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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 31 March 2022

Subject	Page
PRIVILEGE	815
Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House.....	815
SPEAKER'S STATEMENT	815
Absence of Member	815
MENTAL HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE	815
Resignation of Member.....	815
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 3 March 2022, from the member for Traeger, Mr Robbie Katter MP, to the Speaker, Hon. Curtis Pitt, advising of his resignation as member of the Mental Health Select Committee	815
SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS	815
Ukraine.....	815
Finnimore, Mr S	816
School Group Tours.....	816
PETITIONS	816
TABLED PAPERS	816
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS	817
State Schools, Internet	817
Veterans, Grants	817
Women's Strategy	818
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Government: Queensland Women's Strategy 2022-27	818
Endometriosis	818
Queensland Flood Appeal	819
Renewable Energy, Job Creation.....	819
Federal Morrison Government	820
State Schools, Internet	820
Coronavirus, Update	821

Table of Contents – Thursday, 31 March 2022

Road and Rail Infrastructure.....	821
Bundaberg and Burnett, Investment.....	822
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document, undated, titled 'National Water Grid Advisory Body appointed'	822
Women's Strategy.....	823
Federal Budget, Agriculture.....	823
Federal Budget, Youth.....	824
COMMITTEES.....	825
Membership.....	825
SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.....	825
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.....	825
Coronavirus, Hotel Quarantine.....	825
Coronavirus, Hotel Quarantine.....	826
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document, undated, titled 'Part V—Powers of the Parliament'	826
Tourism Industry.....	827
Coronavirus, Hotel Quarantine.....	827
Federal Budget, Natural Disasters.....	828
Coronavirus, Hotel Quarantine.....	829
Health System.....	829
Crime and Corruption Commission, Chairperson.....	830
Regional Queensland, State Schools.....	830
Crime and Corruption Commission, Chairperson.....	831
Federal Budget, Health.....	831
Crime and Corruption Commission, Chairperson.....	831
Federal Budget, Community Safety.....	832
Water Security.....	832
Mount Isa, Youth Crime.....	833
Climate Change.....	834
Roads and Transport Infrastructure, Federal Funding.....	834
Government Owned Corporations, Anacta.....	835
Training and Skills.....	835
Crime and Corruption Commission, Chairperson.....	836
Forensic and Scientific Services.....	836
Federal Budget, Sport Infrastructure.....	836
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.....	837
Coronavirus, Hotel Quarantine.....	837
PERSONAL INJURIES PROCEEDINGS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL.....	838
Message from Governor.....	838
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Message, dated 31 March 2022, from Her Excellency the Governor, recommending the Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022	838
Introduction.....	838
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022	838
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, explanatory notes	838
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, statement of compatibility with human rights	838
First Reading.....	841
Referral to Legal Affairs and Safety Committee.....	841
PUBLIC HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION (EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL.....	841
Second Reading.....	841
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Parliamentary Library and Research Service research brief, dated 31 March 2022, titled 'Recall of Parliament'	849
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Memorandum, dated 24 February 2017, from the Leader of the House, Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, to Queensland members of Parliament titled 'Revised Parliamentary sitting dates 2017'	849
PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS.....	856
Coronavirus, Hotel Quarantine; Government Owned Corporations, Anacta.....	856
Spanish Mackerel Fishery.....	857
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Answers to question on notice No. 255 asked on 29 March 2022, question on notice No. 267 asked on 29 March 2022 and question on notice No. 283 asked on 29 March 2022	857
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice.....	857
Federal Member for Bowman.....	858
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Australian Government, Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority report, dated 24 March 2022, titled 'Audit Report: Andrew Laming MP, Member for Bowman—Travel Expenses and Allowances for the period 21 June to 27 June 2019'	858
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document, undated, titled 'Introducing Henry Pike, LNP for Bowman'	858
Health System.....	859
Ukraine.....	859
Forensic and Scientific Services.....	860
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article from the <i>Australian Journal of Forensic Sciences</i> , titled 'Variation in forensic DNA profiling success among sampled items and collection methods: a Queensland perspective', 2021, Vol. 53, No. 6, 612-625	860
Federal Budget.....	860
Condamine Electorate, Crime; Floods.....	861

Table of Contents – Thursday, 31 March 2022

Nicklin Electorate, Community Events	862
Coronavirus, Business Support.....	862
Resources Industry, Women	863
Palaszczuk Labor Government, Integrity.....	864
North Queensland, Education and Training Accommodation.....	864
Coalmining, Incidents	865
Federal Budget.....	865
Currumbin Eco Parkland	866
Ipswich Electorate, Federal Budget	867
Federal Budget, Agriculture	867
Greenslopes Electorate, Schools.....	868
PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE	869
Report, Motion to Take Note.....	869
COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE	872
Report, Motion to Take Note.....	872
PUBLIC HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION (EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL	879
Second Reading	879
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 22 March 2022, from the President Maleny Commerce, Maleny & District Chamber of Commerce & Industry Inc., Mr Spencer Shaw, to the Premier and Minister for the Olympics, Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk, titled 'Covid mandate and impacts on Maleny Business Community'	883
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 22 March 2022, from the President, Montville Chamber of Commerce Inc., Ms Shiralee Cooper, to the Premier and Minister for the Olympics, Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk, regarding the COVID mandate	883
Division: Question put—That the bill be now read a second time	893
Resolved in the affirmative.....	893
Consideration in Detail	894
Clauses 1 to 13, as read, agreed to	894
Division: Question put—That leave be granted	894
Resolved in the negative	894
Clauses 14 and 15, as read, agreed to	894
Division: Question put—That leave be granted	894
Resolved in the negative.....	894
Clauses 16 to 24, as read, agreed to	894
Clause 25—.....	894
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022, amendments to be moved by Ms Ros Bates MP	894
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022, explanatory notes to Ms Ros Bates's amendments	895
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Ms Ros Bates's amendments	895
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022, amendment to be moved by Mr Robbie Katter MP	895
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022, explanatory notes to Mr Robbie Katter's amendment	895
Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to	897
Resolved in the negative	897
Clause 25, as read, agreed to.....	897
Division: Question put—That leave be granted	897
Resolved in the negative	897
Division: Question put—That leave be granted	897
Resolved in the negative.....	898
Division: Question put—That leave be granted	898
Resolved in the negative.....	898
Clauses 26 to 28, as read, agreed to	898
Division: Question put—That leave be granted	898
Resolved in the negative	898
Clauses 29 to 38 and schedule 1, as read, agreed to	899
Third Reading.....	899
Division: Question put—That the bill be now read a third time	899
Resolved in the affirmative.....	899
Long Title.....	899
COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.....	899
Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates	899
ADJOURNMENT	899
Lockyer Electorate, Federal Member for Wright	899
Morrison Federal Government	900
Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance	901
Liberal National Party	901
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Extract from the Australian government Department of Health webpage, dated 15 February 2022, titled 'Mandating booster vaccinations in residential aged care workers'	902
Noosa Electorate.....	902

Table of Contents – Thursday, 31 March 2022

World Autism Awareness Day	903
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Child's drawing.....	903
Palaszczuk Labor Government, Coronavirus Vaccination Mandate; Spanish Mackerel Fishery	903
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Report, undated, titled 'The unintended consequences of COVID-19 Vaccine	
Policy: Why mandates, passports and segregated lockdowns may cause more harm than good'	904
Cook Electorate, Small Business	904
Warrego Electorate, Flooding; Southern Queensland, Weather Event; Inner-West Primary School.....	905
Redcliffe Electorate, Flood Response.....	905
DEPUTY SPEAKER'S STATEMENT.....	906
Really Big Walk for Parkinson's	906
ATTENDANCE	906

THURSDAY, 31 MARCH 2022



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

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

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.31 am): I rise on a matter of privilege. Yesterday in the House the members for Mudgeeraba and Moggill made statements to the effect that there were no funds allocated from the Hospital Building Fund in the last state budget. The members were present in the chamber when I delivered last year's budget speech on 15 June. During that speech I said that the Hospital Building Fund would make initial investments in the Toowoomba Day Surgery, purchasing public health services through the expansion at Mater Public Hospital Springfield and an uplift in Queensland Health's base capital program. Both members also received a printed copy of *Budget Paper No. 1*, the budget speech on that day. The members for Mudgeeraba and Moggill have deliberately misled the House and I will write to you further on this matter.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Absence of Member



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I received advice from the member for Thuringowa, Aaron Harper MP, as to his absence from the sittings of the House this week. The member's notification complies with standing order 263A.

MENTAL HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE

Resignation of Member



Mr SPEAKER: I have received correspondence from the member for Traeger advising of his resignation as a member of the Mental Health Select Committee. I table the letter for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 3 March 2022, from the member for Traeger, Mr Robbie Katter MP, to the Speaker, Hon. Curtis Pitt, advising of his resignation as member of the Mental Health Select Committee [\[453\]](#).

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS


Ukraine



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia is a shock to the peace and stability of democracies worldwide. The Queensland community is united in condemning this brutal invasion. In a symbolic show of solidarity with Ukraine, tonight Parliament House will be lit blue and yellow. The Deputy Speaker will be hosting a members drop-in session with the Ukrainian Community of Queensland on the Level 7 Green Deck between 12 pm and 2 pm. The UCQ has been raising funds for medical aid to be sent to the Ukraine and to assist Ukrainian refugees coming to Australia. I strongly urge members to pop in and support our local Ukrainian community. I thank the Deputy Speaker in organising this event.

Here in Australia we take peace and democracy for granted. The invasion of Ukraine takes these precious gifts away from the Ukrainian people. It is intolerable there, as it would be here. I stand with Ukraine.

Finnimore, Mr S

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, it is my sad duty to advise that Mr Stephen Finnimore, committee secretary, has officially lodged his retirement after 23 years of distinguished service with the Parliamentary Service. Stephen commenced employment with the Parliamentary Service on 23 April 1999. He has worked in the committee office for various committees over the years, including the predecessors of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee, and is currently responsible for the Technical Scrutiny Secretariat. Stephen is, after the Clerk, the second longest serving Clerk at the Table, serving at the Table of the House since 2001.

Many current members would not realise that in 2008 Stephen cycled from Brisbane to Cairns to raise funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service and to promote and attend the regional sitting of parliament in Cairns in October of that year.

Mr Bleijie: I have seen him in his lycra. It's true.


Mr SPEAKER: Yes, Stephen is a MAMIL. In 2010, Stephen was committee secretary of the parliamentary Committee System Review Committee which designed the current portfolio system. More recently, Stephen was co-opted to assist the Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis Select Committee on its inquiry into black lung; to the Health Committee on its inquiry into aged care, end-of-life and palliative care and voluntary assisted dying; and to the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee on its inquiry into the Logan Council matter.

The Clerk informs me, and I quote, 'Stephen is retiring in April so he can do some soft bike ride in the winter months'. I am reliably informed the official title of the ride is the Gulf 2 Gulf Bike 'N Wheels Expedition, a ride from Port Augusta in South Australia to Karumba in the Queensland Gulf Country.

For members who are not aware, we do important training for our temporary speakers to ensure that they can be robust enough to stand up to the rest of you. Stephen always took great delight in playing his character roles. Let us just say he had his swansong on Tuesday and he enjoys the theatrics and pantomime far too much. I am sure you will join with me in wishing Stephen all the very best in his retirement.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

School Group Tours

 **Mr SPEAKER:** I wish to advise that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from Jimboomba State School in the electorate of Logan, student leaders in the electorate of Algester and Bremer State High School in the electorate of Ipswich.

PETITIONS

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

Agricultural Shows, Mandates

Mr Perrett, from 6,134 petitioners, requesting the House to abolish the mandates which are impacting agricultural shows in Queensland [\[454\]](#).

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

Beerwah State Forest, Logging

2,847 petitioners, requesting the House to block the imminent logging of Beerwah State Forest Lot 1 AP 22457 [\[455\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing (Hon. Grace)—

[456](#) James Cook University—Annual Report 2021

[457](#) University of Queensland—Annual Report 2021

[458](#) Queensland College of Teachers—Annual Report 2021

- [459](#) Brisbane Girls Grammar School—Annual Report 2021
- [460](#) Ipswich Grammar School—Annual Report 2021
- [461](#) Rockhampton Girls Grammar School—Annual Report 2021
- [462](#) Rockhampton Grammar School—Annual Report 2021
- [463](#) Toowoomba Grammar School—Annual Report 2021
- [464](#) Townsville Grammar School—Annual Report 2021
- [465](#) Griffith University—Annual Report 2021
- [466](#) Queensland University of Technology—Annual Report 2021
- [467](#) Central Queensland University—Annual Report 2021
- [468](#) University of the Sunshine Coast—Annual Report 2021
- [469](#) University of Southern Queensland—Annual Report 2021
- [470](#) Brisbane Grammar School—Annual Report 2021
- [471](#) Ipswich Girls Grammar School including Ipswich Junior Grammar School—Annual Report 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

State Schools, Internet



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.36 am): We know how important the internet has become in our modern society. From our workplaces to our homes it is as essential as electricity is to our modern-day functioning. It is also critical in our schools and for our children's education and futures. This morning I can announce a high-speed game changer for our Queensland schools and the communities that surround them. Our government is investing nearly \$190 million to dramatically increase internet speeds at all Queensland state schools.

This important partnership will also see Telstra spend \$110 million on exchange upgrades, benefitting communities and businesses in hundreds of regional and remote areas. This investment will mean internet speeds across every single one of our 1,258 state schools will be 200 times faster. This will ensure teachers and students have access to the latest digital technologies and tools for their classrooms—everything they need for a world-class education.

Dr Rowan interjected.

Mr Brown interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Moggill, member for Capalaba.

Mr Hart interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: The first phase will increase average internet speeds 40 times faster by the end of next year and the second phase will see internet speeds 200 times faster in 2026. This deal will also see around 40 schools connected to fibre optic for the first time so students from the most remote parts of Queensland will have access to quality, high-speed connectivity. The upgrade to more than 350 exchanges will also mean better, faster internet for entire communities in these locations, not just our state schools. It will help with everything from online businesses to agriculture management to telehealth services. Our government is committed to providing world-class education for our students and empowering our communities and this investment is just one of the ways we are achieving this.

Veterans, Grants




Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.39 am): Last Tuesday I was in Proserpine with the assistant minister for veterans affairs at the unveiling of the new cenotaph. It is dedicated to the Proserpine locals who gave their lives serving our country. It was relocated and rebuilt so that future generations can continue to pay tribute. Our government contributed more than \$21,000 through the Queensland Veterans' Memorial Grants Program.

Today, with less than a month until Anzac Day, I am pleased to announce that \$1.5 million is available in the next round of two other grants programs supporting veterans and their families: the 2022 Anzac Day Trust Grants Program and the second round of the Anzac Day Trust COVID-19 Grants Program. The Anzac Day Trust Grants are for organisations that help ex-service men and women and their dependants with welfare visits and functions, educational bursaries or other services. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 Grants Program is to help veterans affected by the pandemic and for COVID-safe events.

Last year, 186 organisations shared \$1.4 million from the trust grants program, and COVID-19 grants totalling more than \$600,000 went to 68 organisations. The 2022 applications are now open, closing on 15 May, and they will be announced in November.

I can also reveal today that more than \$1.5 million has been awarded from the first round of another program, Queensland Remembers. The 25 projects include things such as upgrading the Camp Gregory Veterans Retreat at Woodgate, upgrades to the Roma Cenotaph, telling war widows' stories through the Legacy Club of Brisbane, a new war memorial at Murgon, restoring the Atherton War Memorial, a veterans wellbeing hub at Beaudesert and a veterans housing project at Longreach. I congratulate Assistant Minister Bart Mellish for his hard work and dedication in delivering all of those grants programs. We are proud to continue supporting our veterans, their families and the organisations that assist them.

Women's Strategy

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.41 am): Every March we celebrate the achievements of Queensland's women and girls, and continue to raise awareness of and strive for greater gender equality. I am proud to lead a government that sets the right example. As I always say, you cannot be what you cannot see.

We were the first government in Australia to have 50 per cent women in cabinet. We now have eight women in our cabinet. We also have a female Governor, a female Police Commissioner and another female Chief Justice. Last year we appointed Queensland's first Special Commissioner for Equity and Diversity, Dr Linda Colley, to drive further improvements in the public sector. This week I had a very good meeting with her, along with the Minister for Industrial Relations.

We smashed our target to get 50 per cent of women on boards; it is now at 54 per cent. We are encouraging women into traditionally male dominated professions, investing in women's health initiatives and making sure there are more female facilities in sports change rooms. We are continuing to fight domestic and family violence and have invested \$600 million towards services, programs and strategies targeting the issue. We are committed to tackling coercive control as part of a wideranging review into the experiences of women across the criminal justice system.


All of this is driven by our Women's Strategy, which we released in 2016. It is now five years old and since then there has been much passion and momentum for change, to make the world fairer and safer for women. The nation has a renewed focus on the issue and in Queensland we do too. That is why today, along with the Minister for Women, we are releasing a new Queensland Women's Strategy, developed following extensive consultation with women and girls across the state. I table that report.

Tabled paper: Queensland Government: Queensland Women's Strategy 2022-27 [\[472\]](#).

The strategy takes action on economic inequality, with a focus on fairness and inclusion. It will empower communities to end gendered violence and further strengthen women's health and safety. It will elevate the role of First Nations women in decision-making and amplify the voices of women from underrepresented and marginalised backgrounds. It will provide the foundations to celebrate more extraordinary Queensland women.

A lot of the barriers to women's equality, particularly economic, are a federal responsibility. That is why last year I called for a national women's summit and for it to be put on the National Cabinet agenda. We must all work together—governments, businesses and communities—to make sure it is a fairer society for all.


Endometriosis

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.43 am): Every March we acknowledge women suffering from and raise awareness of endometriosis, which is estimated to affect 200 million women worldwide and at least one in nine women in Australia. Members will know that I have long been an advocate for bringing awareness to endometriosis and its debilitating symptoms. I thank others in this House who also bring attention to this important issue. I know that often women with endometriosis suffer in silence and that in the past there was no-one to turn to and no-one to talk to. Today, it is out in the public, it is being talked about and there is support available.

My government is committed to greater awareness and education, and to ensuring that Queensland endo warriors have access to support. Our commitment of nearly half a million dollars over four years means a range of programs and services can be delivered in schools through mentoring and

workplace sessions. We have come a long way in bringing attention to endometriosis and to improving the care and services available to women. However, there is still more to be done. Our government remains committed to being a proud supporter of this mission.

Queensland Flood Appeal


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.44 am): Last night the parliament came together with our community to raise money for the Queensland Flood Appeal. I thank our generous donors and sponsors for the food, drink, raffles and auction items, with all proceeds going to this worthy cause. I thank you, Mr Speaker, and the opposition leader for co-hosting the event.

One of the most beautiful moments came from the Western Queensland Alliance of Councils, which represents 22 local government areas from the state's Far North to our western border. As Mayor Andrew Martin said, many is the time the people of their region have been heartened by the generosity of those in the south-east in times of drought and floods, and they thought it only fitting to return the favour in our hour of need. They sent trucks and earthmoving equipment from the councils to help ours with the clean-up. Last night they gave \$105,500 to the Flood Appeal. This once again demonstrates something I have often said: no matter where we live in Queensland, we are in everything together.

Combined with their generosity, last night's function raised a total of \$246,000. I think we can all understand that today Mr Spencer Jolly deserves a day off. The funds will be divided between the Red Cross Queensland, Lifeline, the Salvos, Givit and Saint Vincent de Paul to distribute to Queenslanders in need. Finally, once again I pay tribute to the parliamentary staff who did an outstanding job and our primary producers who donated the food. I make special mention of everyone who was involved in that wonderful event.

Mr SPEAKER: I back those comments, Premier. It was a wonderful event, particularly with the Western Alliance of Councils. That was one of the most benevolent acts I have seen in a long time.

Renewable Energy, Job Creation

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure) (9.46 am): The Palaszczuk government is unlocking more opportunities for Queensland to create more jobs. We are positioning Queensland as a renewable energy global superpower. Our renewable energy and net zero emissions targets are creating opportunities for more jobs in more industries right along the renewable energy supply chain. We have been bringing together key players so that we can leverage our state's traditional strengths and thrive in the global transformations ahead, starting in Central Queensland.


On Tuesday, Stanwell Corporation joined Rio Tinto Australia, Alpha HPA, Orica and Acciona as the fifth company to sign the Central Queensland Statement of Cooperation. The statement of cooperation outlines our commitment to making Central Queensland a renewable energy powerhouse. It will secure the future competitiveness of Queensland, adding value to a natural energy advantage to drive employment and economic outcomes for the state. Having Stanwell join the statement of cooperation makes sense and is a good step forward for Central Queensland's growing renewables and hydrogen industry.

With their major Japanese and domestic partners, the company is progressing their feasibility study for a large-scale green hydrogen project to supply both domestic and export customers. With Japan's largest hydrogen supplier, Iwatani, Stanwell is progressing work towards the development of a large-scale renewable hydrogen project in Central Queensland. The project aims to export renewable hydrogen to Japan as well as supply large-scale industrial customers in the Central Queensland region to support emissions reduction for domestic industry. Through this project, Queensland's very own energy generators and ports could play a key role in meeting global hydrogen demand as well as supply local industry. Their landmark memorandum of understanding with Acciona could see Queensland's largest solar project providing clean and renewable energy to one of Queensland's largest renewable hydrogen projects.

The partnerships we have formed through the statement of cooperation are highlighting, on a global stage, the benefits of investing in Queensland. The Palaszczuk government is putting Queensland at the forefront of an emerging industry; an industry that could contribute billions to our economy. Yet in their budget the federal government has failed to deliver a cent for a renewables or hydrogen in Queensland. The Morrison government's budget lacks any dedicated plan or commitment to growing the industries and jobs that will accompany energy transition. The budget does not speak to

any clear or strategic plan to grow renewables in Queensland or elsewhere in Australia. What little they have invested has been given to Liberal governments in New South Wales, Tasmania and the former Marshall government in South Australia. Once again, there is nothing for Queensland. The LNP's federal budget failed to deliver Queensland our fair share of funding, including for renewables.

Federal Morrison Government

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.50 am): The next time this House sits we will be in the final days of a federal election campaign, or the federal election may very well have been held. There is a lot at stake for Queensland on the outcome of this contest. In 2019 Queensland handed Scott Morrison a great victory. The LNP won more than three out of every four House of Representatives seats in Queensland. Queenslanders put their trust in Scott Morrison. Nearly three years on, that trust has been betrayed. At every opportunity, Scott Morrison has chosen words over actions. He has chosen announcement over delivery. He has chosen anyone else over Queensland.

Tuesday night's budget was just the latest—and perhaps greatest—demonstration of the disdain Scott Morrison shows for a state that he takes for granted. In the budget for his state of New South Wales, where he desperately needs to win seats, Scott Morrison has allocated \$1.3 billion for infrastructure investment over the next four years. In the same period, Queensland gets just \$446 million. We have two-thirds of the population of New South Wales but get one-third of the new infrastructure investment. Even the so-called 'signature projects' in Queensland are all signature and no project. The billion dollars of new money for Australian water projects across the forward estimates has to cover Scott Morrison's \$600 million commitment to Paradise Dam. That leaves just \$400 million for everything else in Australia, including the \$5.4 billion Hells Gates Dam. Scott Morrison's plan for Hells Gates is as real as the Queensland LNP's fake Bradfield scheme and the infamous Bruce Highway hoax.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, member for Nanango!

Mr DICK: Like Scott Morrison's park-and-ride pork barrel rort in 2019, they are not even pretending that it is a real commitment; it is just a set of words with nothing to back it up. Something has changed from 2019. Scott Morrison has squandered the benefit of the doubt that Queenslanders gave to him—just like Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, who described him as a ruthless autocrat and bully with no moral compass and no conscience who is not fit to be Prime Minister. Queenslanders have figured him out and they do not like what they see, including what they saw in Tuesday night's budget where Queensland once again failed to get—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.


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

Mr DICK: Tuesday night's budget proved that Scott Morrison is out of touch with Queenslanders. It was a budget for the next six weeks and not for the next four years—a budget designed and built around Scott Morrison's future and not the future of Queensland. Queenslanders will not forget.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is warned under the standing orders.

State Schools, Internet

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.53 am): I have a real deal here. As the Premier said, we have entered into a \$190 million partnership with Telstra that will be game changing for our state schools with additional flow-on benefits to the communities and businesses around them. It will enable teachers and students right across Queensland to have access to the latest tools and technologies needed to deliver a truly 21st century education. My department has worked on the tender process for nearly 12 months to get the best deal for schools and students. I welcome to the gallery representatives from Telstra joining us today, Gaven Nicholls and Jason Mills. Thank you very much for your efforts.

This investment from the Palaszczuk government will dramatically increase internet speeds at all 1,258 Queensland state schools. We do not forget the National Party. When I say 'dramatic', I am not exaggerating. The work is starting already. Upgrades will roll out from the start of next term and hundreds of schools will see the benefit this year. Speeds will be 40 times faster at all schools by the end of 2023 and up to 200 times faster in 2026. Our remote, isolated schools and students will not be

left behind. Newer technologies like next-generation satellites will be used to deliver faster internet where terrestrial options are less practical. This is an absolutely incredible announcement for our schools and students and for the delivery of education throughout Queensland.

Classrooms will have access to the very latest technology and students will have no limits placed on their learning. This partnership will see Telstra invest \$110 million to upgrade hundreds of exchanges across our great state. Around 350 upgrades have been identified already, and more will be added as work progresses. This will mean access to better, faster internet in those areas for schools and students as well as access for businesses and communities around them. What a real deal that is! 'Compare that to the NBN' is what I want to say.

From Aurukun to Agnes Water, Currumbin to Cooktown and Yarrabah to Yeppoon, hundreds of communities will reap those flow-on benefits. For example, there will be new capabilities for regional and remote health care that have previously been out of reach due to bandwidth limitations, including telehealth and the provision of real-time diagnostics. We have futureproofed this partnership, too. As new technologies emerge that can provide an even better service, we can incorporate these into the contract.

This announcement is a game changer for the delivery of 21st century education for schools and students with great additional benefits to the community at large. The Palaszczuk government continues to deliver for the National Party and regional and remote communities, because our schools and students, even in National Party seats, deserve nothing less.

Coronavirus, Update



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.57 am): Last week the Chief Health Officer and I advised that Queensland was in the middle of its second Omicron wave. I can advise that in the past week the number of COVID patients in our public hospitals has risen from 271 to 365, with today's numbers being 339, including 24 children, and 15 people in ICU. The number of furloughed health workers has risen from 1,596 people on 20 March to 3,232 as at yesterday. I know that many in this chamber and people across Queensland are either experiencing COVID in their own households or know friends, families and work colleagues confronting this virus. This wave is now putting additional pressure back on our hospital system.

It was two days ago that the Morrison government had the opportunity to recognise not only the pressure COVID is having on our hospital and health systems across the country but also the need for real reform on funding for public hospitals as well as the primary healthcare sector into the future. They failed the people of Queensland. Instead of fronting up with much needed funding reform, they enacted senseless cuts to our hospitals. Not only has the coalition walked away from health reform; it is also walking away from the vital COVID national partnership agreement. This agreement has provided much needed funding to our health system as we have battled the Delta and Omicron variants. It ensures that we have proper fifty-fifty funding for COVID related hospital and public health activity. In the absence of the actual fifty-fifty funding, retaining a fifty-fifty split for COVID activity is a must.

Our most recent figures show that we are not yet done with COVID. We know that it will continue to put additional pressure on our already stretched hospital system, which is why it was so disheartening to see the significant cut from the Morrison government on this funding source. Whereas \$526.8 million was allocated by the coalition government for the COVID-19 national partnership agreement for 2021-22, that funding has been cut to \$105.8 million for 2022-23, with the federal government projecting that the funding agreement will end on 30 September this year. After that there is nothing—back to the undercooked funding model that has been condemned by every state and territory as well as pre-eminent stakeholders such as the AMA.

Living with COVID does not mean pretending COVID does not exist. Our new reality will always necessitate additional hospital capacity for the continued demand the virus will create. If the Commonwealth is not going to reform our flawed funding model, it needs to reverse its proposed COVID cuts. Queenslanders want their fair share and will not accept anything less.

Road and Rail Infrastructure



Hon. MC BAILEY (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.59 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government is in the midst of delivering our sixth record investment in roads and rail across Queensland. We believe in regional Queensland. That is why \$17.8 billion in road and rail projects will be delivered outside the south-east. We are not like Scott Morrison, who has failed to deliver for Queensland roads.

It seems between Morrison, Joyce and Frydenberg someone forgot about one of Queensland's most important roads—the Bruce Highway. The budget handed down this week by the federal government did not commit a single new construction dollar to the Bruce Highway, despite the Palaszczuk government committing its share for future upgrades. We are delivering 61 Bruce Highway construction projects right now. It comes as no surprise to anyone who has driven on Queensland's longest highway—at 1,600 kilometres long—that more needs to be done. That is why we asked for \$617 million for Bruce Highway upgrades in the federal budget. We got zero. The Bruce Highway is our economic artery so it beggars belief that the Morrison-Joyce government has turned its nose up at our regional communities that rely on it.

We already know Scott Morrison cares less about Queensland flood victims because he gave them only \$1,000 payments compared to \$3,000 payments for flood victims in New South Wales, and he is yet to sign off on a disaster relief package for Queensland even now. We already know Scott Morrison is all spin and no delivery, with more than 80 per cent of this budget more than four years away for Queensland. If he thinks he can fool Queenslanders with his 'spruik now, pay later' scheme, then maybe he has something coming. Queenslanders can see through the smoke and mirrors.

If the federal government is not going to deliver for the Bruce Highway, we would think that it would chip in for the second Bruce Highway—the inland freight route. At the last federal budget, we heard that \$400 million would be committed to the inland freight route, but hidden in the detail was the fact that only \$75 million was in the forward estimates.

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Gregory!

Mr BAILEY: Fast-forward to this year's federal budget. We heard an additional \$400 million would be committed to the project. Lo and behold, when we looked at the detail and the budget breakdown came through, we saw that \$233 million of their previous commitment will not be released for another four years. That is less than half of the 2021 federal government commitment and it is not available until 2026.

Mr Millar interjected.

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

Mr BAILEY: It is on the never-never. How can anyone trust Scott Morrison when he has reneged on his promises from the last election? There is no federal ICAC and yet we have had a state based standing royal commission here for 30 years.

Queensland cannot afford another three long years of the incompetent, deceitful Morrison government. We need a federal government that delivers. We need a federal government that gives Queensland its fair share. We need a federal government that takes responsibility and works with the states, including our state of Queensland.

Bundaberg and Burnett, Investment



Hon. GJ BUTCHER (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.03 am): I would like to bring to the attention of members the great work being undertaken by the Queensland Labor government to support future economic growth in the Bundaberg and Burnett region. The Palaszczuk government has invested a total of \$9 million in its Regional Water Assessment Program, focused on three of our most significant food bowl areas. Work has commenced on the Bundaberg and Burnett regional water assessment and work is also underway for the other two assessments—the ones in the Southern Downs and Darling Downs and the Tablelands regions.

The assessments will take on advice from the community, irrigators, industry groups, technical experts and councils to look at ways to maximise our water supply and drive economic growth in regional Queensland. It is important to listen to the experts. The Palaszczuk government knows that. Overnight we had confirmation that the federal LNP does not listen to experts. The National Water Grid Advisory Body, which was set up by the LNP 18 months ago to provide independent advice to the Australian government on water infrastructure, has been sacked. The media release from the Deputy Prime Minister at the time, which I table, states—

The Body's advice will help inform the Government's policy and investment decisions, assisting the delivery of the National Water Grid.


Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'National Water Grid Advisory Body appointed' [\[473\]](#).

Last week when the federal LNP made \$6 billion worth of dam announcements in North Queensland, do members know who had not been consulted? The advisory board set up by the federal government! Now they have sacked them. A chief CSIRO scientist has been sacked. A farmer, irrigator and businesswoman has been sacked. A former National Party deputy premier of Victoria has been sacked. Before he was sacked, Dr Stuart Khan, a civil and environmental engineering expert, said—

The Australian government should wait for the outcomes of this significant public investment in the development of the detailed business case before committing public funds to the construction of the dam.

Does that sound familiar? The Hells Gates business case is not yet complete. This means it has not even received the necessary federal approvals. Urannah Dam does not have a completed detailed business case or environmental impact statement. Labor will always support and consider good water projects with the capacity to deliver growth and jobs to the regions, but we will listen to the experts first—and not sack them—to make sure these water assets do not become a drain on Queensland taxpayers in the future.

Women's Strategy

 **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): The Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to empowering Queensland women and girls to succeed and is continuing to invest in their safety, health and wellbeing. As the Premier announced this morning, we have now released our new Queensland Women's Strategy. The new strategy makes a strong statement about the Palaszczuk government's commitment to raising the status of women and working towards gender equality. The strategy provides a basis for ensuring that policies and decisions are informed and influenced by women's voices, both now and into the future. It was developed through extensive consultation with stakeholders and the community and indicates the steps we will take together to shift the dial on gender equality here in Queensland. It is critical that we all work together.

I would like to particularly acknowledge all of the women of the Queensland Women's Strategy advisory group. I would like to thank the over 1,500 Queenslanders who completed the Women's Strategy survey, the more than 100 stakeholders who provided written submissions and everyone who attended the many consultation events.


We know that women have been hardest hit by job losses and ongoing underemployment as a result of the pandemic. They have also shouldered the majority of caring responsibilities and sadly still represent overwhelmingly the majority of victims of domestic and family violence. The ABS found that of the jobs lost across Australia between June and September last year, 60 per cent were women. The main overarching priority of the Women's Strategy is women's economic security—because we know that it is central to achieving every other aspect of gender equality.

The Queensland Women's Strategy also focuses on: the safety, health and wellbeing of women; elevating First Nations women; women with diverse backgrounds and experiences; and empowerment and recognition of women and girls. I especially want to acknowledge the First Nations women and girls of Queensland and the unique experiences and contributions they make. True gender equality cannot come unless outcomes for First Nations women are improved. Now more than ever, Queensland women and girls are looking to the government to lead the way in addressing these inequalities.

The new Queensland Women's Strategy is a bold statement for the next five years to achieve our vision for women and girls in Queensland. Our vision is that women and girls have equal rights and equal access to all opportunities in Queensland and that women and girls are safe, valued and able to freely participate and succeed in the economic, social and cultural opportunities available. We must build on the momentum, keep stepping up, move forward and contribute to the change. We all have a part to play in achieving gender equality.

Thank you to everyone who supported the strategy. I look forward to continuing our work as we strive to improve the status of women and girls.

Federal Budget, Agriculture

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.09 am): The budget delivered by the federal Liberal National Party government this week has let down rural and regional Queensland. While there were some big announcements, that is all they were—announcements. This federal government has form on being all announcements but no delivery. They fail to sow but hope to reap. They have sold out to the inner-city Liberals and abandoned the bush.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, member for Southern Downs!

Mr FURNER: The agriculture visa is still an announcement without one single visa issued and not one single worker has arrived in this nation. This visa was announced four years ago and was promised to be in place before Christmas last year. With still no detail about the application process, there are dodgy budget numbers on taxation revenue from these workers. Is this another backpacker tax fiasco in the making?

It also remains to be seen where the federal government stands on biosecurity. After previous failures when it comes to brown marmorated stink bugs, white spot and khapra beetle incursions, Queenslanders have to wonder whether the federal government is really up to protecting our borders. The National Farmers' Federation, our peak agricultural body in this nation, said—

The Budget again failed to deliver an adequate and sustainable funding pipeline for the modernisation and expansion of Australia's biosecurity system and there was insufficient investment to address imminent biosecurity threats.

The federal government's biosecurity failures are putting the entire agriculture industry at risk. We know that the dam announcements have been previously flagged, but the money will likely never flow.

Mr Lister interjected.

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

Mr FURNER: In the heady pre-pandemic days of 2013, the LNP was elected on glossy brochures on dams and Barnaby Joyce trumpeted a white paper for Northern Australia—again, announcements without delivery. Yesterday, Barnaby—nine years gone from Queensland and still hurting our state—abolished his own advisory board on dams after one of its members said his dam announcements were made for 'brazen political purposes'. Barnaby cannot deliver for Queensland farmers. David Littleproud cannot deliver for Queensland farmers. You can bet your bottom dollar that those sorry Scott Morrison apologists sitting opposite cannot deliver for Queensland farmers either.

The LNP Leader of the Opposition failed to stand up to Scott Morrison and his LNP mates to demand Queensland received our fair share. Labor in Queensland is happy to stand on its record when it comes to the agriculture industry—and I am sure that Anthony Albanese and a federal Labor government will do a damn sight better than the current crop of lazy LNP no-hopers. Senator Fierravanti-Wells got it right when she said that this LNP federal government is not fit for office.

Federal Budget, Youth



Hon. MAJ SCANLON (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (10.12 am): Federal budgets are supposed to show a government's priorities. What this decade-old Morrison-Joyce government has revealed in this latest budget is that young people do not matter to them. Young Queenslanders and their future have been left off the agenda.

When 40 per cent of millennials are struggling to pay rent, when the average savings for gen Y have fallen 46 per cent, we saw nothing for renters. We saw no long-term strategy to deal with the cost of living or to increase wages. We saw nothing to deal with skyrocketing house prices. In fact, when pushed on the matter, the Prime Minister told struggling renters to just go and buy a house. When young people are crying out for climate action, they are cutting climate funding by 35 per cent.

Scott Morrison and the LNP think young people do not matter. The Australia Institute's Chief Economist Richard Denniss has said—

The prime minister clearly thinks that the federal election in May will be decided by voters who are older than average, richer than average, and more likely to live in regional Australia than average.

As a result of that cynical calculus, he has aimed an enormous amount of our money at his target voters, while doing little to address the major concerns of young people.

Basically, he is betting that young people will not be paying much attention to the budget or his dismal failures as a Prime Minister. Well, I think he is wrong. Now is the time for young Australians to make their voices heard. There are tens of thousands of young people across Queensland who are not enrolled to vote. This Morrison-Joyce government is counting on you not caring. Prove them wrong. Make sure to enrol if you have not already, or check that your details are up to date and tell your friends as well, because very soon we will be heading to an election—a chance to vote Scott Morrison out. Get out there, show this government that you matter, that your future matters and that your vote matters.

COMMITTEES

Membership



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.14 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. That the member for Condamine be appointed to the Transport and Resources Committee to replace the former member for Callide; and
2. that the member for South Brisbane be appointed to the Mental Health Select Committee to replace the member for Traeger, who has resigned from the committee.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT



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

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 10 May 2022.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, question time will conclude today at 11.16 am.

Coronavirus, Hotel Quarantine



Mr CRISAFULLI (10.16 am): My question is to the Premier. In February the Premier announced the end of hotel quarantine. Can the Premier confirm how much the government has paid for hotel quarantine since then?

Mr Brown interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. I am happy to talk about quarantine because quarantine is a federal government responsibility.

Dr Miles: It's in the Constitution.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is in the Constitution.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. What has happened is that the states have stepped up. Every single state in the Commonwealth stepped up because of Morrison's failure in relation to quarantine.

Mr Dick: Abject failure.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right—abject failure. Remember the vaccine rollout? The federal government did not get that right, did it?

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. Then the Omicron wave came and there was not enough money to deal with it. I find it absolutely ironic that the Leader of the Opposition comes in here to talk about something that the federal government has not had anything to do with. They only came to the party when there was Wellcamp—

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, the question is a reasonably specific question related to a particular matter. I ask you to come back to the question under standing order 118.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I am saying, in the Constitution quarantine is a federal government responsibility. I am getting asked about something that is a federal government responsibility. Mr Speaker, let me share some of the facts with those opposite. I am happy to share the facts.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members to my left!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Some 125,993 people have been through hotel quarantine during the pandemic.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. The state stepped up to do the job because on this side of the House we care about Queensland. That is right. We care about Queenslanders.

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118(b).

Mr SPEAKER: No. I have just ruled on that. I have given the Premier guidance. I am listening to her answer.

Ms PALASZCZUK: At the peak there were 5,114 in 22 hotels—in 22 hotels. The federal government was not helping with this—no, not their responsibility, but it is in the Constitution. But wait—there's more!

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, can I interrupt you. I have given you guidance. The question was a reasonably specific question, as I have suggested already. If you are unable to provide the response, I will ask you to resume your seat. There is a particular question—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, we can get the information on the specifics but I am talking about a question about quarantine. There were 1,200 police committed to COVID operations during the pandemic, including 263 in hotel quarantine. We did the Commonwealth's job, and it is absolutely hypocritical for the Leader of the Opposition to come in here today and talk about something which was Canberra's responsibility.

Mr POWER: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Can I just confirm that the Premier has taken that on notice pursuant to the standing orders?

Mr SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, there was no suggestion that the Premier has taken that on notice, as I heard her answer.

Coronavirus, Hotel Quarantine

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. On 4 February the last person reportedly left quarantine at the Stamford hotel. Since then, the government has paid the foreign owned hotel over \$3 million for empty rooms and meals that were never served. Can the Premier justify this waste of taxpayers' money?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question.

Mr Dick: We'll tell them you don't want investment.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right.

Mr Dick: We will tell the world you don't want investment.

Mr SPEAKER: The Treasurer will cease his interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Do you want to attack the tourism industry now? You are attacking the tourism industry. The Leader of the Opposition's question was about a foreign owned hotel. That is disgusting. That is disgraceful. It is absolutely disgraceful.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I know it is Thursday. Let us get through it.

Ms PALASZCZUK: At the height of the pandemic, as I said, we had 22 hotels and they were contracted. They are contracted over a period of time. What we did is we built Wellcamp. That is right; we built it, with the help of the Wagners. The Prime Minister said he will build Pinkenba, but we have not seen that. That is months away. I have here for the Leader of the Opposition a part of the Constitution, section 51(ix) on quarantine, which I will table for him so he can have a look.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Part V—Powers of the Parliament' [474].

It says it is a Commonwealth government responsibility. As you wind things down and you start something new, there are contracts and you have to honour those contracts. It is a fundamental legal principle. I will not have the Leader of the Opposition coming in here attacking our hotels in this state that are part of the great tourism industry that we have—especially when that hotel, I understand, was flooded. He is attacking foreign investment. That means we will never see you down at the Stamford Plaza again—ever. If you don't like it, don't set foot in there. Don't you go there. No more Moo Moos for any of them.

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair.

Mr Crisafulli: You could have funded 12 ambulances.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will take that interjection. Perhaps the Morrison government should not have cut federal health funding. That is right. You cannot come into this chamber and talk about health when your federal colleagues down in Canberra cut health funding in this state. I look forward to the Leader of the Opposition campaigning with the Prime Minister in the lead-up to the election. I look forward to you holding his hand, walking around the shopping centres, maybe holding a hose—you never know—maybe going out to Pinkenba. Perhaps you can ask him for the money that we spent on quarantine.

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, Premier.

Tourism Industry

Ms PEASE: My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier please update the House on the government's commitment to supporting Queensland's tourism industry to recover from the impacts of COVID-19?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. The member for Lytton joined with me and the Minister for Tourism when we looked at the brand new cruise ship terminal that will be opening and bringing in international tourists, bringing in international cruise ships, supporting our great tourism industry.

Dr Miles: From other countries.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right; they are coming from other countries.

Dr Miles: They might stay in a hotel.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right; they might even stay at the Stamford Plaza, but the Leader of the Opposition does not want them staying there. I can advise—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Well, the opposition liked going to rooms in other states, not backing Queensland.

Dr Miles: Margaret River.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Margaret River, that is right.

Dr Miles: Luna Park.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Luna Park.

Dr Miles: Schoolies.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Oh, no, that was on the Gold Coast. I can advise that cruise ships will be returning to Australian waters from 17 April. I can confirm that the first ship set to dock in Queensland will be the P&O's *Pacific Explorer*. It will sail from Sydney on 31 May on a four-night round trip cruise, docking at the new Brisbane International Cruise Terminal on 2 June. We will be welcoming these tourists to Queensland. They can stay at any hotel they want to. They can go and visit our businesses, because we back the people who work in those jobs—from the hotel staff to the people who prepare the food and do the cleaning. We back workers in this state. We do not attack them, and that is exactly what the Leader of the Opposition is doing today—attacking workers who work in the Stamford Plaza.

I am also advised that we are expecting Princess cruise ships. The *Coral Princess* will arrive in Brisbane with up to 2,000 guests on 16 June. Her sister ships are expected to make six calls to Queensland ports as well in this season, pumping millions of dollars into our economy: the *Majestic Princess* is scheduled to arrive in Brisbane on Saturday, 29 October; the *Grand Princess* on 21 November; the *Pacific Encounter* on Saturday, 20 August; and the *Royal Caribbean* on 1 November. Cruise ships are back, the terminal is going to be open and people are going to be spending their money in Queensland. What welcome news for the tourism industry. We back them. It is a pity that the federal government failed to deliver any significant funding for the tourism industry.

(Time expired)

Coronavirus, Hotel Quarantine

Ms BATES: My question is to the Premier. Since the Premier announced the end of hotel quarantine, how many quarantine hotels are taxpayers paying for?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said, we were phasing down from the 22 at the peak. I think we are down to a handful at the moment. The Deputy Premier will be able to provide that information to the member. Once again, the member for Mudgeeraba might want to talk to her federal colleagues in Canberra and ask them why the state is paying for everything. Do you know what? The states stood up when we first had the pandemic over two years ago and the states said, 'Sure, we're prepared to help out,' and then we carried the load the whole time. That is right: the state carried the load for the federal government. Perhaps those over there can go and talk to their federal counterparts and ask why they have not stumped up. In fact, one could argue that the federal government should have paid every single cent if the federal government were prepared to do their job.

Ms Bates interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We know that the Prime Minister does not like to do his job. He does not like quarantine. He did not order the vaccines. There was not enough advertising for the campaign. Who can forget there were no RATs at the time of the Omicron outbreak? At a time when we needed them the most, there was failure to absolutely—

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118(b) and relevance. We cannot be more specific. The questions are very specific about the waste of this government's money—

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Manager of Opposition Business. The point of order has merit. Premier, I ask you to answer the direct question as asked.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said, the Deputy Premier will get back to the House in relation to that issue. Finally, let me say this: the federal government has failed at every step of the way in dealing with this pandemic, and Queenslanders will not forget it.

Federal Budget, Natural Disasters

Ms HOWARD: My question is of the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic Infrastructure. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on what was contained in the federal budget to help Queenslanders recover from natural disasters?

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mudgeeraba, I have been very clear about having questions heard in silence. You are warned under the standing orders.

Dr MILES: I thank the member for her question. I know how the Ipswich community has been devastated by the recent natural disasters. They certainly bore the brunt of the rain and flooding. Six hundred homes and businesses around the Ipswich area were affected by the natural disaster. I am sure they all would have been very disappointed in the federal budget on Tuesday night. While they are planning for whether and how they will fix their homes, whether they will retrofit them, raise them, sell them, they got no answer from the Australian government about whether they would contribute to our Resilient Residential Recovery Package. They want to know what their options are. They do not know what their options are because the federal government has delayed announcing whether they will partner with us on that program. What are they waiting for? Why should they have to wait?

Surely even Scott Morrison is not so cynical as to make these 600 Ipswich residents wait for him to be in town for the perfect campaign opportunity to know what their options are for their home. Think of those who were renters trying to get back into the rental market which is deeply unaffordable right now. Imagine them looking at the budget thinking, 'What is here for me? What is the Prime Minister's answer for my inability to find a rental property?'

Now we know what his answer is: they should buy a house. How out of touch! To say to flood victims in Ipswich whose rental properties have been destroyed, 'Oh, just go and buy a house.' The Prime Minister says to a mother sleeping in a car with her children because she cannot find a rental property, 'Oh, she should just go buy a house.' He says to a young couple, desperately trying to save for a deposit to buy a house or even rent a house in the suburb they grew up in, 'Oh, they should just go buy a house.' He says to a retired nurse who has worked her entire career, but rented a home her entire career, who cannot afford to rent near her children and grandchildren anymore, 'She should just go buy a house.' They call this a cost-of-living budget, but their answer for one of the biggest components of cost of living, that being the cost of renting, is that it does not matter how much rent costs because people should just go buy a house. How outrageously out of touch the LNP are! What a great disappointment this budget has been for Queenslanders.

Coronavirus, Hotel Quarantine

Mr WEIR: My question is to the Premier. Since the Premier announced the end of hotel quarantine, how many people have stayed in hotel quarantine while Wellcamp has remained largely unused?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let me say from the outset about Wellcamp that we have also extended the hand of friendship to New South Wales to say that for people who have been flood impacted in Lismore and northern New South Wales, if they would like to utilise Wellcamp, the offer remains from the state government to issue the hand of friendship.

Secondly, to the member for Condamine, let me say this: if Scott Morrison and the federal LNP had done their job in the first place and had fit-for-purpose quarantine facilities across the nation, no hotels would have had to be used for quarantine. We had one in the Northern Territory—Howard Springs—but this government had to step up where the federal government failed to deliver. As I said, over 100,000 people utilised hotel quarantine.

Mrs D'Ath: It stopped the Delta spread.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. As I said very clearly, too, the contracts with the hotels also provided people with jobs during the pandemic. Of course, there was not much tourism, but it provided the industry with jobs. I will not have the opposition come in here attacking us on jobs.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let me also say this, if those opposite will just be quiet for a moment—there are some good children behaving very nicely in the public gallery; perhaps the opposition could learn from them. My understanding is that the Stamford Group is looking at investing over \$780 million—that is right, investment—in doing up the Stamford Plaza here and the Stamford at Circular Quay. Why would a foreign investor want to come here with the likes of the Leader of the Opposition talking down a hotel chain in this state? We will stand up for tourism and we will also step in and stand up for Queensland and do the job that the federal government failed to do. Let me say it again for those opposite: quarantine is a federal government responsibility! Let me say it again: quarantine is a federal government responsibility! They fail to do it, absolutely fail to do it. This government stepped up and I thank the men and women who served in our quarantine hotels.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: The members for Lytton, Theodore and Glass House are all warned under the standing orders. The member for Mudgeeraba is already on a warning and she can leave the chamber for one hour for interjecting.

Whereupon the honourable member for Mudgeeraba withdrew from the chamber at 10.36 am.

Health System

Mr MELLISH: My question is of the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer update the House on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to the Queensland health system and is the Treasurer aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Aspley for his question and for his unstinting support for the public health system in Queensland, including on the north side hospitals like the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and the Prince Charles Hospital.

Since 2015, the Palaszczuk Labor government has rebuilt the public health system in this state, decimated by Campbell Newman and the Leader of the Opposition. Since 2015, we have hired 2,450 more doctors, 7,358 more nurses and midwives, 2,025 more health professionals, and 812 more paramedics.

Yesterday in the debate in the House, the Leader of the Opposition made a big show in mentioning Anthony Albanese, but there was one name that he could not bring himself to say and that was 'Scott Morrison'. There is a topic he did not mention in that debate—Queensland Health—which was surprising because on Monday he said that he wanted the focus to be on health. The Leader of the Opposition even stopped whinging for one minute to seemingly agree with us when he said, 'Like the state government, we wish to see more money in the health system from the federal budget for Queenslanders,' and then the kicker, 'That is a non-negotiable for us.' Non-negotiable! More tough talk from the Leader of the Opposition.

Then something happened: the federal budget came down and there was suddenly a glitch in the Leader of the Opposition's matrix. Somewhere deep inside he started negotiating with himself and he decided he did not need to see more money for health from Scott Morrison, he did not even need to

see the same money; he looked at the cut we saw on Tuesday night and he decided he would lie down and cop it. If this is how the current Leader of the Opposition deals with something that is non-negotiable, how on earth could we trust the Leader of the Opposition to get our fair share for Queenslanders? Whether it is Scott Morrison or Anthony Albanese, the current Leader of the Opposition will not deliver for Queensland. That is because he has no principles. Even the principles that he claims to have, the things that he says are non-negotiable are totally up for negotiation.

We just heard it here today: he was willing to dog whistle to attack foreign investment in this state. A company wants to spend three quarters of a billion dollars creating jobs in Queensland, and he is willing to dog whistle on foreign investment. That is because he is a man completely devoid of principles. Of course, he backs in anti-vaxxer organisations like NPAQ and its members, like the shadow health minister. He is totally devoid of principles, pandering to the hard right and completely untrustworthy and incapable of leadership.

Crime and Corruption Commission, Chairperson

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Attorney-General. Yesterday the Attorney initially did not know and then later confirmed in the House that her office had sought advice on how to sack the CCC chair. Can the Attorney confirm that prior to yesterday she did not have any conversations about this advice with anyone?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. As I informed the House yesterday, advice was sought by an adviser in my office in relation to general powers that exist in relation to the chair of the CCC, and I was unaware of this request. Usually any request for legal advice is approved by me. The advice was sought—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left, the Attorney-General is being responsive to the question as asked. I request that you hear the answer.

Ms FENTIMAN: The advice was sought by an acting senior adviser who, to be fair to her, was trying to be helpful given that that request was made—

Mrs Gerber: Does she still have a job?

Ms FENTIMAN: Yes, she does—given that that request was made in the context of serious public hearings that were happening in relation to the PCCC, including counsel assisting putting recommendations to the PCCC about the role of the chair of the CCC. I do not intend to go into any further detail about the advice. It attracts legal professional privilege and I do not intend to waive that privilege.

Mr Watts interjected.

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

Regional Queensland, State Schools

Ms LUI: My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Will the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is delivering for schools in regional Queensland, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Cook for her question, because her electorate is about to benefit big time from a \$190 million investment in Far North Queensland. For example, Mareeba State High School has a current bandwidth of 50 megabytes per second. It will go to 1,000 in 2023 and 4,200 in 2026. Cooktown State School has a current bandwidth of 748 megabytes per second. It will go to more than 9,500 in 2023 and nearly 30,000 in 2026. That is great. It will benefit regional Queensland, and 350 schools are going to be upgraded as part of this deal. I am delighted to inform the member for Cook, who I know is passionate about this, that Aurukun, Bamaga, Coen, Cooktown and Weipa and many more towns in her electorate are going to benefit.

However, it is not just her electorate. I have a list here containing 350 places. Do honourable members know who we are looking after more than anyone in this place? It is the National Party, which has been left behind by the LNP. Do not worry, Southern Downs; Allora is going to get an upgrade as well as Barcaldine and Blackwater in Gregory. We are going to upgrade Charleville in Warrego. I will look after you, Warrego. There is Dalby as well as Emerald in Gregory and Gympie. Gympie is not left out. It is one of my favourites. It is going to be getting it. Love the granola at Mama D's; it's fantastic. They will be getting the upgrades as well. Inglewood in Southern Downs, I am delivering for you. Even

my good friend the member for Nanango does not miss out; Kingaroy is going to get a nice upgrade as well. Then we have Pittsworth in Condamine. I will not leave you behind, Condamine. We have St George in Warrego and Warwick in Condamine. Oh my goodness, the list goes on. It is endless. We have Wyreema in Condamine as well. The list is endless. Do honourable members know who will be the beneficiaries? It will be the students and the schools in all the electorates throughout Queensland.

We hear those opposite talking about cost blowouts. Do honourable members know why we have had to do this? It is because we have no NBN. It has been 10 years and the federal government still cannot deliver it, and those opposite want to talk about costs? The NBN started at \$29 billion. Do they know what it is now? It is at \$57 billion, and it is four years behind schedule. Queensland will deliver it. Do not worry, Nationals; we will look after you.

(Time expired)

Crime and Corruption Commission, Chairperson

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is also to the Attorney-General. Why was the Attorney's office seeking advice on how to sack the CCC chair when the Premier was publicly backing him at that time?

Ms FENTIMAN: As I stated, advice was sought about general powers in relation to the chair. This took place in the context of PCCC hearings where counsel assisting was putting recommendations to the committee about the chair. I refer to my earlier statements. I have nothing further to add.

Federal Budget, Health

Ms KING: My question is of the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. Will the minister update the House on the consequences of this week's federal budget for Queensland's health system?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Pumicestone for her question, because I know she supports our health system and understands the importance of investing in our health system. We know that everyone on this side of the House shares the disappointment in Scott Morrison's and Josh Frydenberg's budget delivered the other night. It was a half-baked budget that left Queenslanders behind across a whole range of areas but particularly in the area of health at a time when we most need it.

I think the best way we can describe Scott Morrison's government at the moment is they are on life support. They think that this budget is going to buy them votes. They think this budget can buy them votes. However, I see that the AMA is today reported as saying that for any Australian who is waiting on a public hospital waiting list this budget will provide absolutely no relief. That is from the AMA.

Not only did the Morrison government have an opportunity this week to step up and invest in primary care, aged care, the NDIS, Medicare, the national partnership on dental services and the public health system, but those opposite had an opportunity yesterday to back the government's motion to call for more funding and our fair share. Instead, we saw the members for Mudgeeraba, Burnett, Kawana, Theodore, Whitsunday, Coomera, Broadwater, Nanango, Currumbin, Burleigh, Scenic Rim, Surfers Paradise, Burdekin, Warrego, Southern Downs, Everton, Lockyer, Buderim, Gregory, Chatsworth, Southport, Clayfield, Bonney, Gympie, Glass House, Ninderry, Moggill, Maroochydore, Mermaid Beach, Toowoomba North and Condamine—every single one of them are officially on the record as voting no to calling for their fair share of funding from the Morrison government even though the Leader of the Opposition ranted the other afternoon—

Mr Dick: It was non-negotiable.

Mrs D'ATH:—that it was non-negotiable, that they would resist cuts to the health system. I do not know what resistance looks like, but it is looking pretty weak as far as we can see. Not only did they not vote for it, but they chose to divide on it so there would be a choice, so they could record how strongly they opposed extra funding for health. It is not only the Morrison government that needs to be condemned by the people of Queensland—

(Time expired)

Crime and Corruption Commission, Chairperson

Mr O'CONNOR: My question is to the Attorney-General. What questions were asked of Crown law by the Attorney's adviser, and will the Attorney table the advice?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. As I said earlier, the advice attracts parliamentary—legal professional privilege—lots of privileges—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Clayfield, you are warned under the standing orders. You know better than to not direct your comments through the chair.

Ms FENTIMAN: I do not intend to waive that privilege.

Federal Budget, Community Safety

Mr WALKER: My question is of the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. Will the minister update the House on any measures in this week's federal budget to boost community safety?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for his question. He is a strong supporter of efforts to boost community safety. That is what the Palaszczuk government does. We boost community safety through investing in police resources and strengthening laws for our police to enhance community safety. Mr Speaker, I know that you have been waiting for this moment. When it comes to budgets, there are lots of numbers. Of course, the LNP calculator has come out again.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, unless you are planning to table it, please put it down.

Mr RYAN: Ever since the member for Kawana became deputy opposition leader, even more negatives have been appearing on the LNP calculator. When it comes to the federal budget, there is no boosting of community safety. There are lots of negatives because they are using their negative LNP calculator. Is there any surprise when it comes to this?

When you look at the forward estimates for the important portfolio area of community safety, Scott Morrison's fingerprints are all over the Australian Federal Police budget. Hidden on page 126, in the forward estimates, what do we see? We see a \$67 million cut to the Australian Federal Police. That should be no surprise to you, Mr Speaker. In which line item is there a big cut in that budget? Employee benefits. There is a \$23 million cut. What does that mean? True to form, when the LNP sack police officers they do it even at the federal level. Some \$23 million is being cut from the forward estimates for Australian Federal Police employee benefits. It does not stop there. Those opposite like to talk big when it comes to community safety, but they never deliver. Hidden on page 94 of the Portfolio Budget Statements for the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission is a \$24 million cut. Hidden on page 170 for ASIO, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, is a \$7 million cut.

We have just had some of the biggest national disasters that our state and nation have known for generations, and what do they do to the Bureau of Meteorology? There is a \$22 million cut to the Bureau of Meteorology. When it comes to emergency management, in the Department of Home Affairs—these are the people who help the federal government respond to natural disasters, so they need more money because they are having a bit of a tough time at the moment—there is a \$22 million cut. When it comes to boosting resources, the LNP have their negative calculator. It is all negative; there is no boosting from them.

Water Security

Ms LAUGA: My question is of the Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water. Will the minister update the House on what expert advice he is seeking to ensure water security for Queenslanders?

Mr BUTCHER: I thank the member for her question. I note how quick on her feet she is today. Obviously those opposite are asleep; they do not want to ask any more questions.

Government members interjected.

Mr BUTCHER: They are all on the same side over there. The honourable member who asked the question really appreciates water security, particularly in Central Queensland. I know that she is a huge supporter of Rookwood Weir in Central Queensland, along with the member for Rockhampton, Barry O'Rourke—two great champions of Central Queensland.

We have invested \$2.6 billion in water here in Queensland. We are focused on Queensland's water future. As I said this morning, it is important to engage experts when it comes to big dam projects, because future generations will be affected if we do not get them right. I have always said that these big pieces of infrastructure need to be robustly debated and investigated and must stack up financially as well as environmentally. They cannot be done on the back of a beer coaster, which is what it appears the federal LNP government is up to at the moment.

Listening to experts is not a sentiment shared by the Deputy Prime Minister. I have some information about Barnaby Joyce dissolving the National Water Grid Advisory Body, which was set up to scrutinise projects needing funding under the National Water Grid, only 18 months after that board

was set up by former LNP deputy prime minister Michael McCormack. The advisory body offered a wealth of diverse expertise in fields including engineering, agriculture, economics, science and infrastructure. A water engineer expert who was a member of that body said that the funding announcements for Hells Gates Dam and Urannah Dam had been made for 'brazenly political purposes'. This is something that we on this side of the House already knew. The panel raised these concerns in a letter to Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce, and they were basically sacked the next day. This morning, ABC News reported that Michael McCormack, the previous deputy prime minister, who set up the advisory body, is shocked and surprised that the body has been abolished. Even the Nationals are infighting now in the federal government in Canberra.

The question has to be asked of the LNP federal government: who now is going to receive the detailed reports on these projects? It is not going to be Ken O'Dowd, his Nationals mate down there, because he will be asleep in the backbench somewhere. Who does he go to next? The next member that he can call on is the new candidate for the seat of Flynn, Colin Boyce. I must say, the one thing that Colin Boyce ever said that I took notice of was when we were talking about hydrogen for Gladstone. He said, 'Where are they going to get the water from?' Well, that is a good question and it is one that Colin should be asking his federal colleagues.

Mount Isa, Youth Crime

Mr KATTER: My question is to the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Increasingly violent and brazen acts of youth crime in Mount Isa are being reported to my electorate office almost daily, with residents' anxiety levels intensifying. Can the minister advise whether the state government will trial new approaches to address the current cycle of youth crime, including relocation sentencing?

Ms LINARD: I thank the member for the question. As the member is aware, we are investing in his area and we are investing in innovative programs, including community based programs like the Mount Isa hub. I know that the member would be aware of the Mount Isa hub and the great work they do in working with young people there. They are working not just with those who have had contact with the youth justice system but also working at preventive contact, working with them to get them back into school, which is where we want them. There are also programs like Transition 2 Success.

What we know with these young people is that when they are involved in education, when we can get them some skills and training and when they are in employment, that is what stops the cycle of youth crime. We know that the community want to see young people having hope for the future. We know that they want to see them engaged in these sorts of programs. We also know that, when young people offend, the community have a right to feel safe and they want to know that the government is taking strong action.

When a young person offends and they are brought before the courts and they need to be held in detention, that is where they need to be. I appreciate that the model for relocation sentencing has been brought forward by the member and his party. I have sat with the member. I have looked at the proposal. I have listened. Relocation sentencing is ultimately about sending a young person away to a remote location, without the services that are actually required to deal with the complexity of young people in the system. That is what it is about.

The services are in the cities. The services are where the young people live. If you send a young person away from family and community, they come back. They come back to community, to the same problems. We need to intervene where they live and we need to deal with the ecosystem from which they come. Every young person comes from a family or from a community. That is what our government is focused on: how do we intervene meaningfully with the ecosystem? I acknowledge the task force under AC Scanlon, who is working so hard across the state with Michael Drain, my senior executive director. How do we increase the interventions and the intensity of those interventions with those young people and their families to stop the cycle?

The other intervention that we have in the member's electorate is On Country. I have met with Mona, which delivers On Country. That is about cultural intervention. I appreciate that relocation sentencing is almost a quasi-model of detention on country, but we will always invest in initiatives which are evidence based. The evidence is not there in respect of relocation sentencing. It is also about sending young people away. If they are a risk, they need to be detained; they need to be remanded. If evidence is presented, our government will always look at the evidence, because we know that the work is never done. I am always happy to meet with the member in his community or here to talk about additional evidence based initiatives.

Climate Change

Dr MacMAHON: My question is for the Premier. Now that the east coast has been twice hit in one month with severe flooding, destroying homes and livelihoods, when will the government phase out fossil fuels with a transition plan for workers so that rampant climate change does not keep killing people and destroying their homes?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. As we know, Queensland gets probably more than its fair share of natural disasters and it is something that our state has been grappling with over numerous years—from cyclones to droughts to floods—but this is not unique to Queensland and it is happening in other parts of the world. That is why we embrace our 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030.

I do not think members will see a government that is more ambitious when it comes to wanting to be a leader in terms of renewables with our \$2 billion investment fund, and not only that but the great investment that Fortescue industries is making in Queensland. It was unfortunate that I was not able to catch up with Andrew Forrest because we had the flooding event. We were due to go to Gladstone to make that significant announcement and do the sod turn for the manufacture of electrolyzers in Gladstone, and we look forward to working more closely with that company. In fact, it is my understanding that that is its biggest investment in the country and Andrew Forrest has personally said to me how good it is to deal with our government.

We are also backing hydrogen, noting that hydrogen is going to be a game changer. We have also announced the \$3,000 rebate for electric vehicles. In fact, it was this government that put in place the first electric vehicle highway. I want to commend Minister Bailey for that and also Minister de Brenni for making sure that our fleet of vehicles is now either hybrid or electric. People can drive into 1 William Street or drive into Parliament House—and I thank the Office of the Speaker as well—and there are charging stations. That is going to be something that we are going to see throughout the state. In terms of our industries, we still have a very strong coal industry, we have a very strong gas industry and we have huge investments—over \$5 billion—coming into renewable energy in this state, and we all need to play our part. Some of our regional areas are doing really well. From memory, Bundaberg in the member for Bundaberg's electorate has the highest number of solar panels on roofs.

Mr Smith: The capital of solar power.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take that interjection: Bundaberg is the capital of solar power. We can all play our part. It is the Labor government that is leading the way when it comes to tackling climate change and having sensible policies that the public embraces.

Roads and Transport Infrastructure, Federal Funding

Mr WHITING: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Will the minister advise the House on the level of federal investment in Queensland's roads and transport infrastructure over the next four years and whether it will be enough to support our booming population?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the member for Bancroft, who is a fierce advocate for infrastructure and road projects in his growing electorate. What we have seen with the federal government is this state government having to carry the load on things like Cross River Rail.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BAILEY: I take the interjection from the member for Burleigh, who wants the light rail to run past his brewery. Do I hear integrity? What has the Leader of the Opposition done about the member for Burleigh wanting light rail to run past his brewery? Absolutely nothing! He talks integrity; he just does not do it. I come back to the question, but I thank the member for Burleigh for that interjection.

We deliver on Cross River Rail. We are delivering on train manufacturing in Maryborough. In the federal budget we saw a promise of \$3.3 billion for Queensland, but when we looked at the detail—when we extracted the detail late at night on federal budget night, because it was hiding it—what we saw is that only \$446 million is coming in the next four years—14 per cent. Fourteen per cent of its big promise is what we get to look forward to beyond the next federal election in 2025.

There are a few nicknames for the Prime Minister. He gave himself his own nickname of ScoMo, just like Campbell Newman did with Can-do. Do members remember that? There was also 'Scotty from marketing' and whatever. What we should be calling him is 'Mr 14 Per Cent', because that is all he is giving Queensland in this federal budget when it comes to road and rail infrastructure. Anyone would know—the Minister for Education would know—that anyone who got 14 per cent on their test would get an F—a fail—so another fail from Scott Morrison.

Let us compare that allocation on road and rail in Queensland—14 per cent or less than \$500 million—to New South Wales, a state with a smaller road network than Queensland. What did it get? \$1.3 billion for New South Wales. We have a Prime Minister for New South Wales. He favours that state when it comes to flood victim financial support. He favours that state on road and rail and does over Queensland, which has the biggest road network in the country.

This has been an absolute F for Queensland in terms of road and rail infrastructure, and that is notwithstanding the sham costs on the Sunshine Coast where the two federal MPs in a Keystone Cops episode could not even get their stories straight about where this invented costing came from. One was the North Coast Connect, which was rejected by Infrastructure Australia; the other one was about somewhere called 'Murrabie'. We presume that means Kuraby, so he does not even know his basic geography in Queensland. The two of them have totally conflicting stories about where this number came from, so no wonder people are cynical on the Sunshine Coast and switching to Labor because they are tired of being taken for granted by Sunshine Coast MPs like the member for Maroochydore.

Government Owned Corporations, Anacta

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Premier. I refer to CleanCo and now the QBCC employing Anacta to engage with their own shareholding ministers. Can the Premier inform the House how many other government owned corporations or statutory bodies have engaged this firm to consult with government ministers and which ones they are?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. Let me say this very clearly: there is no need for anyone to engage with anyone because we have an open door policy which means that my ministers are available to meet with any business community or any community organisation at any time they want to. All they have to do is put a letter into the office and talk to the diary secretary. We have community cabinets across the state. We engage. I say to the member opposite: unlike the Newman days, we very clearly have an open door policy and no-one needs to engage with any government relations person or any lobbyist if they choose not to.

Training and Skills

Mrs McMAHON: My question is of the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development. Will the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's investment in skills and training and the impact of federal government and other proposed policies?

Ms FARMER: I thank the member for her question and I know how much she values skills and training and investment. In fact, I get questions all the time from members on this side of the House about skills and training because they know how absolutely vital it is to our economic recovery. That is in contrast to the opposite side, because I do not think I have been asked a single question without notice by members opposite about skills and training. It is only a topic that is covered in the national media nearly every single day, particularly in relation to labour shortages, so go figure.

One thing we do know about the LNP and skills and training is that it hates TAFE. When it was in government it completely annihilated TAFE and the only skills and training announcement it made coming into the last election was that it was going to set up the skills authority, the very body that it had set up when it was in government to dismantle TAFE and to sack TAFE teachers. We know that since the federal government has been in power it has ripped \$3 billion out of TAFE. We know it hates it—it hates TAFE—and that is why I am so concerned about what the federal government plans to do about TAFE under a national skills agreement.

It was almost two years ago that Scott Morrison announced there would be a national skills agreement to fundamentally determine funding for skills and training in Australia, how we deliver it and what it means for the public provider. Going into the election nearly two years on we still do not know. There was an announcement in the federal budget that they were going to put \$3.75 billion into the national skills agreement, but we have no details.

I have been public about knowing what their plans are for TAFE. I will tell members why TAFE is so important, particularly in a state like Queensland: we believe that everybody, no matter who you are and where you are in Queensland, deserves the right to a good quality vocational education. In Queensland it is expensive. TAFE goes where no private provider can go. It does not matter where you are, whether you are in the Torres Strait, whether you are in Roma, whether you are in Longreach, whether you are in Dalby or whether you are in Gympie, you deserve the same level of training as those in Brisbane or the Gold Coast, or in Sydney or Melbourne.

We know that we already have a party here that hates TAFE. We know that all of these places where it is harder to get training are National Party electorates. We know that their members have been delegated to the back. The National Party has no influence so there is no-one sticking up for TAFE in Queensland. Even if you do not like TAFE, just think about the people in your electorate, those young people who deserve a future. We need to know that they are going to be listening in Canberra, they are going to be hearing the LNP over on the other side, not only that they fund TAFE but that we get our fair share in Queensland to make sure everybody has the same access.

Crime and Corruption Commission, Chairperson

Mrs GERBER: My question is to the Premier. Was the Premier aware that while she was publicly backing the former chair of the CCC, the Attorney-General's office was working to sack him?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I think there is a lot of imputation in relation to that question and it should be ruled out of order.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Everton, you are warned under the standing orders. I am taking advice. Members, I allowed the question. The Premier has responded and the response is completed, but I would remind all members that it is very important in terms of authenticating the detail of the question when asking. I issue a general warning to all members around that.

Forensic and Scientific Services

Ms CAMM: My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the minister's announcement of a review with no reviewer or terms of reference into the government forensic lab. When making this announcement was the minister aware the matter was already being closely looked at by the CCC?

Mrs D'ATH: Could I ask for the question to be repeated?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! members, it is a fair and reasonable request. I ask you to repeat your question, member.

Ms CAMM: My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the minister's announcement of a review with no reviewer or terms of reference into the government forensic lab. When making this announcement was the minister aware the matter was already being closely looked at by the CCC?

Mrs D'ATH: Yes, I was. Thank you.

Federal Budget, Sport Infrastructure

Mr O'ROURKE: My question is to the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, can I please ask you to be silent while the question is being asked. It will assist me and it will assist Hansard. Please state your question again, member.

Mr O'ROURKE: My question is to the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement. Will the minister update the House on what major sport infrastructure commitments were funded in the federal budget, in particular Browne Park in Rockhampton and the Sunshine Coast Stadium upgrade, and is the minister aware of any other approaches?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister. You have two minutes to respond.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for the question. I note his commitment to delivering on an election commitment to the redevelopment of Rockhampton's Browne Park, the real traditional home of rugby league in Central Queensland and the home of the Capras, which last year hosted two NRL premiership games and a semifinal. Construction work on the \$25 million Browne Park Stadium starts this year after the football season concludes. It will deliver a 10,000-seat stadium and 80 jobs for Rockhampton's economic recovery plan. The redevelopment will provide an outstanding first-class venue for sport, concerts and more NRL content.

One would think that this would be a project that the Morrison government would support, but there was not a single cent for it in this week's budget. What we did see in September 2020 was the LNP member for Capricornia, Michelle Landry, make a \$23 million pledge to redeveloping Rockhampton's Victoria Park, part of a bizarre deal with One Nation. Construction was expected to start at the end of last year, but there is not a bulldozer in sight and, guess what, nothing in the budget this week for Victoria Park either. We know the site floods and we know that there has been a falling out with Pauline Hanson so maybe we should not be so surprised it has disappeared.


The LNP should give Queensland its fair share. We know they have not. They should reinvest this \$23 million in the Sunshine Coast Stadium development that the Palaszczuk Labor Party here in Queensland has committed \$20 million to. There are some people in the opposition who think it was their idea. They have stepped up and then nothing has happened. The LNP member for Fisher, Andrew Wallace, promised that the Morrison government would allocate \$20 million for the upgrade in the budget this year. It is not there. Again a Sunshine Coast LNP member delivering nothing. This is all about how we can make sure the best facilities are here in Queensland and the Morrison government delivers nothing.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Members, regrettably the period for question time has expired.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Hotel Quarantine

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumbidgee—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure) (11.16 am): Keeping borders open whilst supporting our economic recovery requires a commitment to a quarantine and isolation management approach that can accommodate a broad range of scenarios, including vaccination status, international border policy and the potential for other variants. As at 14 March, 168,057 people had been through hotel quarantine or isolation throughout the pandemic. At its peak, there were over 5,110 people at one time across 22 hotels. Ninety-three different hotels have been used in total. A peak of around 1,200 police per day were committed to COVID operations, including hotel quarantine and border operations. Quarantine and isolation health measures have kept Queenslanders safe and continue to support recovery from the pandemic.

The cost of renting out entire hotels is significant, but it pales in comparison to the impact lockdowns and harsher restrictions have on business. A week-long lockdown is estimated to cost over \$700 million in lost economic activity. Throughout this pandemic the Palaszczuk government has always ensured we are prepared for whatever might come. To deliver fit-for-purpose facilities as quickly as possible, the state fast tracked implementation of the quarantine management task force incorporating experts. The task force retains a network of isolation options in line with public health advice, including regional hotels.

The Queensland Regional Accommodation Centre at Wellcamp allows us to tackle what comes next and continues to keep Queenslanders safe. Wellcamp is supporting Queensland's response to the Omicron wave and any future waves of the pandemic. The facility is also able to be used for emergent need and has been available to local district disaster management groups for evacuation and emergency accommodation during the recent South-East Queensland floods. I can advise the House the Queensland government is currently talking to New South Wales about how they might use the Wellcamp facilities to provide temporary accommodation for people whose homes have been impacted by flooding.


As of today, 31 March, the only hotels left operational are six regional hotels retained for the purposes of isolation of COVID-well vulnerable people in the community. They are in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Gold Coast and Mount Isa. These arrangements will be scaled down subject to Queensland Health advice regarding the current wave. The Novotel Brisbane Airport, which has capacity to take quarantine guests in emergent circumstances such as transit, will remain available. From 5 February to 31 March the cost of quarantine and isolation hotels totals \$26.9 million.

Since opening Wellcamp and beginning the hotel decommissioning, we have saved \$8.5 million per month. By the time the additional hotels such as those in regional Queensland cease in the coming months, there will be a further saving of \$5.7 million per month. The reduction of hotels has been done in accordance with advice from Queensland Health and the Chief Health Officer, having regard to the health modelling at all times. The updated network strategy is determined by the program board.

The exit from use of hotels has been well planned in a staggered way to ensure sufficient contingency to support our healthcare system. We have an obligation to respect the contractual notice periods of each hotel and their contract expiry dates. When a decision is made not to keep a hotel operational, it does not mean that those contractual obligations cease immediately. We do, however, realise savings associated with no longer paying for the security, health and community support costs at those facilities. All of this has been done despite the fact that the constitution is very clear that quarantine is a responsibility of the Commonwealth. These measures have kept Queenslanders safe in accordance with the health advice, even while those opposite repeatedly called for our borders to be opened and quarantine to be ended well before the health advice suggested it should.

PERSONAL INJURIES PROCEEDINGS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.21 am): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): The message from Her Excellency recommends the Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

PERSONAL INJURIES PROCEEDINGS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, DR JEANNETTE ROSITA YOUNG PSM, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—


A Bill for an Act to amend the Electoral Act 1992, the Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2020, the Legal Profession Act 2007, the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994, the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002 and the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 for particular purposes

GOVERNOR

Date: 31 March 2022

Tabled paper: Message, dated 31 March 2022, from Her Excellency the Governor, recommending the Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 [\[475\]](#).

Introduction

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.22 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Electoral Act 1992, the Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2020, the Legal Profession Act 2007, the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994, the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002 and the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of capability with human rights. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 [\[476\]](#).

Tabled paper: Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, explanatory notes [\[477\]](#).

Tabled paper: Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[478\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The main purpose of the bill is to: stop claim farming for personal injury and workers compensation claims; prevent undesirable costs agreement practices by law practices for personal injury claims; confirm the policy intent for when an entitlement to terminal workers compensation arises under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003; and make technical and clarifying amendments to the Electoral Act 1992 relating to fundraising contributions and state campaign accounts and disclosure returns.

I will deal firstly with the issue of claim farming. Acknowledging the agile nature of the claim farming industry and the concerns of stakeholders that personal injuries claims, particularly institutional child sexual abuse and workers compensation claims, are being claim farmed, there is merit in proactively preventing widespread claim farming across all personal injury schemes and ensuring parity across personal injury legislation in Queensland.

Claim farming is a process by which a third party, the claim farmer, cold calls or approaches individuals to pressure them into making a compensation claim for personal injuries. Claim farmers may use high-pressure and deceptive tactics to elicit the individual's personal information and agreement to submit a claim, often with the lure of quick, easy and significant compensation and even offering to coordinate medical treatment. This information is then sold, for a fee, to a lawyer or claims management service provider to handle the claim.

Members will recall that in 2019 the Palaszczuk government introduced the Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019 to stop the increasingly prevalent practice of claim farming compulsory third party claims. These amendments have been successful in interrupting the market in which claim farmers sought to sell their product. However, it has become apparent that since the Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Act was enacted, the claim farming industry has pivoted to new types of claims. There have been reports of a growing prevalence of claim farming activity for personal injury and workers compensation claims that make it necessary to expand claim farming prohibitions into these markets.

The bill amends the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002, the Legal Profession Act 2007 and the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 to introduce provisions modelled on the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994 that: prohibit cold calling or personally approaching another person without their consent and soliciting or inducing them to make a claim; make it an offence for any person to pay claim farmers for the details of potential claimants or to receive payment for a claim referral or potential claim referral; impose obligations on legal practitioners who represent injured claimants to certify during the claims process that neither they nor their associates have paid a claim farmer for the claim; require law practices to refund, or not recover, fees and disbursements paid in connection with a claim that has been claim farmed; provide the Legal Services Commission with additional powers to oversee and enforce the new claim farming provisions; and expand the Workers' Compensation Regulator's enforcement and investigation powers so it can effectively prosecute claim farming.

As I have indicated, the bill inserts provisions in the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act and the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act that create new offences prohibiting claim farming practices. These offences are modelled on the equivalent offences in the Motor Accident Insurance Act. The first offence removes the financial incentive to engage in claim farming by prohibiting a person from giving or receiving consideration for referring a claimant or potential claimant. This offence aims to prevent a person from paying a claim farmer for the details of potential claimants or receiving payment for a claim referral or potential claim referral.

The second offence prohibits a person from personally approaching or contacting another person to solicit or induce them to make a claim. Personal approach or contact includes contact by mail, telephone, email or other forms of electronic communication. This offence aims to prohibit the act of cold calling or personally approaching another person without their consent to solicit or induce them to make a personal injury claim.

Like the Motor Accident Insurance Act, the bill provides certain exceptions for these offences. The first offence will not apply to a law practice that is selling its business to another law practice provided the new practice pays for the referral of a claimant or potential claimant and the amount is consistent with the current fees and costs the law practice is entitled to charge for the claim. Additionally, the first offence does not prohibit advertising or promoting a service or person to the public or a group, which results in a claimant using the service or person. Similarly, the second offence will not apply if the act of contacting a potential claimant is not expected or intended to result in, and does not result in, that person or another person receiving consideration because of the contact.

Additionally, there are circumstances where a law practice or lawyer may contact a person. The first is if a law practice or lawyer has previously provided services to the person and the law practice or lawyer reasonably believes that the person will not object to that approach or contact. The second is if a community legal service or industrial organisation has asked the law practice or lawyer to contact the person and it is advised that the person will not object to that approach or contact.

To ensure law practices abide by the claim farming provisions and consistent with the Motor Accident Insurance Act, the bill will require law practice certificates to be completed and provided by law practices representing a claimant at various points during the personal injury and workers compensation claim process. A law practice certificate must state the supervising principal and each associate of the law practice has not paid a claim farmer for the claim or approached, solicited or induced the claimant to make a claim in contravention of the claim farming provisions. Additionally, and in line with the objective of the bill in preventing undesirable billing practices, when a claim is a

speculative personal injury claim, the law practice certificate must also state that the costs agreement complies with the rules regarding costs under the Legal Profession Act and section 71E of the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act.

It is noted that the Queensland workers compensation scheme comprises a no-fault statutory component as well as the common law component. In this context, the bill creates a requirement for the provision of a law practice certificate if a workers compensation claimant becomes legally represented as part of a statutory claim and upon receipt of a direction to pay compensation to an account held by a law practice or within seven days after payment of certain lump sum compensation.

A breach of the obligation to provide a law practice certificate, or providing a false or misleading certificate, attracts a maximum penalty of 300 penalty units. In addition to the penalties for noncompliance with the law practice certificate requirements, law practices may need to refund, or may not be entitled to recover, fees and disbursements paid in connection with a claim. Additionally, if a law practice is convicted of certain specified law practice certificate and claim farming offences, the law practice is not entitled to recover any fees or costs including disbursements that relate to the provision of services for the claim and must repay any amount received.

To ensure the oversight and enforcement of the claim farming and law practice certificate provisions, the bill extends the role of the Legal Services Commissioner and the Workers' Compensation Regulator by providing the power to investigate and prosecute breaches of the claim farming provisions. Additionally, the commissioner and regulator may appoint an investigator, also referred to as a special investigator under the Legal Profession Act provisions, who will have extensive powers to investigate suspected contraventions of the claim farming offences.

To ensure the investigator can properly investigate breaches, a person under investigation cannot claim legal professional privilege or the privilege of self-incrimination as a reason for failing to comply with a request of the investigator. However, the bill will counterbalance the abrogation of both privileges by specifying that, if a person discloses a privileged client communication when complying with a requirement of these provisions, the person is taken to have not breached legal professional privilege. The disclosure also does not constitute a waiver of legal professional privilege or otherwise affect any claim of legal professional privilege for any purpose other than a proceeding for an offence against specified law practice certificate and claim farming provisions.

The bill also introduces information sharing provisions. This is essential, as claim farmers can act across schemes, and may target dual liability claims. Where nefarious conduct is detected, the Workers' Compensation Regulator, the Legal Services Commission and the Motor Accident Insurance Commission will be able to proactively share information on claim farming activity, enabling more efficient and targeted investigations.

I turn now to amendments to address undesirable billing practices by lawyers. Currently, the Legal Profession Act limits legal costs that can be charged in speculative personal injury matters to 50 per cent of legal costs after disbursements, known as the fifty-fifty rule. Concerns have been raised with me that law practices are utilising undesirable billing practices by inflating disbursements, through the charging of 'additional amounts', thereby increasing the amount of legal costs that can be charged and in turn reducing the amount payable to the successful claimant.

To address some of these concerns, amendments in the bill will provide for these additional amounts to be treated as legal costs and not disbursements when determining whether the legal costs charged to a client exceed the fifty-fifty rule under the act.

I turn now to amendments relating to terminal compensation. The bill includes an amendment to confirm when an entitlement for terminal compensation arises under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003. Importantly, the proposed amendment does not prevent workers from accessing terminal compensation; instead, it confirms when the entitlement arises.

The bill inserts an explicit timeframe of three years in the definition of terminal condition and this timeframe will apply to latent onset terminal conditions sustained on or after 31 January 2015. The amendments will ensure terminal compensation is accessed when most needed by workers in the end stages of life and protects the sustainability of the scheme for all workers who may need it.

Separately, the bill makes technical and clarifying amendments to address implementation issues concerning the new political donation caps that are scheduled to commence under the Electoral Act 1992 on 1 July this year. The bill will correct an unintended policy outcome regarding the payment of fundraising contributions into a state campaign account of registered political parties and candidates. The bill clarifies that a fundraising contribution that may be paid into the state campaign account is

limited to an amount of \$200 without being subject to the political donation caps. The part of a fundraising contribution that exceeds \$200 must be a political donation and subject to the caps to be paid into the state campaign account. This reflects the original policy intent of the amendments.

Additionally, to assist the Electoral Commission of Queensland in monitoring compliance of new political donation caps, the bill will amend the disclosure return requirements for gifts to registered political parties and candidates. From 1 July 2022, it will be a requirement that a disclosure return for these gifts specifies whether or not the gift is a political donation. For political donations given to an electoral committee established by a registered political party, it will also be a requirement for the disclosure return to state the relevant electoral district. This additional information will ensure that the ECQ can effectively and efficiently monitor compliance with the political donation caps.

In conclusion, I can assure parliament that the claim farming amendments will not affect the rights of genuinely injured Queenslanders to initiate and progress legitimate claims under the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act or the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act. The amendments will, however, prevent them from being incentivised, harassed and induced into making a claim by a claim farmer who will receive payment for the referral.

It is intended that this bill will remove the financial incentive for claim farmers to harass Queenslanders and will amplify the disincentive for legal practitioners to engage with claim farmers given that they will be required to certify, at various stages of the claim process, that the claim was not claim farmed. Lawyers will still be able to inform people of their rights and entitlements at law and to advertise and promote their services. However, what this bill aims to do is stop the harassing calls and intimidating behaviour—all too often targeted at the most vulnerable within our communities—and minimise the potential for unmeritorious claims and fraudulent behaviour in relation to personal injury and workers' compensation claims.

Queensland will be the first jurisdiction in the country to introduce explicit claim farming offences for a workers' compensation scheme and its coverage will prevent the workers' compensation scheme from becoming an unregulated avenue for claims farmers. By doing so, the Palaszczuk government maintains its proud record of supporting Queensland workers and maintaining a strong and sustainable scheme. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. SM FENTIMAN (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.37 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Legal Affairs and Safety Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee.


PUBLIC HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION (EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 30 March (see p. 783), on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Before I call the minister, I remind the following members that they are on a warning under the standing orders: the members for Burleigh, Nanango, Kawana, Gregory, Southern Downs, Mudgeeraba, Lytton, Theodore, Glass House, Toowoomba North, Clayfield and Everton.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (11.38 am), continuing: I resume this debate. I think I ended yesterday by saying that we thanked Queenslanders for their role in their remarkable effort in keeping Queensland safe,

particularly at the height of Delta and the other variants that we had when we first became aware of this terrible world health pandemic. We fared so well because all of Queensland has taken the advice from Queensland's Chief Health Officer. What fantastic chief health officers we in this state have had. When members on the other side say, 'Table the advice; what is the advice?' I point out that these chief health officers have stood up in the media nearly every single day, given advice to the people of Queensland and taken to date thousands of questions on why different initiatives were put in. They explained what is occurring, let the public know the information they had at hand and referred to the AHPPC advice. It has been extraordinary.

I do not remember a time where we knew the chief health officers as well as we in this state did during the world health pandemic. To somehow suggest that any information given in relation to what is required to combat COVID was done in the dark, that nobody knew anything about it and that Queenslanders did not understand is completely and utterly misleading and wrong. These people have given of their time seven days a week, week after week, day after day—an incredible effort by our CHOs.

The Premier, the health minister and all ministers have stood up in the media and taken thousands of questions on this issue. Queenslanders were well aware of why these decisions were taken and that is why they followed the lead of the Premier. To suggest otherwise is misleading this House.


As we have seen, new strains can develop quickly. We are now facing a second Omicron wave with the BA.2 variant. It is important that we extend these public health provisions to ensure we can continue to respond to rapidly evolving situations. Anything else would be irresponsible. It is no wonder that at the 2020 election the people of Queensland so vehemently voted against those opposite.

When I became the Minister for Education I could never have predicted that a global pandemic would bring a complete change to the way school operated. I am incredibly proud of how hard my department and schools have worked. I welcome the students who are in the gallery. We are talking about COVID at the moment. I am talking about what we have put in place to keep schools open so students can get a face-to-face education. In Queensland over the last two years we have had a very good track record of keeping schools open. For about six months of last year, students, Queensland schools were the only schools on the eastern seaboard with face-to-face learning. Schools in New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT were not fully open. Students were learning from home for about six months. That was completely different to the situation here in Queensland. That is because we have these health directives and we have kept Queenslanders safe.

I thank you, students. I know you have used your hand sanitiser. I know you have washed your hands. I know you have tried to socially distance as much as you can. I know the wearing of masks can be difficult. In primary schools it was not mandatory but I know that some of you may have been needed to wear masks. It has not been easy. It has been a difficult start to this term, but tomorrow you go on holidays. I wish you all the best. We will welcome you back on the Tuesday after Easter Monday.

My department has worked with Queensland Health to ensure that we have had pop-up vaccination clinics. I put another call out: vaccination is the way to go. It is the best protection. It is the best way to get over COVID quickly. I was triple vaxxed when I got COVID. Without doubt, I am sure that that is what helped me get back on my feet after seven days.

We had a comprehensive back-to-school plan. We have RATs in schools. We are assisting schools through today and tomorrow. We hope the holidays brings us to another phase of the pandemic, but we do not know where we are going to be. These directives are absolutely essential. Anyone who says that we do not need them in order to be nimble and responsive to whatever changes lie ahead is misleading the House. Thank goodness it is the Palaszczuk Labor government in charge in this state because if it were those opposite the floodgates would be open and the borders would be open. Lord knows where we would be. I support the bill and commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (11.43 am): COVID-19 has caused significant trauma to the lives of not only Queenslanders but also people across Australia and the world. Contrasting views and emotions abound, whether within our communities, in scientific realms or in this chamber, as we are seeing. I have stood here in parliament on numerous occasions over the last two years sharing the reality from my community—many positive, including the incredible efforts by all and especially our front liners, as well as catastrophic. From divisions created by mandates to devastating impacts to our small businesses and workers, there is so much I could revisit.

However, instead I want to focus on this bill and the committee inquiry process that has failed Queenslanders. When the last extension was granted in September 2021, opposition and crossbench members felt that six months was too long for such wide and sweeping powers. If the last three months is any indication, this was justified. The silence from government in response to my and our questions and the pleas and speeches made on behalf of communities over this time has been deafening.

This extension is authorising the continuance of this silence as well as lockdowns, quarantine and mask and vaccine mandates without the needed transparency, consultation or reference back to this parliament for scrutiny. We are being asked to do this without any forward strategy, as previously requested, nor data or scientific advice to support the determinations. There has been no effort to develop legislation that is suitable for our current circumstances, which is vastly different to where we started. Yes, COVID-19 remains a risk to vulnerable Queenslanders and our health system and protections are needed; however, with the federal health minister announcing, following medical advice, that Australia's biosecurity emergency pandemic measures will not be renewed when they lapse on 17 April as well as our high vaccination rates, the question is simple: why do we require emergency powers given, as we have heard, if for any reason we are faced with the need for these powers again we can reconvene parliament here or remotely if speed is required.

During the committee's inquiry into this bill there was overwhelming opposition and concerns—not only from everyday Queenslanders but also from respected peak independent bodies. Despite public submissions only being open for a couple of weeks, thousands were received. The vast majority considered the COVID-19 powers to be discriminatory and responsible for creating division in families, segregating society—citing impacts of restrictions on individuals, small and medium business owners and communities—creating the inability to work, pay rents or mortgages and declining mental and physical health. From my community over so many months, the impacts and trauma are incalculable and ongoing, including an increase year on year for two years of 30 per cent in domestic violence.

The Queensland Human Rights Commission stated in its submission that powers imposing such significant human rights limitations cannot—I repeat, cannot—continue without proper oversight, transparency and external review. Oversight, transparency and external review are critical as they have been missing in these last months. How can we determine if the loss of human rights is justified without this or build the needed public confidence and trust to deal with waves and variants?

The Queensland Law Society in its submission, even though broadly supporting the legislation, called for a parliamentary committee to be given oversight powers in respect of COVID-19 related legislation and executive implementation of this legislation. Alternatively, if a single parliamentary committee is not to have a COVID-19 response oversight mandate, each and every parliamentary committee should be given the power to inquire into any relevant emergency measure of its own volition. Any parliamentarian should also be able to make a referral to the committee. This is essential. These points are instrumental and critical for all Queenslanders. Opposition and crossbench members of the committee stated in their statements of reservation that decisions to issue health directives must be evidence based, transparent and consider human rights implications.

There were some stakeholders that expressed general support for the extension. The Australian College of Nursing indicated that designated officials needed capacity and flexibility. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists stated that this was needed because COVID-19 is still present. Simply saying COVID-19 is still here to validate an extension of such powers is not sufficient. Queenslanders need to be consulted and their questions answered.

This leads me to the process that has seen this bill come into this chamber without any amendments or recommendations through the committee or from government. Of concern is the time for debate. We have many MPs who are not going to have the opportunity to speak. This is shocking. As we did the other night to accommodate the flood appeal, we should extend debate time tonight to ensure every MP has had a voice for their communities.

Anyone who has ever listened to me speak, or who knows me, knows that I objectively look at each bill and process. I am not one to get up here on my soapbox. However, for the last four years I and other MPs have requested our committee system to be reviewed as it is failing what it was set up to do. This bill has actually highlighted those flaws as it does not even attempt to address the concerns or the recommendations raised including from the Human Rights Commission for legislation that is fit for purpose—which this bill is not.

Ms PEASE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I would ask that you direct the member to come back to the long title of the bill.


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): I will get some guidance. Member, I have been listening very carefully and your contributions are in line with the bill. I ask you to continue.

Ms BOLTON: Thank you. This bill is not fit for purpose. It should have been if our systems worked. In addition, the public consultation period was for a couple of weeks. There was a committee inquiry for only 31 days. There was only one public hearing of one hour. This lack of scrutiny, which is necessary for such a momentous bill, implies a rushed process that is unacceptable. As the member for Maiwar said in his statement of reservation, if our parliamentary processes provided for genuine scrutiny of the government's legislative agenda, their report into this bill would have offered a more rigorous critique of the proposal in line with the concerns raised by members of the community and key submitters than to simply extend the existing COVID-19 public health regime.

I ask all MPs to consider the words of the Queensland Human Rights Commissioner that 'any limitations on rights should be necessary, proportionate, and fit for purpose, and the justification for those limitations should be backed by evidence'. Regardless of responses from government, this has not been provided, and I have not heard in this chamber any avenue to address that except through amendments put forward by the opposition to obtain this oversight needed and which I support.

Whilst I thank the committee and secretariat, all submitters, attendees at the public hearing and the department for their consideration of this bill, I cannot thank a system that is failing Queenslanders. We were meant to be in this together. However, in recent months there has been disparity. I was embarrassed when financially vulnerable workers were mandated to be vaccinated, yet as MPs, who are highly paid, we were not. Then when our residents became homeless, losing their jobs, businesses and mental and physical health, we were given a pay rise. This was appalling.

We are now living alongside COVID-19. We have a journey to go and need to end this disparity. To support this bill without amendments that ensure oversight, accountability, transparency, support for evidence based decision-making and independent reviews of determinations is to support a form of autocracy versus democracy—and we should never support that, nor any bill that is against recommendations of the Human Rights Commission. Keeping vulnerable Queenslanders safe is essential, but that needs to include our financially and mentally vulnerable, and we are shamefully not doing that.

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (11.53 am): I rise in support of the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill. A public health emergency was initially declared in Queensland, under section 319 of the Public Health Act, on 29 January 2020 as a direct result of the COVID-19 outbreak and its pandemic potential for Queenslanders and for those who travel into and through this state.

I want to say at the outset that the effect and the impact of COVID-19 has, for the most part, been quite catastrophic for individuals, for families at risk particularly, for our small business community who have faced the brunt of lockdowns and for our school communities—students and teachers alike. No-one has been untouched in the past two years. I do acknowledge that we are weary. We crave the way things were before, and I feel those feelings too. I crave a reality that involves hugs and overseas adventures and sharing plates of food. For the most part, in Queensland, we actually do have those things.

Our reality here in Queensland is that this pandemic is not over. There is an argument for proportionate restrictions on where people can gather and the types of activities that should be shaped to make us safer when we do gather. As at 16 February this year, the World Health Organization reported over 414 million confirmed positive COVID-19 cases globally—which is extraordinary. The Commonwealth Department of Health reported over 2.6 million confirmed COVID-19 cases, including over 4,700 deaths here in Australia. In Queensland, there have been over 500,000 confirmed cases, with almost 400 deaths relating to COVID-19 being Queensland residents. We heard yesterday in the member for Greenslopes' contribution the impact it has had on our healthcare workers. I believe he said that over 180,000 healthcare workers have lost their life through this pandemic. My thoughts are with their loved ones.

This is an unpredictable pandemic and its impact, as I have already said, has been felt across our health, our community and our economic systems. Fortunately, Queenslanders wrote the book on resilience. We have risen to the challenge and our effective public health response has enabled high vaccination rates to be reached across the Queensland population.

In my electorate, the vast majority of people are fully vaccinated—well over 90 per cent. In fact, in some suburbs 99 per cent of people are fully vaccinated. I want to place my thanks on the record to them. Nobody is rushing out wanting to get a jab for fun. We are doing it because we recognise the compelling and scientifically established need to protect ourselves, our loved ones, our neighbours, our community and our friends against an illness that can have immediate and fatal consequences.

The risk of adverse impacts to the health system, economy and the community still remains. We are seeing that play out now in our education and small business environments particularly which are again feeling the brunt of absenteeism. In late 2021, and aided by such high voluntary uptakes in vaccination, here in Queensland we did transition our approach towards one that acknowledged a need to adjust to living with and responding to COVID-19 within our communities.

As Queensland transitions to living with COVID-19, some restrictions may still need to be maintained or activated, such as mask wearing in areas of increased community transmission and vaccination requirements for high-risk settings. Recent events like the emergence of Omicron and the Delta variant before that serve as a clear and compelling reminder of how rapidly COVID-19 can spread, with the potential to significantly impact hospital systems. A rapid and flexible public health response is still required to protect the health, safety and welfare of Queenslanders and to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our community.


Ongoing COVID-19 responses are likely to be responsive to the needs of local communities, with consideration given to those local vaccination rates and the health system capacity. It is critical that flexibility is retained to ensure that, as restrictions are eased and normal social and economic activity resume, appropriate public health measures can continue to be put in place where necessary to address ongoing public health risks and to protect our health systems.

Extending legislative measures past 30 April to support the public health response to the COVID-19 emergency will ensure Queensland remains well placed to respond to the changing nature of the pandemic and to support the government's long-term objective of safeguarding the health of Queenslanders and will support Queensland's economic recovery plan.

Extending the temporary legislative framework in the Public Health Act until the COVID-19 public health legislation expiry date will ensure that the Chief Health Officer can continue to apply any of the existing public health measures that may be necessary beyond this time. This may include measures and response to new variants that emerge and management of health system capacity. The discretionary nature of the CHO's powers under the Public Health Act provide flexibility in relation to the public health responses appropriate to manage the pandemic.

I have heard some of the objections and issues raised by members in relation to the bill. I also want to acknowledge the very strong views from some members in our community about the Queensland government—in fact, their views about many governments' legislative responses to managing COVID. Queensland's response, under the temporary legislative framework, has served Queensland well. It has driven our vaccination rates. We have a strong track record on keeping our schools open, on keeping businesses open. Absolutely there has been change and, where some industries have performed really well, others have taken an incredible hit, and we know this. We have put in place a number of financial relief and other measures to support those impacted through this extraordinary moment in our history.

In regard to comments about parliamentary oversight of the emergency powers and implementation, this legislative framework has been through relevant parliamentary committee inquiries. The CHO and his department are constrained to operate within this legislative framework and are still subject to overarching legislation, like the Queensland Human Rights Act. Regulations to extend the declared public emergency are also subject to parliamentary scrutiny and disallowance. This further temporary extension is a proportionate and necessary response to a global pandemic that is still with us. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (12.00 pm): I rise to contribute to the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022. It is just over two years since governments at all levels in Australia responded to the threat of COVID-19. The initial predictions sent a chill up the spine of many, and governments reacted based on the information they had. Queenslanders, like all other Australians, responded accordingly. Like a number of other members in this House, my family has not been immune from COVID—with my son contracting COVID last week. It is touching many of us across this state. The impact of government action at the state, federal and even local government level was huge. Restrictions meant long planned events were cancelled at a moment's notice. Celebrating a marriage or farewelling a loved one was thrown into chaos, but Queenslanders overwhelmingly did the right thing.

We are now in a very different position. More than 90 per cent of adults have received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. We have moved past a multitude of contact types—where a casual contact of a close contact was treated similarly to a person who had actually contracted COVID-19. Today I am

calling for this state government to repay the enormous efforts and the commitment made by Queenslanders. I am not calling for anything more than openness and honesty, and surely Queenslanders deserve that.

I will be supporting the amendments moved by my colleague the member for Mudgeeraba because they are practical, commonsense amendments that reflect the changing face of COVID-19 in Queensland. Firstly, the member for Mudgeeraba is a health professional. Regardless of the petty attacks by those opposite, Queenslanders support all of our health professionals, and that has been proven during this pandemic. Like all members on this side of the House, I believe that Queenslanders deserve to see the health advice. It is a very different time today than it was just over two years ago. Back then, many of us had never heard the phrase 'health advice' uttered so many times. We complied—in fact we did more than comply—and in my opinion Queenslanders went above and beyond day after day.

More than two years later, the health advice is still not available to the people who have sacrificed so much. It is easy for the minister to refer to an abundance of information when it comes to COVID-19, but surely it is not the responsibility of people who have done the right thing to track down that information. The Premier and the relevant ministers have relied on that health advice provided to them. That health advice was the basis of restrictions and mandates: restrictions that meant people could not say goodbye to a loved one, restrictions that meant people missed the birth of a family member, restrictions that led to heartbreak—heartbreak that Queenslanders faced in good faith based on health advice they had never seen.

At this time I would like to pass on my thanks to the many people who were dragged into that heartbreak—our health professionals, our emergency services and even the staff in our own offices who were confronted by people who felt lost but complied. I know that, like members in this House and their staff, my staff were affected by the sadness, fear and frustration faced by constituents. I also place on the record my thanks to the staff in the Minister for Health's and the police minister's offices who provided assistance and guidance to both my staff and constituents, many times outside of work hours. While I may not agree politically with those ministers, I acknowledge the work of their staff and I thank them for their efforts.

No-one can deny that COVID-19 and the restrictions put in place by government have had a massive impact on people across the state. Like many members on this side of the House, I have spoken with small business owners, cafe owners and hoteliers who were struggling to keep their businesses afloat and their staff employed, and that has continued to this day. In their voices, I could hear the frustration and the fear that their life's work was all for nothing, but they complied. They made the massive changes to their operations and, in addition to suffering financially, they suffered personally.


At the core of all of this was the inconsistency in how those mandates were imposed and how they were enforced. Members on this side of the House are well aware of the challenges that communities in regional Queensland face when it comes to service delivery. In my electorate of the Burdekin, I have towns with under-resourced or even non-existent medical services. In my electorate we have schools with 10—yes, 10—outstanding staff vacancies, with many of these vacancies linked to vaccination mandates. Despite the huge challenges the staff at those hospitals and schools face while being disregarded by this government, they have done again what they always do—they have stood up for and stood by their communities during the COVID response.

The Burdekin electorate is home to a substantial part of the Bowen Basin. Like others throughout the electorate, the miners who live and work in that electorate have sacrificed based on the health advice. FIFO and DIDO workers have been unable to return home to see families due to travel restrictions, and the workers who live locally have had to contend with some of their co-workers simply being unavailable. Despite that, they have continued to keep the economy ticking over. Despite that, without the amendments moved by the member for Mudgeeraba, those people will not have access to the health advice that they have complied with despite the drastic effects it has had on their lives.

The second reason I am supporting the member for Mudgeeraba's amendments is oversight. As I mentioned, Queenslanders have not been given access to the health advice; instead, the Premier and senior members deflect to the current or the past Chief Health Officer whenever the questions get tough. There is no denying that the position of Chief Health Officer is crucial and deserving of respect, but in a democracy that does not mean that the position is immune from oversight. In recent months we have seen the importance of oversight when it comes to fighting corruption and to ensuring integrity

in government. Sadly, it has taken that oversight and brave individuals to force this government to act on integrity, but oversight is not just about holding a government to account. Oversight is part of our democracy because oversight results in better legislation.

I will be supporting the amendments moved by the member for Mudgeeraba. Queenslanders have done the right thing and they deserve to be respected. They have sacrificed and they deserve good, solid health advice that is transparent. I call on all members to support the member for Mudgeeraba's amendments. To do otherwise is failing to acknowledge the sacrifice that Queenslanders have made. We need to see a clear plan going forward to provide that confidence and clarity that our community needs in these times of uncertainty. Is that too much to ask?

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (12.08 pm): I rise to make my contribution and speak in support of the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022. I understand from what I have looked at that 10,626 Queenslanders have been diagnosed with COVID in the last 24 hours, 395 Queenslanders are in hospital, 15 are in ICU and nine have died in the last 48 hours. Over 730 Queenslanders have died since this pandemic began, and over 5,900 Australians have died across our nation since this pandemic began.

The COVID-19 pandemic remains unpredictable in Australia and around the world. The public health measures that we have are necessary to respond if new variants emerge that are more transmissible, more severe or both, and that has been recognised by people on both sides of this chamber. The measures will also allow the Queensland government to continue to manage health system capacity coming into the winter months. The bill sets up the enabling framework for the Queensland government's COVID-19 response. It enables a range of things to be done, but it does not require the powers to be used.

The powers proposed to be extended by the bill do not need to be exercised if the risk remains low. However, it enables the Chief Health Officer to respond rapidly if new threats emerge. It also ensures that the Chief Health Officer can quickly wind back restrictions as soon as they are no longer required. It is important to note that. I will say that again: it gives the Chief Health Officer the ability to wind restrictions back as soon as they are no longer needed.

Since late 2021, restrictions have been steadily easing, particularly as we have seen the compliance rate in relation to vaccinations. Our borders are open to domestic and overseas arrivals. Quarantine is no longer required for vaccinated persons. Masks are no longer required except in limited places, and obviously we are encouraging people who still feel at risk should they want to use them to do so. However, the Chief Health Officer has made clear that he considers withdrawing all public health controls in one go would be reckless.

I want to state from the outset that in Queensland, in comparison to other jurisdictions in the Commonwealth and also when we look overseas, our performance and our management of this has been impressive, to say the least. We have done an outstanding job even when we look at other states in our Commonwealth and, as I said, when we look overseas. The reason is we have taken the scientific and measured and calculated advice from the health experts. We do not bring politics into this. We do not bring the unmeasurable emotion into it. We need to be relied on to be doing what the science tells us. This is what we have done and what we will continue to do.

It reminds me a little bit of that movie where you get the bad bloke at the end and you think you have knocked him out; you get up and you are about to walk away and the bad bloke jumps up again. We need to kill this thing dead.

Mr O'Connor: Which movie is that?

Mr HEALY: Sam, I will explain it to you; it is an old movie.

Mr O'Connor: What movie?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Through the chair, please, member for Cairns.

Mr HEALY: Mr Deputy Speaker, there are some great old movies where they just do not knock the bad bloke on the head and as a result this is what happens. We will not let that happen. Without the measures in the bill, people who have COVID-19, or are suspected of having COVID-19, would only be required to quarantine for a maximum of four days under a direction given by a doctor; the Chief Health Officer would not be able to give a public health direction, such as a direction to manage access to vulnerable facilities like residential aged care or disability accommodation services; and the public health emergency could only be extended by regulation for seven days at a time. These are the facts; they remain undisputed.

The bill only extends provisions that are directly related to the public health response. This includes: powers in the Public Health Act 2005 that increase powers for emergency officers and the Chief Health Officer to limit, or respond to, the spread of COVID-19 in Queensland; authorise the sharing of confidential information of contact tracing; encourage compliance with public health directions and directions by emergency officers by providing penalties for contraventions; increase the period for which a regulation may extend a declared public health emergency from seven to 90 days; provide for quarantine fee arrangements; and public health measures in the Corrective Services Act 2006, Disaster Management Act 2003 and the Mental Health Act 2016.

The bill also continues provisions to support the operation of the Retail Shop Leases and Other Commercial Leases (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020 which have been continued until 30 April 2024. Nobody has made any mention of these. The transition expiring COVID-19 laws put in place back-to-normal operations.

The bill does not extend a range of other amendments made to other portfolio legislation in response to COVID-19. These measures were put in place to provide regulatory relief and continue the operation of institutions and businesses early in the pandemic.

As Queensland transitions to more normal conditions, temporary measures are no longer necessary unless they are part of the public health response. This bill does not repeal these measures. Rather, they will expire in accordance with the sunset provisions made by the parliament in September 2021 as part of the Public Health and Other Legislation (Further Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Act 2021. Some beneficial temporary measures have been made permanent.


From the beginning of this pandemic, the government's goal was to protect Queenslanders and to protect the health system until viable vaccinations and treatments were available. We successfully reached that point late last year, with only 2,318 cases and seven deaths when the Queensland border reopened on 13 December.

As I say, when we look at other jurisdictions, they are solid figures. In line with the national plan to transition Australia's national response to COVID-19, Queensland has moved from an elimination approach to a suppression approach, and we will gradually move to living with COVID. That has been well and truly covered by this government in a range of areas.

I want to finish by saying that I, like many, have been impacted. I talk to people in my community who, for whatever reason, do not want to get vaccinated. I understand the challenges they face. When people are talking about freedoms, I question the authenticity of some of those statements. At the end of the day, our goal is to protect the people of this state. We have made a commitment and we do so. In doing so, I also want to acknowledge the work of not only the current health minister but also the previous health minister. I want to acknowledge the work of Dr Young who was under an enormous amount of pressure and was attacked enormously unfairly for doing what was absolutely right: listening to the science and doing the right thing by the people of this state. I also acknowledge Dr Gerrard who continues in that role.

I pass on my condolences to people who have lost loved ones during this pandemic. I know it is tough; I lost my father. Four of us buried him. There were hundreds of people who would have loved to have farewelled him.

I understand the pressure that police are under. I understand the pressure that doctors and nurses are under every single day. I find it absolutely remarkable the politicisation that some people make of this topic. It is a pandemic; it is going to be enormously inconvenient. We are doing our best and I think we have done an outstanding job. I will continue my support. I am very proud of a government that listens to the science and does the right thing. I will support this bill to the hilt.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (12.17 pm): It is time to release the health advice, to trust the people, to not patronise them, and to acknowledge that keeping people safe does not mean keeping them in the dark. Why is the government so scared of scrutiny? There are 30 media spinners in the Premier's media team, tucked in her office and other senior ministers' offices, we are told, and she holds highly curated media conferences, yet is afraid of accountability and transparency to this parliament. The Premier turns on her heel when she has to go. Accountability and transparency means being willing to answer the questions, table the advice and come back to this parliament to allow parliamentary committees to ask the questions.

The Queensland parliament is the most gagged parliament in Australia. This is the only parliament that has standing gags. There may be a list of members who want to speak in a debate who, unfortunately, may not get to do so because there is a deadline. If the debate has not allowed them to speak by then, the legislation is pushed through. We have seen a parliamentary committee that held a hearing to examine this legislation for only about one hour.

This parliament has sat the least number of days in all of Australia—40 days last year. All of Australia was experiencing the challenges of COVID, but no, Queensland was special in this; the government did not want to be accountable to the parliament. This is a unicameral parliament. Of all the parliaments in Australia that have extraordinary powers that often sit with executive government, this government should go the extra mile to be accountable to the people. When they are asking so much of people in the name of their safety during a pandemic they should trust them. They deserve more trust coming their way. The government has asked a lot of the people. It is time to trust them with the information.

A pandemic is serious and COVID certainly is a serious disease. I know families who have lost loved ones to it. It is not the same as the flu. It is a serious disease. It did need special measures in order to prepare the community, to get people vaccinated and to get our hospitals ready even though we know our hospital system was struggling well before COVID. However, more than 90 per cent of the people are now vaccinated and the Premier had promised that there would be a review at 90 per cent. We are still waiting to hear what that will entail. The people deserve the information about the pathway out of this, when the restrictions will stop, where the trigger points are and the health advice that this is based on. We will not have this rot where we have government ministers lecturing all those people out there who are actually vaccinated, who are saying, 'We're concerned about the lack of accountability. We're concerned about where this stops.'

I get it. It is an easy go-to for government ministers to abuse people who are saying, 'We're concerned about the checks and balances on power.' However, there are many people who have been vaccinated who, like myself—and I am triple vaxxed—believe that we have wonderful scientists who have done an outstanding job. I also believe in democracy and the right to trust the people with the information. I also believe in checks and balance upon power, and one of those fundamental checks and balances is bringing things back to this parliament for review—not in six months time.

I believe the amendments that my colleague the member for Mudgeeraba has put forward are reasonable. They are to do with transparency, releasing the health advice and the ability of parliamentary committees to review these matters. Putting a time limit in place is reasonable. The government does not want the potential of a recall of parliament because they think that is onerous. However, they did it with two days notice in relation to Gordon Nuttall, and I will table advice from the Queensland Parliamentary Library about that.

Tabled paper: Queensland Parliamentary Library and Research Service research brief, dated 31 March 2022, titled 'Recall of Parliament' [479].

There have been other examples where this government has changed the parliamentary sitting dates with only a few weeks notice. Certainly with Gordon Nuttall it was with only two days notice. I table that advice along with the subsequent advice about the change in the parliamentary sitting dates on another occasion when the Premier was going to the Commonwealth Games baton relay and tacked on a trade mission afterwards.

Tabled paper: Memorandum, dated 24 February 2017, from the Leader of the House, Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, to Queensland members of Parliament titled 'Revised Parliamentary sitting dates 2017' [480].

They can do it. Trust the people. Give them the information. They deserve that.

I want to pay tribute to Dr John Gerrard. As our Chief Health Officer he is somebody who has the experience of dealing with serious diseases. I think medical experts who are willing to face personal danger themselves, as he did with teams of other medical experts in Africa with Ebola, and treat the people are extraordinary individuals, as are many of our health professionals. I am so grateful for people who are willing to do that. I do believe it is important that we do not overwhelm our health systems, that they are prepared and that we encourage people to get vaccinated.

I do support the national health advice. We acknowledge that there was a national health body providing their expertise advising why it is important for health professionals and aged-care and disability workers to be vaccinated. When I have explained this to people and they say, 'But it's my freedom not to be vaccinated,' I then say, 'It still is your choice not to be vaccinated, but when you are old, when you are vulnerable or when you are disabled you do not get to choose who treats you in a hospital.' That is why it is important that those professionals according to the health advice in particular have to be vaccinated. I do believe there needs to be greater clarity around when exemptions apply and how that works.

There has been a lot of controversy around the extension of that into other areas, certainly into hospitality areas. There may have been good health advice that justified that at one point, but once again we have never seen the full advice. What has really hurt people is the inconsistency. Where was

the health advice that said it was okay for footballers' entourages to come in while there were people losing their babies because they were not able to get the health care in Queensland? They were stopped at the border; it was a tragedy. The state Labor government said, 'Don't look here, don't look there.' It happened; they are real stories. There was one rule for some and a different rule for others. Those inconsistencies were a disgrace.

There were more than 3,000 Queenslanders who could not cross the border to go home. Once again, there were inconsistencies where the government was waving through celebrities and people who might fit on their social media accounts, but people who were not known in the media were not allowed to cross the border. That could have been avoided if there had been more compassion and consistency in how some of these rules were applied. That is why we are saying release the health advice.

I strongly support my colleague the member for Mudgeeraba in the measures she has put forward. I do condemn this government for gagging this parliament, preventing many members from having the opportunity to speak and also holding a position that they do not think it is worth bringing this legislation back before this parliament except in six months time if it is necessary. That is not good enough. The people have an investment in their own health and their community. We want to see our health system able to cope if there is a change and another variant comes through.

However, we have seen the example: this government recalled this parliament with two days notice when it suited them. They can do it whenever they like and goodness me, we have seen it. They waltzed in here and shut down debate on other matters. They gagged the debate. This should not be a plaything of the ruling party in a unicameral parliament. This government should go the extra mile, have the scrutiny, trust the people, have measures they can justify with health advice—but release that health advice. The people deserve that.

This government should do that for the sake of all those who have suffered with COVID as well as their families. Do it for those who suffered the tragedy of losing loved ones or suffering serious disease. It is a tragedy that some people suffered some of those inconsistencies when they were not able to see a loved one in their final moments or they lost their babies because this government said that our hospitals are for Queenslanders. Those poor people across the border were blocked and mothers and their babies did not have a chance to be treated in a timely way.

Let's have compassion. Let's have consistency. Let's have transparency. This government puts people on a go-slow to address the many examples of their inconsistencies, and there are so many of these examples. By this time the government should have got it right. That is why we are calling on them to treat the people with compassion and consistency and to release the advice.



Ms PEASE (Lytton—ALP) (12.28 pm): I would like to give a big shout-out to the Jimboomba State School kids who are in the gallery today. How fantastic is it that Queensland and the Palaszczuk government responded so well to the COVID pandemic, which was a global pandemic, that shut down most of the schools in other states in Australia, yet Queensland students were able to go to school most of the time. I bet you all had a really great time with the social interaction. You have now been vaccinated. I can see that you are allowed to be here because you have had your vaccination.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Through the chair, member, please.

Ms PEASE: I am sorry that you have had to listen to the rhetoric we have just heard which is not correct and completely frightening to a group of young students.

I am absolutely delighted to be speaking to the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022. This bill extends the provisions that are required to support the public health response, the fantastic public health response that the Queensland government has undertaken. The expiry day is defined as the day on which the COVID emergency is ended by the minister under the Public Health Act 2005 or 31 October 2022, whichever is earlier. That means the government can react really quickly as needed.

We can respond to changing variants that are coming through and provide the appropriate responses that our community expects from us. Our community knows that they can rely on us to take care of their health and their future.

We probably all hoped that by this point, two years down the track in 2022, this would not be our reality. As we can see globally, nationally and here in Queensland, it is certainly not over yet. That is why the measures to extend this bill include the public health COVID measures under the Public Health Act; measures to respond to the risks of COVID-19 in corrective services facilities under the Corrective Services Act; disaster arrangements under the Disaster Management Act; measures to allow patients

subject to the Mental Health Act 2016 to be granted leave to comply with the public health directions; and a range of other measures. This bill provides for most of the remaining COVID-19 measures to expire on 30 April 2022, unless a different expiry date has already been set by earlier legislation.

The COVID pandemic has been complex and unpredictable, presenting significant challenges across the globe for the past two years. Since COVID-19 was first detected, there have been over 400 million COVID cases and around six million deaths reported globally. I pass on my heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost loved ones and been impacted by the pandemic.

Since the start of the pandemic, my community and I have put our trust in our Premier and the chief health officers, Dr Jeannette Young or Dr John Gerrard, to keep us safe from COVID-19. I remember very clearly when we first heard about COVID-19. In the days that followed, our government Chief Health Officer took early and decisive action. It was Queensland's swift and adaptive public health response which was so highly successful in containing community transmission, providing the opportunity to reach high vaccination coverage across Queensland and ultimately saving lives.

My darling niece Millie was just two months into her grand overseas adventure in January 2020. She was settling into life in the UK and had a new job working in a pub, waiting to try something new. She is a nurse. She was all set to have a couple of years tripping around Europe. I remember calling her mum, my sister Maureen, saying, 'Maureen, Millie should come home now.' After a couple of false starts—because, like many Australians, she was abandoned overseas by the federal government—we got her home. That in itself was not without controversy. She was on a plane where a COVID-positive passenger collapsed beside her in the aisle. She took care of him during the remainder of the flight. She came home and quarantined. Thankfully, she did not get COVID.

I thank my constituents who have responded to the Chief Health Officer's directions. You have taken up the call to stay at home, get tested, wear masks and get vaccinated. I know that at times it had been challenging and hard. I thank you for the support you have given to our government, the Chief Health Officer and most importantly our community—a wonderful civil society that we all live in. That is what this is all about: living in a civil society, following guidelines. In the bayside we now have over 94 per cent of the community fully vaccinated and 66 per cent with more than two doses.

I still have, on a regular basis, people in the community asking me to pass on their thanks to the Premier and the Chief Health Officer for their work to keep Queensland safe. What they also say—without prompting, might I add—is how disappointed and disgraceful the Prime Minister's response has been to COVID: the shocking vaccination rollout—'Not a race', he said; the international borders and quarantining—again, a disgrace; the Australians who were trapped overseas for so long; the supply of rapid antigen test kits; and, tragically, the shocking care of residents in residential aged-care facilities and the abysmal vaccination rollout for residents and workers. These are all failures of our Prime Minister. They fall at his feet.

Since late 2021, Queensland has been easing restrictions and moving away from an elimination approach to a suppression strategy and towards eventually living with COVID-19. Under Queensland's COVID-19 Vaccine Plan to Unite Families, over 90 per cent of Queenslanders are now fully vaccinated. I thank the over 94 per cent in my electorate. We have reopened Queensland's domestic and international borders with no quarantine requirements for vaccinated persons.


The member for Hill's contribution—and that of other members—to this debate is at worst dangerous and at best laughable. There have been comments and arguments that rely not on scientific data but on flawed and disproven facts that have been found on the internet. I remind everyone here that the search engines conspiracy theorists use to locate these false facts are owned by the very people they believe are trying to take over the world. It is a bit like a B-grade scary movie, quite frankly. I wonder what score it would get on Rotten Tomatoes. He alleges—others make similar comments—that all governments have been corrupted by the large pharmaceuticals and large multinational companies. He claims that no-one has died from COVID; it was always another underlying health issue that took these people's lives. My colleague the member for Greenslopes has mentioned that the number of COVID deaths of frontline workers is at 180,000 around the world.

I remind everyone that we currently have two mandates in place: masks in certain settings and mandated vaccination, also in certain settings. We also have a growing economy. Fellow Australians are moving to Queensland in droves. Our unemployment rate is sitting at 4.3 per cent. Retail trade is up—and I can tell you that I have contributed to that quite significantly!—and investment is up 3.8 per cent. This is not an accident; this is due to a measured, planned and sensible approach. It is due to good leadership and due to Queenslanders who are committed to looking after each other. Currently,

94 per cent of baysiders are fully vaccinated. This shows that just six per cent either have a medical exemption or have actively chosen not to get vaccinated. This is a really tiny number and small cohort of my community.

All those members opposite, including the LNP, who are siding with the misguided and ill-informed members are on the wrong side of this debate. I ask them: do you want to be on the side of the debate that bases decisions on expert medical scientific advice and not on false facts read on the internet? I know wholeheartedly that I want to live in a civil society—a society that cares about each other, that values the scientific data to make health decisions, that takes care of those who are vulnerable and that makes what are sometimes hard decisions but, through due diligence, knows they are the right decisions for the right time.

I again acknowledge the wonderful work of our frontline workers. I acknowledge the staff who support these workers—the people who do all of the rostering and all of the background administration work. I also acknowledge the people who look after those people—the families who have supported their loved ones during difficult times. I thank baysiders for their commitment and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (12.38 pm): I start my contribution on the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill by thanking the health workers across Queensland and, indeed, in my own electorate of Broadwater. They have been the brave heroes of recent times. They have worked under a system that was already under stress. COVID added pressure to that. They have done a mighty job and they must be thanked. For the sacrifices of Queenslanders; for those who have lost loved ones; for those who have lost businesses; for those who have had disconnections with family in Queensland, in Australia and across the globe, we thank you for your sacrifice.

The opposition has consistently asked responsible and measured questions throughout the pandemic. We asked the questions when the government with two hours notice locked Queenslanders out of their own state. We asked the questions when sporting entourages were allowed in but Queenslanders were locked out. We asked the questions about hotel quarantine when a little boy called Lenny was not given the dignity that he deserved. So it is today that we ask questions about hotel quarantine of a different variety. That question is about a commitment being made by the government that hotel quarantine ended in February when the truth is that it continued. Queenslanders were taken for a ride.

We are talking about \$500,000 a day to pay for empty hotel rooms at a time when the Wellcamp facility is being underused. There is nothing Queenslanders hate more than their money being wasted, and this is a \$26 million dodgy debacle—that is what this is—and it took this parliament to ask questions for the government to admit it. The government was refusing to be honest with Queenslanders that it was paying for rooms that were not used and meals that were never being delivered—hundreds of thousands of dollars, \$500,000 a day in fact for empty hotel rooms. That is two brand new ambulances per day being wasted by a government that is more consumed with how things look than how they are, that is so embroiled in an integrity scandal that it has forgotten how to govern with openness and decency and transparency.

Before I continue, I also thank all of those small business owners who have struggled during difficult times. We have been vocal in our support for them and for their staff—their brave staff who have not had the certainty that they need. Throughout it we have been adamant: get vaccinated. It is important; it matters. I wrote to the Premier early to ask her to get vaccinated with me to send a message across the political divide of how important it is. Make no mistake: the opposition has backed the AHPPC guidelines throughout the pandemic and we will continue to do so. Where restrictions are not covered by these, we support clarity and consistency and a plan to transition back to the freedoms people deserve. As an example, the government has been unable to explain how a show society can host a market without restrictions on a Thursday before its signature event and on a Tuesday after its signature event but not on the Saturday of the show. That makes no sense at all, and transparency matters to me and it matters to Queenslanders. It has long been the opposition's position that the key to public confidence during a pandemic is clear and transparent decision-making. That is not new. That is fair and reasonable.

We have encouraged the government to trust Queenslanders with the information, just as other jurisdictions have done here in Australia and overseas. We have previously moved amendments to this effect and the government has voted them down. However, the opposition will be moving them again. These are targeted transparency amendments. We believe as an opposition these amendments are fair and reasonable. As we did when these powers were voted on last year, we will move amendments

to this bill to increase transparency of decision-making and to provide proper parliamentary scrutiny to the decisions of the bureaucracy. They are simple. We want the time frame shortened to 31 May. Let the parliament decide what is required beyond this date after seeing the government's plan.

We want the advice received by the government from the Chief Health Officer released for all Queenslanders to see. We want proper parliamentary oversight of these powers because, as we have all acknowledged in this chamber, the powers are extraordinary. I am calling on the government to listen. I am calling on the government to be fair. I am calling on the government to be reasonable on this. In the same spirit of bipartisanship which gave rise to these powers two years ago, the government must accept that these transparency amendments which the opposition health spokesperson will be moving are valid.

Bipartisanship is not a one-way street. Bipartisanship is to observe. It is to listen. It is to acknowledge and act on something beyond the daily cut and thrust of this place. I say to the government: the opposition, the parliament, the Queensland people entrusted it with these laws. We all understood we needed them. It is now time for the government to return that trust. If we are to have laws like this in this place, we cannot accept that transparency, accountability and scrutiny are sidelined. That is not fair. Every non-government member in this place wants to see more transparency, accountability and scrutiny when it comes to these laws—members from all corners of the state, from all political spectrums. That does not happen often. It should send a powerful message to the government. That message is to be open, to be transparent, to be accountable and to be prepared to accept scrutiny.

It is no secret that I have been critical of the government's clear integrity failings in recent months. Those very principles of openness, transparency and accountability have been missing in the way this state has been run in recent times, so the criticism is justified. Again here in this bill those things are not present. We could only support this bill with these transparency amendments. This bill needs fair and reasonable checks and balances. It needs the addition of proper transparency measures because in its current state they are just not there. Any fair-minded Queenslander would agree. In my view, leadership is about listening to advice and being prepared to accept transparency and scrutiny when a decision is made. That is what each of us are here in this privileged position to do and we have been put here by our communities to do that, and that is what I believe our amendments provide.

We cannot just wave through a bill which will face no form of parliamentary scrutiny for six months. As it was, Queensland Health officials were only required to appear before the parliamentary committee for a solitary hour. That is why we are moving amendments to establish a parliamentary oversight committee and for health advice to be released publicly. The parliament can query and consider the advice given to the government. That way there can be proper parliamentary rigour and process around our public health response. That is fair. It is also why we are calling for 31 May to be the date these powers end. That gives the government two months to release a plan. The new plan can then be subjected to the scrutiny of a bipartisan committee—fair and reasonable. Should a new variant emerge and should the case numbers rise, we can implement powers in a bipartisan fashion just like we did back in 2020.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Member for Logan, cease your interjections.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The parliament can do its job. That is reasonable. What is not reasonable is for a government to expect a blank cheque without scrutiny. That is unreasonable. The pandemic has impacted the lives of Queenslanders to an extent we have never seen before. We have lost opportunities, precious family moments and livelihoods. Tragically, we have lost Queenslanders. The opposition believes the time has come to restore parliamentary scrutiny of these decisions and these powers. It is time to provide the public and the parliament all the information with the plan for how we can truly live with COVID. To continually accept these laws without the proper oversight, without the proper transparency, would be for this parliament to not be doing its job.

Mr Power interjected.

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



Ms LAUGA (Keppel—ALP) (12.46 pm): I rise to speak to the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022. It was interesting hearing from the Leader of the Opposition about how the opposition sees its role in this place as being a role of trying to call for transparency and to effect change, but effectively all that I have seen since the beginning of this pandemic is a really unhelpful opposition, an opposition that has got in the way of government trying to respond to a disaster, a global pandemic. There were the number of times that the opposition initially

called for the borders to be opened when our government was trying to respond and keep people safe—keep Queenslanders safe—how unhelpful it was about some of the messaging it was putting out there around vaccinations, how unhelpful it was when it came to rolling out vaccinations and also a number of other things throughout this pandemic.

Throughout a disaster is the time to be united and it is a time that the opposition could have pulled up its socks and said, 'We're here to keep Queenslanders safe as well,' but instead it got in the way numerous times. I think often it was just clearly political point scoring—getting in the way, cheap politics. I recall the Leader of the Opposition talking about how he wrote to the Premier about getting vaccinated in a bid to try and show unity in the vaccination rollout, but yet where was the letter to the Prime Minister about rapid antigen test supplies in Queensland? Where was the letter to the Prime Minister about the vaccine rollout, or the vaccine 'stroll-out' as my colleague the member for Jordan called it the other day? Why was the Leader of the Opposition not proactively writing to our Prime Minister about ways in which he could support Queenslanders and keep Queenslanders safe? Instead, it was about publicity stunts and getting in the way of this government working towards keeping Queenslanders safe.

The main purpose of this bill is to extend provisions to directly support Queensland's COVID-19 public health response and the bill amends the provisions beyond the current expiry date of 30 April 2022 for a period of up to six months. It is only six months, and we need this six months. The medical advice is that we need six months and that is why I am speaking in support of this bill in this place.

For the last two years COVID has presented significant challenges to health systems, economies, governments and families across the world. Queensland's successful management of COVID-19 to date has enabled high vaccination rates across the Queensland population. This has certainly mitigated the impact of the public health emergency on our health system and on the community and has ultimately saved lives. This success is largely due to the swift and flexible public health response that began from the initial detection and identification of the virus. I think it is amazing that Queensland was the first state or territory in the entire country to declare a state of emergency and to respond to this pandemic. We were ahead of the game and that put us in good stead to help Queenslanders stay as safe as possible.

Queensland was able to implement decisive public health measures to keep COVID-19 contained until we reached 80 per cent vaccination of the eligible population—until, indeed, a vaccination was actually developed and then administered. Public health measures, such as border restrictions, mask wearing and quarantine, meant Queensland could manage the transmission of COVID-19 into Queensland in a controlled way once the population was maximally protected by vaccination for serious disease. These public health measures were made possible by temporary legislative changes made in 2020 and these legislative changes have been extended and supplemented in subsequent amendment acts.

The temporary legislative framework has been critical in enabling us to respond quickly and flexibly to evolving circumstances. This has been really important given the continuing unpredictability of the pandemic. An agile and rapid public health response continues to be necessary as Queensland transitions from a containment approach to living with the risks of COVID-19. Whilst Queensland is returning to more normal social and economic conditions, COVID-19 remains a risk to people's health and the health system. For this reason the bill proposes to extend the expiry date for all temporary legislative measures that are directly related to the public health response beyond the current expiry date of 30 April 2022. The bill does this by inserting an expiry date for public health measures as the COVID-19 public health legislation expiry day. The bill defines this day as 31 October 2022, or the day that the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services ends the declared public health emergency under the Public Health Act, whichever is earlier.

As Queensland transitions towards more normal social and economic conditions, there is no longer a compelling need or justification for continuing most of the associated COVID-19 measures. I say that again: there is no longer a compelling need or justification for continuing most of the associated COVID-19 measures. The public health measures linked to vaccination status, a plan for 80 per cent and beyond, sets out measures to protect Queenslanders as the state reopens and restrictions ease for businesses and vaccinated individuals.

The phased approach to less restrictive measures means that most of the temporary measures introduced to facilitate the continued functioning of Queensland institutions and the economy to the extent possible are not expected to be needed beyond 30 April 2022. Accordingly, it is proposed that most of the associated COVID-19 measures, including extraordinary regulations and statutory

instruments made pursuant to the modification framework under the COVID-19 ER Act, will not be prevented from expiring, except for the limited savings and transitional arrangements necessary to facilitate the return to normal operations in the most efficient and effective way.

COVID-19 has touched every one of us in different ways. People have missed weddings, births, funerals, they have missed work. Businesses have been impacted. Sadly, lives have been lost. As a result of the measures that we have had in place over the last few years we have been able to minimise that impact as much as possible and minimise the impact on our health system as much as possible. While I am on my feet, can I give a big shout-out to all of the healthcare heroes who have worked so tirelessly to keep us safe over the last few years: the nurses, the doctors, the pathology staff—I make special mention of the pathology lab at the Rockhampton Hospital which has consistently returned the fastest results in Queensland over the last few years, especially as a result of our fast Panther machine. If your HHS does not have one, you need to get one! In four to six hours those results are back, with 700 tests done in one go.


I thank public health officers, such as Dr Gulam Khandaker and Dr Nicolas Smoll at the CQHHS, who have been providing fast, clear and consistent advice to the community. Organisers of community events have been very grateful for the support that the public health unit has provided through those COVID-safe plans that we had back in the day. I thank the contact tracers who were also responsible for identifying, contacting and interviewing people right across the community.

I thank the PCR testing teams who were often working out in the elements. One day in January we had line-ups out the university gates at the CQ University testing clinic. Those healthcare workers were drenched in sweat from being out in the sun in the middle of a heatwave. It was wonderful to see people taking water and food to those people while they were there to provide a really important service to our community.

I also thank our vaccination teams. I know well some of the nurses in the vaccination teams. They have copped a lot of abuse from people. I thank them for the work they have done, the commitment to vaccinating our community, and putting up with some really nasty people who have disrespected them in their role.

I thank the aged-care workers and give a special shout-out to the North Rockhampton Nursing Centre staff who have done so well at managing outbreaks at the centre. This pandemic has shown the importance of nurse-to-patient ratios in our aged-care centres. The North Rockhampton Nursing Centre, a Queensland government owned and operated centre, has those ratios in place as a result of this Palaszczuk Labor government's commitment to nurse-to-patient ratios. We need those ratios in other aged-care homes. We have been able to manage outbreaks in our aged-care centres better than other centres because of those ratios.

I especially thank the paramedics who I know have had to transport COVID-positive patients. They put their own health and safety at risk when they care for people who need to be transported to hospital. I give a special shout-out to triple 0 call centre staff. We saw a huge increase in triple 0 calls when people were testing positive. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (12.56 pm): I want to start my contribution to the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022 by acknowledging those in our community who have suffered the most as a result of the powers in this bill: those who lost precious time with sick loved ones, those who did not get to say a final goodbye, those who lost livelihoods, their careers, their opportunities, their businesses, their income and those who have suffered with mental health problems because of this virus. The silent pandemic of mental illness is one of the many unquantified costs of COVID-19 which I fear will have a far-reaching impact for many years to come.

I also wish to take a moment, like others in this House, to acknowledge all of our healthcare workers who fronted up to work every day to face a disease that at the time nobody knew anything about. They took on whatever risks were present to help and protect others. I cannot image the fortitude it must have taken to spend whole shifts in suffocating PPE gear, to go to work knowing you might be the only support person for a suffering COVID-19 patient, pulling double and triple shifts away from your own loved ones, to hold Queensland's failing health system together. To every single healthcare worker, from aged care to our hospitals, I am so thankful for your sacrifices and for the incredible work that you continue to do.

The bill before the House today is a very important one. There are many members of my community with passionate views on the decisions the state government has made. I thank each member of my community who has contacted me to share their views. I have reviewed all of them. As an opposition, as the Liberal National Party, we have carefully considered the extension of powers bill.

This bill gives the Palaszczuk Labor government an unprecedented amount of power with little to no oversight, no checks or balances, no accountability. It is an extraordinary piece of legislation because of its impact on lives, on businesses, on jobs and on families. It impacts every single Queenslander, every business and every sporting group.


My community already knows all about this government's lack of accountability and double standard when it comes to restrictions. Currumbin constituents were locked out of our state and prevented from coming home for months while footballers and their wives were let in. The Premier refused to meet with our border business community when they were hurting the most, instead staging a photo-op to give the appearance that her government cared. When border restrictions did ease we were promised a plan for the border community in the so-called border reopening strategy, but we did not get one. Our community has spent the past two years trying to navigate the chaos and confusion caused by the Palaszczuk Labor government's restrictions and double standards. Businesses suffered, locals lost their jobs and our border community was completely abandoned by the state government. With this bill the state government is again proposing to extend its extraordinary powers.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Gerber, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Coronavirus, Hotel Quarantine; Government Owned Corporations, Anacta

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): There is one certainty in life and it is that Labor know how to waste Queensland taxpayers' money. We have seen it again today with the announcement that they have spent over \$20 million on hotel quarantine despite having told Queenslanders in February that hotel quarantine was finished and that the last people had left hotel quarantine. They gave the impression that it was all over and that anyone who had to go into hotel quarantine would be going to Wellcamp. We exposed today in question time that, although Wellcamp is underutilised, they keep using hotel quarantine because Wellcamp is too far away for the isolation provisions that the state Chief Health Officer directs under—and get this—the Queensland health directives. This morning they blamed the federal government, but the people who go into quarantine and isolation are there because of the state health directives, not the federal health directives. If we are going to blame anyone for the wasted money that the quarantine system is costing taxpayers, it is the state Palaszczuk Labor government and not the federal government. Today we see again their waste of money.

Let us talk about corruption risks in Queensland. This morning we questioned the Premier and the government about the QBCC having to engage Labor lobbyist Anacta to speak to their own minister. This morning the Premier stood up and said that no-one should have to go and see a lobbyist. What about her own government department and government owned corporations going to Anacta? Anacta has donated money to the tune of over \$168,000 to the Labor Party while government owned corporations such as the QBCC are having to pay a Labor lobbyist to see Labor ministers. How disgraceful! That is such a corruption risk. Not only is that a corruption risk; Dick Williams is the QBCC board chair. He was also president of the Labor Party when Evan Moorhead was state secretary. They are mates. He was his boss. Now we have Evan Moorhead from Anacta getting money from the QBCC. That is absolutely dodgy. There should be a full investigation into the Labor lobbying links and the donations that Anacta makes.

Talking about dodgy, let's talk about Jackie Trad. Yesterday we asked the Attorney-General about trying to hide the CCC report. I thought she would have said, 'I'm sorry, we shouldn't have done it. We shouldn't have granted the legal assistance.' But, no! What did the Attorney do? She complained that whistleblowers told the opposition about it. They do not want people to know that Jackie Trad is spending taxpayers' money hiding a CCC report.

Government members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: No doubt the left wingers over there are the ones interjecting because they want Jackie back and that is why they are hiding her corruption.

(Time expired)

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): I acknowledge representatives from the Ukrainian Community of Queensland in the gallery. I thank all of the members who supported the community today at lunch time.

Spanish Mackerel Fishery



Hon. ML FURNER (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (2.03 pm): I rise to update members on important measures that the Palaszczuk government is taking to protect jobs in fishing sectors in Queensland. Members may be aware that a recent assessment of Spanish mackerel stocks found that the biomass had fallen to just 17 per cent of its original unfished level. That is below the 20 per cent threshold accepted nationally as the trigger point for management action to be taken to rebuild a species. It is important to note that at this stage no decision on management action has been taken.

The stock assessment has been subjected to an external peer review. I know some people are trying to argue that the science of the stock assessment and peer review is flawed. Just to be clear, these reservations related to how resilient Spanish mackerel are. They did not relate to the validity of the input data of the stock assessment. The stock assessment and peer review were presented to the independent Sustainable Fisheries Expert Panel. The expert panel considered that the most responsible way forward is to accept the stock assessment base case as the most credible scenario.

The Palaszczuk government is not going to stand by and watch as important commercial and recreational fish species are fished into oblivion, taking away forever the jobs that depend on those stocks. The science of the stock assessment is sound and the science is not wrong just because we might not like what it says. If there are no fish then there will be no fishing jobs. It is as simple as that. I will do everything I can to restore those stocks so that there will be jobs for decades to come. Doing nothing is not an option.

The Palaszczuk Labor government committed to consult before any management actions are put in place for Spanish mackerel. I can advise that consultation will open on Wednesday next week via the DAF website. I strongly urge people to have their say on how the Spanish mackerel stocks should be managed to ensure they return to a sustainable level. However, we do need to get feedback and make these decisions in time for the season to start on 1 July.

The Palaszczuk government is a government that listens. Since publishing the stock assessment we have heard from some stakeholders that having better recreational catch data is highly desirable. Therefore, we will also be seeking feedback on whether processes used in other states to capture data could be considered. The Palaszczuk government's sustainable fisheries reforms are ensuring that fish stocks are supported for our children and our grandchildren well into the future. I table answers to questions on notice Nos 255, 267 and 283.

Tabled paper: Answers to question on notice No. 255 asked on 29 March 2022, question on notice No. 267 asked on 29 March 2022 and question on notice No. 283 asked on 29 March 2022 [\[481\]](#).

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice



Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (2.06 pm): The Attorney-General is in danger of joining the ranks—and they are long and hallowed ranks—of dodgy former Labor attorneys-general, such as the member for Woodridge. The attorney-general is the first law officer of the government and in that role the Attorney is expected to be frank and fulsome in her actions and in answering questions in this place, not to be tricky or evasive.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. I ask you to withdraw that unparliamentary language.

Mr NICHOLLS: I withdraw. In effect, the Attorney-General is expected to uphold the highest standards in the same way that the Crown is required to act as a model litigant. Yesterday and today in question time the Attorney failed that test. Yesterday I asked a specific question—

Can the Attorney outline to the House if she or any member of her staff requested advice from Crown law on legal steps to remove Mr Alan MacSporran QC as head of the CCC?

The Attorney answered, 'No, I requested no such advice,' and sat down so quickly that the tilting seat base barely had time to pop up. The answer was tricky because it was not the full answer. The Attorney dodged the question by refusing to say whether her staff had sought such advice. The question has to be asked: why would she do that?

The member for Glass House then directly asked the Attorney if any member of her staff had requested advice from Crown law on the same matter. While not answering directly, the Attorney said she would ask and come back to the member. She also said, 'I am not aware of any request that has been made for that advice.' Just after lunch yesterday the Attorney made a statement to the House. The Attorney said that she had sought further advice from her office and she confirmed that advice had

been sought by an adviser about the general powers that exist in relation to the chair of the CCC. In attempting to explain the request, she told the House it was made in the context of the ongoing parliamentary inquiry into the Queensland Crime and Corruption Commission.

Because the Attorney knows the political danger she is in and is desperately distancing herself from this action, she also said—


As Attorney-General, I did not request that advice and it was requested without my knowledge. A copy of it has not been provided to me.

Over and above the fact that that shows the Attorney does not know what is going on in her own office, what she carefully avoided saying is whether she was actually aware of the advice, irrespective of having received it. When asked today whether she had discussed the advice with anyone, the Attorney again dodged the question.

What we now know is that, while the Premier was publicly backing Mr MacSporran, an unnamed senior advisor in the Attorney's office was secretly asking Crown law how he could be sacked. There are some questions the Attorney must answer. Has she discussed the advice with anyone, and if not why not? Has the Attorney now seen the Crown law advice, and if not why not? Will the Attorney release that advice, and if not why not? The answer that privilege attaches hardly rings true when the Attorney did not request the advice and tells us she has not seen it. How can she claim privilege for a document that was not hers? Who is the mysterious unnamed senior adviser? If the Attorney did not receive the advice, who did? There are a lot of unanswered questions that this Attorney needs to answer.

(Time expired)

Federal Member for Bowman

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (2.09 pm): We have seen extraordinary revelations in Canberra this week from the federal member for Bowman. When the independent parliamentary expense committee brought down its report into travel expenses, what did it find? It found fraudulent rorting by the member for Bowman in taking family holidays to Tasmania and Melbourne and in pretending to be a guest speaker at horticultural conferences. I am surprised—all of a sudden he is a green thumb! Then the member pretended to be a guest speaker during morning tea breaks! It is an extraordinary report. Over \$8,000 of taxpayers' money was fraudulently rorted and there was \$2,000 in penalties. What is he saying? He is refusing to pay back the taxpayers' dollars. It is a disgrace.

Ms Boyd: Disgraceful behaviour.

Mr BROWN: It is a disgrace. I take the interjection. I also found it extraordinary that he jumped in a hire car with the family, travelled 900 kilometres around Tasmania and reckons—

Ms Boyd: It is not that big!

Mr BROWN: I take that interjection. The member was looking at using the information in the walking paths in Tasmania to justify its use in his own electorate? It is an extraordinary report. However, there is another rort of his electorate allowance. I table the first report.

Tabled paper: Australian Government, Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority report, dated 24 March 2022, titled 'Audit Report: Andrew Laming MP, Member for Bowman—Travel Expenses and Allowances for the period 21 June to 27 June 2019' [482].

Today, hidden in letterboxes, member for Bowman Andrew Laming uses his electorate allowance to promote the new candidate, Henry Pike.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): The member will table the document and not use it as a prop.

Mr BROWN: I table the document.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Introducing Henry Pike, LNP for Bowman' [483].


Mr BROWN: The member has used the electorate allowance for campaign purposes—rorting yet again. I wish I still had the document, because Henry Pike fittingly put his family up the top of the flier. Will Henry Pike be taking his family on family holidays as well? Will he be charging taxpayers to visit Tasmania and will he refuse to pay back taxpayers if he gets into parliament?

Bowman needs a change and a candidate of integrity. Donisha Duff is a candidate of integrity, honour and transparency. The voters of Bowman are sick of the rorts. As I said time and again, the Labor vote in Redlands keeps going up and up. We now have three members. Things have to change. It is unbelievable that Andrew Laming is not paying this back. I call on him to pay back the taxpayers' money and I call on Henry Pike to do the right thing by paying back the cost of that flier. He should not

use taxpayers' money to promote himself as a candidate in the election. I cannot believe those opposite are interjecting and protecting these fraudulent rorters. It is disgraceful. Where is the shadow minister's integrity on this one? This is a rort. They need to pay back the money now.

(Time expired)


Health System

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.12 pm): Queensland Health is in crisis. The crisis is real and it is impacting the lives of Queenslanders each and every day. Overseeing our public health system are those opposite, losing control of our public hospitals and ambulance service. Their solution? It is to blame everyone else but themselves. What happens when a government loses control of the health system? I will tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker: people wait years to see a specialist, people do not get seen quickly enough when they walk into an ED, ambulances sit on the end of a ramp waiting to get into hospital for eight hours and code yellows in our hospitals reign supreme. That is what is happening in Queensland public hospitals right now. Our staff on the front line are desperate for change and desperate for help. They are desperate for someone to listen. It cannot keep going on like this.

I want to give some context on the rolling code yellows we in Queensland are facing. Across 2015 our state recorded only 49 code yellows, yet in 76 days alone this year our hospitals had to call code yellows because they were full 57 times. I read the comments of the health minister in that code yellows were not a cause for alarm. The alarms should be ringing loud and clear in the health minister's office. Our staff on the front line are alarmed. Patients waiting eight hours on the end of the hospital ramp are alarmed. People dialling triple 0 and being told there is no ambulance available are alarmed. Code yellows are called when our hospitals are full. There is nowhere for patients to go. It means there are no beds left for anyone needing treatment. It is happening in Queensland now with monotonous regularity, but we should not be accepting it. The reason it is happening is simple—we do not have enough hospital beds in our state. That is widely acknowledged, none more so than by the AMAQ.

For 30 years, successive, long-term Labor governments have failed to build the hospitals Queenslanders need. They failed to plan for our rapidly expanding population, meaning that public health care which Queensland patients can access has been detrimentally affected. The most spectacular failure, of course, has been by this government. Seven satellite hospitals, or 'health clinics' as we should really call them, will not put a dent in this problem. If that is the government's plan to fix this mess, it is doomed to fail. It has no genuine plan. In this third term the government has stopped listening and has stopped acting to fix Queensland Health's crisis.

Ukraine

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (2.15 pm): The aggression of the Russian military upon the people of Ukraine is unacceptable and the human toll of this conflict is devastating. The Queensland government recognises the sovereignty of Ukraine and its right to peace, freedom and democracy. We stand proudly with them. As we continue to watch events unfolding with deep compassion and concern, our thoughts are with members of our community who are impacted and worried for their loved ones.

On Sunday, 6 March I attended along with you, Mr Deputy Speaker, a moving service at the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Woolloongabba and spoke at a rally in Brisbane's King George Square where more than 1,000 people pledged their support for Ukraine. The passion not just from Father Stephen and the Ukrainian community but people from Brisbane's proud Polish community, the German community and people from all cultures and backgrounds was palpable. Everywhere I looked I saw flags of blue and yellow and Queenslanders showing their support for their friends, families and neighbours overseas. Earlier today I joined the Premier and you, Mr Deputy Speaker, to present a \$500,000 cheque on behalf of the Queensland government to the Ukrainian Crisis Appeal.


I acknowledge Peter Bongiorni, president of the Ukrainian community of Queensland; Mikayla, treasurer of the community; Adam and Nataliya who are here today in the gallery. It was truly a privilege to meet with them again today and others of their community to hear their stories and, I hope, to convey the support of the Queensland government. We stand with you.

We will continue to work collaboratively with the federal government and Queensland's Ukrainian community to ensure necessary support is available. We welcome the federal government's decision to grant automatic visa extensions to Ukrainian nationals in Australia who have a visa expiring before 30 June this year. We also welcome the federal government's announcement of 20 March that it would make temporary humanitarian visas available to Ukrainians who have arrived in Australia because they were forced to flee from Russia's military invasion.

Ukrainians arriving in Queensland will be greeted with the warm welcome Queenslanders are known for giving. We have a long and proud history of helping people seeking haven from conflict overseas, including refugees seeking to re-establish their lives in this state. Under the Queensland Multicultural Policy *Our story, our future* the government has made a specific commitment to support refugees and people seeking asylum to participate and contribute to all aspects of Queensland life. I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your unwavering support for the Queensland Ukrainian community and for hosting the event earlier today with the community.

I commend the Ukrainian community of Queensland's efforts to coordinate information and support for people trying to bring their families and friends to Australia. I join with the Ukrainian community of Queensland in appealing to all Australians to donate. We stand with you in the pursuit of freedom, peace and democracy.

Forensic and Scientific Services

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (2.18 pm): The issues found in the *Shandee's Story* podcast produced by the *Australian* have quickly been shown to be much broader than just Shandee's case. The work of expert forensic biologist Dr Kirsty Wright is something we can be thankful for in terms of raising the issues with the Queensland forensic lab. Here is what has been found: in an analysis of 20 months worth of samples when a man's penis was swabbed, often in a sexual assault or rape case, in over 50 per cent of samples no DNA could be found. According to Dr Wright, that number should equate to 100 per cent.

How is a sexual assault victim in the state of Queensland to have any confidence in the forensic lab or in the fact that justice is not being impeded by the incompetence of this lab, the incompetence of Queensland Health and the incompetence of the minister? Dr Wright has also found that the threshold for detecting DNA in Queensland is twice that of New South Wales and much higher than the threshold recommended by the manufacturer.

The minister asked for evidence of this claim on Tuesday. I now table that evidence for the minister's benefit.


Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian Journal of Forensic Sciences*, titled 'Variation in forensic DNA profiling success among sampled items and collection methods: a Queensland perspective', 2021, Vol. 53, No. 6, 612-625 [\[484\]](#).

It is from a paper written by the Queensland Police Service's forensic section analysing 20 months worth of DNA profiling information released from the Queensland Health lab from February 2018 to September 2019.

This issue has been ongoing in this state for years. Every minister should be concerned about this issue. This means that it is highly likely that samples with lower levels of DNA will get sidelined and not fully tested. I do not pretend to understand the science behind DNA testing, but what I, and many across this state, am certainly aware of is that if someone like Dr Kirsty Wright, who is significantly credentialed, comes out with these findings then the government should take note and should take action.

This government continues to pay lip-service to Queensland women about women's safety. It continues to pay lip-service to victims of sexual violence, sexual assault and rape. When it comes to safety, this lab's failing is impeding the judicial process. It is impeding the work of the Queensland Police Service and preventing prosecutions. It is ensuring and facilitating those who commit sexual offences get off scot-free. We call on the government to undertake—and I note the minister's response in question time this morning—a full, independent, external review. It should not take Dr Kirsty Wright to write to the CCC before we see action from this government.

Federal Budget

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (2.21 pm): I could not let federal budget week go by without summing up the Morrison government's efforts—and all brought to you by the letter 'D'. Firstly, what a disappointment this federal budget has been—no vision for the future of this country, no understanding of the critical reform that is needed in key policy areas or even the willingness to engage. From Queensland's perspective, it is beyond disappointing. It is dreadful how the federal government is treating the people of Queensland.

As the Premier said, a budget is about priorities. In Queensland, a state that grew by 40,000 through net interstate migration last year, it is about the health of our people, the infrastructure they need and supporting them in their hour of crisis. Queensland, along with every state government

representing both sides of politics, has sought a fifty-fifty split for fairer health funding, given the rising demands on our health system. The Morrison government has not only ignored these calls but also now actively cut \$21 million from our hospitals in the next financial year, with another \$176 million cut over the forward estimates.

The request for a joint flood resilience package to allow families to move from flood zones or to raise their homes so they can build back better has also been ignored by this heartless government. If the federal government is holding back on giving money to flood victims because the timing does not suit their election campaign timelines then that would not only be despicable but downright disgusting.

I have a few more d-words. Scott Morrison says this budget contains \$3.3 billion for road and rail projects in Queensland, but, as the Treasurer has rightly pointed out, when we check the figures, there is only \$446.5 million across the four years of the budget. This is deceptive and begs the question: where is our funding, Mr Morrison?

In housing, one of the most critical issues facing our state, the federal government has made it very clear that they will not support social and affordable housing in this country. This was summed up by the Prime Minister's outrageous comments that the best way to support those who are struggling with increasing rents is for them to buy a house. The expectation that someone struggling to pay rent will be able to save and lay down a deposit on a house—regardless of what the percentage of that deposit is—shows just how delusional this government is.

Finally, I come to my favourite d-word of all, which is division. At a time when the Morrison-Joyce government should be uniting as they head into a federal election, the division and splits have never been more pronounced. We had veterans' affairs minister Andrew Gee launching a stunning attack on his own government, revealing he was on the cusp of announcing his resignation from cabinet because he was being refused funding for his department. Then there is one of the most accurate descriptions of the Prime Minister by someone who knows him best. Liberal Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells variously described the MP as 'unfit for office', an 'autocrat' and a 'bully' with no 'moral compass'. She even suggested Scott Morrison 'has used his so-called faith as a marketing advantage'.

The divisions are real, the disappointment, the deception and the delusion are there for all to see. There really is just one more word that comes to mind in regard to this federal government—

A government member interjected.

Mrs MULLEN: You are correct, member. They are duds!

Condamine Electorate, Crime; Floods



Mr WEIR (Condamine—LNP) (2.24 pm): There is a constant stream of complaints and stories in every corner of the Condamine electorate of residents being victims of crime or someone close to them experiencing a criminal offence. In the past six months we have been contacted by people from Oakey, Kingsthorpe, Drayton, Wyreema, Cambooya, Crows Nest, Pittsworth and Westbrook with their accounts of break-ins, cars being stolen and property destruction.

The local police are doing the best they can to catch the perpetrators—many of whom are juvenile offenders; kids, some not even in their teens—breaking into homes, terrifying residents and wreaking havoc on people's property. Most of these people have been happy with the police officers who have responded and dealt with their cases. They understand that they can only do so much. They catch the criminals only to see them walk out the door shortly afterwards because of this weak-on-crime government. Cars are stolen and quite often burnt and property stolen or damaged and the owners are left to clean up with no responsibility on the offender.


I recently met with a lady near Kingsthorpe. Their home had been broken into and absolutely trashed—smashed windows, every cupboard and drawer upended, their vehicle stolen with the offenders driving straight through the closed roller door of their garage causing massive damage. The offenders turned up in a stolen vehicle. These residents had what they thought were secure locks on windows and doors. They had security cameras installed. The offenders were caught on camera and subsequently appeared in court in February, with one being immediately released on bail. How can that be acceptable?

This lady is now too frightened to stay in her own house alone thanks to this government's complete fail on punishing offenders. The Kingsthorpe community has now sought the services of a private neighbourhood patrol to offer security checks on properties from 7 pm to 6 am in response to the record crime in the area and the fear the community have for the protection of their property. I have

previously asked the minister questions about extra police officers and resources in the Condamine electorate and his answer is always the same—crime is down in the Darling Downs. I would like the minister to come and explain that to the residents of Condamine.

I cannot finish today without speaking about the recent flooding in the Condamine electorate. I offer my condolences to the families of the two men who lost their lives in the recent flooding. One was a visitor from New South Wales. The other was Craig Cattell who is part of a well-known and widely respected family in Pittsworth. I, as well as the entire community of Pittsworth and district, offer my condolences and sympathy to the families.

Nicklin Electorate, Community Events

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (2.27 pm): I rise to provide an update to the House on the fabulous community groups in my electorate of Nicklin. I am delighted to report to the House that I am now the patron of SPIRAL. Supporting People in Respite and Lifestyles, SPIRAL, is a not-for-profit disability service provider, established on the Sunshine Coast in 1981—the International Year of Disabled Persons. They are renowned for providing services to empower potential and equality through growth, innovation and community support. SPIRAL are on a mission to listen and co-create services that empower self-determination and choice for people with disabilities, including innovative skill-building programs, growing connections with others and advocating for communities where everyone can thrive.

The Yandina Historic Society recently reopened their museum to the public after being refurbished. I joined them on their open day to help them welcome back visitors. The volunteers have done a wonderful job of bringing our local history to life. If people ever have the chance to visit I thoroughly recommend stopping in for a scone or a toasted sandwich while they take in works by local artists and ponder the various historical artefacts on display.


I spoke to president Col and local historian Audienne about the grant the organisation is receiving from the state government to help celebrate Queensland Day. They are planning a family fun day on Saturday, 4 June 2022, with stalls and historic displays, food and lots of fun times. I would like to extend an invitation to all in the House to attend.

I had the privilege of recently attending the Sunshine Coast Australia Day Awards, recognising individuals and organisations who have made invaluable contributions to our local way of life. I am happy to report that, once again, the electorate of Nicklin was punching well above its weight with regard to nominations across all categories.

I would like to congratulate James Coles from RangeCare for being named Senior Citizen of the Year; Jack Watson from the Nambour Youth Chamber of Commerce for taking out joint Young Citizen of the Year; Kenilworth Community Transport Service Subcommittee, Nambour Community Centre, Nambour Meals on Wheels Service, CWA Palmwoods and the Nambour Salvos for their nominations in the Community Group category; ECOllaboration for their win in the Environment category; and Toni Eggleston and John Waldron for their win in the Creative category.

I would like to give a reminder to the House that this weekend the Nambour Expo will be on at Sunshine Coast showgrounds, which is in Nambour. I encourage you all to attend what will be a fantastic weekend of latest caravans and camper trailers, holiday destinations, boating and fishing, vehicle accessories, camping gear and more—all in one convenient location. While I am on my feet, I would also like to invite everyone to Picnic for Parky's at the Lake Boreen recreational area on Tuesday, 5 April.

Coronavirus, Business Support

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (2.30 pm): Today's revelation that the bill for six hotels—Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Gold Coast and Mount Isa—still being used as quarantine hotels since Wellcamp opened in February has totalled \$26.9 million since 5 February is a slap in the face for businesses not just on the Gold Coast and in Surfers Paradise but across the state. I have had numerous businesses, as I know have many on this side and many on the other side as well, that are frustrated about the fact that Labor has not released any business support packages during the Omicron wave and that we have been neglected and overlooked compared to other states.

I have a number of testimonials from businesses who have asked me to report to the House about the situation they found themselves in. When we look at the other jurisdictions such as New South Wales, where they had payments of up to \$5,000 per week; Victoria, where they had the Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme and the Commercial Landlord Hardship Fund; and South

Australia, where businesses that had suffered decline in turnover were able to get grants—we have had nothing here from the Labor government. Very frustrated local constituents have asked me to report to the House about some of their issues. I want to quote them. They state—

The last 2 years have devastated our Qld based travel business. We have suffered massive losses and lost most of our staff.

We have been operating for most of the last 2 years at below 10% sales revenue and income. This has gradually increased to 20% and higher and while February 2022 was our best month since February 2020, this equated to just over 30% of Feb 2020.

I note that the Queensland government has spent \$8.8 billion through this period in Queensland; the federal government has spent \$27.9 billion. The rent relief code was very different here in Queensland. This business owner said—

We have had very little support from the Qld Government ...

They were very appreciative of the federal funds of JobKeeper and the travel agency grants, but those funds were not sufficient to keep the business operating. They have had the frustration of extensive border closures and heavy restrictions which have led to an extended delay in domestic travel taking off. They said—

We cannot have any more uncertainty around borders or restrictions.

The *Gold Coast Bulletin* in its editorial a month ago said that traders and thousands of small businesses are swamped by red tape and evolving government restrictions. They want to be freed of a bureaucratic web. Queensland should do what New South Wales has done—provide a clear pathway to operate under one umbrella. I have another quote from another businessperson who says—

Qld's State of Emergency needs to end. The extreme situation we were in two years ago no longer exists, yes of course there are still covid cases but the world has opened up and moved on.

From a small business perspective there is no need to extend these powers and put added pressure on business owners to meet extra restrictions.

They are frustrated about the government wasting \$29.6 million. Many businesses around the state are frustrated too.

Resources Industry, Women



Hon. SJ STEWART (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (2.33 pm): I rise to talk about the amazing women we have in our resources sector and the importance of having a diverse workforce.

Ms Pugh: Hear, hear!

Mr STEWART: Thank you. I take that interjection. Earlier this month I had the pleasure of attending the Queensland Resources Council's and Women in Mining and Resources Queensland annual International Women's Day breakfast and Resources Awards for Women.

I would like to congratulate all the finalists and all the winners from the day, including Jill Coppo, who won the Exceptional Young Woman in Queensland Resources. Ms Coppo is from my home town of Townsville. She is the Engineering and Projects Superintendent at South32 Cannington Mine—a silver, lead and zinc mine located about 200 kilometres south-east of Mount Isa. I had the great pleasure of meeting Ms Coppo at the event to congratulate her. She was beaming. She was absolutely full of beans. She is in charge of a team of about 30 people and is clearly a role model for any woman looking to join the resources workforce.

Having women like Ms Coppo and Lydia Gentle, who was named the Exceptional Woman in Queensland Resources, at the award ceremony is incredibly important for women of all ages from right across the state looking at joining the industry. We say this all the time in this House—and I heard the Premier say it today: you cannot be what you cannot see. Thankfully we are seeing more and more women joining the industry. For our young women who are in our classrooms today and the young women who were in the gallery today, there is a real career path for them in the resources industry.


Last year we saw an average of nearly 14,000 women employed in the Queensland resources sector, accounting for almost 18 per cent of the total workforce. This is up more than 46 per cent from the same period five years ago and nearly 80 per cent from 10 years ago. Quite clearly, the industry is much better for it. Having diversity in perspective and experience in any industry can only be a good thing for the workforce.

It is great to be speaking about this today on the same day that the Palaszczuk government released the Queensland Women's Strategy 2022-27. As the Minister for Resources, I can say that the Palaszczuk government is committed to seeing more and more diversity in the resources sector and we want to assist companies in achieving this. Through the Queensland Resources Industry

Development Plan, an industry workforce plan will be developed which will examine ways to make the workforce more diverse and inclusive by attracting and retaining women, former defence personnel, First Nations people and people with a disability. The resources sector has never been more diverse and there are so many unheralded people like Ms Coppo who are doing amazing things already.

(Time expired)

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Integrity

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (2.36 pm): The Premier announced just in the last few weeks that she is going to be one of the members of her very own committee—the organising committee for the Olympics. I pose this question to the Premier: how is the Premier going to deal with the fact that not only is she a member of that committee but the committee reports to her and she has the ability to issue directions to that committee?


This is an extraordinary situation. We have a Premier who, when asked questions about integrity and when the heat is on in press conferences, pivots, turns the other way, and says, 'Gotta go.' Yet issues of integrity matter. It needs to be called out when a Premier then appoints herself to a committee that in fact reports to her and then cannot explain how she is going to address those particular conflicts of interest for her and her ministers.

I support the Olympics, but I support them being done right. I do question the Premier's very flexible approach to integrity issues and conflicts of interest. That should not be a surprise from this Premier. As we have found out, they have taken it to a new low in regard to pocketing the money of Labor aligned lobbyists who have favoured status in getting access to ministers. It is corruption or a risk of corruption when you have ministers taking meetings with Labor aligned lobbying firms and some of their staff who, under the legal requirements, are not to be lobbying such as Denise Spinks, who was not long ago working for the Premier in the Premier's office. Yet that person is now working for a Labor aligned lobbying firm that is donating big time to the Labor government.

This is money laundering. Labor passes laws to restrict donations to political parties and to put requirements on how they are declared but then comes up with this new inside way of laundering money to themselves, with contracts being awarded without going through the appropriate tendering processes or scrutiny of some of the clients of these Labor aligned lobbying firms. Not only is there a risk of corruption but also there are very real questions to be answered. Minister de Brenni, who took one of these meetings from one of the Labor lobbying firm staffers, said, 'It wasn't a formal meeting.' That does not stack up. They can try to launder the money but they cannot launder the truth. The truth must come out and it is time they came clean.

(Time expired)

North Queensland, Education and Training Accommodation


 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (2.40 pm): That is a hard act to follow. I rise today to talk about education and training and the importance of providing high-quality accommodation for those young people who want to pursue a trade or work in hospitality or medical services and who come from regional and rural locations across North Queensland. I recently had the opportunity to represent the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing, Minister Grace Grace, at the opening of the new Tec-NQ accommodation facility on Bowen Road, Townsville.

This is a \$3.25 million investment by the Palaszczuk state government, in partnership with Tec-NQ's \$3.2 million investment, which will provide 40 one-bedroom units for young people who wish to pursue a trade, be it in carpentry, plumbing, mechanics, electrical or another trade in the building industry, or who want to study in the field of hospitality. The new commercial kitchen has eight cooking booths for students to learn how to cook or become chefs to help meet the needs of the tourism sector, which was devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this new facility, there is also a small medical ward for the purpose of training young people who wish to work in the medical or aged-care sector. This facility is a very smart design that provides accommodation and training facilities on the one site that meet the ever-changing needs of the building, medical, aged-care and hospitality sectors.

It was an absolute pleasure to represent the Queensland government, which provided \$3.2 million as part of the redevelopment of this site after the devastating floods of 2019. That is right—the Palaszczuk government does care about Queenslanders. We build it back better in partnership with the private sector, and along the way we invest in young people and the future of Queensland. This is an especially important investment in our young people and Tec-NQ to help them recover from the devastating flood of 2019 and to make sure our young people have every opportunity to develop and achieve their goal to become a tradie, a nurse or an expert chef.

It does not stop there. The following day I visited the site for our new Youth Foyer at the Pimlico TAFE college where we announced the community engagement program and the proposed design of the new Youth Foyer. The young people will enter into a rental agreement and pay rent to live at this facility. This facility will provide 40 one-bedroom self-contained units to accommodate young people aged 16 to 25 years of age, with 24-hour support to help the young people with study, assist them to develop their life skills and provide role models. The site will also have 43 car parks. This facility will sit alongside the phenomenally successful Cowboys House for young First Nation men and women. That is right. The Palaszczuk government will invest in Queenslanders every day of the week, and the Youth Foyer is one of those especially important investments to encourage young people to further their education and training to achieve their dream jobs.

Coalmining, Incidents

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (2.43 pm): Before I begin, I would like to offer my sincere and heartfelt condolences to the friends and family of the miner who passed away after suffering head injuries in a lifting accident at Anglo's Moranbah coalmine on Friday night. The latest death follows that of another Anglo American employee at Queensland's Crinum underground coking coalmine last September. Both tragedies show clearly that, despite all of the fine words and promises this government has made over the past three years, absolutely nothing has changed in Queensland when it comes to protecting the lives and the wellbeing of our coalminers—something that only really hit home, as far as I am concerned, when I heard recently that the Office of the Work Health and Safety Prosecutor had announced that no prosecutions would be made in relation to the truly horrific accident that occurred on 6 May 2020 at the Central Queensland Grosvenor mine.

I have heard from countless miners that this news was like a sucker punch, with many saying it marked the lowest point of oversight for the safety of coalminers since the Coal Mines Inspectorate nearly 100 years ago. What happened at Grosvenor on that day in 2020 to five young contract coalminers has left an indelible mark on the mining community in my region. I have friends who are still plagued by what they saw as they worked in amongst that.

The horrific burns the men received after having to rescue themselves and each other off the mine face were shocking. They were all put into induced comas for weeks afterwards and have suffered through multiple ongoing operations. They have been left with permanent physical scarring and mental trauma as a result of their ordeal. To now find that there would be no prosecutions is shameful. Some of the miners have told me they knew the cover-up had been launched as soon as they saw the terms of reference for the inquiry. The terms stipulated that only evidence covering the period between 1 July 2019 and 5 May 2020 would be presented and considered. This means the actual day the event took place was specifically excluded from the inquiry. Why? The decision makes no sense at all, other than it was part of some backroom deal made between the government and the management in order to shield each other from their shared culpability that day. That is what the mining community is saying, at any rate, and who could argue with them? Secrecy and evasiveness were evident at every stage of this inquiry from what I have been told.

Imagine a criminal trial where no evidence was allowed to be presented from the events of the day that the crime was committed or from those who were there. The five workers who were horrendously burnt that day in 2020 have been given a life sentence of pain, permanent injury and irreparable disfigurement. In the words of one experienced miner who wrote to me this week—


It seems to me that it is only the coal miner at the coal face that is trying to do anything to help his fellow workers, but where does he go and what can he do when the supreme decision makers have abandoned them?

So who is looking after us?

(Time expired)

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Before I call the next speaker, I want to acknowledge students from the Islamic College of Brisbane. Welcome to the Queensland parliament.

Federal Budget

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (2.46 pm): The federal budget was a dud. Scott Morrison has fudged it and Queensland, as expected, is not getting its fair share. In 2019 when he smirked from the podium and proclaimed 'How good is Queensland', we at least hoped he might deliver for Queensland, but he has proven to be a sad sack of disappointment. My federal budget wish list was not fancy, but it would have made a real difference for Pumicestone communities.

I wanted the Prime Minister to front up with fifty-fifty health funding as promised under the national health partnership agreement so we could have more doctors, more nurses, more beds and more infrastructure. I wanted to see him fix our GP crisis by increasing Medicare rebates for doctors so people are not waiting up to four weeks for an appointment in my community. We wanted to see fair flood recovery funding for flood impacted households in our communities. I wanted to see an end to the cuts to NRAS housing that will see 140 Pumicestone families turfed out of their homes.

Mr Hart interjected.

Ms KING: Member for Burleigh, that is not the way to refer to people who are losing their homes. I wanted to see funding to upgrade Bribe Island Road brought forward to this year, not four years from now. But Scott Morrison has duded us. He is the Prime Minister who cut health funding during a pandemic. We watched the Queensland LNP march in to the chamber all fired up to talk about health, but then they sat there in silence because the budget of their mate Scott Morrison has ripped \$21 million from Queensland hospitals next year and \$176 million over the next three years. There was nothing for GPs and there was nothing for aged care. Unlike our federal Labor candidate, Scott Morrison totally failed on bringing forward that key Bribe Island Road funding that will get people home sooner and safer.

Shamefully the budget did nothing to fix the flood injustices that Queensland communities are facing. Under Scott Morrison, if you are flooded in Beachmere you can only get \$1,000 in grants, but in Ballina you can get \$3,000. In Ipswich locals can get \$1,000, while in Alstonville they get \$3,000. People in Gympie get \$1,000 but in Grafton they get \$3,000. How is that fair? Our \$771 million flood recovery package has seen no response from the Prime Minister. As usual he is missing in action. At least if he was in Hawaii he would be making Jenny happy. As it is, not even the Queensland LNP will speak up for him. It is not just that he is bad at being Prime Minister; it is that he is a bad person and it leaks into everything he does.

Just ask his friends. He is an empty autocrat with no moral compass who is all announcement, no delivery. He offers nothing but a merry-go-round of distractions. His comments about renters were a distraction from the texts, which were a distraction from the RAT crisis, which were a distraction from the booster shortages, which were a distraction from his failures on women, which were a distraction from his vaccine strollout, which was a distraction from the bushfires. The Prime Minister needs to be voted out.

Currumbin Eco Parkland



Mrs GERBER (Currumbin—LNP) (2.50 pm): We know that this Palaszczuk Labor government cannot be trusted with taxpayers' hard-earned money and that they have a culture of cover-ups and secrecy. I was disappointed but not surprised when new information came to light regarding Currumbin Eco-Parkland. I recently attended an engagement session for environmental groups by the Deputy Premier's department, and I subsequently attended a briefing with the department directly on the Currumbin Eco-Parkland project. The public should be aware that the Palaszczuk Labor government has absolutely no clue how much this project will cost. They have no plan and no real idea, just an assortment of vague themes. They are making it up as they go along and scrambling to announce something that they thought would win them the seat of Currumbin.

The most obvious issue here is cost. RTI documents show that the parkland had a market valuation of \$70 million—that was last year—and that the government knew about it. The RTI documents also show that after a briefing with the Deputy Premier on 24 May 2021, the department advised, 'We anticipate having a costed master plan ready for mid-July 2021.' So where is it? I have asked the department and they cannot tell me.

The state government is hiding the real cost of this election commitment because they know that they could have purchased this land when it went up for sale in April 2020. They could have purchased it for \$15.25 million, but now it will cost taxpayers \$70 million or more. Do you know how I know that? It is all here in the RTI documents. The Labor government was aware of the sale in 2020 and could have acquired the land, but they did nothing. It was only when this project might have won them a few votes at an election that they finally decided to act.

These RTI documents are damning. There are briefing notes from the department to the Deputy Premier which state—


With insufficient funding allocated to deliver the commitment, there are resource implications and financial implications of this election commitment.

Another one states—

Without participation by the council and an agreed way forward for long-term ownership of the site (which the state government does not yet have), there is a risk that the state could acquire the site, with no solution for long-term holding costs and no appropriate, capable manager.

The idea that the Palaszczuk Labor government would commit Queenslanders to pay more than \$70 million, when they were on notice of the significance of this land to our community and they could have bought it for \$15 million, is an utter disgrace. They should be ashamed and they need to be answerable to the people of Currumbin for their failed election commitment.

Ipswich Electorate, Federal Budget

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.53 pm): The federal budget was an opportunity to plan for the future, but instead we got a plan for the next election. This budget is a cynical attempt to buy votes in the hope that people will forget the last nine years of policy inertia, leadership failures, rorts and scandals. The one-off cash payments, tax rebates and the temporary six-month fuel excise cut has all come at the expense of long-term spending on critical infrastructure and services in Queensland.

Every budget that the coalition government delivers has fallen short when it comes to Ipswich. There has been no significant investment in our roads and transport infrastructure, our public hospital is straining under population growth and the neglectful investment in social housing leaves struggling families in housing stress.

Despite the massive construction boom in Ipswich suburbs like Ripley and Deebling Heights, more and more people are struggling to find an affordable place to live because of next to zero rentals available and rising costs of rents and mortgages. The recent floods left 550 houses in the Ipswich local government area damaged, and a number of families have been stuck in temporary accommodation, like motels, for weeks, yet Scott Morrison has failed to commit to Queensland's proposal for a joint \$771 million package to help Queensland flood victims recover from future floods. For Ipswich people on low incomes trying to find affordable housing, the situation is dire. Some families are forced to live with friends and relatives or are living out of their cars because their rental applications keep getting knocked back due to high demand.


Scott Morrison has decided he does not need votes from renters so he has abandoned them. He even stated that renters who are struggling with rising rents and needing rent relief should instead just buy a home. It was truly Morrison's 'let them eat cake' moment. Scott Morrison has abandoned funding for the National Rental Affordability Scheme, he has abandoned social housing funding, and he is not doing nearly enough for women who need secure housing after escaping domestic violence.

When it comes to investing in public health, Scott Morrison has duded Ipswich voters. The Ipswich Hospital urgently needs federal funding to help it manage the enormous pressure placed on it by population growth.

Shockingly, Scott Morrison is cutting \$21 million from Queensland's public hospitals next financial year, and he is cutting another \$176 million from Queensland hospitals in the following financial years, up to 2025. While the Palaszczuk government is delivering \$166.9 million for the Ipswich Hospital expansion, Scott Morrison is failing to stump up his share.

In this budget, I looked for big, bold transport infrastructure projects for Ipswich and found none. More than 88,000 Australians will move to Queensland by 2026, some six times more than any other state, but Queensland is only getting 10 per cent of total rail funding. Despite Scott Morrison spruiking \$680.6 million for the South East Queensland City Deal, no funding is actually being delivered over the next four years and it leaves projects like the Springfield to Ipswich rail corridor sitting in a state of limbo. Quite frankly, Scott Morrison has failed Ipswich in this budget.

Federal Budget, Agriculture

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (2.56 pm): This week's federal budget is investing in, and planning for, a stronger future for Queensland's agricultural sector. It is delivering. It contrasts starkly with the lip-service the state government pays to our agriculture, forestry and fishing industries.

The state government resorts to confected outrage, misinformation and scare tactics about the federal budget. Today it tried to spin its support for regional communities. Nothing is further from the truth. Actions speak louder than words. Claims of support and the agriculture minister's self-praise are hollow words when daylight is shone on his dismal record.

Every year it is expected the expenditure of every department will increase. It is normal because of growth. Every year should be a record budget, yet DAF is the only department that goes backwards—backwards in funding and backwards in staffing. Staffing levels go backwards at the same time as the bureaucracy swells. The minister talks a big game but struggles to deliver.

The contrast with the federal government could not be greater. The federal agriculture budget championed by Minister Littleproud is supporting new programs so that farmers can capitalise on export success, prepare for tough times, and put them at the centre of prosperity and growth. Some \$7 billion for investments through the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility will underpin economic growth in the north. Some \$61.6 million will boost frontline biosecurity, including safeguarding our northern border against lumpy skin disease and other emerging vector-borne animal diseases. Some \$10 million will support state agriculture departments to undertake surveillance and control activities as part of the \$69 million response to Japanese encephalitis virus. A \$20 million grant program to improve on-farm biosecurity and enhance pest and disease traceability will be delivered through interested states. This commitment is on top of over \$500 million invested in biosecurity since last year and a record \$1.1 billion on biosecurity and export programs. Drought resilience will be assisted by consolidating a four-year drought resilience strategy through the \$5 billion Future Drought Fund.

The federal government backs our forestry sector. Some \$90.6 million will support the sustainability of the industry and to respond to emerging challenges, and \$86.2 million for new plantations to secure future wood supply. They will be delivered over five years. Some \$4.4 million will strengthen illegal logging traceability and timber identification systems.

Growcom CEO Stephen Barnard said the federal budget 'backs in horticulture regions' and is 'particularly pleased to see the big investments in water infrastructure in North and Central Queensland'. The seafood Industry of Australia welcomed the budget and 'a number of measures which will directly and indirectly support Australia's commercial seafood producers'.

The state government is desperate to deflect from its self-inflicted integrity crisis. It has given up on governing. The state minister is doing nothing. The glaring truth is that, under this government, DAF is going backwards in funding and staffing.

Greenslopes Electorate, Schools



Mr KELLY (Greenslopes—ALP) (2.59 pm): I hope everyone is enjoying the soundtrack I have arranged for my speech here this afternoon! On this side of the House, we love our teachers, but today I want to talk about other important people who work in schools, particularly the administration officers. Every parent will tell you teachers often come and go, but those administration officers at the front counter who are there when your kids get sick, help you to sort out enrolment, and all those little things you have to do on the way, they are there for the long haul, and you get to know them over the years.

It is my sad duty to report to the House that the community of Seville Road State School this year was torn apart by the loss of Helen Reah. Helen was on the front desk. She was the front face—the kind person you would see every time you went to that school. She was known to generations and generations of people at that school. Sadly and tragically she died suddenly just a few weeks ago. I pass on my condolences to Helen's family. I know she is deeply missed and mourned by the entire community of Seville Road State School.

There is another administration officer I really want to pay tribute to today as well and that is Karen Oliver. She has served the community of Holland Park State School for 31 years. My hair was dark back then, I seem to recall. Helen has done a fantastic job. She is someone who is so dedicated to that community. It is nothing to find Helen there when you go for the P&C meeting late at night; she is still there working away. She is such a part of the fabric of that community. I wish her and her husband, Paul, all the best in their well-deserved retirement.

In the time remaining, I want to talk about how I back local schools. It was great to have Harper, Anu and James here, student leaders from Coorparoo State School. They were here today to talk to the minister about the exciting announcement of faster internet. I know that is something that everybody on this side is really behind.

We have done so much to back local schools in the community of Greenslopes. I speak of schools like Coorparoo State School and Nursery Road Special School as well as Cavendish Road, Mount Gravatt and Holland Park schools. They have all benefited from infrastructure. I am pleased to be able to stand in this place today and say that Holland Park State High School will now be benefiting from \$2 million worth of investment in infrastructure to upgrade their hospitality facilities for training and


student support resources. I am also pleased to say that another great school, Whites Hill State College is getting \$2.4 million to build a new manual arts block and upgrade its student facilities. It is fantastic. This is what we do on this side of the House: we back our local schools.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE


Report, Motion to Take Note

Resumed from 17 March (see p. 574), on motion of Mr Krause—

That the House take note of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee Report No. 108, 57th Parliament, *Inquiry into the Crime and Corruption Commission's investigation of former councillors of Logan City Council; and related matters*, tabled on 2 December 2021.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (3.02 pm), continuing: In returning to my contribution, I did note that it was a voluminous report that the PCCC has put forward. There are six recommendations and 14 findings. Having read the transcript of some of the contributions so far, I would ask that members make sure they read the recommendations and findings before making a contribution, because the ignorance of some has now been recorded forever in *Hansard*. I speak specifically of contributions stating that the PCCC's report did not make any finding of innocence in relation to the actions of the Logan City councillors and it does not absolve them.

I briefly want to talk about the work that Tony Fitzgerald QC will be doing as a result of the recommendations. I welcome his report and I think it is going to be the transparent way forward. We need the best and that is why Mr Fitzgerald is here.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.03 pm): I rise to address Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee report No. 108, *Inquiry into the Crime and Corruption Commission's investigation of former councillors of the Logan City Council; and related matters*. The inquiry was conducted pursuant to a resolution of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee, which is a statutory committee of the Parliament of Queensland.

On 5 May 2021 the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee received a complaint from the Local Government Association of Queensland regarding the conduct of the Crime and Corruption Commission in relation to its investigation of certain matters related to Logan City Council. In response to the complaint, on 28 May 2021 the committee unanimously resolved to investigate the issues raised by the Local Government Association of Queensland and publicly inquire into and report on the CCC's investigation of former councillors of Logan City Council which led to the former councillors being charged with fraud—and, as we know, these charges have now been discontinued; the decision and considerations of the Crime and Corruption Commission to charge these former councillors; the process by which the CCC considers and determines whether to refer matters to the Director of Public Prosecutions; the Crime and Corruption Commission's role in charging persons with an offence arising from its investigations; and other related matters.

On 2 December 2021 the chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee, the member for Scenic Rim, tabled report No. 108 in the Queensland parliament. I have to congratulate the committee chair, the deputy chair and all members of the committee for the work they did. It was important work. As was stated in the chair's foreword—

This report outlines very serious findings about the Crime and Corruption Commission ... and its actions.

The findings and recommendations in this report are made on a bipartisan basis.


The committee's report made 14 findings along with six recommendations. Significantly, the committee found that the Crime and Corruption Commission exceeded the specific limits on its powers under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010 in the Logan City Council matter and the Crime and Corruption Act 2001 with regards to assistance with the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission's process and further found that the Crime and Corruption Commission chairperson did not ensure that the Crime and Corruption Commission acted independently and impartially.

A pivotal recommendation made was that the Queensland government instigate a review of the Crime and Corruption Commission structure in regards to its investigatory and charging functions and the role of seconded police officers at the Crime and Corruption Commission, and that a commission of inquiry or similar be headed by senior counsel of sufficient standing to consider the structural basis for the Crime and Corruption Commission that has its roots in the Fitzgerald inquiry. As we all know, this has now been commenced with both the Hon. Tony Fitzgerald AC, QC and the Hon. Alan Wilson QC leading such an inquiry.

It is very important that here in Queensland we have a robust Crime and Corruption Commission to ensure good public governance and public administration. As well as that, the public needs to have confidence in it as an institution. Certainly there is significant work to be done given the findings contained within this report. The commission of inquiry which has been established has some important work to look at the structure and the function of the Crime and Corruption Commission so that it acts in the best interests of all Queenslanders.

If we look back to those years between 1987 and 1989 when Tony Fitzgerald undertook that very important body of work, the then Fitzgerald inquiry, we saw a seismic shift in governance and public administration in Queensland. Equally, 30 years later, there are a number of serious matters which pertain to integrity, accountability and alleged corruption here in Queensland. The Crime and Corruption Commission is one of the critical bodies that needs to be robust, independent, transparent and act impartially when looking into matters. These matters will be looked at further through the commission of inquiry, and I look forward to the final outcome.

I take the opportunity to again commend the committee, the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee, for the work they have done and particularly the member for Scenic Rim, given he is the independent chairperson of the parliamentary committee and was appointed in a bipartisan way. Again, all of the members of the committee certainly undertook some important work on behalf of all Queenslanders to ensure a standard of openness, transparency and accountability when it comes to the Crime and Corruption Commission.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (3.08 pm): I also want to make some comments in relation to this report. I want to acknowledge the hard work that has been put into compiling this report by the chair and also by all other members of the committee. In fact, three of the members of that committee were members of the committee when I was its chair. A substantial portion of that report covers periods when I was chair of that committee. I am very interested to see the reflections and the information from that thorough investigation.

The regular committee meetings of the CCC are, by their nature, constrained. There is a limited amount of time within which the committee can ask questions and carry out its proper functions in both the public and private sections. One Friday every second month is the time frame that is currently available for the PCCC to conduct its very important role of oversight of the actions of the CCC, particularly to ensure that it is performing its duties according to law and according to the provisions of the legislation.

Of course, 16 findings have been made by the current committee and there are another six recommendations on top of that. A number of those findings are, in fact, quite disturbing. They should be disturbing to members of this House and they should be disturbing to members of the public, given their very extensive powers—powers that are granted to no-one else in this land—to carry out coercive hearings, to tap people's phones and to break into people's houses to plant wire taps. These are very extensive powers. They are not powers to be laughed off and they are not powers that should be dismissed lightly. It is important that the body charged with exercising those powers is honest, accurate and fulsome in its reports to the body that is charged with overseeing the exercise of those powers. What disturbs me in this report, on page 127, is this comment that was uncovered—

A file note of a discussion between CCC officers dated 11 September 2018, provided to the committee pursuant to the summons issued to the CCC, suggested there had been discussion about how much detail to provide the committee in the update.

They were saying: 'We're not sure how much we should tell the body that is charged with ensuring that we are complying with our obligations under the provisions of the act.' The report continues—


Evidence also showed that the CCC held concerns about the 'agenda' of the former PCCC chair Mr Nicholls MP, Member for Clayfield, and Mr Crandon MP, Member for Coomera.

We had the officers who were proposing to report to a public committee of this parliament, who were charged with overseeing their operations, second-guessing the motives of the MPs who were there to do it. Let me say: there was no agenda, other than an agenda to make sure that the CCC was complying with its powers. It was an agenda that had been publicly and openly discussed in public meetings with myself as chair.

We had asked the chair of the CCC on a number of occasions about the reasons for the charges that were being laid and the adequacy of those charges. We had asked about the interrelationship between the matters in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission and the matters that were under investigation by the CCC at that time. I had asked on a number of occasions about the exercise

of the prosecutorial discretion—so much so that I took a copy of the DPP guidelines for prosecutorial discretions into one of the meetings and put those to the chair of the CCC at the time to discuss how he came about those positions.

Perhaps if the CCC had been less concerned about our agenda, which was to make sure they were doing the right thing, and more concerned to do the right thing and to consider in an open and frank way that maybe they are not the repository of all knowledge and wisdom, we would not have then had the withdrawal of the proceedings, as reported on page 125 of this report, whereby Mr Carl Heaton, the Director of Public Prosecutions, advised that there was insufficient evidence and that, even if there was more material that had been put to the QIRC, that admissibility was doubtful. When provided with that material he said, 'There are no reasonable prospects of success.' It goes to show that the balance between this place and the CCC is delicate, and both sides need to come at it with the appropriate integrity and attitude.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (3.13 pm): I rise to make a short contribution on the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee's report No. 108, *Inquiry into the Crime and Corruption Commission's investigation of former councillors of Logan City Council; and related matters*. Madam Deputy Speaker, with your indulgence I would like to talk about the impact this matter has on all councillors, especially those in Western Queensland councils, and what has happened over the last 12 months. One of the biggest difficulties we have when it comes to councils in Western Queensland is finding people who want to stand for council. I am talking about councils such as Diamantina, which covers a huge area, Boulia, Barcoo, Longreach and Central Highlands, which is the size of Tasmania.

Councillors are now coming to me and saying, 'Why am I doing this?' When they saw the CCC investigation into the Logan City Council, they started to get worried. We need to have good public advocacy in our regional councils. It is getting harder and harder to get those types of people to stand for council. Last night in Brisbane the generosity of the Western Queensland councils could be seen when they gave over \$100,000 to the Flood Appeal. They recognise that when they are in trouble in drought—as the minister for agriculture understands—it is the people of Brisbane and South-East Queensland who rally for them. Relating that back to this report, the problem is that many councillors, whether they be in Woorabinda council or in the Central Highlands Regional Council, are starting to question the scrutiny they are under and asking, 'Why am I doing this? It is getting more and more impossible.' Those councillors out there do not get paid a lot of money. In fact, many of those councillors leave businesses behind to serve their community. I have a couple of friends who are councillors who have lost money—not that they complain about it.

The CCC needs to be beyond reproach. It needs to have integrity. It needs to be believed in. I am not knocking the CCC; they need to do their job and they have an important job to do. The member for Scenic Rim as chair and his fellow committee members were able to establish that we have some issues there that need to be addressed. There needs to be confidence in the CCC. With the CCC, trust is important and integrity is important. The CCC hold a valuable position in Queensland whereby they need to be trusted and their integrity needs to be beyond question. There are good people in the CCC. I just think we need to build that trust up again.

We also need to recognise that Western Queensland councillors and mayors are different from South-East Queensland councillors. I am not taking anything away from the Brisbane City, Gold Coast or Sunshine Coast councillors, but many of the councillors out my way do not do it for the pay; they do it for the service. They do it because they are connected to the community. They do it because they are involved in the local pony club or the local Rugby League club.

When it comes to conflicts of interest, we have to be a little more understanding of Western Queensland, regional and remote councillors in that they will be involved in a lot of issues and a lot of clubs. They should not be fearful of nominating that they have a conflict of interest in the council meeting and have to remove themselves. They have a genuine interest in trying to play an important role in the local activities in their community. We need to have a better understanding of what a Western Queensland or remote councillor has to do compared to a major city councillor. I am not taking anything away from those major city councillors; they do a fantastic job. I know that the member for Clayfield was in the Brisbane City Council and did a fantastic job, but we have to have more flexibility in the way we look at things and the CCC needs to be able to understand that as well.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Ms McMILLAN (Mansfield—ALP) (3.19 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Community Support and Services Committee Report No. 14, 57th Parliament, *Inquiry into social isolation and loneliness in Queensland*, tabled on 6 December 2021.

It was late 2017 when I was delivering meals to those in need in my community on behalf of my local Meals on Wheels organisation when towards the end of my delivery run I knocked on the door of a woman who I found to be distressed and very sad. She shared with me that her only sister had just passed away earlier that morning. Until she shared this information with me, she had not had the opportunity to share her sad news with anyone else and, further, she told me that I was likely to be the only person she would share this news with on that day and that I would be the only person she would talk to during that day. I offered a hug in comfort and put the kettle on to share a cup of tea with her and spend time listening.

This story stayed with me for many days later and I am sure that many members of this House have had very similar conversations with members of their communities. I was left feeling hollow and helpless and for the very first time questioned whether I truly knew my community—a community that many perceived to be an inner-city community of relative privilege and tremendous opportunity. As the days passed, I wondered about the extent of this issue in my community and considered the role of a good government, asking myself, ‘What would a good, strong, caring and considered government do to address this issue?’

In the following months I encountered many others with similar stories of a solo existence in need of love, warmth, friendship and connection. It was this experience that was the catalyst that began my conversations in 2018 with my colleagues at the University of Queensland, the Queensland Community Alliance and the Mount Gravatt Community Centre to investigate social isolation and loneliness in our local community. Our research and pilot project, the Ways to Wellness program, sparked government curiosity, and I thank Minister Enoch for her tremendous support. It attracted a resource allocation from our government and of course interstate and global interest.

The committee’s task was to inquire into and report on the nature and extent of the impact of social isolation and loneliness experienced in Queensland and to identify the causes and drivers and the protective factors available in society that might mitigate the problem. The terms of reference also required the committee to inquire into and report on the potential benefits of addressing social isolation and loneliness, which I note are significant both to the individual and to the Queensland community. The committee learned that social isolation and loneliness is not clearly or universally defined and nor is it easily identified. The committee also learned that there is no singular action or treatment to end social isolation and loneliness. Rather, the committee heard compelling evidence for systemic change to the delivery and interaction of social and community services and infrastructure to best deliver a more place based and person centred approach to address this problem.

During the course of the inquiry the committee received evidence from world experts in this field, and I am deeply appreciative of the information and research generously shared with the committee by academics here in Queensland as well as from across the world. Their work forms the foundations of this report upon which the committee has built its 14 recommendations. On behalf of the committee, I thank those individuals and organisations who provided submissions to the inquiry, both in written and video format. I am especially thankful for the people throughout Queensland who took time out of their very busy days to attend the committee’s public hearings, often setting aside their essential work within their own communities to share their stories.

It is the contributions of these Queenslanders that has guided the committee towards a set of recommendations that shape a vision for a statewide strategy to address social isolation and loneliness in Queensland. I thank the deputy chair, Mr Stephen Bennett MP, the member for Burnett, and all of my fellow committee members for recognising the difference that they will make through their genuine care for and commitment to this important issue. I thank the Parliamentary Service staff for their patience, time and endurance compiling the extensive state, national and global research evidence and the personal stories and experiences of organisations across Queensland that supported the clarity with which our committee detailed the recommendations of this report. Finally, I thank the 16 Queensland government departments which work tirelessly every day to support Queenslanders to better their lives.



Mr BENNETT (Burnett—LNP) (3.23 pm): At the outset I want to say that in this place after a decade members get to do some inquiries which they start with apprehension but end up being very fulfilling and rewarding. I want to put on the record that the social isolation and loneliness inquiry was one of those. We should accept the evidence that social isolation and loneliness impact on health outcomes, quality of life and mortality. I did feel that the committee became acutely aware of the significant social isolation and loneliness experienced in our communities, most notably by the disadvantaged and vulnerable. We have witnessed an increase in social isolation and loneliness during the COVID-19 outbreak and the committee heard that there has been a significant impact on people in the community, particularly those with pre-existing health conditions and limited support networks including the elderly or those from low socio-economic or vulnerable backgrounds.

After receiving nearly 200 submissions and doing extensive travel for hearings, which were very well attended, there are many serious issues that exist. The committee heard that the association between social isolation and the built form and design of our communities is important. The fact is that as a whole society local, federal and state governments have a role to play in things like civic participation, use of public spaces, access and safety for women and girls, particularly in our communities, and people with disability. We all have a role to play to make sure that our communities are more cognisant of these issues. Transport stops underpin mobility, people's behaviour and, more importantly, safety. Social isolation and loneliness are detrimental to both physical and mental health, leading to terrible adverse effects in our communities. We heard that these things were viewed as both a potential cause and a consequence of mental illness according to a report by the Productivity Commission in 2020. We were given information that addressing this is critical for improving the mental health and wellbeing of everyone and that the community mental health sector has a role to play.


I want to discuss the Laidley Community Centre, which is one of 140 neighbourhood and community centres around Queensland responding to loneliness and social isolation in our community. Neighbourhood centres are place based social infrastructure that foster connection, belonging, participation and inclusion. Neighbourhood centres welcome everyone regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion, age or social status and by their very nature build connections between individuals and organisations, particularly those who are isolated, vulnerable or disenfranchised.

Alana Wahl, the manager of the Laidley Community Centre, impressed with her presentation. This centre supports the Queensland Families and Communities Association's submission, the peak body of neighbourhood centres. Overwhelmingly there was a consistent message of trying to increase investment to get more workers into neighbourhood centres, as well as to help cover overhead costs; strength based awareness campaigns emphasising the role of these centres, creating increased awareness of centres as hubs of socially isolated individuals; and enhancing neighbourhood centres' digital and physical infrastructure to connect isolated communities and individuals using hybrid online and in-person methods. The association also talked about the reporting frameworks, which were something that I found interesting.

I want to give a shout-out to all of those neighbourhood centres that we visited. They are such a passionate bunch of people doing amazing work and they are a resource. The Queensland government has put some extra capacity in those organisations already out of one of the recommendations, and funding is the best thing we could give towards these community-led, place based solutions in our communities. I also want to give a shout-out for the neighbourhood centre at Agnes Water. It has been trying to get a more permanent stature and its funding has increased as well, and we would love to see a purpose-built facility for that community.

The committee heard submissions that for over 25 years neighbourhood centres have been providing homelessness services here in Brisbane and they know firsthand how homelessness, health, inequality, poverty, intergenerational trauma and interpersonal violence and abuse from partners are disconnecting people from services and family. We know that this disconnection forces individuals and families into homelessness, creates barriers to employment and on it goes. I again give a big shout-out to our neighbourhood centres and all committee members.

As I said at the beginning, my time on this inquiry in particular was a most rewarding time and I am glad that this House has shone a light on this issue. I was a bit sceptical to start with, but as time went on we met wonderful Queenslanders doing amazing work and that goes to show the role we can play in making sure that our communities are a better place. Let us ensure that our neighbourhood centres are resourced to do the work that they do. Thanks to the secretariat and everyone involved. I look forward to making social isolation and loneliness a thing of the past in Queensland.

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (3.29 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the social isolation and loneliness report No. 14 of the Community Support and Services Committee. This report presents a summary of the committee's inquiry into social isolation and loneliness in Queensland, outlines the nature and extent of the impact of social isolation and loneliness experienced in Queensland and identifies the causes and drivers and the protective factors available in society that might mitigate the problem. On 27 May 2021 the Legislative Assembly agreed to a motion that the committee inquire into and report on social isolation and loneliness in the state. The committee was required to report to the Legislative Assembly by Monday, 6 December 2021.


I would like to acknowledge and thank the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts, Leeanne Enoch, committee chair Corrine McMillan, fellow committee members, the committee secretariat and Hansard for their hard work during the course of the inquiry. I am humbled to be part of the Community Support and Services Committee that led the inquiry across the state. The committee invited stakeholders and subscribers to make written submissions to the inquiry and received a total of 196 submissions, including one video submission. The overwhelming response from Queenslanders was not surprising, as social isolation and loneliness is a serious problem that affects everyone, but is probably the least talked about. The inquiry gave Queenslanders an opportunity to have a conversation about this important topic to improve outcomes into the future.

The committee heard from a diverse range of submitters from around the state, nationally and internationally. The committee held public hearings in Brisbane, Mount Gravatt, Toowoomba, Nambour, Mount Isa, Townsville, Cairns and Thursday Island. I acknowledge and thank the following organisations from my electorate that made the extra effort to travel to our Cairns public hearing: the Port Douglas Neighbourhood Centre, Mossman Community Care, Mareeba Community Care and Pormpur Paanthu Aboriginal Corporation from Pormpuraaw in Cape York for dialling in to give their contribution via teleconference. I acknowledge the difficulty my communities often face when it comes to attending public hearings and I give a special shout-out to the wonderful hardworking and passionate CEOs of these organisations for making the extra effort to contribute to the inquiry and give FNQ and regional and remote communities a voice and a chance at influencing change.

What is social isolation and loneliness? Social isolation and loneliness, while related, are not the same. Loneliness has been defined as an aversive and subjective feeling of social isolation which occurs when a person perceives that the quality or quantity of social relationship that they have is less than they desire. The Australian Loneliness Report stated that compared to non-lonely people, lonely people are more anxious about social interactions, express more symptoms of depression, have less social interaction with families, friends and neighbours, have poorer physical health, have more negative emotions, have fewer positive emotions, have poorer overall quality of life, are more likely to suppress their emotions and are less likely to be able to change the way they think about a difficult situation. As social beings we rely on interactions with others and the relationships we form and maintain to help navigate our way in this crazy world. No doubt the global pandemic over the past two years has put a lot of pressure on our daily norms by restricting the social interactions that we all thrive on.

I acknowledge that restrictions on face-to-face interactions were particularly hard. Not being able to travel and not being able to interact with friends and loved ones was devastating. When the strict lockdowns had us restricted to our homes, hugs and handshakes were put in the no-go zone, when our recreational activities suffered because suddenly it was too high risk to be around people—although it was in the best interests of keeping ourselves, our family and our communities safe—it came at a cost to our emotional, physical and mental health. While we are talking about social isolation now in the context of COVID, the issue has been longstanding. During the committee inquiry we got to meet many people who came forward to share their experience of social isolation. There are many causes underlying an individual's lived experience and I want to mention some of the barriers that affect individual experience such as people with disability, ethnic backgrounds, the language they speak and their educational level. It all plays a part in how a person integrates into society thus influencing their ability to conform on a daily basis.

I want to acknowledge the many community organisations, sporting groups, clubs and volunteers who do incredible work in our community to engage our most vulnerable. They provide support and create opportunities for vulnerable people to engage in meaningful activities that facilitate positive interactions to help them function effectively in society.

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (3.34 pm): At the outset I acknowledge, as my fellow committee members have, what a fascinating and eye-opening inquiry this was to be a part of. I personally learnt an awful lot. We know that social isolation and loneliness are growing problems in modern Queensland,

as they are elsewhere. We live in a world where we are more connected by technology than ever before but still isolation and loneliness are major and growing issues for countless Australians and Queenslanders.


I think it is fair to say coming out of this inquiry that the evidence does not paint a particularly uniform national picture about which demographic groups face these issues most acutely, but it is clear that there are pockets of people struggling with this all across society and some particular factors that clearly contribute to the issue. For example, poverty is a key factor in contributing to loneliness and isolation. Discrimination can also contribute to social isolation and psychological distress, whether that is racial discrimination or discrimination against the LGBTIQ+ community.

The outcomes and harm that people experience as a consequence of social isolation and loneliness are very real. They are issues that in themselves are grave and growing concerns that warrant major investment and responses from government. Many of these have been listed already in contributions: the social anxiety, depression and other mental ill health that is generated are a real problem; poorer physical health and overall quality of life leading to earlier death; and greater incidence of suicidality and self-harm. Less social interaction itself is a consequence of loneliness which only perpetuates these issues. Given the gravity of the consequences, we clearly need an urgent, well-resourced and coordinated government response to these issues. Unsurprisingly though, there is no single or straightforward answer to a problem that I would suggest has its roots in long-term patterns—centuries old patterns—of industrialisation, privatisation and urbanisation. These trends are all exacerbated more broadly by capitalism and the way it fosters more individualistic lives and strips away family support structures and social connection support and collective responsibility.

We are seeing the community in some quarters spontaneously organising and responding to this. I want to make mention of John Scobel in particular, who kicked off the Social Inclusion Project Inner West some years ago. The first time we heard from John was back in 2019. As we moved into 2020 and the pandemic, the value of that organisation shone through. We heard some fascinating evidence about the possibilities of social prescribing and the vital work that could be done by link workers in connecting isolated or lonely people with the organisations or services that best suit their needs. Although I do take very seriously the warnings from some witnesses in the inquiry about over-medicalising our response to an issue for which so many of the apparent solutions rest with the community.

Some of the recommendations made by the committee touched on practical community based solutions that I know are incredibly popular in my community already. Recommendation 10 points to the need for better provision of green space, parks, toilet access and access to transport and community facilities. It is not the strongest recommendation we could have made perhaps, but I think it speaks to an inspiring and hopeful vision of active communities with abundant green spaces, community hubs with diverse activities and creative programs for all ages and interests, connected by—imagine it—free public transport. None of this needs to be treated as though it is a fantasy. These are all outcomes we could achieve if the government simply made the investment necessary to realise that vision.

While I am speaking of the need for increased investment, I want to turn to the central role that neighbourhood and community centres occupied in this inquiry. Perhaps the only thing more apparent than the need to increase funding for neighbourhood and community centres was the absolutely pivotal role that they play in supporting their local communities. We had the privilege of visiting and hearing from staff and volunteers at more neighbourhood and community centres than I could possibly recall in the time I have available. It was really extraordinary to see the amount of, for example, food support that they offered through OzHarvest, the variety of activities and supports that were on offer for young and old and the diversity of these centres that was driven by the needs of those communities that they serve. We are going to see some really interesting numbers come out soon, I understand, from Neighbourhood Centres Queensland, formerly the QFCA, when they release their sector impact report. In closing, I would like to drive home the point that what we need now is a firm commitment to dramatically increase funding for these community hubs. We really do not need another review.

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (3.39 pm): I rise to speak on the Community Support and Services Committee's report into social isolation and loneliness. I concur with the previous speakers who have spoken about how important and eye-opening this inquiry was and what a privilege it was to be a part of it. I thank the chair, the deputy chair and the other committee members. I thank the minister, the government departments, the state bodies, the community organisations, the academics and all the members of the public for their invaluable contributions to our investigation of the nature and extent of the impact of social isolation and loneliness experienced in Queensland.

Through the inquiry the committee found that social isolation and loneliness, while related, are not the same. Loneliness has been defined as an aversive and subjective feeling of social isolation that occurs when a person perceives that the quality or quantity of their social relationships is less than what they desire. Research has found that lonely people feel that their relationships are not meaningful and they are not understood by others. According to Relationships Australia, 'social isolation', 'social connection' and 'loneliness' are often used interchangeably although it is well understood that they capture highly related but distinct concepts. As such, the committee has recommended that the Queensland government clearly defines 'social isolation' and 'loneliness' to create a common discourse and ensure consistent language to enhance the understanding of these issues across Queensland and to support appropriate policy responses.


The committee found that there is a high prevalence of social isolation and loneliness within Queensland. Through site visits to some of the 127 community centres around the state, we saw the fantastic work of social workers, social work students, link workers, volunteers and students on work placements in tackling this issue. To support the important work of neighbourhood and community centres, the committee recommends the establishment of a network of frontline professionals involved in preventing and responding to social isolation and loneliness. It also recommends that the Queensland government explore more opportunities to place work students in neighbourhood and community centres across Queensland to build the capacity of workers while nurturing university partnerships.

To ensure neighbourhood and community centres have the resources they need, the committee recommends the government review the funding model for neighbourhood centres across Queensland, including a consideration of measures to help stabilise the workforce, retain corporate knowledge and help ensure centres are best positioned to meet the emerging needs of their communities. I thank Chris Mundy from Neighbourhood Centres Queensland for providing my office with a bit more information.

The committee found that social isolation and loneliness is not an issue unique to Queensland and many other jurisdictions are taking action to reduce the lack of social connection in their communities. As such, the committee recommends the government reflect on the work and the research in other jurisdictions to identify best practice in addressing social isolation and loneliness, with a view to it being adopted here.

One method of treating social isolation and loneliness in other jurisdictions is social prescribing, which is outlined by the Australian Association of Social Workers as a practice where health professionals, including GPs, have the resources and infrastructure to link patients with social services or even social groups in a bid to address the social determinants contributing to poor health and stave off the epidemic of loneliness and social isolation. One example of that, as spoken about by the member for Mansfield, is the Ways to Wellness program. Since that pilot began in 2019, over 300 individuals have been connected to groups, activities, social and sporting clubs, volunteering opportunities, training and employment while building a network of link workers. Due to the success of the program, the committee recommends that the Queensland government consider partnering with other levels of government to implement a statewide trial of that model.

Other recommendations include finding an effective measure of social isolation to help direct funding where it is needed; advocating the Commonwealth for more primary health network nurses; advocating council for green space and social infrastructure; the development of online training and induction opportunities for volunteers to contribute to programs aimed at preventing and responding to social isolation and loneliness; government investigate opportunities to co-locate state and Commonwealth organisations and NGOs to improve efficiency and access; government consider a consistent approach to support place-based responses; and government develop a 10-year plan. On a personal level, it was found that one in four Queenslanders is affected by both or either of these issues and I would contend that that is a snapshot of the time right now. These issues have or will affect all Queenslanders at some point in their lifetimes. I thank all who have informed this report.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (3.44 pm): I rise to make some comments on the committee's report. I thank the members of the committee for their work, particularly the chair and deputy chair who led the way. Loneliness and social isolation obviously lead to negative impacts on many parts of society. People's mental health issues and outcomes can lead to larger problems for themselves, their families and society, including suicide trauma. It should not be forgotten that these issues can also lead to economic loss for the whole of our community. Therefore, like most health issues, prevention is better than cure. I hope this inquiry will go some way towards finding some solutions to the issues identified within the report.

The member for Burnett mentioned the various visits that the committee undertook. I thank everyone who came along to the hearings and shared stories from their communities. One of our visits was to the Mount Gravatt Community Centre, which I think underwent a significant upgrade when the former member for Mansfield, Ian Walker, was the local member. He very much supported that place as has the current member and the federal member for Bonner. During our visit we heard some really good evidence.

One of the lighter moments of the inquiry came in the afternoon session at the Mount Gravatt Community Centre when we were privileged to visit a ladies group. Respecting these things, the chair of the committee entered the room first and politely inquired whether it would be okay if some of the gentlemen of the committee joined the meeting. One of the ladies in the group said, 'Yeah, send in the eye candy!' I think the member for Nicklin and I were the only blokes there and we were both a bit shocked. It must have been Rob, the member for Nicklin, they were talking about. It was a very light moment.

We did get a good insight into the way that the Mount Gravatt Community Centre operates in supporting people who do not have other ways of interacting socially in their community. We also visited Momentum in Toowoomba, where we were met by the Queensland Alliance for Mental Health, and Nambour. I was sorry that I could not attend all of the visits due to PCCC commitments around that time.

Some of the issues raised in the inquiry cannot be addressed entirely by government because they relate to complex family and individual social needs. However, that does not mean that government should ignore those issues altogether. As other members have identified, there are some practical measures that can go a long way towards improving people's social connection in their own lives and public transport is one of them. It is something that I have lobbied for a lot in my own area of Scenic Rim, which does not have significant public transport options. That is something that we will continue to work on because, although there were increased bus services a few years ago, there has not been any progress in the past two terms of parliament on that front.

Mental health services, both acute and preventive, need to be delivered on the ground in community and not just as an outreach service because, unfortunately, that does not always materialise in areas that are further away from big metropolitan areas, including in the Scenic Rim electorate. Those services need to be more targeted on the ground so that people can actually access them where they live.

Finally, and this is something that I asked about at one of the hearings, we need to get people into jobs. Whether they have paid or unpaid jobs, there is evidence that people being in employment is a huge improver when it comes to social connection and isolation. Having a job, whether it is paid or unpaid, is a massive preventive measure to isolation. We heard from some people who had taken on voluntary roles to achieve just that, to reduce their isolation, and that led to paid roles. That is something that we need to remember as well.



Hon. LM ENOCH (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (3.49 pm): Ahead of the 2020 state election, the Palaszczuk government committed to hold a parliamentary inquiry into social isolation and loneliness. The Community Support and Services Committee has now conducted this very important inquiry. The committee undertook extensive consultation over a five-month period which included 10 public hearings and a review of 196 submissions by community members and key stakeholders. During the inquiry the committee heard that the issues of social isolation and loneliness are complex and can affect the physical and mental health and wellbeing of many people. The final report was delivered late last year.

The Palaszczuk government takes this issue very seriously, and its response will take into account the findings and recommendations. I take this opportunity to again thank the Community Support and Services Committee, led by the member for Mansfield, for its hard work in reviewing this issue so thoroughly on behalf of all Queenslanders. I also thank everyone who had their say. It has demonstrated again just how important this issue is to Queenslanders.

The timing of the inquiry meant it could consider the impacts of COVID-19. It is clear that the pandemic contributed to loneliness and isolation for many people. The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that loneliness was the personal stressor most experienced by Australians during the height of the pandemic. One in five people experienced feelings of loneliness and social isolation. We know that Queenslanders such as seniors, people with disability and their carers, people with mental illness and young people are the most vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness, and these groups felt the effects of COVID-19.

We are fortunate that we had and continue to have services and supports that encourage and increase social and community connections. At the forefront of this is our network of more than 125 Queensland government funded neighbourhood and community centres. The COVID-19 pandemic further demonstrated the value of these centres that are the backbone of their local communities. Many of the neighbourhood and community centres adapted and embraced technology throughout the COVID-19 pandemic so they could continue service delivery and support their local communities. That is why the Palaszczuk government has supported each of Queensland's funded neighbourhood and community centres with an additional \$20,000, to help respond to increased demand for services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are currently working with neighbourhood and community centres and their peak body, Neighbourhood Centres Queensland, to make these centres even stronger and more responsive to their local communities.

I was also pleased recently to announce that the Palaszczuk government has delivered on its commitment to employ Neighbourhood and Care Army Connect workers in 15 communities across the state. They will build on the legacy of the Care Army by linking volunteers with organisations, including neighbourhood and community centres, in their local areas, helping Queenslanders be more engaged and connected with their communities. I am proud that the Palaszczuk government has provided \$1.7 million towards this important initiative and partnered with Volunteering Queensland to deliver it.

We have also been supporting our frontline housing and homelessness services to work directly with people to help develop tenancy and support connections. The Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan includes a commitment to stronger, safer and more inclusive communities across our state. Action 10 commits to building social inclusion and participation by leveraging community infrastructure, including neighbourhood and community centres, to provide access to support services, make art more accessible in the community and provide spaces for creation of art and social activities.

Additionally, our very popular My Home Awards were expanded this year to recognise public housing tenants who are building social connections. The new community and culture category has provided an opportunity for public housing tenants to share how they connect with or celebrate their community. This could be through volunteering, supporting neighbours, celebrating cultural events or other ways to connect. I look forward to announcing the winners of those awards very soon.


Social isolation and loneliness is a complex issue that impacts many communities globally. The Palaszczuk government will continue its important work with sector partners on initiatives aimed at preventing and responding to social isolation and loneliness in communities across Queensland. I again commend the committee for the incredible work it has done in this particular inquiry. As we went through the pandemic and as we continue to ensure that our cultural identity as Queenslanders is intact, this work and the work around social isolation and loneliness will become incredibly important. I look forward to being able to update the House in future months with regard to our response to this inquiry.



Mr McCALLUM (Bundamba—ALP) (3.54 pm): Across the world there has been increasing recognition of the issue of social isolation and loneliness. We know that social isolation and loneliness have a significant impact on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of so many people. Queenslanders including seniors, people with disability and their carers, people with mental illness and young people are amongst the most vulnerable groups that are susceptible or prone to social isolation and loneliness. Of course, there has been a huge increase in social isolation and loneliness because of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has had a big impact on Queenslanders, particularly vulnerable people who are at biggest risk of social isolation and loneliness.

In fact, in 2020 the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that the personal stressor most experienced by Australians during the COVID-19 pandemic was loneliness. Up to one in five people reported feelings of loneliness and social isolation as a result of the pandemic. That is why in 2020 as a government we committed to undertaking a parliamentary inquiry into social isolation. This report is delivering on that commitment to take real steps towards addressing social isolation and loneliness.

I want to make special mention of our neighbourhood and community centres and give a particular shout-out to my local neighbourhood centres: Goodna Neighbourhood House and community centres in Riverview and Redbank Plains. I also mention the magnificent work undertaken by the African Youth Support Council at Redbank Plains. They all provide places of connection and places of community, where people can come together. We have so many other groups that provide these valuable spaces. I commend this report to the House. I thank the committee, particularly the chair, for what is an excellent report.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (3.57 pm): I start by acknowledging the terrific work of the chair, the member for Mansfield, in relation to not just this report but also this issue. I am inspired every day by my colleagues and the great work that they do, but the member for Mansfield has identified an issue through her time as an MP, and in her time previously as a principal, and has pursued that doggedly in this place, specifically through this inquiry. She has come up with a report that is based on really sound evidence and makes some really good suggestions on how to go forward. I acknowledge the member for Mansfield for that.

Probably one of the saddest things I ever encountered as a nurse was being with somebody at the end of their life when there was nobody else there for them. Any nurse will have had that unfortunate experience. I have experienced the power of community as a rehab nurse. I want to be careful about what I say because I do not want to identify the patient, but we had a patient from a very small country town who had horrific injuries leading to very significant permanent disabilities that would require very high levels of care. It would have been difficult to discharge this patient back into the community in a metropolitan area but, because this patient had such a strong community around her, both family and friends, even in this really isolated spot we were able to discharge this patient. Many other patients we looked after might have lived in the centre of Brisbane or in Townsville—we were a statewide service—but when we sat down to start to work with them on their discharge planning we found that they had no family and no friends—not a single person in the world they could rely on who was not provided by a government service. Those people were so much more difficult to discharge, because you really do need that interconnectedness, to be part of a community.

We all understand Maslow's hierarchy of needs. We need water, food, oxygen et cetera, but if we really want to live life it is those things higher up the triangle that matter. People being connected into their community—

Mr Healy interjected.

Mr KELLY: I will take that interjection. People being connected into their community gives them a good quality of life. I am sure every MP on this side of the House who does a lot of doorknocking and is always at community events would have met people who are socially isolated. I think the recommendations in this report point to a way forward in trying to respond to that.

I acknowledge the work of the Mount Gravatt Community Centre which is in the member for Mansfield's electorate. I am pleased that they have opened a branch office in Coorparoo and are now providing services in my electorate. I acknowledge the work they do in dealing with social isolation. They have been champions of this issue. They have been well supported by the member for Mansfield. I acknowledge and thank them for all the work they do all the time, but particularly during COVID. With those few words, I commend this report to the House.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.


Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION (EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 856, on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (4.00 pm), continuing: As I was saying before the break, with this bill the state government is again proposing to extend their extraordinary powers without giving Queenslanders the transparency or the plan they deserve. They still refuse to release the expert medical advice used as the rationale for COVID-19 restrictions, despite two years of requests from the LNP.

Giving Queenslanders this transparency would ensure the state government is accountable to the people of Queensland for the decisions and restrictions imposed on them. This is not a unique request. Governments interstate such as Victoria regularly release meeting minutes and correspondence between the minister and the Chief Health Officer to justify restrictions imposed. That is what my community want. That is what they deserve—transparency, honesty and accountability.

My community also want this government to hold up their end of the bargain. We now find ourselves in the position where the state has reached the 90 per cent vaccination target. In fact, Queenslanders have surpassed this goal. At this milestone we were told by the Palaszczyk Labor

government that restrictions and mandates would be reviewed, but the Labor government have sat on their hands. Over the past two years our communities have displayed an extraordinary level of trust in the state government—wanting to do their part to flatten the curve until we all had an opportunity to be vaccinated. It is time that that trust was returned.


The vaccination rollout was hampered by the Palaszczuk government's mixed messages around the AstraZeneca vaccine and the Premier's refusal to have it. Lots of work needed to be done to restore public confidence in the vaccine. I played my part. I chose to be vaccinated with AstraZeneca. Our Currumbin community played their part too, achieving the 90 per cent vaccination target at the start of this year.

The measures governments take must be proportionate with the risk. The risk has changed, both as the virus has evolved and because of our high vaccination levels. I am not talking about the expert medical advice from the AHPPC regarding vaccinating healthcare, disability and aged-care workers. The advice from the AHPPC should be followed. I am talking about the restrictions and mandates in settings where there is no recommendation from the AHPPC and that should be reviewed now we have reached the 90 per cent vaccination target. I know that the people who are most affected by these mandates right now are in the minority given the high vaccination rates statewide. It is the role of government to govern for all Queenslanders. Even if policies only impact a few, it is imperative that they are reviewed stringently.

I know those opposite will try to twist what I am saying to suggest that I am against vaccines. Let the record reflect that I support vaccination and I have done everything I can to ensure that every one of my constituents has had the opportunity to be protected through vaccination. Regardless of whether or not we agree or disagree with mandates and restrictions, we were all told that at 90 per cent the restrictions and mandates would be reviewed. As a state and a community we have held up our end of the bargain. We have done everything that was asked of us and more. It is time the Premier and her government held up their end of the bargain.

It is because of this that the LNP will move key amendments to this bill that will make it mandatory for the Chief Health Officer to publish the health advice on which a direction has been made as soon as practicable. Our amendments will see oversight of the emergency powers in the form of a parliamentary committee. Our amendments will see that the state government's extraordinary powers expire on 31 May rather than the proposed date of 31 October.

The LNP amendments are a sensible approach to the transition away from mandates and restrictions. They ensure transparency and accountability and they balance the need to respond to an unprecedented health crisis with the need to ensure the extraordinary government powers are not in place for a moment longer than necessary. Without the amendments proposed by the LNP, without oversight, without checks or balances, without accountability, without the government response being proportionate to the risk, this bill does not serve the people it is meant to serve—the people of Queensland. I cannot support it.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (4.05 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the bill before us. I start by paying regard to my local community that worked together to counter this pandemic, which I recognise is ongoing. My community listened, they took action and they stuck to the directions. Many people grumbled and many people complained. A few people complained vociferously. Even though it was difficult, in the main they did it. They stuck with what we asked them to do. I thank those who are vaccinated. They are part of four billion people, I do believe, around the world who are vaccinated. We still have the rest of the world to vaccinate though.

I pay regard to Queensland overall. It is very clear that we did well compared to our jurisdictions. When people asked me questions or raised objections about this before the Omicron outbreak, I would hold up seven fingers and say that seven deaths is all the deaths we have had. That was the number until that point. I was proud of that. I know that now in Queensland we have had over 700 deaths. My heart aches for all of those people and their families for their loss.

I pay regard to what Queensland has done. By and large, we stuck to the restrictions. We did what we were meant to do. That gave us the time and space to roll out vaccinations and make sure we had the best protection possible. Let us not forget that in terms of lockdowns Victoria was in lockdown for 260 days and we were in lockdown for 21 days. Most of that was just in the south-east corner. That is an incredible achievement and a metric that reflects how well we managed the pandemic.

I also pay regard to the Queenslanders who went to the Queensland Health website for information on COVID-19. As we know, there was—and still is—an enormous amount of misinformation and unreliable information being spread around. When people ask me questions I say to them, 'What

have you seen on the Queensland website? It is cutting edge. That is where you will get your information.' One mother was despairing about her daughter who was heavily pregnant and refusing to get a vaccine. I was able to point to the part on the Queensland Health website that said that it is absolutely crucial for pregnant women to get vaccinated. That is one example of how we should all be promoting the Queensland Health website as the point of truth for Queenslanders in this pandemic.

For all those people who belittle the scientific evidence and medical scenarios around the pandemic and cast doubts on why we need these powers, I will quote some statistics. There are over six million people around the world, or probably double that, who have passed away because of COVID-19. Some 180,000 nurses, doctors and allied workers have passed away from COVID-19 as of November last year. That is an incredible number. I thank the member for Greenslopes for that information. There have been 6,000 deaths in Australia. In Queensland, as of yesterday, we have had 727 deaths.

We cannot ask all of the people if they want to be free. We cannot ask them: 'What choice do you want to make?' We cannot ask them: 'Do you want to see that health advice on the website?' We cannot ask them anymore. I say to people who cast doubts on why we need these powers, what choice was exercised by those 180,000 nurses and doctors? What choice did they make? Their choice was to perform their duty, to run towards the fire, if you like. I pay tribute to those who have chosen to serve and do what they had to because of their duty. That is a choice that has made us all safer.

To all those people who have emailed me—I know all members here have been emailed excessively about this particular bill—I say to them: I will vote for it and I will not be swayed. I am determined to record my vote for this particular bill. I will listen to health advice, I will listen to the lessons of history and I will listen to my own convictions when I vote for this bill. One person said—and I am sure we all received the same email—

Grow a backbone. Grow a conscience. Start standing up and doing your job to protect the people you are meant to represent.

My message is: thank you. I am doing exactly that. I am firmly convinced that this bill and these measures are what we need to keep Queenslanders safe into the future. There are a number of reasons for that. I have said that there are the lessons of history and my own convictions. I outline one of the reasons I feel so strongly in favour of vaccines and these health measures. I have talked about this before.

My grandfather was crippled by polio. He could not serve in World War II because of that. He walked with a limp all his life. My mother had rubella, German measles, when she was quite young. That badly affected her sight. Her sight was never the same after that. She spent months in bed because of that. I saw my own sister with the worst case of chicken pox I have ever seen. She was absolutely riddled with it. She also had whooping cough. I still remember her whooping cough echoing through the household. These are all diseases that we can now vaccinate against. Those members of my family would not have suffered if they had those vaccinations. We should always be standing up for vaccinations.

I also remember the case of James Chapple. He died on a sailing boat here in the 19th century. His wife and daughter survived. He is commemorated on a plaque at Dunwich on Stradbroke Island. His granddaughter I think was Elsie Flay, who was my great-grandmother. We think he died from typhoid. It is a reminder that we have constantly had diseases for which we need to take such measures.


On the issue of convictions—I am talking about our own personal convictions—I think it is fair to say that for two years we have seen the LNP being lukewarm or cool on these COVID measures. We remember they called 64 times for the border to be opened. The member for Kawana said yesterday that he believed in 'small government' and 'personal responsibility'. I believe in active government, a government that intervenes to help our people, a government that offers a way forward, a government that gathers resources and applies solutions to problems. That is an active government.

I also believe in personal responsibility, as we all do on this side, but the ultimate personal responsibility is to be part of a collective response, to be part of a collaborative action to protect each other, to perhaps dilute our self-interest to enlarge the interest and wellbeing of all of us. That is the ultimate personal responsibility. That embodies what this bill is about.

I will remind people who are listening what this bill is about. It is about enabling the power of the CHO, the Chief Health Officer. It will make sure that workers in vulnerable settings like aged care and disability services are vaccinated, and it will make sure that people with COVID go into isolation or quarantine. That is what this bill does. They are crucial measures to help us all get through this pandemic.

One of the things I worry about, in listening to the LNP yesterday and today, is what they choose to believe in. If they do not believe in mandates—and we heard that yesterday—I think that shows a chilling indifference to the public health and safety of Queenslanders. I urge them to consider whether they stand to oppose mandates or not.

There is no doubt that this bill has the best interests of Queenslanders at heart. It really is the embodiment of all that we have learnt and done over many years, especially the last two years, placing health advice at the centre of our response and making sure that we are guided by this—not ill-considered ideologies, not ill-considered lurches to try to gain political advantage. We need this bill to make sure that Queenslanders stay safe. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (4.15 pm): I rise to speak on the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill, a bill that the public commonly refer to as the emergency powers bill. COVID is very real. Since the pandemic began, more than 765,000 Queenslanders have been diagnosed with it. More than 7,000 people have been diagnosed with it in the last 24 hours. Currently, there are 362 individuals in hospital with COVID—16 of those in ICU. Sadly, 737 Queenslanders have succumbed to COVID. I extend my sympathies to those Queenslanders who have lost loved ones. My heart also goes out to those who have lost their livelihoods and lost their jobs, but I will come back to that in some detail shortly.

COVID is very real. If you have not had it, chances are you will get it. The world, Australia and Queensland are different places to what they were when we first put in place these emergency provisions. Queensland is a different place from when we debated an extension to these laws back in August last year. For starters, significantly more than 90 per cent of eligible Queenslanders have been double vaccinated. I and the LNP support vaccination. We support, and have supported and always will support, the AHPPC vaccination advice, particularly as it pertains to the health, aged-care and disability sectors.

As such, Queenslanders are now living with COVID, albeit with ongoing challenges. It is here that I want to acknowledge our amazing frontline health professionals who have done an outstanding job over the past two years in facing this head on. I also want to acknowledge our amazing teachers and students who have had one of the most disjointed, frustrating and testing starts to any school year.

The time has come to make living with COVID easier for all. The restrictions on our shows, the lifeblood of our communities in places like Maleny and Woodford, need to end now. As others have said, the ridiculous situation where you can host a market on a Thursday at the showground but not hold a show on a Friday does not make sense. The restrictions on our hospitality small business owners need to end now.

Many of the provisions in this bill need to end. Before those opposite start going on and suggesting that what I am saying is crazy, what I am actually saying is not inconsistent with what the newly minted South Australian Labor government has just announced, and that is that vaccine mandates will end effectively at midnight in the education and passenger transport sectors. I note a media article to that effect. Labor governments in other jurisdictions are taking sensible steps to end unnecessary mandates.

However, some of the provisions in this bill do need to stay—for example, mask wearing in aged-care facilities—which is why we in the LNP are moving some very sensible amendments. These amendments bring transparency. For starters, we will reduce the extension from 31 October 2022 to 31 May 2022. We are giving the government two months to chart a path out of this, to remove those unnecessary restrictions and to find other ways to legislate those aspects that need to stay. Secondly, we had hoped to move an amendment to compel the government and the Chief Health Officer to release the expert health advice they use to prepare their public health directives. Queenslanders are fed up with the secrecy. Release the advice. Unfortunately, as the government has already voted once against these amendments, we are not able to put that again.

Thirdly, we seek to establish a parliamentary committee to oversee Queensland's ongoing response to COVID. Such a bipartisan approach mirrors similar oversight in other Australian and international jurisdictions. It would increase transparency around the health advice. It would hold hearings with the Chief Health Officer. It would consider the AHPPC advice recommended by the Commonwealth government. It would deliberate on appropriate quarantine requirements for international arrivals, especially should a new strain surface. It would provide recommendations to government on what, if any, ongoing restrictions should be maintained.

These amendments are considered, these amendments are responsible, these amendments are sensible, these amendments are transparent. If the Palaszczuk Labor government, however, does not support these amendments, I will not support this legislation. I repeat: if these amendments are not supported by the Palaszczuk Labor government, I will vote against this bill.

I spoke earlier about the loss of jobs and of livelihoods. I have addressed this in the House on a number of occasions already. Let me today read into *Hansard* letters I have received that were directed to the Premier from the Maleny and Montville chambers of commerce. These are not what the government brands as 'crazies' or 'anti-vaxxers'; these are small business owners representing their fellow small business owners. The first is from the Maleny Commerce president, Mr Spencer Shaw. He wrote—

The Maleny Chamber of Commerce supports the call for the Queensland State Government to immediately remove their Vaccine Mandate for the hospitality industry. Maleny and the Blackall Range is well known for its cafes, restaurants, winery's, micro-breweries, bars and hotels. These businesses are all small business operated and provide the majority of employment in our community.

For two years our business community has survived and adapted as best they can to the varying restrictions imposed by mandates to assist with the prevention and management of the spread and impacts of the Covid19 virus. However as we move into the phase of management phase where Covid19 is now endemic within the population and vaccinations are beyond 90% of the Queensland population, it is time to repeal the mandates that place an undue economic, legal and social burden upon the small businesses that are the backbone of our tourism based economy.

He concluded—

After two years of bearing the burden of adapting and surviving Covid 19 Mandates, our hospitality businesses and our wider business community need hope that these restrictions are coming to an end, and we are returning to a degree of positivity and certainty. We need this so that our businesses and community are given back the ability to survive and prosper.

The second letter is from Shiralee Cooper, President of the Montville Chamber of Commerce. She wrote—

The Montville Chamber of Commerce supports the call for the Queensland State Government to expedite the removal of the Vaccine Mandate on the hospitality industry.

Hospitality has been one of the areas most exposed to the impact of Covid 19. The vaccine mandate has placed a ... unsustainable burden upon hospitality.

Initially they have been forced to stand down unvaccinated employees. This has been terribly distressing for many business owners. Some have long term staff who are like members of their family and they have been forced by the State Government's regulations to sack these unvaccinated staff. (Unfortunately many employees blame the business owner for enforcing the State Government's mandate.)

She went on—

The inconsistency of the mandate policy causes confusion and requires staff to constantly explain the rules to customers. Some customers have reacted angrily to being excluded whilst others have called in the police if a business is perceived to have turned a blind eye. Our hospitality staff have had to bear the brunt of this fractious situation. The goodwill of many establishments has been severely undermined by having to impose the State Government's Vaccine Mandate.

She concluded—

We ask that the government urgently review this impost on small business and the community. We ask that the State Government seek as a matter of urgency, a review of the health advice which led to the establishment of the mandates within the hospitality industry. Small business need support!

In the interests of time, I table both of those letters.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 22 March 2022, from the President Maleny Commerce, Maleny & District Chamber of Commerce & Industry Inc., Mr Spencer Shaw, to the Premier and Minister for the Olympics, Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, titled 'Covid mandate and impacts on Maleny Business Community' [\[485\]](#).

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 22 March 2022, from the President, Montville Chamber of Commerce Inc., Ms Shiralee Cooper, to the Premier and Minister for the Olympics, Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, regarding the COVID mandate [\[486\]](#).

The Palaszczuk Labor government stopped listening to Queenslanders long ago. They stopped listening to business owners like Spencer, Shiralee and Andrew Grant in the outdoor education sector. They have stopped listening to Queenslanders. We in the LNP will not.



Mr MARTIN (Stretton—ALP) (4.25 pm): I do not know about other members in this place, but I certainly do not have the urge to 'Shout, shout, let it all out'. I rise to support this bill to extend the provisions required to support the public health response unit until the COVID-19 public health legislation expiry date, defined as the day on which the COVID-19 emergency is ended by the minister under the Public Health Act or 31 October 2022, whichever is earlier.

The impact of COVID-19 has been devastating: on families and individuals who have lost loved ones, and in my community this is pronounced as many residents of Stretton have relatives overseas and have shared with me that they have lost loved ones overseas due to COVID and it has been made all the more difficult because they have been unable to travel back to visit them; on small businesses and students who face lockdowns and restrictions; on families who have been unable to see each other; and on nurses and doctors in the ICUs putting people on ventilators. No-one has been untouched.

If we could go back 2½ years, no-one could have imagined the challenges our community would face as a result of this global pandemic. It certainly has been a difficult time. Many of us are over it. I know from speaking to members of my community that we had all hoped that at this point in 2022 COVID would be over. We all want life to get back to normal. We want this to be over, but the reality is, as we can see globally, nationally and here in Queensland, it certainly is not over.

That means we need to stay the course. We need to carry on sensible and proportionate restrictions. We must take a cautious and prudent approach that continues to keep Queenslanders safe and, importantly, protects our health system from being overrun. After all, the emergence of COVID has not stopped the ongoing health needs of Queenslanders—be it emergency services or elective surgery. We must continue to provide these services to Queensland in the midst of this pandemic.

The Australian Department of Health has reported over 5,000 deaths in Australia from COVID, and in Queensland we have had over 700 deaths. The truth is that the Queensland government has done exceptionally well in its response, always putting the safety of Queenslanders first. I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to supporting Queenslanders and business. The last few years have obviously been very challenging times for small business in Queensland, but they have been resilient and survived thanks in large part to the strong health response of the Palaszczuk government allowing our businesses to stay open whilst businesses in other states and countries faced extended lockdowns.

Of course, restrictions and the vaccination program have only been possible and so successful thanks to the overwhelming support they have received from the community. Our community have done the right thing. They have rolled up their sleeves and got vaccinated, they have worn masks, they have checked in and stayed home when asked. They have done this because the vast majority of Queenslanders understand that responding to a global pandemic is about the community working together. It is about recognising the needs of others, recognising the needs of people in high-risk categories—people with disabilities and our seniors in aged-care facilities. In contrast to your own individual health, public health is about the community. It is about your responsibility to your neighbours, to others and to being a good citizen.

On this, I want to thank my community for getting vaccinated and following the rules to protect themselves, their families and others. We have risen to the challenge. Our effective public health response has enabled high vaccination rates to be reached across the Queensland population. However, whilst this high coverage provides protections, the risks of adverse impacts to the health system, the economy and the community remain. We are seeing that play out now at the moment in schools with disruptions to semester 1 and in businesses which are feeling the hurt thanks to the brunt of absenteeism. Whilst most people do the right thing, others do feel passionately that their individual beliefs outweigh the needs of the community. They believe that they know better than scientific experts and, sadly, some have fallen victim to crackpot conspiracy theories peddled by science deniers in deep dark places on the Internet.

As I have said in many email responses, COVID is real and COVID kills. I believe that vaccines work and that they are safe and effective. I have had many conversations with locals, and I recognise that many have passionately held beliefs against restrictions and vaccinations. I understand your position. I accept that you will not get vaccinated. However, except for those with genuine exemptions, I totally disagree with your reasoning. I agree with the Chief Health Officer's directives that in some cases, to protect the public and our health system, your decision will have consequences as to places you cannot go and things you cannot do. Sometimes civic duty outweighs individual wants. In addition, I will always take my medical advice from scientific experts and our Chief Health Officer, especially when it comes to decisions relating to public health.

I have been perplexed with anti-vaxxers on the one hand arguing that the vaccine is experimental, that there is not enough efficacy and questioning the evidence behind the vaccine, while on the other hand when it comes to therapeutic medicine like Ivermectin or hydroxychloroquine apparently no efficacy is required, no evidence is needed and their belief is that there is some absurd conspiracy to stop people taking it. As I have said to the many anti-vaxxers I have emailed or met, I support medicine that works. I believe in vaccines, I believe in science and the scientific method, and I rely on advice from the medical experts and the approval process of the TGA.


Many locals who have spoken to me about this issue have been polite and respectful, passionately putting forward their opinions in a calm and reasonable way. Unfortunately, this cannot be said for everyone. I have to share with the House a recent experience with anti-vax protesters in my community. Just this weekend, I was outraged and angered by racist attacks from anti-vax protesters which were directed toward members of my community who had come out to talk to their federal MP, Graham Perrett, last weekend in Sunnybank Hills.

Stretton is a multicultural and harmonious community. On the weekend, anti-vaxxers descended on a community sausage sizzle hosted by Graham Perrett. I can confirm that one of the residents of Malaysian descent was yelled at to 'go back to China!' by a member of the anti-vax crowd. I will not reveal the name of the person targeted as they have asked me not to, but I can confirm that they are a well-known community volunteer who has also been recognised with an OAM. In fact, many members on both sides of this House will probably know who I am talking about and I am sure they have been to functions with this great Australian. I will be very clear: these attacks are racist and unhinged. They have absolutely no place in our community or Queensland, and I condemn them without hesitation. Members of our community have the right to talk to their local representative and raise concerns in peace. By attacking members of our community who are trying to exercise this right, the anti-vax crowd is attacking a fundamental tenet of our democracy. Every member of Stretton benefits from our fantastic multicultural community and, like Duncan Pegg before me and Graham Perrett, I am unequivocal in standing on the side of all members of my community.

In addition, I have to say that I question the decision of these protesters to target a sausage sizzle. I understand protesting outside parliament and I support people's right to do so—after all, this is where laws are made; however, with their decision to descend on a community sausage sizzle in a park with placards and chants, in my view they lost a lot more support than they won, interrupting and accosting ordinary members of the community. I am happy to advise the House that, despite the bad behaviour of the protesters, their protest was a fizzle; they could not stop the sizzle!

It is also important to note that we have been reducing and easing restrictions since late 2021. We are moving away from an elimination approach towards a strategy based on suppression. We know that we will have to live with COVID, but this transition needs to be done sensibly. With winter on the way, it is prudent to keep a close eye on how COVID is spreading through the community, and we need powers to respond if something unpredictable happens.

This bill simply extends most temporary public health measures by six months, to 31 October 2022, or until the Minister for Health declares the end of the public health emergency. I have to say that I hope it can be before October, but, as I said before, these decisions need to be based on health advice from health experts, not TikTokers or YouTubers.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (4.34 pm): I rise to make a contribution to this very important debate. In doing so, I intend to speak as authentically as I can for the people of Southern Downs. I would like to be rightly understood that, from the very beginning, I have always agreed with the state government's use of powers to keep Queensland safe, and I am particularly talking about things like the border closures. Given that my electorate of Southern Downs has about 400 kilometres of border country with New South Wales, with many towns located close to the border or on the border, where their communities of interest, family connections, small businesses, primary production operations and so forth have spanned that border, I feel that the people of Southern Downs and I have made a very significant sacrifice in keeping Queensland safe. That is why I have not criticised the measures that have been imposed on Queensland in order to battle the COVID pandemic.

However—and this is something which came to us the last time the extension of these powers was debated, in about September last year—many of my colleagues and I do not agree with the continuation of powers which compel people to give up their freedoms without proper understanding of the motives and the information that the government has acted upon to impose those things. I am talking particularly here about what are known as vaccine mandates, where people who have elected not to be vaccinated are excluded from certain venues and from certain activities.

In my electorate of Southern Downs, we have had three of the eight shows in my electorate so far closed because of that particular mandate. We have also seen the Stanthorpe Rodeo cancelled. I want to inform the House that these are not small things. In my electorate, the local show is a very important part of the life of the community in which that show is located, and requirements that the shows have employed security to vet people on the basis of their vaccination status puts those shows out of the reach of the communities that control them. It costs too much.

What is particularly concerning here is that it seems that other events which have the same physical circumstances—perhaps a similar location, similar propinquity of revellers or people together to potentially pass COVID to one another—do not require such measures. I look, for instance, at the Stanthorpe Apple and Grape Harvest Festival, which we had recently. We had tens of thousands of people come to Stanthorpe, yet the rodeo, which ran concurrently with that event, was provided with a decision that it had to vet people going into the showgrounds based on their vaccination status. It is those kinds of arbitrary inconsistencies which hurt people, hurt communities and hurt excellent community organisations that breeds contempt for the system which encourages disobedience for the measures that have been necessary up until now.

I have just recently recovered from my own bout of COVID. When I undertook COVID quarantine at home, I gave it to my family in no time at all. I am triple vaccinated. My kids have had one of their shots; they are due for more shots soon. My wife is triple vaccinated. The lesson to me is that my vaccination status did not stop other people from getting COVID from me. There could be arguments over the likelihood of transmission and so forth but, at the end of the day, I cannot see, on the basis of practicalities, that the case has been met to prevent people who have not been vaccinated from going to things like the Stanthorpe Rodeo. It has cost my community, just like the border closures cost farmers and families and small businesses in my community.

I feel that in my electorate people are well and truly over vaccine mandates. It has been a divisive issue. It has forced people who have made the valid and lawful decision not to be vaccinated to be divided from perhaps their own families and friends, from the music group they play with or the choir they are involved with. They can be prevented from engaging with the community in the ways they have always done. The bifurcation of realities that I talked about where people can actually be vaccinated and still pass it on to others who are also vaccinated really erodes public confidence in the need for vaccine mandates. I am deeply concerned about the erosion of very sacred and precious personal liberties that has occurred under the extensions of powers we have seen.


As I have said, I do not oppose realistic measures, some of which have been quite punitive on communities such as border communities in my area. We have done the hard lifting in Southern Downs, but I think it is time to draw the line on vaccine mandates. I say again that when I had COVID myself a week or two ago I went home and within days all of my family had it. They were vaccinated and so was I. On that basis I think it is difficult for the government to maintain with credibility the line that it is necessary to divide people on the basis of their vaccination status. I think it is time that the government stuck with the original agreement that the Premier struck with all the other Premiers in the country and the Prime Minister that these kinds of restrictions would stop when we reached 80 per cent vaccination status. We are almost at 90 per cent now.

When I say this, I am speaking for many people in the community who share that view. I have heard members on the other side of the House—not universally but there have been some—reflecting haughtily on the people outside who are protesting and trying to convince us to take their view in this debate. I think that is unfair. Those who choose not to be vaccinated and who are disenchanted with the way these powers have been used to exclude them from daily life are not necessarily a howling anarchy. Many of them are very good people; they are good, sensible people.

Mr Andrew: Doctors and nurses.

Mr LISTER: They are doctors and nurses. I take that interjection from the member for Mirani. In fact, a good friend of mine is a doctor; he is a very good fellow. He explained to me his objections and they sounded pretty reasonable to me.

I am vaccinated. I believe people should be vaccinated. However, I oppose the separation of people who exercise their lawful right to decline to be vaccinated. We do not need any further division in the community and we do not need further politicisation to the advantage of the government during this COVID emergency. I say to the people of Southern Downs: I hear you and I am going to stand up for your rights.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (4.42 pm): I rise to support the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022. The objectives of the bill are to: increase the power for emergency officers and the Chief Health Officer to limit or respond to the spread of COVID-19 in Queensland, including by issuing directions to require physical distancing, restrict movement and gatherings, require people to quarantine or self-isolate and implement other containment measures; authorise the sharing of confidential information for contact tracing; encourage compliance with quarantine requirements and other public health directions by the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022, providing appropriate penalties for any contraventions; increase the period for which a regulation may be extended a declared public health

emergency from seven to 90 days; enable fees to be charged for costs associated with the mandatory quarantine of persons in government arranged accommodation; and protect personal information collected for contact tracing.

It was on 29 January 2022 when a public health emergency was declared for all of Queensland due to the global outbreak—a pandemic—of COVID-19. Some two years later we are still dealing with this pandemic. While Queensland's management of COVID-19 has proven to be rapid and effective, the pandemic continues to be unpredictable and has presented a number of significant challenges over the past two years to the Queensland health system, economy and community. It is our responsibility as a parliament to respond and provide the pathway for Queensland to return, as much as is possible, to pre-COVID-19 days. Our government has endeavoured to find a balance—a balance between public health outcomes and freedom of an individual's rights and a transition to living with COVID-19. We must act to prevent the loss of life and ensure any decisions made aim to address the health of all Queenslanders: people with disability, the aged, our First Nations people and other vulnerable Queenslanders. Many Queenslanders who consider themselves privileged understand the responsibility and the small sacrifices that come with this privilege.

The spread of the COVID-19 virus remains unpredictable. Since late 2021 Queensland has been easing restrictions and moving away from the suppression approach towards finding a way for all of us to live with COVID-19 and to minimise, as much as possible, the impacts caused by this pandemic. Tragically, since the emergence of the virus in Australia in 2020 to 28 March, 727 Queenslanders have lost their life to COVID-19 with further deaths across the country. In the same period 747,434 Queenslanders have been infected. The virus has been ruthless in who it targets. It does not differentiate based on where people live or who they are. We have seen good outcomes in the number of people who have been fully vaccinated, and I understand that figure for Queensland as of 29 March is 91.7 per cent. I shudder to think what statistics we would be discussing here today if we did not have those vaccination results.

Last year we saw the emergence of a new variant of COVID-19 called the Omicron variant. Health data indicates that while the resultant infection is not as severe as the original variant, it has been proven to be more easily spread. The number of COVID-19 cases experienced here in Queensland up to 20 December was 2,356. As I mentioned earlier, the number of people who have had COVID is now in the hundreds of thousands. That increase in cases occurred in just 14 weeks.

Anyone with the idea that this pandemic has been beaten would do well to remember how rapidly this has spread as well as the potential and the significant impact on our health and hospital systems. It is critical that flexibility is retained to ensure that as restrictions are eased and normal social and economic activity resumes, appropriate public health measures can continue to be put in place where necessary to address ongoing public health risks, protect the health system and safeguard the health of Queenslanders.

I acknowledge the many—thousands of individuals—who have put in submissions to the committee. I have received a number of emails from across Queensland from people who expressed their heartfelt desire for this bill not to be passed. I would like to acknowledge them as well. I do not discount their views. I acknowledge their views do differ from my experience and my own views.

The committee noted that many of the submissions they received were from individuals who opposed the proposed extension of the temporary COVID-19 legislative framework in the bill. The committee acknowledged that public health directions and other public health measures can have a significant impact on individuals and businesses. In response to those concerns, the department stated—

COVID-19 vaccines are a proven, safe and effective means of reducing the risk of moderate to severe disease with COVID-19, and up to date vaccination reduces both the severity of infection and transmission. Individuals who become infected despite vaccination (break-through infection) may be at reduced risk of transmitting due to a generally lower viral load and shortened duration of shedding.

They further stated—

High vaccination coverage remains a key determinant of positive health outcomes for all Queenslanders, while also minimising the impact of COVID-19 cases on our hospital system and the impact of COVID-19 on ongoing operations of businesses and public facilities and community life in general.

There was general support for the extension of the temporary framework from some stakeholders, including the Australian College of Nursing, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists and the Queensland Law Society. Other stakeholders called for an extension to legislative measures not extended by the bill, including the Australian Logistics Council, the Strata Community Association and the Family Responsibilities Commission.

As someone who has seen COVID spread through my family, I can say that this is something that I would not want to see others suffer through.

The bill proposes to amend the Corrective Services Act 2006, the Disaster Management Act 2003 and the Mental Health Act 2016 to directly support the public health response. The proposed measures would all be dependent on the COVID-19 public health emergency declared under the Public Health Act and could not be used if that declaration ceased.

Amendments to the Corrective Services Act recognise that correctional facilities are uniquely vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19 due to the close proximity of prisoners and staff and the inability to maintain social distancing. In this regard, the bill seeks to ensure Queensland Corrective Services is fully equipped to continue to respond rapidly to the increasing risks presented by COVID-19 for the duration of the public health emergency. With regard to the proposed amendments, it is important to note that the Corrective Services Act already allows the chief executive to make an emergency declaration. The only change made by the temporary amendments is to extend the application of the declaration to a broader number of facilities and to extend the time frame for the declaration.

The bill proposes to extend amendments of the Mental Health Act that allow patients subject to the Mental Health Act to be granted leave where it may be necessary to comply with public health directions. As stated in the explanatory notes—

While the public health emergency continues, the approval of absence of certain patients may be required where, for example, a person who is already in the community on a temporary absence from a mental health facility contracts COVID-19 and is then required to isolate.

This global pandemic has shown that we can be, and must be, adaptive and able to respond in a timely manner to the challenges we face. We need to have in place safeguards and measures that will allow us to continue to keep Queenslanders safe. I want to end on an anonymous quote—

Privilege is when you think something is not a problem because it's not a problem to you personally.

I commend the bill to the House.



Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (4.51 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2020 that is before us. First, let me say that I know that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruption and upheaval to the lives of us all. It has been a very difficult time, with the impact on mental wellbeing yet to be fully understood. I acknowledge those who have lost their life and their families who have lost loved ones.


We must also realise that many have lost their livelihoods and that some businesses will not recover. COVID-19 has taken away many things from many people and it is only proper that this fact be recognised. Others in our community have come back stronger. They have reinvented themselves and, for some, their businesses are in a better place. We have all as members of this place remained acutely aware of these things dealing with and responding to our constituents over the past two or more years.

The LNP has carefully considered the detail of the government's Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022. We, the LNP, recognise that the provisions contained in this bill are extraordinary. They give an unprecedented power to the government with little to no oversight. Having said that, the position which Queensland now finds itself in is a very different one to when this House debated a similar extension in August last year. At that time the vaccine rollout here in Queensland was still ramping up. More than 90 per cent of our state's adult population has now received at least two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. My wife and I have received three doses and will be having the fourth dose at the earliest opportunity. We also encourage all of those around us to be vaccinated.

Indeed, as a local member when I respond to constituent inquiries my email contains several broad points and words to the effect that my preference is that every Queenslanders be fully vaccinated unless medical advice recommends against it. If constituents are unsure or concerned about vaccination, I recommend they consult their doctor to gain a better understanding and for their doctor to advise them in relation to whether or not to be vaccinated. I acknowledge that some among us choose not to be vaccinated for their own reasons and I respect their choice. I also advise constituents that we, the LNP, acknowledge that it is up to the medical experts to determine the health advice but that we will continue to call on the state government to increase transparency of the advice it bases its decisions on and improve its communication regarding the restrictions and directives which Queenslanders must abide by from time to time.

Looking to the future, it is the responsibility of government to provide a step-by-step road map grounded on expert advice that shows Queenslanders the path out of this pandemic. We were told things would be reviewed at 90 per cent. The government has sat on its hands and we still have no clear path. Queenslanders deserve to know what the plan is. It is for this reason that the LNP will move key transparency amendments to the bill. They have already been outlined by my colleagues and I will not go through them again, but importantly the expert health advice that is received by the state government which is used as the rationale for implementing public health directions should be released publicly.

Our amendments will also establish a parliamentary committee which would routinely hold hearings with the Chief Health Officer to assess and scrutinise the health advice. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic the opposition has called for the public release of expert medical advice which is used as the rationale for the COVID-19 restrictions. A good government does not shy away from openness, transparency, accountability and scrutiny. However, this government has. It is time that changed and I urge all members to support the amendments proposed by the LNP that have been outlined.

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (4.56 pm): I rise to speak to the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022. I want to start by thanking every single health worker who stepped up to keep Queenslanders safe over the last two years, often at their own expense working long hours and isolating from their families. I also want to acknowledge the terrible impact COVID-19 has had on the world as a whole and the heartache and disruption that it has caused Queenslanders. Many people have lost loved ones to the virus, leaving holes in families that can never be filled. I acknowledge their pain and my heart goes out to these families. Livelihoods have suffered during the pandemic, with many Queenslanders losing their jobs or watching helplessly as their businesses took blow after blow. It has caused incredible financial difficulty for so many Queenslanders, and the impacts are not lost on me. No corner of Queensland was spared, including my electorate of Buderim.

I recognised that at the start of this pandemic the government was dealing with the unknown and was required to act quickly on an ever-changing and challenging situation which we had not experienced in recent history. What concerns me is that as we enter the third year of this pandemic there is still little transparency when it comes to the health advice. Queenslanders have blindly put their trust in the state government, but we have always said that Queenslanders need more. They need information. They deserve detailed reasons for the government's actions because it greatly impacts them and their futures.


Queenslanders, including constituents in my electorate of Buderim, have done the work. They have sacrificed a hell of a lot over the last two years. They have been separated from their families and friends, they have lost pay cheques, their kids have missed school and their weekend sports and activities. They have been vaccinated, worn masks and isolated, all for the safety of their family, their friends, neighbours and strangers. They stepped up and did what they were told based on the health advice that has never been disclosed to them in full.

I, like my colleagues, have always supported vaccinations against COVID-19. It was frustrating to see the slow rollout of the vaccination program and the mixed messaging from the Premier in particular. We all remember the AstraZeneca debacle when the Premier put doubt in the minds of Queenslanders over its safety and effectiveness despite national expert health advice. As soon as I was eligible, I got vaccinated with AstraZeneca, as have others on this side of the House, and I encouraged others to do the same. Had there been no confusion from the Premier and the then chief health officer, I strongly believe that Queenslanders would have been vaccinated against the virus at a faster rate, but here we are now with more than 90 per cent of the adult population double vaccinated. Queenslanders were told that at 90 per cent there would be a review of restrictions and powers. This has not happened. The goalposts keep shifting. Queenslanders deserve a plan forward and they deserve to know what it is in full detail.

As the shadow minister for small and family business, I have heard some of the most heartbreaking stories from business owners right across Queensland—mum and dad business owners who have taken out second mortgages and are drowning in debt to keep their doors open and keep their employees in a job. Do members know what they tell me has been the hardest part? It is not their own debt; it is telling their staff that they no longer have a job, knowing that their loyal workers are not getting a pay cheque anymore to pay their bills. Frankly, at times it has been heart-wrenching.

We note from Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland surveys that two-thirds of businesses and their staff are experiencing mental health challenges. Small businesses are still suffering. They have lost trade and they have lost confidence. They have not had any confidence in the last couple of years due to the confusion and the inconsistencies. A detailed plan from the state government could help restore confidence so businesses know what to expect and how to handle situations as they arise. The rushed last-minute approach has not served anyone well.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): I thank the member for Buderim for his contribution. Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House and the time limit for this stage of the bill having expired, I call the minister to reply to the second reading debate.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (5.00 pm), in reply: In rising to speak in reply to this bill I would like to thank members for their contribution to the debate on the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022. This bill has been developed in a period of ongoing uncertainty not experienced in a century. For the foreseeable future there will continue to be unknowns. Government must have the tools to respond to preserve the health and safety of our people, to protect the community and mitigate disruption to society. The government cannot do this without relying on the public health emergency powers included in this bill. This is the bill that allows the Chief Health Officer to require mandatory vaccinations in our hospitals, aged-care facilities and other high-risk settings. It is what allows him to quickly bring in requirements for mask wearing should the public health environment require that to be done. The unpredictable nature of this virus means that we need a framework that allows for our Chief Health Officer to react quickly.

While this virus remains unpredictable, one thing remains constant: the opposition's unrelenting willingness to criticise and undermine the public health framework that has served Queensland so well since the outset of the pandemic. The opposition claims they recognise the importance of following expert public health advice and the need for restrictions, but also want to cherry-pick which restrictions they like with hindsight in their favour. Having said that, many have said they will vote the entire bill down if they do not get what they want today, which includes the restrictions that they do say they support. We do not have the luxury of hindsight or hesitation here. Those opposite are now trying to rewrite history to pretend that they have asked responsible, measured questions, as the Leader of the Opposition liked to put it.

Let us look at the record of some of those who spoke on this bill. We had the member for Mudgeeraba who tried to attack the Premier on vaccinations—we just heard it again from the member for Buderim—despite the member for Mudgeeraba's membership of a fake union that promotes antivaccination sentiment.

We had the member for Kawana, who in a dog whistle to the protesters outside, loudly proclaimed that he was pro-choice when it came to vaccination. In early 2020 the same member for Kawana described COVID-19 as a scare campaign.

The member for Toowoomba North launched into a bizarre rant, making allegations of the Palaszczuk government having visions of a dystopian future and sharing his musings on propaganda. He said it was time to cast out the legislation entirely, but the member for Toowoomba North would do well to remember he is not particularly well placed to criticise COVID restrictions given it was revealed that he was breaching COVID rules at the beginning of the pandemic.

Despite all of the words from the member for Broadwater, he is still yet to apologise for his comment that Dr Jeannette Young was a punch-drunk bureaucrat. I am not even going to mention the member for Mermaid Beach, other than to say I hope he gets an invite to the next karaoke night held by the member for Nanango and the member for Kawana. I did miss some of the singing and dancing in the chamber relating to this bill, which I do not regret.

The record of those opposite is relevant to this bill and the amendments that they seek to move. Their record is relevant because it undermines their contentions that the amendments that they propose have been formulated in good faith. They are not. They are an attempt to play to both sides of the fence. Not to achieve balance, but to play politics. They are yet another example of an opposition's willingness to blindly oppose anything proposed by the Palaszczuk government. I want to go into a bit more detail in relation to some of the speeches that we have heard in this debate. I want to go to the member for Currumbin first.

Mrs Gerber: Yes!

Mrs D'ATH: She is very excited—I would not be. The member for Currumbin said, 'I want to acknowledge those who have suffered the most from COVID', except the member for Currumbin did not mention the families of the 737 people who have died from COVID. She did not mention all those with disability, in aged care, those who are immunocompromised or First Nations people who are most at risk. There has been heartache from this virus throughout the world, but let us not forget the lives lost and their loved ones.

Mrs Gerber: You missed the start of my contribution, Minister. It was before the break. That's when I thanked all those people and talked about all those people.

Mrs D'ATH: I acknowledge the interjection. The member did thank all those who work in health care. That does not change the fact very few people talked about those who died from COVID. One can talk about those who did not make it to funerals or weddings or heartbreaking situations, but also the families of those who have died from COVID should be remembered.

I encourage everyone on that side to meet with disability advocates. I can tell members opposite that they are not calling on us to lift the remaining restrictions. They are calling on us to reintroduce mask wearing and other restrictions because they feel like they have been forgotten. They feel that they are the minority and that no-one cares that they are being put at risk by this virus as we get on with the rest of our lives. We have to remember the most vulnerable in our community. Even with the booster those in aged-care settings are at risk and the onus is on us to do what we can to protect them.

Mrs Gerber: Politics of fear, Minister. It is disgraceful.

Mrs D'ATH: I will take that interjection: politics of fear. What an absolute joke from the member opposite. 'Open the borders! Open the borders!', those opposite said. 'Let the virus in. We do not care how many people die. Just let it rip'. I will forever be proud of what this government did in holding firm despite the calls of those opposite to let the virus in before people were vaccinated.

Mrs Gerber: That is rubbish, Minister.

Mrs D'ATH: I will take that interjection: rubbish. Sixty-four times they asked for the borders to be opened!

Mrs Gerber: Then you opened the border, Minister. You are rewriting history.

Mrs D'ATH: The member for Mudgeeraba, the member for Buderim and a number of others talked about the public being told that at 90 per cent we would review and lift restrictions and that we sat on our hands. I do not know where those opposite have been. Talk about rewriting history. Let me talk about the changes we have made as we have lifted our vaccination rates. At 70 per cent people could come from declared hotspots by air if they were fully vaccinated and home quarantine instead of hotel quarantine. At 80 per cent, if they were fully vaccinated they were able to come back by road as well as air and not need to quarantine at all. At 80 per cent international arrivals could home quarantine if fully vaccinated. At 90 per cent there were no longer any restrictions or quarantine for vaccinated arrivals from interstate or overseas—unless you were an unvaccinated interstate traveller. We have continued to ease restrictions, including lifting mandatory mask wearing. Those on the opposite side just like to say, 'We have hit over 90 per cent, nothing to see here. It is all over. It is all done.'

Let us talk about the rate of COVID in our young children in our schools who are only 43 per cent vaccinated—our five- to 11-year-olds. Let us talk about the fact that only 61 per cent of eligible people are boosted. Thirty-nine per cent of people who are eligible for boosters have not had one. It is not all over because we hit 90 per cent, I say to the member for Mudgeeraba and those on the other side, and they should recognise that. The last time I checked, National Cabinet was still proposing to expand the requirements for the booster, not reduce it. They agreed that we should now mandate the third booster for aged care and disability. They are not winding it back, they are increasing the mandates for the booster. We now have ATAGI advice that there should be a fourth booster and that fourth booster should apply to people who are over 65, who are vulnerable, our residents in aged-care and disability sectors and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders over the age of 50. There are more requirements being put around vaccinations and boosters in the community.

Mr Mickelberg: They are planned. Do we have to wait until the next government?

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection. If they are saying they have to wait for the next government at a federal level to see a change, they need to talk to Morrison. We are hoping for a change. A couple of members on the opposite side have said that they are willing to have some restrictions embedded in legislation. They should come and tell me which ones they want permanently entrenched in law. They do not want a stand-alone bill that will cease at a point in time when we lift the emergency declaration, but they want things permanently embedded.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I heard someone on the other side say, 'We're happy for the mandatory vaccinations in aged care to continue.' What other measures are they happy to have permanently embedded in legislation? It is not just about mandatory vaccinations. I do not know if those on the other side are clued in to the fact that isolation and quarantine are still a national requirement in this country.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Order! I am sorry to interrupt you, Minister. The House will come to order. The member for Pumicestone and the member for Currumbin will stop quarrelling.

Mrs D'ATH: It is this head of power that underpins our ability to require people to isolate and quarantine. That is a national decision. It is the AHPPC's advice that allows that. There is no plan at this stage. They have not announced when that is going to end. Those opposite say that we can just come back at the next sitting and outline the plan to lift isolation and quarantine, but AHPPC have not announced that yet. National Cabinet have not said when they will do that. I was just looking at my messaging from health ministers, including the Commonwealth minister. They were talking about mandatory mask wearing in airports and clarifying that it is still required. I do not think I am divulging anything confidential when I say that the Commonwealth health minister, literally in the last hour, texted everyone to say that it is a National Cabinet agreement that has to be administered at a state level through our public health directives.

Mr Stewart: So we need to have one?

Mrs D'ATH: We need to have the head of power to have the public health directives otherwise we could not comply with a National Cabinet decision.

A government member: So do we want to go with the Morrison government or not?

Mrs D'ATH: That is questionable. Those on the other side have had two bob each way in this debate. Many have said, 'We support the health advice.' The member for Glass House said, 'I support AHPPC.' However, as I have just explained, it is the AHPPC that recommend to us the requirements around isolation and quarantine, and that requires a head of power. We are not here debating individual public health directives. We are here debating the head of power that allows the Chief Health Officer to create those directives. There are so many who have decided to turn this into a debate about different mandates that they do or do not like as opposed to whether we should maintain a head of power for the Chief Health Officer.

An honourable member interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: The AHPPC issues advice online, as does ATAGI and TGA, if members would like to look there. There are those who have said in this place that they support the health advice and mandatory vaccinations in aged care, but then have said, 'If you do not give us what we want today we will vote against the bill.' They need to explain the inconsistent position that they have put in this debate over the past couple of days. They are willing to put the National Cabinet agreements at risk because we cannot comply with National Cabinet decisions without the head of power. They want us to end these powers at the next sitting in May.

A number of members opposite have said that their communities are fed up with mandatory vaccination and that their communities have done the hard yards. Every Queenslander has done the hard yards. Every single Queenslander has done the hard yards. Our health workers, our vaccinators, those doing the testing, our paramedics, our police, our emergency workers, our aged-care workers and our border control officers have done the hard yards. We remember the heartache as many Australians tried to get back to Australia and Queensland. It was a national decision to close the international borders. Let us be honest about what this is about: it is about politics for those on the other side. It always has been.

The member for Mudgeeraba has advised that she plans to move amendments to bring forward the expiry of the public health emergency powers in just two months time, in May at our next sitting or the one after—they are two weeks apart—because they want this bill to end on 31 May. They say that the parliament can come back and debate a further extension in May if required.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: 31 May. You would have to introduce another bill, which could not go to committee if it were to be introduced and passed by 31 May.

Mr Hinchliffe: Then they'd have a whole bunch of speaking points about how it didn't go to committee.

Mrs D'ATH: They complain that the committee process was not long enough and then they say, 'Can you support our amendments?'

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, please resume your seat for a moment. The level of interjection has risen to an intolerable level. I want to be able to hear what the minister has to say. If I have to pull up any more members, I will be warning them.

Mrs D'ATH: Those opposite argue that there has not been enough transparency and there has not been enough time spent in the committee process, but then they ask to change the expiry date so that we can come back at the next sitting week to quickly pass a bill that would not have time to go to a committee. That shows the game playing of those on the other side. Honestly! Members opposite complain about the committee process being five weeks instead of six but then they ask to introduce and pass another bill in May to meet the 31 May date. That is so hypocritical that it is extraordinary. And they do it with a straight face, which is what I am always surprised about.

The federal government has indicated that the COVID-19 national partnership agreement will run until 30 September, at this point. They have put money into more vaccinations and the national partnership for COVID goes until the end of September so at least the federal government realises that COVID will continue—at least until the end of September. However, those on the other side say, 'No, time's done. We're over it. We're just over COVID. Can we just end it now?' Come on! There are countries that are going back into restrictions because of new outbreaks. Their irresponsible call for us to end this before winter shows that they continue to deny that COVID is a serious threat to life.

Across the world every government has faced difficult decisions about minimising harm to public health, social institutions and the economy while also upholding the rights of people. I want to briefly touch on the Human Rights Commission. Yes, they did say that they believe we should lift mandatory vaccinations. I understand the point that they are making, but the health commissioner also wanted us to allow people to come out of their hotel quarantine rooms to get fresh air and we had to cease that because there was a significant risk of transmission. You have to weigh up the risk to the greater population against the rights of the individual. Those are not easy decisions to make. We introduced the Human Rights Act. We know it is hard to weigh up those rights and get the balance correct, but we have to do it.

No government has the luxury of making a choice without costs. It is not as simple as choosing between the impact of restrictions and the harm of COVID. Rather, we must seek to minimise the impact of both and we must make the decision that balances the respective harms most effectively. The bill provides the enabling framework to strike this balance.

I take the last minute to thank Dr Gerrard for his amazing work; of course Dr Jeannette Young, now our Governor; all of our healthcare professionals; police and emergency services workers; frontline employees; our hotel quarantine staff and hotel staff; and aged-care workers. I acknowledge the 737 people who lost their lives in Queensland as a consequence of COVID-19. A loss of life from COVID is something that weighs heavily on me as I know it does on our health staff and our communities. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families of those we have lost. Finally, I express my gratitude to each and every Queenslanders who has made personal sacrifices during this unprecedented time. As a government we will continue to keep you safe and ensure we have the powers to do so.

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

AYES, 82:

ALP, 49—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Grace, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

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

Grn, 2—Berkman, MacMahon.

NOES, 5:

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

Pairs: Gilbert, Robinson; Harper, Janetzki.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 13, as read, agreed to.



Dr MacMAHON (5.25 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Ring the bells for one minute.

AYES, 6:

Grn, 2—Berkman, MacMahon.

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 81:

ALP, 49—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Grace, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczyk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

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

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Pairs: Gilbert, Robinson; Harper, Janetzki.

Resolved in the negative.

Clauses 14 and 15, as read, agreed to.



Dr MacMAHON (5.30 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

Mr SPEAKER: Ring the bells for one minute.

AYES, 6:

Grn, 2—Berkman, MacMahon.

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 80:

ALP, 48—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Grace, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczyk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

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

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Pairs: Gilbert, Robinson; Harper, Janetzki.

Resolved in the negative.

Clauses 16 to 24, as read, agreed to.

Clause 25—



Ms BATES (5.34 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 25 (Amendment of s 315 (Definitions for ch 8))

Page 14, line 14, '31 October 2022'—

omit, insert—

31 May 2022

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

Tabled paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022, amendments to be moved by Ms Ros Bates MP [\[487\]](#).

Tabled paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022, explanatory notes to Ms Ros Bates's amendments [488].

Tabled paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Ms Ros Bates's amendments [489].

This amendment would see these powers expire on 31 May 2022. The opposition thinks this is a fair and reasonable amendment. Think about what has changed in the last two months. Think about how different our response to COVID-19 now is. Think about how we are now living with this virus. That is why we are moving this amendment. It is so the parliament can assess the situation and vote to tailor the government's response based on the circumstances. That is right and it is proper. There are two sittings weeks in May so why can the parliament not do its job in May and vote on further extensions if that is required? Should a new variant emerge and should the case numbers rise we can adjust. We can come back into this place and extend the powers in a bipartisan fashion, just like we did in 2020.

Let the parliament do its job. Let us all in this place assess the situation. Let us not throw a blanket over the next six months. It should not be set and forget. This bill is too important to do that. We all acknowledge how extraordinary these powers are—that much is clear. Let us send a united message to Queenslanders that all of us in this chamber realise how extraordinary these laws are and that we all agree that they should not exist for one day longer than they need to. Let us show the Queensland public that we can be adaptive and tailor Queensland's response as the circumstances dictate. It also gives the government two months to outline a plan for how these restrictions could be responsibly eased.

It is a fair and reasonable amendment. The government rammed this bill through in just over a month. If they can do it for this bill, why can they not do it for another bill in May? The government has shown it has treated the examination of this bill with contempt. The committee process was farcical. The government cannot argue the same point as it did last time—crying foul that there is just not enough time to introduce and consider these laws. It pushed this bill through in just over a month. They have destroyed that argument with their own actions.

I implore the government to listen when it comes to this. The opposition and I are calling on the government to be fair. We are calling on the government to be reasonable on this amendment.

Mr KATTER: I did not have an opportunity to speak in the second reading debate as it was truncated so I want to speak to this amendment. It is a terrible injustice for all those members who did not get to speak in the debate. We are talking about the extension of powers and the KAP is firmly opposed to the extension of those powers. There has not been enough time to deal with this. Things have to come back to parliament

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member, you do need to stay relevant to the amendment.

Mr KATTER: The amendment is related to shortening the proposed time for the extension of the emergency powers. That is what I am talking about. We oppose the extension.

A lot of things transpired through the initial stages of the emergency powers that caused great concern to the KAP. I refer to the firearms decision made by the CHO. We had the CHO making a decision on the run that inadvertently created a real health risk. There were firearms and ammunition in transit and overnight it was said that they could not operate. Deliveries of firearms and ammunition that were in transit were affected. These are the inadvertent consequences of doing these things. That is not to say that it cannot be done better in the future. We need to consider what that means for people. There needs to be more accountability. There was a lot of tunnel vision shown by the CHO at times such as around the firearms issue. The CHO thinks about health and that is fine, but it creates inadvertent consequences.

Our trust has eroded on this issue. There needs to be more transparency around the risks and consequences of the vaccines. Those are very real issues that are not insurmountable. They are not a reason not to have them. There needs to be transparency around those things.

It was important that we had an opportunity to say something about this bill. We had an amendment that we were going to move and that we will not now be able to debate. I will table it now.

Tabled paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022, amendment to be moved by Mr Robbie Katter MP [490].

Tabled paper: Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022, explanatory notes to Mr Robbie Katter's amendment [491].

We will be opposing this amendment because it is still in keeping with the essence of the major part of the bill which we do not agree with at all.

Mrs D'ATH: As I said in my reply and in my second reading speech, we are not supportive of this amendment because to be so would be to ignore the fact that the National Cabinet and the national government have recognised that this will go beyond May. For those who say they support the health advice—the AHPPC, ATAGI, TGA, National Cabinet, the national government and every other state and territory in this country—none have said that COVID is going to be over by May. No-one has said that. In fact, the national partnership agreement for COVID funding goes till the end of September. There is clear recognition by the federal government that COVID will be with us for some time.

We also know that the Southern Hemisphere will be the first to deal with an Omicron wave after the first hit of Omicron. We do not know what that is going to look like. I take the point from the member for Mudgeeraba, who said, 'If cases rise, we can come back and look at all this.' Cases are rising. We have had furloughed staff numbers go from 1,500 to over 3,200 in just over a week—in just over a week. We are having bed numbers go up again. We are having capacity constraints because of this right now because we are hitting the peak of this second Omicron wave. The evidence is right in front of us.

We know there are going to be further waves. We know winter is coming. We do not know what the flu and COVID are going to do to our health system because we have not had a major flu outbreak for two years. There has not been a major flu outbreak at the same time as we have managed COVID. We need to make sure that we have the safety net in place. The member for Mudgeeraba says we can just come back in May and quickly put another bill in and push it through. How can the member for Mudgeeraba sit here and say, 'The committee process was farcical,' but now they do not want a committee process? Let's just bypass the committee process when it comes to the public health bills now, according to them.

We need to make sure that when we talk about the minority—I apologise if I am wrong, but I thought the member for Currumbin talked about the group outside. It might have been the member for Southern Downs, so I apologise if I am wrong. One speech talked about the minority group outside and respecting their views. I respect everyone's views. Can we also talk about the other groups? Can we talk about people who have disabilities who are particularly vulnerable whether they are vaccinated or not? Can we talk about our loved ones in aged care who are particularly vulnerable whether they are vaccinated or not? It is important for us to protect them.

Can we talk about our First Nations people and the importance of protecting them? Can we recognise that recently National Cabinet said we should mandate a third dose for aged care and disability? We cannot do that if we lift these powers. Let us recognise the AHPPC still recommends that people have to isolate and quarantine for seven days. Without this head of power, we cannot do this. If we oppose this amendment, those on the opposite side have said—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Minister, you have the call.

Mrs D'ATH: Delaying this approximately six weeks to the next May sitting will do nothing to ensure that we provide certainty. Those on the other side have said everyone wants as much notice as they can get. We are here trying to give notice that we are extending the bill beyond the end of April to the end of October so that people know what is happening, that the powers are there. Instead, they want to give them uncertainty: 'We're only going to extend it to the end of May. Then we will come back in May and we will quickly push it through. Sorry, we are not giving you much notice.' That is what the opposition want to do it. I want to be clear. I understand that members on the other side have said in the debate, 'If these amendments by the LNP are not supported—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Nanango!

Mrs D'ATH:—they will not be supporting this bill.' I want to be clear what that means. They are willing to vote against the passing of this bill—

Ms Simpson interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: Let us be clear: the opposition are saying they would prefer that this bill goes down which means the current legislation would expire at the end of April. That means that after the end of April those on the opposite side are happy for unvaccinated people to be working in our aged-care and disability sectors. They are happy that every positive COVID person in Queensland never has to quarantine.

Mrs Gerber: You're misleading the House.

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection from the member for Currumbin saying I am misleading the House. Maybe they need to explain voting against the bill—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: They are voting against the bill. Maybe they should all clarify what they mean by 'We will vote against this bill.' I think they are having second thoughts about what it means to say they are voting against this bill. It means they do not support the extension of this bill. That is what voting against this bill means. That is what it means. Voting against this bill in total means: 'We do not agree to the extension of the head of power and we would rather it lapse at the end of April if we do not get what we want.' I am not willing to accept those tactics. We oppose this amendment. I recommend those across the chamber do as well.

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Ring the bells for one minute.

AYES, 32:

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

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 54:

ALP, 48—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Grace, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

Grn, 2—Berkman, MacMahon.

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Pairs: Gilbert, Robinson; Harper, Janetzki.

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 25, as read, agreed to.

Mr KATTER (5.49 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Ring the bells for one minute.

AYES, 35:

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

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 51:

ALP, 48—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Grace, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

Grn, 2—Berkman, MacMahon.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Pairs: Gilbert, Robinson; Harper, Janetzki.

Resolved in the negative.

Dr MacMAHON (5.52 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Ring the bells for one minute.

AYES, 6:**Grn, 2**—Berkman, MacMahon.**KAP, 3**—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.**Ind, 1**—Bolton.**NOES, 80:****ALP, 48**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Grace, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.**LNP, 31**—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.**PHON, 1**—Andrew.

Pairs: Gilbert, Robinson; Harper, Janetzki.

Resolved in the negative.

Dr MacMAHON (5.55 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Ring the bells for one minute.**AYES, 6:****Grn, 2**—Berkman, MacMahon.**KAP, 3**—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.**Ind, 1**—Bolton.**NOES, 80:****ALP, 48**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Grace, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.**LNP, 31**—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.**PHON, 1**—Andrew.

Pairs: Gilbert, Robinson; Harper, Janetzki.

Resolved in the negative.

Clauses 26 to 28, as read, agreed to.

**Ms BATES** (5.58 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Ring the bells for one minute.**AYES, 37:****LNP, 31**—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.**Grn, 2**—Berkman, MacMahon.**KAP, 3**—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.**Ind, 1**—Bolton.**NOES, 49:****ALP, 48**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Grace, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.**PHON, 1**—Andrew.

Pairs: Gilbert, Robinson; Harper, Janetzki.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): In accordance with sessional order 4, the House must now consider any clause or remaining clauses, schedules and any amendments circulated by the minister in charge of the bill.

Question put—That clauses 29 to 38 and schedule 1 stand part of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Clauses 29 to 38 and schedule 1, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Ring the bells for one minute.

AYES, 48:

ALP, 48—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Grace, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

NOES, 36:

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

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

Pairs: Gilbert, Robinson; Harper, Janetzki.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a third time.


Long Title

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

Motion agreed to.


COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.04 pm): I seek to advise the House of the determinations made by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly at its meeting today. The committee has resolved, pursuant to standing order 136, that the Transport and Resources Committee report on the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 13 May 2022, and the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee report on the Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 27 May 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

Lockyer Electorate, Federal Member for Wright

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (6.04 pm): It gives me great pleasure to stand tonight to give a shout-out to Scotty Buchholz, our federal member for Wright. Scotty is one of the hardest working and dedicated members of the federal government. He has a very large electorate—from Lockyer in the west through to the Gold Coast, down to Mudgeeraba in the east. I said that he is one of the hardest working members, but he is also one of the most strategic thinkers and somebody who gives great advice and leadership to our local community. That came to the fore recently when he picked up the phone and gave Peter Dutton a call and helped us secure the ADF to help out in our floods.


More importantly, he has secured \$75 million of federal government money to go to our Lockyer Valley and Somerset Water Collaborative. That involved a lot of hard work. I recognise my colleague the member for Nanango for her contribution to the great work that we have done in helping our mayors, Tanya Milligan of Lockyer and Graham Lehman of Somerset, along with our farmers secure that money. We saw some of that go through with the city deal recently. I know of no better person or member in Canberra than Scotty Buchholz who can walk the corridors of Canberra and, through his efforts, secure that money. Our community love it when local, state and federal governments work together, and it is a great partnership that we have.

I must say that one of the great decisions that has come from the federal budget this week will benefit our community in the Lockyer a great deal. Our families have quite a large area to travel, so cutting the fuel excise from 44 cents to 22 cents will result in a saving of about \$30 a week per car. For the average two-car family, that is a saving of \$700 over the next six months. That is a significant saving for our community. If it were not for the likes of our Morrison government, we would see more waste and spending by Labor governments. I place on record my thanks to Scotty Buchholz and his team for contributing to that.

As I mentioned before, Scotty is one of the hardest working members of the federal government and he certainly contributes to some great outcomes in our community. He has recently been able to also secure money for our roads. The Warrego Highway and the Brisbane Valley Highway are two of the major roads in our community and on which many people have lost their lives. To secure that money—\$60 million for the Warrego Highway and \$40 million for the Brisbane Valley Highway—has been a great outcome. I must say: Sam Biggins, the candidate for Blair, is doing a great job. He is listening to the community, he is working hard and he was part of the team that secured that \$40 million for the Brisbane Valley Highway. Again I send a shout-out to the Somerset Regional Council and my colleague the member for Nanango for the work that has gone in to securing that funding.

I will finish where I started: thanks, Scotty Buchholz. Your work does not go unnoticed. You do a great job for our community.

Morrison Federal Government

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (6.08 pm): The federal budget released this week is a poor budget for Queensland. They have performed the old trick of promising billions and then pushing it out beyond the forward estimates so that it no longer exists. It is also remarkable that the time between the Prime Minister promising money and the time of the money evaporating is getting shorter and shorter. It used to last six months or so, like when they promised funding for Linkfield Road in 2018 but it got barely a mention in the 2019 budget. Now the monetary announcements barely last a week. As today's *Courier-Mail* reported, \$3.3 billion was promised for road and rail for Queensland, yet the budget papers contain only \$450 million. For water projects, of the \$6.9 billion promised nationally only \$1 billion over four years is actually in the budget, with no detail on the \$5.4 billion for Hells Gates Dam announced just last week.


On veterans matters, it was remarkable to see on the weekend the federal Minister for Veterans' Affairs threaten to quit over the Morrison government's lack of funding support for veterans. I read from an article titled 'Veterans' Affairs Minister Andrew Gee threatens to resign on eve of budget over funding shortfall'. I have a lot of respect for Minister Gee in his initial stand here, and in my dealings with him I have found him to be someone who seems genuine in his care for veterans. There is no doubt that the backlog of 60,000 unprocessed claims causes issues daily in the veterans community. The minister himself described the backlog as a national disgrace. For him to have to threaten to quit on the eve of an election budget in order to get veterans matters taken seriously by the Morrison government is also a disgrace.

Scott Morrison should hang his head in shame that, amongst a trillion dollars of debt and cash splashes galore, he cannot find \$96 million to clear a backlog of veterans' claims. In fact, he found only \$22.8 million over two years and an additional 90 staff as opposed to the 145 staff which were asked for. When I talk to veterans groups, it is one of the biggest issues they bring up: they are in limbo while they are waiting for their claims to be processed. It is very disappointing that even on the eve of an election the Prime Minister could not find the money to fix this issue. The \$22 million that has been committed in the budget looks more like a short-term political fix for the Prime Minister designed to get the LNP through to the election.

Onto state issues briefly, it was great to hear this morning the Premier announce \$1.5 million is available in the next round of two grants programs supporting veterans and their families—through the Anzac Day Trust Grants Program and the second round of the Anzac Day Trust COVID-19 Grants

Program. I was especially pleased to hear the Premier announce that more than \$1.5 million has been awarded from the first round of another program, Queensland Remembers. There are some very worthy recipients. I think the member for Nanango has a couple. There are recipients from Allora to Blackbutt, from Ipswich to Longreach and right across the state. The program is fantastic and I am really looking forward to seeing it roll out.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (6.11 pm): There is no greater example of a lack of democracy, openness and transparency than what we have just experienced in this great House. We have just had one of the most controversial extensions of health powers that has ever been brought before this parliament and could we all speak? No! There were 12 people left on the list and what did the Palaszczuk government do? They guillotined it! I was one of those people who would have liked to have spoken, so in the two minutes I have now I will put a few things on record.

First of all, I want to thank our hardworking health workers who have been dealing with this COVID pandemic, one of whom is very close to home. My daughter Lucy has been a COVID nurse. She worked in Blackall from just after Christmas right until she started as a COVID nurse, so I know exactly what these frontline health workers are going through.

I want to say this. This government is who we should apparently trust. Are they honest with us? No! Are they up-front and honest? No! This is the Premier that caused vaccine hesitancy in this great state. I back vaccines. Everyone should get vaccinated. Every single person should get vaccinated, but what did this government do? They told us the powers would stop when we got to 90 per cent vaccination. We got to 90 per cent. That is exactly what the community did. They all got together and did what the government asked. Now what is the government doing? They are continuing with this abuse of power. How is that about trust? How is that about openness? How is that about transparency? None of that is happening under this Palaszczuk government. They are riding roughshod over Queenslanders and Queenslanders have had enough. Queenslanders are smart people. We should respect them. We should listen to them. That is exactly what we have done by voting against the extension of the powers in this bill.

I will say another thing. This is a Premier who went to the last election spending around \$12 million with a term 'unite and recover'. Can everyone remember the 'unite and recover term'? Where is that now? They cannot use that anymore because they know it is now 'divide and conquer'. It is the Palaszczuk government that is dividing Queenslanders. They are pitting people against each other. They are dividing our communities and our communities have had enough. Our communities want common sense to come back into this. They do not want a government to ride roughshod over them.

This bill went too far. That is exactly why the arrogance of this Palaszczuk government—

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr KRAUSE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member for McConnel has just used extremely unparliamentary language and I ask her to withdraw.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): I did not hear that.

Ms Grace: You haven't taken personal offence. Grow up.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence. Once and for all enough is enough—

(Time expired)

Liberal National Party

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (6.14 pm): I was going to speak about Logan and some of the fantastic things—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Pause the clock. Order, members. I will wait for silence before we hear from the member for Logan.

Mr POWER: I was going to speak about Logan and some of the great things that were going on there. However, I have just been so shocked by the way we have seen the member for Broadwater and the two Greens members go out together and dance in unison with their drums in a drums line in terms of their anti-COVID restrictions and mandates position.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr POWER: All right, they may not have been dancing out there, but they were in this chamber. I want to bring to the attention of the House the consequences of how the LNP just voted. If their amendments had gotten up, on 30 April we would have seen unvaccinated people treating disabled children which would have put them at risk. We would have seen unvaccinated people in our nursing homes putting our seniors at risk. We would have seen all of these restrictions removed. I want to alert the House to the fact that this will not be over in a month, but it will not be over in under three months either. The consequence of their vote would have seen the advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee thrown away, but then they voted to have unvaccinated people treating people's parents. They voted to have unvaccinated people from 30 April treating those who are disabled.

I want to point out the fact that there was an advice titled 'Mandating booster vaccinations in residential aged care workers' which is dated 15 February. I wish to table that.

Tabled paper: Extract from the Australian government Department of Health webpage, dated 15 February 2022, titled 'Mandating booster vaccinations in residential aged care workers' [\[492\]](#).

Do those opposite seriously think that that advice is going to expire? No, it will not. This is a dangerous and untrustworthy opposition who are in unison with the Greens in throwing away sensible advice which would actually keep our seniors safe. They are truly dangerous. They did not learn when they asked 64 times for the borders to be opened. They did not learn when they—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order, members.

Mr POWER: On 16 March, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee also brought out an advice mandating booster vaccinations for disability support workers. This is not the Queensland government's advice; this is the health advice of the Commonwealth. However, the vote that the LNP members took tonight would see disabled children exposed to unvaccinated workers. It is a day of infamy which Queenslanders will long remember that LNP members were so irresponsible as to join with the Greens to put Queenslanders at risk.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House will come to order before I call the next speaker.

Noosa Electorate



Ms BOLTON (Noosa—Ind) (6.17 pm): Noosa is home to incredible youngsters who advocate with passion and hold us as representatives to account for our actions, or lack thereof. Through their efforts we find legislation and processes that need modernising to strengthen protections for our environment and its inhabitants. Spencer, on behalf of the glossy black-cockatoos, highlighted where critical remnant habitat that is essential for these feathered friends would be lost due to a 2011 development approval that did not require updated environmental clearances before proceeding. Then we have environmental authorities that only look within operational boundaries, ignoring impacts outside those boundaries, including on our schoolchildren and on roads that were not built to accommodate heavy haulage, and without any avenue for review after intensification of use.


Climate change is always a regular topic from my favourite Q&A session with our year 6s. They ask why we simply do not stop those things that contribute and why is Queensland's renewable energy target 50 per cent when other states have targets of 100 per cent? The subject of turtles is also prevalent, especially as to why we simply do not close off sections of the beach during their hatching season. Then there is the subject of sharks. With advocacy from Taylor as well members of Nippers to see an end to methods that destroy marine life, yet keep all safe, that will see greater understanding and innovation.

As I say to all of our youngsters who query, rally, protest or come into my office for work experience as trainees or as interns, there is so much we can do. Whether it is impacts to our natural spaces from unmanageable visitor numbers, polystyrene from pontoons from the recent flooding or building codes and laws that reduce sustainability or adaption, we can resolve them.

Another issue was how to share space in our rivers and national parks with consideration for each other. It just takes a lot of work and persistence. There can be legitimate constraints in our frameworks. However, that does not mean we cannot find solutions. For governments to adequately protect our environment and its inhabitants, we need to move beyond tick-and-flick processes that give a semblance of action.

The questions of our youngest should not result in obscure answers to investigations on their behalf. Instead, we need to build confidence in government, its processes and us as representatives by listening, querying the norm and answering honestly. These young Queenslanders are future decision-makers and leaders and we must set the standard for them to emulate. Meaningful change occurs by bringing diverse viewpoints together to work out how their concerns can be resolved. This will be essential in our journey along the path to treaty and to get to those better outcomes for their future.

World Autism Awareness Day


 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (6.20 pm): This Saturday, 2 April, is World Autism Awareness Day and on this day we wear blue. The purpose of the day is to put a spotlight on the hurdles people with autism face every day, and I will make my regular annual contribution to the House on our family's autism journey. In other years I have focused on the social or communication barriers that my boy has faced as he ages, but today I want to raise the awareness of some of those physical barriers. Autism spectrum disorder is often considered an invisible disability. That may be the case for many but not all. I want to thank my boy for joining us in the gallery today. If I had known it was going to be very noisy outside, I probably would not have brought him in. If I had known it was Pyjama Disco day at school, I probably would not have brought him in either. Sorry, dude!

As Ronan has gotten older and larger the physical symptoms have started to become more and more apparent. He does not have the balance or coordination that others his age have and apparently his inability to dance is not genetic; it is actually from his diagnosis. He has low muscle tone and poor core strength so that even the mildest exertion or strength takes up far more energy than it does for you or me. A trip to the shops is really enough to exhaust him. This often manifests in clumsiness—again, apparently not genetics—but it can be quite dangerous when he does not have the ability to protect himself when he falls. We have already had an ambulance trip from school this year when he fell and hurt himself. The other more obvious sign is actually in his gait—that is, the way he walks. Even at a distance amongst a group of his peers, he does stand out. For a child who has a lot of social issues, that can be quite disturbing and make him distraught because he still has trouble socialising. We have another NDIS review because now we are going to work on some of that physio aspect to really help him bring his muscle tone and skills so he can fit in amongst his peers.

Again, I get to update the House on his annual self-portrait. He is not as colourful as he used to be, but his name is perfect and we have been working really hard on that. I table this year's Ronan self-portrait update. Again, I want to highlight that although 2 April is World Autism Awareness Day it should be 'world autism awareness and understanding day'.

Tabled paper: Child's drawing [\[493\]](#).

Palaszcuk Labor Government, Coronavirus Vaccination Mandate; Spanish Mackerel Fishery

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (6.23 pm): I take the opportunity to endorse those comments made about autism. My sister deals with autistic children and they do some wonderful things now for children with autism.

Tonight I rise with a sense of extreme dissatisfaction given the number of debates in this place that have been truncated. I wanted to talk about the mackerel fishery that is being attacked at the moment, but I need to mention the speech I was preparing all day. I travelled 2,000 kilometres to be here and this was the big debate of the week for us and I did not get a chance to speak, along with many other members. There was a party last night on the green. We could have had another hour. There was another hour of debate yesterday. I would have been prepared to stay another two or three hours to let other people speak even if I did not agree with their views, but we are truncating democracy in this space by not letting members speak.

I am extremely annoyed that I did not get to put my views forward, so I quickly want to talk about vaccine mandates, something we have disagreed with from the start. I accept the view of trying to keep people safe and using mandates to do that. We are at 92 per cent or 93 per cent now and a lot of people are accustomed to doing it. I get so many comments from police, cafes and restaurants saying that they are sick of dealing with people by being the quasi-security police and enforcement officers for government around the state. The social disruption that is happening is not quantified. We can quantify deaths and illnesses, but we cannot quantify social disruption, the economic costs and those social

costs. A parliamentary committee handed down its report on social isolation and loneliness. What do members think contributes to that? Mandates and the likes. It is very easy to present the empirical data on deaths and sickness, but it is very difficult to define the huge cost on society.


There are a number of people who are described as having cognitive dissonance. The number of people who have come up to us and said, 'Do you know what? I didn't have a problem with the vaccines, but I'm sick of the government forcing them and now I'm against them.' With regard to the swell of people outside, the government is inadvertently creating this balloon of people who are getting annoyed with the government and now they just want to object for the sake of it. There is a strong argument that all of the effort it is putting in now is counterintuitive and resulting in fewer people going to get a vaccination. It is time to get rid of the mandate and move on. We need to turn the messages into 'stay at home if you are sick', 'do not shake hands' and social distancing. They are real things we can do, but I do not hear that anymore. All I hear is vaccines, vaccines, vaccines. There is a lot more to public health than just that. That is one of the main reasons we so strongly object to that, and I table a report. It is not the pillar of what I stand for. Rather, it is a report that encapsulates a lot of arguments around that mandate.

Tabled paper: Report, undated, titled 'The unintended consequences of COVID-19 Vaccine Policy: Why mandates, passports and segregated lockdowns may cause more harm than good' [494].

The Spanish mackerel fishery is under attack at the moment. It seems to be the new battleground to attack primary industries. A new methodology has been discovered. The minister stood up today and said, 'It's all good.' In the peer review process, which I am not always a fan of, one guy stood out on a limb. His name is Neil Clark. He is doing the desktop peer review and he said, 'There's stuff here I don't agree with. You can't draw conclusions on this.' They have changed the methodology and they took the data off all the fishermen and will not give it back to them. They cannot get access to test this themselves. There are some highly questionable findings and the government is saying that now that it is under 20 per cent it is going to have to start to shut things down. We will have to import 50,000 tonnes from Vietnam or Indonesia now. That is where it will come from now when they are already overfishing.

(Time expired)

Cook Electorate, Small Business


 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (6.26 pm): I recently had the opportunity to travel to Cooktown with assistant minister Nikki Boyd and the Small Business Commissioner to sign the Small Business Friendly Council Charter between the Queensland government and Cook Shire Council. I am proud that Cook Shire Council became one of 30 councils in Queensland to sign up to the Small Business Friendly program in Queensland and joins the Mareeba Shire Council and Douglas Shire Council, which both became signatories last year. This is a significant step towards forging a strong partnership with the Queensland government in support of small business in the region. Small businesses are the engine room of these shires and it is important that we support them. I acknowledge and thank the local councils in my electorate for the work they do to advocate in the best interests of the business community. Although the business sector does not fall in line with local government core responsibilities, this has not stopped any of my local councils picking up the bat for local businesses.

This charter will give local businesses the certainty they need during these unprecedented times. Small business owners face many challenges and during the pandemic these challenges were heightened, putting enormous pressure on businesses to survive in the COVID world. Having something firm such as the small business charter in place will only help council to better work with businesses to navigate a range of complexities and the economic impacts that are outside their control: increased competition, finding customers and dealing with government red tape.

I want to give a shout-out to the many businesses in my electorate that are absolute champions, and I will name a few: Mareeba's Hungry Pug, the Mareeba Deli, Beechwoods Cafe in Mossman, Driftwood in Cooktown, Mossman Custom Kitchens, Ma Kai Cafe on Thursday Island, Elite 818 in the Douglas shire, Furious Fitness in Mareeba, Western Cape Eco Tours, Solar Whisper in Port Douglas, Port Douglas Automotive car workshop, Jacques Coffee Plantation and Coffee Works, amongst the many others in my electorate.

I love visiting small businesses in my electorate because they do more than deliver a service: they continue to support and give the community an experience that only small businesses can deliver. They welcome all of their customers with a warm, friendly smile, a chat and a good laugh that no money can buy.

Warrego Electorate, Flooding; Southern Queensland, Weather Event; Inner-West Primary School


 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (6.29 pm): I extend my condolences to the family and friends of those who have tragically lost their lives in floodwaters. The residents of Dalby in my electorate had a nervous night this week with floodwaters peaking just under the 2010 flood height. Unfortunately, eight homes were flooded above the floorboards and approximately 2,000 properties had water impacting their households. Six businesses were impacted, including the Dalby Shoppingworld centre, and the business damage assessments have already come in at over \$800,000 and are increasing.

I have been on the ground in other flood-prone areas of South-East Queensland. The Mount Crosby water treatment plant is a critical part of the water supply for Brisbane residents, supplying about 50 per cent of the drinking water for Brisbane. The pump station went under water in the 2011 floods and it is still waiting to be moved to higher ground. Eleven years on and another flood, and the pump station has still not been relocated by Seqwater. It is critical for clean drinking water in Brisbane during flood events.

The existing Mount Crosby Weir bridge also went under water. It has sustained extensive damage making it an even greater priority for a new bridge to be built. When Colleges Crossing is cut and the Mount Crosby Weir bridge is out, communities of thousands of people in suburbs such as Karana Downs and Mount Crosby are isolated for days. In the recent flood the local state member, the member for Moggill, Dr Christian Rowan, and Councillor Greg Adaman, along with helicopter owner James Robinson, organised food and medical drops into these and other cut-off communities. Residents need food drops in floods even just 30 kilometres from the CBD because the state government has not addressed the bridge infrastructure at Colleges Crossing or the Mount Crosby Weir bridge. Both are state government responsibilities.

We heard a fair bit from the education minister about wanting to rebuild and flood mitigate our schools. A good start would be to not put the new inner-west primary school right in a flood zone. The Toowong Bowls Club site, which I have visited, flooded significantly in the recent event and, making it worse, the sewage treatment plant beside the bowls club flooded and raw sewage spilled into Perrin Park and into the club. The park is still closed. The state Labor government's priorities are absurd when it comes to wanting to put schools in flood zones where there are significant sewage risks. It is not the right place for a school.

Redcliffe Electorate, Flood Response

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (6.32 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, before I talk about my wonderful electorate of Redcliffe I acknowledge the efforts of yourself and your brother on the weekend with your fundraising and your Really Big Walk.


I want to thank my Redcliffe community for rallying around each other during the recent floods and severe weather events. Unfortunately when the motion was moved last sitting week and everyone got to speak to their communities I was in isolation with COVID so I do want to take a moment to acknowledge my community. Like all Queenslanders, they came together to support each other during the disaster event by getting out and shovelling sand in the pouring rain, filling sandbags for complete strangers. It was amazing how many people came together; I think at one point we had over 20 volunteers there to help fill bags for other people. They supported their community by helping clean up the homes of neighbours and strangers in the aftermath. The Redcliffe spirit truly shone through. As I travelled around the community with my electorate staff and volunteers there were many stories of heartbreak, but it was an absolute joy to see the community come together.

There are many stories of people losing everything and now having to embark on the task of rebuilding their homes and their lives. Many do not have homes to go back to. I want to briefly mention a small number. Sara, Joe, and all the people in Grant Street lost their homes. It was heartbreaking to see. The water was waist deep. They are nowhere near a creek; it was water inundation and there was nowhere for it to go. The waters rose and flooded their homes. Many of these homes were uninsured rental properties and the residents now have nowhere to go. Emily reached out to us. Anne was sleeping on a wet couch after three days. She could not sleep inside her apartment it was so saturated. Within a week it had black mould up the walls. I got a text this afternoon to tell me that the Department of Housing has located a property locally for Anne. I am thrilled about that. I acknowledge Laura, Stacey, Kim and their children. Kim had a fall while trying to clean up and broke her arm. Stacey and Kim got to talk to the Premier when the Premier came out to the electorate.

I acknowledge the businesses who helped: the staff at Breathe Easy Cafe made around 350 fresh meals for people who had lost everything; Harcourts Real Estate came out and ran a barbecue in Grant Street and helped clean up; Chris at Hakuna Ma'Coffee ran our volunteer thankyou barbecue on the weekend. I give a shout-out to Trina and Ritchie from Breathe Easy Cafe and their staff member Tash who raised \$2,500. I thank the community for coming together. We are proud of being such a strong community. I also thank, of course, the SES and the council workers.

DEPUTY SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Really Big Walk for Parkinson's

 **Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): I would like to acknowledge my brother Vince and his wife, Andrea, who are in the gallery. Vince is here to help with the Really Big Walk for Parkinson's disease, a devastating and common neurological condition. If there was a vaccine for it I would be making sure everyone got it tomorrow.

Members, thank you for a difficult week. Perhaps the Speaker will make sure that we have a soundtrack every week for parliament going forward. It brings a different tone to the House, doesn't it? I will leave that to the CLA. I will not stray into their territory.

The House adjourned at 6.36 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Camm, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gerber, Gilbert, Grace, Hart, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Katter, Kelly, King A, King S, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lister, Lui, MacMahon, Madden, Mander, Martin, McCallum, McDonald, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke, Palaszcuk, Pease, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Skelton, Smith, Stevens, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Watts, Weir, Whiting