



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, 10 May 2022

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TUESDAY, 10 MAY 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.

ASSENT TO BILLS



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

The Honourable C.W. Pitt MP

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Parliament House

George Street

BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Speaker

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

Date of Assent: 8 April 2022

A bill for an Act to establish the office of small business commissioner and for related purposes, and to amend this Act, the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020 and the Retail Shop Leases Act 1994 for particular purposes

A bill for an Act to amend the Acts Interpretation Act 1954, the Corrective Services Act 2006, the Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2020, the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020, the Disaster Management Act 2003, the Justice and Other Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Amendment Act 2020, the Mental Health Act 2016, the Public Health Act 2005, the Public Health and Other Legislation (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Act 2021 and the Public Health and Other Legislation (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Act 2020 for particular purposes

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

Yours sincerely

Governor

8 April 2022

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 8 April 2022, from Her Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to certain bills on 8 April 2022 [\[601\]](#).

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Rulings, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of House




Mr SPEAKER: On 6 April 2022, I tabled three rulings regarding matters of privilege: a ruling relating to a complaint by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads alleging that the member for Maroochydore deliberately misled the House during matters of public interest on 22 February 2022; a ruling relating to a complaint by the member for Burnett alleging that the Deputy Premier deliberately misled the House in response to a question on notice on 17 August 2021; and a ruling relating to complaints by the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services that the Leader of the Opposition and members for Toowoomba South, Mudgeeraba, Burnett, Glass House and Whitsunday deliberately misled the House on 30 November 2021.

I ruled that all three matters did not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee. I now refer to all three matters so that if any member wishes to exercise their rights in respect of those matters under the standing orders they should do so immediately, identifying the matter.


REVOCATION OF PROTECTED AREAS

Notice of Motion, Alteration


 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I note for the information of the House that under standing order 67 the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs provided the Clerk with an alteration of the notice of motion given on 30 March relating to the revocation and dedication of certain areas. The amended notice of motion does not exceed the scope of the original notice of motion and simply inserts a heading which provides clarification relating to the areas to be dedicated as national park. The alteration of the notice of motion does not impact the timing of legislative requirements under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 relating to the revocations in the notice and does not, therefore, reset the notice period under that act.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS


Absence of Members

 **Mr SPEAKER:** I have received advice from the Minister for Resources and member for Townsville, Hon. Scott Stewart, and also advice from the member for Hill, Shane Knuth MP, as to their absence from the sittings of the House this week. The members' notifications comply with standing order 263A.

Chamber Seating Arrangements

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, in line with the general easing of COVID-19 restrictions, I advise that members are no longer required to sit only in their allocated seat during the sittings. It is good to have good news.

School Group Tours

 **Mr SPEAKER:** I wish to advise members that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students, student leaders and teachers from: Bray Park State School in the electorate of Pine Rivers; the Aboriginal and Islander Independent Community School, the Murri School, in the electorate of Algester; Somerville House, in the electorate of South Brisbane; and Ormeau Woods State High School in the electorate of Coomera.

PETITIONS

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

Pool Safety

Dr Rowan, from 544 petitioners, requesting the House to implement a system of mandatory accreditation and annual training in CPR for all residential properties where there is a pool [\[603\]](#).

Lobbyists

Mr Andrew, from 6,780 petitioners, requesting the House to hold a full enquiry into the use of lobbyists [\[604\]](#).

Coronavirus, Vaccination Mandate

Mr Andrew, from 16,745 petitioners, requesting the House to remove mandatory vaccinations and vax passports in government departments and for Queensland residents [\[605\]](#).

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

GPS Monitoring Devices

1,344 petitioners, requesting the House to amend legislation for youth and adult offenders granted bail/parole in Queensland which makes it mandatory for offenders charged with serious criminal offences to be fitted with a GPS monitoring device [\[606\]](#).

Rockhampton, Marie Stopes Women's Health Clinic

634 petitioners, requesting the House to reopen the recently closed Rockhampton Marie Stopes Women's Health Clinic [\[607\]](#).

Urinary Tract Infection Pharmacy Pilot

1,278 petitioners, requesting the House to instigate a full and transparent evaluation of the Urinary Tract Infection Pharmacy Pilot prior to any continuation or expansion of the program [\[608\]](#).

South-East Queensland, Level Crossings

306 petitioners, requesting the House to make safety a priority by working with local governments to identify and eliminate level crossings on the SEQ network [\[609\]](#).

Petitions Office

342 petitioners, requesting the House to increase resources to the petitions office [\[610\]](#).

Dogs, Confinement and Tethering

1,059 petitioners, requesting the House to amend the provisions of the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 that permit prolonged unsupervised confinement and/or tethering of a dog [\[611\]](#).

Animal Protection

1,007 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure legislation includes mandatory codes for provision of species-specific shelter and consider each species' capacity to tolerate extremes in weather [\[612\]](#).

Redwood Park, Mountain Biking

1,840 petitioners, requesting the House to stop the mountain bike development proposal and declare Redwood Park a National Park [\[613\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS (SO 31)

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

1 April 2022—

[495](#) Community Support and Services Committee: Report No. 18, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 1 September 2021 and 15 March 2022

[496](#) Ministerial Gifts Register—Reportable Gifts 1 July 2020-30 June 2021

5 April 2022—

[497](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report on Trade and Investment Mission to the United Arab Emirates by the Treasurer and the Minister for Trade and Investment (Hon. Dick), 26 February-4 March 2022

[498](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 23, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 17 November 2021 and 22 February 2022

[499](#) Legal Affairs and Safety Committee: Report No. 25, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 7 December 2021 and 22 February 2022

6 April 2022—

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

[501](#) Ruling by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Curtis Pitt—Alleged deliberately misleading the House by the Deputy Premier

[502](#) Ruling by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Curtis Pitt—Alleged contempt of the Parliament by the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Toowoomba South, the member for Mudgeeraba, the member for Burnett, the member for Glass House and the member for Whitsunday

8 April 2022—

[503](#) Queensland Government: Fourth annual progress report—Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, December 2021

[504](#) Education, Employment and Training Committee: Report No. 18, 57th Parliament—Racing Integrity Amendment Bill 2022

[505](#) State Development and Regional Industries Committee: Report No. 19, 57th Parliament—Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

[506](#) Health and Environment Committee: Report No. 18, 57th Parliament—Inquiry into the provision of primary, allied and private health care, aged care and NDIS care services and its impact on the Queensland public health system

11 April 2022—

[507](#) Auditor-General Report 14: 2021-22—State entities 2021

14 April 2022—

- [508](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to an ePetition (3678-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 55,865 petitioners, requesting the House to provide the people of Queensland with reasons why the COVID-19 vaccination of children should not cease immediately
- [509](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to an ePetition (3693-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 4,419 petitioners, requesting the House to legislate to allow people to seek legal remedy for adverse reactions from vaccines
- [510](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to an ePetition (3681-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 1,872 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the provision of information as to what treatment protocols are being actively administered, or made available to all Queenslanders infected by COVID and its variants
- [511](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to an ePetition (3695-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 1,512 petitioners, requesting the House to seek a more detailed and factual account of the health impacts of COVID-19
- [512](#) Response from the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (Hon. Furner), to a paper petition (3714-22) presented by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(3) from 234 petitioners, requesting the House to block the imminent logging of Beerwah State Forest Lot 1 AP 22457
- [513](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to an ePetition (3692-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 4,379 petitioners, requesting the House to note the people of Queensland abhor discrimination and have the right to make their own health decisions without reprisal and/or discrimination
- [514](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to a paper petition (3715-22) presented by the member for Nanango, Mrs Frecklington, and an ePetition (3657-21) sponsored by the member for Nanango, Mrs Frecklington, from 16 and 723 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to consider the provision of a Persistent Pain/Chronic Pain Clinic in the South Burnett
- [515](#) Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence (Hon. Fentiman), to an ePetition (3688-22) sponsored by the member for Theodore, Mr Boothman, from 659 petitioners, requesting the House to make legislative changes to stop developers selling off the plan to deliberately delay progression of the development to enact sunset clauses for financial gain
- [516](#) Education, Employment and Training Committee: Report No. 15, 57th Parliament—Inquiry into the operation of the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990, government response
- [517](#) Response from the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement (Hon. Hinchliffe), to a paper petition (3716-22) presented by the member for Nanango, Mrs Frecklington, from 176 petitioners, requesting the House to reconsider the decision to remove darts as a sport in Queensland and reinstate it as a listed activity
- [518](#) Response from the Acting Premier (Hon. Dr Miles), to an ePetition (3701-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 10,120 petitioners, requesting the House to establish a Commission of Inquiry with terms of reference to investigate allegations of integrity and the failure of independent action
- [519](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3592-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 1,112 petitioners, requesting the House to call on the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, in consultation with the community, to reconsider existing plans for the Caloundra transport corridor
- [520](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3667-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 1,762 petitioners, requesting the House to abolish the discriminatory requirement for annual medical checks for Queenslanders aged 75 or older in order for them to be able to continue to drive on our roads
- [521](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3671-21) sponsored by the member for Ninderry, Mr Purdie, from 230 petitioners, requesting the House to install pedestrian lights at the intersection of David Low Way and Petrie Creek Road, Diddillibah

21 April 2022—

- [522](#) Community Support and Services Committee: Report No. 15, 57th Parliament—Public Trustee (Advisory and Monitoring Board) Amendment Bill 2021, government response

22 April 2022—

- [523](#) Response from the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure (Hon. Dr Miles), to an ePetition (3683-22) sponsored by the member for Burnett, Mr Bennett, from 250 petitioners, requesting the House to support the Bundaberg Regional Council to develop a staged master planned redevelopment of the Innes Park and Coral Cove foreshore

28 April 2022—

- [524](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to an ePetition (3677-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 1,854 petitioners, requesting the House to replace the vaccine mandate with a suitable regime of rapid antigen testing
- [525](#) Response from the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (Hon. Furner), to an ePetition (3685-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 801 petitioners, requesting the House to remove any provisions in the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 that permit the use of an electric collar on a dog and implement legislation to prohibit the use of electric or e-collars

- [526](#) Response from the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (Hon. Furner), to an ePetition (3686-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 618 petitioners, requesting the House to ban the use and sale of choke dog collars
- [527](#) Response from the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (Hon. Furner), to an ePetition (3687-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 785 petitioners, requesting the House to ban the use of prong dog collars
- [528](#) Response from the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts (Hon. Enoch), to a paper petition (3723-22) presented by the member for Oodgeroo, Dr Robinson, from 108 petitioners, requesting the House to do all in its power to cause the reinstatement of state government support which will enable the Homeless United program to continue its vital work in assisting vulnerable homeless
- [529](#) Response from the Acting Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services (Hon. Furner), to an ePetition (3654-21) sponsored by the member for Coomera, Mr Crandon, from 1,139 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the construction of a PCYC in Pimpama-Ormeau-Coomera
- [530](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3704-22) sponsored by the member for Hinchinbrook, Mr Dametto, from 711 petitioners, requesting the House to cause the construction of a turning lane off the Bruce Highway to the Five Mile Creek swimming hole and Five Mile Creek Road and to increase road signage on this section of the Bruce Highway

29 April 2022—

- [531](#) Legal Affairs and Safety Committee: Report No. 22, 57th Parliament—Inquiry into serious vilification and hate crimes, interim response
- [532](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to an ePetition (3721-22) sponsored by the member for Gympie, Mr Perrett, from 6,134 petitioners, requesting the House to abolish the mandates which are impacting agricultural shows in Queensland

3 May 2022—

- [533](#) Response from the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (Hon. Furner), to an ePetition (3719-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 2,847 petitioners, requesting the House to block the imminent logging of Beerwah State Forest Lot 1 AP 22457

5 May 2022—

- [534](#) Education, Employment and Training Committee: Report No. 19, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 1 December 2021 and 29 March 2022
- [535](#) National Health Practitioner Ombudsman—Annual Report 2020-21
- [536](#) Administrator National Health Funding Pool—Annual Report 2020-21

6 May 2022—

- [537](#) Transport and Resources Committee—Report No. 16, 57th Parliament—Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022
- [538](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 24, 57th Parliament—State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill 2022
- [539](#) Public Interest Monitor—Report on inspections under Section 362 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 for the period of 1 July 2021-31 December 2021

9 May 2022—

- [540](#) Legal Affairs and Safety Committee: Report No. 23, 57th Parliament—Evidence and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, government response
- [541](#) National Energy Retail Law (South Australia) Act 2011: National Energy Retail Amendment (Regulated stand-alone power systems) Rule 2022: Making of National Energy Retail Rules

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994, National Injury Insurance Scheme (Queensland) Act 2016:

- [542](#) Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation (Administration Fee and Levies) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 32
- [543](#) Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation (Administration Fee and Levies) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 32, explanatory notes
- [544](#) Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation (Administration Fee and Levies) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 32, human rights certificate

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984, Liquor Act 1992:

- [545](#) Liquor (Morningside) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 33
- [546](#) Liquor (Morningside) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 33, explanatory notes
- [547](#) Liquor (Morningside) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 33, human rights certificate

Police Service Administration Act 1990:

- [548](#) Police Service Administration (Reviews) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 34
- [549](#) Police Service Administration (Reviews) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 34, explanatory notes
- [550](#) Police Service Administration (Reviews) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 34, human rights certificate

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994:

- [551](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Variation of Tourism Business Professional Advice Rebate Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 35
- [552](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Variation of Tourism Business Professional Advice Rebate Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 35, explanatory notes
- [553](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Variation of Tourism Business Professional Advice Rebate Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 35, human rights certificate

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994:

- [554](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Variation of Tourism and Hospitality Sector Hardship Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 36
- [555](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Variation of Tourism and Hospitality Sector Hardship Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 36, explanatory notes
- [556](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Variation of Tourism and Hospitality Sector Hardship Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 36, human rights certificate

Environmental Offsets Act 2014, Environmental Protection Act 1994, Nature Conservation Act 1992, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999:

- [557](#) Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 37
- [558](#) Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 37, explanatory notes
- [559](#) Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 37, human rights certificate

State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971:

- [560](#) State Development and Public Works Organisation (State Development Areas) (Gladstone) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 38
- [561](#) State Development and Public Works Organisation (State Development Areas) (Gladstone) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 38, explanatory notes
- [562](#) State Development and Public Works Organisation (State Development Areas) (Gladstone) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 38, human rights certificate

Acts Interpretation Act 1954:

- [563](#) Acts Interpretation (Fee Unit) Regulation 2022, No. 39
- [564](#) Acts Interpretation (Fee Unit) Regulation 2022, No. 39, explanatory notes
- [565](#) Acts Interpretation (Fee Unit) Regulation 2022, No. 39, human rights certificate

Ambulance Service Act 1991, Food Act 2006, Medicines and Poisons Act 2019, Private Health Facilities Act 1999, Radiation Safety Act 1999:

- [566](#) Health Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 40
- [567](#) Health Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 40, explanatory notes
- [568](#) Health Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 40, human rights certificate

Rail Safety National Law (Queensland) Act 2017, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995:

- [569](#) Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2022, No. 41
- [570](#) Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2022, No. 41, explanatory notes
- [571](#) Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2022, No. 41, human rights certificate

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984, Liquor Act 1992:

- [572](#) Liquor (Kowanyama) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 42
- [573](#) Liquor (Kowanyama) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 42, explanatory notes
- [574](#) Liquor (Kowanyama) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 42, human rights certificate

Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980:

- [575](#) Building Units and Group Titles Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 43
- [576](#) Building Units and Group Titles Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 43, explanatory notes
- [577](#) Building Units and Group Titles Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 43, human rights certificate

Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Act 2022:

- [578](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 44
- [579](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 44, explanatory notes

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994:

- [580](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Horticultural Netting Program—Trial Expansion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 45
- [581](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Horticultural Netting Program—Trial Expansion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 45, explanatory notes
- [582](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Horticultural Netting Program—Trial Expansion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 45, human rights certificate

COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020, Retail Shop Leases Act 1994, Small Business Commissioner Act 2022:

- [583](#) Small Business Commissioner Regulation 2022, No. 46
- [584](#) Small Business Commissioner Regulation 2022, No. 46, explanatory notes
- [585](#) Small Business Commissioner Regulation 2022, No. 46, human rights certificate

Acquisition of Land Act 1967, Fossicking Act 1994, Geothermal Energy Act 2010, Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009, Land Act 1994, Land Valuation Act 2010, Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014, Mineral Resources Act 1989, Petroleum Act 1923, Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, Stock Route Management Act 2002, Surveyors Act 2003, Valuers Registration Act 1992, Vegetation Management Act 1999:

- [586](#) Resources Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 47
- [587](#) Resources Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 47, explanatory notes
- [588](#) Resources Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 47, human rights certificate

Legal Profession Act 2007:

- [589](#) Legal Profession (Society Rules) Amendment Notice 2022, No. 48
- [590](#) Legal Profession (Society Rules) Amendment Notice 2022, No. 48, explanatory notes
- [591](#) Legal Profession (Society Rules) Amendment Notice 2022, No. 48, human rights certificate

Oaths Act 1867, Supreme Court of Queensland Act 1991:

- [592](#) Uniform Civil Procedure (Affidavits and Statutory Declarations) Amendment Rule 2022, No. 49
- [593](#) Uniform Civil Procedure (Affidavits and Statutory Declarations) Amendment Rule 2022, No. 49, explanatory notes
- [594](#) Uniform Civil Procedure (Affidavits and Statutory Declarations) Amendment Rule 2022, No. 49, human rights certificate

Penalties and Sentences Act 1992:

- [595](#) Penalties and Sentences (Penalty Unit Value) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 51
- [596](#) Penalties and Sentences (Penalty Unit Value) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 51, explanatory notes
- [597](#) Penalties and Sentences (Penalty Unit Value) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 51, human rights certificate

Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966, Animal Care and Protection Act 2001, Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008, Biosecurity Act 2014, Brands Act 1915, Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988, Drugs Misuse Act 1986, Fisheries Act 1994, Food Production (Safety) Act 2000, Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936:

- [598](#) Agriculture and Fisheries Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 52
- [599](#) Agriculture and Fisheries Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 52, explanatory notes
- [600](#) Agriculture and Fisheries Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 52, human rights certificate

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Weather Events



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.37 am): Only two months after intense rainfall wrought havoc across South-East Queensland, again I rise to warn Queenslanders to prepare for damaging weather this week. Already we have seen how dangerous this event can be. I can confirm that a man was rescued from floodwaters in Mount Isa late last night after he was spotted in the river. I offer my heartfelt thanks to the police officers and swiftwater rescue firefighters who risked their lives to save that man. I understand he is being treated for hypothermia in hospital and I wish him a speedy recovery.


In the 21 hours to 6 am, we have seen heavy rainfall in some parts of the south-east, the Far North and central Queensland, including: 97 millimetres at Kirby, north-west of Winton; 79 millimetres at Coops Corner, near Rainbow Beach; and 59 millimetres at Daintree Village. Since 3 pm yesterday, the SES has received 39 requests for assistance. The Bureau of Meteorology has warned us to expect significant rain across much of Queensland this week. We are likely to see showers and thunderstorms transition to widespread rainfall over the next few days. The bureau has advised that some locations may receive their highest May rainfall on record this week.

Forecasts show that almost all of Queensland will be impacted by rain throughout the week, with heaviest falls likely across the central and northern interior today before spreading towards coastal areas from Wednesday. Localised flash flooding is an increased risk this week, particularly in creeks, streams or falls that are already saturated. There is the potential for bands of intense rainfall over the next few days, particularly around coastal areas between Ingham and Yeppoon on Wednesday. I am advised that this could lead to dangerous and life-threatening flash flooding.

Flood watches are current for numerous catchments across northern, central and western Queensland. The south-east and remaining central Queensland catchments will be assessed today. Current warnings in place are: a major flood warning for the Cooper Creek; a moderate flood warning for Eyre Creek; minor flood warnings for the Thomson, Barcoo and Georgina rivers; and a flood warning for the Diamantina River.

We know that these events can develop quickly. I can assure Queenslanders that our emergency services are prepared and our councils are prepared. The SES is already mobilising volunteers throughout the state and swiftwater rescue crews are on standby to attend to any emerging threats. But they cannot do it on their own so I urge Queenslanders today to visit the Get Ready Queensland site to ensure that they are prepared for severe weather, monitor the weather updates—there will be a lot of broadcasts, which the bureau has already started putting out and I urge Queenslanders to listen to them—and, most importantly, if it's flooded, forget it.

2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.39 am): Last week, senior members of the International Olympic Committee toured venues across the south-east for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. It is fair to say that they were blown away. Despite there being more than 10 years until the games, more than 80 per cent of our venues are already built and already in use in our communities. For example, committee members were able to visit the Gold Coast Sports and Leisure Centre, where local schools filled basketball courts. In the same complex our very own Logan Martin was able to demonstrate why he is the world's first gold medallist for freestyle BMX, and nine-year-old Koby Clayton was able to show why we stand a good chance to repeat Logan's success in 2032.

Giving Queensland families the opportunity to watch their children compete in an Olympic and Paralympic Games on home soil will be one of our proudest achievements. We start making that dream come true as of now. Starting Friday in Toowoomba, we begin the biggest talent search this country has ever seen. Today's Queensland children are tomorrow's Olympians, and the Youfor2032 program gets them on their way. We aim to test 20,000 young Queenslanders and find and train our Olympic and Paralympic hopefuls for tomorrow.

Last week, the sports minister opened a new \$2.7 million National Throws Centre of Excellence for sports like discus and javelin. We have doubled funding to the Queensland Academy of Sport. We have located a site for the International Broadcast Centre, which will be built where the Visy Glass Factory is at South Brisbane. Last month we announced an historic deal between our government and Visy to purchase the site for the games and, in return, Visy will invest \$700 million in Queensland—the largest investment the company has ever made in this state. This deal secures 550 ongoing jobs at three locations for the next decade, including: building a new \$500 million glass factory at Staplyton; building a new \$150 million cardboard box factory at Hemmant; and \$48 million to upgrades at the material recovery facility at Gibson Island. These projects in total will also create 900 construction jobs.

The Organising Committee for the Olympic Games under the presidency of Andrew Liveris has met and has begun the countdown to 2032. We are well on our way. As IOC President Thomas Bach said, the only sad thing in our Olympics is that we have to wait 10 years to see them. We cannot wait for 2032!

Domestic and Family Violence, Reforms

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.42 am): Last year, thousands of women marched through our streets—here and around the country—demanding to be heard. The March 4 Justice had many goals but none more emphatic than that we listen to women, particularly in terms of their experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, because it is women and children who suffer most from these crimes. I am proud to say that our government is listening.

Today I can announce historic and wide-reaching reforms to help address this issue. Our government will make coercive control a crime. Coercive control is telling a woman what she can wear, where she can go, whom she can see and what she can spend. It is the most common factor that leads to an intimate partner murder. It was what Hannah Clarke suffered before she and her three children were so brutally killed.

The \$363 million package I announce today will provide programs to recognise and prevent it as well as the laws that will punish its perpetrators. This was the key recommendation of Justice McMurdo's Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce. Her report was titled simply and accurately *Hear her voice*. It received more than 700 submissions from women about their lived experience of domestic and family violence. As a result of those submissions, we will also conduct a commission of inquiry into police practices investigating reports of domestic and family violence.

Let me make this very clear: our Police Service does an exemplary job. Countless lives have been saved because of the men and women in our Police Service, but many survivors report that they did not receive an adequate response at their particular point in time. This four-month inquiry will recommend improvements. In addition, the Police Service will trial a collaborative co-response model involving police and specialist domestic and family violence services working together in a number of locations. A key focus will be recognising coercive control and a pattern of behaviours over time.

We will dedicate \$106 million to improving safety for victims attending court. We will expand specialist domestic violence courts. There will be more support for victims and a special strategy for First Nations communities. Above all, we will hear her voice.

It is fitting these reforms occur in Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month. None of these actions are our government's first to address this hideous crime. This will not be the last. Next month, we receive the second report of the task force examining the experience of women across our criminal justice system. I thank Judge McMurdo and the Attorney-General for all their hard work, diligence and dedication. I am inspired by the work of so many survivors, advocates and the families of the victims of these atrocious crimes—such strength and such grace. The vigil I attended the vigil last week was a very emotional vigil recognising the women who have lost their lives to domestic and family violence. I thank all of those people who took the time to attend, including the many families and people who support families during this time, especially support services. It was attended, too, by members of our Police Service. I thank them for that.

As well today, some families are joining us in the public gallery. Far too many have carried this burden for far too long, but I want to acknowledge especially Vanessa Fowler, who is co-chair of the government's Domestic and Family Violence Taskforce. As many would know, Vanessa is Alison Baden-Clay's sister. She is joined by her wonderful parents, Geoff and Priscilla Dickie. I would also like to acknowledge Sue and Lloyd Clarke, Hannah's parents. Their Small Steps 4 Hannah Foundation is dedicated to ensuring that no other family suffers what they have gone through. They want to HALT the cycle of domestic and family violence: 'H' for Hannah, 'A' for Aaliyah, 'L' for Laianah, 'T' for Trey. Those were the members of their family who were murdered by a man who was supposed to love them. Not one of us will solve the incidence of domestic and family violence. It is going to take all of us together.

Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, Report



Hon. SM FENTIMAN (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (9.47 am): I am so pleased to join with the Premier today to announce our government's response to the landmark first report from the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, *Hear her voice*. On 2 December last year the task force released its first report, *Report one: addressing coercive control and domestic and family violence in Queensland*. The report makes 89 recommendations for reform to our criminal justice system, including the creation of a new offence to criminalise coercive control. The task force received more than 700 submissions from right across Queensland. We have listened to every single one. Now is the time to take even further action to end all forms of domestic and family violence.

Today's announcement of a \$363 million reform package is historic. It will fundamentally change the system to be trauma informed and place victims and survivors at the forefront. The package is not just about new laws; it is about expanding specialist DV courts, increasing funding for perpetrator programs, increasing respectful relationships education for all young people in Queensland, expanding our high-risk teams and funding co-responder models to ensure that victims receive a joint response from police and domestic violence services.

We know that non-physical violence is just as dangerous as physical violence and that coercive control is the biggest predicting factor for intimate partner homicide. Queensland women and children deserve to live free from the threat of violence and without fear for their safety. We are committed to doing everything we possibly can to eliminate domestic and family violence in our state and ensure the tragic deaths of so many women have not been in vain.

I acknowledge all of the hardworking frontline service workers and advocates who have joined us here today as well as Hannah Clarke's parents, Sue and Lloyd; Allison Baden-Clay's family, Vanessa, Geoff and Priscilla; Kelly Wilkinson's family, Danielle Carrol; and also the families of Doreen Langham and Mary Benedito. Thank you for your incredible advocacy and incredible strength; your work is making a real difference.


The Palaszczuk government welcomes the task force's report and is supporting the recommendations. These strong recommendations collectively provide a road map to the introduction of legislation to criminalise coercive control. In our government response, which I now table, we agree with the recommendation of the task force to implement their recommendations in a four-phase approach to ensure that we are both reforming the criminal justice system and educating the community and training first responders.

Tabled paper: Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce report titled 'Hear her voice—Report 1 Addressing coercive control and domestic and family violence in Queensland, government response' [\[602\]](#).

Laws will be amended, including modernising the offence of stalking. As well, we will change the system's current outdated approach of responding to a single—usually physical—incident of domestic violence, given what we know about the dangers of non-physical violence, and respond to patterns of controlling behaviour that happen over time. We said from the beginning that we are committed to legislating against this insidious form of abuse and we want to make sure we get it right.

We especially want to acknowledge the survivors in Queensland who shared their experiences with the task force. We know that sharing your stories was not an easy decision to make, but we are very grateful for your contribution—it does make a difference. Thank you again to the Hon. Margaret McMurdo AC and all of the task force members for the critical work they do. I look forward to continuing our work as we strive to eliminate domestic and family violence here in Queensland.

Visy

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure) (9.51 am): At the outset, I acknowledge the work of the Premier and the Attorney-General on the government's response to the report of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce. It is indeed important. I acknowledge those who join us in the gallery.

The Palaszczuk government is proud to partner with Visy, both on securing the land for the International Broadcast Centre for Brisbane 2032 and on a new recycling boon for Queensland—with Visy investing \$700 million on expanding its recycling and remanufacturing operations across Queensland. Thanks to a \$16 million investment from the Palaszczuk government, Visy will invest in major upgrades to the material recovery facility on Gibson Island. Upgrading the facility will not only create local jobs but also increase recycling capacity to significantly reduce landfill.

The works include a new state-of-the-art paper optical sorting plant that will be able to turn mixed paper, picked up in kerbside collections, into 100 per cent recycled paper, reducing landfill waste. Visy expects that this upgrade will see close to an additional 30,000 tonnes of material diverted from landfill each year. The upgrades to the Gibson Island facility will also create 11 jobs. Visy's investment also includes a new \$500 million glass food and beverage container recycling and manufacturing facility in Yatala and a new \$150 million corrugated box factory at Hemmant.

Now that we have secured the site for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games International Broadcast Centre we can support Visy to expand their operations around the state. Visy have pledged to invest \$2 billion in Australian recycling and clean energy infrastructure over the next decade, creating thousands of new green collar, well-paying Australian manufacturing jobs. We want as many of them as possible to be in Queensland. Importantly, the IBC deal also protects the more than 200 manufacturing jobs associated with the glass factory, with the new glass manufacturing facility at Stapylton replacing the current facility at West End. The nine-hectare IBC site offers wonderful legacy potential for after 2032. This deal, and Visy's massive investment in Queensland jobs and Queensland's future, is testament to business confidence in the direction this government is leading the state in.

Job Creation



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.54 am): At the outset, I associate myself with the comments of the Premier and the Attorney-General in relation to the government's response to the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce report—an important investment by our government; the sort of investment our government can make because of the strength of the Queensland economy and everything we have been able to do to recover from COVID-19. I am proud to be part of a government that is attacking the scourge of domestic and family violence wherever it appears, including in the City of Logan.

Each week we see more evidence of the strength of Queensland's nation-leading economic recovery from COVID-19. Labour force figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the month of March show that Queensland added 8,000 jobs in that month. That is more than any other state or territory. Those 8,000 jobs take the total number of Queensland jobs created across the two years of the pandemic to 160,700. That is also more than any other state or territory, and it is more than New South Wales and Victoria combined.

Time and time again, we see Queensland punching above its weight. Queensland business conditions and confidence—as measured by the NAB business survey—have rebounded from their pandemic depths two years ago. In the March quarter 2022, the National Australia Bank found Queensland business confidence was the second highest in the nation. It also found that Queensland business conditions led the national average.

Queensland has achieved these results because of the hard work and dedication of Queensland businesses and Queenslanders themselves. They did what had to be done to get us through the pandemic and now we are reaping the rewards of the rebound. We have done that despite the toxic twosome we have been relentlessly served up by Scott Morrison across those two years. Scott Morrison has comprehensively failed to deliver Queensland our fair share of funding for vital infrastructure and services such as health. At the same time, Scott Morrison has taken every available opportunity to take cheap shots and denigrate our health response and our strong borders.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DICK: The LNP may laugh, but almost every week during the pandemic we faced criticism and condemnation from Scott Morrison and the federal coalition because of our strong health response. It is precisely because of our strong health response that we now lead the nation when it comes to economic recovery. Queensland's economic strength has been achieved despite Scott Morrison and the LNP, not because of them. Imagine what we would be able to do as a state, what we would be able to achieve with a supportive, consultative, constructive Albanese Labor government in Canberra, working with Queensland and not against us.

Mr Nicholls: When did you join the Left faction?

Mr Dick: And I'm the Treasurer and you're not. How did that work for you?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Clayfield, you are warned under the standing orders. Treasurer, you are warned under the standing orders. Let me remind ministers that ministerial statements should not be party political. They should also be very much about matters of public interest. I reiterate that for the benefit of all ministers.

NAPLAN



Hon. G GRACE (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.57 am): I join the Premier and the Attorney-General in welcoming the report and actions to stem domestic and family violence in this state.


Today marks the start of the NAPLAN testing period for 2022. Over the next two weeks, up to 300,000 students in almost 1,800 schools across the state will sit the annual national literacy and numeracy tests for years 3, 5, 7 and 9. I take this opportunity to wish all the participating students the best of luck—especially our year 3 students doing NAPLAN for the first time. I know it might be easier said than done, but I encourage students to relax, keep calm and simply do their best.

It has not been an easy time for our students, but our NAPLAN results last year held up very well despite everything COVID has thrown at us. Schools and students have shown time and time again how resilient they are. That said, compared with other parts of the world and indeed Australia, Queensland students have spent a very small amount of time away from school and face-to-face learning thanks to the Palaszczuk government's strong health response.

I always make the point that NAPLAN is not the be-all and end-all, but it does provide a useful point-in-time check for teachers and schools to identify how their students are tracking so they can put in place any additional targeted support that might be needed. This is what our dedicated teachers do day in, day out right across Queensland. Whether it is using NAPLAN results or their day-to-day classroom teaching, our teachers are focused on doing whatever is needed to help students reach their full potential. We want to ensure teachers have all the support they need to do this. Whether it is our commitment to employ over 6,000 new teachers in this term of government—with nearly 1,500 already employed—our Turn to Teaching internship program or our centres for learning and wellbeing, the Palaszczuk government will continue to value the role of our hardworking teachers.

I therefore welcome this week's campaign announcement from federal Labor that they will invest nearly \$150 million to boost teacher numbers. Their plan supports what we are doing here in Queensland, including practical measures such as bursaries of up to \$12,000 to encourage high-achieving year 12 students choose a teaching degree and 1,500 extra places for qualified professionals in other fields to take up teaching, which is similar to our Turn to Teaching program. The plan shows that federal Labor, like the Palaszczuk government, not only understands but truly values the vital role that teachers play right across our state.

Ambulance Service; Flu Season


 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (10.00 am): The Palaszczuk government backs our frontline health staff. In the past five months we have recorded the four busiest days ever in the history of the Queensland Ambulance Service. Since the Omicron variant of COVID-19 first emerged here in Queensland our Ambulance Service has answered more calls, visited more homes and treated more patients than ever before. In the face of huge demand pressures, our paramedics and hardworking Queensland ambulance staff have stepped up to support Queenslanders in their time of need.

That is why I am pleased to advise the House that we are welcoming an additional 120 paramedics to the Queensland Ambulance Service family this month. Right now 60 paramedics are undertaking their induction training ahead of hitting the ground across all corners of the state. Another 60 paramedics will start their induction later this month. The Palaszczuk government is proud of our strong track record in backing our frontline staff. It is why we will deliver 535 additional officers this term of government, helping to deal with record demand. I am so happy to welcome our new and enthusiastic ambulance officers, who have stepped up to join the front line at a time when they are needed most. I want to thank every single one of our hardworking ambulance officers and operations centre staff who work tirelessly to ensure Queenslanders are cared for every day.

Importantly, I want to remind all Queenslanders that this year—of all years—is the year to not be complacent about the flu and getting your flu jab. The influenza wave is accelerating rapidly. More than 1,000 influenza cases were reported in Queensland last week—more than double the previous week. This is the highest number of flu cases seen in early May in recent years. There have also been 63 cases of influenza and COVID identified to date. This all reinforces the need for as many Queenslanders as possible to get the flu vaccine and the COVID vaccine if you have not had it yet. Queenslanders can get the flu and COVID vaccines at the same time. Vaccines are widely available through local pharmacies, GP clinics and some workplaces and are free to vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, the elderly and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

COVID vaccination rates for our 16-year-olds plus are now at 93.73 per cent first dose and 92.18 per cent second dose; however, boosters are at 62.7 per cent and our five- to 11-year-olds are at 43.65 per cent. I say to Queenslanders: please come forward and get vaccinated for the flu to protect yourself and your loved ones and to protect themselves and their families from serious illness by getting their vaccination for COVID as well. We know that getting COVID and influenza at the same time increases the risk of serious illness. I ask all Queenslanders not to take the risk and to get updated with their vaccinations.

Forensic and Scientific Services, Review

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (10.04 am): During the last setting week I announced a review of Forensic and Scientific Services and I now update the House on this matter. I can advise the House that the terms of reference for this review have been finalised and I now table them. I know they are eagerly anticipated by those opposite.

Tabled paper: Terms of reference titled 'Summary of FSS Systems and Processes Review' [\[614\]](#).

The terms of reference have been prepared in consultation with the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Corruption Commission. The highly specialised set of skills required for this review means there is a limited national pool of potential reviewers. We are going through the process of appointing a reviewer, including undertaking normal due diligence. I will continue to update the House on this review as it is progressed.

Police Resources; Weather Events



Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.05 am): Last week 68 new recruits were sworn into the Queensland Police Service, becoming our newest constables. These officers are already boots on the ground as first year constables undertaking station-based training and ensuring the safety of Queenslanders across our state. They are but one facet of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to enhancing the resourcing and operations of the Queensland Police Service to deliver frontline and specialist services.

The largest ever boost to the Queensland Police Service is about enhancing the capability of police to not only respond to and investigate crime but also disrupt and prevent criminal offending and protect people from crime. We are investing in more than 2,000 extra police personnel—the biggest investment of its kind in more than three decades—and we are providing police with the very latest equipment to ensure they are fully resourced to serve and protect the community.

A crucial aspect of our commitment to a safer Queensland is increasing the number of body worn cameras to 12,200 so that every frontline officer is equipped with this vital piece of technology. This technology will support new ways of gathering evidence, including the proposed trial of enabling statements to be obtained from victims of domestic and family violence electronically rather than typewritten statement. The proposed trial of body worn cameras in this way is just another means by which this government is confronting the scourge of domestic and family violence.

I have met many police officers across Queensland. Every one of them has impressed me with their dedication to protecting their community. Police want the best systems and processes to ensure every member of the community is provided with the best possible protection. I know that police will cooperate fully with any form of inquiry because police want what everyone wants; that is, the best outcomes for community safety and the best outcomes for Queenslanders.

The Palaszczuk government is unswerving in its duty to ensure Queenslanders can live and work safely in our great state. That is why we are making historic investments in police personnel numbers, in police resources, in police facilities and police equipment. Modern policing is front and centre of this government's commitment to a world-class police service dedicated to the safety of Queenslanders. Our investment in police personnel is also delivering good, secure permanent jobs for Queenslanders who want to serve their community.

Regarding the forecast by the Bureau of Meteorology of severe weather with intense rainfall and potential flash flooding in many parts of Queensland, I take this opportunity to remind all Queenslanders to stay informed and up to date with the latest weather advice and to always act cautiously and responsibly during weather events. These actions can be lifesaving actions. If it is flooded, forget it.

Animal Welfare, Reforms



Hon. ML FURNER (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.08 am): Firstly, as a proud and active White Ribbon ambassador I commend my ministerial colleagues for addressing the scourge of domestic and family violence, particularly with respect to coercive control.

This week we will introduce the biggest reforms to animal welfare in this state in more than 20 years. Queensland already has some of the strongest animal welfare laws in the country, but we know that the world has changed. Our attitudes to, and expectations of, animal welfare have changed also.

When we were re-elected in 2020, the Palaszczuk government promised to review the act and we are delivering on our promise. Last year we released a discussion paper asking the public what they thought about animal welfare and how we could amend the act to best serve Queensland and improve animal welfare in our state. Consultation covered a number of areas of animal welfare, including restraining dogs, the scientific use of animals, compliance and enforcement, inspector powers, and penalties and offences to name but a few.

We had a tremendous response. We received over 2,300 responses. Some of the changes to the act will include the banning of pronged collars and the firing of horses' and dogs' legs because these practices are inhumane and are no longer acceptable. The reforms will strengthen some of the powers used by inspectors. For example, an inspector will be allowed to enter a property to provide relief to an animal that is affected by weather events or if they feel that an animal is in danger from another aggressive animal. The Palaszczuk government will deliver on another election commitment, allowing the pregnancy testing of cattle by accredited laypersons. This is something I know graziers will welcome.

Queenslanders love their animals. They are valued members of many families, and I would like to thank the thousands of people across the state who took the time to tell us how they felt about animal welfare and what needed to be improved to ensure the care and protection of animals in Queensland. I would like to thank my department and the teams that have worked on the discussion paper and the amendments to ensure they best reflect our modern Queensland. Whether it is your working dog or horse in Chinchilla or your cavoodle in Cairns or Brisbane, all Queensland animals need to have the care and protection they deserve and legislation that reflects a modern Queensland. I look forward to the introduction of the amendments into the House this week and delivering on our promises.

Small Business



Hon. DE FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.11 am): I too acknowledge the tremendous work of the Premier and Attorney-General in making the significant domestic violence announcement today. I acknowledge the hard work of service providers and police from across the state and the strength and bravery of domestic and family violence victims.

As we celebrate Queensland Small Business Month during May, we acknowledge the almost half a million Queensland small businesses that make such a vital contribution to our state's economy and our communities. I am so pleased to be able to update the House today on a number of the key initiatives to support small businesses that we have announced already in this important month.

Tonight we mark the 20th anniversary of our hallmark Mentoring for Growth program, which over the last six years has facilitated more than 3,000 sessions to support small businesses. In the last financial year alone, the majority of mentees report a projected increase in employment, turnover or profitability following their session—a wonderful result in challenging times.

We know the last two years have been exceptionally difficult for small business which is why this month we announced the \$6.75 million small business health and wellness package. This package will provide: access to psychological support and financial counselling, a \$3 million Small Business Support Services Fund, an extension of the Smile4Biz program started by the mighty Kingaroy Chamber of Commerce, and a promotional campaign to make sure small businesses across the state are aware of the wellness support that currently is and will be available.

In another initiative, the new Queensland Small Business Advisory Council met for the first time last week—representing a balance of businesses from regional Queensland, from women, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, of young people, from culturally and linguistically diverse businesses and of social enterprises. This well-informed, energetic Small Business Advisory Council will be a voice to government from small business, and I so look forward to working with members.

Last week, the Queensland Small Business Commissioner officially became a permanent position. Queensland small businesses know it, but it was also clear from the contribution of members from all sides of this House during the debate on the bill that the commissioner and her office is highly valued. Last week also, I co-signed with Deputy Mayor Krista Adams the Small Business Friendly Council Charter with the Brisbane City Council, making BCC the 33rd council to sign up. Through this commitment of councils across the state—and there are more to come—a real difference is being made to the everyday operations of small businesses.

The state government continues to support small businesses through our grants programs. Last week, I announced that eight organisations will share in almost \$1 million to ensure the development of Queensland's emerging social enterprise sector. The third round of our Business Basics grants is back on track and will reopen next week, with the SmartyGrants system up and running after a 90-minute outage last Wednesday that affected all users across Australia and internationally. The external provider of the SmartyGrants system, Our Community, has given my department an assurance that the grants program can safely proceed. Our Community's CEO, Denis Moriarty, issued a statement apologising for the stress this issue caused, and I would like to thank small businesses across Queensland for their patience while the issues were resolved.

This month, Queenslanders are encouraged to wear their hearts on their sleeves when it comes to supporting their local small businesses. I am loving seeing MPs show their appreciation by posting videos, photos and heart-shaped hands on social media with the hashtags #loveyoursmallbusiness, #buylocal or #shoplocal whenever they shop local or buy Queensland made this month. Finally, I give a huge thank you to small businesses across the state for their resilience, for their hard work, for their love for what they do and for being the heart of our local communities.

ABSENCE OF MINISTERS



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.15 am): I advise that the Minister for Resources will be absent from the House this sitting week due to COVID-19. The Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment will take any questions relating to matters within the portfolio of the Minister for Resources in question time during this week's sitting.

I also advise that the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts will be absent from the House today. The Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure will answer questions relating to matters within the portfolios of the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts during question time today.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

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

Ambulance Ramping

Mr CRISAFULLI (10.16 am): My question is to the Premier. Tomorrow marks one year to the day since the Premier announced \$100 million to fix ambulance ramping. Since then, wait times have blown out further and Queensland now has the worst ramping in the country. How can Queenslanders trust this government to fix the health crisis?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. Some of the member's question in fact contains a lot of imputations, but let me say this very clearly: Queenslanders can trust our government in delivering health. They cannot trust the LNP and they do not trust the LNP. Let us see how it goes in a couple of weeks. Let us see how the federal election goes because I know that—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you for the interjection. Yes, I do hope that Anthony Albanese becomes the new Prime Minister—I absolutely do hope that—because he might listen. Not only that, he might put on the National Cabinet agenda fifty-fifty health funding—unlike your mate down in Canberra.

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: He puts his head in the sand. He is very slow to act. The Prime Minister is always slow to act. When it came to the vaccines, he was slow to act. When it came to the RATs, he was slow to act. When it came to quarantine, he was slow to act.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Toowoomba South will cease his interjections. The member for Everton will cease his interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am glad the member talks about health because during our recess the health minister and I were in the electorate of Nanango in Kingaroy opening a brand new hospital. That is right—the member was very happy on the day. She was there, smiling, 'Look at our new hospital'—delivered by the Palaszczuk Labor government.

Ms Grace: And what a hospital.

Ms PALASZCZUK: What a hospital—that is right. There is another one in Roma as well. You don't mind that one either, do you. They do not mind the new hospitals being built, and there are going to be a lot more. There are going to be seven new satellite hospitals as well.

They want to talk about staff? We are adding the staff as well to make sure that Queenslanders get the best care. The record of the LNP—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am more than happy to talk about—

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: The LNP was cutting and slashing services. There is the architect, the member for Clayfield. That is right, the member for Broadwater—sorry, he was the member for Townsville or something back then—the member for Mundingburra. They all sat around the cabinet table, making decisions to slash hospitals, slash—

(Time expired)

Ambulance Ramping

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Minister for Health. Tomorrow marks one year to the day since the government announced \$100 million to fix ambulance ramping. Since then, more than one in two patients are still ramped at the Royal, at Logan, at QEII, at Redlands and at Ipswich hospitals. How can patients trust this government to fix the Queensland health crisis?

Mrs D'ATH: Such is their strategy they just asked me the same question as they asked the Premier, but I am happy to repeat what the Premier said. We could make this very short and say, 'Ditto.' I am happy to talk about the investment that Labor governments make in the health system. It is Labor that invested in our frontline staff, it is Labor that builds hospitals, and it is Labor that enhances our services.

The Leader of the Opposition would like to believe that if it were not for him, no-one would know there was pressure on the health system, except health ministers have been working on this for over 12 months across the country. It does not take a town hall meeting to understand the pressures on the health system that have been building over many years. It did not help that a number of years ago under the current federal LNP government they stopped their investment at 45 per cent. They walked away from the agreement that said that health funding in this country was supposed to be fifty-fifty. Then, not only did they stop at 45 per cent, they brought in a cap of 6.5 per cent. Then they ignored the Productivity Commission's recommendation around aged care. That is the Liberal National Party's record on health. Then we all know, and Queenslanders will forever remember, what they did when they were in government to the frontline workers and the nurses they said had to lose their jobs. 'It was difficult, but it needed to be done'—

Mr Powell interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH:—all in the need of cost-cutting and efficiencies. They thought it was okay to cut frontline health workers. It is the Palaszczuk and Labor governments that invest in health. It is federal Labor that introduced Medicare, it is federal Labor that introduced the NDIS and it is Labor that will continue to invest in the health system in this country.

Health ministers of all political persuasions across this country will continue to work together to find solutions to make our free universal health system in this country sustainable in the long term. We need a Commonwealth government that will step up and work with us on this, to acknowledge that not only is there pressure and issues that they have sole responsibility for but also that it is their responsibility and obligation to work with us, to find better outcomes for the future.

Floods, Recovery

Mr RUSSO: My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier update the House on the rollout of support for Queenslanders impacted by the floods in South-East Queensland earlier this year?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Toohey for that question. The member for Toohey knows firsthand about the impact of floods in his local electorate. His local school was impacted. The Minister for Education and I had the opportunity to visit that school with him. Homes around Rocklea were impacted as well. That is why our government called for a fifty-fifty share in relation to helping these people get back up on their feet. This package was \$771 million.

From memory, it was over 14 days that we were calling for assistance from the federal government to match our 50 per cent injection. This money would be used to either enable people to relocate to alternative areas on higher ground or to rebuild their homes higher. There was no response from the federal government. They were absolutely slow to act. This is a pattern of the Prime Minister of this country—always slow to act.

This package is about getting Queenslanders back on their feet. There were grants up to \$50,000 to rebuild 5,500 homes, grants up to \$100,000 to raise up to 1,000 homes and an increase in structural assistance grants from \$15,000 to \$50,000.

Today I am pleased to announce that our disaster assistance support is also getting out to Queenslanders who need it most. 105,165 grant applications for emergency assistance funding have been received, 46,000 payments have been made and 95,000 Queenslanders have benefitted. I want to thank the Deputy Premier and his agency for the great work they are doing.

We know the Prime Minister likes to treat New South Wales and Queensland differently. If you are living in New South Wales and were severely flood-impacted, you received \$3,000. If you are in Queensland and you were severely flood-impacted, you received \$1,000. Once again, absolute discretion on the part of the Prime Minister. Disgraceful!

After our calls for the funding, finally the Prime Minister came to the party with the 50 per cent. Once again, he was very slow to act. What we need is a prime minister who will stand up, who will work with the states and who will deliver what is needed, especially when people are going through the worst of the worst. Sadly, we do not have that in the Morrison government.

Ambulance Ramping

Ms BATES: My question is to the Minister for Health. Since the government announced \$100 million to fix ambulance ramping, ramping at Mackay and Bundaberg hospitals have climbed to the worst levels on record. At Hervey Bay Hospital, nearly one in two ED patients are not seen on time; again, the worst on record. How can regional Queenslanders trust this government to fix the health crisis?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for her question. The Premier has just addressed this question and I have just addressed this question, but I am happy to continue to talk about the investment of the Palaszczuk government in our health system and especially in the regions.

As the Premier said, we built and opened the Kingaroy Hospital—a fantastic facility for the community. It was this government which built the Blackall Hospital. It is this government that continues to invest in the Roma Hospital. We continue to invest in infrastructure in our regions. We understand that no matter where you live in Queensland, you should have state-of-the-art health facilities. Our investment is not just in South-East Queensland. We know that there are pressures all over Queensland. We know there are pressures all over Australia. In fact, today there are reports around ramping in Western Australia, and they are also quoting the ramping times of patient—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will direct his comments through the chair.

Mr Mickelberg: You can't even release data daily.

Mrs D'ATH: I will take that interjection. My apologies.

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

Mrs D'ATH: Queenslanders want the truth. They want facts. They are certainly not getting that from the Leader of the Opposition. I suspect that not once in his town hall meetings has the Leader of the Opposition ever talked about the fact that private health insurance is going up, that fewer people are taking up private health insurance, that when they do have private health insurance they cannot access it in their own communities because those services have left, that they cannot get in to see their GPs because they are not affordable or accessible, that there are people who should be in aged care or disability taking up beds in our hospitals right now including in the regions—

Ms Bates interjected.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mrs D'ATH:—because those on the other side—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mudgeeraba, you have asked the question. I would like to hear the answer. The Minister for Education, will cease her interjections.

Mrs D'ATH: Those on the other side want to pretend that there are no pressures and there are no issues that cause these pressures. They just want to turn it into a political weapon to target the government. They refuse to accept the pressures being placed on the health system, where those pressures are coming from and that this is a national problem. In fact, it is a global problem when it comes to the health workforce. It is about time the opposition starts being honest with the people of Queensland and acknowledges the pressures on the health system.

(Time expired)

Satellite Hospitals

Ms RICHARDS: My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier update the House on how the Palaszczuk government's Satellite Hospitals Program is progressing and outline other investments in health that are helping to ease the pressure on our health system?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Redlands for the question.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr Brown interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I am sorry, Premier, for the interruption. Member for Mudgeeraba, you are warned under the standing orders. Member for Capalaba, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Construction is now well underway on our \$265 million Australia-first Satellite Hospitals Program. I was very pleased to see the health minister out there turning sods with the member for Redlands for the new satellite hospital that will service her community. A couple of days later the Minister for Health and the police minister and member for Morayfield as well as the member for Pumicestone turned the sod at the Caboolture site. Once again, we are getting on with the job of getting these satellite hospitals built. I am advised that next week sods will be turned at Tugun and Ripley and I am sure the remaining sites will not be far off, either. I say to those opposite that we are getting on with the job of delivering satellite hospitals.

Mr Watts: How many overnight beds have we got?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let me remind those opposite: it was our government that restored your savage cuts.

Ms Simpson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, you will direct your comments through the chair. The member for Maroochydore will cease her interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We are continuing to expand our hospitals and increase the number of paramedics as well. On this side of the House we know how important health is as opposed to a Prime Minister of this country who refuses to even put the issue of health funding on the National Cabinet agenda. He refuses to put it on the National Cabinet agenda. I understand from reports that the Prime Minister might be holding his campaign launch here on Sunday. I look forward to seeing the Leader of the Opposition introduce the Prime Minister because he is such a popular figure in the community! We will see how that goes—

A government member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—or perhaps the member for Kawana might be there as well. Let's wait and see.

Ms Grace: There won't be any Nationals.

Ms PALASZCZUK: There might be a dancing act to start. We have delivered 1,297 new beds since 2015 and we are investing \$3.7 billion to deliver more than 1,000 beds over the coming years. This includes significant projects such as the Logan Hospital expansion, Caboolture Hospital redevelopment, Nambour General Hospital redevelopment, the Ipswich Hospital expansion and the Gold Coast secure mental health unit and, as I said, Kingaroy Hospital, Roma Hospital, Blackall Hospital, and there are a lot more to come.

(Time expired)

Ambulance Ramping

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the health minister. The government claims issues causing ambulance ramping are not unique to Queensland. What is unique to Queensland is the third-term Palaszczuk Labor government. Given this—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my right, there will be no interjections while questions are being asked. I ask that the question be heard in silence.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

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

Dr Miles interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, you are warned under the standing orders. The House has been called to order. We will have order in the House. The question will be heard in silence. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will start his question again.

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the health minister. The government claims issues causing ambulance ramping are not unique to Queensland. What is unique to Queensland is the third-term Palaszczuk Labor government. Given this, can the minister explain why Queensland has the worst ambulance ramping in the nation?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I certainly dispute the claims around the record of the health system in Queensland. I know what is unique, and that is an LNP government with the largest majority ever held in this state losing after one term. That is unique.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Please resume your seat, Minister. Leader of the Opposition, I have given you a good go today, but you continue to interject. When a minister is answering the question as asked, I want to hear the answer. She was being responsive.

Mrs D'ATH: Certainly that is something that will go down in history: the uniqueness of the Newman government being able to lose in such a huge way after one term with such a historically large number of members. The Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition were front and centre. They were part of that cabinet and ministry who not just allowed it to happen, but supported every one of those decisions. The people of Queensland will continue to remember that. That is why it is important to reflect on that when we look at the third-term Palaszczuk government and what we have achieved since coming back in 2015 and we compare that to what an LNP government delivered for health care in the state of Queensland. We will proudly stand by our record any day in terms of our investment. The thought of what an LNP government would have done during COVID and during unprecedented demand and pressures on the health system is horrifying. I doubt that they would be sitting around with other health ministers calling on the Commonwealth to work with us to—

Mr Mander: It wouldn't happen. We wouldn't have had a problem.

Mrs D'ATH: I will take that interjection. The member for Everton says, 'We wouldn't have had a problem.' I suppose when you have no frontline workers and you stop reporting data, suddenly problems go away. We know how they deal with problems: they just stop reporting statistics.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Buderim.

Mrs D'ATH: They very conveniently stop reporting statistics, releasing data and having transparency around the health system when they are in government.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: In the last 12 months more services have been delivered for patients in Queensland than ever before. We had 640,000 ED presentations in the final quarter of 2021, a nine per cent increase on the same time last year. However, we continue to deliver services to this state with amazing frontline health workers. They are fed up with the way the opposition are running around this state constantly criticising and ignoring the fact that COVID still exists. They do not mention the word 'COVID' anymore. It is over as far as they are concerned.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Everton and member for Kawana, you are both warned under the standing orders. I was not going to interrupt the minister, as you were intending to do.

Job Creation

Ms BUSH: My question is of the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure. Can the Deputy Premier outline to the House what the Palaszczuk government is doing to create more jobs in the industries of the future in Queensland, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Cooper for her question. I know that she shares the Palaszczuk government's vision to make sure that Queensland gets more than our fair share of the clean energy jobs of the future. Those plans are going ahead in leaps and bounds. Last week we hosted Japan's largest hydrogen producer, Iwatani. I was pleased to take them on a tour of the Gladstone port and the Aldoga region in the state development area. That region is the focus of a \$10.4 million feasibility study to build a green hydrogen plant that would, at its peak, create 5,000 jobs and provide \$4.2 billion worth of hydrogen exports, contributing an estimated \$10 billion to the state's economy. Queensland is incredibly well placed to be the energy superpower of the world, ensuring those jobs are created here in Queensland.

I was somewhat surprised but definitely pleased to see the LNP finally get on board with our plan to make Queensland a hydrogen superpower. With the election just a couple of weeks away, the Prime Minister has committed \$114 million to the Palaszczuk government's flagship hydrogen projects with Fortescue Future Industries and with Stanwell. What I thought was odd—well, not just that it happened—was that the Prime Minister flew towards Gladstone to make this more-than-\$100-million Gladstone hydrogen announcement and then kept flying a further 100 kilometres to make his Gladstone hydrogen announcement in Townsville. I wondered, 'Why wouldn't you go to Gladstone to make your single biggest renewables and hydrogen announcement? Why wouldn't you do it in Gladstone? Is there someone in Gladstone you didn't want to stand next to while talking about renewables? Could you not trust your candidate for Flynn to hold the party line for the few weeks every few years that you pretend to support renewables?' In fact, the Prime Minister has not been to Gladstone since the candidate for Flynn was preselected.

While the LNP are still hopelessly divided on whether Queensland should have our fair share of the renewable energy and hydrogen jobs of the future, the Palaszczuk government is laser focused on ensuring that our regions and our young people will have an opportunity to be part of the renewable energy revolution that will deliver thousands of jobs to Queensland's regions.

Ambulance Ramping

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to the Minister for Health. One year after announcing \$100 million to fix ambulance ramping, ramping in Queensland is the worst in the nation. Can the minister explain why more money is not fixing Queensland's health crisis?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I am happy to organise a hearing test for him in case he has not listened to the last few answers.

Mr SPEAKER: I find that that may be unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw.

Mrs D'ATH: I withdraw. As I have said in answer to the previous questions asked of me today, we continue to invest in both our frontline health workers and expanding our capital infrastructure in this state. We have more infrastructure not only already built and opened in recent years but also in the pipeline. Construction is happening right now—major upgrades of hospitals and expansions like at the Caboolture Hospital and the Logan Hospital, which I recently visited to look at the incredible work being done there. It is not easy on existing, brownfield sites, where you have hospitals running 24/7, to expand these hospitals and their capacity and work around those difficulties.

I point out for those opposite—they might not realise—that currently over 400 patients in the public system alone have COVID. That is one single virus which is taking up over 400 beds in our hospital system. This is an issue we did not have two years ago. That is 400 beds taken out of the system to deal with that, and that will be ongoing. This is something we will have to deal with well into the future, because COVID is not going to disappear. In fact, thousands of people would have been taking up hospital beds if not for the Palaszczuk government's response to COVID—if we had listened to the LNP when they said that we were overreacting and if we had opened the borders when they called for it—64 times. When the Commonwealth constantly criticised the strong response and decisions of the Palaszczuk government in dealing with COVID, we stood strong. The Premier of this state stood strong and kept people safe and, in keeping people safe, also saved businesses and ensured we did not have the incredible pressures on our health system that we otherwise would have had.

We also saved billions of dollars for the Commonwealth. In fact, they have had to spend over \$12 billion in New South Wales and Victoria alone since June 2021, since the outbreak that started in New South Wales. Because of our decisions we avoided this scenario and the Commonwealth only had to spend over \$500 million on those support packages. I think the Commonwealth owe us; they have some spare money that they can give to Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Forensic and Scientific Services, Review

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Premier. Regarding the announced review into Forensic and Scientific Services' systems, will the Premier commit to immediately release the report publicly once it is completed and received?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you. The answer is yes.

Health System

Mr HARPER: My question is of the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the Palaszczuk Labor government backs the Queensland health system, and is the Treasurer aware of any other approaches?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Thuringowa for his question. The Leader of the Opposition's complaints about the Queensland health system have as much sincerity and credibility as the electoral declaration signed by the LNP candidate for Lilley, Vivian Lobo. When it comes to the LNP and health in this state, Queenslanders remember. They remember the ruined and wrecked lives left behind by the LNP when they were in government. Some 4,000 health workers got the pink slip, including over 1,200 nurses and midwives. The Barrett centre for mental health closed without replacement and its patients were turfed out without adequate support, with catastrophic consequences. Mental health funding was cut for the first time in Queensland's history. It is the largest cut ever made by any state or territory.

That is the legacy of men such as the members for Broadwater, Kawana and Clayfield. It is a stain on their public service in this state that they will never wash out. That is what we had to deal with and that is what I had to deal with as minister for health in this state. I can tell you from my experience as minister for health that we have a world-class health system in Queensland, but it would be so much better if the work of Queensland Health workers had not been set back decades by the cut, slash and burn mentality of people like the member for Broadwater. We rebuilt the public health system with 2,450 more doctors, 7,358 more nurses and midwives, 2,025 more health professionals and 812 more paramedics.

The Leader of the Opposition wants Queenslanders to forget the abysmal record of the Newman LNP government on health. This is not past history; this is exactly what they promised at the last election. Their proposal in the election was to impose an artificial population cap on frontline services. The net effect at the end of this parliament is that there would have been 5,025 fewer health workers, including 3,270 fewer nurses and midwives. That is what the Leader of the Opposition took to the election as a member of the shadow cabinet. That is a dark stain on this state and people will not forget. From the Leader of the Opposition, I will tell you what it is: it is all spin and no spine. That is exactly what Queenslanders get from the LNP, from this Leader of the Opposition. It is entirely unbelievable.

Mr SPEAKER: Treasurer, can I ask that you withdraw the comments made in the last part of that statement?

Mr DICK: About the LNP, Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: No, about the lack of spine.

Mr DICK: Yes, but that is about the LNP. Do you want me to withdraw that?

Mr SPEAKER: Treasurer, I am not going to ask you—

Mr DICK: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Well, that is what I asked you to do immediately.

Mr DICK: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: You are under a warning. I do not wish to have you challenging the request to withdraw. It was not a question of which; I asked you to withdraw.

Mr DICK: I am very happy to withdraw unconditionally, Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you.

Workers

Mr BROWN: My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Can the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government continues to support Queensland workers and advise if there are any alternative approaches?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Capalaba for that question because we both know—all of us on this side of the House know—that the one thing that workers are not being supported by at the moment is the federal LNP government. This is especially the case when it comes to low-paid workers, and the one thing that they cannot afford is more of the same.

When we on this side of the House are asked about whether all workers deserve a minimum wage, our answer spontaneously is, 'Yes.' We do not cloud it by saying, 'Are they under a sham contract? Are they contract workers because the employer deems them to be?', which is exactly the answer they got from Scott Morrison during the debate. We in this country cannot afford to have more of the same of what workers have experienced over the last 10 years. Just look at what they have faced under the federal LNP government. In the private sector over the last 10 years real wage growth has stagnated to its worst level in recent modern history, bargaining is at an all-time low and sham contracting is going through the roof. There has also been an explosion in casual and insecure work and the results were clearly seen during COVID when workers were left to fend for themselves.

There is a housing crisis for workers living near where they work, there is a rise in the cost of living like we have never seen in recent history and a rise in interest rates is only making it harder for low-paid workers to put food on the table. I know that the member for Capalaba joins me in wishing the aged-care workers taking action today for decent wages and fair outcomes well and we are with them. There is a case before the commission. They are arguing for a better pay deal. They are arguing for a review to the value of their work, and guess who is missing at that hearing? The one that funds aged-care workers and the one that is instrumental in the crisis in aged-care workers, and that is the federal LNP Scott Morrison government. Shame on it!

It should be in there battling for those aged-care workers who work tirelessly to ensure the safety of our loved ones in those places. What is it doing instead? Sitting on its hands like it has done over the last 10 years giving low-paid workers in this country absolutely nothing. Workers cannot afford more of this and we look forward to an Albanese-led Labor government to bring about changes to the federal industrial relations system. Every worker deserves it. Every Queensland worker deserves it. When they cast their vote, I urge them to think that they cannot have more of the same. If they want to fix low wages, vote for an Albanese Labor government.

(Time expired)

Forensic and Scientific Services, Review

Ms CAMM: My question is to the Premier. When questioned on Friday about the defective processes in the forensic lab leading to failures in the judicial system, the Premier said that there has been no evidence to that point of view. Following revelations that almost 2,500 previously failed tests later detected DNA, including samples from blood, from cars and even the DNA of an alleged offender taken from their own body, what further evidence was the Premier seeking in order to fix the lab and provide confidence to victims of crime?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said, I was not in the chamber when the health minister announced the review. I was aware at the time that work was happening about seeking some outside opinion in relation to setting the terms of reference. I was out talking with some of the members of our community who have tragically lost loved ones, so my understanding is that the health minister has made that announcement. The review will start very shortly and, to the question that the member for Clayfield asked, the report will be tabled publicly.

Health System

Mr TANTARI: My question is of the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. Can the minister advise how the Palaszczuk government is investing in our health system and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question because I know he is certainly a strong advocate in his local community for health services and is in regular contact with our HHS and does not mind having a strong voice if he does not think it is meeting the mark, and I recognise that because that is what we do. That is what Labor governments do. We continue to give a voice to the community and make sure that we are investing in our frontline services, and that includes our health services. There is a record \$22.2 billion in this year's budget to further invest in our health system. Frontline staff, QAS staff—as I announced, an extra 120 this month coming online—and new capital infrastructure such as the amazing new hospital at Kingaroy that the Premier and I recently opened are just some of the examples of the Palaszczuk government's investments.

I want to do a bit of myth busting about the opposition and its town hall meetings when it says that if we adopted its four-point plan it would be fixed—everything would be fixed; all we would have to do is follow its four-point plan. I have noticed that the LNP seems to have a new strategy—that is, call and response is supposed to be to call for something and then it starts happening, not wait for the government to be doing it and then call for it afterwards, which is what the FFS review was about. Members opposite say, 'I'm calling on the health minister to initiate a review. Even though she announced it five weeks ago, I'll call for it this week because that sounds like a good plan from the Leader of the Opposition.'

The four-point plan of those opposite mentions real-time data for EDs. What they need to understand is that we are already utilising real-time data to manage emergency demand. Our patient access coordination hubs are staffed by QAS and Queensland Health officers who are able to manage patient flows in real time. We are already doing this. With regard to streamlining triaging, we have invested millions of dollars to improve our ED triage processes, including in part \$5 million from the Care for Queensland package to implement our transport initiative nurses who are able to ensure that we can get ambulances back on the road quicker. We know that our mental health co-responder model can lead to 60 per cent of mental health patients being diverted away from an emergency department.

Ms Grace: Didn't they close the Barrett centre?

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection. The alternative was closing the Barrett centre, as the LNP did. The LNP promised 300 extra paramedics if it was elected at the last election. We do not even have to go back to the Newman days. It promised 320 while we are putting on 535 paramedics in this parliamentary term. We are investing in more things—

(Time expired)

Coal Industry

Mr BERKMAN: My question is to the Premier. Last week the energy minister said that Queensland will not close a single coal-fired power station in the next 10 years while the coal industry lobby group QRC says that every single coal-fired power station in Queensland could close within 10 years. Why is the government refusing to face reality at the expense of a transition plan for coal workers?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. As I have said in this House on numerous occasions, Queensland is very blessed to have an abundance of coal, gas and renewables, and we are seeing a huge investment happening in renewables and people will see in the budget that there have been some record prices for coal recently.

We are also seeing a big issue with world energy prices due to what is happening in Ukraine. The huge investment in this state in renewables is phenomenal. People like Andrew Forrest are investing billions of dollars in this state because this government is open to working with large companies because we can see the future. That future is bright when it comes to hydrogen. Four years ago I was one of the first leaders in this country to go to Tokyo and recognise that hydrogen was going to be something bold and bright for this state. I asked my ministers to put a plan in place and now we are reaping the benefits of that forward thinking. Not only are we doing it but now other states are doing it and both the federal government and the opposition are also moving in this space.

Mr Berkman: What's that got to do with coal-fired power?

Ms Grace: It's very important!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, it is very important. We have coal-fired power stations at the moment operating in Queensland. We have large amounts of gas in this state and the LNG is being exported around the world. We now have this phenomenal investment in our state in renewables and we are embracing that with open arms. Unfortunately it is not the Greens that are doing it, it is people in government who are doing it—setting these goals and making them happen.

We can go back to when we looked at putting solar panels on people's rooftops. Bundaberg has the record at the moment for the town with the highest number of solar panels on their rooftops.

Ms GRACE: Schools.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That's right, we looked at schools as well. It was this government that announced the first EV charging stations right up and down the highway. It has not happened in New South Wales yet. I was told a story recently where someone's car ran out of charge halfway to Queensland. There are, of course, examples like Tritium which is now on the global stage—small companies going big.

Electoral Commission of Queensland

Mr SULLIVAN: My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. Can the Attorney-General update the House on how the Electoral Commission of Queensland ensures that our elections are conducted fairly and honestly and are there any alternative approaches?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. I know how passionate he is about making sure we have fair and transparent elections in his local community. I think we can all agree that it is vital that our elections are conducted fairly and transparently in accordance with the law. This is why we have bodies like the ECQ at a state level and the AEC at a federal level to ensure that we can all have faith in the electoral process and that our democracy is protected. With the federal election just around the corner, of course this work has become more important than ever. It now seems that included on the list of that very important work from our election bodies is having to crack down on a dodgy LNP candidate who has allegedly lied about his address.

According to media reports, the LNP candidate for Lilley lied on his candidacy forms to the AEC.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms FENTIMAN: According to media reports, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: It is still a word that we will not use in the parliament.

Ms FENTIMAN: He has seriously misled the electoral bodies, it would seem, Mr Speaker. Can I remind everyone in this House this is a crime punishable by 12 months imprisonment. I know the LNP are desperate, but electoral fraud is a whole new low. The candidate has now been referred to the Australian Federal Police for investigation. That is how serious this is. Reports today are that it is not just the candidate who has misled authorities about his address; he has enrolled his partner and his in-laws at the property as well. Here we have an LNP candidate deliberately misleading the AEC about himself and his family members.

Ms GRACE: It is called fraud!

Ms FENTIMAN: I take that interjection. What has the Prime Minister had to say about any of this? Have they decided to disendorse this candidate? Have they taken down his corflutes?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I know what is on 21 May.

Ms FENTIMAN: They certainly have not apologised to the voters in Lilley. It is disgraceful. While we have not heard from the Prime Minister, what has the Leader of the Opposition, a leader of the LNP, the same party, had to say about Mr Lobo? Absolutely nothing! He loves to talk about integrity issues, but when there is potential fraud in his own party he will not say a thing. What has the opposition spokesperson for integrity had to say? Absolutely nothing! This is serious. This is potential fraud and he is potentially facing imprisonment. Those opposite and the Prime Minister need to step up and disendorse him.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: I give a very general warning to members under warnings in the chamber. There will be no interjections from those members at all otherwise they will be leaving the chamber.

State Debt

Mr ANDREW: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Last year Queensland's annual interest payments were calculated based on the RBA's forecast that interest rates would halve by 2025. What increase will there be on the service payments now that interest rates have nearly tripled?

Mr DICK: I am proud to take that question because Queensland has the second strongest performing economy in the country only behind Western Australia. What does that mean? Debt and deficits are lower under Labor. We saw that just last week with the Victorian budget and how much better Queensland is now positioned compared to all of our comparator states on the east coast. When I released the midyear budget review last year—the honourable member may have paid attention to that, I do not know; maybe he did, maybe he did not, but if he did he would have known that when I handed the budget down last year we predicted a budget deficit of about \$3.8 billion for this financial year. When I handed down the midyear fiscal and economic review the budget deficit was targeted to

be about \$1.5 billion, less than 50 per cent of what we anticipated. We know that Victoria has just booked a \$17.6 billion deficit for this financial year and New South Wales—the high-performing Liberal government of New South Wales—is on track to deliver a \$20 billion budget deficit.

Our budget deficit this year is going to be perhaps a 10th or less of the budget deficits of New South Wales and Victoria. What does that mean? We are rebuilding the fiscal capacity of the state. We are rebuilding the fiscal buffers of the state which allows us to manage natural disasters. It allows us to deal with unforeseen or unanticipated consequences. It also allows us to deal with an increase in interest. I hope the member for Mirani is not going to go down the path of talking publicly about debt in Queensland because that has been the front line of where the LNP has been for 20 years. Because you are the Leader of the One Nation in this parliament, member for Mirani—

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, please, member.

Mr DICK: I hope that One Nation is not going to go down that gully because it is a dry gully when you look at what Queensland has done. All of the states faced the same time of trial during COVID. We know the pressures in the health system, which is why we put record investment there, but when one looks at New South Wales and Victoria and you compare us with them, there is one state that leads the nation and that is Queensland. We had that strong health response, and I know your leader opposed that. I know Pauline Hanson opposed our strong health response, she opposed our control of borders, she opposed the directions of the Chief Health Officer and I say this to you, member for Mirani—

Mr SPEAKER: Member, you will direct your comments through the chair. I have given sufficient warning.

Mr DICK: I say this to the member for Mirani, through you, Mr Speaker, it is about time One Nation stopped undermining our strong health response because that has led to a world-leading economic response in this state. I would ask him to take that to the people of Central Queensland he represents and to the north of our state, so they can know what this government has done for them.

(Time expired)

Sunshine Coast Stadium

Ms KING: My question is of the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement. Can the minister inform the House whether there has been any progress from the federal government on funding for the upgrade of the Sunshine Coast Stadium, and is the minister aware of any other approaches?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for Pumicestone for the question and note the broader region's enthusiasm for getting the \$68 million stage 1 upgrade of Sunshine Coast Stadium off the ground and delivering for the region's COVID-19 economic recovery.

The Palaszczuk government has \$20 million on the table, ready to go. I have spoken about it in this House on many occasions. The Sunshine Coast Regional Council is putting up \$28 million. The much anticipated upgrade of the Sunshine Coast Stadium would boost spectator capacity to 25,000 and attract more major events—a huge opportunity for the region right now. It is shovel-ready and ready to add millions of dollars to the Sunshine Coast visitor economy and support, in that process, some 150 construction jobs—a very important opportunity at this point in time.

There is a road block, and that road block is the Morrison government. The LNP's member for Fisher, Andrew Wallace, promised that the federal government's \$20 million fair share of the stadium upgrade would be in the federal budget. In the last two federal budgets there has been not a brass razoo. The member for Fisher blames COVID for the budget snubs. COVID is to blame on this one. He has promised it twice and it has fallen flat twice.

It appears that the Sunshine Coast faces more delay for its stadium upgrade. Last week the special envoy for the 2032 games and member for Fairfax, Ted O'Brien, told ABC Sunshine Coast that the games partnership is 'our best avenue for securing funding for different facilities to help with the 2032 games, and Sunshine Coast Stadium is one of those facilities'. If there was a gold medal for stalling, the Morrison LNP government would win hands down—no question.

Round 1 of the Morrison government's stadium stalling prompted two benefactors, with \$11 million for the upgrade, to walk away in frustration. Private sector benefactors who had \$11 million on the table walked away—gone for good—because of the slackness of the Morrison government.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: With the Morrison government's out-of-control cost of living, we know that the upgrade is not going to stay at that price for very long. It is not getting any cheaper.

The Sunshine Coast Stadium is another stunning example of the Morrison LNP government failing to give Queenslanders their fair share. Instead of calling out the Morrison LNP government's trickiness, the Leader of the Opposition has gone missing and done absolutely nothing. The member for Kawana thinks the stadium is his idea, and he has not said a peep about the failings of the Morrison government. There is no surprise there. The LNP has always taken the Sunshine Coast for granted.

Police Resources, Health System

Mr LAST: My question is to the Minister for Police. Since the minister took over the police portfolio, how many patients have died in a police car on the way to or waiting at a hospital because an ambulance was not available?

Mr RYAN: The member is asking about the partnership between the Queensland Police Service and all other emergency services—a partnership that has been around since the inception of the Police Service and other emergency services. It is what Queenslanders would demand from their emergency services—that they work together. We see that during floods, cyclones, bushfires and health pandemics, and we see it on the streets when there are car accidents and other life-threatening incidents.

The Police Service works very closely with the fire service, the Ambulance Service and health services to ensure Queenslanders get the best possible care and the most urgent care, depending on their circumstances. From time to time police officers are required to assist ambulance officers—when a patient might be violent, when a patient might be having a mental health incident or when a patient might need other urgent support. Is the member for Burdekin suggesting that we put paramedics in life-threatening situations because he thinks the Police Service should not be there to help paramedics with incidents that may arise?

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118(b). The question was very specific about the number of patients who have died in a police car.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The minister is providing a response which, as I hear it, speaks to the role that the Queensland Police Service plays in conjunction with Queensland Health and the Ambulance Service.

Mr RYAN: Is the member for Burdekin saying that the LNP policy now is to put paramedics and emergency department staff at risk because they do not want the police to work in partnership with the Ambulance Service, health services and emergency departments to keep patients, health workers and paramedics safe? It is a partnership when it comes to delivering community safety outcomes and health outcomes for Queenslanders. It always has been and always will be under a Labor government. Police work alongside all of their partner agencies to ensure patients, the community, health workers and paramedics are safe. We know that that is in the best interests of Queenslanders. If the LNP want to announce a policy right now to put at risk paramedic staff and emergency department staff, let them do that and we will let the people of Queensland judge them on that policy.

This government will always back the front line. That is why we have historic investments in health, in the Ambulance Service and in the Police Service—to ensure those services are resourced to deal with the demands they face. There is no doubt that there is increasing demand on government services. It is not just in Queensland; it is around the nation and around the world. You can always count on a Labor government to back the front line.

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing Order



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.16 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That standing order 87 be suspended to enable clauses 4 and 5 and schedule 1 of the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 to be considered.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MENTAL HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE

Reporting Date



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.16 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the date for the Mental Health Select Committee to report to the Legislative Assembly on the inquiry into the opportunities to improve mental health outcomes for Queenslanders be extended from 31 May 2022 to 6 June 2022.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (11.17 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended to enable the notice of motion relating to the Health and Environment Committee's Report No. 18 to be listed on the *Notice Paper* as order of the day No. 1 under General Business, Notices of Motion, House to Take Note of Committee Reports.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

CHILD PROTECTION REFORM AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 15 September 2021 (see p. 2675).

Second Reading



Hon. LM LINARD (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (11.17 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

All Queenslanders want to see vulnerable children and families provided with support and assistance when needed to keep all Queensland children safe. The Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, if passed, will make Queensland a national leader. It will give Queensland one of the strongest legislative frameworks in Australia to support the participation of children and young people, whereby they must be listened to and engaged with and where active attempts must be made to understand their viewpoint. This bill will make Queensland one of the first jurisdictions to mandate that child safety officers must make active efforts in meeting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. Both of these important elements are already part of contemporary child safety practice, but this bill will enshrine them in legislation.

On 15 September last year the bill was introduced to the parliament and referred to the Community Support and Services Committee for consideration, and the committee tabled its report on 12 November. The committee made three recommendations: firstly, that the bill be passed; secondly, that the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs establish a process to ensure customary and age-appropriate participation of children in care in decision-making that affects them; and, thirdly, that the Department of Justice and Attorney-General investigate the barriers facing First Nations people obtaining blue cards to access employment. I thank the committee for its examination of the bill and its recommendations. I would also like to thank the chair, the member for Mansfield, for her strong stewardship of this bill and all matters that come before her committee and all committee members.

The government response, which I tabled on 10 February this year, states our acceptance and support of recommendations 2 and 3. In respect of recommendations 2 and 3, the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs will continue to undertake consultation with young people and key stakeholders to support the implementation of recommendation 2 of the bill. Likewise, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General will continue to implement the Safe Children and Strong Community Strategy and Action Plan and address barriers experienced by First Nations people applying for blue cards, as outlined in recommendation 3.

I thank the many people who made submissions to the committee and the many stakeholders who provided valuable input during the consultation. I wish to thank the Create Foundation for its assistance and particularly the young people who shared their stories and experiences of being in care. Their contributions have been instrumental in shaping the reforms and in creating meaningful change in the child safety system. My regular meetings with these young Create consultants and other young people with a current or past experience in care are always thought provoking and challenging. The system can and must always improve and evolve with their interests and voices at the centre.

The consultation process preceding this bill was extensive and far reaching. In 2019 my predecessor, Minister Di Farmer, released a discussion paper titled *Rethinking rights and regulation: towards a stronger framework for protecting children and supporting families*. The discussion paper outlined options for legislative reform in three focus areas: children's rights, children's voices and the regulation of care. Some 54 submissions were received, including from PeakCare Queensland, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak—QATSICPP—the Office of the Public Guardian, Queensland Law Society and Legal Aid Queensland.

In addition to the discussion paper, surveys were available online. Almost 400 people from across Queensland responded to these surveys, including over 200 young people. Workshops were facilitated with children and young people, parents and families, carers, peak bodies, service providers, legal professionals and frontline departmental staff. More than 150 people attended these workshops. Meetings also took place with the truth, healing and reconciliation task force, the Queensland First Children and Families Board, the Quality Collaboration Network and QATSICPP.

We heard from children and young people about how important it was for them to be listened to and supported to participate in the decisions that affect them—decisions such as who they live with, how often they see the people they care about and day-to-day matters. They told us that the legislation needed to recognise and acknowledge that all children are unique and different; therefore, how they choose to participate will be different, for example through letters, verbally or through an adult they trust. One stakeholder emphasised: 'It is important to know what is significant for a young person.' We were also told that some children do not want to participate or feel responsible for making decisions. We heard time and time again that children need to be given meaningful and ongoing opportunities to participate and engage in a way that is not tokenistic and that they need to be genuinely listened to. We also heard from children, young people and other stakeholders about how important it is for children to understand their rights and how these rights should be protected. This included rights that are not currently found in the charter of rights in the act.

Further consultation with our key stakeholders occurred in March, July and August last year during the development of the bill. We heard that the proposals relating to children's rights and voices should be made a priority. For the amendments to the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General consulted with key stakeholders, including peak bodies and community legal services. The amendments relate to Queensland's participation in the working with children check national reference system and the sharing of domestic violence information.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. This bill makes amendments to the Child Protection Act in three areas: reinforcing children's rights in the legislative framework; strengthening children's voices in decisions that affect them; and streamlining, clarifying and improving the regulation of care. To begin, I will discuss the reforms that reinforce children's rights. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle provides safeguards to protect the rights and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The bill explains that a person involved in administering the act must make active efforts to apply the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. Active efforts are efforts that are thorough, purposeful and timely in applying the five elements of the principle. This entrenches the current practice of the department to make active efforts a statutory requirement for decision-makers when applying the child placement principle.

Active efforts can include: strategies to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are connected to family, culture, community and country such as supporting families to access culturally appropriate support, assessing placement options with the preferred option of placing a child with their family, or creating cultural support plans for every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child in care. By changing the wording of 'partnership' in the child placement principle, the bill embeds the government's commitment to partnering with First Nations peoples, community representatives and organisations in policy and program development, service design and delivery as well as with decision-making in individual child protection cases. These amendments support the government's commitment to

eliminate the disproportionate representation of First Nations children and families in the child protection system. Queensland will continue to promote in legislation the safe care and connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The bill also amends the Child Protection Act by broadening the purpose to include the additional purposes of promoting the safety of children as well as providing support for families. In consultation with stakeholders in 2019 we heard that a broader purpose could include support for families within the child protection system to safely care for and protect their children. We also heard that the purpose should reflect the rights of children in care. Children's rights have been protected with amendments to include additional rights within the charter of rights. These additional rights further enshrine the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and complement those protected under Queensland's Human Rights Act. Examples include the right to engage in play and recreational activities, the right to choose and practise a religion, the right to enjoy and develop their identity and the right to maintain their culture.

In 2019 children and young people told us that the right to be treated with respect, the right to be treated fairly, the right to be allowed to be a child and the right to do activities that they enjoy such as sport or art were all important to them. In response, the bill includes additional rights to engage in play, to have a safe place to store belongings and to make a complaint to the chief executive if the charter is not being complied with. Enabling children to raise concerns is reflected in the amendments. The chief executive will be required to regularly inform children of their rights under the charter and explain how they can make a complaint if they feel their rights are not being complied with. We want children to feel more confident in raising their concerns and to understand how they can exercise their right to contact the chief executive about their protection and care needs.

Additionally, the importance of recognising and protecting children's rights and ensuring children are aware of them has been a consistent theme in various inquiries and reviews, including the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. To quote one young person who was involved in the consultation process: 'If you don't know what your rights are, you can't say what you want in your case plan.'

The bill promotes equality and review rights for children and young people without long-term guardians. They can seek a review by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal if the chief executive decides not to review their case plan when they request it. The amendment aligns the existing review rights of children without a long-term guardian with those children who do have a long-term guardian.

In respect of strengthening children's voices in this legislation, we received feedback from children, young people and child protection stakeholders about the importance of children's voices being heard in decisions that affect them. The amendments in the bill will provide Queensland with the strongest child participation framework within child protection legislation in Australia. It will require anyone who is exercising power under the Child Protection Act that will or may affect a child to ensure that the child is given opportunities to participate. That person must make a genuine attempt to understand and consider any views expressed by the child.

Children and young people who were a part of the consultation process said they would prefer to tell their views directly to the decision-maker, while others wanted to write down their views or tell someone else who can tell the person making the decision. The bill therefore ensures that the child is allowed to decide whether to participate and is given support to participate in decisions where needed. These new participation principles also flexibly consider the many ways in which children may choose to participate. For example, a child can be provided with the support of a trusted sibling at a meeting to help ensure their views are heard.

The bill also supports the systemic participation of children. The chief executive must ensure that children have meaningful and ongoing opportunities to participate in decisions about the design and delivery of child protection programs and services. During the committee consultations, stakeholders supported this saying that this will improve outcomes for children and young people by empowering them to have a say in decisions that impact their lives.

I turn now to the reforms which seek to streamline, clarify and improve the regulation of care. I would like to acknowledge the incredible work and contribution that carers in Queensland make to care for children and young people experiencing vulnerability. Carers are instrumental in supporting children and young people in challenging circumstances. This bill will clarify the information and support framework under the Child Protection Act to ensure carers and licensees receive information about a child and can make informed decisions about accepting placements and providing appropriate care for a child. This may include providing information about a child's medical or behavioural needs, cultural

support or disability needs. It may also mean that other contextual information about a child's life before coming into care is also provided to the carer. As we heard through the committee's consideration of the bill, stakeholders supported the amendments to strengthen the carer information and support framework. The bill includes provisions that will require the chief executive of the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs to provide access to support and to training to ensure carers can fulfil their role in protecting and caring for a child.

The bill proposes amendments to the Child Protection Act that address several recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse as well as the Queensland Family and Child Commission's report titled *Keeping Queensland's children more than safe: review of the foster care system*. The royal commission found that nationally consistent carers registers could act as a mechanism that prevents unsuitable people from being approved as carers. The bill will support the royal commission recommendations by creating a legislative framework for a carers register under the Child Protection Act.

We have strengthened the mandatory reporting framework to further protect children from harm, irrespective of their care arrangements. If foster carers, kinship carers and out-of-home care placement support staff reasonably suspect harm against a child in care, it must be reported to the chief executive of the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs.

We have included amendments to deliver recommendation 11 of the Queensland Family and Child Commission's report. These amendments support the department's nomination to become the first child protection agency to be a participating screening unit of the intergovernmental agreement for a national exchange of criminal history information for people working with children. The bill enables the department to obtain and assess the circumstances of interstate charges and convictions against a person who may be provisionally approved to care for a child. This will enhance the screening process carried out by the department to ensure that persons who receive provisional approval to become carers for Queensland's vulnerable children and young people are suitable and not a risk to a child. The bill supports operational efficiencies including streamlining the carer assessment process, extending the term of a renewed carer certificate and removing the requirement for the return of paper licences.

The bill includes minor and technical amendments to improve the operation of the Child Protection Act and deliver on the royal commission's recommendations. For example, recommendation 8 of the royal commission's criminal justice report recommended that state and territory legislation be amended to authorise a person to disclose the identity of a notifier to a law enforcement agency. This was intended to safeguard the wellbeing and safety of children, assist investigators to reach conclusions quickly and increase the ability of police and prosecutors to successfully prosecute persons who have committed crimes against children.

The bill proposes to amend the Child Protection Act so that a notifier's details can be released to a senior police officer. Safeguards are in place to ensure the continued protection of a notifier's details such as enabling disclosure only where the information is required for the prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution or punishment of a criminal offence against a child; and where it is necessary to ensure the safety, wellbeing or best interests of a child. A notifier must also be informed that their details have been disclosed where it is practical and not prejudicial to proceedings. They also cannot have their details disclosed in proceedings without leave of the court or tribunal. Further minor amendments include the disclosure of child protection information with the consent of the person to whom it relates or upon the request of a parent following the death of their child who was an adult at the time of their passing.

The bill makes other amendments to confirm and clarify the role of independent Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander entities and their role in decision-making. The role of an independent Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander entity is to facilitate the participation of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child. An independent entity is chosen by the family and can only participate when the family agrees. This will ensure our First Nations families are supported by independent entities for child protection decisions or court proceedings when they wish to have that support.

Additionally, the bill seeks to recognise Aboriginal tradition and Torres Strait Islander custom as it relates to who is considered kin for a child. Our key stakeholders identified that the current definition of kin within the act may have had the effect of including any person of significance to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child, which was not the intent of the definition. Therefore, the bill clarifies the definition of kin as a person who is regarded as such under Aboriginal tradition or Torres Strait Islander custom. Another person may be considered kin where they are recognised by the child or their family as significant to the child and have a cultural connection to the child.

This amendment was informed by the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak's position statement for Aboriginal kinship care. It seeks to ensure meaningful mapping and identification is conducted by the department to determine who may become a kinship carer to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child.

The bill includes other technical amendments to support the effective and efficient operation of the Child Protection Act within court proceedings. When there are immediate safety concerns regarding the child who is the subject of the appeal, the bill seeks to enable the court to dispense with the service of a notice of appeal and to hear the appeal in the absence of a respondent. This will allow the court to make timely decisions when any delay to proceedings could place a child at risk of harm. An additional technical amendment is included in the bill to enable existing orders to continue until the Children's Court decides on an application to extend or replace the order by the litigation director or chief executive. This ensures there is no gap in the protection of a child while court proceedings are ongoing.

The bill also makes priority amendments to the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act which aim to increase the safety of Queensland children by enhancing the working with children check system. The amendments provide a legislative basis for Blue Card Services to request domestic violence information from the Queensland Police Commissioner when undertaking a blue card assessment.

Amendments also facilitate Queensland's participation in the working with children check national reference system, which enables jurisdictions to identify persons who have been deemed ineligible to work with children in another state or territory. When conducting a blue card assessment, Blue Card Services will also be able to consider adverse outcomes of applicants in other jurisdictions.

The amendments also redesign the category of regulated employment that deals with licensed care services to better reflect the contemporary service delivery model used by licensees in discharging their functions. This is supported by an expansion of the definition of notifiable person, which enables a licensee to link to and receive updates on any changes to the blue card status of any person performing a risk assessed role for a licensed care service.

I will now conclude by talking to the amendments to the Adoption Act within the bill. The bill proposes technical amendments to the Adoption Act. This will enable the chief executive to make an application for a final intercountry adoption order to be made for non-citizen children placed with prospective adoptive parents by the relevant Commonwealth minister. The Adoption Act enables the chief executive to apply to the Children's Court for a final intercountry adoption order for a child when the child has been in the custody of the prospective adoptive parents for at least one year. This includes circumstances where the chief executive placed the child in the prospective adoptive parents' care.

The chief executive of the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs is usually responsible for the placement of children in Queensland. This is part of Australia's intercountry adoption program because of an instrument of delegation by the Australian government Minister for Home Affairs under Commonwealth legislation. This instrument of delegation, made under the Commonwealth Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946, refers to specific agencies, work areas and positions.


This can have a significant impact on the operation of the Adoption Act in the event of machinery-of-government changes that result in changes to the names of agencies or work areas. Following the 2020 Queensland election, machinery-of-government changes occurred that resulted in the forming of a new department. As the instrument of delegation referred to a previous department name, the delegations conferred on Queensland were unable to be exercised until a new delegation had been approved by the Commonwealth minister.

The Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2021, which was passed on 23 March 2021, included amendments that were limited to enabling adoptions to be finalised for a small number of children in a specific time frame due to issues with the instrument of delegation at that time. Further technical issues with the instrument of delegation have since been identified that impact the operation of the Adoption Act for intercountry adoptions.

To address the issues, the bill seeks to amend the Adoption Act to enable the chief executive to apply to the court for a final adoption order for the non-citizen children. This provision is intended to apply retrospectively to support the department's supervision of non-citizen children who were placed with their prospective adoptive parents by the Commonwealth minister. This will avoid any uncertainty for these children and their families.

Again I would like to extend my thanks to the Community Support and Services Committee for its thorough consideration of the bill. The bill builds on our government's ongoing commitment to vulnerable children and families by delivering significant reforms as part of the 10-year Supporting Families Changing Futures reform program. We want every child to be empowered and their voice amplified in the decisions that affect them. This bill seeks to do just that. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Before I call the member for Whitsunday, I will remind the House which members have been warned under the standing orders: Woodridge, Clayfield, Nanango, Glass House, Mudgeeraba, Capalaba, Inala, the Deputy Premier, Broadwater, Buderim, Kawana and Everton.

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (11.40 am): I also rise to contribute to the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It is pleasing to finally see this legislation come before the House, as I believe it has been ready to go for some time. I would firstly like to acknowledge the work of the committee and their recommendation that the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs establish a process to ensure there is customary and age-appropriate participation of children in care in decision-making processes that affect them and encourage the Attorney-General to investigate the barriers regarding First Nations peoples obtaining blue cards so as to improve their access to employment. Later in my contribution I will touch on blue cards and some of the concerns raised with me around unintended consequences.

I note that consultation on this bill has been inclusive, it has been expansive and it has also recognised children's individuality, their needs and their ability to participate. I also acknowledge the importance of the empowerment of children through their voices and the differing methods of participation that have also been outlined in the committee's report and the minister's contribution. I would also like to acknowledge the principles based approach which has been implemented for some time, in particular in relation to the application of child placement principles for the placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The LNP will not be opposing this bill.

The objectives of this bill are to better support children and young people in care and to streamline, clarify and improve processes. I think that is something all Queensland children would like to see both sides of the House work towards. This is about reinforcing children's rights. It is about strengthening their decisions and their voices in the decisions that affect their ability to participate and contribute to our community and our society, but, most importantly, around their safety and security. I certainly hope that as a result of this bill children's concerns are taken very seriously. Every single week there are issues raised with my office which are presented to the minister around child safety and children's desires, needs and wants to feel safe and secure. Their voices must be fully heard by the adults in charge who are there to protect them.

This bill aims to streamline, clarify and improve the regulation around how we care for our children. This bill amends the Adoption Act to resolve technical issues within the federal act and makes priority amendments for working with children. It provides a legislative basis for the chief executive, when working with children, to request domestic violence information from the Queensland Police Commissioner for the purpose of blue card assessment. The bill also aims to facilitate Queensland's participation in working with children with regard to the national reference system check, which is a national database that enables jurisdictions to identify persons who have been deemed ineligible to work with children in any other state or territory. It also enables the chief executive to: have regard to adverse decisions in other jurisdictions as part of a blue card assessment; simplify and streamline categories of regulated employment and regulated business that deal with licensed care services to better reflect contemporary service models; and enable a licensee to have greater visibility over the blue card status of each person performing a risk-assessed role for licensed care. A blue card is only really worth the information that comes to hand in making those assessments.

I note that at times many of our children are not afforded care and safety, and from what has come through my office and the conversations I have had with carers I believe that is worsened by bureaucracy and when we ignore the voices of children. This bill also highlights the desire for children to thrive by giving them a voice in decision making. The amendments to the principles of this act will further enshrine that. We need to ensure that we give children a greater voice. We must also provide support to enable them to do that. We have seen an increase in statistics that demonstrate children's mental health and wellbeing is at greater risk. We have statistics that demonstrate a greater number of children in the care of the state, particularly the over-representation of First Nations children.

I want to highlight the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle: the prevention principle, that a child has the right to be brought up within the child's own family and community; the partnership principle, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons have the right

to participate in significant decisions under this act about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children; the placement principle, that if a child is to be placed in care the child has a right to be placed with a member of the child's family group; the participation principle, that a child and the child's parents and family members have a right to participate, and be enabled to participate, in an administrative or judicial process for making a significant decision about the child; and the connection principal, that a child has a right to be supported to develop and maintain a connection with the child's family, community, culture, traditions and language, particularly when the child is in the care of a person who is not an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.

The LNP supports all of those placement principles. What I cannot support is children who are removed from loving foster families or loving family members and placed back into risk, placed back into harm's way, placed in geographical locations where the department does not have access to check on those children. Who is listening to those children from the cape and Indigenous communities in Far North Queensland, Cairns, Western Queensland and Mount Isa? I hear from carers and foster carers who report harm to these children after visits with their kin or family members. Frankly, the right of a child to be safe, secure and protected from sexual harm, violence and assault is a right every child should have, no matter the colour of their skin, their cultural heritage or their background. It has to be paramount. That is certainly not consistent with the cases that have come before me and that community members and community leaders in Cairns, Townsville and Far North Queensland have actively reported more recently.

I also want to touch on the unofficial policy of reunification that is starting to trend across this state. We encourage the placement of children with their families, but those families need support. Those families need to be ready. Those families need wraparound services. Those families need to be checked on. Sometimes those families are not ready to receive children back into their care. The Child Protection Act and the unofficial reunification policy—which is happening—are hastening the return of children when families are not ready, when they are not equipped, when they are not supported, when they do not have a secure and safe house for a child to live in, and when perpetrators of sexual assault still have access to those children. These are the stories that come through my office which I represent to the minister every single week.

All of the legislation, all of our good intent and all of the words that are being spoken here today in this bill about the rights of a child can continue to be spoken, but the practical resourcing and supports actually have to be implemented for every child—whether they live in Logan or in the cape. Every child has the right to the same safety, the same security and the same support.

I would now like to touch on the changes around the blue card, in particular the information sharing when it comes to domestic violence orders. In a meeting I had with the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, they raised with me some potential unintended consequences of the domestic violence order interpretation. I ask the minister to clarify whether departmental staff who are carrying out these assessments are well trained in domestic violence. It was raised with me in relation to the information sharing surrounding domestic violence orders and blue cards that women may be less likely to apply for domestic violence orders if they believe it could impact their financial security. If they are concerned that their partner or ex-partner might lose employment, they may not apply for a DVO so there are unintended consequences.

Also, victims are often misidentified as perpetrators and that could have a negative outcome on blue card applications and be a further disadvantage. That was also raised in the McMurdo review, in particular around the over-representation of First Nations women who are alleged to be perpetrators themselves when this is not correct. That is something we certainly want the department to be mindful of.


It was also raised with me in my meeting with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service that domestic violence orders are often used at different times in very complex child custody and Family Court cases so there could potentially be unintended consequences. Given that taking out a DVO is such a big step for a woman—and for a male in some cases as well—we do not want to put any barriers in place. We support the QFCC's recommendations that this information should be assessed by those trained in this area so it can be sensitively assessed and so that no victims are impacted.

In regards to interstate sharing, this change is in line with recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. It is certainly a welcome change that many across our state wanted to see. We need these recommendations to be pushed through as swiftly as possible to ensure the safety of all children across our state.

I would also like to acknowledge the stakeholder engagement that was undertaken. All of these peak bodies meet with the government regularly, and I also meet with them regularly. In particular, Create Foundation and PeakCare have been strong advocates for this legislation, for the empowerment of a child's voice and for greater participation. I also mention those bodies that continue to advocate for those carers and for the increased support that is required to ensure that all of our children are protected.

I would like to highlight the increased pressure that we see on the department, in particular across North Queensland. There are increased staffing pressures caused by high attrition rates and, as I mentioned before, the geographical locations and the significant and complex caseloads. I wonder how the practice principles will be applied when there are increased attempts by the department to recruit but there are quite high attrition rates. Ultimately, what we want to see is a service that is supporting the empowerment of our children to ensure that they are protected.

I look forward to seeing how these changes to the act are going to operate and how they will further protect our children so that no more barriers are put in place and our children are not put at risk. We need to hear the voices and the needs of our children loud and clear—even if those needs are not what the department wants to hear. If they are in the best interests of our children, they need to be prioritised. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (11.55 am): I rise to speak on the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. Firstly, I wish to thank the minister for her leadership of the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs. Those of us in this chamber who have served young people for their entire career understand the complexities that come with every child, with every situation, with every family. We know that every child, every family and their context is very different. The immense work that our department does day in, day out to support our most vulnerable children has always been admired by me and by the teaching profession across Queensland. We have always worked very closely with the department. We know of their work intimately, and we know of the complexity of their work with our students and their families. I also take this opportunity to thank the many organisations which work tirelessly to support our most vulnerable young people. Again, having worked firsthand with those organisations for more than 25 years, I understand the work that they do.

It is my firmly held belief that all children should be afforded the opportunity to have a voice in decisions that are made about them and their lives—their education, the way they spend their time, the way they negotiate what they need. It is absolutely imperative that our young children have a voice. It is incumbent on us as a government to facilitate children's views and wishes in the safest possible way. Involving young people in the decisions about their lives not only empowers them; it allows decision-makers to make better and more informed decisions about care arrangements. Whilst the committee notes the concerns from some stakeholders with respect to the reforms to the blue card assessments, the safety of children in care remains of paramount importance to this government.

On 17 September 2021, the committee invited stakeholders and subscribers to make written submissions to the bill, and the committee received 18 submissions. The committee received a written briefing on the bill on 23 September 2021 and a public briefing about the bill from the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General on 27 September 2021.

During the inquiry, the committee heard compelling evidence from people directly experiencing the child protection system in Queensland. The committee is particularly appreciative of Mr Jake Shields, who is a fine young man and is a young consultant at Create Foundation, as well as the many others who spoke to their experiences of care at the public hearing in Brisbane on 15 October 2021. Mr Jake Shields shared with us that—

Participation is fundamentally important for young people in care.

Having experienced that himself, he was able to shed much light on his experience. He said—

They need to know that they are being listened to and they need to know that they have a say. As a kid in care I sometimes felt like a puppet and not in control about decisions in my life. No child or young person should feel like that. When I was in care I stopped going to my case plan meetings because I was not included in decisions that were being made and I felt like they were always telling me what I was doing wrong.

The committee took great heart in hearing Jake's thoughts and certainly we reflected in our recommendations many of the issues that Jake raised with our committee.


As we know, the objectives of the bill are to better support children and young people in care, and streamline, clarify and improve the processes. It includes three reform areas: reinforcing children's rights in the legislative framework, strengthening children's voices and decisions that affect them and streamlining, clarifying and improving the regulation of care.

The bill also proposed amendments to the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 by obtaining and considering domestic violence information, imperative to our Queensland families, facilitating Queensland's participation in the Working with Children Check national reference system, and simplifying and streamlining the categories of regulated employment and regulated business that deal with licensed care services to better reflect the contemporary service delivery model used by licensees in discharging their functions.

The committee made three recommendations: the first is that the bill be passed. I am very happy to support the bill. The committee encouraged the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs to establish a process to ensure there is customary and age-appropriate participation of children in care in decision-making processes that affect them. I note that the opposition spokesperson for this bill made mention around how that will look in practical terms. I absolutely can see clearly how that will look in practical terms. Often I, as a principal and teacher, would have my young people chair meetings that were about them. So often our young person would set the agenda, whether that be about their learning, about their performance in assessments, or about their care arrangements. Often I would have the young person chair the meeting, set the agenda and invite relevant attendees. That is a classic example of what the minister talks about when she says we must empower our young people. We must scaffold their opportunities for empowerment and we must provide them opportunity to lead, and to lead the life that they wish for themselves.

The third recommendation was that the committee encourage the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to investigate the nuances and barriers regarding First Nations persons obtaining blue cards so as to improve access to employment. We know that housing and employment are significant factors for our young people, and if we refer to many theorists, one being Maslow and his hierarchy of needs, certainly housing and access to safe, secure employment in order for young people to be provided with their basic needs is essential.

On behalf of the committee, I thank those individuals and organisations who made written submissions on the bill and who attended the public hearings to meet and speak with the committee. I also thank the members of parliament who assisted the committee and attended public hearings. I thank our Parliamentary Service staff who always do a great job and are so committed and so supportive to the work of our committee. I thank the minister once again. I thank the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the Torres Shire Council who provided tremendous input into the bill, and the communities of Mount Isa, Townsville, Cairns and Thursday Island who assisted the committee to understand the nuances in regional and remote Queensland and who gave up so much of their time that they would normally spend in their day-to-day work, so much of their time to work with our committee to ensure that this legislation is the very best that it can be. I commend this report to the House.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (12.04 pm): I note the origins of the bill as being the findings of Deputy State Coroner Bentley of the Coroner's Court of Queensland and the inquest into the death of Mason Jett Lee, a tragedy that we all acknowledge in this place. The recommendation of the Deputy State Coroner that the bill is said to respond to is that children in the care of the department should be permanently placed through out-of-home adoptions within 24 months.

The committee heard many submissions that adoption is a controversial and emotive topic. I cannot claim to understand the outcomes or have any experience on the appropriateness or otherwise of preferring adoption over alternatives for the permanent care of a child, but I reflect on the many who provided the committee with their life and lived experiences and thank them all for their contributions.

I acknowledge the government's responses to the committee's recommendations. I think this is a true indication of how the committee process can be worked and work well when we acknowledge the work that the committees do.

The Bar Association raised some good points. In reference to the Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020—

As such, as the Bill currently stands, clause 8 excludes reference to permanent care orders from its order of preferences for the permanent care of children. This could see adoption preferred over a permanent care order in circumstances where the latter is more appropriate.

Ideally, subsection 4 of clause 8 would set out the order of preference for all relevant orders. Further, providing for a hierarchy of placement preferences is said to be consistent with approaches in New South Wales and Victoria.

The Association suggests that permanent care orders are referenced above adoption. This is because, when such orders were first inserted into the CPA in 2017, they were said to be somewhere on the continuum between a long-term guardianship order and adoption. As such, the Association views permanent care orders as being logically somewhat less disruptive to a child's existing care arrangements than adoption. Only in the event that a permanent care order is not appropriate, should adoption be considered.

The committee notes that while some submissions to the committee inquiry expressed support for clause 8 of the bill, a significant majority of submitters opposed the proposed amendment. The submitters who opposed the bill did so for a variety of reasons including: their opposition to adoption in principle; concerns about the potential adverse impact on adopted children, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; a view that existing permanent principles were sufficient; human rights implications; and concerns about the adequacy of support services, safeguards and oversight of adoption decisions.

The majority of submissions received by the committee opposed the proposed amendment for similar reasons as those expressed to the committee inquiry. I can guarantee the committee was resolute in its decision that this bill is the best thing for those vulnerable Queenslanders.

These issues have caused a lot of pain and trauma for many years and, since the introduction of the Adoption Act which came into effect in 2009, a result of significant reform, we needed a reset, we needed reform and we needed to enact more protection options for Queenslanders. The reset started in November 2012 when the then premier made an historic apology in parliament to people affected by past forced adoption policies and practices. I table a copy of that apology for the benefit of those who have not seen it.

Tabled paper: Document, dated 27 November 2012, titled 'Apology for forced adoption policies and practices' [\[615\]](#).

I quote from the opening paragraph of that apology—

Today the Legislative Assembly acknowledges the wrongs that have been inflicted by past forced adoption policies and practices in Queensland.

We acknowledge those who were denied their choice of parenthood, especially the mothers, as well as the fathers and other generations of the families.

Since then and the Carmody review, we know that adoption is an option for achieving permanency for a child who requires long-term care, and there are existing safeguards in both the Child Protection Act and the Adoption Act to ensure that adoption is pursued only when it is appropriate for an individual child. The other thing that this bill and act does is make sure that children are respected in that process.

Under section 5A of the Child Protection Act, the main principle for administering the act is that the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child, both through childhood and for the rest of the child's life, are paramount—the paramount principle, as it is called.

The act is also administered under the principle that an adopted child should be cared for in a way that ensures a safe, stable and nurturing family and home life; promotes openness and honesty about the child's adoption; and promotes the development of the child's emotional, mental, physical and social wellbeing.

I will digress, with the member for Bundaberg in the chamber, to thank all those who joined me and the member of Bundaberg last week at the Foster and Kinship Care Week celebrations to acknowledge the great contribution the carers and kinship people do in our community. It was a great morning. It was also important that we had the Child Safety staff there who do a tremendous job, and I take this opportunity to wish them all the best in the work they do in our community. It was a wonderful morning tea and I hope that we can do it all again next year.

In conclusion, there are several calls for the government to do more reviews. I hope we can draft more legislation and I respectfully say that the reviewing is pretty much done. On behalf of those vulnerable Queenslanders I say let's get on with any options we can to provide those most vulnerable with the best start in life.



Ms LUI (Cook—ALP) (12.09 pm): I rise to speak on the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The bill was introduced to the parliament on 15 September 2021 and referred to the Community Support and Services Committee for examination. The Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 was examined previously by the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee in the 56th Parliament, which tabled its report on 28 August 2020. Given the bill is the same as the one which was examined comprehensively by the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, the Community Support and Services Committee agreed to include the former committee's report as part of its report. The committee recommends the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 be passed.

The Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 seeks to amend the Child Protection Act 1999 in the three key reform areas: reinforcing children's rights in the legislative framework; strengthening children's voices in child protection decisions that affect them; and

streamlining, clarifying and improving the regulation of care. It is encouraging to know that the bill will further enhance the rights of children by implementing the reforms proposed within the 2019 discussion paper titled *Rethinking rights and regulation: towards a stronger framework for protecting children and supporting families*, which outlined a number of options for legislative reform to the Child Protection Act to continue implementing the Supporting Families Changing Futures reform program.

All children deserve to be safe. However, for some children this is not always the case. We, therefore, rely on services to provide intensive support. This support helps vulnerable families to overcome personal challenges that would minimise future risk of harm to a child. I acknowledge the severity of cases ranges from low to high risk. Despite the level of risk, every child deserves the right to have a say in the decision-making process. That is, they should be able to freely express their feelings and thoughts. When we talk about working in the best interests of the child, it is our duty as policymakers to ensure we not only give these children a voice, but we support and we nurture their voice to feel empowered and gain control of their reality. As a mother, I will always want all children to have a voice, and this bill speaks directly to those who do not have a voice.

I am proud of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to legislate strong reforms to protect the rights of vulnerable children in this state and to ensure children and families are fully aware of their rights and how to exercise them. As someone who has spent some time working in child protection in both the government and the non-government sectors, I have worked with many children and their families who have travelled down the path of disempowerment by not having the right to have a say or contribute to any form of the decision-making process. I have seen how the inability to contribute to important life-changing decisions leads to feelings of disappointment, frustration, anger and extreme sadness which becomes quite stressful and traumatic for everyone. When considering the amendments in the bill it is important to note that many factors can often prevent children and families from actively participating in the decision-making process. I want to make specific mention of the cultural barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and the recognition of Aboriginal traditions and Torres Strait Islander customs that is deserved when dealing with those children.

The bill seeks to embed a human rights focus throughout the Child Protection Act so children and families become fully aware of their rights and are empowered to exercise their rights appropriately. This bill will broadly include amendments to support collaboration with, and involvement of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child protection system; further protect and promote rights for children in care; encourage participation of, and communication with, children and young people in decisions that affect them; streamline the regulation of carers to ensure a robust, safe and transparent framework for children; and make minor and technical amendments to modernise provisions and support operational efficiencies.

This is a good, strong bill that speaks volumes for this government's commitment to child protection reform in this state. The Queensland government is committed to strengthening the child protection and family support system to support the wellbeing of children and families now and well into the future. This bill is about empowerment, it is about strengthening processes and how we can make the child protection system work for our most vulnerable. Most importantly, it is about protecting the rights and liberty of our children.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Hon. Leanne Linard, Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, for all her work in progressing this important legislative reform. I acknowledge and thank the Community Support and Services Committee; committee chair, Corrine McMillan; members of the committee, the members for Nicklin, Burnett, Scenic Rim and Maiwar; the committee secretariat; and Hansard for their work in the examination of the bill. I commend the bill to the House.



Dr ROWAN (Moggill—LNP) (12.15 pm): I rise to address the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. As I have said before in the Queensland parliament, an important measure of any modern society is how it treats and takes care of its most vulnerable. It is an unfortunate reality that in Queensland there have been too many tragic incidents and revelations of significant failures and shortcomings with respect to the protection of children and young people, particularly in the care of the Queensland government.

When it comes to Queensland's child protection system, both the voice and the safety of a child must take priority. Unfortunately, we have heard and seen too many examples where this has not been the case. That is why this legislation before the Queensland parliament is an encouraging step forward. However, as the Queensland Minister for Children and Youth Justice articulated in her first reading speech, the journey to improve the child protection system must continue.

The Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 was introduced into the Queensland parliament on 15 September 2021 and it was subsequently referred to the Community Support and Services Committee for consideration. As outlined in the bill's explanatory notes, the objectives of this legislation are to amend the Child Protection Act to better support children and young people in care; and streamline, clarify or improve processes including by, firstly, reinforcing children's rights in the legislative framework, secondly, strengthening children's voices and decisions that affect them and, thirdly, streamlining, clarifying and improving the regulation of care.

There are also amendments to the Adoption Act 2009 as well as the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, the latter of which will support the sharing of domestic violence information as well as facilitate Queensland's participation in the working with children checks national reference system, which is in line with the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

On 12 November 2021 the Queensland parliament's Community Support and Services Committee tabled its report making three recommendations, including that the legislation be passed. I note via the committee's report that stakeholders and submitters were generally supportive of the proposed amendments to the principles of the Child Protection Act which will enable children in care to have a greater say in the decisions that affect them so that their care can better be tailored to suit their individual needs. I also note that stakeholders were similarly supportive of the expansion of children's rights and also improving children's knowledge of their rights within the child protection system. It is hoped that such a move to ensure children have a greater awareness of their rights will have a resultant impact on encouraging children to identify and also speak up when they may be in harmful environments. All children in Queensland deserve every opportunity to thrive, especially those who come into contact with Queensland's child protection system.

Children in child protection deserve a greater voice and, importantly, the Queensland government must ensure that an enhanced voice is equally matched by enhanced support, particularly through what can be difficult and traumatic processes relating to their care. Whilst these specific changes are welcomed, it is incumbent on the Queensland state Labor government to take immediate steps to clarify and improve the administration of the Child Protection Act 1999 and other related and relevant acts. In addressing this legislation, I would like to raise a specific matter as it pertains to relevant legislation.

In my electorate of Moggill, over many months local residents have told me of their incredibly difficult experiences in seeking to work with the Queensland government with respect to local premises that are seemingly being utilised under the auspices of the Child Protection Act 1999 and the Youth Justice Act 1992. In fact, along with local community safety concerns following multiple police incidents, a significant concern of local residents has been a seeming lack of openness, transparency and accountability by the Queensland government and the continued level of 'secrecy', as local residents term it, around the utilisation and occupancy of such premises as well as suitable supervision. Local residents understand and appreciate the importance of privacy provisions contained within legislation; however, in raising a number of concerns and conflicting legalities of the operation of such a premises, the veil of privacy is being used to effectively override the concerns of some residents and not answer legitimate questions. In fact, local Queensland Police Service officers are being hindered in keeping our community safe due to such provisions. That is certainly information that they continue to provide to me.

There are also issues pertaining to the legal use of the premises, given concerns that have been raised with respect to the application and jurisdiction of Brisbane City Council's Brisbane City Plan 2014 and the requirement for an impact assessable development application in the relevant rural residential zone. Responses that local residents have received to date from the Queensland state government show that there is a significant blurring of the jurisdictional and regulatory lines between the Child Protection Act and the Youth Justice Act and how it intersects with the Queensland Planning Act and Brisbane City Council's Brisbane City Plan 2014.

The Queensland state government is failing local residents, and Queenslanders more broadly, by enabling such premises to be utilised for specific purposes with no community input, engagement or consultation. The Queensland state government seems to be exempting itself from the application of Queensland's planning laws.


I raise these issues specifically in the parliament in addressing this legislation because I understand that they are important for the minister. I have formally written to the minister about those issues as well, but it certainly needs a suitable solution for all involved. I ask the minister and the

Queensland state Labor government to continue to engage comprehensively with local residents and the local community and provide them support in relation to the answers they seek whilst also looking after vulnerable Queenslanders. That would be greatly appreciated.

This legislation is enhancing efforts by the government to fix child protection and the youth justice system, but it certainly cannot come at the expense of community safety and transparency. As outlined earlier, the measures that are contained within this legislation are a positive step forward, but it is clear that more needs to be done not only for Queensland children but also for families and the communities they live in.

Finally, I take the opportunity to thank all members of the Queensland parliament's Community Support and Services Committee. I know that the Liberal National Party members, the Labor members and other members on that committee do some very important work, particularly in scrutinising this legislation. After looking at their comprehensive report, I would like to give acknowledgement to all of them but particularly from this side the deputy chair, the member for Burnett, and the member for Scenic Rim; the committee secretariat for its support; and the stakeholders who contributed to the committee's consideration of this legislation. Again, without the contributions made by various submitters to the committee, it would be extremely difficult to get improvements and enhancements to legislation which are in the best interests of all, in this case particularly vulnerable Queenslanders. I acknowledge the contributions the submitters have made to the committee oversight process. It has been vital work. We would all hope that the passage of this legislation will strengthen and enhance the protection of vulnerable Queenslanders, particularly children who are in the child protection system.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): I would like to acknowledge that with us in the gallery are the principal, college captain and vice-captains Harry, Andrew and Darcy from Nudgee College in the electorate of Nudgee.

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (12.23 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As a government we are committed to a strong child protection and family support system that supports children and families, both now and into the future. We are committed to achieving this through strengthening and reinforcing children's rights in the legislative framework and by having an ongoing commitment to strengthening children's voices in the decisions that affect them. This bill amends the Child Protection Act to strengthen children's rights and children's voices.

One of the fundamental tenets of the Child Protection Act is to help ensure the safety, wellbeing and best interests of a child both through childhood and setting them up for the rest of their life. This bill amends the act to ensure that the general principles that are contained in the act in section 5B are relevant to making decisions about what is in the best interests of the child; for example, ensuring a child's safety and wellbeing through supporting the child's family and that, should it be appropriate for the child, the child should be able to maintain relationships with their parents and kin should they choose to do so.

The bill also provides dignity and autonomy to children and young people by amending the general principles to provide that a child has a right to express a view about what is and what is not in the child's best interests. Children and young people have made clear the importance of knowing their rights and wanting to be heard when they speak about what they need. They have made clear the rights they want to see protected such as the right to be treated with respect, the right to be treated fairly and the right to be allowed to be a child.

This bill proposes amendments to the charter of rights by expanding the list of rights enshrined in the charter to include rights relating to culture, religion and language, fairness, respect, personal belongings, and play and recreational activities. New rights include: the right to be treated fairly and with respect; the right to develop, maintain and enjoy a connection to the child's culture of origin; the right to religion and language; the right to engage in play and recreation; the right to develop, maintain and enjoy the child's identity; the right to keep and have a safe space to store personal belongings; and, importantly, the right to make a complaint to the chief executive if the child considers that the charter of rights is not being complied with.

This bill includes an obligation on the chief executive to ensure that children are regularly told about the charter of rights and their rights under it and a duty to ensure that those rights are complied with and that a child can contact the chief executive if the child has any questions or concerns about their protection and care needs.

This bill will help strengthen children's voices in the decisions that affect them by introducing participation principles to ensure that children and young people are provided with real and ongoing opportunities to have a voice by ensuring that people involved in the administration of the act genuinely listen and engage with trying to understand a child's view and by providing for children's views to inform the child protection system design and delivery of services.

The new child-centric participation principles include a new requirement for a person who makes a decision or exercises a power under the act relating to a child to ensure that the child is given meaningful and ongoing opportunities to participate. The new principles acknowledge that children choose to participate in a variety of different ways. For example, some may choose to participate verbally, while others would prefer to express their views by way of written statement or recorded audio or video. In some cases, children may wish to participate separately from particular people, including parents or carers. The new participation principles also recognise that children may choose not to participate, that children's views may in fact change over time and that some children may need assistance or help to participate fully. This recognises that care should be taken not to require a child to express a view or wish on a particular matter if they do not wish to and that children and young people should have the freedom to change their mind.

The bill will also amend the act to make Queensland the first jurisdiction in Australia to require children to be given a voice in the child protection system itself, genuinely empowering and supporting children to participate in the decisions about their lives specifically and the child protection system more broadly. It will provide that one of the chief executive's functions under the act is to ensure that children are given the opportunity to participate in policy and program development and service design.

I will now turn to the provisions in the bill that relate to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. Queensland was the first state to legislate all five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. The prevention element of the principle provides that a child has the right to be brought up within the child's own family and community, and that is particularly important when we consider the devastating reality of government policy in this country as it relates to the stolen generations. The partnership element currently provides that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons have the right to participate in significant decisions under this act about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children. The placement element states that, if a child is to be placed in care, the child has a right to be placed with a member of the child's family group and the participation element states that a child and the child's parents and family members have a right to participate and be enabled to participate in an administrative or judicial process for making a significant decision about a child. Finally, the connection element provides that a child has a right to be supported to develop and maintain a connection with the child's family, community, culture, traditions and language, particularly when the child is in the care of a person who is not an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.

This bill proposes to amend the Child Protection Act to require that, instead of simply having regard to this principle, active efforts must be made to apply the principle—a very important distinction. This means efforts which are purposeful, thorough and timely. This amendment responds to feedback from stakeholders received during consultation, including the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak which has strongly advocated for these active efforts, and I want to acknowledge the contribution that it has made to this legislation. Our laws are coupled with historic investment in child safety. Our record is one that includes approximately \$1.5 billion of investment in child and family services. That includes more than 150 new frontline child safety worker positions that have been created to boost services for Queensland's most vulnerable children and families, and more frontline staff mean that we will be working more intensively with children and families sooner. It also means creating a more meaningful relationship with children and families in need.

I acknowledge the work of the minister in bringing this bill before the parliament and also the committee. In conclusion, our child safety workers do an incredible job, often in unimaginable circumstances, and that vital work is to be valued and appreciated. I acknowledge and place on record the commitment and dedication of everyone involved in child safety and protection. There has been a tremendous shift in community attitudes when it comes to child safety and we are seeing more and more people willing to stand up and take responsibility for the safety of children, because protecting children is everyone's business and everyone has a role to play in keeping children safe. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr BERKMAN (Maiwar—Grn) (12.33 pm): I rise to make my contribution on the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The first broad observation I want to make is that much of this bill takes us in generally the right direction, enjoys the support of a number of submitters and

proposes some very welcome reform. In particular, improving children's capacity to engage with the child protection system and participate in planning that affects their lives is a great step forward. We also welcome the strengthening of requirements to take active efforts to apply the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child protection principles.

Submitters have provided some useful and important feedback on these issues that I will touch on later, time permitting, but first I want to speak to some concerns we have about the proposed amendments to the working with children checks or the blue card system, as we know it, and unintended consequences of the proposed reforms that were raised by a number of submitters. The proposed changes to the blue card system will most significantly allow the chief executive to request domestic violence information from the Police Commissioner where the chief executive believes a domestic violence order, a DVO, may have been made against the person. Once the chief executive is aware of domestic violence information, they are required to consider that information in their decision-making around blue cards.

The Women's Legal Service expressed concerns that the changes will create a number of unintended and perverse outcomes, some of which have already been referred to in the debate so far. It is concerned that the changes will make domestic violence victim survivors more reluctant to involve authorities where the perpetrator's ability to support them and their family would be compromised by a DVO. The changes may reduce the likelihood of DVO applications being resolved by consent without admission which is to the detriment of women who experience domestic violence and then have to argue the case in court. It also expressed grave consequences where police misidentify a domestic violence perpetrator. On the issue of misidentification, its submission states—

WLSQ is aware that there is a concerning high proportion of women being misidentified as respondents. This misidentification results in domestic violence orders being placed upon women who are not the primary aggressor but might have lashed out in self-defence or the primary aggressor has successfully manipulated the narrative when the police and other authorities respond to an incident.

Beyond that, the submission from Sisters Inside also points to research indicating that women are routinely being misidentified as perpetrators of domestic and family violence and named as respondents to protection orders and that this is more prevalent in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The ramifications for a misidentified victim survivor are already severe and would be gravely compounded by these proposed changes to the blue card system.

The changes we are looking at must be considered against the backdrop of disproportionate criminalisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We cannot ignore the fact that the amendments to the blue card system and the unintended consequences raised by submitters will disproportionately affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They will disproportionately deprive First Nations communities of employment opportunities that require a blue card. I discussed these issues just last week with elders at the COOEE Indigenous Family and Community Education Centre when we stopped in for a visit. These barriers to employment are very real and well recognised and this is clear in the evidence before the committee. Beyond that, the QFCC's recent review of the working with children system set out its concerns that the blue card system is a major barrier to employment and kinship care arrangements.

The committee report on this bill and the government's own response to that report recognise the same, but the government's response offers no new or meaningful solutions on this issue. I will say that the member for Traeger deserves recognition for his ongoing efforts to address the issues around blue cards in First Nations communities, particularly those in his electorate, and the barriers that this process creates, but this is work that the government should be doing. It cannot fall to the crossbench or to committee inquiries into private member's bills to find solutions to such complex problems. The government needs to do the work to resolve these issues, to address disproportionate impacts on First Nations people and to remove those barriers, but instead we are being asked to support amendments in this bill that will create new barriers, that will raise the bar, that will only put employment opportunities further out of reach for some people who already face significant disadvantage.

Whatever other positive changes this bill contains, we cannot support these specific amendments given those unintended consequences. Some submissions suggested constructive amendments to soften the impact while allowing for consideration of domestic violence information.

ATSILS, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, noted that the bill requires the chief executive to have regard to circumstances of any DV information in blue card checks. They suggested that this should be amended to give the chief executive a discretion as to how this domestic

violence information is dealt with simply by changing 'must' to 'may'. ATSILS and LawRight recommend in their respective submissions that the bill be amended to ensure domestic violence information is only taken into account where it supplements consideration of criminal charges, or at least require that where domestic violence information is considered in a blue card application this is done by someone with specific training and expertise in domestic violence.

There were a number of other submitters, including the QFCC and the Women's Legal Service, who noted the importance of relevant domestic and family violence training and expertise for those people responsible for processing blue card applications. Additional resourcing for this purpose would allow more nuanced consideration of the circumstances of any domestic violence information and proper consideration of the gendered nature of domestic violence when making a determination.

Before I turn to other issues, I want to put on the record concerns communicated to the committee by LawRight about misrepresentation of their evidence in the committee report. This is not the first time I have had to raise concerns about the misrepresentation or oversimplification of witness testimony in committee reports. LawRight is referred to in section 2.1.1 of the committee's report which states that LawRight supports the inclusion of domestic violence information in blue card assessments. The committee received correspondence that sought to clarify their position and evidence asking that LawRight be removed from that paragraph. The report was not amended to reflect this request so I table a copy of that letter and I raise this issue here to ensure LawRight's concerns are properly reflected on the record.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 16 November 2021, from LawRight to the Community Support and Services Committee [\[616\]](#).

Turning to the changes around active efforts to apply the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, these changes should be applied to good effect and are welcome, but they also could go further. ATSILS recommended in its submission that the amendments requiring active efforts should include a definition detailing steps which should be taken to meet that requirement. Submitters also expressed concern that decision-making under the Child Protection Act does not require evidence that active efforts have been made. PeakCare's submission suggested, and QCOS suggested similarly, that a decision should not be able to be made by a court unless it is satisfied that the chief executive or delegated decision-maker has made and can evidence active efforts to comply with the child placement principle. The department's response to this was that it would be inappropriate to remove the court's discretion, especially in urgent circumstances where a child was at risk of harm. I would suggest that this concern could be accommodated by creating an exception for urgent decisions or where there is risk of harm to the child.

Around the provisions to do with case plan review, it was noted in the report that QLS and ATSILS raised concerns about the chief executive's power to refuse to review a case plan and emphasised the importance of case plan reviews to address any concerns a child may have. The department's response simply notes that the purpose of the amendments is to align the rights of children with or without a long-term guardian and that the decision to review the case plan can be challenged before QCAT. The response does not address the more fundamental question of whether the chief executive should be able to refuse a child's request for a case plan review, nor does it engage with the information in the submission from Create Foundation that almost half of all children with a case plan do not know about it and less than 60 per cent of those who knew about their case plan were involved in its development. We would like to see a child's right to a case plan review enshrined in legislation.

The last point I will turn to is the need for improved access to independent legal advice. This is a concern not only in this sphere but also in various other areas of legislation. Submitters, particularly Sisters Inside, noted that some changes proposed by the bill, including the expansion of the reviewable case plan decision framework, will be of limited benefit unless children and their advocates have better access to independent legal advice. This requires far better funding for organisations like Sisters Inside, ATSILS, Legal Aid Queensland and the countless other community legal centres that provide this support. I take the opportunity to implore the government to increase funding to these independent legal advocates.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): I acknowledge that we have student leaders from Runcorn State High School from the electorate of Stretton in the gallery. Welcome.



Mr HEALY (Cairns—ALP) (12.44 pm): The short title of the bill is the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I stand here to make my contribution. As I do, I acknowledge the extremely hard work that ministers have in this particular portfolio. In my four years in this chamber as a proud member of this government, I have seen two extremely competent women take charge of what is a very difficult portfolio. I extend those niceties to both of those women and also to those who work

in the department and many other areas. I recognise the significant challenges and emotional attachment that goes with what is the most important role that we have and that is protecting our children. It is an enormously difficult role. I begin by acknowledging that because, to be honest, I think I would struggle. I get emotional when I look at some of the issues that are being dealt with on a daily basis and the challenges they face. I also acknowledge that the committee, under its outstanding chair, has done some excellent work. I commend it for what it has done.

Queensland is more than halfway through the 10-year Supporting Families Changing Futures reform program. As part of those reforms the Child Protection Act 1999 has been progressively amended. It was amended in 2014 and it was amended again in 2016 and 2017. It was comprehensively reviewed between 2015 and 2017. Priority amendments were made to the Child Protection Reform Amendment Act in 2017, with further opportunities for improvement to be progressed in subsequent stages.

Before I became a member of parliament I spent 35 years working in the tourism industry. My mother and father instilled in myself, my brothers and my sisters that we always had to give back to our community. Ten years before I became the member I met with Desley Boyle, who at that stage had the great privilege of being the member for Cairns. She encouraged me to join an organisation called Access Community Housing. Access Community Housing was one of the largest not-for-profit housing organisations. The position was completely voluntary. I was working in the tourism sector and doing a lot of international travel, but I enjoyed this job. For five years I sat on the board and then for the last 4½ years I became the chair of that organisation.

In my role I could see the significant demand that was out there. What we call the traditional family unit, or the family unit today, is under siege and that is why we need to make amendments to this legislation and we need to make sure it is well funded. This has been going on for a very long time. I am pleased to see that these amendments are being introduced. They will have positive impacts not only in my community but also right across Queensland. The options in the discussion paper are intended to address the outstanding recommendations from the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the Queensland Family and Child Commission under the heading 'Keeping Queensland's children more than safe'. The options in the discussion paper naturally also took into account the Human Rights Act 2019 and legislative frameworks in other jurisdictions.

The former department of child safety, youth and women received 54 written submissions, 181 responses through the Get Involved website, 210 responses through the Youth eHub and undertook 10 targeted, face-to-face consultation sessions attended by over 150 people, including children, young people, parents, families, carers, peak bodies, service providers, legal professionals and, of course, departmental staff. I thank each and every one of those people who participated in this vitally important process. It is essential that we get the feedback. That helps us correlate the data and put the legislation together. In the future we will continue to ask these people to make their important contributions.


I highlight that the bill will achieve its objective of reinforcing children's rights in the legislative framework by requiring the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle to be applied to a standard of 'active efforts', meaning efforts that are purposeful, thorough and timely—these are key words; broadening the purpose of the act to reflect the intent of the legislation and the functions of the chief executive; clarifying how the general principles for ensuring the safety, wellbeing and best interests of a child apply when determining a decision or action is in that child's best interests; and ensuring children are provided with information about their rights and where they can seek help. This is essential.

Having the rights is important but knowing how to access and understand them is just as essential in the process. The bill's objectives will also be achieved by expanding the list of rights enshrined in the charter of rights to include rights relating to culture, religion and language, fairness, respect, development of identity, personal belongings, play and recreational activities; and expanding the existing reviewable decisions framework to allow children to more effectively question decisions made about their care. Bringing these children into the decision-making process not only expands their opportunity for maturing and understanding the challenges but also develops critical thinking, which is essential. Changing the wording of the partnership element of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle will more clearly reflect and clarify the department's commitment to partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, community representatives and organisations in policy and also in program development, service design, delivery and individual child protection case decision-making.

Importantly, information about the existence of domestic violence, particularly where more than one domestic violence order has been issued and there are different complainants, is relevant to a blue card assessment. The Queensland Family and Child Commission acknowledged that considering civil domestic and family violence information as part of a blue card assessment is complex but that assessing this information where there is any criminal history will strengthen the blue card system, enabling a holistic approach. Currently, Queensland has no visibility of decisions made in other jurisdictions and there is no ability under the working with children act for Blue Card Services to share information about blue card outcomes with worker screening units in other jurisdictions.

In its entirety, the bill will support or address outstanding recommendations from the royal commission and the criminal justice report as well as some proposals from stakeholders gathered during the consultation process that I talked about, which was obviously extensive. Strengthening children's voices is a very important part of this process. Most other Australian states and territories have legislative provisions expressing that children and relevant family members should be encouraged and given adequate opportunity to participate fully in the decision-making process. Victoria's legislation, for example, requires the decision-making process to be conducted in a way that the persons involved are able to participate in and understand the process, including any meetings that are held and decisions that are made. The proposed amendments in the bill extend well beyond similar provisions in other jurisdictions. No other jurisdiction places a proactive obligation on a decision-maker to generally listen to, engage with or try to understand the child's view.

I finish by saying that our commitment to supporting this financially has been reflected. We know this needs resourcing. There is a significant disparity between us and those on the other side when it comes to funding these vitally important programs. It is essential and we will continue to do that. There are few greater responsibilities than the protection of our children and we need to ensure we have updated, purposeful and effective legislation. These actions strive to ensure those outcomes. I acknowledge the hard work of the minister, the department and the committee. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (12.53 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, which seeks to improve welfare outcomes for children in care. There are some 12,000 children in the care of the Queensland government and 1,300 live in residential care. This is an enormous responsibility and should be the government's highest priority. Each of those children has a voice that deserves to be heard. Each of those children has a right to be protected from harm. Each one has the right not only to survive but also to thrive. It is equally important that those children be aware of their rights as determined by the Human Rights Act and be supported and equipped to fight for them.

This bill responds to a number of high-level reforms required to fix this government's broken system. It seeks to do this by reinforcing children's rights in the legislative framework to include rights relating to culture, religion and language, fairness, respect, development of identity, personal belongings, play and recreational activities. It strengthens children's voices in decisions that affect them, ensuring there is customary and age-appropriate participation of children in care, and streamlining, clarifying and improving the regulation of care, including certifications and access to orders in other jurisdictions before approving blue card applications.

Firstly, I thank the members of the Community Support and Services Committee for their detailed consideration of the bill and the 18 submitters and attendees at the public hearings in North and Far North Queensland for their contributions. The proposed amendments in this bill form part of Labor's 10-year Supporting Families Changing Futures reform program and is a response to the *Rethinking rights and regulations: towards a stronger framework for protecting children and supporting families* discussion paper that was released for public comment three years ago. Ten years is an unacceptably long time just to get the basics right and taking three years to respond to a discussion paper is indicative of the lack of priority this government gives to protecting our children.

Nearly two years ago I stood in this place and spoke on the Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020, during which I paid tribute to toddler Mason Jett Lee and the 15 other Queensland children known to the department of child safety at that time who had lost their lives at the hands of their abusers. An agonising four long years after the damning review into the role that the department played in Mason's death was made public, the Queensland Child Death Review Board was established in 2020 to be an external viewpoint. Again, four years is an unacceptably long time to improve oversight of the failing systems in place when children are dying from preventable deaths.

Released in February, the board's first annual report into the deaths of dozens of children known to Queensland's child safety department warns that entrenched systemic issues are impacting the speed and quality of help available. The report revealed that more than one in 10 of the 398 youths who died in Queensland last financial year had been known to the department in the 12 months before their deaths. Nine died as a result of assault or neglect and eight from suicide. Even more alarming, between 2015 and 2020, 71 per cent of deaths by fatal assault or neglect were of children known to the child safety department compared to only 29 per cent not known to them.

According to the Child Death Review Board, children known to the department of child safety unit have a mortality rate almost twice as high as other children. The board's chair spoke of workload pressures, resource constraints and the overrepresentation of First Nations children, making up 23 of the 55 deaths and almost half of the suicides. With regard to this alarming statistic, section 5B of the bill embeds all five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle in legislation, which include prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection. Pleasingly, these provisions to strengthen the consideration of those placement principles from simply 'having regard' to the principles to making 'active efforts' to implement the principle, which is an important step towards addressing the overrepresentation of First Nations people in the child safety statistics that I mentioned earlier. On the matter of suicide rates, as an insight into the department's failures the report commanded the department to explain why suicide risk management plans had not been developed for 60 per cent of eligible young people. Above all else, child protection is about preventing child harm and deaths.

The amendments to the Child Protection Act contained in the bill that give children a stronger voice in the management of their care is welcomed. However, for this to be more than just hot air and spin by the government, it is essential that children and young people are meaningfully supported through the often traumatic decision-making process. Extra effort and support must be put in place for those children who have experienced negative long-term interactions with officials and are extremely sceptical of genuine change. You can change the narrative but, if the people are all the same and their histories cannot be erased, the job is a lot more than aspirational words on paper.

The bill makes priority amendments to the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000. The policy objectives of these amendments are in line with the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and, as such, should be enacted as swiftly as possible to ensure the safety of all children.


The majority of stakeholders that submitted to the committee were broadly in favour of the bill and its intent to increase a child's ability to be heard and improve their participation in their own care plans. The majority of concerns related to the importance of carefully managing and sharing domestic violence information so that practical implications and consequences are considered at the same time, noting that a DVO is not evidence that a criminal offence has been committed. The QFCC stated that the existence of a domestic violence protection order, which will affect the respondent's blue card status and their ability to obtain and maintain employment, may provide added barriers for women to report domestic violence and seek protection through domestic violence orders. Creating another barrier for women who are trying to leave abusive relationships is counterproductive to ending violence in the home.

Debate, on motion of Mr Purdie, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.


DEPUTY SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Cameras in Chamber

 **Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Honourable members, I wish to advise the House that a television pool camera will be filming proceedings for a short period from the commencement of matters of public interest.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Domestic and Family Violence; Forensic and Scientific Services

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): When I first became Leader of the Opposition in Queensland I made a promise. I promised that if I saw things were a step in the right direction I would say so. Today the government has announced that it intends to introduce

coercive control legislation. For many victims of domestic and family violence who suffer in the shadows and the dark corners of our homes and our society, things got a little lighter today. I believe in a Queensland where women are safe. I believe in a Queensland where children feel free. I believe in a Queensland where families should not have to live under the heavy, abusive hand of a controlling individual. I believe in a Queensland where women should know that they will be heard, believed and protected. The sad reality in Queensland is that today is not yet that day.

Domestic and family violence is a scourge on us all. It is happening now at an increasing rate. It happens behind closed doors, out of sight, so often in households where friends and neighbours have no idea. We know the size of the task ahead of us. We are seeking to summit the mountain that gets bigger every day and we have a lot of work to do. We earn respect when more women are safe. We earn respect when more children feel safe. We earn respect when more families can access safety. We earn respect when perpetrators stop hurting and start respecting partners and the privilege of living under the same roof as somebody else. We earn respect when we do this every single day for all victims of domestic and family violence.

From opposition we have advocated to strengthen domestic violence laws for many years. We have been calling for coercive control legislation. We have been advocating for funding for frontline services. We wanted the government to act on non-lethal strangulation. Today is a positive step forward that is in no small part thanks to victims' families, who have continued to speak up for their loved ones. They have raised their voices when perpetrators continued to silence them—people like Sue and Lloyd Clarke. Earlier today I had the privilege of chatting with them. Their emotion and how much this means to them is something this place should grasp. Lloyd sees education as the way of breaking that cycle. He sees this as ensuring the legacy of his beloved daughter. Today, their trauma has led to change.

When I became the opposition leader in Queensland I made another promise. I promised Queenslanders that I would hold the government to account. Today the government announced a review into the Queensland forensic services laboratory. It is something we have been calling for but—I will call it as it is—this does not go far enough. It falls well short. On the same day the government made an announcement aimed at protecting and getting justice for domestic violence victims, it has failed to take genuine action on the failings of the forensic services laboratory. I have seen the terms of reference. We have read them. The government's review will not look into one case—not one previous failing. I have listened to Vicki Blackburn. I heard the pain of a family who have not only lost a loved one to violent crime but also been denied justice.

We are not just talking about Shandee, though; we are talking about potentially thousands of victims being denied justice. We are talking about rapists and murderers who have walked free. We are talking about instances where DNA has not been found in blood, where DNA has not been found in vehicles, where DNA has not been found on a forearm test, where DNA was not even found on an alleged offender—the alleged offender's own DNA!

Sadly, the issues with Forensic and Scientific Services are not new. Previous reviews have shown this, but the government cares more about how things look than about actually doing something. There have been many reviews: the Queensland Audit Office report *Delivering forensic services*; the Forensic Services Group's *Variation in forensic DNA profiling success among sampled items and collection methods: a Queensland perspective*; and Queensland Health's internal analysis of Forensic and Scientific Services. Out of the public eye, issues have been raised but the government has not acted. For this government, out of sight is out of mind. Now it has been found out so, as is always the case, it tries to cobble something together to make it look as though it is acting or, at the very least, to kick the can down the road. As a former attorney, the health minister should understand the importance of getting this service right.

Six weeks ago there was a rushed announcement. In the last six weeks the government still has not found someone to do the review. We do not want a system that is adequate; we want a world-class system that serves the people of Queensland and brings perpetrators to justice. If the state government does not start listening and does not start delivering justice for victims, history and Queenslanders will judge it for such.

Is it the case that this minister and Queensland Health are incapable of running this service? Is that where it has got to? Does the minister understand the significance of the failures? Does the minister understand that this is not a political problem; it is a justice problem? Does the minister see this as a political storm that she can ride out—in the same way that this minister has sought throughout the Queensland health crisis to try and find a way to release pressure valves rather than fix the service that is under her control?

It is nearly one year to the day since the minister stood up—and money was going to be the solution. Some \$100 million was going to fix ambulance ramping. Since that time we have continued to see the Queensland health crisis affect everyday Queenslanders every day. The minister might feel very uncomfortable about the health town hall meetings, but they will continue. We would welcome the minister coming to talk to Queenslanders, because when you look into the whites of the eyes of people who are recounting a harrowing experience of waiting for 4½ hours for a loved one to get out of the back of an ambulance and having to—and I quote—walk over bodies in the waiting room—

Mr Harper: What a load of rubbish!

Mr CRISAFULLI: I am absolutely taking the interjection from the member for Thuringowa, and I will tell you why: he is chair of the committee that ran a sham inquiry into this. Rather than look at the services delivered by Queensland Health—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Pause the clock. Member for Thuringowa, you will cease using that report as a prop.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Rather than look at the things that Queensland Health was responsible for, the member ran a sham inquiry. Do members want to know how many times—


Mr HARPER: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I take personal offence and I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I withdraw. The report mentioned ambulance ramping zero times. Ambulance ramping in this state is at 38 per cent. I am going to give the minister a little history lesson. The minister wants to say that it is all because of Canberra, COVID and—my favourite—patients who dare to turn up and use the ED. When this government came to office ambulance ramping was at 15 per cent. It was at 30 per cent when former premier Bligh described it as a basket case. Now it is at 38 per cent—the worst in the nation. We do not have any data beyond December. Minister, we would love to see that data. I have a sneaking suspicion it is getting worse—the worst in the nation.

(Time expired)

Health System

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (2.11 pm): I am pleased that I get to follow the Leader of the Opposition. Firstly, I reflect on the comments of the Leader of the Opposition in relation to the announcements today of the government's response in relation to coercive control and the commission of inquiry. This goes more generally to the Leader of the Opposition and his leadership of the LNP. The Leader of the Opposition stated when he took over the leadership that if there were something being done right he would acknowledge it. Here today he still could not help himself but play politics with such an important issue around domestic and family violence.

They call for a review into the forensic services system but then complain that we are kicking the can down the road. It does not matter what this government does, the Leader of the Opposition will put a negative slant on everything because that is who he is and what he does. That is the leadership of the LNP that he shows. It is not that dissimilar to that of the Prime Minister of this country.

In relation to the review into the forensic services system, I am very disappointed and concerned that the Leader of the Opposition is making statements both in this House and publicly that he already knows what the findings will be of the forensic services review. He has already predetermined what that review is going to find. He is saying, 'There are Queenslanders who are being denied justice. There are Queenslanders being put in harm's way ... That is clear,' yet the review has not even commenced.

There is a coronial investigation going on into the Shandee case—reopened at my request. There are comprehensive terms of reference to look into the system. The Shandee case specifically talked about a type of testing that was being used and critical in relation to the DNA analysis service and the profiling kit used. That system will be reviewed as part of the terms of reference that I have announced. I want an acknowledgement from those on other side—because it never happens—that the DNA profiling kit that will be investigated is the DNA profiling kit and system that was introduced on 3 December 2012. I am interested in knowing whether that analysis that was put in place in 2012 is failing the people of Queensland. I want to know that too.


Those on the opposite side have again talked about our health system and patient-off-stretcher times. They have never talked about the demands on the health system. The Leader of the Opposition says that we need to look at the whole system. I could not agree more. We need to look at the whole health system in this state and in this country—not just the public hospital system, but the primary and allied healthcare system, funding from the states and Commonwealth and what we should be doing together.

As they continue to talk down Queensland and our delivery of health care to the people of Queensland, I reflect again on my comments earlier today. Their four-point plan is apparently going to fix everything. If we just followed their advice it would fix everything. What we are seeing in Western Australia today is a 47 per cent transfer of care within 30 minutes. In Victoria 59.83 per cent of patients are seen within 40 minutes. In New South Wales they have seen a decline of 10 per cent since the April-June quarter 2020.

Jurisdictions across the country are dealing with ramping and these pressures. They are all willing to talk about the solutions that would improve the health system. It is not about shifting the blame or responsibility; it is about collaboration and cooperation with our stakeholders across the health system—our doctors, our nurses and our primary and allied healthcare workers—as well as the Commonwealth and state governments. It is this level of cooperation and collaboration that we need to see and not the political pointscore that we see from the Leader of the Opposition.

(Time expired)

2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games; Mooloolah River

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.16 pm): Thank you very much, Monsieur le President. 'A dix ans des Jeux, Brisbane 2032 s'offre une première polémique.' I hear the question asked: what on earth did he just say? I did French at school. I may not have passed French, but I did it. What it said is this: 'Ten years before the games, Brisbane 2032 has its first controversy.'

Ms PEASE: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am of the understanding that English must be spoken in this chamber.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order!

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not need the assistance of members of this House when I am taking points of order. I will hear points of order in silence. I was seeking advice in relation to exactly that point, Member. There is no standing order that you have to speak English in this House. However, there is a convention that you should provide an English translation to Hansard at the completion of your speech. I was taking that advice so I do not know whether the member provided the translation.

Mr BLEIJIE: The translation, as I did suggest, is: 'Ten years before the games, Brisbane 2032 has its first controversy.' That is from the French media. I table that for the House.

Tabled paper: Article from *FrancoisJeux.com*, dated 4 May 2022, titled 'Ten years before the Games, Brisbane 2032 has its first controversy' [617].

We would think that 10 years out from the games that the international media would be focused on how great the games are going to be in Brisbane in 2032—all the athletes, the International Olympic Committee and everybody getting together. The first media we get is about the boyfriend. The French media—

Mr Nicholls: The language of love.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. The first piece of media about the Olympics where Queensland gets to shine internationally is the petit ami—boyfriend, translated for members. That is what the Premier did. When the Premier was asked about it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Comments will be directed through the chair.

Mr BLEIJIE: When the Premier was asked about it at the Labour Day march, she said, 'It was all informal. There was nothing to it. They just happened to be in Sydney.' They just happened to be in Sydney with the International Olympic Committee chair, the Australian Olympic Committee chair, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, her chief of staff and two spin doctors. They just all happened to be in the same place at the same time.

The first question is: why on earth would you have a Brisbane 2032 Olympic meeting in Sydney? Secondly, the photographs revealed it for what it was. It was not an informal get-together and they all happened to be down there. There were papers, minutes of the meeting, an agenda and name tags. The chief of staff was relegated to the back table. The Premier's petit ami—boyfriend—was at the table. It shows a complete lack of judgement on the part of the Premier. Why do we see it?

An opposition member: Arrogant.


Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection—third-term Labor government arrogance. This Premier believes she can do what she wants without consequences. She is not listening. It is that 'ruler' mentality. When faced with a barrage of criticism, she came out the next day trying to convince Queenslanders she understands that she made a mistake. It was rubbish. It was only because they got hammered on the news that night that she was forced to apologise. She did not mean it. She is trying to pull a Peter Beattie with her constant apologies. I note that she is making a lot of apologies lately—and she ought to—on everything, including the crime crisis, the housing crisis and the health crisis, but it is not believable. No-one believes it. They do not believe it because la Premiere abandonnee l'integrite! The Premier has abandoned integrity in this state. That is a translation for Labor members.

The Premier has absolutely abandoned all forms of integrity in this state. She should be ashamed. She is not listening. It was a complete lack of judgement on her part to have her boyfriend sitting at the official table. Queenslanders will not forget. The Premier has stopped listening to them. Queenslanders are sick and tired of a celebrity Premier. Who could forget that she allowed celebrities in when Queenslanders were locked out? She allowed footballers' wives, boyfriends and girlfriends over the border to live it up at a Gold Coast hotel while cutting Queenslanders off at the border—not even letting Queensland citizens in—because she prefers to walk the red carpet every day than rolling up her sleeves and working on behalf of Queenslanders. Rather than fixing the health crisis, the housing crisis, the integrity crisis—all of the crises we are having in Queensland—she would rather be seen with the flash mob with the celebrity status she has. It is a shame. Queenslanders are not falling for it anymore.

In the short remaining time I will address a huge issue on the Sunshine Coast: the Mooloolah River entrance. I note the minister is in the chamber today. Another trawler called *Here you go Donna* got stuck today trying to get into Mooloolaba harbour. The member for Maroochydore and I recently met Rachel Bermingham from Beach Matters Group. Nothing is being done. In a question on notice, the Minister for Transport said they have a review happening. People's lives are at risk because of the dangerous Mooloolah River entrance to the harbour. It has to be fixed before people lose their lives.

(Time expired)

Satellite Hospitals

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (2.22 pm): It is always interesting to follow the speech of a true conservative. We know that conservatives always have a desire to pry into the personal lives of everyone else and they assume the right to direct the personal lives of everyone else, so I do mark that as the speech of a true conservative.

Today I rise to talk about two important milestones in the Queensland Health system under Labor. This morning we heard about the sod turning for our satellite hospitals at Redlands and Caboolture—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Pause the clock. That was unparliamentary. I would ask you to withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Mr WHITING: As we also heard today, we can look forward to sod turning at Tugun and Ripley. These are the first of seven satellite hospitals we will be seeing in Queensland. They are an Australian first, a true Queensland creation, and Queensland should be very proud of them. As we know, these satellite hospitals will take pressure off our hospitals. They will perform a range of regular and day visit procedures, including: renal dialysis, chemotherapy, wound management, oncology appointments, paediatrician appointments and breast screening. These will be hugely important parts of our health system and are a very welcome development.

The other welcome development we heard about, as the health minister announced, is that 120 new paramedics will be starting this month. This is hugely important. They are part of the 535 who will start this term, and I congratulate the health minister on that as well. It is very clear that only Labor backs our frontline workers. We never talk them down. We will never undermine them for political

advantage. This investment in our paramedics comes at a time when, as we have heard, we had the four busiest days ever for paramedics in the last five months. There are more ambulance visits to more Queensland homes than ever before. As we can see, it is very clear that Labor invests in our healthcare system. Labor builds our healthcare system, and that includes over 1,300 more beds since January 2015.

In this term we will see an extra 9,475 frontline workers in our health system. We invest in health. Compare that to the record of the LNP. We heard a bit more about that this morning. We always knew they sacked 4,400 workers during the Newman era, including 1,800 nurses. They closed the Barrett Centre. As the Treasurer said this morning, that represented the biggest cut in mental health in Queensland's—if not Australia's—history. It was a tragic event. Look at what happens at the federal level. Let's look at the record of the LNP at the federal level. As we heard this morning, they walked away from a fifty-fifty split in health funding. They stuck at 45 per cent. They will not go any further than that. We have also heard they will not put serious health funding on the agenda of National Cabinet. It is a disgrace. If we talk about what they have done in aged care, that just compounds their record.

I want to pay my respects to those aged-care workers who have taken the decision to go out on strike today in support of better pay, and I include my very dear friend Caiden Neate, who was at the rally today. These people are taking action to get better wages. The federal government has gone silent about the recommendations of the Productivity Commission on how to improve the aged-care system. This is at a time when we know there are hundreds of Queenslanders in public hospital beds waiting on federally funded aged-care packages, and as we heard this morning there are over 400 Queenslanders in hospital due to COVID. What we have seen is that those federal government actions are late. Let's use another Spanish term: Ellos son muy flojos. They are very lazy. They are a disgrace. If you compare what they have done, they are nowhere near us.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I would ask all members to remain speaking in English if they possibly could.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Budget



Mr JANETZKI (Toowoomba South—LNP) (2.27 pm): There will be no French from me today. I promise.

Dr Rowan interjected.

Mr JANETZKI: I think French was the official language of England until the 14th century, but I will not take that. Today I want to turn the spotlight back onto the state government's financial management. Right now it is all about the federal government and the opposition and what they believe the economy should look like. As I watch 'Albo' plundering around the country forgetting his policies, I am reminded of what we have here in Queensland and the importance of the dates that are ahead for us in this year's budget. Time and time again we have seen that this government is characterised by three things when it comes to economic management: new taxes, wasteful spending and the wrong priorities. We will see that all over again during the budget in six weeks time.

Let us just go back. Over the course of the Palaszczuk government we have seen more than 10 new taxes across the term. Just last December the Treasurer broke a promise. In 2020 he broke a debt promise, and in 2021 he broke an election promise not to introduce new taxes. In December in MYFR we saw the Treasurer introduce a new tax, and we will see the flow-through impacts of that in the budget in June.

We see every day the wasteful spending of this Labor government—with \$200 million on a quarantine facility in Wellcamp for a thousand beds and not one of them goes to new social housing beds or homelessness beds.

Mr Watts: Or hospital beds.

Mr JANETZKI: Or hospital beds—I take the interjection from the member for Toowoomba North. That is a thousand beds, and they could have been used for the social housing crisis. There are 50,000 households waiting for social housing right now, with 80 per cent of them classed as very high need. Instead, the government blows \$200 million on a quarantine facility that is a white elephant. We know that there is over \$3 billion in cost overruns in key infrastructure projects. Cross River Rail has blown out, and the Coomera Connector has blown out from \$1.5 billion to \$2.1 billion. There are over \$3 billion in cost blowouts plaguing infrastructure projects across Queensland.


Then we have the wrong priorities on display every day with this government. We now have a series of Auditor-General reports that have blown the whistle on the transparency and timeliness weaknesses of this government. We have seen the Auditor-General reports time and time again.

Accounting trickery has been a hallmark of this government's budgets. It started with loading up debt on government owned corporations, then it went into raiding public servant superannuation, and last year we saw the dodgy valuation of the titles registry office. Already in this bill before the House we have seen a billion dollars of bond money for renters being popped into the back pocket of the Treasurer. We have seen the accounting trickery, so we will be looking for it again in this budget because they are running out of hollow logs and raids that they can enact.

The elephant in the room, however, is cost of living. Inflation across the nation is 5.1 per cent, but in Queensland it is actually six per cent. At a time when the government have been seeking out red carpets, announcements and ribbon cuttings, they have been silent on the cost-of-living pressures facing Queenslanders. There will be an opportunity for the Treasurer to speak on the cost-of-living pressures facing Queensland people. As we have seen time and time again, this government will seek out the short cut, they will seek out the red carpet and they will seek out trickery when it comes time to present the books.

We know that new taxes will not grow the Queensland economy. We also know that wasteful spending is disrespectful of hardworking Queensland taxpayers. On this side of the House, we will always hold the government to account on infrastructure cost blowouts and on the \$100 million that was promised one year ago today that has not improved the health system or ambulance ramping in this state. We will always focus on the wrong priorities of this government because those wrong priorities reveal every single day that this government is concerned more about the way things look than how things actually are.

Federal Election, Funding Commitments

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.32 pm): I am combative by nature and I will not shy away from a fight or from fighting for the people of Thuringowa on tackling the hardest issues, like crime and community safety. We are delivering 150 more police, more police stations and more resources. We have changed laws in this place with bipartisan support—serious offenders must not get bail, presumption against bail. We have delivered programs and funding, with millions of dollars for Project Booyah, Transition 2 Success, Clontarf, STARS, the pathways college, flexi school, the Lighthouse, and Murri Court, and I am working hard to deliver a specialist youth Murri Court in Townsville. In my community of Thuringowa, I have got Community Gro which are delivering a diversionary program. They get recurrent funding of \$500,000 to look after young people after hours—from when school finishes until about 11 o'clock at night. They do a great job looking after 65 kids a quarter.

We are delivering—versus the LNP, which consistently blame the state government on this issue. They tried boot camps but failed. They tried serious reoffending. They tried breach of bail. They failed. That is a 10-year-old policy. We had the Leader of the Opposition in Townsville trying to say that it is the best thing since sliced bread. It failed, with 90 per cent of people reoffending.

They continue to blame the state government, when the Prime Minister himself said in Darwin that it is not up to one level of government alone to solve the issue of crime. He then went on to commit \$14 million to the Northern Territory to combat crime. I wrote to the member for Herbert, Phil Thompson, because he stood beside the Prime Minister at that time. He has done nothing but blame the state government and buck pass on this issue, but he has gone missing in action. I wrote to him—and if the printers worked today I would table the letter—and asked where our \$14 million in Townsville is. The Northern Territory population is the same as Townsville and the surrounding district. They got \$14 million. He misled the people in the Upper Ross Community Centre the other night when he said that it was to deliver more police for the Northern Territory. No, it was not. I will tell you what it did.

Mr Purdie interjected.

Mr HARPER: Come in spinner. I will tell you exactly what it did, and it sounds very familiar. It was, as the Prime Minister said—

Mr Purdie interjected.

Mr HARPER: I will take your interjection because you have got nothing, mate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Your comments will come through the chair.

Mr HARPER: The member has got nothing. He said that it was to deliver a community-led response, with \$1.2 million for a Safety at Home project, \$1.3 million for youth camps, \$1.5 million for youth training and early intervention services, \$600,000 for CCTV, \$2 million for safe and secure places and \$3.4 million for a mental health service. That is what they are delivering in the Northern Territory,

but what do we get in Townsville? Nothing from Thompson. What he did today was stand up in Townsville—and they are in caretaker mode—and say, ‘If I get elected, I’ll give you \$500,000 for security cameras.’ Are you joking? Where were you three years ago when we needed to tackle it? When the Prime Minister says that all levels of government need—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! We have clearly all missed each other over the Easter break. Let us see if we can get through the rest of the afternoon with some order in the House.

Mr HARPER: I say to Phil Thompson, ‘You failed.’ He has gone missing in action. That money should have been delivered in Townsville and he knows it. He has done nothing but blame and buck pass when we need all levels of government working together to address the issue. If they can deliver \$14 million to community safety in the Northern Territory—

Mr Purdie interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Ninderry, you are on a warning.

Mr HARPER: I say to the federal member, ‘Stump up.’ Maybe it is out of his reach. Maybe it is above him to deliver for Townsville because he has done nothing but play politics with this. His own Prime Minister said that all levels of government need to work together. He needs to stop with the buck passing, the blaming and the dusting off of the 10-year-old policies that failed. We need to be working together to tackle this. I will not shy away from the toughest issues. I ask the federal member if he gets re-elected to work with us. Help us tackle the issue by working together. That is all we ask.

Community Safety, Women



Ms CAMM (Whitsunday—LNP) (2.37 pm): I too would like to acknowledge the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce report: *Hear her voice*. As we work through the recommendations, I recognise how much this means to domestic and family violence victims—those who are alive and, sadly, those who are no longer with us—and their families in changing the way we support them as we work towards securing women’s safety across our state. The task force is seeking feedback on women’s and girls’ experiences of the criminal justice system as victims and survivors of sexual violence. I think it is very important we reflect upon what the opposition has raised as a very serious issue of the forensic services lab.

I would like everyone in this House and in particular the minister to imagine this. Imagine finishing work hosting a charity event where you were the MC. It is 8 pm. You head out to your local nightspot. You are catching up with friends. You order a drink—a vodka, lime and soda. You put it down. You turn your back. As you chat with your friends, the music is loud. You may dance later. You sip again. It is not more than 10 minutes and you start to feel very unwell. You feel a wave of sickness. You tell your girlfriend you are going to the bathroom. As you head there, you feel very unwell so you bypass the bathroom and head to the car park. As you walk out, the fresh air hits you. The last thing you remember seeing is the street lights. Your legs feel like jelly before they go from under you. You wake. Your head hurts. Your head is pounding. Your body is aching. You are in and out of consciousness. You feel something—something inside you. Imagine realising that someone is inside you.

You want to scream, but you cannot. You open your eyes. You see hair. You feel a body on yours. You pass out again. When you wake, you wake in a ball of pain. You have been dragged. As you touch your lip, you feel blood. You taste blood. Your body is bruised. You have scratches. Your underwear is torn. Pieces of gravel and dirt are stuck to your skin. You somehow manage to get to your car to get home. You are so sore—sore on the inside. Your hips feel torn.


You summon the courage to call a friend because you need to go to the hospital. They sit in emergency with you, waiting for what feels like days. No-one is qualified to use the rape kit on this shift and you have to wait for the shift change. They examine your most private area, the area most violated. They take swabs. They take hair samples. They check your nails.

In the days following, you experience the shock that you have been drugged, that you have been raped, that you have given your statement to police and they think this has happened to other girls at that same bar many times before. You will have to wait for the tests. They will contact you.

Months and months pass. The police prosecutor calls. There is no DNA. There is no evidence. Your legs feel like jelly again as they collapse from underneath you. That perpetrator, that rapist, that person who violated you so, is out there. He will do it again. There will be no justice. There will be no trial. All of your courage is wasted for nothing.

That is why the lab review matters. Women are contacting the opposition about why this matters, why this should matter to every member of this House, why this matters to Queenslanders. We talk about safety and we talk about women's safety, yet there is just this one lab, which has such an important job to protect Queenslanders and to provide evidence so that victims who are so courageous in coming forward can have their justice. Hear her voice.

Health System

 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (2.42 pm): We are in the grips of a federal government health crisis. It is a federal government health crisis that is impacting hospitals all across Australia. It is a federal government health crisis that is seeing every single health minister across the country call upon Scott Morrison to fix the system which he has broken. We still see nothing from Scott Morrison and the federal government as they refuse to fix the health crisis which they have created across this country.

It is affecting our hospitals here in Queensland. It is affecting our hospitals in the community of Bundaberg which I represent and, of course, across the greater Wide Bay region. We are seeing that more and more families cannot access a GP. The funding is not there for more and more GPs to come into our communities. I speak with families, individuals and pensioners every single week who tell me they are waiting three weeks to see a GP. Three weeks! Families cannot wait that long, individuals cannot wait that long and pensioners cannot wait that long. What they do is go to the emergency departments of our hospitals right across not only Queensland but also across the country. That is putting more and more pressure on our health system.

Further to that, when a family is able to finally get in to see a GP, they cannot afford it. They cannot afford to see a GP because the federal government refuses to talk about the rebates around Medicare; they absolutely refuse to.

When cost-of-living pressures go up for households and the general community, they go up for our GPs as well. When their rent goes up, their fees need to go up, which then falls directly back onto their patients. The other week I spoke to a single mum who had to pay \$70 out of pocket for a 15-minute consultation. Is that what Australia looks like under Scott Morrison? It is what families feel like under Scott Morrison. \$70 out of pocket for a 15-minute GP consultation—it simply is not good enough.

We know that it is the federal government that is failing the primary health network and that is putting pressure back onto our Queensland hospitals. We know that the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners said that, in the last financial year, of the 1.8 million presentations to our Queensland emergency departments, 40 per cent of those presentations should have been able to access the family doctor. 40 per cent of all ED presentations in the last financial year should have been able to access the family doctor, but they cannot because of the Scott Morrison federal government which is causing this crisis not only in Bundaberg, the Wide Bay and Queensland but also all across our country.

When we talk about the failures of the federal government with health, let's talk about aged care as well. I will note that there are aged-care workers right across this state out on strike at the moment because of the way they are treated under a Liberal-National coalition government in this country. It has been years coming. It is not a surprise—it is not as though ScoMo only woke up the other day and realised—this has been institutional under a Liberal government.

Right now we have a minimal number of registered nurses in our aged-care facilities. In some aged-care facilities, there are no registered nurses on shift. Last week at the markets I spoke with a registered nurse who works in an aged-care facility in Bundaberg. She did the night shift the night before on the Saturday. She was the only registered nurse on shift for 110 residents. One registered nurse for 110 residents! That is what things have come to under this Liberal Scott Morrison government. It is not good enough.

What does it mean when there is not a registered nurse on shift? It means that residents cannot get assessed. They cannot have simple procedures done that a registered nurse is able to do in that aged-care facility. That means that at three o'clock in the morning when a resident cannot get a catheter changed, they are taken to the hospital by an ambulance. It is happening more and more across the Wide Bay. I know that the member for Maryborough feels it. I know that the member for Hervey Bay feels it. I know that people in my community feel it as well.

Let's talk about long-stay care because you cannot transition into aged care. Right now in Bundaberg Hospital 10 beds are being taken up by people who are medically fit for discharge but cannot be transitioned into aged care. That is because of the Scott Morrison federal government. There are 10 beds taken up right now. It is costing the Queensland taxpayer \$2,000 a day because those patients cannot transition into aged care.

We need a new federal government. We need a government that will fix this federal government health crisis. We need a new prime minister. We need an Albanese government.

(Time expired)

Federal Election



Dr MacMAHON (South Brisbane—Grn) (2.47 pm): Queenslanders are facing an increasingly uncertain future. If there is one thing that 2020 has taught us it is that the leaders of our major parties do not have our backs. Queenslanders are experiencing skyrocketing house prices and rents. We are now facing one of the worst housing affordability crises in history. Queenslanders are experiencing the impacts of climate change. The recent devastating floods and the 2019-20 bushfires are a reminder of what we will face with even greater frequency if we do not tackle climate change. Queenslanders are experiencing a rapid rise in the cost of living, while wages stagnate and health and education remain chronically underfunded.

Politics should be about offering a vision for how we can change society for the better, but as Australians stare down these overlapping crises this election, the leaders of our two old parties seem more interested in personal insults than outlining a bold and positive plan for the future.

Is this seriously the best we can hope for: means tested child care and a pitiful amount of new social homes? Meanwhile, over the last two years, 47 Australian billionaires doubled their wealth to \$255 billion.

Labor and the LNP both support the stage 3 tax cuts—tax cuts for the ultrarich—that will cut \$184 billion out of the budget and see billionaires like Clive Palmer save \$9,000 a year in tax. That is \$184 billion ripped out of the services that Australians need. The ABC reported this morning that the big four banks pocketed \$14.4 billion in profit according to their 2020 half-year results. Together they hold \$1.87 trillion in home loans. This housing crisis has not happened in a vacuum. Some people are getting very rich off the back of this housing crisis and we have seen the big banks' profits soar as people pay massively inflated prices for their homes. Meanwhile on the ground Queenslanders suffer.

We have seen older women facing homelessness in droves. People renting under the National Rental Affordability Scheme are being turned out of their homes as the scheme is being phased out. Any renter in Queensland will tell you that they are treated like a second-class citizen, facing massive rent increases and are not even able to make minor modifications to their home. People's lives are worse because the government cares more about the big end of town than its own communities.

This is not a case of Australia not being able to afford an ambitious vision for the future. No, this is a political choice of the two old parties so deeply entwined with big corporations. We have two major parties that would rather make everyday people suffer than actually go after their big corporate donors. Governments do not want to talk about real reforms that would transform people's lives for the better—things like capping rent increases and building a million affordable homes countrywide—

An honourable member interjected.

Dr MacMAHON: Do you want to talk about that? They do not want to talk about bringing dental into Medicare, unlimited Medicare covered mental health sessions, cutting power prices with a publicly owned electricity retailer, increasing the pension by \$244 a fortnight and increasing JobSeeker to at least \$88 per day, scrapping means testing and introducing free child care. These are the bold, exciting and urgent policies the Greens are taking to this election. Here in Queensland these are the policies that are shifting votes to the Greens in Griffith, Brisbane and Ryan and in the Senate. In my part of town having a federal member actually willing to fight for the community—someone like Max Chandler-Mather—would be transformative. As Max knows from the thousands of doorknocks and conversations he has had, it is an ambitious plan that voters are looking for, not the crushing status quo.

The old parties do not want to talk about these ideas. When I tried to introduce a levy on the big banks last year Labor ministers stood up here and argued with great passion that a crossbencher has no right to make such a suggestion and my bill was struck off the *Notice Paper*. We could have had an extra billion dollars in our healthcare system.

We have seen Labor take an even more unambitious policy platform to this election than in 2019. At least then we saw proposals like a phase-out of negative gearing and proper access to abortions. Now we have seen Labor run terrified from the stand they took in 2019. No policy or statement is too conservative for them. What Labor and the LNP do not want to talk about this election campaign are real policies—

(Time expired)

Federal Election



Mr KELLY (Greenslopes—ALP) (2.52 pm): I will tell honourable members what Labor want to speak about this election. They want to speak about a better future, and that is exactly what Terri Butler is doing in Griffith. She fights for her community every single day. That is why she has delivered and is delivering for the World Wellness Group in Stones Corner a refugee health service. That is why she is out there delivering for Coorparoo Australian Rules Club and for the Holland Park Hawks. That is what Terri Butler does every single day—works for a better future. That is why she is going to fix Medicare, aged care and child care, because we believe in a better future. We are not sitting around in some fantasy land that we are never ever going to be able to deliver; we will leave that to the Greens. Now I want to turn to a positive note.

Mr Minnikin: Take their preferences though. You're going to need them.

Mr KELLY: I want to turn to a positive note, member for Chatsworth. I want to say something positive about ScoMo. There is one thing that ScoMo succeeds at over and over again. He succeeds at failing. He has failed over and over again. During the bushfires, did he pick up the cudgels and come back and protect his community? Oh no! He said, 'I'll have another pina colada please.' That is what ScoMo said. 'If people find out I'm on holidays—don't actually tell them. Just go and lie to the community.' That is what we got from ScoMo.

I say to the women in the House what a failure he is when it comes to the treatment of women. I was honoured and privileged to join the March 4 Justice outside, as I know did many members of this House. What was the response of the Prime Minister? 'They should be happy that we're not shooting at them.' He is a failure when it comes to women.

What about the floods? 'Prime Minister, would you like a mop or a broomstick?' 'No, I'm too busy holding my selfie stick and please don't let anybody get any help until I get my selfie.' That is another failure when it comes to floods. 'Rather than trying to unite the country, let's divide it. Let's say to New South Wales people they are going to get some more money and to Queensland people they are going to get a lot less money.'

Then there was university funding. At a time when we need to be investing more in universities, at a time when we have skill shortages all over the place and we have lost potentially one of our biggest export earners in university funding, that is the time they cut funding. When they lost those overseas students and the income they brought in, which level of government supported the university sector? It was the Palaszczuk Labor government that went out there and saved jobs in my electorate.

Then there was the vaccination rollout. We had to wait four months before we started vaccination. We had vaccines ready to go in December, but they did not start rolling out till March. How many people died as a result of that decision? I can tell honourable members it was a lot. Quarantine was another absolute failure. The member for Toowoomba South wants to talk about Wellcamp. Why does he not talk about the fact that there is a place out there at Pinkenba that is never, ever going to be built, that will never be used—ever?

Aged care—what a failure there. Where do we start? The absolute utter insult of offering aged-care workers a one-off \$800 pay hit is just disgusting and disgraceful. The royal commission said as much. They did nothing to implement the recommendations of that aged-care royal commission.

If honourable members want to talk about housing affordability, let's talk about NRAS, another absolute and massive failure by the Morrison government. What about the Indigenous housing partnerships that they walked away from here in Queensland? They absolutely walked away from that. For the first time in 50 years the federal government did not show up to fund that. They are absolutely failing Queenslanders and absolutely failing First Nations people.

What about the Uluru Statement from the Heart? If honourable members want to see another failure, they can look to the failure of the federal government when they empowered a group to go out and ask, 'What do you want moving forward?', and they said, 'We want the Uluru Statement from the Heart. This will empower us.' They then said, 'We're not going to give it to you.' That was an utter failure.


How, with this litany of failure and disaster, can we possibly risk having a Morrison government dealing with the cost of living? It is too important. How can we possibly trust them to deal with climate change? How can we possibly trust them to back workers to get decent pay rises? We cannot. Only an Albanese Labor government will deliver a better future.

CHILD PROTECTION REFORM AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 951, on motion of Ms Linard—


That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (2.57 pm), continuing: The LNP is committed to protecting all children, especially those who cannot speak for themselves, no matter their economic background, gender or where they live. The need to empower children and support them in navigating their journey through care is paramount. How many heartbreaking stories do we hear of children pleading to be kept with their long-term foster families only to be forced to reunify with their biological family and placed in an unsafe situation such as parents using drugs, domestic and family violence including physical and sexual abuse, and guardians unwilling or unable to protect the child from harm?

In almost a quarter of the cases reviewed by the Child Death Review Board, cumulative harm was not recognised or responded to appropriately by the department. How can the department truly engage in the child's protection if history keeps repeating itself, each time further damaging the child on every level of their being and limiting their futures? Only a few weeks ago a former child safety officer blew the whistle on the terrible practices happening in Townsville and the disastrous outcomes for a young child.

The former departmental employee said that there had been a tenfold increase in carers' complaints about deteriorating workplace culture in the department. When we run out of carers, hope ceases to exist for many children. Carers are the department's right hand; it is a no-brainer to respect and look after them.

So much more needs to be done to improve the system that predicts the future of so many young lives. Sadly, under Labor, Queensland's child safety system and standards are at great risk of remaining unacceptably low. Those opposite must act now—not when they get around to it in another three, four or 10 years. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (2.59 pm): I begin my contribution by acknowledging the tireless efforts of the Child Safety staff in our community and, of course, the foster carers. It is a very hard job. Along with the previous minister, I was lucky to get to go out to the Inala office and speak with some of the workers there. They truly do an amazing job. It is a really hard job and they do it for very little thanks, day in and day out. I place on record my appreciation for all that they do. I know that the work they are doing in the Inala office near my community is replicated right across the state of Queensland. I was lucky enough to visit with the former minister, Minister Farmer. I acknowledge the passion of all of the members of the committee and the ministers who have been working on this bill, the department and the many sector stakeholders who have made submissions as we have moved through this process of reform.

Previous speakers have touched on the fact that Queensland is currently midway through the 10-year review of the Supporting Families Changing Futures reform. As part of these reforms, the Child Protection Act 1999 is being progressively amended and reviewed. The explanatory notes have advised of the priorities around these reforms and the further amendments that are being made as part of this process. We have had some really fantastic submissions. I will touch on those later. There were 10 targeted face-to-face consultations attended by over 150 people, including children and young people, parents and their families, carers, peak bodies, service providers, legal professionals and departmental staff.

I want to reflect on how lucky I have been, not as a member of parliament but just as a member of the community, to get to know a few foster carers and observe their relationships with the children they are caring for. Obviously there are very strict privacy protocols around those relationships, but I can say that I have observed informally the really amazing job they do in providing stability, love and care for those children. It is a really beautiful thing to see. I know that there are a lot of foster carers throughout Queensland. I think every single member of this House would join me in thanking foster and kinship carers for the work they do.

A little while ago I was visiting a friend who had taken on a foster-child. She introduced me to the kids, who were primary school aged. They had just come home from school and were quite excited. They were chatting away about their day and my friend said, 'This is Jess. She is a member of parliament. She is a member of the government.' Now, to most six-year-olds that does not mean

anything, but this kid immediately stopped, looked at me very seriously and then turned to her and said, 'Does she need to talk to me about something?' It was really interesting to see that change in behaviour. To see them interacting in this natural family environment and to see the excitement he had as he came home from school was a really wonderful thing. I thought it was interesting that he knew, at his young age, what a person from government might mean for him. That is an insight that most kids that age would not necessarily have.

This reform and the amendments in this bill are all about making sure that these kids actually have their voices heard. It is very clear to me that if this young fellow had a say he would very clearly want to stay where he is, because he is very happy there. He is well cared for and very loved as part of that family.

I really loved one of the comments made by Mr Jake Shields—I have heard him referred to a few times today—who is a young consultant from the Create Foundation. He said—

I dream of every young person having a smile on their face knowing that they have control over their own life ... nothing about us without us.

From speaking to the minister and some of the members of the committee, I know that is exactly the intent of this bill.

During the consultation process stakeholders recognised the importance of the legislative framework for protecting children's rights and said that they felt many children in care do not know or understand their rights or, if they do, how to actually go about exercising and executing those rights. The Create Foundation's 2018 national survey of children in care, published in the report *Out-of-home care in Australia: children and young people's views after five years of national standards*, found that only about 30 per cent of children in care in Queensland specifically knew about the charter of rights for children in care.

The bill proposes to amend the act to expand the broader purpose, to introduce participation principles into the Child Protection Act and to increase the list of rights. These reforms were supported by stakeholders. Ms Carly Jacobitz, the director from Life Without Barriers, stated—

Children and young people should be given the opportunity to have all of the information that is relevant to their world be that education, be that culture, be that family connection. That it is incumbent on us to facilitate those views and those wishes in the safest way possible.

Section 5A of the act provides that the main principle for administering the act is that the safety, wellbeing and best interests of a child, both through childhood and the rest of the child's life, are paramount. One of the stakeholders, Ms Sandra Oui, expressed the sentiment of ensuring children have a voice. At the Townsville public hearing she said—

It is about making sure our children have a voice. It is about making sure that when their voice is wanting to be heard someone is going to be there to give them that 100 per cent support that they are comfortable with. Like I said, we all come from different diverse cultural backgrounds and one shoe might fit one person but not necessarily fit another person.

That is a very good point. It is all about ensuring it is principle based rather than prescription based. The department stated—

What is in the best interests of a child will vary significantly from child to child, and in different circumstances for the same child. There is a risk that prescriptively defining 'best interests' will limit flexibility in considering the needs of each child, at each point of contact with the child protection system.

It is all about retaining flexibility and, therefore, allowing, as I said, a principle based and not a prescription based approach. We can then continue to be responsive to the needs of a child and to the voice of that child. The rights of children are enshrined in the charter of rights, which will be expanded by the bill, at clause 66, to include rights relating to culture, religion, language, fairness, respect, development of identity, personal belongings, and play and recreational activities.

I think there will be a lot of speakers in the debate today but, as I said earlier, the bill can be really well summarised in the words of Jake Shields—

Participation is fundamentally important for young people in care. They need to know that they are being listened to and they need to know that they have a say.

...

... nothing about us without us.

With those few words, I commend the bill to the House. I especially want to thank all of the stakeholders for their submissions, because it is their submissions and their voices that have contributed to the bill that we have before us today.



Mr MILLAR (Gregory—LNP) (3.09 pm): Almost exactly a year ago we were debating an almost identically named bill. I do not mean that as any criticism of the minister but as praise for her tenacity in trying to improve laws which are meant to protect Queensland's children. Last year's child protection bill sought to establish a more child centred approach where the safety and welfare of the child is the very core of every action undertaken for that child. The bill also addressed head-on the issue of every child's need for stability, love and trust if they are to develop normally. It bravely put adoption back on the list of options for child placement. This had been recommended by the Carmody review some eight years previously. It was never implemented until the terrible case of Mason Jett Lee. Clearly Mason Jett Lee would have had a much better chance in life if the emphasis of the department had been on finding him a safe and loving home in the true sense of the word. Instead, he was left to the mercy of his tormenters and we called it keeping the family together.

Last year's bill was a step forward towards a more child centred approach. Such an approach now requires departmental staff to put the safety and welfare of the child at the centre of every action undertaken for that child. This central concern must outweigh other considerations such as whether a parent needs assistance with drug or alcohol issues or anger management or employment. Every decision taken for a child must consider the child first. The departmental officer must ask: will this make it better for the child, not mum or dad but the child? It is clear the minister is genuine about wanting to develop a comprehensive suite of child protection legislation that actually does what the label says—child protection. She has my full support on this and I am sure that she has the full support of every member in this parliament.

The LNP wants our children to thrive. Giving them the right to be heard is essential to their aspirations. This bill seeks to enshrine the right for the child to be heard and for their preferences to be taken into account wherever possible when it is safe to do so. They must also be given the support they need, because interaction with the department and with court processes will always be traumatic for them. We must minimise the trauma as much as possible. The bill will also strengthen the use of the child placement principles for Indigenous children, amending the bill from 'having regard' to the principles to a sterner 'make active efforts' to fulfil those principles. The need to explicitly legislate this hints at the reason we are still hearing too many reports that this is not happening in practice. In Cairns and in Townsville we are hearing from foster families and from whistleblowers who have worked in the department that children's pleas to remain with loving foster families are too often ignored. We hear cases where children are forced into family reunions that place them in jeopardy. This seems to expose the cultural problem in the department that is proving resistant to the spirit of these reforms.

Good laws—better laws—are only the first step in any process of reform. Departmental officers must apply those laws or nothing changes. People are far more difficult to change than laws. I understand this will take time and I encourage the minister to set up a process within the department to support this change. Change is never comfortable and time, effort and firm leadership will be needed if this much needed change of focus is to be achieved in practical outcomes. Whistleblowers are a part of that process, but they are usually coming from a place of good intentions and they can offer informed observations from the inside. They might make things uncomfortable for the powers that be, but they should be listened to by our leaders and I encourage the minister to protect and value their input.


I turn now to the provisions dealing with the working-with-children checks which align with the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse about information sharing between jurisdictions nationally. The LNP wants these recommendations pushed through as swiftly as possible to keep children safe. The bill will allow the chief executive to have regard to adverse decisions as part of the blue card assessment. This will include domestic violence offences. On the face of it this would seem an obvious and helpful step, but I must sound a note of caution: domestic violence offences can cover a wide range of actions. When considering domestic violence offences, the chief executive must have the discretion to decide if they affect the safety of children. After all, that is what the blue card is for.

Nobody would defend domestic violence, least of all me, but I must highlight blue cards are now required for an extremely broad range of jobs. That is people's employment. They are also required for an equally broad range of voluntary civic and community groups and organisations including sporting clubs, churches, even rural fire brigades. If an offender is genuinely and actively trying to reform following domestic violence—maybe through drug and alcohol rehabilitation or through anger management and other psychological therapy—and the same offender has moved to another state to help ensure the issue does not reoccur, it seems counterproductive to then lock them out of employment and community connection. I am in no way making excuses for domestic violence. It is horrific. The toll it takes on victims, secondary victims like child witnesses and family members of the victims and society in general must not be tolerated, but the question remains: how do we end this?

It is clear it will take a multipronged approach and it is not enough to try and prevent it occurring through policing and court initiatives. It is not enough to try and ensure shelter and safety for the victims. As a society we need to effectively deal with the perpetrators too. DVOs were amongst the first attempts by legislators to do this. Their utility is underscored by the fact that they are still used decades later. They are not perfect, but they are still an essential tool in trying to wrestle the monster in our homes. Perpetrators can contest DVOs—natural justice and human rights demand this—but it is often frustrating for police and increases the trauma for the victim. A substantial portion of DVO subjects choose not to contest them. I hope that is because the DVO comes as a shocking wake-up call and those offenders decide to look at the way they act and change immediately.

If having a DVO in the past in any Australian jurisdiction means that you will forever be locked out of your employment or out of many community or recreational groups, then suddenly there is a real incentive to contest a DVO. Certainly any lawyer representing the person would be telling them to contest it, so I am concerned that what appears to strengthen the blue card will actually complicate the DVOs and make things worse for the victims of domestic violence. There is even an argument that women who are victims of domestic violence will be less likely to seek a DVO if the offender is the family's breadwinner and the DVO will mean that they will lose their job. It can be true that even when the offender is no longer their partner his job contributes to their financial welfare and that of their children. Taking the decision to seek a DVO is one that already requires great courage from the victim. We should not be increasing the cost unless there is a clear benefit from doing so—a benefit for the victim and a benefit for society.

The chief executive will need to be very sensitive in applying this amendment. They need to be trained by experts in domestic violence so they can properly decide whether denying a blue card on DVO grounds is justified by any benefit or whether it will cause a further negative impact on the victim of the domestic violence offence. Furthermore, I think how this works out in practice should be reviewed down the track so we see the actual outcomes. We may find it no longer aligns with the way we approach these situations or we may find that it has contributed to a decrease in domestic violence because it did raise the stakes for the offender. It would be helpful if the minister would be able to commission a fact-finding review of the outcomes for legislators to consider in a few years time. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (3.17 pm): I rise in support of the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. We all know that the very best outcome for any child is when their family can provide safe and appropriate care so that they can flourish and grow at its heart amongst those closest to them, but sometimes that is just not possible and children and young people must enter care for their own safety. Our job in this place is to make sure that more than 10,000 Queensland children in care are as safe and secure and respected and heard as we possibly can. With Foster and Kinship Carer Week only just finished, I pay tribute to the almost 6,000 Queenslanders supporting vulnerable children as foster and kinship carers and providing emergency care. You are the heartbeat of our caring communities. Your big hearts and open doors make a difference every day to our youngest and most vulnerable Queenslanders. I also acknowledge the important work of our child safety workers supporting children and families. As one of the members in this place who proudly represents the diverse, kind-hearted and community minded Caboolture region, I know that our local child protection staff carry a heavy weight of history as they work to protect and care for local kids every day.

A very significant body of work underlies this bill. The government has listened and delivered on the recommendations from the Family and Child Commission's report *Keeping Queensland's children more than safe*, the 2013 Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Recommendations from all of these reports shaped the options in the 2019 *Rethinking rights and regulation: towards a stronger framework for protecting children and supporting families* discussion paper, which in turn informed this bill.

This bill seeks to ensure that we implement a child centred approach to better support kids and young people in care across a range of areas. As we have heard, the three main purposes of the bill are to reinforce children's rights within the legislative framework; to strengthen children's voices in decisions that affect them; and to streamline, clarify and improve the regulation of care. This bill will make a very significant difference to the lived experience of children in care because it genuinely seeks to amplify their voices in decision-making about their care arrangements. We know that one of the greatest risks for future trauma is the feeling of being jointly unsafe and out of control. That is why the opportunity for true participation in child safety decisions is so fundamentally important for our young people. We heard the contribution from Mr Jake Shields to the committee when he said, 'As a kid in

care I sometimes felt like a puppet not in control of decisions about my life.' Jake's words that nothing about us should be determined without us speak volumes. This legislation will help to ensure that no longer will young people in care be seen but not heard.

The aim of this bill is for children in the child protection system to be empowered, to be able to participate, to be engaged in the future direction of their lives and to have control in their care and of their destinies. With this bill we are working to ensure that young people like Jake Shields have all that and more. Importantly, the bill proposes to significantly amend the charter of rights for children in care. We have heard of the new rights that include, among others, the right to be treated fairly and with respect; the right to develop, maintain and enjoy a connection to culture; the right to language and religion; the right to engage in play and recreation; and, crucially, the right to make a complaint to the chief executive if the child considers that their rights are not being respected.

The bill places an obligation on the chief executive to ensure that children are regularly told about the charter of rights, told that the chief executive has a duty to make sure their rights are respected and told that they have a right to contact the chief executive if they have questions or concerns. As a young person said during the consultation, if you do not know what your rights are you cannot say what you want in your case plan. Importantly, a child also has a right of further review if the chief executive does not respond to their concerns. Children must feel confident to raise those concerns and be informed about how to take those steps. Strengthening children's rights and their ability to raise concerns to make sure that they can be heard and that they can be safe and secure is essential.

The bill requires customary and age-appropriate methods be available for children to participate in their care and have a voice in the decisions that impact them, as well as support to make sure that they can participate and be heard. We believe that every child must be empowered to contribute to the circumstances of their care to the greatest extent possible and that is what this bill is about.

One of our most important jobs as parliamentarians is to keep working to ensure that First Nations children receive culturally safe care. Queensland was the first jurisdiction to legislate all five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. Importantly, this bill updates the Child Protection Act to increase the duties of decision-makers from the minimum standard of 'having regard to' the five elements of the principles to, instead, require decision-makers to use 'active efforts' that are purposeful, thorough and timely. These changes ensure that the application of the principle changes from a mere aspiration to a requirement for practical action toward culturally safe care.

Through this bill our government is taking action on the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the child protection system. The bill sets a clear standard for the application of the principle, strengthens the rights recognised and supports transparency and accountability. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations were consulted and provided important feedback that has been incorporated into the bill, including to ensure that the definition of kin is fit for purpose and only encompasses people who have a genuine kinship connection with a First Nations child.

I note that I found it disappointing to hear the member for Moggill talking down the work and the presence of child safety facilities in his electorate. His electorate is not immune from the complex social issues that lead kids and families to engage with the child safety system. The need to provide vulnerable children with care does not discriminate and it does not end at the borders. It was also disappointing to hear the member for Ninderry again dumping on our hardworking child safety workers who work in tremendously complex environments with complex families every single day to protect children and support their families. I have heard firsthand the impact on the morale of our child safety workers of that kind of discourse.

I offer my thanks to the member for Mansfield for her work as chair of the Community Support and Services Committee and her always thoughtful and considered contributions. Thank you also to the members of the committee and to the committee staff who work so diligently. I acknowledge the many submitters and the staff of the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs for their work on this bill and all of the contributors to the consultation and submitters to the committee process. Finally, I acknowledge the minister for her compassionate and balanced leadership that always resists the cheap shots and recognises the profound complexity of the circumstances of children in Queensland's child protection system. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr MICKELBERG (Buderim—LNP) (3.25 pm): I rise to speak to the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. At the outset I too would like to acknowledge the contribution of foster carers and child safety staff for what on many occasions is an incredibly thankless and difficult

task. In 2018 my wife and I went through foster care training. I was very confronted by the content that was presented in relation to the effects of trauma on the psychological development of the brain. Every child in this situation represents a tragedy, but what struck me was that those foster carers who make the decision to care for children in such a circumstance are making a considerable sacrifice as well. It was a sacrifice I was not prepared to make at that time. The reason for that was because I felt that the position taken in relation to the rights of the child and, in particular, the rights of their parents was incompatible with my ability to be able to support that child in the same way that I support my own children. I was not prepared to enter into a situation where my children would be treated with one standard and a foster child who we were caring for would be treated with a different standard because their parent may have a different view. I understand the desire to reunite young people with their parents regardless of the circumstance, but there has to be a point in time where the rights of the child come first. I appreciate and acknowledge that this bill seeks to do that.

There needs to be a greater priority to protect all children in our society. I acknowledge that it is a bipartisan position that that is a priority for governments—for the Labor government and also for the LNP. Unfortunately we have seen too many cases of children becoming a forgotten number in a broken system. I will not talk about the individual cases because we have spoken about them time and time again in this House. Those kids need a voice. They need a chance to grow and to develop in a safe and loving environment as most kids get the chance to do. Every single time that a child enters the foster care system it is a tragedy, be it for tragic circumstances like a car accident where both their parents may be deceased or in instances where there is abuse in the family unit. I acknowledge there is a multitude of reasons why children may enter the foster care and child safety system in Queensland and right across Australia.

For reasons I spoke about earlier, I support the amendments to the principles of the Child Protection Act giving children a stronger voice in decisions that affect them. It is also vitally important that children are given appropriate support while they are using that voice. Too frequently these children are discussing matters that are traumatic and stressful. Discussing them could be a cause of further harm so it is important that they get the appropriate support.

Information sharing between departments and authorities is critical in ensuring that we fix the child protection system. Unfortunately we hear too frequently stories of antiquated processes, such as the keeping of paper files, for example, and the inability for information to be transferred rapidly across departments but also within the department of child safety. We need to ensure that the right people are looking after children in care in our schools and in other entities across society. In my view, at the very least people need blue cards. At the moment there are clearly deep concerns around the blue card process generally.

As others have spoken about, we have seen where victims of domestic violence have been misidentified as perpetrators and domestic violence orders have been put in place, which at times can result in the refusal of blue cards. Of course, that will impact their employment opportunities. I note the member for Gregory spoke about the potential unintended consequences of people not reporting domestic violence in the home because they are concerned about the impact on the family breadwinner. Clearly that is an outcome that no-one in this House seeks to achieve. We need to remove all of the barriers for victims of domestic violence in seeking help. There needs to be a process where women or men who are seeking help from authorities in gaining a DVO are able to do so and we need to consider the second-order effects of some of these decisions.

Information sharing between departments will break down barriers that have existed in the past and will open more doors for victims of domestic and family violence. I am pleased that this is a simple change to how things are currently done. To be frank, and this is not a reflection on the current government or the minister, it is disappointing that it has taken until 2022 for these sorts of measures to be put in place. We have been in a situation where the information technology capabilities have existed for many years. In my view, we need to do better in this space.

Our aim in this space must always be to protect children and women from violent and abusive relationships and situations. I acknowledge that that is the minister's first objective. I know that often it is a thankless task. I acknowledge the minister's commitment to that and I also acknowledge the shadow minister. As I am sure all in this House do, I find many of the stories that come across my desk as a member of parliament—stories about children who are in abusive environments or in cases of neglect—deeply confronting. I live in a relatively affluent area and I acknowledge the preponderance of that in my area is probably less than in some other parts of the state and particularly in some of the more remote communities.

One of the reasons my wife was so passionate about becoming a foster carer is that she was a police officer in the Far North and had seen, time and time again, children in situations of neglect. I recall her telling me about a job she did in Cairns. One night at about 10.30 she entered a house and found a one-year-old child alone. No-one else was home. There was drug paraphernalia and so on in the house. No-one should grow up in such a situation. I am sure all members of the House would want to see that sort of instance remediated. We need to work towards that without political interference getting in the road.

In relation to the Working with Children Check National Reference System, interstate information sharing is a no-brainer for me. The recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse should be implemented without delay and states and territories should be working together on this. As I said, politics should be pushed aside. This issue is bigger than politics.

On the Sunshine Coast we have some trail-blazing organisations that are making a difference in the lives of women and children. Just last week, along with the member for Cooper and the member for Maroochydore, I attended a workshop tackling domestic and family violence. We heard from advocates such as Lloyd Clarke, the father and grandfather of Hannah Clarke and her three children who, as we have heard today, were killed in horrific circumstances at the hands of a monster. The work that organisations such as those I met with last week on the Sunshine Coast is invaluable.

At the event we heard from a cause that is close to my heart, DV Safe Phone. Ashton Wood founded that charity organisation. He is a Buderim resident. So far they have collected 6,000 phones, which are cleaned, repaired and then given to women in domestic violence situations so that they can call for help and get themselves and their children to a place of safety. It is a tremendous organisation. I am proud that my office was one of the first to start collecting phones for Ashton.

The organisation was born out of COVID. Ashton cleaned up his house and had a carload of stuff to take to the op-shop. However, we had a lockdown so he was left with a car full of stuff that he did not know what to do with. He rang a police officer who works in the child safety space who said, 'Mate, to be honest, we don't need all of your old stuff from the house. It's nice of you, but what we really need is mobile phones.' Ashton then made it his mission to set up this organisation. They have partnered with Lloyd and Sue Clarke to ensure that their service is rolled out more broadly across Queensland and Australia.

If members of parliament are so minded, I would encourage them all to set up a DV Safe Phone collection point in their offices. It is very simple: people come in and drop a mobile phone into the box, which can be dropped at any Jeep dealership from where they will be given to DV Safe Phone.

On the Sunshine Coast, foster-care services such as IFYS are under extreme pressure yet our staff and carers continue to operate to protect displaced children right across the coast. Across Queensland we hear of children pleading to stay with their long-term foster carers but too frequently, in my view, they are taken away from their foster carers and reunited with their families, placing them in what may be unsafe situations. That is why I think it is important that we recognise that children deserve to have their voices heard. Their opinions and emotions need to be taken into account. Too frequently we discount the views of young people in relation to some of these issues.

My wife and I are the proud parents of four young kids. We know that they are very privileged to have every opportunity in life and that they are the lucky ones. As representatives of the state we need to do more to ensure that fewer children fall through the cracks in that regard. I will support anything we can do to reinforce children's rights in the legislative framework, to ensure that information sharing is streamlined and to improve care for children because every child deserves a childhood and a bright future.



Ms PEASE (Lytton—ALP) (3.35 pm): I acknowledge the words of the member for Buderim and thank him for his kind and thoughtful contribution to the House. It was very touching. I appreciate him sharing his and his wife's journey and thank him very much.

I rise in support of the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Like those before me, I would like to acknowledge the great work of the many carers, kinship carers and foster carers who take care of the precious members of our community who might need a hand at different times in their lives. I am really fortunate that in my community there are some fabulous foster carers whom I know personally. They have contributed tens of thousands of hours to the hundreds and hundreds of children they have worked with, have loved and have maintained a relationship with for many years.

I think that everyone benefits from that relationship—the family members as well as the foster children. It is such a wonderful gift to provide love and support to children who might not necessarily have had that opportunity under other circumstances. I find equally encouraging the work that foster parents do with the biological parents of those children in making sure that they maintain a relationship as best as they can. They work with the families to make sure that they also benefit by gaining some experience in parenting, hopefully for reunification. I acknowledge the great work of carers, kinship carers and foster carers in our communities. I also acknowledge the great work of grandparents, many of whom take over the care of their grandchildren. I know that falls under kinship care but often it is not a formal arrangement. However, it is a really meaningful relationship. I acknowledge all of the grandparents who do that.

The purpose of the bill is to provide for the protection and promotion of children to the extent that it is appropriate to support families caring for children. The key term in this bill is defined through ‘active efforts’, meaning purposeful, thorough and timely efforts. The bill will amend the act to better support children and young people in care and streamline, clarify or improve processes. The discussion paper *Rethinking rights and regulation: towards a stronger framework for protecting children and supporting families* was released for public comment in 2019. There are three key focus areas: reinforcing children’s rights in the legislative framework, strengthening children’s voices in decisions that affect them and reshaping the regulation of care.

This bill makes priority amendments to the Work with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 by providing a legislative basis for the chief executive to request domestic violence information from the Queensland Police Commissioner for the purposes of blue card assessment, among other changes, which will enable a timely breakdown of barriers. Information sharing where there is more than one domestic violence order has been issued and there are different complainants is relevant to the blue card assessment. The royal commission recommended that the Commonwealth government facilitate a national model for the working with children cards, establishing a centralised database, which equals national transparency.

The achievements of the policy objectives will be met by, as I have already said: active efforts, which means efforts that are purposeful, thorough and timely, and they are required by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle; ensuring children are provided with information about their rights and where they can seek help; expanding the list of rights to include rights relating to culture, religion and language, fairness, respect, development of identity, personal belongings, play and recreational activities; changing the wording of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle from ‘partnership’ to ‘partnering’, delivering individual child protection case decision-making; and strengthening a child’s voice so that those engaging must genuinely engage and listen to a child’s view.

To resolve technical issues arising from the Adoption Act due to the delegation instrument made under the Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act, the bill retrospectively amends the Adoption Act to enable the chief executive to supervise the wellbeing and interests of non-citizen children in the custody of their prospective adoptive parents and to apply to the Children’s Court for final adoption orders for non-citizen children.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle is a five-element placement principle. These are: (1) the prevention principle—a child has the right to be brought up within the child’s own family and community; (2) the partnership principle—a child has the right to participate in significant decisions; (3) the placement principle—if a child is to be placed in care, the child has the right to be placed with a member of the child’s family group; (4) the participation principle—a child’s parents and family members have a right to participate and be enabled to participate in an administrative or judicial process for making significant decisions; and (5) the connection principle—the right to be supported to develop and maintain a connection with the child’s family, community and culture.

This bill expands the list of rights enshrined in the charter. Considering the rights for a child in care, the charter acknowledges the special vulnerability of children who do not have a parent able and willing to protect them. The bill expands the rights to ensure that the child is treated fairly and with respect; can develop, maintain and enjoy a connection to their culture of origin; and other rights such as to learn a language or choose a religion. Essentially, there is an emphasis on the importance of children’s views and their participation in decision-making. This bill therefore makes several amendments to the act to strengthen and support existing legislative provisions and practices relating to hearing children’s voices in protection decisions.

Other objectives of the bill include streamlining, clarifying and improving the regulation of care. Children and young people are cared for in several different types of arrangements including foster care, kinship care, residential care and other arrangements. The act provides for a system to approve foster and kinship carers to provide care for children and to grant licences for the provision of care services. The chief executive is responsible for deciding applications for carer approvals and licences as well as monitoring ongoing compliance with approval and licence requirements such as the standards of care in the act. Compliance will be accredited under the human services quality framework. The priority is to prevent further serious harm caused by isolation from community, family and peers.

I know that in my electorate we have the lovely and wonderful Silky Oaks Children's Haven that provides a great service for looking after families and children in care. It has done so for many years. I acknowledge the great work that it has done and will continue to do into the future.

This bill aims to make our state's child protection system the most robust in the nation. The strong commitment by the Palaszczuk Labor government to reform is ongoing, and no measure is too great to ensure that our young people are heard and are safe. I also acknowledge the great work of the minister, the Hon. Leanne Linard, and the kind and gracious manner in which she always operates. I also acknowledge the great work of the chair of the committee, the member for Mansfield, Corrine McMillan.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms PEASE: She is a very honourable woman; you are correct. I acknowledge her measured and dedicated approach to undertaking this inquiry. I thank each and every member of the committee, who worked so hard on the inquiry. I thank the secretariat for their hard work in putting it all together. I know that often the stories are difficult and hard to read and review. I thank the staff and everyone for what they have done. I commend the bill to the House.



Ms BOLTON (Noosa—Ind) (3.43 pm): To protect the rights of our youngest is to invest in our future. This includes dignity and health, identity, equality and non-discrimination. They have a right to a safe place to live, to be protected from harm, to participate and to be heard in the decisions that affect them. They have the right to privacy, education, play and freedom of thought. These rights are guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, additionally, under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; however, sadly, as we are seeing in some statistics, these rights are not ensured by some of those whom they depend on for their care.

The Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 proposes to amend the Child Protection Act to more deeply embed children's rights and voices in both the legislative framework and their lived experience of care. Why is this so important? In Australia in 2019-20, over 174,000 children aged up to 17 received child protection services. More than half of these children were the subject of an investigation only and were not subsequently placed on a care and protection order or in out-of-home care.

Some groups of children are consistently over-represented. In 2019-20, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were almost eight times as likely as non-Indigenous children to have received child protection services. Infants aged under one were also more likely to have received these services than those aged between 15 and 17 years. Children from geographically remote areas had the highest rates of substantiations, more than three times those from major cities, and were more likely to be from lower socio-economic areas—35 per cent, compared to 5.9 per cent from the highest. Tragically, the number of children receiving these services continues to rise. I find all of this deeply confronting. These are our children, our grandchildren and our future.

Even though the rights of children would be expanded by this bill to include culture, religion and language, amongst others, what does this really mean and how does it translate to reduce these horrendous statistics? I note that the committee is encouraging the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs to establish a process that ensures there is customary and age-appropriate participation of children in care in decision-making processes that affect them. Children and young people are a natural inclusion in the design processes and decision-making, given their role as experts in their own lives; however, diverse cultural backgrounds mean that one shoe does not fit all, which is something we need to be cognisant of. This view was consistent across many submitters.

The bill also proposes a number of other amendments including to the Working with Children Act 2000 to enable the chief executive to have regard to adverse decisions in other jurisdictions as part of a blue card assessment. As well, Queensland will participate in the Working with Children Check National Reference System to identify persons who have been deemed ineligible to work with children

in another state or territory. This simplifies and streamlines the categories of regulated employment and regulated business to better reflect the contemporary service delivery model used by licensees in discharging their functions.

Many submitters, including the Women's Legal Service Queensland, support these amendments. However, while submitters support information about the existence of domestic violence orders being considered as relevant and concerning for continuing to hold or obtaining a blue card, they highlighted the potential inadvertent consequences on women and their capacity to obtain a blue card in relation to the care of children and work that they are able to apply for. Into the future, we must ensure that the amendments outlined in this bill flow through the system via policy, procedure and practice to impact day-to-day engagement with and for improved outcomes for children and young people. This must include safe housing and practical, ongoing support.

I thank the minister and departments for their hard work in this confronting arena; the committee and secretariat; submitters; and attendees to hearings. I extend our gratitude to all who work in bettering the lives of our children, with a special call-out to our foster carers and organisations dedicated to this. It takes a village to raise a child and we must ask ourselves: what will each of us do to assist them in their endeavours?



Mr SULLIVAN (Stafford—ALP) (3.48 pm): I rise to support the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. I start by thanking the minister for progressing this important piece of legislation, and I would like to associate myself with her earlier contribution. I know how passionate she is about this area of policy and I thank her for her hard work and dedication. Obviously I refer to her as the minister in this place, but she is in the neighbouring electorate of Nudgee so we do get a chance to catch up on the north side somewhat regularly. Her enthusiasm and passion in this area is contagious. I give a shout-out to her predecessors who were also very committed.

I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk Labor government that is not afraid to tackle tough challenges—a government that has a track record of delivering important reform. This bill is the next example of that. In terms of my approach in this area of public policy, I said as early as my first speech in this House that I do not think there is a silver bullet when it comes to breaking the cycle for vulnerable young Queenslanders—that is, young Queenslanders who do not get the start in life that they all deserve. It is a complicated, complex and challenging piece of public policy and it is a committed government that takes that challenge on and does what it can to give every child in Queensland the start in life they deserve. As I said in my first speech, I do not think there is a silver bullet. It will take a generational change so let us try to make it this generation.

That is why I am proud to join the minister and all members in the House in doing what we can to make that change. To be honest, I am not sure this bill or this debate will make the nightly news. I am not sure when I am out doorknocking that this bill will be the first issue people raise with me, but it is an important issue for us as a state, as a parliament and as the community that makes up the wonderful Stafford electorate.

This bill amends the Child Protection Act 1999 to better support children and young people in care. These reforms aim to streamline, clarify or improve processes and do so by: reinforcing children's rights in the legislative framework; strengthening children's voices in decisions that affect them; and streamlining, clarifying and improving the regulation of care. The bill reinforces children's rights in the legislative framework, placing it at the core of the legislation by: requiring the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle to be applied to a standard of active efforts, meaning efforts that are purposeful, thorough and timely; broadening the purpose of the act to better reflect the functions of the chief executive; clarifying how the general principles for ensuring the safety, wellbeing and best interests of a child apply when determining whether a decision or action is in the best interests of a child; ensuring children are provided with information about their rights and where they can seek help; expanding the list of rights enshrined in the charter of rights to include rights relating to culture, religion and language, fairness, respect, personal belongings, play and recreational activities; and expanding the existing reviewable decisions framework to allow children to more effectively question decisions made about their care. I think that collectively those reforms are very empowering.

Philosophically for me, giving young people a voice in our community and in government is an issue that has long been close to my heart. Many moons ago I was heavily involved in youth charities, refugee tutoring and youth advocacy. My belief that the voices of young people need to be heard has stayed with me throughout my career and, of course, in the context of this bill it extends to young people in the child protection system. Surely, the need to hear the voices of young Queenslanders should extend to those most vulnerable amongst us.

The bill will achieve its objective of strengthening children's voices in decisions that affect them by: introducing participation principles to ensure children and young people are provided with real and ongoing opportunities to have a voice; ensuring that people involved in the administration of the act genuinely listen to, engage with and try to understand a child's views; and providing for children's views to inform system design and delivery of services at a more broad level.

The bill also makes a range of changes to administrative issues—streamlining, clarifying and improving the regulation of care—by: allowing the chief executive to request interstate criminal history information to assist in assessing the suitability or otherwise of a person to be a provisionally approved carer and their adult household members; providing for carer certificates to be renewed every three years rather than every two years; streamlining carer assessment processes for existing kinship carers; clarifying the operational reporting requirements for foster and kinship carers; establishing the legislative framework for a carers' register; strengthening the carer support framework; ensuring that carers and licensees are provided with all the relevant information needed to make informed decisions about placements and provide appropriate care; clarifying that a licence may be amended to add or remove a licensed premises; and removing a requirement for amended, suspended or cancelled licences to be returned to the chief executive.

In conclusion, I thank those Queenslanders who dedicate their professional lives to this area—dedicated public servants who work so hard and have such a huge heart. In supporting this legislation, I want to recognise those on the front line who do what, in reality, can be a very tough job. I mention those local departmental staff who interact with me and my office when it comes to individual issues or individual cases. Obviously, I am not going to speak about details of individual matters, but I put on record my thanks to those officers who work so hard in our local community and work closely with us.

I also thank those local families who fulfil the important role of foster parents or kinship families and carers. I have spoken to many local foster carers—mums, dads, grandparents and carers. I thank them for the love, generosity and dedication they display. I also thank the local community groups and support organisations that play an important role in the broader efforts to provide wraparound services to families, including, of course, to vulnerable children.

Decisions around placement are not the start and finish of the support that the most vulnerable children require. In terms of support and intervention, I give a shout-out to our local schools. It can be the intervention of a caring teacher or good leadership of a school that can recognise where support is needed or where engagement with school is the most important thing we can do to keep kids' lives on the right track. I do believe in the power of education to change people's lives, including the lives of our most vulnerable young children.

I again thank the minister for progressing this legislation. Thank you to her team who work so well with us. Thanks to the officers from the minister's department and DJAG who have prepared this legislation for debate today.

I also give a shout-out to the chair of the committee, the member for Mansfield. We only have to listen to her contribution today to understand her long involvement in this policy area and her absolute determination to improve the lives of young Queenslanders. As the member for Mansfield pointed out, these can be very complex cases. Each child has individual needs. Each child has their own story. We need to recognise that these are layered issues and we as legislators need to bring a responsible and thoughtful approach.

Thanks to those stakeholders who made submissions throughout this process. As the member for Lytton pointed out, for the submitters, witnesses, secretariat staff and departmental staff these can be heavy issues and heavy content. Thank you for doing so much in engaging people and bringing the legislation to the point where it is today. I thank the committee more broadly—those on both sides of the House—for progressing the legislation to where it has landed today. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr KRAUSE (Scenic Rim—LNP) (3.57 pm): I was a member of the Community Support and Services Committee that reviewed this bill. Like other members before me, I thank all members of the committee and the submitters for their work. I particularly thank the deputy chair and chair of the committee for leading the way in the assessment of the bill.

We will not be opposing the bill. I want to highlight a couple of issues that came out through the committee process. The first is the changes to the legislation to enable domestic violence information to be accessed in the assessment of a blue card application. There were a variety of submissions made to the committee expressing concern about this and suggesting possible changes that could be made

to the legislation to take into account those concerns. There were submissions made by Sisters Inside. They expressed concern about the negative impact that that could have on vulnerable women who had been identified as domestic and family violence perpetrators. There were also submissions made in this respect by the Women's Legal Service Queensland which supported the concept but also had some reservations about the impact it might have on women reporting domestic violence and seeking protection through that system.

The Queensland Law Society also expressed concern about those changes and the risk that more applications for domestic and family violence orders may be opposed in the court process where they otherwise would be made with the consent of both parties and that, if orders were made, that could impact the employment of parties to those proceedings. It is a real concern for our system in trying to help people affected by domestic and family violence if there are unintended consequences as a result of the changes being made in the bill. As much as we would like to think it does not occur, sometimes there may be situations—particularly in a family law situation—where false allegations of domestic and family violence are made in those proceedings. If such an allegation is made and it causes one party or another to the family law dispute to lose their employment as a result, it would potentially affect the outcome of those custody proceedings in a very detrimental way. This is something I am sure there is no easy answer to, but the government and the minister surely need to pay attention to the concerns that are raised and ensure they are not creating negative unintended consequences with these changes.

The same can be said about the ability of decision-makers in blue card applications to take into account adverse findings from interstate authorities, particularly where those interstate authorities work to a different system and have different criteria. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service in Queensland urged the government to make the legislation say that chief executives 'may' take action as a result of interstate notifications rather than 'must' take action so they can take into account different situations that may arise from interstate notifications of adverse decisions.

The other issue I want to speak about and support is the intention of the legislation to give a greater voice to children who are part of the child safety system. This is something that I think all members can agree with. No doubt, all members have had situations come to their office where there have been what looks like very bad decisions made affecting children who are in the child safety system. I have certainly experienced that in my electorate.

One particular case a few years ago really stands out. That was in relation to a young girl who was about nine or 10 years old at the time. For a range of reasons that were all later disproven, the child safety department removed her from her foster carers, who were the only parents she had ever known. She had been placed with them when she was two months old, I think, and then was torn away from them quite suddenly at the age of about nine or 10 years. Despite the discontinuation of any complaints about those foster carers, despite the clearly stated intention of the youngster in question, who wanted to return literally to the only family she had ever known, that situation remained.

On one occasion after she had been removed from the family and placed into other foster arrangements or residential care there was an attempt by that child to hitchhike 21 kilometres back to the town where she had grown up with her foster family. On another occasion she was picked up by police walking tens of kilometres to get back to the only family she had ever known. There were at least 12 times where this person absconded from residential care and tried to return, as I understand it, to the only family she had ever known. The child safety system did not seem to have a great deal of regard at all to the intention, clearly evinced by that child, to return to the only family she had ever known. I believe it is an absolute miracle that that child is still alive. Her expressed intention to go back to where she came from did not seem to have any weight in the system, even though there was no validity to the issues that led to the decision rendered by the child safety department.

It is one thing to put it in legislation; it is quite another thing to change individual outcomes. We all know it is hard, but there needs to be common sense shown on the front line sometimes. There also needs to be compassion shown, and where there are clearly indications of a child's intent there needs to be more attention given to that. I am sure many other members could talk about individual cases without identifying children within the system. It is a difficult job.

I want to thank all foster and kinship carers and particularly third party agencies and community organisations who help support children in the child safety system and foster and kinship care. I thank all members of the House for their thoughtful contributions here today and the work of the committee. As I said at the start, we will not be opposing this bill. I certainly hope that the legislation's intent works its way into positive improvements on the ground.



Hon. MC BAILEY (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (4.06 pm): I rise to support the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. I stand before the House to make a contribution to the bill and support the meaningful reform and protections this bill holds for our children, for young people and for families right across Queensland. The Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to making the child protection and family support system as strong as it can possibly be. It is an essential part of effective government and an essential part of who we are as a society that that should be the case. That should be an ongoing priority for us and for any government that is connected to the values of a decent society.

Our government has already delivered significant and meaningful changes through the 10-year Supporting Family Changing Futures program. This bill continues that reform by improving our child safety system. Our key and primary objective is to keep our children safe. That is a basic right that every child in this state deserves. Another important aspect is providing children with a stronger voice in the decisions that impact them. In this day and age of the internet, social media and all sorts of ways of communicating, that is a very important thing to consider. The ability for people to engage is greater than it has ever been, but sometimes there are greater risks with that. That means we need to work to ensure that we keep up with that and that the forces of good, the forces of respect, are ahead of those people who are on the other side of that equation, particularly in terms of children. That is something that we are very aware of and that we have very much encapsulated in some of these reforms.

We know how formative and fundamental the early years are for children. The vast bulk of learning and cognitive development happens before the age of five. That has ramifications in terms of how we help vulnerable children in particular. This bill will help to protect the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children. Not only that, we are also actively implementing the recommendations of recent reviews. I thank all of our officers, all of our MPs, who have been part of those reviews. They have done a lot of very important work in terms of identifying the issues that need to be considered that are part of reform and have been encapsulated in this bill, so I thank them for their very profoundly important work.

That is an important part in making sure these key amendments hit the mark and deliver the changes that are needed across our state. Making sure that the rights of children are entrenched in legislation is an important step forward to protecting and supporting children and their families. That is why I endorse this bill and the changes it contains.

As a member of parliament representing the electorate of Miller, I spend a lot of time talking to local families, parents, children and young people, like all members of parliament do. The engagement about the future has probably never been stronger, and where young people and children are in that future is a very dynamic thing. It is my responsibility as their local representative and as a member of the Palaszczuk state Labor government to advocate for legislation that delivers the best outcomes for their future and keeps track with the times.

One thing that has stood out for me is just how vocal—and rightly so—young people and children are in terms of the importance of knowing their rights, of having their voices heard and of being listened to and respected in the decision-making process. I am glad to say that the contents of the bill certainly do just that. We are providing dignity and autonomy to the children and the youth of our state, allowing them to advocate for their best interests. Young people deserve that right. They also deserve the right to be treated fairly—and this bill certainly has that as a core value—and the right to be treated with respect.

They deserve the right to maintain a connection with their culture. In this state, we have cultures from 200 different nations across the world and many First Nations cultures, including Torres Strait Islander culture, and it is very important that children have the right to have that connection, particularly where that connection might be broken or deferred or may have had interruption. They have a fundamental right to have that connection if that is their origin. They have the right to religion and also the right to language. I acknowledge that there are many languages that are spoken as a first language in many places of the state, particularly our First Nations languages.

They have the right to develop, maintain and enjoy an identity, including sexual orientation and gender identity. This is one of the great changes in our society in the recent decade or so, with discussions, a greater acknowledgement and a greater understanding of some of those aspects. We are only just beginning to be a truly inclusive community. We had the marriage equality referendum only four or five years ago, and that is a right people should have had a long time before that. People deserve those equal rights and equal respect. We will not stand in the way of the rights of children. We will strengthen their rights with this bill.

The Palaszczuk Labor government is also committed to partnering with First Nations people across Queensland, their community representatives and their organisations which hold so much collective wisdom, law and culture going back in some cases 3,000 generations. Through this bill, we will also continue to deepen and strengthen our partnership with them. There are five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle that were recommended, and we are the first state to legislate all five. As a member of this government, I am proud of that achievement, as are all of those who are voting for this bill, because I think that is a very important aspect of it.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in this state have an innate right to develop and maintain a connection with their country, their family, their community, their culture, their traditions and their language. They also have the right to participate in decision-making and advocate in the best interests of First Nations children. It will only be through genuine and collaborative partnerships with First Nations people that we will deliver the best outcomes for children on a physical and emotional level. I pay tribute to our three First Nations MPs here—the members for Algeester, Bundamba and Cook. They are very important people and real trailblazers not just within this government but within this parliament.

This is something I feel very strongly about. It is a privilege to be able to speak to this bill. I thank all of those who have been associated with it and who have driven it, including the minister. I commend the bill to the House.



Dr MacMAHON (South Brisbane—Grn) (4.14 pm): The child protection system is meant to serve some of the most vulnerable kids in Queensland—those who badly need the protection and resources of the state. As we have heard, First Nations children are overrepresented in every area of the child protection and out-of-home care services compared to non-Indigenous children. It is vital that we ensure this system does not compound the other disadvantages that colonisation has inflicted upon First Nations people. Every single one of us owes it to kids in the system to get our child protection legislation right, and I want to make a few comments about where this legislation needs to be.

Much of this bill is heading in the right direction. The Greens have significant enough reservations around parts 5 and 6—amendments relating to blue cards—that we cannot support these, but in general, as my colleague the member for Maiwar has gone through in detail, this bill makes some welcome reforms to a vital system. Since getting elected, my office has heard dozens of stories from people suffering in the child protection system and we have been doing what we can to support parents, advocates and children. A few cases stick in my mind.

A mother got in touch with my office after having all of her children removed from her care. One of her children, however, had run away from care and returned to his mother. She was also caring for one of her grandchildren. Despite being deemed fit to care for these two children, she was unable to regain the care of her other children, despite having the support of family members and advocates around her. Two of her children were in the care of a non-Indigenous family, despite the children being Indigenous.

In another case, a grandmother shared footage of a child being removed from their family in visible and audible distress. In many of these cases, the families are victims of circumstances beyond their control—poverty, trauma and a chronic lack of housing. Advocates like Aunty Cephia Williams—a Butchulla and Darumbal woman who runs the Brisbane Sovereign Grannies Group—have been pushing for systemic change to keep families together.

The Greens are concerned about the disproportionate impacts that automatically cancelling a blue card without appeal would have on First Nations people. This bill proposes to do that where there has been a decision in another jurisdiction in relation to a working with children card. Where there have been negative notices or cancellations in other jurisdictions, there will be no rights of review or appeal. The submission from Sisters Inside articulates this issue. As Sisters Inside say, ‘greater national transparency and consistency of WWCCs’ is appreciated, but ‘the proposed amendments deny Queensland applicants and cardholders procedural fairness’. They say—


It is plainly procedurally unfair for a Queensland cardholder’s WWCC to be cancelled because of the operation of another jurisdiction’s decision-making process.

To be clear, as Sisters Inside spells out—

This will have the greatest impact on criminalised women, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, who often have little resources or capacity to challenge adverse WWCC decisions.

We also share the concerns of organisations such as PeakCare that ‘permitting the chief executive to request expanded criminal history information about a person from an interstate police commissioner’ does ‘not address the broader systemic issue relating to the current criminal history screening approach’.

Further, we need more funding and practical changes to provide support services to children and their families, including independent legal services to represent children. This bill proposes some welcome reforms to a really important system, but submitters have been clear in raising their concerns. It does not seem like the government has acknowledged these concerns in the final version of the bill. I will keep working closely with community members, advocates and children and their families to advocate for a child protection system that puts children and their families first.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.19 pm): I would like to start by saying that I support the bill in its entirety. I acknowledge the hard work of the minister in bringing this bill before the parliament. It is a great privilege to sit next to the responsible minister and get deeper insight into not only this bill but also a whole range of issues in relation to keeping our kids safe in this state. It is a complex business, if you want to call it that. It requires a complex approach. It is many faceted and it is something that we need to be ever vigilant about and forever look to improve systems. That is what this bill does.

I also acknowledge the members of the committee, particularly the chair. I acknowledge the fine contribution she made earlier. It displayed her long and deeply held commitment to empowering and educating young people. That certainly came through in the report that was prepared. I also thank all of those people who made submissions to this inquiry.

On Saturday I had the great privilege of attending a fundraiser for the Small Steps 4 Hannah Foundation that was being organised by the Holland Park Hawks. There was a confluence of issues that relate to this bill on display there. We now hopefully can feel somewhat safe that those good people who step forward to coach junior sport and to play really important leadership roles in the lives of young people—helping them to develop physically, mentally and emotionally—are not people who are there to try to do those children any damage. Our robust system of checking and screening allows us to do that.

I note that provisions in this bill relate to domestic violence and allow for interstate checking. The reality is, as we have seen over the last couple of years, that Australians are a pretty mobile people. We move around a lot. I know that you, Deputy Speaker, would know that in your neck of the woods, being the border electorate—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister) interjected.

Mr KELLY: Indeed. I do not think I can take an interjection from the Deputy Speaker! Having said that, that mobility of Australians is there nonetheless, so these sorts of provisions are incredibly important.

I come back to the event held last Saturday. We saw today the announcement by the Attorney-General to support the move to deal with coercive control, which has long been an objective of the Small Steps 4 Hannah Foundation. I think any parent who steps forward to volunteer in an organisation starts to build an understanding of just how robust our systems are and how important they are.

A few years ago my wife and I signed up as volunteers for our local scouting groups, where our kids were involved. I am still on the management committee to this day. Every year I have to do an update on my child safety education. It is not onerous but it is informative. I also have to make sure my blue card is up to date. Whilst sometimes in a busy day these things can be a bit of a pain, the reality is that I know that things like this are helping to keep Queensland kids safe.

I want to turn to the parts of the bill that talk about the strengthening of children's voices in decisions that affect them, because I think that is a really important provision in this bill. Without straying too far into the territory of the Mental Health Select Committee's report, we did have the great pleasure of having the Queensland Family and Child Commission youth delegates come and speak to the committee, not once but twice. We were so very impressed with their views around particularly child and youth mental health, but mental health generally, that we wanted to hear from them twice. The role of people with lived experience in the mental health sector, the alcohol and other drugs sector and the suicide prevention sector is really important and valued. A great deal of emphasis is placed on making sure that people who are actually involved in the service have a huge role in designing and delivering the service. I think that holds true across to children and young people.

Like many members of parliament, I have a youth forum going in my electorate. It really is interesting how much young people are enthused to try to make a difference in society, how much of an opinion or views—often evidence based views—they have around how we can improve things, and


how much they are really looking for opportunities to make a contribution. Through designing programs where children's and young people's voices are put front and centre, we are really making sure we are harnessing the full breadth of capacity in our community.

I also want to turn to the parts of this bill that deal with the definition of 'kin' and the requirement for active effort in the placement of children. To put my thoughts into context, I think about the bill enacting safe nurse-to-patient and safe midwife-to-patient ratios. When we were going through that bill, many people said, 'It's something we already do. It's something we already strive and aim for.' That is potentially quite true, but placing a legislative requirement on that means it is now something that actually happens all the time. If there is an exception, there is a process for dealing with that.

I think that would be fairly true of this situation. I think the many hardworking and very dedicated child safety workers in our state and people in the NGOs would go to great lengths to try to find appropriate connections for people, but if those connections present challenges and you have to do a significant amount of work going forward it would be easy to say, 'This is near enough; it is good enough.' This legislation makes sure that those people who work in this field make the active effort to place people.

Again coming to the mental health inquiry, I guess I have always had a sense of it but it has become particularly clear through the many submissions and the hearings we have had that this issue impacts people of First Nations communities. We had submissions and heard from people on Thursday Island, in Yarrabah, in Hervey Bay, in Bundaberg and here in Brisbane as well. One of the things that comes through very strongly is this sense of intergenerational trauma that First Nations people feel. Therefore, the need to place a child in out-of-home care, given the history of this country and past governments' decisions, which rightfully have been apologised for, has huge implications to retraumatise this community.

Ensuring that the definition of 'kin' is correct and ensuring that people make active efforts to place people goes a long way to making what is a difficult situation less difficult. These are small things. They may not mean a lot to somebody who is sitting in Coorparoo going about their daily business, but for First Nations people the provisions in this bill are extremely important. The minister and her team are to be commended for pushing these provisions. With those words, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr DAMESTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (4.28 pm): I rise to contribute to the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The bill aims to amend the Child Protection Act 1999 to better support children and young people in care and streamline, clarify and improve processes. This is proposed to be achieved by reinforcing children's rights in a legislative framework. This includes within section 5C of the act, which provides additional principles that apply for administering the act for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. This includes embedding all five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protection principles in the legislation.

In the explanatory notes it is argued that the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system and an enduring legacy of the stolen generation makes it imperative that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the system are connected to family, community, culture and kin. This amendment aims to ensure positive steps are consistently taken to apply the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. It also sets clear standards for the application of the principle, strengthening the rights recognised by the principle, and supports transparent and accountable processes. This is consistent with the current guidelines provided in departmental practice about applying active efforts to embed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.

Unfortunately, I believe this bill sets out to create different standards of treatment for the care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. For example, in terms of placing a child for adoption, in seven child safety cases the third option for non-Indigenous children and the final option for Indigenous children create a scenario where the way the department deals with a child's safety within a family unit depends on the child's race or background. Unfortunately, some households and some communities are just not safe for children. The fact is that whether or not a child is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander could determine whether they are left to linger in some of these family units where they are not being cared for or looked after.

It is very sad that children from the Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous communities are overrepresented in our youth justice system. They are overrepresented because there are certain families who are not looking after their kids. These kids who we are dealing with now in the youth justice system who are roaming the street at nights, particularly in Townsville—and I know it is not the only place in Queensland where this is happening—come from dysfunctional families. They are roaming the

streets at night, getting up to no good, whether it is stealing cars or breaking into people's houses or people's businesses. These are the same kids who do not feel safe at home. I think it is very sad to think that we are creating a double standard that will see some of those children left longer in those communities or in those dysfunctional families.

I also believe that as legislators and people who stand in this House we are afraid that any of our actions might be labelled as 'stolen generation 2.0'. No-one wants to be labelled in that way. However, I think that cloud—and it is a very dark cloud—that sits over how Australians dealt with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the past should not cloud our judgement and how we ensure those kids are protected into the future. I think it would be a backwards step to leave some of those kids in the care of parents who may not have ever intended to raise them or to leave them in the care of family members.

This may come as a shock to some people, but we have heard stories coming from remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where, for some people, the federal government payment that comes every two weeks is a reason to have a child in care. It makes me die inside a little bit to think that, for some people, a meal ticket is a reason to have a child under their roof. Unfortunately, when these children are then abandoned they have to go into care. There is a person in the Hinchinbrook electorate who has taken on a young Aboriginal boy after his aunty went AWOL after having up to 10 nieces and nephews in her care. Now they are in the system. It does not matter if children are Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or non-Indigenous, they should be looked after in the same way and they should be protected from dysfunction.

Another part of the legislation before the House that I want to drill down on seeks to prioritise amendments to the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act. The policy objective of this amendment is to provide a legislative basis for the chief executive of working with children to request domestic violence information from the Police Commissioner for the purposes of a blue card assessment. The thing that concerns me is that domestic violence orders may be drawn on for information to decide whether or not someone is granted a blue card. I will not speak directly to the member for Traeger's bill because it is before the House at the moment.

We have to remember that a DV order is a civil order. It is used to protect the most vulnerable in our community, but there are scenarios—and it has been well documented—where people use the DV process to inflict pain or suffering on an ex-partner. These DV orders are not tried or scrutinised by the courts. The first person to make a complaint to police about an ex-partner is the person who actually has the law on their side. It is then up to the other person to decide whether or not they want to take it to court to have that DV order lifted. To think a civil order can be drawn on when making decisions about whether or not someone receives a blue card—it is tough to get a blue card and there are disqualifying offences for a reason. Being slapped with a civil order because of a disgruntled ex-partner should not be a reason to prevent someone from applying for work, especially if it has not been tried in court.

Those are the two points I wish to drill down on in speaking to this bill. We have some concerns about them. That is my contribution to the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.



Mr RUSSO (Toohey—ALP) (4.36 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The objectives of the bill are: to amend the Child Protection Act 1999 to reinforce children's rights in the legislative framework; strengthen children's voices in decisions that affect them; and streamline, clarify and improve the regulation of care. The bill also amends the Adoption Act 2009 to resolve technical issues relating to delegations under the Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946 (Commonwealth). The bill also makes priority amendments to the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000.

The Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 was introduced into the Legislative Assembly and referred to the Community Support and Services Committee on 15 September 2021. The committee in its report No. 12, which was tabled in the assembly on 12 November 2021, has recommended to the assembly that this bill be passed. It is my belief that all children should be afforded the opportunity to have a voice in decisions that are made about them and their lives. Involving young people in decisions about their lives not only empowers them; it allows decision-makers to make better and more informed care arrangements.

The bill seeks to introduce participation principles which are intended to ensure children and young people are provided with real and ongoing opportunities to have a voice and to provide for children's views to inform system design and the delivery of services. The bill will require all persons

involved in administering the act to have an obligation to tailor participation to a child's needs and circumstances. Further, they will be required to continue to do so in a way that is inclusive and accessible. They will be required to ensure they are genuinely listened to and engaged with and understand the child's view.

We need to strengthen children's voices in the decisions that affect them. Clauses 29 and 30 propose amendments to ensure children are provided with information about their rights under the charter of rights in a way which is appropriate for them to understand. This is intended to ensure children are made aware of their rights and where they can seek help.

Under the 10-year Supporting Families Changing Futures reforms, the Child Protection Act 1999 has been progressively amended and reviewed. In 2019 the state government released the discussion paper 'Rethinking rights and regulation: towards a stronger framework for protecting children and supporting families' for public comment. The discussion paper proposed options for reform relating to three key focus areas: reinforcing children's rights in the legislative framework; strengthening children's voices in decisions that affect them; and reshaping the regulation of care. The options in the discussion paper were intended to address outstanding recommendations from the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse—the royal commission—the Queensland Family and Child Commission's *Keeping Queensland's children more than safe: review of the foster care system* report and previous departmental consultation.

The proposed reforms were themselves generated by recommendations from these reports. During the consultation process, stakeholders acknowledged and recognised the importance of the legislative framework for protecting children's rights. These stakeholders felt that many children in care do not know or understand their rights or how to exercise them. Ms Carly Jacobitz, the Director of Life Without Barriers, stated—

Children and young people should be given the opportunity to have all of the information that is relevant to their world be that education, be that culture, be that family connection. Then it is incumbent on us to facilitate those views and wishes in the safest way possible.

Stakeholders were generally supportive of the proposed amendment to the principles of the act that allow children in care to have a greater say in decisions that affect them so that their care can be better tailored to suit their needs. Mrs Sandra Oui expressed this sentiment at the Townsville public hearing—


It is about making sure our children have a voice. It is about making sure that when their voice is wanting to be heard someone is going to be there to give them that 100 per cent support that they are comfortable with. Like I said, we all come from different diverse cultural backgrounds and one shoe might fit one person but not necessarily fit another person.

The amendments in the bill to the Child Protection Regulation 2011 establish a framework for the carers' register with relevant definitions and the information that is required to be kept on the register of applicants, authority holders and former authority holders. Life Without Barriers supported the creation of the carers' register to contribute to making safer environments for children in foster, kinship and residential care settings.

Section 5C of the act provides additional principles that apply for administering the act for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children. Clause 9 proposes to amend section 5C of the act to rename the 'child placement principles' the 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle'. Adding a partnership element to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle was supported by stakeholders. Section 5C(2) embeds all five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle in legislation. These five elements are the prevention principle, the partnership principle, the placement principle, the participation principle and the connection principle. The elements recognise a child as having the right to be brought up within the child's own family and community and that the child's parents and family members have a right to participate in administrative or judicial processes making significant decisions about the child. The child has the right to be supported to develop and maintain a connection with the child's family, community, culture, traditions and language, particularly if the child is in the care of a person who is not an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.

In terms of the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in determining the best interests of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child, the department noted that the cultural rights of children would be protected under clause 66 of the bill which intends to amend the charter of rights. The rights of children enshrined in the charter of rights would be expanded by the bill at clause 66 to include rights relating to culture, religion and language, fairness, respect, development of identity,

personal belongings, play and recreational activities. The bill will also make a number of minor and technical amendments including around the information held by the department about a child. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (4.45 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. I will limit my contribution today to those issues which relate to my portfolio responsibilities—the proposed changes to the blue card system. At the outset, I thank the Community Support and Services Committee for its work in considering the bill as well as the stakeholders who provided submissions to the committee. I note the committee's recommendations and, as indicated in the government's response to the committee's report and noted by the Minister for Children and Youth Justice in her second reading speech, the government fully supports recommendation 3.

Blue Card Services is committed to continuing its work to reduce barriers experienced by First Nations Queenslanders and provide a more supportive system at each step of the blue card process. I note the statements of reservation from the non-government members of the committee and the statements made in the House today and I will address these matters throughout my contribution. The amendments to the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 are designed to ensure the blue card system continues to provide the strongest possible safeguards for Queensland's children. As Dr Lee-Anne Perry from the Queensland Catholic Education Commission acknowledged as part of her oral submissions to the committee—

Blue cards give ... privileged access to young people. Blue cards play a critical role from the perspective of ensuring adults who are given that privileged access are screened as effectively as possible because it is a key part of the protection of the young people who are entrusted to schools.

That same sentiment can be extended across all of the child related industries that the blue card system regulates and aligns with section 6 of the working with children act which provides that the act is to be administered on the basis that the welfare and best interests of the child are paramount. We must always remember this core principle in actions we take as a government and, collectively, as a parliament.

Turning to the amendments which relate to domestic violence information, the bill amends the working with children act to enable the chief executive to obtain and consider domestic violence information as part of a blue card assessment. These amendments will implement recommendation 39 from the Queensland Family and Child Commission report *Keeping Queensland's children more than safe: review of the foster care system*. Whilst I note that stakeholders did indicate consideration of domestic violence information adds complexity to the blue card system and they did express some caution, the majority of submitters ultimately supported the intent of the amendments, which is to improve protections for children.

I want to take this opportunity to respond to some of the concerns raised by stakeholders and non-government members of the committee about the potential impacts of these amendments. The changes in the bill are made with an awareness and an acknowledgement that the dynamics of domestic and family violence are challenging and complex. Access to domestic violence information allows for a more informed decision to be made about a person's eligibility to engage with children and it is critical in ensuring that any risks a person may pose to children are considered in the screening process. A number of safeguards have been incorporated to ensure that access to and consideration of domestic violence information in the blue card assessment process are appropriate. Domestic violence information will be carefully considered as part of an holistic approach to address assessing a person's eligibility, including any information provided by applicants themselves regarding the circumstances of that domestic violence information.


Specific amendments have been made to guide the chief executive on factors to consider when considering the information. Domestic violence information will not be automatically requested for all blue card applicants. Rather, it will only be requested where there is information that raises a reasonable belief that a domestic violence order or police protection notice may have been made against the applicant. A reasonable belief could be formed in many ways. In most instances a reasonable belief will be formed by information already before the chief executive. Information about the existence of domestic violence orders, including where more than one order has been issued or there are different complainants, is relevant to a blue card assessment. It may suggest a repeated pattern of behaviour. Conversely, the existence of a single order may also be highly relevant to an assessment, such as where the order is current and/or names a child as a protected person.

Some stakeholders, including the member for Maiwar, highlighted the need for specialist training within Blue Card Services to undertake the unique nature and dynamics of domestic violence. I am pleased to advise the House that in addition to the existing training already undertaken, Blue Card Services has added extensive training to the continuing professional development program of their assessment officers. This ensures that assessment officers remain up to date on the law and legal processes relating to domestic violence, maintain knowledge of current research in the area and understand the more subtle impacts of power and control and how that information should be considered as part of a blue card assessment. Assessment officers received training from the Centre for Women and Co late last year. Strong Women Talking, Marigurim Mubi Yangu, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation also delivered further training in April this year. That training focused on the drivers of violence impacting First Nations women and children and the impact of ongoing gendered violence.

I now turn to concerns expressed by stakeholders and others about the disproportionate impact the amendments and the blue card system more broadly have on First Nations people as a consequence of their overrepresentation in the criminal justice system. The government's response to recommendation 3 of the committee's report outlines several strategies which have already been implemented by Blue Card Services to improve participation. Of particular note, this includes a dedicated team of officers, including identified liaison officers, to help First Nations applicants engage with the assessment process and provide a cultural lens to the decision-making process. Targeted travel to remote communities to provide one-on-one support is also happening. This allows for more informed decisions as a result of the increased engagement by applicants in the submissions process. These initiatives are achieving positive results.

In 2020-21 Blue Card Services issued 15,489 blue and exemption cards to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Queensland. This is more cards issued in a single year than ever before. Blue Card Services has already seen a reduction in the number of applicants in remote discrete communities withdrawing from the process before a decision has been made. Of course we still need to do more. I am committed to exploring additional opportunities. In June last year I was proud to launch *Safe children and strong communities: a strategy and action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations accessing the blue card system 2021-2025*. This plan was co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and validated with First Nations peoples across Queensland. The strategy and action plan will be an opportunity to continue the dialogue with key stakeholders to understand how First Nations applicants and organisations want to access information and support throughout the decision-making process.

Finally, I will briefly touch on the amendments which will facilitate Queensland's participation in the Working with Children Check National Reference System, the NRS. The NRS is a national database which enables jurisdictions to identify persons who have been deemed ineligible to work with children in another state or territory. The amendments adopt a mutual recognition approach. This means that a person who is currently prohibited from working with children in another jurisdiction will be prohibited from working with children in Queensland. Mutual recognition of adverse decisions requires an automatic and mandated response. This approach is necessary to ensure stronger protections for children and young people. These amendments to the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act build on the steps already taken by the Palaszczuk government to further strengthen Queensland's blue card system. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (4.54 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. It is an emotive topic in the community and involves some hot-button issues. Like many in this chamber I have had plenty of experience in the electorate office of complaints in relation to this matter. The language within the bill is interesting. It mentions alternative principles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. In legislation I have brought before the House relating to blue cards I have often been told we do not have two rules, one for one group and one for another. That is very much a theme in this bill. I commend the government for that. I think there are horses for courses. Some situations need to be looked at differently where it can be justified.

The member for Hinchinbrook brought up the stolen generation, which I think is highly pertinent and a very uncomfortable topic for people to talk about. In the context of child protection, certain cases are talked about in back rooms. No-one dares mention it, but it does weigh on the conscience in particular when you want to focus on the high-incidence involvement of agencies with First Australians communities. I do not think any rational person would argue that it does not weigh heavily on the conscience of those people making those decisions.

I think we could all agree that the tendency would be to err on the side of caution and not be the subject of that same judgement in the future. I think that puts officers in a dangerous position—more to the point, it puts kids in a dangerous position. There may be an intangible influence. It could be better to send this kid over there, but we have to be careful that we are not seen to be taking them away from the family. It is not talked about in the open much because no-one is game to talk about it, but it does have an influence. If we are talking about looking after these kids, there will always be a tension in that space. I am of the view that people are scared as hell of being accused of that same sort of activity now. It worries me that decisions will not be made in the best interests of kids. I do not think this bill addresses that. I think it would be very hard to address it in a cultural way—I do not mean Aboriginal culture, I mean embedded in our modern culture where everyone is scared to touch on that issue.

Recently in Mount Isa I spent some time with a guy I used to play footy with. He did not have a good relationship with his partner. His father, from a First Australian family, traditional owners, a good family from the gulf, said, 'I am trying to get access to the kids. The boy knows they should not be there with him, he gets in bad habits, but they keep giving the kids back to the mum.' I feel sorry for those child protection officers. You do want to keep kids with their mum and in their family. I play that same scenario out under these laws. If someone invokes the cultural claim that 'they need to be back with me'—in the grandfather's words, 'These kids need to be with me and they want to be with me'—I hope that in that sort of scenario those kids would be with the grandparents where they should be. There is no question in my mind about that.

In relation to blue cards, I disagree strongly with the Attorney-General that this bill will make it better. It is just as bad as ever and it will make it harder. I speak with authority when I say that in First Nations communities it is creating a hell of a lot more damage than it is doing good. I know that it is well intended, but it is doing a hell of a lot more damage and not doing the job that people think it is doing in those communities. I think that a negative and ill-informed direction is being taken here. I certainly can claim to have ground-truthed that pretty well in the communities I visit.

I thoroughly agree with the comments of the member for Hinchinbrook in relation to domestic violence orders. On occasion, regardless of whether or not it is rare, there can be malicious activity by a female against her ex-partner who is then whacked with a DV order and can suffer enormous consequences. The inadvertent effects from that reprisal can be horrific. You have to be careful how much you poke the bear on one side. If someone lobs a DV order on their ex-partner, that person will lose their right to work—if they are a teacher, for instance, they will lose their job—but it might turn out to be a malicious claim. While that might be in the minority of cases or the exception, you must consider the damage that these things can cause. That point has to be voiced in this House because, again, a hell of a lot of constituents come to us and say, 'How does this work in the order of fairness when a DVO is whacked on me, denying me my right to work and everything, but then it's proven in court that there was no validity to it?' There are consequences both ways and it is something we have to be very careful about.

We certainly disagree with the parts of the bill that interact with the blue card system because it is failing to do its job, particularly in First Australian communities where people think it is doing good. I think in this space there is a hell of a lot that is beyond the scope of this bill but that needs fixing, because it is causing great heartache and problems in the community. There are avenues for that within these changes.

There is an additional point that I do not think has been raised. The bill talks about giving kids in foster care the opportunity to choose whether or not they go back to their families. While I think some officers would try to navigate this, I am pretty sure that in most cases the kid will say, 'I don't want to be with these foster carers because they're telling me to be in bed by eight o'clock and they're giving me some rules and guidelines that I'm not used to. I want to go back to aunty's.' As I understand it, they will be allowed to go back to aunty's because it fills the criteria of the legislation and what we are supposed to be doing. However, in my view, the most compassionate thing you could do for that kid would be to give them some rules and boundaries. If you really loved the kid, you would want to give them some boundaries and not put them back in a scenario that can lead to bad outcomes for them in the future. It does concern me that what may initially seem to be an act of compassion really is not the best outcome for some of the kids.

Those are my concerns. I ask the House to carefully consider this bill, particularly the changes it proposes to the blue card system, because I think in the long term we will have created more problems than we are setting out to solve.



Mr MOLHOEK (Southport—LNP) (5.03 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution with respect to the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. Like all members of the House, I am pleased to see this legislation come forward. In particular, I am pleased with the recommendations in respect of the *Working with children checks* report and the recommendations of the royal commission on information sharing amongst the states.

For some time this has been a significant area of concern, particularly for border communities such as the Gold Coast and the Tweed. I know this happens in other states. Given the transient nature of Australians and the way that people can move so easily and quickly around the country, it is important that we have the ability through the Police Service to monitor the issuance of blue cards and the behaviour of perpetrators in respect of children. I know that in child safety circles this has been an issue of concern for many years. It is good to see that through this legislation we are progressing the recommendations of the royal commission for greater information sharing amongst the states.

I note that the legislation looks at issues around adoption. I want to touch on some of the challenges around that issue and the trauma that is still a lived experience for many Australians who endured forced adoption. During a Mental Health Select Committee hearing we heard from one witness who made a public submission. He talked very openly about the trauma that he faced as an adopted child. He ended up in a family that did not work out so well for him. Sadly, as a result of that, he ended up within the child protection system and subsequently endured significant childhood trauma, including physical and sexual abuse. It is so important that we look more broadly at these issues and challenges that are facing us as a government and as a society.

I note that the explanatory notes and the legislation itself deal with issues around domestic violence. The Queensland Police Service and other services need to access detailed information about perpetrators of domestic violence to determine the potential risk of those people accessing a blue card and being allowed to work with children in other states. Our children are a precious resource and we need to protect them. In respect of the blue card system, any improvements we can make are certainly valued.

I long for the day when the blue card will be even more accessible and more transparent in terms of the information that it can provide to community organisations. Perhaps one day we will see an online portal where a club secretary, an employee or someone working within an organisation that deals directly with children can verify a person's blue card and make sure that there has not been a cancellation within a two-year period or access other relevant information. I believe that with the greater use of technology there is also the potential to better track people who have found a way around the system and are, sadly, moving from one club, organisation or sporting group to another. Any strides in terms of improving our blue card system are incredibly important.

As I have spoken on many occasions about my involvement with Bravehearts, it would be remiss of me not to raise it in the context of child protection. This is my 15th year as a director of the organisation. This year we celebrate our 25th anniversary and a special event will be held at the Brisbane City Hall on 28 May. It is exciting to see the work of that organisation, albeit sad that organisations such as Bravehearts, the Morcombe Foundation and other organisations that specialise in these areas need to exist. In Australia the reality is that a female child has a one-in-three chance of experiencing sexual assault and abuse before they reach the end of their teens and, likewise, boys have a one-in-three chance.

We need to stand up. We need to do better. We need to become a much stronger voice for our kids. Government and opposition members in this House need to continue to advocate and stand up for the protection and the rights of our children. We must advocate for frontline workers: the child safety officers, the doctors and nurses, the police, the ambulance drivers and the domestic violence support workers. We need to advocate for them so that they are better equipped and have better information to do their job in protecting our most vulnerable.


Over the course of the Mental Health Select Committee hearings—I know that I am possibly jumping the gun a little bit, but it is not legislation being discussed; it is a report that is still to come to the House—a number of organisations raised real concerns about the impact of childhood trauma on people, many of whom carry those scars and that damage through their lives. On many occasions I have spoken to young people who have come through the child protection system, who have been in foster care or whom I have met through great organisations like Create—it plays a very significant advocacy role for young people in our nation—and heard stories where some young people never recover. That is why it is so important for us to protect our most vulnerable.

There is always hope. Thankfully, some young children, because of good counselling and good support—perhaps on some occasions they are lucky enough to end up in a home that truly cares for them and that provides balance, encouragement and love—come through our child protection system and do incredibly well. I often say to young people: in life you have an opportunity to live as a victim or a victor. There are many young people who, because of good support, develop the ability to brush off the terrible experiences of childhood trauma and go on to live very full and productive lives but, sadly, there are many others who just do not have that ability. As Queenslanders, as a government and as members of this House, we need to do better. We need to continue to advocate for our children.

I will close with one of the recommendations made to us by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth and Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership. It states—

Adverse childhood experiences are highly disruptive to healthy brain development and are a specific risk factor for mental illness including suicide. This can in part be addressed at a government level through intersectional collaboration among other policy improvements. For example, TQKP is currently advancing proposals for a Thriving Qld Kids Brain Builders Program.

There are many great things happening in our communities. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (5.13 pm): As the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for multiculturalism and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, I rise to address the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill aims to achieve its policy objectives by reinforcing children's rights in the legislative framework, strengthening their voices in decisions that affect them and improving the regulation of care. These objectives must remain at the forefront of the bill. We cannot lose sight of these integral responsibilities.

At the outset I can confirm, as other members have, that the LNP will not be opposing this legislation and I acknowledge the essential nature of such a bill. However, there are some important matters that, considering my shadow ministry, I wish to bring to the attention of the House.

The bill's child placement principles for Indigenous children are crucial. The Child Protection Act 1999 expressed general support for the strengthening of the use of the child placement principles for Indigenous children. The amendment to the bill from 'having regard to' the principles to 'making active efforts' to the principles is a step in the right direction for our duty to the Indigenous community. This notion has the potential to go further in the future; however, at this stage it is an appropriate change.

The Indigenous child placement principle must be applied to a standard of 'active efforts'. The efforts must be purposeful, thorough and timely. As the shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, I urge the government to contemplate Aboriginal tradition and island custom. Preserving and honouring Indigenous culture is important to our First Nations people. Preserving and honouring Indigenous culture is important to the LNP.


Time is of the essence here. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over-represented in child protection and out-of-home care services. Whilst the reasons for this are complex, past policies have failed and inadvertently contributed to this alarming reality. This bill under no circumstances can repeat the past. Today we move forward.

Poverty, assimilation policies, intergenerational trauma, discrimination and forced child removals have all contributed to the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care. I concede that the prevalence of child abuse and neglect experienced by our Indigenous community is not necessarily measured accurately. This is a problem. Some children who have been victimised by horrendous abuse or neglect have not been reported to the appropriate authorities.

Closing the Gap recalls that there is a fear of racism, a fear that the child might be forcibly removed from the community, and a strong belief in the need to protect the perpetrator because of the high number of Indigenous deaths in custody. That motivates some Indigenous decisions to not report abuse. I note that other members, the members for Greenslopes and Traeger, have dealt with some of these issues in their contributions today.

There is a fundamental need to balance the desires of the family whilst championing our goal to keep the child safe. The child cannot be returned to the family if it is an unsafe situation. The family environment must come under examination and not be passively overlooked any longer. I can understand and accept that that is a very difficult situation sometimes for child safety workers in communities to try to work through these issues.

We hear Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children asking and pleading to be kept with their long-term foster family only to be forced to reunify with their family and placed in an unsafe situation. The children's voices are small yet they are mighty. I encourage all to listen. The child's voice and the child's safety must take priority. Once again, we stress the importance of balancing the family's desires with the No. 1 priority of keeping the child safe. No other agenda should be accepted by all of us.

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (5.17 pm): Nothing is more important than protecting our children and ensuring young Queenslanders get the best possible start to life. This is as true for children in care as it is for all young people. There are some 12,000 children in the care of the Queensland government, and 1,300 live in residential care. This is an enormous responsibility and it should be the state government's highest priority. I want to see children in care thrive, not just survive. An essential piece of this is ensuring that there is customary and age-appropriate participation of children in care in decision-making processes that affect them. Allowing children in care to have a greater say in decisions that affect them not only lets kids in care feel listened to and empowered but also allows their care to be better tailored to suit their needs.

This bill seeks to reinforce children's rights in the Child Protection Act 1999 regarding decisions that affect them and improve the regulation of care. The bill also addresses some technical issues from the Adoption Act 2009. Notably, there are several amendments to the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, including changes to information sharing within the blue card system.

Firstly, regarding the changes to the Child Protection Act, the bill's focus on the rights of children and young people in care to have their voices heard was broadly considered a positive step in the right direction by almost all of the stakeholders. However, I think it is worth noting here that the safety of the child must be the utmost consideration. It is crucial that support is provided throughout the engagement process with the child. In this regard, I note the submission of the Queensland Law Society to the committee. It stressed—

... directly involving children in legal processes can be traumatic, and there needs to be a focus on ensuring that engagement with children is done in a way that is safe, culturally competent and promotes the child's emotional and psychological wellbeing.

With that noted, enshrining children's participation in decisions that affect them is a positive step forward, but it is only one step. Extra efforts and support must be provided to the kids in care right now—the kids who, like Mr Jake Shields from the Create Foundation, feel like a puppet and not in control of decisions affecting their lives, who have stopped going to case plan meetings because they were not included in decisions that were being made and who feel like they are always being told what they are doing wrong. For these amendments to be more than just aspirational words the state government must have a plan to help those children who have experienced what Mr Shields told the committee about—those children for whom the Create Foundation advocate.

I also note the proposed changes relating to the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. The bill enshrines all five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle in legislation which includes prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection. It strengthens the consideration of these placement principles from simply 'having regard to' these principles to now requiring 'active efforts' towards the principles.

This is an important step towards addressing the over-representation of First Nations kids in child safety statistics. I note the shocking data from the Child Death Review Board that First Nations children make up 23 of the 55 deaths and almost half of the suicides. So strengthening the application of the placement principle by requiring 'active efforts' towards the principles, not just having regard to them, is welcomed. However, I, along with other stakeholders, would like to see the government better outline what constitutes 'active efforts' so that it is, in fact, actionable and not just words.

In this regard, the Queensland Law Society submitted that 'active efforts' should be expanded to include the steps that the relevant decision-maker should take when making a decision that engages the application of the principle. ATSILS also submitted that the bill should detail steps to be taken to embed 'active efforts' into policy and procedure. Similarly, QATSICPP suggested the bill further detail what constitutes 'active efforts'.

Turning now to the issue of information sharing regarding domestic violence offences for blue card applications, it was clear from the submissions to the committee that there is significant potential for unintended negative consequences from the application of this provision for domestic violence victims. The bill seeks to amend the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening Act) 2000 to enable the chief executive working with children to request domestic violence information from the Queensland Police Commissioner during the blue card assessment process.

The Women's Legal Service Queensland highlighted the potential for inadvertent consequences, submitting to the committee—

The existence of a domestic violence protection order, which will affect the respondent's blue card status, and their ability to obtain and maintain employment, may provide added barriers for women to report the domestic violence and seek protection through domestic violence orders.

They highlighted scenarios where victims are misidentified as perpetrators in domestic violence orders. With these new provisions in place, victims may face further disadvantage and barriers to reporting.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission shared these concerns, submitting—

The dynamics of domestic and family violence are challenging, particularly where there is a risk the perpetrator of violence has been misidentified.

Any changes that might have an impact on women in need of protection as well as their financial stability and independence or add to the barriers for women to report domestic violence and seek protection through domestic violence orders should be closely monitored by this state government and approached cautiously. In this regard, I note the Queensland Law Society's submission which recommended—

... the chief executive should adopt a discretionary and flexible approach when requesting and relying upon shared criminal history and domestic violence information. Appropriate safeguards to ensure privacy and confidentiality are essential, and the chief executive should ensure that natural justice is afforded to the applicant. This should include appropriate avenues to challenge an unfavourable decision.

I note that this is suggested to be incorporated as part of the application of the amendments in the bill.

Similarly, the Queensland Family and Child Commission strongly emphasised the importance of ensuring domestic and family violence information is assessed by staff with sufficient expertise in this area to ensure any information is 'used appropriately without further disadvantaging applicants who have already experienced harm' and sought that this requirement be implemented alongside the amendments. I note the Attorney-General's contribution that this essential training is underway.

Tragically, the scourge of domestic violence continues to plague Queensland. We know the horrifying statistics—one in six women and one in 16 men have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or previous partner since the age of 15 in Australia. Here in Queensland we have the second highest number of DVO breaches in the country. What is worse, in the last year DVO breaches in Queensland have more than doubled to almost 45,000 breaches. That is a massive 129 per cent rise across the state. On the Gold Coast we have seen a 162 per cent increase in DVO breaches since 2015. Any rise is bad, but a rise of this amount is detrimental to our community.

Last financial year there were 28,797 DVO applications and the Magistrates Court at Southport heard just under 10 per cent of these. There were 1,983 contraventions of DVO charges lodged with the Southport Magistrates Court alone in 2020-21, with a total of 30,538 contravene DVO charges lodged statewide. These are not just numbers. Every single figure is a victim who is now fearing for their safety at the hands of a perpetrator—a victim struggling to sleep at night, scared to leave their home, scared to walk down the main street. A DVO is taken out hoping to keep them safe, but there are countless stories where it is breached and the offender walks free.

The state government is not doing enough for domestic violence victims in Queensland. On the Gold Coast, local help centres have seen a 40 per cent increase in women seeking help for domestic violence between November to January this year, and domestic violence workers are struggling to meet demand. This is being reported on year after year, with family and sexual violence counsellors struggling to keep up with demand for their services. It is not good enough by a long shot, and the Queensland government must urgently do more to protect and support victims of domestic violence. I welcome the Premier's announcement this morning to act on the *Hear her voice* report and introduce a bill into this House to make coercive control a criminal offence by the end of 2023. But it has taken so long to get to this point, and yet more needs to be done.

It is reported that over 400,000 women over the age of 45 are at risk of homelessness. This is the fastest growing cohort at risk of homelessness. Just last week, my colleague the member for Everton and I held a round table with a number of key stakeholders in the Gold Coast homelessness field. Several concerns were raised, including concerns around domestic violence victims becoming increasingly susceptible to homelessness and the pathways available to children in care once they turn 18. The reforms in this bill are positive and welcomed, but, even so, it was clear to us from our round table that the state government must do much more to protect both children in care and victims of domestic and family violence.



Hon. LM LINARD (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.27 pm), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to the debate on the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I thank them for their support for these important reforms. I will now turn to a number of the issues raised by various members during the debate, noting of course that my colleague the Attorney-General has already addressed those issues in respect of the blue card amendments.

I will first touch on reunification because there are a number of members who have touched on reunification with the general theme being that we move too quickly and perhaps pursue too aggressively reunification in situations where it should not be. I acknowledge how complex this space is. Equally we receive criticism about the low levels of reunification. It may surprise members to know that the level is low. The agency takes a very careful approach, acknowledging the complexity of the issue. What always guides it is what is in the child's best interests. If a family meets the threshold under our act for a child to be removed or for there to be intervention there are clearly significant issues in that family. We often have to work with them for a long time and give them significant support before reunification can be considered.

I inform the House that there were 435 children reunified with their families in 2020. That is not a huge number. The agency does not seek to reunify in situations where they do not think it will succeed. A positive note is that almost 90 per cent of those children remain safely at home 12 months after they were reunified. I think that that is absolutely a reflection on the work that the agency does to ensure that the right children are reunified at the right time with their families. What is of paramount concern and what guides us is the purpose of the act, and that is to serve a child's best interests.

In her contribution, the member for Whitsunday asked why the bill does not define what is in a child's best interests. Clause 8 of the bill amends the general principles in section 5B to clarify their application when a decision-maker considers a child's safety, wellbeing and best interests. What is in the best interests of a child will vary significantly from child to child and in different circumstances for the same child. As noted in a submission from a statutory body to the 2019 consultation process, determining the best interests of the child needs to occur on an individualised case-by-case basis. There is a risk—and I think a very real risk—that prescriptively defining best interest will limit flexibility in considering the needs of each child at each point of contact with the child protection system. Sections 5A and 5B of the Child Protection Act instead provide a principles-based approach which can be tailored to the needs and circumstances of each child.

Refusal of a request to review a case plan was an issue raised by the member for Maiwar. He asked why the bill enables that to occur. Currently, the Child Protection Act enables a child or their long-term guardian to request a view of the child's case plan. Clause 24 of the bill is intended to extend this right to children without a long-term guardian. The Child Safety Practice Manual provides guidance for child safety officers relating to a review of a case plan in line with part 3A of the Child Protection Act, and it requires that a child's case plan must be reviewed regularly and at least every six months.

The chief executive may decide not to review a case plan upon receiving a request in circumstances where it may not be considered necessary. For example, the Child Safety Practice Manual states that a review of a case plan may not be needed if a request by the child or long-term guardian for additional financial or practical support can be assessed and approved through casework or a case plan review was recently completed as part of the required review process and the child's circumstances have not significantly changed. Guidance within the Child Safety Practice Manual emphasises that case plan reviews are a key part of the case planning process. They provide an opportunity for the child, their parents and their safety and support network to share information on progress and determine what other actions can be taken to achieve the overall case plan goals.

I also want to touch on a point that the member for Whitsunday made, because I think it has application to all members in this House—certainly her office and mine by nature of our roles—and that is the many difficult issues that come into our offices, often with significant detail. I want to acknowledge the things that our teams—our electorate officers and ministerial staff—have to read and how difficult and challenging that is, because I do not think there is any simple issue that comes to my agency. I appreciate that is the case for all electorate officers in this place. I know, because I read every single letter and email that the members in this House send me and I respond personally. I want to acknowledge what all of your teams are reading and what you are reading and how difficult that is. In doing so, I acknowledge that is the job of the people in my agency because that is their work. It speaks to the difficult and challenging nature of child safety and the issues that families are experiencing. I do want to acknowledge that. The member for Whitsunday does regularly raise those issues and pass them on to me, and I acknowledge that.

The member for Mansfield, as the chair of the committee, spoke so beautifully in respect of her passion and experience as a teacher. She brings a wealth of experience to these inquiries and these issues. I really appreciate working alongside her. In her contribution she made mention of a Create young consultant, Jake Shields. I meet with Create quarterly, but I meet with children in care, whether that is in-care arrangements, out-of-home-care arrangements or residential homes, as often as I can to hear their voices. You should never have a favourite, but I have to acknowledge that Jake is one of mine. He has had a tremendous impact on me personally. When I am considering change and reform in the system, Jake is someone to whom I reach out to hear his stories and his voice. I am having dinner with him—

Ms Fentiman: He's awesome!

Ms LINARD: Yes! I take that interjection from the Attorney: he is awesome. He has actually aged out of being a Create consultant, but I am keeping him on as a private consultant, as a ministerial consultant, because he is extraordinary. He is coming in tomorrow night to have dinner with me, along with a number of Create consultants and young people with experience in the child safety system. They have not been to parliament, so we are going to have dinner together and I am going to spoil them. I want to acknowledge his voice and the great work that Create does.

I also want to acknowledge the member for Pumicestone when she called out the impact that politicisation of the system has on morale. While I call out her comments and her honouring of the passion of carers and the need for culturally appropriate and safe practices, I also want to mention the member for Buderim's contribution. Equally, the member for Lytton acknowledged that it was moving. I want to thank him firstly for him and his wife doing foster care training, for being willing to open his home and consider doing that, because we cannot do what we do without the thousands of foster and kinship carers across the state. They make this system work. Equally, the member for Buderim made a really honouring contribution of the system. I know the system does not always get it right. It will never always get it right. I always acknowledge that it has to evolve. I will never be defensive or embarrassed to stand up when I need to and say sorry when it gets it wrong, but I also believe in the system and the people in it.

I travel extensively around the state meeting with the people in this system—the child safety officers, our regional directors, our cultural practice advisers and our executives in Brisbane—and there is absolutely no question that these people get out of bed every day because their passion is to serve the interests of children. That is what drives them every day, and no amount of politics in here will ever further the interests of children in the Queensland community. I do not play politics with this issue; I think that people are clear on that. Every time I stand up and speak about the system I am talking about those children and young people, and I am trying to amplify their voices and not play politics with it. Member for Buderim, I thank you for not doing so in this place, for being honouring. It is much appreciated.

I just want to make a final comment with regard to the issues that the member for Traeger raised and then I will turn to the implementation of the bill and make some final comments. I do not always agree with the member for Traeger's position on issues, but I really respect that he genuinely has the interests of his community at heart. He consistently raises the same issues but he comes with solutions. I do not always agree with those solutions either, but he always comes to the table with something. He does not just throw political bombs because he can. I have had to say 'no' many a time and vote down private members' bills he has brought before this House when I used to chair child safety inquiries in my first two terms here, but I always respected that about him. I know he has a private member's bill in this House. I am not going to get into his comments around a two-tiered system of blue card. I know that is something he thinks is a solution. We will talk about that later when the private member's bill comes forward. I do want to honour that about him. He is always at the table. He has a complex electorate. Whenever I travel there he makes the time to meet with me and talk about some of the really complex cross-jurisdictional issues he faces.

I want to move now to implementation of the bill, because people have sought some clarification in respect of that. The commencement of the amendments in the bill will happen in two tranches. It will enable the department to effectively review policies, procedures and other guidelines for staff to ensure alignment with the amendments. Implementation activities will include training of frontline child safety officers and our non-government staff to ensure a shared understanding and effective implementation of the changes. I take people's comments on board. It is great to talk about these things, but in terms of how it will happen in practice we need to honour that. It needs to happen in practice and it needs to consistently happen in practice, and that is a tricky thing across a big state like this.

Information and communication campaigns are also proposed to be conducted. These will focus on departmental staff, funded services and peak bodies as well as carers and families. A dedicated implementation team within the department is being set up to effectively implement the bill. The department proposes to work with the Create Foundation to ensure the voices of children and young people are heard and considered in the implementation of the bill. The department also proposes to work with relevant stakeholders in relation to the implementation of active efforts with regard to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, noting that the amendment aligns the Child Protection Act with current departmental practice guidance.

We will work closely with fierce stakeholders in this space—like QATSCIPP, like Natalie Lewis in the Queensland Family and Child Commission, like Jody Currie, like our First Nations and families boards within the agency. They will hold us to account to those, as they should, and we welcome that.

I want to make some concluding reflections in the time I have left. I want to acknowledge the reform journey that we have been on over the past eight years as a government because this reform continues that work. We have had \$1.2 billion in new funding since coming to government in 2015, as well as 550 new staff to June this year, with a commitment in last year's budget of an additional 153. We have brought caseloads down to 16 per CSO from 21 per CSO. I want to acknowledge the significant contribution made by my predecessors—the Attorney-General, Shannon Fentiman, and Minister Di Farmer—because I continue their good work. They made a significant contribution to this space. The child safety system we have is much stronger and more robust in 2022 because of those investments. I have absolutely no doubt about that.

I also want to acknowledge where we are now: 93,000 children known to Child Safety each year; one report made every four minutes, with 134,000 reports; and three out of every four households we work with experiencing domestic and family violence, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health issues or criminal histories. Child safety notifications are up, even with all of that investment, and COVID has exacerbated vulnerability in families that were already struggling. However, across the state, child safety officers are responding faster to the most urgent calls and they are working with families in need longer. They are doing more in difficult circumstances, and I acknowledge them.

I also want to acknowledge where we are going as an agency. We want to halve the dependence on residential care. We want to double kin care. We know young people should be with a foster or kinship carer when appropriate, and residential care services provide an incredibly important service and an intensive therapeutic service when that is appropriate. We are investing in a renewed focus on permanency practice. We are walking with courage with our First Nations communities and child protection peak, QATSCIPP, to see delegated authority extended in this state because we are focused on reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in our system. We want to amplify and elevate the voices of children and young people in the system—in their own situations and their own case plans. In the system generally, we want to reform the whole system based on their voices and their asks and that is what this bill does.

I want to again acknowledge the dedication and passion of foster carers and kin carers and our partners in the non-government sector. Child safety is everyone's business, and we need everyone to work together alongside the community to call out abuse and neglect in our communities. I want to acknowledge my department and my director-general, Deidre Mulkerin—a more than 30-year veteran of child safety, a child safety officer herself. I want to acknowledge her leadership and her expertise in this space and her courage to continue to lean into this space around how we reduce over-representation in the system. I acknowledge my deputy directors-generals—Kate, Rob, Phil and Dr Meegan Crawford—as well as all of our team in the central office, our regional executive directors and regional directors, our cultural practice advisers, our CSOs and all of our frontline staff out in our regions across Queensland. As I said, when I travel the state, their passion is not in question. Much of their work is done quietly and respectfully inside families' homes. You will not see it and you will not hear of it, but I acknowledge them.

I want to acknowledge the support team on the bill here in the House and in 1 William Street—Helen Missen, Erin Biles, Emily Woodford and Rachel Platzer from my department and Greg Bourke from DJAG on blue card issues. I thank them for their support on this bill and in all policy and legislative matters that we work together on.

This bill will create a stronger framework with which we can achieve the best possible outcomes for Queensland's children and young people. The bill delivers reform in three key focus areas: reinforcing children's rights, strengthening children's voices, and streamlining, clarifying and improving the regulation of care. It amplifies the voices of children and young people—the very people that the system is here to serve. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.


Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 132, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.45 pm): I move—


That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.45 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.


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

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE (ADVISORY AND MONITORING BOARD) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 28 October 2021 (see p. 3387).

Second 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) (5.46 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

On 28 October 2021, the Public Trustee (Advisory and Monitoring Board) Amendment Bill 2021 was introduced into parliament and referred to the Community Support and Services Committee. The committee tabled its report on 21 January 2022, making three recommendations. I thank the committee for its thorough consideration of the bill. I would also like to thank the organisations and individuals who made submissions to the committee and participated in the public hearing. The first recommendation was that the bill be passed, and I thank the committee for its support of the bill. The government response to the Community Support and Services Committee report was tabled on 21 April 2022. I will shortly address the other two recommendations in the committee's report. I foreshadow that I will be proposing amendments to the bill during consideration in detail in response to these recommendations.

On 10 March 2021, I tabled a report by the former public advocate entitled *Preserving the financial futures of vulnerable Queenslanders: a review of Public Trustee fees, charges and practices*. The report made 32 recommendations to improve the operations of the Public Trustee and, importantly, the outcomes for vulnerable Queenslanders. As I have previously stated in this House, the Public Trustee has under new leadership been on a significant reform journey. It is working hard to transform into a modern, customer-centric organisation. Much positive change has already occurred, but of course there is still more to do.

The establishment of the board is in response to the Public Advocate's report which recommended additional oversight over the Public Trustee to improve its performance, transparency and public accountability. The oversight body should be completely removed from the Public Trustee, not responsible for carrying out the functions and duties of the Public Trustee. The bill gives the board the tools it requires to effectively perform its oversight function, including: a skilled and knowledgeable

membership providing a fresh perspective; the power to require the Public Trustee to provide the board with information; and the responsibility to report on any recommendations made by the board to the Public Trustee or the minister.

The majority of submitters broadly support the bill, including the Public Advocate, Carers Queensland, the Queensland Human Rights Commission, Queensland Advocacy Incorporated, the Crime and Corruption Commission and Aged and Disability Advocacy. However, a number of issues were raised through the committee inquiry about the functions, composition and accountability of the board, some of which are also the subject of recommendations in the committee's report, and I would now like to address these concerns.

Firstly, a number of submitters and committee members have commented that the board should have stronger governance functions, with the ability to direct the Public Trustee in the exercise of their functions. To introduce a governance board in Queensland and maintain the current structure of the Public Trustee would be problematic because it is the Public Trustee that owes a range of statutory, fiduciary and common law duties to its clients, and the Public Trustee must ensure those duties are discharged. It would be inappropriate to allow any other entity to direct the Public Trustee where the Public Trustee remains responsible and liable for meeting those obligations. By having a board with and advisory and monitoring functions reporting to the minister on the outcomes of that monitoring, the Public Trustee would then not be subject to any direction about the administration of estates of the financial administration clients and you would not have that fundamental conflict.

Governance boards are used for many statutory bodies including, for example, Legal Aid Queensland, and they do offer many advantages. Different to an advisory and monitoring board, governance boards have responsibility for managing the affairs of the corporation. They are responsible for ensuring a corporation achieves its objectives, performs its functions and meets its obligations and duties at law. Under the current corporate structure of the Public Trustee of Queensland, it is the Public Trustee who has the responsibility to ensure that the Public Trustee of Queensland's significant statutory, fiduciary and common law duties are fulfilled.

A governance board would take over the running of the Public Trustee rather than providing that oversight. In contrast, the advisory and monitoring board that the bill establishes will be independent from the entity it is overseeing. The board will monitor the performance of the Public Trustee's functions and provide advice and make recommendations about how the performance of those functions could be improved. The board will also monitor complaints received by the Public Trustee about the performance of the Public Trustee's functions and the Public Trustee's processes for managing complaints. I would also like to point out that the Public Advocate provided overall support for the bill and, when asked by the committee, stated that the bill satisfies recommendation 30 of the Public Advocate's report.

It is not possible to set up a new board to manage the affairs of the Public Trustee without changing the entire corporate structure of the Public Trustee and removing the corporation sole. That is not a simple exercise and would require a complete overhaul of the corporate structure of the Public Trustee and a complete rewrite of the Public Trustee Act 1978. Consideration may need to be given to any consequential amendments that would be required to associated legislation in that case, such as the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000 and the Powers of Attorney Act 1998.

Establishing an advisory and monitoring board in this bill implements recommendation 30 of the Public Advocate report by establishing that independent oversight mechanism. Importantly, the board will also be able to support the ongoing reform process to address the issues raised in the Public Advocate's report and will ensure ongoing oversight once the reforms are implemented to make sure that new and emerging issues are identified.

As I have stated, the Public Trustee owes a range of statutory, fiduciary and common law duties to the clients, and if a public trustee was also required to comply with directions from a governance board it would be problematic, including, for example, if a direction from the board conflicted with the Public Trustee's discharge of its duties. If the board had the ability to direct the Public Trustee, the board would essentially share some of the governance responsibility for the operations. The directions could have impacts on the other operations of the Public Trustee, including its financial performance in the accounts of the Public Trustee's non-administration clients. Again, this would be problematic as the Public Trustee would remain solely accountable for matters that are not entirely within its control.

No Australian jurisdiction has a board independent from the Public Trustee that can direct the Public Trustee. While two other states, Victoria and Tasmania, have boards of directors as part of their governance structure for the state or public trustees, both of those particular state trustees are

government owned companies. In these jurisdictions the board, like any other company, assumes overall responsibility for managing the affairs of the corporation and is responsible for ensuring the corporation achieves its objectives, performs its functions and meets its obligations and duties.

There are no statutory, advisory and monitoring boards providing oversight of a public trustee in other Australian jurisdictions comparable to the proposed board. All Australian public trustees are assisted by various committees—for example, an audit and risk committee—which may or may not have a statutory basis; however, the functions of these committees do not have the same breadth of scope as those of the proposed board and none of them, again, have the power to direct the Public Trustee.

The other proposal was changing the Public Trustee to a body corporate, so changing the structure of the Public Trustee. As I have stated, this would fundamentally change the structure of the organisation and require a complete overhaul of the legislative framework. It is not a simple exercise and it could not be done quickly. It would require lengthy consultation. It would be necessary to formally transfer assets, contractual rights, powers, delegations, and decision-making authorities, obligations and liabilities. The Public Trustee would owe duties to clients and it would be the board that would be required to ensure that the Public Trustee discharged those duties.

The advisory and monitoring board would be comprised of permanent members, ex officio members appointed by virtue of the position that they hold, and appointed members with particular expertise, knowledge and skills. The second issue raised by submitters and the committee members was about the independence of the board from government, particularly in light of the ratio of permanent board members to appointed board members. The mix of members on the board is informed by the proposed role of the board, which is to provide oversight of the performance of the Public Trustee's functions. It is important that the board's membership, which also includes senior Public Service officers, reflects the knowledge, qualifications and skills relevant to the Public Trustee's broad and complex role and functions.

Recommendation 2 of the committee report is that the membership of the board be increased by one to accommodate an additional appointed board member with lived experience with impaired decision-making capacity in regard to either themselves or others. I can foreshadow that I will be moving amendments during consideration in detail to implement this recommendation, increasing the maximum size of the board to 11 and requiring the appointment of an additional appointed board member with experience living with impaired capacity or with experience as a family member of or carer for a person with impaired capacity. Not only will these amendments ensure that the board benefits from the personal knowledge and experience that lived experience brings; they will also ensure that permanent board members cannot outnumber the appointed board members.

To complement this amendment to add an additional appointed board member, I will also be moving amendments to provide that the minister must appoint at least five but not more than six appointed board members, increasing the total number of board members by one, and provide that a quorum for board meetings is at least half of the board members including at least four appointed board members. This complements existing provisions in the bill that ensure the board's independence from government. The bill also provides that the chairperson is to be an appointed board member, not one of the government members.

The third issue raised by submitters was about the transparency of the board's activities, including any recommendations made to the Public Trustee or to the minister. Submitters were concerned that there was no explicit requirement for any advice provided or recommendations made by the board to be publicly available. Recommendation 3 of the committee report is that the bill be amended to require the board to prepare a separate annual report to the minister that is tabled in the parliament. I foreshadow that I will be moving amendments during consideration in detail to implement this recommendation also.

The board will be required to prepare and give to the minister a separate annual report about the performance of the board's functions that the minister must table in the Legislative Assembly within 14 sitting days after receiving the report. The report must include any advice given or recommendations made to the minister and any recommendations made to the Public Trustee. Together, the proposed amendments will strengthen the board's independence, accountability and transparency.

The fourth issue raised by submitters queried how quickly the board will be established, how frequently the board will meet and whether the board will be adequately resourced. Once the bill is passed, it will take some time to recruit and appoint the appropriate board members, particularly given some of the specific and unique skills and experience that the bill requires. For this reason, I foreshadow that I will be moving an amendment to commence the bill by proclamation to allow sufficient time for

the appointment process to occur. The chair will be responsible for calling the first meeting of the board, and the board itself will determine its own work plan and schedule its own meetings. This is not a matter for government to decide. The Department of Justice and Attorney-General will fund the appointed members' fees and will put in place arrangements for the secretariat to support the board as soon as it is established.

Finally, a number of submitters and committee members expressed concerns about the delay in implementing remaining recommendations in the Public Advocate's report that are for government to consider. The government takes the recommendations of the Public Advocate very seriously. Following the Public Advocate's report, the Public Trustee and government have already actioned a number of recommendations and we are continuing to respond to the report.

Many of the remaining recommendations for government raise complex legal issues that require detailed consideration and further consultation with stakeholders to ensure the best outcome for vulnerable Queenslanders, and that consultation is underway. On 24 February this year I tabled a progress update by the Public Trustee on the status of implementation of the Public Advocate's report. Since then, on 10 March, the anniversary of the Public Advocate's report, Public Advocate Dr John Chesterman released an implementation update that identifies actions that have been taken by the Public Trustee and government in relation to the report's 32 recommendations. That document is available on the Public Advocate's website. The government is absolutely committed to ensuring vulnerable Queenslanders are supported and protected when they need it most.

In summary, the bill effectively implements recommendation 30 of the Public Advocate's report and establishes an independent oversight mechanism for the Public Trustee to look after the interests of vulnerable Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (6.00 pm): The Public Trustee deals with matters of the utmost seriousness to vulnerable Queenslanders, their loved ones and their carers. Almost 10,000 people deemed to have impaired capacity to varying degrees have a significant part of their lives controlled by the Public Trustee. This control extends to how much money they are allowed to have and to spend, the type and style of housing and accommodation they can live in, the car they drive, the food they eat, the presents and gifts they can buy for loved ones and friends, and where they can go for entertainment and holidays. It extends to control over their assets and belongings—everything from million dollar properties to their jewellery and sentimental items.

I ask members in this place to consider what that might be like. Consider what it must be like if they have been placed in that situation against their wishes and without their consent by well-meaning but ultimately unaccountable people who may never have contact with them again—someone in a hospital, someone in a psychiatric institution. How would they feel in those circumstances? Would they feel empowered? Would they feel respected? Would they feel understood? These are all the catchwords used by the Public Trustee in its PR material.

Honourable members should imagine they are that person's brother or sister. Imagine if they are the son or daughter or maybe the partner of someone who, through circumstance and the vicissitudes of life, has had to have the Public Trustee appointed to manage their personal affairs but for whom honourable members have the day-to-day responsibility of caring for and looking after. Every time they wanted to do something for that loved one, they have to contact a government bureaucracy to check if it is okay to spend the money on anything from incontinence pads to physiotherapy to seeing a movie or even to buy that person they love and care for some new clothes or maybe to take them to the hairdresser.

Imagine then having to keep every receipt from a cup of coffee to a grocery list or a petrol voucher and to have to account for it every week or every month and to have the spending questioned and sometimes even refused by someone who is not there, does not really know their loved one and does not see them every day. That someone may not even be the same person from week to week or month to month. As that great US president Ronald Reagan said, 'The nine most terrifying words in the English language: I'm from the government and I'm here to help.'

That is the experience of many Queenslanders who deal with the Public Trustee. Those are the stories that we have heard from people who have had to deal on a day-to-day basis with the machinations of the Public Trustee office with little or no recourse, little or no vehicle for complaint and the odds stacked against them.

Honourable members should consider that the Public Trustee often acts as the executor of estates, often appointed in wills drafted under the guise of the free will-making service. We all know there is no such thing as a free will-making service; someone somewhere has to pay. What is less well

understood by those who use the service is that the free will often comes with an expensive administration—often more expensive than having a local solicitor draw up a will appointing family or trusted associates to administer the estate, those people often not charging anything.

Members can imagine seeing a modest inheritance that has been put together by someone who has earnestly saved, paid off a mortgage and who went without and was frugal being denuded by seemingly meaningless and ultimately wasted administration fees and charges. Can they imagine the incredible feelings of frustration and impotence when someone wants to take back control of their life and finances but is met with resistance and rejection and finds themselves in court or in QCAT up against the Public Trustee, a Public Trustee who is using their own money to resist their application to take back control of their life and who has all the resources of the official solicitor of the Public Trustee's office on side to do so?

Mrs Gerber: Talk about a power imbalance.

Mr NICHOLLS: It is an enormous power imbalance.

What I have described I have asked honourable members to imagine, but for many caught up in the confusing and complicated web of financial and personal administration this is a reality. It is a reality that we in the opposition have been hearing about for years now and it is a reality that was exposed only two months ago on the ABC's *Four Corners* program when we heard Chris's story. We heard the experienced forensic accountants reporting in that story they had estimated he was charged more than a million dollars in fees by the Public Trustee. That has led to two inquiries announced by the Attorney-General in respect of the matters referred to in that ABC *Four Corners* program.

This is not ancient history. It was not five years ago or seven years ago or 10 years ago; it happened in the last 24 months—even after the myriad complaints and media stories had emerged about the poor experiences of customers of the Public Trustee, of its clients. It has happened after we have been told about the Public Trustee's often promoted 'customers-first strategy', a strategy that started as the customers-first agenda in 2019 that was to ensure that 'our customers were the focus of all our processes and decisions'. I bet they were when there was a million dollars worth of fees coming in the door from them! It has morphed into a variety of nice-sounding words that are really meaningless corporate speak without any determined action to fix the problems. It has happened after we were told in annual reports and in estimates in this place that the Public Trustee is fixing up the problems of the past, that staff training is underway, that there will be organisational capability and process and technology changes. Every year in the SDS there is a new catchword, a new buzzword and a new program underway, and the problems still occur.

It has happened after a blistering report into the financial practices of the Public Trustee was delivered by the Public Advocate in March last year. It has happened after the Auditor-General's report into the Public Trustee's handling of complaints in 2020, a report tabled in September 2020 that looked at complaints handling by the Public Trustee and made damning findings about the Public Trustee's processes. It has happened after the actions of the former public trustee and well-known Labor mate Peter Carne was subject to a CCC investigation and report to the then attorney-general, Yvette D'Ath.

It has happened after Mr Carne, an individual with an uninhibited sense of entitlement and who, let's not forget, was paid by the poor old clients of the Public Trustee, was stood aside and issued a show cause notice and quit a year later having avoided answering the show cause notice after pocketing \$385,000 for not working that year. Imagine that—an individual who, it was revealed in estimates in 2020, billed Public Trustee customers tens of thousands of dollars for university courses and who even now is asking the Court of Appeal to stop the release of a Crime and Corruption Commission report to this House about his behaviour as public trustee after Justice Peter Davis in the Supreme Court found he had no grounds to do so.

'Something stinks' were the concluding words to the disturbing *Four Corners* report on the operations of Queensland's Public Trustee and when I spoke in this chamber on 21 March last year following the release of the Public Advocate's report I said that there is clearly something rotten with the state of the Public Trustee in Queensland. In the time since, nothing this government has done has served to remove that stink or fix the fundamental issues in the Public Trustee's office. I want to be clear about this: I have no beef with and make no adverse allegations about the current Public Trustee, Mr Samay Zhouand. I think Mr Zhouand has done his best in difficult circumstances, but unfortunately the problem is greater than one person can fix and unfortunately this bill will not fix the very real issues the Public Trustee of Queensland faces.

The bill in its current form really is just window-dressing and it will not address the vast number of issues raised in the Public Advocate's report last year, let alone the more deep-seated cultural and organisational issues. Recommendation 30 of the Public Advocate's report said that the government should consider whether the Public Trustee and its clients would benefit from additional oversight and/or reporting mechanisms to improve the Public Trustee's performance, transparency and public accountability, but this is not the entire story.

The board to be established by this bill will be advisory only. It has no governance power. It simply monitors and reviews. The functions of the board are set out in proposed clause 117Y to monitor and review the performance; to monitor complaints received by the Public Trustee about the Public Trustee's functions; to monitor and review the Public Trustee's processes for managing complaints; to give written advice or make recommendations to the minister about changes to legislation, resources, service or training, improvements or enhancements to the performance of the Public Trustee's functions; to give written advice if asked by the minister to give advice or make recommendations about matters relating to the performance of the Public Trustee's functions; and another function given to the board under this act. They are the subclauses in summary but not the entire subclauses.

In essence, it is a toothless tiger, and it is not much of a tiger. It has no power to direct the Public Trustee on administrative issues, for example—administrative issues that do not affect the obligations of the Public Trustee acting as a fiduciary. It cannot say, 'What's wrong with the IT system?' It cannot say, 'This is what is wrong with the complaints monitoring system and this is what you need to do to fix it.' These are functions that have no bearing whatsoever on the Public Trustee carrying out its common law and statutory duties as a fiduciary to its clients.

I note that I listened carefully to the Attorney's speech and she was very careful in her language, but she was almost overenthusiastic to say why the board could not have more powers than it did and she relied extensively on the basis of the relationship of the fiduciary obligation, as if there has been no thought given to how it might be able to be made to work. This new board cannot challenge Public Trustee decisions. It cannot even investigate a complaint. It does not have that power. Fortunately for all involved, in doing all of this nothing it must do so independently and in the public interest. That will be of great comfort to all of those involved.

In the committee the department advised that this is because it is necessary to maintain the Public Trustee's position as an independent statutory office and avoid a conflict with the Public Trustee's fiduciary and other obligations and duties, as the Attorney mentioned in her speech in the House, but the Attorney was careful to use 'under its current structure'. But that is not the end of it. There has been no thought process given to how the structure might be adapted to in fact allow greater oversight of the operations of the individual who is the Public Trustee and the corporation sole constituted as the Public Trustee. There is complaint about conflict as if there already is not an inherent conflict—a conflict that was highlighted time and again in the Public Advocate's report.

The Public Trustee is conflicted to keep as many people under administration by the Public Trustee as possible because the self-funding model demands that it does it in order to earn the fees to pay the salaries of the people who run the Public Trustee. It is inherently conflicted and it is inherently conflicted on those clients with big estates, because guess what? They were paying the big bills. Disproportionately, the Public Advocate's report found that they were paying a larger amount of fees and subsidising, in breach of an existing fiduciary duty, other clients—taking more money from one in order to subsidise another. How does that work as a fiduciary obligation of the Public Trustee that is being fulfilled? The department's advice was disingenuous.

A board with powers to direct need not conflict with the Public Trustee's fiduciary obligations. Indeed, a board has to ensure, in fact, the opposite. The board has to ensure that the trustee fulfils its fiduciary obligations and any suggestion otherwise is arrant nonsense. How else do organisations like Australian Unity Trustees, Equity Trustees, Perpetual and the myriad other private trusts and organisations, large and small, with boards perform their duties and maintain their fiduciary obligations? Some form of legal magic obviously that does not apply in the government sector and that it cannot make work. Arrant nonsense! Of course not! Those private organisations and others follow the law and act in the best interests of their clients and the board proposed by this bill is not the type of board recommended by the OPA report as referenced by the Attorney-General. What the report actually said was—

There may be benefits in exploring additional oversight mechanisms for an agency with the extensive powers and responsibilities of the Public Trustee. One possible additional oversight mechanism could be to establish a Public Trustee board that would provide direction and oversight to the organisation.

I have dealt with the issues of direction, certainly in an administrative sense. We have dealt with the nonsense regarding the fiduciary obligations and we have not yet heard another good reason why it could not be done that way, because the report goes on to state—

State Trustees in Victoria is ... a state-owned corporation with a diverse and independent board of directors.

It is not a simple exercise—that is what the Attorney-General said—but there is a whole government over there and a whole department over there that could take up the cudgels and work out how to do it, because if they can sell the Titles Office off and transfer all of those assets over in a couple of months you would reckon that they would be able to sort out the 400-plus employees and the assets at the Public Trustee's office! But, no, that seems to be beyond the capability of this government, which seems to only be able to do the simple exercises.

Mrs Gerber: Tinker around the edges.

Mr NICHOLLS: Tinker around the edges, exactly; I take that interjection. While there would be changes needed to the current structure of the Public Trustee, it is clear the government has given absolutely no powers to the board similar to those suggested in the OPA report and nor has it taken an active step to try and do something better.

Turning to the composition of the board as proposed by this bill, section 117ZA(1) of the bill proposes—

In performing its functions, the board must act independently and in the public interest.

I have covered that. However, given half the members as originally proposed were going to be senior executives and public servants, there was in submitters' submissions a very real apprehension board members would not act independently but would in fact simply reflect what the government expects—and it is certainly impossible to see the permanent members criticise a government position on the Public Trustee board—and they should not do that. If they are senior members of the government and they disagree with what they are being asked to do by the government, they should resign. That is the honourable thing to do. The OPA provided the following advice—

A board provides the opportunity for board members, who could be selected on the basis of particular skills or expertise relevant to the Public Trustee's functions, to have a governance role as well as supporting senior management and guiding strategic decision-making.

The OPA references State Trustees in Victoria and references its members' backgrounds. Half the board as originally proposed in this bill were made up of departmental representatives and the other half were appointed members and three of the five departmental representatives would, in the current make-up of the government—that is, the current administrative orders—come from the same department. That hardly constitutes a board likely to act independently and in the best interests of the public.

In response to criticism by stakeholders on this point, the committee made recommendation 2. That recommendation, in essence, is to increase the number of appointed board members by one and ensure the balance lies with the non-government members—that is, the appointed members not the bureaucracy. The government has accepted this recommendation—

Mrs Gerber: And so it should!

Mr NICHOLLS: I take that interjection from the member for Currumbin—after strident opposition to its original proposal from the very many submissions made to the committee hearings by very many organisations.

Turning to the transparency aspect in the form of the proposed reporting requirements, originally, of course, there were none. That was helpful to transparency and openness, the catchwords of this government, more honoured in the breach than the observance. The board was subject to minimal reporting obligations and the minister even less. While the board can give advice or make recommendations to the minister about matters relating to the performance of the Public Trustee's functions, there was originally no obligation on the minister to table or make these recommendations public.

Clause 5 of the bill required the Public Trustee to include in its annual report information about the performance of the board's functions and the exercise of its powers and nothing else. How could that board have acted independently and in a supervisory role and be confident, given the revelations we have heard over the last six months in relation to how reports are prepared and vetted and go through the government, that this would occur?

Given the paucity of real information that would have been available, it is no wonder that submitters to the committee called for greater transparency and that led to recommendation 3 of the committee report that the bill be amended to require a separate annual report of the advisory board to the Public Trustee to be provided to the minister and tabled in the House. Had the government not agreed to this proposal, in an attempt to improve this bill the LNP would have introduced amendments to do the following: to limit the number of permanent board members to four, increase the number of appointed members to at least six but not more than seven and expand the appointed members' experience taking into account stakeholders' submissions to the committee report—and I note that the government has accepted that aspect of it.

We would have legislated a report from the board be tabled within 30 days of submission to the minister and that that report be completed within 30 days of 30 June each year: board gives report to minister within 30 days, minister tables report in the House within 30 days. We will continue to pursue this last amendment. I foreshadow the amendment will insert time frames around the reporting proposal because currently the clause simply says the board will provide a report as soon as practicably possible. There is no time limit. The Attorney then has 14 sitting days to table that report after receiving it.

We note in this respect the Auditor-General's recent report about statutory reporting time frames and the government's abject failure to maintain or improve those reporting time frames over the last two years. Members can read that for themselves in report No. 14 of 2021-22. While that goes to statutory bodies, recent experience with the courts shows this is not an isolated incidence. Whilst one might hope the Attorney-General would not play games on reporting deadlines, experience shows that that hope is forlorn.

Indeed, the recent last-minute tabling of the reports of all three courts—the Magistrates Court, the District Court and the Supreme Court—shows this government continues to play games with the reporting requirements. All court reports were tabled on practically the last permitted date in March of this year for a reporting period that ended on 30 June last year. In those reports was vital information, including information from the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court regarding the delays in parole that were seeing parole applications and judicial applications being made to the Supreme Court on a regular basis to the extent of almost 16 in one day because the government was failing to properly fund and operate the Parole Board—matters that we were raising earlier. If there had been proper transparency the public would have been informed, this House would have been informed and action could have been taken instead of the cover-up that occurred with the police minister obfuscating, dithering and delaying.

The amendment we propose is straightforward and simple and will improve the timeliness and transparency of the board's deliberations and fully reflect the recommendations made by the Public Advocate in her report last year and reflect the warnings given by the Auditor-General about the timeliness and adequacy of reports. That may give some hope to dissatisfied clients of the Public Trustee that concerns are being taken seriously.

There is much that needs to be looked at in the entire area of financial and personal administration of vulnerable Queenslanders and those affected by an incapacity of some type. It is not just the Public Trustee by any stretch, but the Public Trustee is the very public face of these failings—and these failings are very real. There is not just the ABC's *Four Corners* report, there have been reports that have been going on for the better part of three years now. Sue Nunn from the Sunshine Coast spoke on the *Four Corners* report. She has been raising issues and battling for more than three years in order to get justice not only for the matter that she spoke about, but also another matter where the Public Trustee is involved. She was fought every step of the way.

There are many more matters such as that, in particular on the issue of fees. The Public Trustee has been saying there is going to be a new scale of fees presented. It is 12 months on, here is the Public Trustee's report and we are still waiting. The next deadline for the Public Trustee to update their fees is now going to be 30 June 2022. In the meantime people are still paying the old fee structure and the old fee structure is still as opaque and confusing as it ever was. There is no clarity and no consistency. I suspect it is because this government does not want to ensure adequate funding for the Public Trustee. It does not want to bite the bullet.


As I said, there is much that needs to be looked at in the area of financial and personal administration. The interaction of laws about guardianship, administration, succession and capacity, as well as the role of QCAT and the courts, need to be considered holistically. Currently Queenslanders are labouring under the remnants of a trustee system that was originally designed when the Anzacs landed in Gallipoli 107 years ago. The origins of this legislation are from 1915.

In the 21st century we have very different ideas and understandings about capacity, the administration of estates, how we treat people who are found to have difficulties with administering their estates and who are under some form of disability. Much of this work has already been done by the Queensland Law Reform Commission from 2008 to 2010. There are two massive reports. I urge members to go online and have a look.

In 2010 the Queensland Law Reform Commission issued a two-volume report into the guardianship laws. With the passage of time a review and an updating of that report, taking into account what we have heard and learned about the operations of the Public Trustee, has become more and not less necessary. While no-one pretends that this is an area of law capable of an easy resolution—I certainly do not; it is complex, it is difficult and it puts a tremendous strain on the officers of organisations like the Public Trustee—or that there are undeniable complexities extending beyond the mere wording of legislation to the often confounding and sometimes intractable interplay of family relationships and very human feelings, that is no reason to shy away from attempting to resolve this most important area of law. Regrettably, this bill does just that; it shies away from attempting to resolve this most important area of law.

This bill could have been so much more. It could have delivered so many better outcomes for customers of the Public Trustee and their families and loved ones. It barely scratches the surface. While it does provide some level of oversight and the amendments at least make it acceptable, it is in many respects still a toothless tiger. We have just heard that it is not even ready to go yet. The bill itself was introduced in October 2021. We are now in May and the government still cannot find six people to put on the board. The other members are already in their own departments. How hard can it be?

This bill barely scratches the surface. Clients and customers of the Public Trustee are still paying a high price for its mismanagement, for its incompetence and for its failure to be brought up to speed by a government that resolutely only takes the simple way out and does not take the right way out. Had the amendments currently proposed by the government not been made it would have been even less than worthless and not deserving of support. Even now it barely struggles to get across the line.

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (6.29 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Public Trustee (Advisory and Monitoring Board) Amendment Bill 2021. The Public Trustee of Queensland provides a range of vital services to Queenslanders including financial administration and financial attorney services for those with impaired capacity for financial decision-making. The committee thanks the Public Trustee for all of the services provided to our most vulnerable Queenslanders.

In response to the Public Advocate's review of the Public Trustee, in a report tabled in March 2021, the government has acted to establish the Public Trustee Advisory and Monitoring Board to monitor and review the performance of the Public Trustee. As stated upon its introduction by the Hon. Shannon Fentiman, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, the bill demonstrates the commitment of the Palaszczuk government to look after the interests of vulnerable Queenslanders by establishing the board and ensuring additional independent oversight over the Public Trustee.

The committee's task was to consider the policy to be achieved by the legislation and the application of the fundamental legislative principles—that is, to consider whether the bill has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals and the institution of parliament. The committee also examined the bill for compatibility with human rights in accordance with the Human Rights Act 2019. The committee made three recommendations. The first the recommendation was that the Public Trustee (Advisory and Monitoring Board) Amendment Bill 2021 be passed. Recommendation 2 states—

The committee recommends that clause 4, new section 117ZD (Appointed Board Members), be amended to add another Appointed Board Member to the Board, with lived experience, increasing the number of Board members by one. The committee recommends that under new section 117ZD, subsection (2), the Minister must appoint at least five, but not more than six, appointed Board members, and under subsection (3)(a) in appointing the Board members, the Minister must ensure that at least one appointed Board member has lived experience with impaired decision-making capacity, either in regard to themselves or others.

Recommendation 3 recommended that the bill be amended at clause 5, new section 141B, to ensure that a separate annual report of the board of the Public Trustee be provided to the minister and tabled in this House, the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

On behalf of the committee I thank those individuals and organisations that made written submissions on the bill. I also thank our parliamentary services staff and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General for their guidance and support. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr BENNETT (Burnett—LNP) (6.33 pm): In talking to this bill on the Public Trustee, I declare that my family is currently going through, and has been for many years, nonsense that involves the betrayal of public trust. It is important that I put on record that we are currently dealing with that institution.

We all want to ensure that Queenslanders have fair access to a public trustee that is affordable, responsible and will always act in their best interests. From the very beginning I have concerns about the independence of the proposed board considering that the board will include the appointment of public servants, as mentioned earlier, who will be reluctant to raise issues of significant concern about the operations of the Public Trustee.

The 2019 report of the Public Advocate made 32 recommendations relating to the Public Trustee's fees, charges, financial management, client services, legal services and administration. The government response noted 23 recommendations of the report were already primarily the responsibility of this dysfunctional Public Trustee to implement. Of the 10 remaining recommendations, the government accepted one—recommendation 30—supported five in principle and committed to further consider four. Recommendation 30 called for the government to consider additional oversight and/or reporting mechanisms to improve the Public Trustee's performance, transparency and public accountability. In response to recommendation 30, the government introduced the bill we are discussing to bring in an advisory and monitoring board.

I note that many submitters to the bill expressed concerns about the proposed provisions in the bill. My problem with having another level of public servant bureaucracy is that there already exists a governance board within the Public Trustee—the financial risk board. I think it is clear that there are already many monitoring systems. I want to ensure that we understand that we already have a financial risk board and a number of other boards, all with remunerated positions, so I am struggling with the concept of a new monitoring and advisory board.

Are there legal frameworks under which board members have fiduciary rights to be held accountable? We know they do not because it is government and, of course, the responsibilities of the CEO will not really be challenged. We know the answers, as we said, because it is government and that came out in our inquiries. Mr Matt Dunn of the Queensland Law Society talked about the implications of that model, stating—

... those members are advisory in their role, as are all the members. If those members have a particular concern or problem, they have no right to make the corporate—the Public Trustee—do anything.

The board is an advisory board rather than a governance board and, therefore, will be unable to direct the Public Trustee in its functions. To maintain the Public Trustee's position as an independent statutory authority and avoid conflict with the Public Trustee's fiduciary and other obligations and duties, the department also advised—

If the Board was given governing functions, and if the Public Trustee's corporate structure or responsibility for discharging duties remained unchanged, this could be problematic, for example if a direction by the Board conflicted with the Public Trustee's discharge of a duty.

That point is very well made.

The government proposes to appoint highly paid and functioning public servants. I ask the question: what are they already doing? If they already have a role to play, why give them another role? We must remember that this is about protecting Queensland's most vulnerable. We want them protected but we are adding another layer of bureaucracy, without any real independence or power to take action, which I think is an unnecessary layer.

As I noted earlier and raised many times during our hearings, there are levels of management that already exist within the Public Trustee. I have concerns about the new board. We have an investment board that already exists in the Public Trustee. We have a board of management. We have a communication committee. We have an audit and risk management committee. Some of the members of those boards are collecting \$50,000 to \$60,000 and they are external to the committee. How will we see all of this coming together, including the remuneration of the members? We could not get that information from the department. It will be the sole responsibility of the minister to set the remuneration of the new board members. We could not establish what the overall costs would be or the appointment and remuneration arrangements, as I have already said. Again, that is at the sole discretion of the responsible minister.


In the committee hearings we talked many times about how the board members will be remunerated. Of course, the ex officio public servant members will not be paid. However, I have real concerns about how the terms and conditions of the other board members will be decided. Over the

last short while in Queensland we have not had a good record with board appointments. We want to ensure that vulnerable Queenslanders can have faith in this system and that it is the best that it can be. In the hearings I raised the issue of the remuneration because the annual report of the Public Trustee clearly disseminates how much remuneration there is for positions that already exist within the Public Trustee. For transparency, I wanted those fees to be a part of the bill so that we could all make sure that we were comfortable not only that it was in line with what exists but also that we would not see more perverse outcomes in the appointment of people to this board.

The Public Trustee of Queensland provides financial management and services to 9,300 vulnerable individuals and families. Many Queenslanders often find dealing with the Public Trustee difficult, as financial management can be complex to navigate and they need assistance from the Public Trustee to understand financial administration. Every member in this House would have had someone come through their office to talk about a problem in dealing with the Public Trustee. There is considerable work to be done with reforms to the operations of the Public Trustee. In March 2021, the Public Advocate's report titled *Preserving the financial futures of vulnerable Queenslanders: a review of Public Trustee fees, charges and practices* was tabled in the Queensland parliament.

We should all be concerned about the Public Advocate's concern around the trustee's fees and other practices such as investment policy, information access and decision accountability. We should see faster action in bringing forward other recommendations to ensure Queenslanders are receiving the best representation from their Public Trustee without being excessively charged, burdened or put through the wringer.

That said, I give a shout-out to the secretariat and other committee members. It was a process we all got a lot out of. We certainly learned a lot about the Public Trustee's actions and about what it has to offer. I cannot speak on behalf of others, but I saw so many gaping holes. The people who appeared before the committee had the genuine needs of Queenslanders in their hearts and minds. We in this place have a role to play to give them the structures and the framework to allow them to do their job. I thank everyone involved with this piece of legislation.

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (6.40 pm): I rise to speak on the Public Trustee (Advisory and Monitoring Board) Amendment Bill 2021. In doing so, I acknowledge the Attorney-General, the Community Support and Services Committee—the chair, the member for Mansfield, and committee members the members for Burnett, Nicklin, Scenic Rim and Maiwar—the committee secretariat and Hansard for their work in the examination of the bill.

The bill was referred to the committee on 28 October 2021. During the examination of the bill the committee invited stakeholders and subscribers to make written submissions on the bill. We received a written briefing and had a public briefing on the bill from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. The committee received a total of 10 submissions and had the opportunity to hear directly from submitters during the public hearing held on 29 November 2021.

It is important to note that the administration clients of the Public Trustee are some of the most vulnerable members of the Queensland community. The committee remained diligent in the examination of the bill to ensure certain structures were in place to safeguard the rights and interests of our most vulnerable Queenslanders. The Public Trustee, as an agency representing the state of Queensland, has been appointed to protect the person's interests and has a string of obligations that go with that responsibility, including: to act honestly and with reasonable diligence; to act in accordance with the general and health principles outlined under the Guardianship and Administration Act in all decisions; and to avoid conflict transactions. These are significant responsibilities that are unique to the Public Trustee and, in relation to guardianship, to the Public Guardian. I acknowledge the work of the Public Trustee to date. The Public Trustee forms a central role in the guardianship system in Queensland. This system provides for a range of substitute decision-makers to make decisions on behalf of adults with impaired decision-making capacity.

The committee heard from the Office of Public Advocate that the Public Trustee has significant power over its administration clients. It is in a position of trust, controlling the person's money and property; making many, if not all, financial decisions for the person; and having significant power over their lives. The administrator's role can include paying household bills, buying or selling property, running a business, entering into contracts, applying for government benefits, making business decisions, managing investments and bringing or defending legal proceedings of a financial nature.

There were concerns raised by people under administration with the Public Trustee, their families and supporters about the level and types of Public Trustee fees and charges and their negative effect on financial outcomes for people under administration. The Public Advocate launched a review in 2020


to explore the concerns raised. On 10 March 2021 the former public advocate's report, *Preserving the financial futures of vulnerable Queenslanders: a review of Public Trustee fees, charges and practices*, was tabled. The government response to the OPA report was also tabled on 10 March 2021.

The government response publicly committed to the establishment of a Public Trustee board with an advisory and monitoring focus. The OPA report made 32 recommendations relating to the Public Trustee's fees and charges, financial management, client services, legal services and administration. While 23 of the recommendations were the responsibility of the Public Trustee to implement, the government accepted OPA recommendation 30 to establish additional oversight and/or reporting mechanisms to improve the Public Trustee's performance, transparency and public accountability. The government response accepted this recommendation and stated that the government 'has committed to the establishment of a Public Trustee board that will have an advisory and monitoring function'.

Membership of the board would comprise permanent members; ex officio members appointed by virtue of the office that they hold; and at least four but no more than five appointed board members appointed by the minister for a maximum term of three years. Appointed board members may be reappointed. The bill proposes five permanent board members including: the chief executive—the director-general of DJAG or a senior executive of that department; the chief executive of the department in which the Financial Accountability Act 2009 is administered or a senior executive of that department; the chief executive of the department in which the Disability Services Act 2006 is administered or a senior executive of that department; the chief executive of the department mainly responsible for seniors or a senior executive of that department; and the chief executive of the department in which the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 and the Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003 are administered or a senior executive.

Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia was supportive of the proposed composition and board membership reflecting the diverse spectrum of the Queensland community with the inclusion of at least one member who is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person as well as having regard to the lived and professional experiences of members.

The government listened closely to our most vulnerable and advocacy groups in Queensland to strengthen the processes. We are acting on the concerns raised to make this process more effective to serve those who have been impacted. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (6.46 pm): I rise to make my contribution on the Public Trustee (Advisory and Monitoring Board) Amendment Bill. This bill responds to recommendation 30 of the Public Advocate report on the Public Trustee's fees, charges and practices that was delivered in January last year by establishing the Public Trustee Advisory and Monitoring Board. The purpose of this recommendation, and the bill in turn, is to enhance the transparency and accountability of the Queensland Public Trustee.

As we all know, in March a *Four Corners* episode highlighted what has been a critical issue for years. Clients of the Public Trustee are often completely at its mercy and have in many cases been subject to shocking financial and emotional abuse by the actions of the Public Trustee. When the Public Trustee becomes administrator of a person's financial affairs, that person is often at their most vulnerable. There is no room for the state through the Public Trustee to undermine their autonomy, respect and trust, and we cannot tolerate the kind of conduct that has come to light more recently. It is our job as elected representatives to ensure that all Queenslanders can rely on the services of the Public Trustee with confidence that their best interests will be protected and that their financial and personal autonomy will be respected, not denied.

I support this bill and, for what it is worth, the amendments that have been circulated by the Attorney-General. As many submitters pointed out, the bill is not enough as it stands. The bill only implements one of the 32 recommendations from the Public Advocate's report and only one of the 10 recommendations that the government is wholly or partly responsible for implementing. In fact, the government has not even come up with a response for four of those 10 recommendations, with discussions still ongoing more than a year later, as I understand it. While the implementation of that one recommendation is welcome, it is yet another example of the government making an inch of progress when we really do have miles yet to run.

I, along with my constituents and submitters, am concerned that, without further legislative protections, the bill's promise of enhanced transparency and public accountability within the Public Trustee will not be achieved. We all know that the Public Trustee has some pretty shocking fees and charges structures and deeply unethical practices that have recently been made apparent. To really

understand the impact that the Public Trustee can have on an everyday Queenslanders, I want to share some stories that I have heard from my constituents about their interactions with the Public Trustee. These are shared with permission.

One client who was awarded \$650,000 in a compensation settlement was told that the Public Trustee would take 15 per cent of that amount in a one-off fee. The client was paying \$9,900 a year in fees, amounting to \$270,000 in total. During this time, the Public Trustee refused to give the client enough to live on. While they were living alone and supporting themselves, the Public Trustee dropped their allowance to \$80 per week. I hazard a guess that most members of this chamber would struggle to live on \$80 a day, let alone \$80 a week!

One constituent described how after her mother battled with the Public Trustee for three years that they denied her money for a simple request of taking her mum out of aged care temporarily to share some time together. She was then hit by roadblocks when trying to remove the Public Trustee as their mother's administrator, and could not access legal services from Legal Aid Queensland because of the governmental conflict.

These stories are not new, but there are more and more coming to light now. As we know, *Four Corners* revealed some incredibly disturbing mistreatment of vulnerable clients and laid bare the kinds of exorbitant fees they have been charging. One Brisbane man with a memory disorder was left about \$1 million worse off following 4½ years under the administration of the Public Trustee. Another man was charged more than \$59,000 in fees over four years, including \$14,000 in realty fees to manage property valued at just \$20,000.

Christine Dalas from Australian Association to Stop Guardianship and Administrative Abuse, says—

The main concern for me is the Public Trustee has an open chequebook. It's an open chequebook to your finances and there's no checks and balances.

In that context, creating an oversight board is helpful, but manifestly inadequate. As Queensland Advocacy Incorporated put it in their submission—

Establishment of the Board alone is not sufficient to address the numerous issues of concern raised by the Public Advocate's report.

Although an accountability measure is well overdue and we welcome it, so are the basic legislative requirements not to profit, limit surpluses and reserves and clarification on how the Public Trustee can invest client funds. These are all government supported recommendations from the report of the office of the Public Advocate.

As a consequence, I will be moving an amendment in consideration in detail that aims to increase transparency and public accountability around the implementation of those remaining recommendations. The bill as it stands implements just one of 32 recommendations, as I mentioned. The objective of the amendment is to ensure that progress on implementing the remaining recommendations of the Public Advocate's report is publicly reported so these reforms get implemented and we can see how they are being implemented over time. The amendment would require the Attorney-General to table six-monthly reports on the progress of implementing the recommendations in the Public Advocate's report.

We must not forget that the Public Trustee is a public body with significant power over an individual's life. As elected representatives we owe it to Public Trustee clients to be transparent about the progress of improving an institution that is in a position of trust and incredible control over vulnerable Queenslanders.

These remaining recommendations are incredibly important to implement. Recommendation 11 of the OPA report—the no-profit rule—would require that the Public Trustee not profit from administration clients unless expressly permitted by law. This would provide a minimum safeguard for administration clients, and better transparency as to what is happening with client money.

Recommendations 15 and 29 require limitations on surpluses and reserves, and legislative amendments to clarify how the Public Trustee can invest client funds. The need for these rules is very clearly demonstrated by the many stories of overcharging due to excessive fees and opaqueness of what is happening to client funds.

Recommendation 32 suggests legislative amendment be made to ensure the Public Trustee is an appointment of last resort, and that this appointment is periodically reviewed. This would avoid the need to rely on legal action to remove the Public Trustee, just like my constituent's mother had to.


All these recommendations should be implemented to protect our most vulnerable Queenslanders at a time when they need it most. That is why I am putting forward the amendment to ensure reporting on progress of these recommendations and their implementation for the Public Trustee's clients and all Queenslanders.

The proposed amendment sits alongside and complements several ongoing reviews related to the Public Trustee. As the Attorney-General has mentioned, she tabled a progress overview on the Public Advocate's recommendations earlier this year. Another review was conducted by the Public Advocate one year on, which included contributions by the Queensland government. The Attorney-General has said that the government will continue to work with the Public Trustee, the Public Advocate and other experienced stakeholders for the detailed consideration of the remaining nine recommendations that are the government's responsibility. Frankly, I think people are tired of hearing commitments like that without any substantial requirements to back them up. This amendment would ensure attention remains beyond the current news cycle and takes these recommendations through to completion. Given the gravity of the Public Trustee's role and the seriousness of the recent wrongdoings by the Public Trustee, Queenslanders deserve greater transparency around the implementation of these recommendations.

I will use the few moments left to give voice to some of the views of submitters about the government's proposed oversight board. Although government amendments mean that an additional board member with lived experience can be appointed, submitters raised concerns that the board may not be strong enough, independent enough or perhaps not enough overall. The office of the Public Advocate noted that other statutory boards have stronger governance functions. The Queensland Law Society called for the establishment of a stronger oversight mechanism, notably a governance board. I note that the Attorney-General has addressed this. We accept that that would be a substantially greater reform, but these are the kinds of reforms that need to be continuously considered by the government for such an important body.

Even in light of the government amendment to include a board member with lived experience living with impaired capacity, the board has some key players missing. There are no statutory requirements to include members with knowledge in relation to human rights or mental health. Although the board's composition, as it stands, is okay, we must remember that the Public Trustee should put clients first, and to do so requires a board that can truly understand its clients. We will be supporting the bill. I would hope to get support for the amendment, but we will support the bill in any case.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (6.56 pm): I rise in support of the Public Trustee (Advisory and Monitoring) Amendment Bill 2021. I commend the Community Support and Services Committee for their work and for their report on the bill. As Minister for Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, I support the inclusion of my department's director-general or nominee as a permanent board member. I also note and welcome the inclusion of a representative of First Nations peoples and a representative of the disability sector as board members to be appointed by the Attorney-General. Queensland has a strong disability sector and there is no shortage of strong, experienced Queenslanders with lived experience. It would be wonderful if one of the five appointed members of the board were nominated from our 900,000 senior cohort. I will leave that for the Attorney-General. There is no shortage of very experienced seniors with personal experience that could add quite a lot of weight to the proposed board.

For Queensland seniors this would provide a new level of trust knowing that they are represented—especially those in the twilight of their life who no longer have capacity to manage their affairs and have their financial interests entrusted to the Public Trustee. The decision to have the Public Trustee appointed for financial administration is a significant one. It is a significant change to a person's estate and how things are managed. Many families, including elderly parents of people with disability, seek support from the Public Trustee to manage their loved one's finances as a way of ensuring their needs and interests are protected into the future and that they are not exposed to the vulnerabilities of financial exploitation.

Currently my department provides support to 460 individuals living in supported accommodation and 62 per cent, or 285, of them have the Public Trustee appointed for financial administration. Financial administration takes all sorts of forms, including receiving and banking income, paying bills, budgeting for food and weekly expenses, planning and saving for larger purchases such as furniture or modified vehicles. Older people are vulnerable to exploitation as a result of ageing, and with that comes


a fear of homelessness, social isolation and elder abuse. As a government we have many programs around elder abuse and we fund the elder abuse program. Generally, the common profile of a victim of elder abuse is an 84-year-old widow who is being abused by their own son or daughter. Research tells us that 72 per cent of cases are psychological and in 62 per cent of cases it is financial.

This bill provides additional oversight for the Public Trustee to improve its performance, transparency and public accountability. The board must act independently and in the public interest. As minister for some of the state's most vulnerable people, I welcome the extra oversight that is included in this bill. It is vital the public has full confidence that the Public Trustee will work in the best interests of those whom they represent. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Crawford, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

North Stradbroke Island, Dunwich Harbour


 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (7.00 pm): For many years I have advocated for funding to revitalise Dunwich Harbour, the gateway to North Stradbroke Island. This kind of infrastructure investment has been sorely needed for community growth and to boost the flagging local economy, create new jobs and provide amenity. Sadly, until recently my calls for this upgrade have fallen on deaf ears despite the state government's \$30 million ETS program and despite it being the No. 1 priority project of the Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, tourism operators and many locals. It took the leadership of Prime Minister Scott Morrison, along with the advocacy of mayor Karen Williams and myself, to finally move the state government to come to the table.

The Prime Minister's announcement of a \$41 million upgrade to Dunwich Harbour as part of the SEQ City Deal has been widely welcomed. The upgrade includes the construction of new pontoons, shelters, parking, retail shops, other amenities, landscape upgrades and more. It is also great to have the support of Henry Pike, LNP candidate for Bowman, for this project going forward. He is already working hard for the people of Straddie, the bay islands and Redlands coast, supporting this project and many others. I wish Henry well on 21 May and look forward to his long service in our community as the federal member and part of the Morrison government's next term.

I also wish to put on record and thank the retiring Andrew Laming, who has supported and achieved much in his long service as the federal member for Bowman. Sadly, in contrast to the LNP's support of the Dunwich Harbour upgrade, the Labor member for Capalaba has attacked the SEQ City Deal, calling it a dud even though his own Premier supported it. Labor is all over the shop in the Redlands, and that is why we do not need more there. It is also very important that the Harold Walker Jetty be fully restored in the Dunwich Harbour area. Simon Walker has led the charge to restore the jetty named in honour of his father. The local community wants it fully restored and fast-tracked, but the \$750,000 will not be enough and I call on the government to do more.

Sadly, the island has suffered under the failed 'Tradbrooke Island' plan of Jackie Trad and businesses such as the Stradbroke newsagency at Dunwich, which has operated since the 1980s, have closed. Hopefully, better policy and better targeted investment in the future like the Dunwich Harbour upgrade will revitalise North Stradbroke Island.

Logan Metro Football Club


 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (7.03 pm): Local sporting clubs create dynamic, inclusive communities and strengthen the fabric of our state. They are places where bonds are made and lifelong friendships are formed, places where lessons are learned, growth takes place, and important traits like dedication, resilience, communication and teamwork are developed and shaped. In my home city of Logan we are blessed to have many sports clubs that really capture all that is great about our wonderful city. Logan Metro Football Club is such an organisation. Tonight I want to acknowledge Logan Metro FC's 10th anniversary and recognise the significant contribution the club has made to our community in that time.

Ten years ago Logan Metro FC started from scratch, and I mean scratch: no players, no funds, not even a ball to kick. Logan Metro's five founders—president Samuel Escobar, operations manager Sam Escobar, secretary Elsa Yanes, treasurer Adrian Rodas and former head coach Pat Costello—identified an opportunity to create a club that was as diverse and multicultural as the Logan we all know and love.

I am proud that Logan Metro's current home is Compton Park in the Woodridge electorate, and I am proud that funding from our government and the Logan City Council has been invested in competition-standard lighting, irrigation and seating. This has allowed the club to create a unique football venue that is now home to 270 players and members—that is men, women and youth teams—players as young as three-year-old Javier Pablo and as mature as 61-year-old Tommy Lubi, who still laces up for the seniors squad. There is hope for me yet! You have current head coach Luis Melgar, who donned the yellow and navy as a player back in 2012 and has been with Logan Metro FC ever since. Meanwhile, newer members like Julie Scott, Chelsea Smile, Rosa Kuvai and Branden Turepu are acknowledged as the backbone of the club. Then there is Felipe Hueneda, a jack-of-all-trades who spends countless hours at the fields every week line marking, cleaning, coaching under 11s and helping you with anything you need a hand with. That is the loyalty Logan Metro FC is built on.

The diversity I mentioned earlier is in the club's DNA, as it is in the city of Logan. Visit the fields at Compton Park and on any given day any corner of the world could be represented. We are proud; it is our own unique corner of the world. When you visit you feel the vibrancy of Logan Metro FC firsthand, an energy that is cultivated and celebrated across all areas of their operations. It is a club committed to providing a platform for people to participate, whether on the pitch or in the back office. Our community is so lucky to have a club like Logan Metro Football Club, and their 10 years of contribution and success to the city of Logan deserves to be celebrated. Developing local talent, chasing the fairytale, always inclusive and, most of all, Logan proud—that is what Logan Metro Football Club is all about.

Krause, Mr R, OAM; Gregory Electorate; Bowyer, Mr E

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (7.06 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask for your indulgence and I wish to thank the member for Scenic Rim for allowing me to fill his spot in the adjournment. I also want to acknowledge his dad, Robert Krause, who is receiving an OAM. He has done a great job. He is involved in the show society. I know the member for Scenic Rim will talk about his dad tomorrow. He is looking forward to his investiture this week. He is a significant man in the Marburg community. I wish him all the best and I wish Jon all the best. Please talk about your dad tomorrow, mate, because he deserves to be recorded in the annals of the Queensland parliament. He has done a significant job for the community in Marburg.

If I can just talk about something that is significant in my region: we finally got our community shows back! I was lucky enough to open the Tambo show a couple of weeks ago. Tambo holds a special place in my heart because that is where the Millar family comes from.

Mr Nicholls: You attended?


Mr MILLAR: Yes, I did. I opened the show and I stayed there for quite some time. The Tambo show is significant to me because that is where my family comes from. It just shows that eventually, after COVID-19, we are getting back to some sort of formality. Our show societies right across Queensland—I know the minister for agriculture would understand this—have gone through a terrible time to try and get our community together. I congratulate all those show societies and presidents for sticking together and making sure we have shows to come back to. We had the Tambo show and we also had the Blackall show, but sadly today the Longreach show has been cancelled because of the rain event we are having in Western Queensland.

Mr Nicholls: I love the Longreach show!

Mr MILLAR: I take the interjection from the member for Clayfield. We have spent some time at the Longreach show. We probably spent too much time one night at the Longreach show, but we did behave ourselves. Show societies have been struggling for the last two years, and we need to make sure that we get them back. Finally, after a two-year hiatus the Sunflower Festival in the Central Highlands was on again this year. We are a sister city to Altona, Canada, and we finally got the sunflower queens from Altona over to Emerald, which was great.

Before I conclude I want to pay tribute to a significant person in my life who unexpectedly recently passed away, Eric Bowyer. Eric Bowyer was a dear member of our family and the Emerald community. He was the salesman for Bruce Rhodes, which was the John Deere dealership. He spent much time in our area, and I pass on my condolences to Stella. It was very sad.

Federal Government, Economic Performance

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (7.09 pm): Since Menzies the Liberals have postured for the title of best economic managers. However, it has been the Australian Labor Party that has authored the great economic interventions of this country—Medicare, superannuation, HECS and NDIS, policies that

have made a profound impact on the lives of Australians and on the economic productivity of our country. The economic performance of a country is objectively measured by the World Bank, the OECD, the IMF and the Reserve Bank. They report Australia's economic performance of the last decade, and it is not as it is presented by the current Prime Minister. It is not strong in comparison to like countries and it has been deteriorating on almost all measures for nearly a decade.

On income per person, the IMF ranked Australia 11th out of 197 in 2007 at the end of the Howard government. During the ALP government's reign from 2007 to 2013, Australia ranked fourth. We have now slipped to eighth. On gross domestic product, the value of Australia's GDP per person was just under US\$50,000 at the end of the LNP government in 2007—ranking 11th among the 38 OECD member countries. From 2011 to 2013 Australia ranked fourth on this measure, with only small rich nations like Norway, Switzerland and Luxembourg earning more. We have now fallen to 27th.

On government spending on GDP, during the last seven years of the Howard government, Australia ranked 14th in the OECD. During the Labor Party reign from 2008 to 2010, which included the GFC, Australia's ranking on spending to GDP improved to between seventh and 10th. During the most recent LNP term, government spending has blown out. Our ranking by 2021 fell to 15th. The only government with a worse spending record than Australia was Chile.

On government debt, at the end of Howard's reign in 2008 and during the resources boom, the OECD ranked Australia as third, with government debt comprising only 2.7 per cent of GDP. By 2012, after extensive borrowing during the GFC to keep Australia out of recession, the ALP's debt to GDP expanded to 27 per cent, but we were still ranked fourth best comparatively. Then came the boom period from 2014 to 2019 under an LNP government. Most OECD countries reduced their debt to GDP but not Australia. Only three poorly managed economies stacked on more than 12 per cent of debt to GDP—Chile, Costa Rica and Australia. Debt under the Morrison government doubled, even before the pandemic spending.

(Time expired)

Gold Coast, Police Resources



Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (7.12 pm): I rise to speak about something I have spoken about in this House many times before—that is, our Police Service on the Gold Coast which is stretched to its limit tackling a juvenile crime and hooning crisis. I am going to use the government's own figures to show that the reason people in the suburbs of the Surfers Paradise electorate are not getting the services they expect from their police is because of the amount of work that our Police Service in Surfers and Broadbeach have to deal with.

Question on notice No. 354 was asked by the member for Bonney. The statistics show that in Broadbeach the approved police strength has been 63 since 2019. In June 2020 it was 63 and in June 2021 it was 63. In Surfers Paradise, the approved police strength was 110 in June 2019, it went down to 108 in June 2020 and it stayed at 108 in June 2021. Basically, police numbers have declined in those two areas. Yet at the bottom of that same answer it states that the number of calls for service across those two areas of Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach has gone from 28,789 in 2018-19 to 35,640 in 2020-21. That is an increase of 24 per cent, yet there are fewer police. I table that answer. I know it is a question on notice, but I am going to table it for anyone who is interested in looking at those statistics.


Tabled paper: Answer to question on notice No. 354, asked on 31 March 2022, by the member for Bonney, Mr Sam O'Connor MP, to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, Hon. Mark Ryan [\[618\]](#).

Obviously, we have got fewer police trying to deal with more issues. We have had significant coverage of the recent wandering trial which the police have had to deal with. A story by ABC journalist Dominic Cansdale stated that the trial has resulted in 336 arrests and 467 charges, including 106 weapons offences. Over the last year, the police have conducted 748 operations across Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach, with 11,775 people wanded—of which 3,275 were juveniles. These are the same police who have had a decrease of two from a couple of years ago trying to deal with all of these issues. No wonder the people in the suburbs of Main Beach, Broadbeach, Broadbeach Waters, Clear Island Waters, Sorrento and Benowa Waters are not getting the services when they are demanded.

If I turn to question on notice No. 291—where the member for Burleigh asked about the number of recidivist juvenile offenders on the coast—the answer was that the number declined from 757 offenders in 2015-16 to 687 offenders in 2020-21. In other words, we have a core number of

around 600 to 700 juvenile offenders—remembering that 18-year-olds have been taken out of the most recent figures. No wonder our police are under pressure. No wonder people in the suburbs cannot get the services they deserve.

Pineapple Industry


 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (7.15 pm): Queenslanders have a lot to be proud of in the Sunshine State. They should be proud of our key agricultural industries. However, I will explain later in my contribution how that is not always the case. Tonight I would like to talk about the pineapple industry. Pineapple is an iconic fruit in this state, as all Queenslanders know. In fact it is so famous that there is even the Big Pineapple in Woombye, in the famous seat of Nicklin, with our strong Labor member up there representing that industry very well.

The pineapple industry is a \$68 million crop for this state. For many years, pineapples from across the state have been destined for the Golden Circle cannery at Northgate to be processed. I am proud that in my previous life I was able to represent the thousands of workers there who are dedicated to that industry and dedicated to help feed Queensland with quality Queensland produce. I am advised that even today the Northgate cannery produces over 150,000 tonnes of canned pineapple, fruit juices and cordials per year.

I am sure the industry will be shocked to know that, although we on this side of the chamber have a passion for pineapples, the Leader of the Opposition is not a fan. Some of those opposite may be surprised to hear that and to learn of TikTok, and they will be even more surprised to learn that their leader is on that platform attacking pineapples. For those who have not seen the video, the non-pineapple-loving member for Broadwater is in what looks like a commercial kitchen with a can of pineapple. At this point, although the label is obscured, they do not seem to be Queensland packed pineapples; in fact they are most likely imported pineapples—so much for the influence of the National Party in their leader's eating habits. Then the Leader of the Opposition throws the can of pineapple into the bin. I am unsure if the member went back to retrieve that can from the bin for consumption later or if it became wasted food. Either way it was a deeply disrespectful approach to such an iconic Queensland fruit.

With Hort Connections occurring this month, it will be a prickly reception for those LNP members when they show their faces. Queenslanders have learnt one thing—that the LNP have past form on the rough end of the pineapple when it comes to their policies. Queenslanders cannot trust the LNP on pineapples, and Queenslanders should can them for it. We should never tell Queenslanders where to put their pineapples—whether that be on a pizza or anywhere else—and that includes those opposite and the Leader of the Opposition.

Lockyer Valley Turf Club

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (7.18 pm): Tonight I rise to speak about one of the great institutions of the Lockyer Valley, the Lockyer Valley Turf Club. We are well known for our world-class fruit and veggies and proteins of many sorts, but the Lockyer Valley Turf Club has been a shining light for a long time. We know that the racing industry was one of the best performers of the economy through COVID, and it is one of the great things that we enjoy in our community where a fun time is had by all. As the Lockyer Valley Turf Club website says—

We have a proud history of delivering true country style horse races. As a country turf club, we have a committed volunteer team who make sure each race day is very special.

I can say from being to many of the races out there that each day is very special. Those who attend the races can enjoy many parts: going within the ring, where they can have a look at the horses coming out on parade, readying to race; picking one of their winners; spending some time at the bar; going up on the hill into the stand; or enjoying the marquee. Recently they have had not only some very well catered food but also some seafood lunches.

Recently the Laidley Cup was held at the Lockyer Valley Turf Club in Gatton. It is only an hour's drive west of Brisbane. People from Brisbane should make the trip out west to enjoy a true country racing experience. Thanks must go to the sponsors who participated in that event, particularly the Porters Plainland Hotel. For all those interested, coming up we have a full eight-race program on 10 June, another on 25 June and another on 22 July.


I want to pay tribute to that volunteer team: President Terry Kirkwood, Vice-President Bill Brown, Treasurer Tenika Murphy and Secretary Bec Donaldson. They do a great job, ably supported by committee members Mick Brennan, Steve Brennan, Gary Mischke, Pat Kynoch, Melissa Kraut and

Jason Harm. Of course, our life member and club patron Kev Toohill is always there to give some advice. I must give a good shout-out to Jim Wran, who is the part-time groundsman at the Lockyer Valley Turf Club. He keeps the track in good order, but it is the volunteers who do a lot of the work to make sure the track is in great preparation.

Queensland Racing recognises the Lockyer Valley Turf Club for the professionalism they have. I thank Queensland Racing for their ongoing support. At one stage we had six races and many of them were non-TAB events. Now every race is a Sky covered program. They have a lot of faith in our committee to be able to deliver great things, so much so that they are a partner in the strategic business case to see the Lockyer Valley Equine Collaborative bring even more great equestrian events to the Lockyer Valley.

When you are looking for something to do, get out to the Lockyer Valley Turf Club. You will enjoy a great country racing experience.

Easter in the Country; Macalister Electorate, Schools

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (7.21 pm): It has been a while since we have been in this chamber. Since we last sat we have had Easter. Over Easter I visited Roma for the Easter in the Country celebrations. I thank the tourism minister for inviting me out there. It was a bit of a homecoming for me. It has been 30 years since I graduated at the high school out at Roma. I would like to thank the committee out at Roma that does all the work of pulling it all together. I got to meet the president of the committee who, it turns out, was our neighbour when we last lived there. It is a small place, really.

Over the last week I have been going around my electorate of Macalister to catch up with all the schools. Ordinarily I would have done it in term 1 except that, as members who have been speaking to their schools would know, term 1 was a bit hectic for them. I gave them a wide berth for term 1, but I have been catching up with them recently.

It would be remiss of me not to use this time to thank all of our teachers, principals and teacher aides for the amazing amount of flexibility and resilience they showed during term 1. It was, in their words, probably the most difficult term they had had since the beginning of COVID. When you think about what we had in 2020 and 2021, that is quite a statement to make. They are all optimistic and they are looking on the other side for the rest of the year. They are all quite positive, with many events coming up for them.

At Beenleigh State High School I got to partake in their Beef and Beer Night. Members, if your high school is not putting on a beef and beer night with their own cattle and own craft brewery partnership, what are they doing? We have the Paddock to Plate coming up next term as well, so I am looking forward to that.


I got to see the work that we had done at the Carbook State School administration block with the new staffroom. The teachers there quite ably reminded me that I did promise them a new coffee machine at their graduation ceremony last year, so I will have to get out there and christen the staffroom with a new coffee machine in the coming weeks.

Before I finish, it is that time of year again when Edens Landing State School puts on their annual Dress Like a Pirate Day in support of the Kids' Cancer Project.

Government members interjected.

Mrs McMAHON: I can hear all me hearties out there. I do my annual challenge to the Edens Landing Student Council where they will have their students come dressed as a pirate for a gold coin donation. I will be out there on 20 May and I will match all the funds that the Edens Landing Student Council raises. Boys and girls, get out there, seize the day and raise as much money as you can for such a fantastic and noble cause, the Kids' Cancer Project. I will see you guys there.

Second M1, Delays

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (7.24 pm): Having an alternative to the M1 for local traffic is the biggest infrastructure need for the central and northern Gold Coast. It is not good enough for so many people in Queensland's second largest city to have to jump on a national highway to drive between our suburbs. No work has started on this road. The Minister for Transport and Main Roads has been in the job for seven years but he has utterly failed to deliver the second M1. Today we saw that he could not even deliver on a Dorothy Dixer. A *Gold Coast Bulletin* story this morning said that Minister Bailey 'revealed the latest stunning twist in the building of the second M1 during question time in state parliament on Tuesday'. The only problem was that it never happened. The minister gave a copy of what he was going to say in parliament to the media, but he did not actually say it in parliament. Thankfully the House was spared this contribution, but it is worth addressing to clear things up.

The federal government chipped in \$750 million to get this road built. In 2021 the state government then blew out the project cost by over 30 per cent. To get this project underway and to stop the state government blaming them for any delays, the federal LNP quickly put in their half of the cost, an extra \$316 million, within just weeks. All of the funding from the Commonwealth is committed and budgeted, and I checked with the federal government today about Minister Bailey's claims. It turns out that the payments from the Commonwealth are only made when these state projects reach particular milestones.

The \$70 million payment is currently available to the state, but the Queensland government has not put in their claim to this funding. Could this be because no work has started on the new road? The business case has not even been released. We do not have detailed plans, only artists' impressions. The environmental impact reports will not be released until June.

Also, despite costing 30 per cent more, we are getting a four-lane road instead of a six-lane road, and it is split into two stages with the first of the stages being built in three packages. On 26 April I received an update on one of those three stages from TMR's Gold Coast office. It said that two joint venture contractors had been selected to progress the preliminary design for Stage 1 Central. It went on to say, 'An agreement to even finalise the design will not be reached, at best, until late 2022'—and that is all before they even get on to building the road. This lack of action is a disgrace, especially from a minister who has been in the Main Roads job for over seven years.

Today was just another attempt by this Labor government to blame the federal LNP for a project that only the state can build. The Gold Coast deserves better. We need a second M1 and it should not be taking this long to deliver. Minister, get off Twitter and start building the second M1.

Aged Care



Mr BROWN (Capalaba—ALP) (7.27 pm): Today aged-care workers across Australia took the extraordinary step of going on strike, including here in Queensland, through their union, the United Workers Union. I say it is an extraordinary step because the workers in that industry care so much for their residents that they do not want to lose a single second by their side. How do I know this? In my former role I used to organise these workers and negotiate on their behalf, and I know that the members for Springwood and Pine Rivers did the same. It is an extraordinary step for them to walk off the job because they care so much.

What have they been through in the last two years? They have been through the experience of a federal government that has ignored them during COVID—absolutely ignored them—and also ignored the findings of a royal commission, refusing to implement the recommendations made. These workers deserve more.

I see it in my local community, too. The nurses and the doctors in the emergency ward at the Redland Hospital tell me continually that the busiest day of the week is Friday. Why is Friday the busiest day? It should be unpredictable in an emergency department. Friday is the busiest day because aged-care providers in the area ring up the ambulance to collect their tough patients to take them to hospital on Friday because they do not have the funding to have nurses or GPs on site over the weekend. The tough cases come into Redland Hospital on a Friday and then go back on a Monday. They take up valuable bed space and valuable ambulance time.

Aged-care workers have had enough. They are not supported by this federal government in their wages case, but they are by the federal Labor Party. Federal Labor is supporting their wage claim. They are also supporting them to have a nurse in the facility 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Prime Minister cannot even agree to that. A nursing home having a nurse in it—what a wild concept! It is unfathomable.

Not only that, it is simple things like making sure the meals that these residents receive are high quality. That is what they deserve. They have worked all their life. They deserve it, and so do these workers. They deserve a federal government that will support decent wages and conditions. No longer should a junior worker at Woolies packing shelves be paid more than those caring for our most vulnerable—caring for our parents and grandparents.

I fully support the workers going on strike today and I hope in a couple of weeks time they will have a federal government that also supports them in what they do every single day. I wholeheartedly support what they are chasing and what they are going after. They deserve proper wages and conditions.

The House adjourned at 7.30 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Camm, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gerber, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Janetzki, Katter, Kelly, King A, King S, Krause, Langbroek, Last, 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, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Skelton, Smith, Stevens, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Watts, Weir, Whiting