enough, there was Des dragging the fire harrows around the paddock and the stubble ablaze. I went home and got the camera and as he went past me with a big grin on his face I took a photo. I had the photo developed and put it in a frame and presented it to him and said it was a photo of the last stubble fire there would be on this property. In time he saw the advantages of what I was trying to achieve and came on board.

It is the same in the sugar industry. Many now see the advantages in BMP. This is where the government should be committing more funding and support. There are advantages in BMP for both the landowner and the reef. No grower wants to see his chemical or fertiliser being lost into our watercourses, particularly with the cost of these commodities today. Anhydrous is currently selling for \$2,500 a tonne, urea is now at \$1,440 a tonne and phosphate is at \$1,650 a tonne. The price of all these commodities is still rising. The chemicals commonly used are between \$8 to \$40 a litre plus application.

I am sure all of us in this House, and indeed outside these walls, want to protect and preserve the reef. I have been doing a yearly trip to the reef for many years and intend to do so for many more years to come. Agriculture cannot continuously be portrayed as the bad guys by this Palaszczuk government. This is what upsets our farmers. They are all too often seen as the easy mark for this Labor government. It is this section of our community that is expected to do the heavy lifting on environmental issues time and time again. The government needs to work with the farmers. The farmers have more to lose than most. I believe the member for Bonney has presented a common-sense amendment that would reward those farmers who are doing the right thing. I would urge all members to support the member for Bonney's proposed amendment.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (6.27 pm): I rise to contribute to the Environmental and Other Legislation (Reversal of Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) Amendment Bill 2021. I state at the outset my unconditional support for our farmers right across Queensland and in particular my canefarmers in the largest sugarcane growing area in Australia, the Burdekin. I am proud to stand here

as a fourth generation cane industry family who have worked and is still working in the sugar industry in this state. It is a disgrace that the Katter party are using our farmers and graziers as pawns in this debate.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr Dametto** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Order! Pause the clock. Member for Hinchinbrook, I understand that this is your bill. I am avoiding warning you, but I will shortly, so no more. Other members, keep the noise down.

**Mr LAST:** Make no mistake, this is about the members for Hinchinbrook and Traeger trying to split the community in North Queensland. In fact, it is exactly what this Labor government has done and continues to do.

**Mr Dametto** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock. Member for Hinchinbrook, you are warned under the standing orders. I just gave you a direction. Be careful. Try and stay for the rest of the debate.

**Mr LAST:** Cane farmers, and for that matter farmers right across this state, are sick and tired of being used as a political football, of being the easy target for a government hell-bent on strangling our agricultural sector through overregulation. The shadow minister for the environment has tabled amendments and it is those amendments that I want to elaborate on because they are sensible, practical amendments that recognise farmers and landholders as the true conservation champions for their land. These amendments will ensure that our farmers who have completed a recognised accreditation program such as BMP or AgCarE, and we have heard about that tonight as part of this debate, are exempted from the onerous penalties currently embedded in the Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Act.

The reasons for the LNP's amendments are simple: they can work, they are based on consultation and they are based on respect. They are amendments that recognise the importance of the reef just as strongly as the importance of primary production. For any primary producer, the health of their land is the most important and valuable asset that they have. In all my years living in regional Queensland I have never heard a primary producer say that they do not care about the land on which they work. Never have I heard a farmer play down the importance and value of the environment around them or environmental assets such as the Great Barrier Reef.

The Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Act shows the disdain the current government has for primary producers. Along with zero acknowledgment of the farmers' effects on recycled water, the planting of alternative crops to lock nitrogen into the soil and leaving paddocks fallow, we saw legislation that empowered government agencies to demand information and enter properties without legal checks and balances. The amendments proposed by the LNP not only recognise but also reward the actions taken by our primary producers. Rather than attacking their rights, our amendments recognise their rights and the rights of others. Rather than portraying them as environmental vandals, the LNP's amendments recognise the work of primary producers in embracing internationally recognised accreditation systems. In short, the LNP's amendments will remove the risk of—

**Mr Dametto** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. I am sorry to interrupt, member. Member for Hinchinbrook, you have carriage of this bill. You are on a warning. I have just come into the chair. I will not warn you again. You will be asked to leave the chamber.

**Mr LAST:** In short, the LNP's amendments will remove entirely the risk of penalties from farmers, provided they are accredited under a recognised program and are complying with the requirements of that program. It is important to note that farmers do not receive funding to participate in or make changes to their farming practices. They do that because they acknowledge—in fact, they embrace—their responsibilities while also feeding and clothing Australians. I have seen firsthand the work and commitment of our farmers to continuous improvement and innovation. I say to those opposite, and I have seen this firsthand also: do you honestly think our farmers will use excess fertiliser and spend money on pumping water or purchasing chemicals and diesel if they do not have to? They are efficient, they are effective and they know what they are doing. It is about growing the best quality cane and produce they can with minimal input from fertilisers and chemicals. It is about time that those opposite stopped demonising our farmers.

As the member for Bonney mentioned in his contribution, the LNP will be moving amendments to this bill. Rather than posting on Facebook, claiming to be seeking support, how about members in this chamber support our amendments because it is those amendments that will make a real difference. On that point, I put on the record the LNP's appreciation for our primary producers and the role that they have played during the COVID pandemic. They have been subjected to restrictions that have affected their workforce, transport and many other factors, but they have kept Australia fed and clothed.

It is worth noting that in their response to a question asked on notice last year, the department stated—

Smartcane BMP and Freshcare Environmental Program were granted recognition on the basis that they have standards under section 318YB of the Act. Producers who are accredited under these programs are deemed to have met the minimum practice agricultural standards through an industry supported pathway.

There it is. There is recognition from the minister's own department that farmers are meeting the accreditation standards. Therefore, it naturally follows when the member for Bonney, my colleague and shadow minister for the environment, introduces amendments exempting farmers who meet those requirements that this government should support those amendments.

As Canegrowers Queensland chairman Paul Schembri said on 23 February this year—

We welcome an additional move by the Liberal National Party to amend the reef regulations to exclude growers accredited under our industry best practice program Smartcane BMP, acknowledging the importance and value of such programs.

Canefarmers do not shy away from the need to be environmentally responsible and the involvement of 80 per cent of the cane area in the voluntary Smartcane BMP program is evidence of that commitment. Canegrowers have acknowledged that, on their current trajectory, reef regulations pose a massive cost risk to the Australian sugar industry, regional communities and the economy. Canegrowers' calculations have put that cost to the Queensland economy at up to \$1.3 billion over 10 years through a misguided push to cut nitrogen use on the crop.

As the submission to the committee from Green Shirts Movement Queensland states—

The legislation does not factor in clear evidence of demonstrated improvements—

**Mr Dametto** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Hinchinbrook, you can leave the chamber for one hour.

*Whereupon the honourable member for Hinchinbrook withdrew from the chamber at 6.35 pm.*

**Mr LAST:** The submission states—

The legislation does not factor in clear evidence of demonstrated improvements made by the sugar industry in using fallow rotations, trash blanketing and underground fertiliser applications.

It does not consider that over 70% of the states cane growing land is already being operated under industry best practices. It instead gives broad reaching power to a departmental Chief Executive officer in setting minimum standards and the ability to change them without sufficient consultation, accountability, or regard to potential crop yield reduction and increased cost burdens.

In their submission to the committee, AgForce highlighted the importance of 'achieving realistic and achievable targets about water quality' whilst ensuring we 'avoid a diminution in the environmental and economic sustainability of farming enterprises'. That is a logical response and I thank AgForce for their role in advocating for primary producers and for their consultation.

In their submission, the Queensland Farmers' Federation stated—

We consider regulation is a high cost, simplistic instrument that supports minimum standards of compliance, and does not encourage or foster a culture of long-lasting practice change. By contrast, voluntary industry-led farm management systems (such as BMP programs) and other water quality improvement projects have proven to be enablers of such cultural changes.

The QFF goes on to cite what they call significant underinvestment in 'voluntary and industry-led programs to date when considered against the cost of achieving the water quality targets that governments have set'.

Exempting primary producers who participate in a best practice management or Smartcane BMP program from draconian and excessive environmental protection measures will result in a better outcome for the Great Barrier Reef than the original bill or the bill introduced by the member for Hinchinbrook would ever achieve. I point out that the bill put forward by the Katter party gives an independent regulator very broad powers, including 'anything necessary or convenient to be done in the performance of the independent regulator's functions'. That should be ringing alarm bells for our farmers. Would members believe that the Environmental Defenders Office—that is right, the EDO—supports the establishment of an independent regulator that could end up being harsher on our farmers



than the regulations themselves? In giving evidence during the public hearing, Ms Revel Pointon said, 'We do support the things in the bill that relate to implementation of an independent regulator.' There it is.

I support the practical amendments put forward by my colleague the member for Bonney. I would encourage all members in this place to support those amendments when we vote on this bill.

**Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (6.37 pm): As the deputy chair of the Health and Environment Committee I rise to make a contribution on the Environmental and Other Legislation (Reversal of Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) Amendment Bill 2021. It was an incredibly interesting and challenging time as we conducted hearings and listened to the various proponents in our consideration of the bill and writing our report on it. I have to say that, as a father and a grandfather now—

**Mr Saunders:** Congratulations.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** I have been a grandfather for four years but I thank the member for that interjection. I know I do not look old enough.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order, member. If you pull out any photos I will ask to you table them; you know that.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** I am not taking any more interjections about my grandfatherly duties.

I knew when this legislation came up that it would be, like so many other pieces of legislation around reef protection, kicked around as one of those issues that would seek to wedge members of this House and political parties within the state of Queensland. I took it upon myself to do a little bit of extra work on the review of this legislation. I had the great privilege of travelling north. I decided that I wanted to meet the canefarmers who are directly affected by this legislation. I also wanted to go and talk with some of the environmental care groups. I had the privilege of spending the best part of a day at the Australian Institute of Marine Science. It is interesting, because all sides of politics seek advantage over the other sides of politics on these issues. The reality is that times have changed. The thing that has surprised me through my travels, in the meetings I have had and the investigation I have done is that both sides of the debate have changed. It is a little bit like Uber to the taxi industry. There is disruptive technology that is impacting on everyone.

The member for Burdekin provided some introductions for me to go and visit some canefarms within the Burdekin region. What we are seeing there is world's best practice. We should be immensely proud of our canefarmers across Queensland, because most of them have already embraced a lot of the legislative changes and, out of necessity, are adopting best management practices because to remain viable there is no alternative. No farmer wants to put more fertiliser on a crop than they need to. No farmer wants to burn more diesel looking after the crop than is absolutely necessary. No farmer wants to waste water.


In the Burdekin I spent some time with the Hesps. The Hesps—Chris and Sonya—are also very involved with the cane industry more broadly. They are perhaps third-generation canefarmers. They have a beautiful family. They want to hand over very sustainable and vibrant farming practices to their children. I was surprised to learn that, while most of the land used to be laser graded, the land is now graded using satellite technology. The camber or the run-off of the cane fields is managed, the water is conserved and the farms are designed to capture the water in pits or dams across the properties where they actually recycle the water. We hear fairytales about canefarmers just throwing fertiliser around everywhere and about how it runs off into the ocean and destroys the Great Barrier Reef. That sort of thing may have happened 30, 40 or 50 years ago, but it certainly is not happening now because the canefarmers simply cannot afford to run their farms and grow their crops with that kind of waste. Canefarmers in Queensland have become sophisticated business operators. We should be very proud of the work that canefarmers do across our state.

In respect of the Katter party's proposed bill, there are a couple of issues within the bill that I thought were actually sensible. One that particularly concerned me—this is typical of the heavy-handed approach we want to take towards the cane industry and farmers—involved the amount of penalties that would apply to farmers who breach the regulations currently in place. The reality is that there have been no breaches. The canefarmers are actually doing an incredible job with their management practices so it is almost a moot point; however, I think it is quite disturbing that you could effectively dump three or four 44-gallon drums of toxic waste into the Brisbane River and, under the current environmental laws, the maximum penalty would be maybe \$13,000 but, if you were caught spreading a little bit too much fertiliser on your farm—perhaps you exceed the tolerance by half a per cent or one per cent and it could be proven—you could be fined hundreds of thousands of dollars. In terms of the whole issue of penalties that were alluded to in the proposed bill and in the current legislation, it

seems a little bit like we got a bit carried away with, 'We really have to make an example of those farmers but it is okay for factories and manufacturers in South-East Queensland to do whatever they want.' I support the amendments proposed by the member for Bonney.

I want to thank a few people. I had the privilege of meeting with the Reef Restoration Foundation and Whitsunday Conservation Council—Tony Fontes and Faye Chapman. I also had the privilege of meeting with Olivia Brodhurst from the Whitsunday Climate Change Innovation Hub. They certainly provided some interesting insights into issues of run-off, the inner reef and the outer reef. They also facilitated the opportunity to go out on one of the research vessels to Stonehaven Bay and to Daydream Island to participate in collecting coral spawn. I have made a few colourful posts about that on my social media that I have had people chat to me about. What an incredible experience to spend an evening in a rubber dinghy with nets, waiting and hoping that the coral would spawn, suddenly seeing all of this coral spawn coming up through the water, literally frothing and bubbling on the surface, and then catching it. On this particular occasion our goal was to net about 20 million eggs. The survival of those eggs is estimated at about 10 per cent.

There are some amazing practices happening on our reef, not just with the capture of coral spawn and then using it to regrow coral but also with the propagation of coral. I saw some amazing things at the Australian Institute of Marine Science. I point out to the House that that institute was established back in the 1970s with bipartisan support from both Liberal-National and Labor governments of the day, at a time when people were talking about wanting to mine for oil on our barrier reef. We have made some great strides forward. At AIMS we also heard from their CEO and some of their key staff. They told us that the Great Barrier Reef is considered to be in the top 10 best maintained reefs in the world. We should be very proud of the work that we do in this House.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (6.48 pm): Firstly, I commend the member for Bonney on his foreshadowed amendments relating to best management practices. I believe that is the right way to go, because best management practices have not just happened; they have been around for over 20 years. I will give members a bit of a story. In 1996 the cotton industry had to face a big dilemma. There was a contamination of Endosulfan in beef to South Korea. We were at loggerheads with the beef industry. Beef and cotton were at loggerheads in Central Queensland over a contamination. We had to come together and fix it up. We could not just allow government to regulate; we needed to fix it up ourselves. The cotton industry has been part of a BMP process since 1996. I have been very involved in that and very proud of what the cotton industry has been able to establish. It is ISO 14000. It is the highest environmental standards. Because industry took control of its own destiny, it now has control of its own future. The cotton industry now has over 90 per cent—I think it is 95 per cent—of people under a BMP program. That goes from health and safety right through to chemical usage and the development of whole-of-farm practice. It has worked wonders.

In 2012, when the member for Glass House was the environment minister and John McVeigh was the minister for agriculture and the member for Toowoomba South, we embarked on introducing and implementing BMP grain and BMP cattle. That is working because industry knows how to protect its own industry. BMP is a program that agriculture can take a hold of and put in place to protect itself.

I do not want to be too critical, but over the last couple of years I think we have seen farmers demonised for political gain. That cannot be ignored. With regard to vegetation management, we had accusations from certain green groups and environmentalists that we were clearing 400 football fields of vegetation a day, which was absolute rubbish. The Herbarium said—and the committee I was on at the time heard from the Herbarium on this—that we have more vegetation growing in Queensland than we are clearing. We have to recognise that graziers and farmers are best environmentalists because they do not want to destroy their land.

I certainly understand where the Katter party are coming from. They feel the frustration. They see the problems and know how the agriculture industry is being demonised by certain groups. If the industry is going to survive and continue to grow, best management practices is the best program to follow. It is not just a program that has been thought about in the last two weeks or the last two years. It has been a program used in the cotton industry since 1996. It is a program that has been developed in the sugar industry, the cattle industry and the horticultural industry.

We do not want to use any more fertiliser or any more chemical than we have to. We are very efficient. We only need to look at the technology we have in the agriculture, farming and grazing industries today. Take the farming industry as an example. We have the technology that identifies a weed and only sprays that weed. We use 90 per cent less chemicals than we used before. That is an industry capable of regulating itself.

We want to protect the environment. We are the environmentalists on our land. The Great Barrier Reef is important and we understand that, but I do not think we need to be blamed for the issues on the Great Barrier Reef. There are a lot of issues with the Great Barrier Reef such as urban development and those sorts of things, but agriculture is being responsible and embracing best management practices. That is why I support the member for Bonney's amendments. If someone is part of a BMP program then they should be exempt from these regulations. It is as simple as that. They are taking control of their own industry.

I ask the Labor Party, the Katter party and the crossbenchers to join with us and make sure that we implement a BMP program. We had a BMP program from 2012 to 2015 and beyond that was working very well. We were allowing industry to take control of their own destiny.

**Mr Knuth** interjected.

**Mr MILLAR:** I take the interjection from the member for Hill. I have been involved in a BMP program for over 30 years and it absolutely works. Gaslighting, highlighting and scaring is not the way forward for agriculture. Industry wants to take control of its own destiny. Paul Schembri from Canegrowers said in an article in *Queensland Country Life* only a couple of weeks ago that BMP was the best way forward for industry. It is the same for the cotton industry and the cattle industry.

It might be great to sit there and say, 'We can just get rid of these regulations and that is it,' but what happens if something goes wrong? What happens if there is an issue of chemical contamination? It is not just one person who gets thrown under the bus; the whole industry gets thrown under the bus. It is like what happened with the cotton industry in 1996. There was contamination of beef going to South Korea and the industry was asked: does the industry have a social licence to continue? Does the industry have the ability to continue if it is going to contaminate our beef products into South Korea? The cotton industry stepped up and made significant changes. We allowed ourselves to have a BMP program that was recognised not only by government but also by the whole world.

Coca-Cola, McDonald's and other big corporates that take our product are now asking whether we are part of a program that tells them that we are sustainable and doing the right thing. They are dictating terms to us. We can sit there and say, 'We will throw it out,' but then we lose our markets. We have already seen massive problems when it comes to China—that is, where they have put massive tariffs on or rejected our wheat, barley or wine. We have to do everything right and we have to allow the industry to do it itself. We cannot let the government come in and regulate and dictate. We have to let industry be a part of that. We have to let the industry grow its confidence and do the right thing.

Talk to any cotton grower from Emerald down to Wee Waa and members will find that they are part of a BMP program and proud of it. It has made us better as agricultural people and has given us better yields. I remember in 1996 that our average yield for cotton was around 3.1 bales to the acre. It is now over 4.5 bales to the acre. With grains, and certainly with chickpeas and mung beans, we have massively increased our yields. BMP has played a significant role in that. It has played a role in increasing our yields.

Our beef industry is much better. I pay tribute to people like the late Xander McDonald. He was a fantastic bloke. I pay tribute to what he did in developing a sustainable beef industry. That is what we need. We have massive leaders in the beef industry. They are doing great things, getting better yields and better product and making us basically the cleanest, greenest and most sustainable agricultural export country in the world.

We have people in Japan who go straight to Obe beef in the Diamantina because of the sustainable and correct way we do things out there. Our cotton is sought after not only in Indonesia, Vietnam and South-East Asia but also in Europe. We have one of the best wool-growing industries in the world and it is sought after. I am looking forward to getting some support from the state government when we look to build the woolscour in Blackall. Some 87 per cent of our wool is scoured in China. If China says, 'We don't like you,' that is going to have a massive impact on our wool industry.

**Mr Nicholls:** You have said that already, I think.


**Mr MILLAR:** I think so. Get behind the wool industry. Get behind the member for Bonney's amendments around BMP. I think he has done a good job in putting a BMP program in place. I ask the Labor government to get behind the BMP program. Let the industry regulate itself and commit to that. I ask members to do that.

Debate, on motion of Mr Millar, adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT

### Western Queensland, Housing

**Mr Nicholls:** Tell them more about the wool scourer.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (6.58 pm): I would love to but I am going to talk about Western Queensland and the housing crisis that we have out there. We have a housing crisis here in Brisbane at the moment with the floods. I understand that. My heart goes out to all those Brisbane, South-East Queensland, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast families who have gone through such a tragic situation. We need to get behind them, but we also need to get behind a housing crisis that we have in Western Queensland.

Last week, the Deputy Premier attended the Western Queensland Alliance of Councils in Charleville. I thank him for coming out and being there. Given that nearly half of the local governments who make up the alliance are constituents of mine, I was there to see what was happening. He made an announcement. He knew that housing is a key area that the alliance wants urgently addressed. Late last year the alliance released the first study of the housing situation across 22 Western Queensland LGAs. As I told the House back in October last year, it showed that an area spanning 60 per cent of Queensland is short 1,500 houses.


Western Queensland receives only one-fifth of the housing investment of South-East Queensland. This is not an illusion caused by a lower population. Over the last three years to June 2020, in Greater Brisbane, the average value of approved residential building work—be that new build or renovation—was \$2,675. In Western Queensland, it was a measly \$320. It creates a chronic shortage of housing that is now threatening our economic sustainability.

Private employers—be they tourism and hospitality, transport, small business or agriculture—repeatedly tell me that they cannot recruit workers because they cannot rent a house in the town. One of the big changes in Western Queensland is that the Queensland government no longer takes responsibility for owning or maintaining its own employee housing. It chooses to rent from our tiny, tiny private rental market. It is like having a whale shark in a swimming pool!

Last year I told the House how the Queensland government had a young Longreach couple evicted from their rental house for a government employee. The young pair had been paying \$400 a week. The Queensland government gazumped them with a \$680 per week pay cheque. Why would any responsible government do this? Well, a responsible government would not. It would build new employee housing so we could recruit and retain doctors, nurses, police officers and teachers. Instead, this government has run down our housing stocks in Western Queensland—both government employee housing and social housing.

We need to get better housing outcomes for regional and rural areas. We have employees such as tyre fitters and boilermakers—people are screaming out for workers—but we do not have a housing market in rural and remote to be able to accommodate those people. If we want to grow Queensland, we have to grow our housing market out my way.

### Queensland Floods, Ipswich Electorate

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (7.01 pm): Ipswich has weathered many floods throughout its history, but the recent flood event in late February was perhaps one of the most challenging we have seen. From Friday, 25 February through to Monday, 28 February, 573 millimetres fell over Ipswich. This extreme downpour meant that some people saw the worst flooding they have seen since 2011.

The evacuation centre at the Ipswich showgrounds opened its doors on 25 February, providing food and shelter to more than 400 flood affected people. I want to thank the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the police minister who came out to Ipswich to meet the people in the evacuation centre. It meant so much to those people and we are really grateful for their visit. I am also grateful to the Premier for allowing us to speak further about the floods on a motion tomorrow.


Ipswich people are no strangers to flooding. Many locals I talked to readily recalled the 1974 floods and of course the 2011 and, to a lesser extent, the 2013 floods. As I moved around the flood-affected areas over the past few weeks, I was struck by the deep sadness and sense of loss that people are experiencing. They, more than anyone in our community, know what is ahead of them. They know that in most cases they can repair their damaged homes but they will never replace their beloved possessions. One heartbroken woman I spoke to lost her deceased husband's ashes in the floodwaters. It was important to me to speak to everyone I could get to to assure them that they are not alone—that I, the Palaszczuk government and the entire Ipswich community will be with them all the way.

We know that climate change is responsible for these extreme weather events. Ever since the bushfires in late 2019 and early 2020, it does not matter where I went or wherever I held a mobile office, the No. 1 issue Ipswich people raised with me was their concerns about the rise in temperature, wildlife loss and habitat loss. That is why I recently held a climate forum at the USQ Ipswich campus. Over 120 people attended. It was just last weekend, so people were still reeling from the floods. We heard from some fabulous speakers including our very own minister, Meaghan Scanlon, and assistant minister, Lance McCallum. We had USQ professors Scott Power and John Bell, who left us all in no doubt that the issue of climate change is our most pressing.

We know that people all over the world have been bearing the brunt of the worst effects of climate change for many years. It is absolutely heartbreaking to see so many families so close to home devastated by the floods. I want to thank the Ipswich City Council and all of our emergency services—the police, ambulance and firefighters. I thank the ADF, the SES and all the wonderful, selfless volunteers. Many of our schools were flood-affected and I thank the principals and staff and the school community for stepping up to make them ready as quickly as possible. Our recovery is our main priority now. I am looking forward to speaking further tomorrow.

*(Time expired)*

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Integrity

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (7.04 pm): The integrity crisis has come knocking on the Premier's door, and with it there is a lingering stench of corruption. Let alone the Premier's bizarre media comments yesterday regarding the Integrity Commissioner, the Premier still has not fully explained what role she had in the smelly mangocube affair. The CCC confirmed the Premier had at least two private email accounts. Remember she told estimates that she conveniently forgot about one of those accounts and had to correct the record.

The Premier said that she got legal advice from Labor barrister Kerri Mellifont QC, the wife of the Labor member for Toohey, who apparently told her she is not legally obliged to release those emails. The Premier's office even refused to say who engaged Mellifont, who paid for her advice and how much it was. Of course legal advice cannot be RTIed. That is convenient, isn't it! Where is Kerri Mellifont now? She has been promoted.

The Premier's refusal to release the emails puts her under a cloud of suspicion. I am told that one of those emails was used to have discussions with her sister, a senior public servant. Let us see what that is all about. The Premier's refusal to release the legal advice puts her under a cloud of suspicion. The Premier's failure to release the State Archivist's report to the CCC puts her under a cloud of suspicion. Remember the Premier said that she would release the State Archivist's report that went to the CCC. She has not done that. Other reports have been released, but not that one. Let us see it. It is reasonable to ask her today to release all of these things. The Premier insists she has done nothing wrong. Let her prove it.


The Premier's stubbornness to come clean raises suspicion that she has something to hide. The Premier's support of continual attacks on the Integrity Commissioner reeks of payback. What else will they do to this poor woman? During the last sitting I said that Rob Setter was appearing to me to be a Labor scapegoat. Clearly, Mr Setter is aiding and abetting that concept by what he said yesterday, but remember his contract has been extended for two years, so he is on an extra \$1.2 million when he eventually goes. Watch this space.

It is straight out of the Labor playbook: first, you blame somebody else; second, you instigate a rigged inquiry; third, you shoot the messenger; and, fourth, you provide a scapegoat. I wonder which ministers might be the scapegoat in all of this? Will it be Minister de Brenni? Will he be the scapegoat? Will it be Minister Bailey? Maybe he will be the scapegoat.

**Mr Stevens:** Maybe there are two goats together!

**Mr HART:** Maybe there will be multiple goats. I take that interjection. Maybe it will be Minister Enoch. Maybe she will be the scapegoat here. Somebody is going to be the scapegoat for sure.

### Stafford Electorate

 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (7.07 pm): I would like to thank the many people across the Stafford community who have worked so hard to get us through what I think we can all agree has been a very challenging start to 2022. I will start with the frontline health staff in our local hospitals including

the Prince Charles Hospital, in our vaccination clinics, our GPs, our pharmacists and all the support staff who got us through the surge of COVID early in the year. Of course, we need to be live to the fact that that challenge is ongoing.

I recognise our schoolteachers, principals, leadership teams and support staff who were so dedicated to our students in helping deliver what has been a challenging start to the school year. In the two-week delayed period at the start of term 1, I made a point to stay in touch with them, speaking to every school in my area. I was so impressed with the energy and commitment shown across the board. The reports were of high staff morale, a commitment to planning for the year ahead and a shared commitment to each other to help keep staff, students and families as safe as possible in the circumstances. It has been wonderful to start seeing students and staff again face to face. I particularly wish incoming student leaders all the best for the year.

I also want to give a shout-out to the Inner North Lions Club, who recently hosted the district finals for the Lions Youth of the Year. Congratulations to Richard and the team for managing to still deliver the program in the circumstances and for how inspiring the students really were.

In terms of the challenges we have had locally in my area, our community was one of the many South-East Queensland areas hit hard by the recent weather event. In terms of the rain event and how unprecedented it was, I literally grew up on the Kedron Brook and I know the local areas that regularly flood, but this was very different. Never have I seen our suburban waterways flood like that, nor have we seen suburban streets across the north side flood like they did as a result of the rain bomb parking itself over us and water that just could not get away—not related to creeks or waterways, but just the water from above.

Many residents, businesses and sporting community organisations were hit hard. Thank you to all of the volunteers, the charities and the frontline services who worked so hard in that recovery. Can I particularly thank the Premier and DP for coming out to the Stafford community to meet with people and see the damage firsthand. I know that the Premier being on the ground in my community and across the state is really comforting. My community was comforted—well, at least the local residents. I do want to apologise for the welcome from the local birdlife on the day. I will continue to work with local residents going forward.

If you will indulge me, Mr Deputy Speaker, can I finish by thanking one local who was a very dedicated volunteer during the recovery: my wife Carolyn. She worked so hard alongside with local organisations, and today is actually her birthday. Happy birthday, darl. I am sorry I will be home a bit late, but the cake is already in the fridge, the presents are wrapped and I will see you soon.

### Mermaid Beach Electorate, Development



**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (7.11 pm): The recurrent cry from unhappy Mermaid Beach electorate residents is the continued push to turn the spine along the light rail route into ‘sardine city’ with increased densities through height-limit extensions, increased traffic causing extended delays, and street parking chaos changing the ideal residential amenity and lifestyle. The blame for this lies squarely at the feet of the Palaszczuk Labor government accompanied by the Gold Coast City Council through their deliberate and deceitful changes to the Gold Coast City Council plan to accommodate the so-called brownfield development policy designed to save government expenditure on greenfield sites.


We know that thousands of people move to the Gold Coast every year because of its fabulous climate, geography and desirable lifestyle. We understand that construction is a big part of our economy and it is necessary for economic wellbeing and to build new dwellings for the thousands of new Gold Coasters moving here every year. We understand the need to conserve our natural valleys and remote rural hinterland scenic backdrops we always called the ‘green behind the gold’. What I cannot understand is the Labor Party government’s dead green hand across the 10,000 hectares of anachronistic caneland blocking development of this prime residential area in favour of jamming more people into a limited space along the development-enabling light rail spine.

It reminds me of the ideological folly of the Goss Labor government when they decried the development of Sanctuary Cove and Hope Island as ad hoc development which the local Albert shire should not have approved. Well hello—those two areas are some of the Gold Coast’s prime residential areas with houses fetching multimillions of dollars, which I do not see being achieved in the electorates of Inala and Woodridge. That tells me it is a political ploy to stop the development of further conservative leaning constituencies with Labor playing class war politics in its executive planning direction over the Gold Coast City Council’s CityPlan. There are only perhaps some 40 practising canefarmers today, and the mill owners recognise that the time has come for the area between Australia’s third-largest city and

Australia's rapidly growing sixth-largest city to go the same way that the cotton and arrowroot agricultural industries on the Gold Coast went and let that land be used for its best and highest purpose in providing housing for the thousands of people who move to the Gold Coast every year.

Canal estates would provide flood-free living for future residents and stop nutrient fertilisers from leading into Moreton Bay and killing seagrasses. Premier Palaszczuk, stop chock-a-blocking more people into an already brimming neighbourhood of my electorate and address the obvious need to pursue the greenfield development of the canelands.


### Pine Rivers Electorate

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (7.14 pm): Mount Samson State School leaders Abigail, Tom, Olivia and Georgia today joined Mrs Jodie Beverley to visit the people's house. Their visit included a tour, lunch, a local member catch-up and viewing the protesters. Everything was outshone when they ran into the Premier in the corridor and got to meet her in person.

On Thursday, 10 March, I joined with the team of Bray Park State High School and the wider community where, representing our fantastic education Minister Grace Grace, I had the particular honour of officially opening the new innovation centre. The two-storey teaching block has 20 general learning areas, robotics, STEM and science laboratories. The building was designed by Tanya Mathers Architecture. Tanya is a local Pine Rivers girl, and she did a sensational job incorporating practical design and beautiful architecture into the structure. It looks perfectly at home at the campus. The project supported 37 jobs and 35 apprentices, including students who took part in the construction process through work experience placements, with several of these students going on to secure apprenticeships—including Daniel, an apprenticeship sparky with Adco, who was present at the event. With the help of Cram from It's Rocket Science Adventures, rockets literally launched the building and with it so many exciting, innovative partnerships with industry and varied stakeholders across our community. Congratulations to Principal Peter Turner and the leadership at the school on delivering the sensational new learning space.

Proposed safety works have been occurring along Samford Road from Camp Mountain to Lomandra Park to improve the surface of the road over recent weeks. When the initial safety works were put to my community, including the removal of the westbound overtaking lane, I received 324 separate community responses about it: 250 opposed the removal of the overtaking lane and 27 supported it. I have conveyed this sentiment to the department through several meetings, and I am working with them on a sensible, workable solution. While the road surface is getting a shot blasting treatment to improve the skid resistance of the road surface, the technique of shot blasting is environmentally friendly and provides a cost-effective method to deliver safety improvements. I appreciate that while there is a desire to have a safer road, particularly in light of the fatalities seen along it, the approach needs to meet community need. I will continue to advocate on behalf of my community, along with the Minister for Main Roads, for sensible solutions so we can make the road safer into the future. The initial works also included many safety upgrades which I am still hopeful we can deliver for the community while keeping that overtaking lane in place along Samford Road. That is hard work we will continue to do in conjunction with the community to ensure we can come up with a sensible and workable solution.

### Coomera Connector


 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (7.17 pm): Since I was born in 1991 the Gold Coast's population has more than doubled. We are Queensland's second-largest city; the sixth-largest in the nation. More and more of these many new Gold Coasters are calling the north of our city home. In 2022 to easily drive between most of our city's suburbs you still have to jump on a National Highway. Someone travelling from Carrara to Coomera or from Helensvale to Pimpama has to get on the M1, the most congested road in Queensland. Trips that should take 15 or 20 minutes are taking, on a good day, twice or even triple the amount of time they should. It is even worse when there is a crash, because having only one road for so many people means it will always lead to a blockage. There is nowhere else for these Gold Coasters to go to get to where they need to. We saw that again this afternoon with a four-car crash in Helensvale and on Friday morning with an horrific incident at Coomera. None of that is good enough. It is frankly ridiculous.

The only solution is another road for local traffic to use instead of the M1. Public transport needs work, but it alone cannot fix this. The second M1, or Coomera Connector, is a basic bare minimum infrastructure requirement for our growing Gold Coast, but what progress has been made in the seven years since Labor was elected? The business case has not been released. The public environment report will not even be released until mid-2022. After criticising the LNP for proposing a two-stage road,

the state government is now putting forward a three-stage road for just the first stage. We are now told that even one of those tiny sections will not open for years. The six lanes promised by Labor have now been reduced to four lanes, again after they criticised the LNP's proposal. The cost has blown out from \$1.5 billion to \$2.1 billion. Light Rail Stage 2 was built on the land needed for the road, but the planning for the road corridor was not updated at the time, which meant \$74 million had to be paid to a developer to fix this planning stuff-up and secure the road corridor.

How about the road design? Has that been done? No, the state government only just called for a design tender last week. They have had over seven years in government and they are only just starting the design. For that entire time—and this is something of a rarity in politics—we have had the same Minister for Main Roads. One would have hoped that would lead to better outcomes—the ability to see a project through—but, with the only tangible progress on this road being some survey pegs, the minister has failed dismally. I urge Minister Bailey to get off Twitter, stop playing politics and do the work to deliver the second M1. Gold Coasters need it badly and we have waited long enough.

### Great Barrier Reef Experience

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (7.20 pm): When the member for Bonney arrived, I was 27. I have seen a lot of the investment that Labor has made and I would like to talk about that now. Last month, I accompanied Minister Hinchliffe to the launch of Experience Co's new floating activity platform in Cairns. This is an outstanding and remarkable piece of technology which the government contributed to significantly, and I will talk about that shortly. The new activity platform is the first to be built on the Northern Great Barrier Reef. It was built by Austal and English Engineering Cairns. They have built pontoons and 45-metre high-speed wave-piercing catamarans. We can build things and we continue to build more. I am sure once we get a real federal government we will see more business in our part of the world.

There is no doubt that this platform will enhance the experience of tourists and our tourism offering for the region. In addition to the new swimming platforms, we will have a 10-seat air-conditioned underwater observatory with floor-to-ceiling windows and a fully functioning scientific lab where reef research and projects will be conducted by Great Barrier Reef marine biologists and master reef guides. We also have Indigenous guides, who are fundamental to the new experience being offered by Experience Co.

Other activities for guests include fish feeding, introductory and certified diving, guided snorkelling tours, one of the largest helmet diving circuits on the Great Barrier Reef and a huge sundeck with sun lounges where visitors can relax in comfort while admiring the beauty of the Great Barrier Reef, which is being well protected by us. The pontoon has three levels and is 1,003 square metres and the capacity to host up to 250 guests, making it the largest reef pontoon on the Great Barrier Reef. It is also important to acknowledge that we have spent \$176 million expanding the Cairns Convention Centre, so we will have more events.

**Mr Harper:** How much?


**Mr HEALY:** \$176 million.

**Mr Harper:** That is a lot of money.

**Mr HEALY:** That is a significant investment which we will get a great return on. When those groups and businesses come to our city, we have the appropriate infrastructure and we will be able to cater for them.

Experience Co Ltd is an Australian listed public company founded in 1999—not long after the member for Bonney was born—which specialises in adventure and leisure tourism and brands. This pontoon project is one of 22 projects funded through the \$25 million Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund. This is important. I spent nearly 30 years in tourism, and I can say that during COVID people were not investing. This government works with the private sector and continues to see significant products being born and this is one of them. This fund is a key element of the Queensland economic recovery strategy, Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs. This is a fantastic investment and is another example of the Palaszczuk government working with the private sector, ensuring a strong future for tourism.

### Toowoomba Royal Show

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (7.23 pm): I want to talk about our Toowoomba Royal Show, and I would like to invite everybody to Toowoomba for the show on 25, 26 and 27 March. It is the oldest show in Queensland. It predates the Ekka and is just one year older than this institution itself.



The first show was held in 1860. It is primarily an agricultural show so there will be livestock judging, equestrian events and animal breeding competitions. Lots of people come to look at the genetic stock that is available to improve their herd. That has been particularly important after the last couple of years. There are produce competitions where people will compare various produce they have grown. Far be it for me to say, but there will be cake, slice and various other competitions.


There is something for everybody at the Heritage Bank Toowoomba Royal Show. Costa, the gardener from the ABC, will be there talking about how to make your garden grow. Paul West is coming to do cooking displays, and my wife has told me I have to watch some of those so I will do that. Bluey and Bingo will be there for the kids. There will be a farmyard where kids can interact with farmyard animals and feed them and get that experience of rural Queensland. It is a great opportunity for kids in urban footprints who want to connect a bit and see what goes on.

There will be sheepdog trials. There will be sideshow alley, which is probably more for the teenagers, and there are lots of activities and amusements for them to get up to. There will be fashion parades. In one of the dams, which I am sure is very full at the moment, there will be jet pack and jetski displays for people to look at. There is a bull ride. There is always a great fireworks display at the end of the evening. There is some horse archery going on in the Sentinel Square this year, which is the same area where the equestrian will be going on but hopefully not at the same time. There will be a Miss Showgirl competition and a Rural Ambassador Competition. There is a demolition derby as well.

If you cannot find something to do at the Toowoomba show, then you have really been stuck inside under COVID restrictions watching too much Netflix. It is a great opportunity to come out and see the country. I invite everybody to come up and enjoy the opportunity to see a proper royal show.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): I wish you well, member for Toowoomba North. I believe a former member of this House, William Groom, was one of the founding members of the agricultural society there.

### Queensland Floods, Waterford Electorate

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (7.26 pm): It has been absolutely devastating to see the impacts of the floods right across South-East Queensland and in my own community of Logan. These are the worst floods Logan has seen in almost 50 years. Many families in my electorate were inundated by floodwaters, many were without electricity and some were completely isolated for many days. As devastating as the damage has been, it has been heartwarming to see the community spirit in action. We saw it in 2011, we saw it in 2013, we saw it in 2017 and we are seeing it again now.

There have been so many wonderful stories I have witnessed in the last few weeks being on the ground in flood-affected neighbourhoods, but I would particularly like to mention Shirley and Jeff. While checking in on families with the Premier and Deputy Premier—who both came down to Waterford to witness firsthand the impacts of the floods—we met Jeff and Shirley. Shirley's phone had been damaged in floodwaters, she had lost hundreds of her treasured books and they had no hot water as their system went under. Telstra was kind enough to donate a mobile phone to Shirley, and we gave that to her so she could stay in touch with loved ones. We also dropped around much needed groceries and a book voucher so she could replace what she had lost. I give a huge shout-out to the Logan Deputy Mayor, Jon Raven, who teamed up with the Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre to donate and install a new hot water system in Jeff and Shirley's home.

During the clean-up process Jeff celebrated his birthday, and he and Shirley also celebrated their wedding anniversary days after the floods inundated their home. Their neighbours, Jane and Steve, rallied together to put on a special dinner for them. I am sure Jeff and Shirley's anniversary will be one to remember. This is just one house on one street that was flooded. I have been hearing stories like this from countless constituents, and it makes me so proud to represent this amazing community.

In Waterford, everyone looks out for one another. My office quickly became a hub of activity, with people from right across Logan coming and going, dropping off supplies for those in need. There are so many people and organisations to thank, but I would like to give a special shout-out to the following people: Debbie Hill from Lighthouse Care; the kids from Everything Suarve; Domino's Logan Central, which donated pizzas for people without electricity; locals like Kiri, whose own house was flooded but she dropped off quilts from her mother's knitting group for other local families; Patino Lawyers, which donated vouchers for the local IGA; Hello Fresh, which delivered boxes of meals to my office; Bec and Leigh from The White House of Waterford, a wonderful small business whose own business was

flooded, which dropped off supplies for others; Wally and Anne, who donated fruit and other supplies; Bren and Justine from Slacks Creek; Katrina Bills, who baked up a storm; Woolworths Meadowbrook, which managed to get extra groceries to those in need; and the amazing team from Bunnings, which donated insect spray, air compressors and barbecues and then cooked a barbecue for community members; the Indonesian Muslim Centre of Queensland, which delivered food hampers; and Louie Naumovski from the Logan House Fire Support Network—and Logan could not do it without Louie. I thank everyone. You are all what makes Logan so special.

The House adjourned at 7.30 pm.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyce, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Camm, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, 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, Lister, Lui, MacMahon, Madden, Mander, Martin, McCallum, McDonald, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Skelton, Smith, Stevens, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Watts, Weir, Whiting