



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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Phone (07) 3553 6344

## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

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## TUESDAY, 21 JUNE 2022

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 The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

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

### ASSENT TO 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: 10 June 2022

A bill for an Act to amend the Land Tax Act 2010, the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008, the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Act 2017, the State Penalties Enforcement Regulation 2014, the Taxation Administration Act 2001, the Traffic Regulation 1962 and the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 for particular purposes

A bill for an Act to amend the Architects Act 2002, the Building Act 1975, the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) Act 2017, the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2020, the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) Regulation 2018, the Planning Act 2016, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018, the Professional Engineers Act 2002 and the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 for particular purposes

A bill for an Act to amend the Bail Act 1980, the Criminal Code, the Disability Services Act 2006, the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012, the Evidence Act 1977, the Justices Act 1886, the Magistrates Act 1991, the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 and the Acts mentioned in schedule 1 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

10 June 2022

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 10 June 2022, from Her Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to certain bills on 10 June 2022 [\[825\]](#).

### SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

#### Absence of Members

 **Mr SPEAKER:** I have received advice from the member for Hervey Bay, Mr Adrian Tantari MP, the member for Macalister, Mrs Melissa McMahon MP, and the member for Lytton, Ms Joan Pease MP, as to their absences from the sitting of the House this week. The members' notifications comply with standing order 263A.

## PRIVILEGE

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

 **Mr SPEAKER:** On 31 May 2022, I tabled a ruling regarding a complaint by the member for Hill alleging that the member for Lytton deliberately misled the House during the second reading debate on a bill on 31 March 2022. I ruled that the matter did not warrant the further attention of the House by the Ethics Committee. I now refer to the matter so that if any member wishes to exercise their rights in respect of the matter under the standing orders they should do so immediately.

## SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

### School Group Tours

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to advise that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from Moggill State School in the electorate of Moggill and Blackall Range Independent School in the electorate of Nicklin.

## PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, lodged by the honourable member indicated—

### Far North Queensland, Crime

**Mr Last**, from 490 petitioners, requesting the House to address the level of crime in Far North Queensland by undertaking a number of measures to reform the youth justice system and child safety [\[829\]](#).

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

### Townsville, Youth Residential Facility

**Mr Walker**, from 1,417 petitioners, requesting the House ensure that residential housing at 39 Casuarina Drive Annandale, Townsville is not used as a rehabilitation centre for juvenile offenders and/or juvenile mental health consumers with a history of violence [\[830\]](#).

### Ipswich, Environment

**Mr Andrew**, from 1,026 petitioners, requesting the House to take action and protect the local government residents of Ipswich from toxic air pollution and environmental harm [\[831\]](#).

### Sunshine Coast, Streetlights

**Mr Powell**, from 1,041 petitioners, requesting the House to replace all streetlights within Sunshine Coast Council Division 5 with streetlights that comply with the Australian Government National Light Pollution Guidelines and the Australasian Dark Sky Alliance approved criteria [\[832\]](#).

### Toowoomba Hospital

**Mr Watts**, from 1,709 petitioners, requesting the House to facilitate redevelopment of the Toowoomba Hospital at the Baillie Henderson site [\[833\]](#).

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

### Crime and Corruption Commission

680 petitioners, requesting the House to take notice of the serious adverse finding against Mr MacSporran and other Crime and Corruption Commission officers [\[834\]](#).

### Queensland Building and Construction Commission

1,071 petitioners, requesting the House to take notice of the serious failure by the government to effectively investigate the Queensland Building and Construction Commission [\[835\]](#).

### Coercion and Segregation

13,028 petitioners, requesting the House to cease the use of coercion and segregation as methods of gaining compliance to policies that are incompatible with human rights, informed consent, and individual freedoms [\[836\]](#).

### Pallara, Bus Services

345 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure Translink approves the Brisbane City Council business case utilising interim temporary bus stops in Ritchie Road, Pallara [\[837\]](#).

### Youth Justice

1,412 petitioners, requesting the House to review the current failing youth justice legislation and implement changes to better address behavioural issues [\[838\]](#).

### Yeppoon Road, Speed Cameras

187 petitioners, requesting the House to provide point to point speed cameras to Yeppoon Road [\[839\]](#).

### Coopers Plains Queensland Health Precinct, Rubbish Removal

184 petitioners, requesting the House to remove the illegally dumped rubbish from the Queensland Health precinct at Coopers Plains [\[840\]](#).

### Brisbane River, Moggill Bridge

375 petitioners, requesting the House to replace the Moggill ferry with a bridge that is above the level of the highest flood event [\[841\]](#).

### Beerwah State Forest, Logging

2,907 petitioners, requesting the House to block the imminent logging of Beerwah State Forest Lot 1 AP 22457 [\[842\]](#).

### Occupational Lung Disease, Workers Compensation Funding

555 petitioners, requesting the House to establish a Black Lung and Silicosis Fund to fully fund workers compensation claims for workers suffering from permanent disabling and/or fatal industrial respiratory disease due to workplace exposure [\[843\]](#).

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—

27 May 2022—

[733](#) Legal Affairs and Safety Committee: Report No. 26, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 23 February 2022 and 29 March 2022

[734](#) Legal Affairs and Safety Committee: Report No. 27, 57th Parliament—Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

31 May 2022—

[735](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 25, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 23 February 2022 and 15 March 2022

[736](#) Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Amendment (Professional Indemnity Insurance) Regulation 2021, No. 157/2021, made by the Ministerial Council under section 245 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as applied by the law of the States and Territories

[737](#) Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Amendment (Professional Indemnity Insurance) Regulation 2021, No. 157/2021, made by the Ministerial Council under section 245 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as applied by the law of the States and Territories, explanatory notes

[738](#) Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Amendment (Professional Indemnity Insurance) Regulation 2021, No. 157/2021, made by the Ministerial Council under section 245 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as applied by the law of the States and Territories, human rights certificate

[739](#) Ruling by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Curtis Pitt—Alleged contempt of Parliament by the member for Lytton

[740](#) Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements—Queensland Government's Second Implementation progress report—May 2022

3 June 2022—

[741](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 26, 57th Parliament—Inquiry into the report on the strategic review of the functions of the Integrity Commissioner

[742](#) University of Queensland—Annual Report 2021: Erratum

6 June 2022—

[743](#) Mental Health Select Committee: Report No. 1, 57th Parliament—Inquiry into the opportunities to improve mental health outcomes for Queenslanders

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

9 June 2022—

- [745](#) Response from the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (Hon. Furner), to two ePetitions (3673-21 and 3674-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 1,059 and 1,007 petitioners respectively, 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 and to ensure legislation includes mandatory codes for provision of species-specific shelter and consider each species' capacity to tolerate extremes in weather
- [746](#) Response from the Premier and Minister for the Olympics (Hon. Palaszczuk), to an ePetition (3696-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 342 petitioners, requesting the House to increase resources to the petitions office
- [747](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to an ePetition (3642-21) sponsored by the member for Mirani, Mr Andrew, from 16,745 petitioners, requesting the House to remove mandatory vaccinations and vax passports in government departments and for Queensland residents
- [748](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to an ePetition (3705-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 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
- [749](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to an ePetition (3717-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 634 petitioners, requesting the House to reopen the recently closed Rockhampton Marie Stopes Women's Health Clinic
- [750](#) 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 (3629-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 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
- [751](#) Response from the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs (Hon. Scanlon), to an ePetition (3707-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 1,840 petitioners, requesting the House to stop the mountain bike development proposal and declare Redwood Park a National Park
- [752](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3646-21) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 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
- [753](#) Response from the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement (Hon. de Brenni), to an ePetition (3722-22) sponsored by the member for Moggill, 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
- [754](#) Response from the Premier and Minister for the Olympics (Hon. Palaszczuk), to an ePetition (3698-22) sponsored by the member for Mirani, Mr Andrew, from 6,780 petitioners, requesting the House to hold a full enquiry into the use of lobbyists

10 June 2022—

- [755](#) 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 (3732-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 664 petitioners, requesting the House to call upon their federal colleagues to implement the Jenkins recommendations; and to recognise and commit to rectifying the unmet needs of women and children impacted by gendered violence in the Southern Downs region
- [756](#) Response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services (Hon. D'Ath), to an ePetition (3725-22) sponsored by the member for Coomera, Mr Crandon, from 1,210 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the delivery of a public hospital and health precinct on the Northern Gold Coast
- [757](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3726-22) sponsored by the member for Coomera, Mr Crandon, from 382 petitioners, requesting the House to upgrade bus services between Ormeau Railway Station and Coomera Railway Station
- [758](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3727-22) sponsored by the member for Coomera, Mr Crandon, from 224 petitioners, requesting the House to upgrade and improve the operation of Exit 38 of the M1
- [759](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3728-22) sponsored by the member for Coomera, Mr Crandon, from 91 petitioners, requesting the House to upgrade bus services between Beenleigh Railway Station and Ormeau Railway Station
- [760](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3729-22) sponsored by the member for Coomera, Mr Crandon, from 357 petitioners, requesting the House to provide a regular daily bus service for the residents of Jacobs Well to connect to the transport hub of Ormeau and the nearby Pimpama shopping precinct

14 June 2022—

- [761](#) Auditor-General Report 18: 2021-22—Enhancing government procurement

15 June 2022—

- [762](#) Community Support and Services Committee: Report No. 16, 57th Parliament—Criminal Law (Raising the Age of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2021, interim government response

16 June 2022—

[763](#) Auditor-General Report 19: 2021-22—Education 2021

20 June 2022—

[764](#) State Development and Regional Industries Committee: Report No. 22, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 23 February and 29 March 2022

#### TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

#### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Building Act 1975:

[765](#) Building Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 57

[766](#) Building Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 57, explanatory notes

[767](#) Building Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 57, human rights certificate

Major Events Act 2014:

[768](#) Major Events (Motor Racing Events) (Townsville 500) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 58

[769](#) Major Events (Motor Racing Events) (Townsville 500) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 58, explanatory notes

[770](#) Major Events (Motor Racing Events) (Townsville 500) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 58, human rights certificate

Retirement Villages Act 1999:

[771](#) Retirement Villages (Exempt Schemes) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 59

[772](#) Retirement Villages (Exempt Schemes) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 59, explanatory notes

[773](#) Retirement Villages (Exempt Schemes) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 59, human rights certificate

Water Act 2000:

[774](#) Water (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 60

[775](#) Water (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 60, explanatory notes

[776](#) Water (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 60, human rights certificate

Forestry Act 1959:

[777](#) Forestry (Use of Side-by-side Vehicles) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 61

[778](#) Forestry (Use of Side-by-side Vehicles) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 61, explanatory notes

[779](#) Forestry (Use of Side-by-side Vehicles) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 61, human rights certificate

Adoption Act 2009:

[780](#) Adoption (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 62

[781](#) Adoption (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 62, explanatory notes

[782](#) Adoption (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 62, human rights certificate

Professional Standards Act 2004:

[783](#) Professional Standards (Law Institute of Victoria Limited Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2022, No. 63

[784](#) Professional Standards (Law Institute of Victoria Limited Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2022, No. 63, explanatory notes

[785](#) Professional Standards (Law Institute of Victoria Limited Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2022, No. 63, human rights certificate

Professional Standards Act 2004:

[786](#) Professional Standards (South Australian Bar Association Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2022, No. 64

[787](#) Professional Standards (South Australian Bar Association Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2022, No. 64, explanatory notes

[788](#) Professional Standards (South Australian Bar Association Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2022, No. 64, human rights certificate

Racing Integrity Act 2016:

[789](#) Racing Integrity (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 65

[790](#) Racing Integrity (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 65, explanatory notes

[791](#) Racing Integrity (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 65, human rights certificate

Housing Act 2003, Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002, Retirement Villages Act 1999:

[792](#) Housing Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 66

[793](#) Housing Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 66, explanatory notes

[794](#) Housing Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 66, human rights certificate

## Further Education and Training Act 2014:

- [795](#) Further Education and Training (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 67  
[796](#) Further Education and Training (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 67, explanatory notes  
[797](#) Further Education and Training (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 67, human rights certificate

## Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, Explosives Act 1999, Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999, Petroleum Act 1923, Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004:

- [798](#) Resources Safety and Health Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 68  
[799](#) Resources Safety and Health Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 68, explanatory notes  
[800](#) Resources Safety and Health Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 68, human rights certificate

## Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999:

- [801](#) Mining Legislation (Continuing Professional Development) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 69  
[802](#) Mining Legislation (Continuing Professional Development) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 69, explanatory notes  
[803](#) Mining Legislation (Continuing Professional Development) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 69, human rights certificate

## Fisheries Act 1994:

- [804](#) Fisheries (Hammerhead Sharks) Amendment Declaration 2022, No. 70  
[805](#) Fisheries (Hammerhead Sharks) Amendment Declaration 2022, No. 70, explanatory notes  
[806](#) Fisheries (Hammerhead Sharks) Amendment Declaration 2022, No. 70, human rights certificate

## Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, Education (Overseas Students) Act 2018, Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005, Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Act 2014, Electrical Safety Act 2002, Industrial Relations Act 2016, Labour Hire Licensing Act 2017, Racing Act 2002, Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003, Work Health and Safety Act 2011:

- [807](#) Education and Other Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 71  
[808](#) Education and Other Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 71, explanatory notes  
[809](#) Education and Other Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 71, human rights certificate

## Public Health Act 2005:

- [810](#) Public Health (Further Extension of Declared Public Health Emergency—COVID-19) Regulation (No. 2) 2022, No. 72  
[811](#) Public Health (Further Extension of Declared Public Health Emergency—COVID-19) Regulation (No. 2) 2022, No. 72, explanatory notes  
[812](#) Public Health (Further Extension of Declared Public Health Emergency—COVID-19) Regulation (No. 2) 2022, No. 72, human rights certificate

## Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995:

- [813](#) Transport Legislation (Fees and Other Matters) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 73  
[814](#) Transport Legislation (Fees and Other Matters) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 73, explanatory notes  
[815](#) Transport Legislation (Fees and Other Matters) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 73, human rights certificate

## Weapons Act 1990:

- [816](#) Weapons (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 74  
[817](#) Weapons (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 74, explanatory notes  
[818](#) Weapons (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 74, human rights certificate

## Fisheries Act 1994:

- [819](#) Fisheries (Coral) Amendment Declaration 2022, No. 76  
[820](#) Fisheries (Coral) Amendment Declaration 2022, No. 76, explanatory notes  
[821](#) Fisheries (Coral) Amendment Declaration 2022, No. 76, human rights certificate

## REPORT BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

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

**Evidence and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021**

Amendments made to Bill

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

*Omit—*

'Evidence and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021'

*Insert—*

'Evidence and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022'

## MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence (Hon. Fentiman)—

[823](#) Professional Standards Act 2003 (Vic): Professional Standards (Law Institute of Victoria Limited Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2022 [Refer to subordinate legislation No. 63 of 2022]

[824](#) Professional Standards Act 2004 (SA): Professional Standards (South Australian Bar Association Professional Standards Scheme) Notice 2022 [Refer to subordinate legislation No. 64 of 2022]

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Budget

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.35 am): The past two years have been some of the most challenging in Queensland's history. From floods to fires and from global pandemics to surging cost-of-living pressures, Queenslanders have weathered every storm by standing by one another when the going gets tough. Finally, there is light at the end of the tunnel. With 2032 on the horizon, Queensland is on the cusp of a golden decade of opportunity that promises to pave the way for a prosperous future for our great state.

This afternoon, the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment will hand down the 2022-23 state budget. The budget we hand down today will build on the courage and hard work of Queenslanders over the past two years. It will address our greatest challenges; it will create good, honest jobs; and it will deliver better services for the people of our state. There is not long to wait now, but here is a sneak peek at some of the highlights: a record investment in health, the likes of which Queenslanders have never seen before in our history; record investments in education, jobs and renewables; and record investments in community essentials like police, fire and emergency services.

In addition, we have already announced: \$4 million to develop Indigenous tourism experiences throughout our state; \$35.5 million to build a new medical manufacturing facility in Brisbane, creating local manufacturing jobs; \$200 million to build more houses, creating thousands of jobs and opportunities in construction; more than \$300 million to build the Toowoomba to Warwick pipeline, delivering water security for the Granite Belt and Southern Downs while creating around 420 local jobs; \$5.7 million for a further expansion of the Mackay Resources Centre of Excellence, ensuring more Queenslanders have the skills they need to pursue a career in the resources sector; \$15 million to expand the National Battery Testing Centre to support jobs making renewable batteries in Queensland; \$750 million to build the state-of-the-art Queensland Cancer Centre at Herston; \$13.6 million to build a new screen studio in Cairns, creating jobs and opportunities in the screen industry for the people of Far North Queensland; and \$3.5 billion for rail projects, as announced by the Treasurer and minister over the weekend.

**Mr Bleijie:** It will be a long red carpet from Brissie to Cairns for the screen awards.

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Do not worry, Mr Speaker: in September we mark ten years since the Newman budget—ten long years. That is a record we are not going to forget. That is a good record to remember. Queenslanders have not forgotten that record.

Queenslanders have shown incredible resilience in the past two years. Their hard work has meant that our economy has recovered faster than any other jurisdiction's. Queensland has the strongest jobs growth in the nation, coming out of the pandemic with 206,000 jobs created. Queensland's domestic economy is outpacing the nation and our exports are now at a record \$99 billion. Our strong economic management has now created the budget position we need to make an historic investment in good jobs, better services and embracing our great Queensland lifestyle.

### National Cabinet

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.39 am): Last week National Cabinet met in Canberra. To those opposite I say, I went to that as well! Although some of the faces have changed, the job remains the same: working together in the interests of the people of our state and our nation. I can report that this was the best National Cabinet meeting ever. What a pleasure it was to meet in the spirit of cooperation. What a pleasure it was to work with a Labor Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is keen to work with every state and territory, including New South Wales and Tasmania. He wants to put people first.

Our first priority is health. As a group we were able to announce the extension of special funding to assist with issues being felt in almost every public hospital in Australia. Some of these pressures are being caused by the ongoing pandemic. Although we would like to work towards a greater contribution from the federal government, this was an important first step and a welcome one. This includes working together to identify practical ways to get people out of hospitals and into aged and disability care sooner. In Queensland alone this would free up as many as 500 beds. Let me say to the opposition that this is a national issue that every state and territory addressed.

We also addressed another shared concern: a critical skills shortage. The Commonwealth agreed to address a backlog in visa applications to—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my left will cease their interjections. The Premier is making a ministerial statement.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The Commonwealth has agreed to address a backlog in visa applications to reduce the amount of time skilled migrants are waiting to come into Australia and to prioritise training that will address these skills shortages. Many of these skills shortages are in regional and rural Queensland.

Every state premier and territory leader gave a commitment to progress a referendum to enshrine in our Constitution a First Nations voice to parliament. We gave a commitment for energy ministers to continue working together to improve outcomes for consumers; to further streamline disaster recovery funding arrangements; for measures to boost productivity across all sectors; and for a reduction in Australia's greenhouse gas emissions of 43 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030.

The Prime Minister is also investigating ways to add a representative of local government to National Cabinet meetings. We achieved a lot. As I frequently say, we work best when we work together. I look forward to the next National Cabinet meeting prior to the federal budget in October.

### Nadesalingam Family

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.43 am): One year ago—on budget day, coincidentally—we welcomed what looked like good news from the former federal coalition government: bridging visas being granted to the Nadesalingam family. It turned out to be a false hope. They were not going home to Biloela that day. They had to remain in Western Australia and remain in doubt, a long way from Central Queensland and from the friends they had known for seven years. I said that day that we looked forward to when all the family would be allowed to come home to Bilo. It took a change of government in Canberra, but 12 months later the good news is—

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Everton!

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members to my right!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The family is back in Biloela—back in the community which embraced them, campaigned for them and raised money for them. They know that under the Albanese government they can continue in Biloela with certainty. It is a wonderful outcome for this family, who have persevered through so much. It is thanks to the new federal Labor government.

Today I want to emphasise a point in particular: this is a tribute to the love and spirit of the people of Biloela. How moving it was to see the emotional welcome, the cheers and the tears of joy. I thank Minister Glenn Butcher for going out there that weekend as well. Thank you very much for representing the government. Council workers even spent the morning making sure the airport was spick-and-span for their arrival. As a state we can all be proud of a Queensland community so ready and so willing to demonstrate the true meaning of the word 'home'.

### Exports

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure) (9.45 am): The No. 1 economic priority of the Palaszczuk government is creating jobs for Queenslanders. Our current unemployment rate is proof that our plan is working. Unemployment in Queensland is just four per cent. That is the lowest it has been since 2008. The unemployment rate is so low because we are exporting so much more. Queensland exports hit a record \$99 billion. Our No. 1 trading partner, Japan, is driving this boom.

Last week I represented Queensland in Japan to find even more opportunities to create jobs for Queenslanders. Japan and Queensland have a proud history, with the state exporting more goods, services and energy there than to any other country in the world. We appreciate the long-term relationship which in many ways has been a major contributor to Queensland's being the economic powerhouse of the country. I can report that Japanese businesses are eager to do even more business with Queensland, especially importing green hydrogen. Executives from Stanwell Corporation joined me to promote hydrogen investment opportunities, particularly in Central Queensland.

Four years ago the Premier went to Japan and met with businesses and academics to talk about the potential to export Queensland's sunshine as hydrogen. Since then, we have released a hydrogen strategy and appointed a hydrogen minister. Last year we launched the Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund, a \$2 billion commitment to secure the opportunities and jobs that are coming from clean energy. The state government is sending a very clear message, especially to our partners in Japan, that Queensland is the ideal international supplier for reliable, affordable and clean energy.

Global markets are increasingly hungry for green hydrogen to help meet their decarbonisation ambitions. Every credible expert is saying that renewable energy is the biggest opportunity since the industrial revolution. Queensland, with our abundance of sunshine, wind and potential for pumped hydro energy storage, is in prime position to sate an increasingly hungry world hydrogen market. I thank the Japanese government and businesses that took the time to meet with us. I look forward to the opportunities to create even more new jobs together.

### State Schools, Share the Dignity

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.48 am): On this side of the House we are all looking forward to our Treasurer handing down a budget this afternoon that will deliver for all of Queensland. It is going to deliver good jobs and better services and will protect and enhance our great Queensland lifestyle.

It was great to join the Premier and Treasurer at the opening of the Brisbane South State Secondary College for an early announcement of the expansion of our partnership with Share the Dignity which will be confirmed in today's budget. The Palaszczuk government believes that access to period products and misplaced stigma around periods should never be a barrier to learning. That is why we were delighted to announce that all state schools in Queensland will be given the opportunity to receive a Share the Dignity vending machine, which provides free period products to students, thanks to our \$13.3 million investment in the budget.

This announcement builds on the highly successful existing partnership with Queensland based charity Share the Dignity, first announced in 2020. I have visited some of the schools that already have machines installed, including Mackay State High School and Pioneer State High School, with the member for Mackay and Assistant Minister for Health. At Pioneer State High School, captain Alyssa and vice-captain Alarna told us the machines were amazing and will make a huge difference—and they were not the only ones. Founder and Managing Director of Share the Dignity, Rochelle Courtenay, said she was elated that this partnership will now be extended to all state schools. School communities responded by saying it was a 'fantastic initiative', 'wonderful news', and mothers reflected on how much better things will be for their daughters compared to their own experiences.

I am also delighted to confirm my department will cover the ongoing costs of maintenance and restocking the machines so that no student goes without. The partnership also means schools in Queensland—both state and non-state—will continue to have free access to Share the Dignity's Period Talk program, which is delivered by students to students and is all about reducing any misplaced shame and stigma. Schools will be contacted in the coming weeks about the process of getting a machine installed. I can tell the House that they look fantastic. It is not an expression of interest this time: any state school that wants one, will get one. It is just another way the Palaszczuk government is delivering much welcomed better services to Queensland state school students and communities, no matter where they live.

### Budget, Railways; Cunningham Highway, Roadworker Death

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.51 am): In today's budget, the Palaszczuk Labor government is making a record investment in Queensland's rail network. More than \$3.5 billion is locked in over the next four years for new rail projects which will transform transport in Queensland.

On Sunday, I joined the Treasurer at Cross River Rail's Woolloongabba station, where the Palaszczuk Labor government's rail revolution is already well underway—30 metres below ground level. I am pleased to report to the House that the first train tracks have now been laid in Cross River Rail's twin tunnels, and they look awesome. In fact, they are running almost below this House—from the future underground Albert Street station under the Botanic Gardens and south towards the future Woolloongabba station. Over the coming months workers will be laying up to 100 metres of track per day. This is another milestone as we build the first underground passenger rail line in Queensland's history.

Our commitment to rail does not terminate there. We are not just building 100 per cent state government funded Cross River Rail—after the lack of cooperation from the previous federal government—we are transforming the entire rail network. Through more than \$3.5 billion in rail investment in today's budget, we are creating more than 5,000 jobs, and delivering major South-East Queensland rail infrastructure projects, which will help Queenslanders get home to their families sooner.

This investment timetable includes: \$924 million towards the \$1.2 billion Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3 from Broadbeach to Burleigh Heads—I can see the smile on the face of the member for Mermaid Beach; \$875 million towards the \$2.6 billion Kuraby to Beenleigh track duplication, which includes removing five level crossings and station accessibility upgrades; \$488 million towards the \$550 million Beerburrum to Nambour Rail Upgrade—a project I know the members for Caloundra and Nicklin are huge supporters of, and aren't they doing a fantastic job?; \$912 million towards the New Generation Rollingstock program; \$212 million towards the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program which is part of our \$7.1 billion plan to build 65 new trains here in Maryborough, driven by the member for Maryborough and assistant minister and supported strongly by the member for Hervey Bay; \$107 million towards the construction of three new Gold Coast train stations at Pimpama, Hope Island and Merrimac—we will not ignore the Gold Coast like those opposite as we invest in better rail; and \$120 million towards the Loganlea train station relocation and park-and-ride upgrade—a project the Attorney-General and member for Waterford has championed.

Queensland is a boom state with a booming population due to our leadership during the COVID pandemic. That means we need an expanded rail network. That is exactly what the Palaszczuk Labor government is delivering in this budget. When it comes to rail, the Palaszczuk Labor government delivers for Queensland through a record investment in today's budget—not cuts.

Before I finish, I have some sad news to report to the House. Yesterday a RoadTek worker tragically lost his life on a job site on the Cunningham Highway. The incident is under investigation. The gentleman has been working for RoadTek for five years. I am sure all members support me in sending our sincerest condolences to his family, friends and all his work mates at the RoadTek depot in Nathan.

## Energy Industry

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (9.55 am): There is no doubt the national energy system has come to significant prominence over the last four weeks, but it has always been important to the Palaszczuk government. That is because the nation's energy system challenge is Queensland's jobs opportunity—the opportunity to create more clean energy jobs in more industries. Make no mistake, what our nation is facing is the culmination of a near decade of energy policy chaos under the federal LNP—chaos that has left this nation exposed to global markets despite being home to the world's best renewable resources.

This cannot be the way for Australia. Under Labor, it will not be. State and territory ministers met two weeks ago, under the leadership of new federal energy minister Chris Bowen. From that meeting came a very clear consensus on delivering more renewables and more storage. Here in Queensland, the Palaszczuk government is getting on with that job.

The 2022 state budget will power Queensland's energy future with \$48 million committed to deliver more pumped hydro across Queensland. I joined the Treasurer at Wivenhoe—itsself a 28-trillion-litre battery—to announce \$13 million to accelerate key technical studies for a final investment decision on the 1.5-gigawatt Borumba pumped hydro and a further \$35 million to advance a statewide search for a second potential pumped hydro energy storage site in Queensland. This funding commitment will see us identify a further five to seven gigawatts of renewable energy storage across Queensland—projects that together will create 4,000 jobs and futureproof our energy system by achieving this state's energy independence.

Why is that important? As Australian Energy Market Operator CEO Daniel Westerman said earlier this year—

The sooner we can move the nation to higher levels of firmed renewables ... the sooner we can decouple energy costs from international factors.

This is what we call our energy independence. With more pumped hydro storage and a pipeline of renewable energy projects here in Queensland, we can achieve energy independence for our state and for our nation. By 2024, the pipeline has 10 additional solar farms and a further five wind farms in the market in Queensland, representing an extra 3,000 megawatts and creating 3,000 clean energy jobs in construction.

When there is an oversupply of these resources, we can store them in our pumped hydro-electric storage systems and return them to the energy system when Queensland consumers need them. Critics over the other side of the House say that the sun does not always shine and the wind does not always blow, but the rain does not always fall either. As a civilisation we still manage to store water. We can do the same with renewable energy. This \$48 million pumped hydro blitz is yet another example of how the Palaszczuk government is powering a better future for all Queenslanders.

### Tourism Industry

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement) (9.59 am): Today is an important milestone for the future of Queensland's award-winning tourism industry with the release later this afternoon of the Tourism Industry Reference Panel's final action plan for tourism recovery. It is the start of a 10-year strategy for the tourism industry and government to reshape our state's visitor economy and create more good secure jobs.

Visitors have always been attracted to Queensland because of our great lifestyle and tourism experiences only this state can offer. Across Queensland, tourism is seeing the green shoots of recovery from COVID-19 grow and flourish. That is why the independent Tourism Industry Reference Panel's final action plan goes beyond the pandemic and sets ambitious goals for the decade ahead.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the expert panel, chaired by Liz Savage, for their terrific work over the last year in reviewing industry submissions and consulting with tourism operators. As a tourism industry-led blueprint for the future, the panel has said, 'Queensland needs to be bold to achieve long-term success—or run the risk of being left behind.'

The independent panel makes 75 recommendations aimed at positioning Queensland as Australia's destination of choice for domestic and global visitors seeing the world's best tourism experiences by 2032. We are on the cusp of two golden decades of opportunity before and after the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games here in Brisbane. In 2032 Queensland will be the only tourism destination on the planet with a potential worldwide audience of more than five billion people.

Government cannot do this alone. Some of the panel's 75 recommendations will need further discussion and consultation with industry and broader stakeholders. That feedback will be critical to *Toward Tourism 2032*, the Palaszczuk government's longer term response. Already our \$200 million partnership with airports to attract international aviation is bearing fruit. Along with the recently announced investment in First Nations Tourism and the Queensland Music Trails, these are the first instalments of our tourism strategy to deliver good jobs, protect our great lifestyle and futureproof the visitor economy.

### Social and Affordable Housing

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (10.00 am): Last year this government announced the largest concentrated investment in social and affordable housing in Queensland's history as part of our Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025. This \$2.9 billion investment will see the commencement of 7,400 new social and affordable homes by 2025, and we have a proven track record with 4,153 new social and affordable homes already commenced across the state since the Palaszczuk government came to office in 2015.

Over the last 12 months this government has been working tirelessly to improve housing outcomes for Queenslanders. I can confirm that we are on track to meet our target of commencing 727 social homes alone in the first year of the action plan. That means we are hitting the milestones we set out to achieve and are building more homes for the most vulnerable in our community.

I have been out and about across Queensland to see firsthand the hard work of my department to deliver more social housing stock. I have turned sods, inspected building sites, opened new complexes and met with social housing tenants in Bundaberg, Townsville, Cairns, Ipswich, Gold Coast, Rockhampton, and the list goes on. I was recently in Gympie, where I announced our \$10.5 million investment to fast-track Gympie's Local Housing Action Plan, and we are working with other local councils, including remote Indigenous councils, to finalise their local housing action plans.

Last week we launched our Help to Home initiative. This program is designed to encourage investors sitting on vacant properties to sign up to a government headlease. It incentivises private investors to sign up with a guaranteed lease for two years and three months rent in advance paid each quarter. Help to Home will mean 1,000 more housing solutions for vulnerable Queenslanders. We know that pressures on the rental market and the housing sector are having an impact on young people. That is why we have delivered a new 40-unit youth foyer on the Gold Coast after the success of the Logan Youth Foyer. We are building another one in Townsville which will provide 40 new homes for our young people who need it most.

We also know older women are the fastest growing group of people to experience homelessness in Queensland. That is why earlier this year I announced a \$14 million housing older women strategy to co-design new homes and deliver specialised support services for older women, including a new housing support hub and advisory group. We continue to work with specialist homelessness services with a \$122 million investment to support those most at risk.

Our work extends beyond my department's responsibilities. In partnership with the private sector, the Treasurer has overseen Queensland's Build-to-Rent initiative, which in partnership with the private sector is delivering 750 new dwellings specifically for the rental market. Our \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund, the first of its kind, is already delivering for Queensland. Recently the Treasurer, Minister D'Ath and I announced 118 new social and affordable homes to be built on Brisbane's north side. Just this week the Treasurer announced a further 1,200 new social and affordable homes will be delivered through a partnership with Brisbane Housing Company. This is just the beginning for our \$1 billion investment through our Housing Investment Fund.

A few weeks ago the Deputy Premier announced \$200 million to unlock land supply and make housing more affordable. This new funding will boost land supply and deliver more affordable housing outcomes for Queenslanders. We are not just building more homes; we are helping Queenslanders right across the system to find housing solutions. In fact, just last year my department helped Queenslanders with over 205,000 forms of housing assistance. We are strengthening the rental sector through the delivery of strong rental reform laws. Last year we made a record investment in social and affordable housing. We are delivering on our housing action plan, and we are only just getting started.

### Emergency Services

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.05 am): Under a Labor government, budget time is always a special occasion for Queenslanders. It allows the Treasurer to highlight the astute financial management of the Palaszczuk government and our rock-solid plan for better services, good jobs and a great lifestyle for Queenslanders. Budget day is not the only time that this government shows its commitment to this great state. We are a full-time government. We work for Queensland communities every day of the year. Today's budget will highlight our government's ongoing and record commitment to supporting and enhancing the hardworking front line of community safety in our state.

Last week's community cabinet in Stanthorpe was another important opportunity to talk about the Palaszczuk government's critical investments in regional Queensland. Certainly it was good news for the police and fire and emergency services in the broader region. For instance, at Toowoomba I joined the Police Commissioner to announce that, because of the government's historic commitment to growing the Queensland Police Service by 2,025 additional police personnel over five years, an additional 29 frontline police officer positions would be deployed to the Darling Downs district this year, including four officers for Goondiwindi Police Station, allowing that station to have a full-time, 24/7 operating model for the first time and a new mobile police beat for the district. The remaining positions announced by the commissioner will be allocated to key frontline policing roles, boosting the response in the Darling Downs district, including dedicated investigative positions to focus on youth crime.

I was also able to confirm that the \$15 million upgrade of the historic Warwick Police Station was entering the final design stage, with construction due to start next year. The upgrade of this Queensland heritage-listed building is another example of this government providing the resources needed by our front line.

It gave me great pleasure to join the member for Southern Downs for the official handover to firefighters at the Warwick fire station in the state's south-west of a new Urban Water Tanker. The new 9,000-litre UTank, valued at almost \$700,000, ensures our firefighters in south-western region can continue their life-saving work and is a significant boost to their firefighting capability.

Our firefighters, our Rural Fire Service, our marine rescue volunteers, our police, our SES personnel and our corrections officers all play a vital role in ensuring we can maintain the lifestyle we have come to expect in Queensland. One way in which we can thank them for their commitment to the community is to ensure that they have the tools to support their work and their service. The Palaszczuk government is truly a government for all Queenslanders in all regions not just on budget day but every day.

### Regional Forums

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.08 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government is a government for all Queenslanders. That was certainly on display earlier this month when I headed out west to Longreach to attend the regional forums. These forums and our engagement with the regions drives results in regional Queensland. This comes from open and productive two-way communication between regional communities and this government.

When I first became the minister I met with the mayor of Barcaldine while visiting Western Queensland. He told me all about how the cluster fencing where they live—which we funded—revived the sheep industry in that area. I reported that back to the Premier, and not long after that she announced a further round of funding for this fantastic initiative. While I was in Blackall recently travelling around with the local mayor I got to see some of that cluster fencing and hear firsthand how it has been so successful in those regions.

While I was out in the regions again last year mayors reported to me that they are facing challenges finding important water infrastructure for their communities, and once again this government listened. I came back to Brisbane and ensured that a centrepiece of our budget was a further round of Building our Regions funding provided exactly for this purpose. The Treasurer and Premier acted. They delivered \$70 million over the next three years for local governments to improve their water supply and sewerage services. Previous rounds of Building our Regions funding have seen more than \$348 million approved for hundreds of projects, creating nearly 3,000 construction jobs—all in regional Queensland. Under the first stage of Building our Regions round 6, a total of \$8.3 million has been awarded to 23 local councils from up in the Torres Strait down to Goondiwindi for projects that will improve liability and long-term prosperity for regional communities.

It was fantastic to meet with Barcoo mayor Sally O'Neil on my trip out west recently and tell her in person over a nice cold beer at the Birdcage bar that her council had been successful in round 6, receiving \$248,000 to plan upgrades to the Jundah water treatment plant. The program will now move into phase 2, with this year's budget allocating \$39 million for councils to deliver on critical infrastructure in regional Queensland. I look forward to making more announcements very shortly about these construction projects moving forward. It is the Palaszczuk Labor government that you can count on to deliver for regional Queensland, to make sure there are good jobs and better services for everyone no matter where you live in this great state.

### Resources Centre of Excellence

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.11 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to creating a diversified resources industry and more good Queensland jobs, particularly in our regions. That is why I was so pleased to join with the Treasurer earlier this month in Mackay to announce as part of the Palaszczuk government's budget a \$5.7 million investment over three years into the Resources Centre of Excellence. These funds will underpin an expansion of the centre and the development of a future industries hub to support new economy minerals projects and, in turn, good jobs for Queenslanders.

Nearly two years ago to the day the centre was opened after the Palaszczuk government and Mackay Regional Council invested \$7 million to help create jobs and prosperity in the region. The centre has helped make Mackay one of the world's best sources for mining expertise and innovation in the mining equipment, technology and services—or METS—sector. It is a fantastic facility and it will now be able to grow. Earlier this year I launched the Heart 5 mobile health unit at the Resources Centre of Excellence. It is no secret that Mackay and the region has a long and important history as a resources

hub in this great state. We know that we can harness the region's existing skills and experience as the emerging new economy minerals sector continues to grow—I can see the member for Mackay nodding furiously. Creating more good secure jobs in our traditional and emerging industries will be an unashamed focus of our budget, and Central and North Queensland are perfectly primed to take advantage of this.

New economy minerals will be in demand for decades as the world continues to decarbonise. Our state is blessed with world-class deposits of these vital minerals. Many Queenslanders will have these minerals in their hands right now: copper, cobalt and tungsten, just to name a few. These minerals are needed for everything from mobile phones and medical technology to electric vehicle batteries and solar panels. The Palaszczuk government's 30-year vision for the resources sector is to mine, process and manufacture these minerals right here in Queensland, taking them from pit to product. Our investment in the Mackay Resources Centre of Excellence will help us achieve exactly that. This \$5.7 million in funding will help expand the centre's research, development and commercialisation and training services for our new economy minerals sector. For decades the resources industry has provided jobs for Queenslanders and the royalties for our teachers, health workers and police officers. Growing our new economy minerals sector will help ensure the resource sector continues to create good regional jobs and prosperity for many decades to come.

### ABSENCE OF MINISTER

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (10.15 am): I advise that the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services will be absent from question time today due to illness. The Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure will take questions on behalf of the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services today, and I will act as Leader of the House.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

**Mr SPEAKER:** Question time will conclude today at 11.15 am.

#### Electricity Prices

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.15 am): My question is to the Premier. With the threat of blackouts and sharply rising power prices, can the Premier guarantee that Queensland government power generators have at no stage this year driven prices up?

**Mr Power:** You wanted to sell it off!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take the interjection. Let me say very clearly that, as I mentioned at National Cabinet, we acknowledge there are pressures on the National Energy Market fundamentally because there has been no national energy plan. Not once did the Leader of the Opposition ring his former mate in Canberra to raise those issues.

I am also very pleased that today we will be handing down the budget, because it reminds us that 10 years ago in September the Newman government, of which the member for Clayfield was treasurer at the time, had the plan to sell everything off. We are going to compare the pair. Compare the historic awful budget of 10 years ago with the budget we are going to deliver today, which is focused on Queenslanders, focused on jobs, focused on better services and focused on our great Queensland lifestyle. That is what we will be doing. Let me also say that we are giving Queenslanders a \$175 rebate.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They do not like it over there.

**Ms Grace:** They wouldn't have owned it!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. I take that interjection. There would be no way those opposite would be able to hand that rebate back because they would not have owned it. They had nothing.

**A government member:** They would have sold it off.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. But the people of Queensland stood strong with us. They rejected their plan for asset sales and backed our plan to keep it in public hands. I commend our Minister for Energy, who is working very collaboratively with the new federal minister, the New South Wales minister, the Tasmanian minister and the Western Australia minister. All of the ministers are working collaboratively because there was a vacuum, a void at the national level of no national energy plan.

**Ms Grace:** For 10 years!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** For 10 years, many long years; that is right. It was not remarked on that this is the fourth prime minister I have had to deal with. The last three could not even agree on a national energy plan because the Nats and the Libs were completely and utterly divided.

*(Time expired)*

### Electricity Prices

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** My question is to the Minister for Energy. At the start of the month, the minister said that government owned power generators did not bid up the price of power. Australian Energy Regulator documents show that in the first quarter of the year they regularly did. Will the minister rule out that government owned generators' bidding practices have contributed to increased power bills for Queenslanders?

**Mr de BRENNI:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question because I welcome the opportunity to set the record straight. I want to set the record straight for those opposite, and I do not know whether it is a lack of understanding or they are just intent on misleading Queenslanders.

**Dr Miles:** It's a bit of both.

**Mr de BRENNI:** Probably a bit of both? I take the interjection from the Deputy Premier—we think it is both. Let me deal with the truth here. Despite what the LNP tells Queenslanders, Queenslanders pay between 10 and 20 per cent less for their electricity under this government than they did when those opposite were in power. There is cheaper electricity under this Labor government than under those opposite. In fact, right at this very moment, Queenslanders' wholesale electricity costs are the lowest in the National Electricity Market—a testament to the decisions that this government has taken to keep those assets in public ownership.

Despite what the LNP claim and what they said in this House this morning and what they said in the public domain last week, despite what the Leader of the Opposition has said, there has not been a risk of blackouts in this state. There was never a requirement and there was no need for the Leader of the Opposition to tell vulnerable Queenslanders not to boil their kettle, to tell the most vulnerable people in this state not to take a shower or not to put their heater on. Despite what the Leader of the Opposition is trying to insinuate, my office has been repeatedly advised that Queensland's government owned corporations have been acting responsibly. They have been making sure there is power supply, and I have sought and received those assurances on multiple occasions.

Let me also set the record straight about what the LNP have said to Queenslanders, and I think this came from the shadow minister. They said to Queenslanders that solar feed-in tariffs would be cut. They said that if you put a solar panel on your roof you get less solar feed-in tariff. That was not true. In fact, what the Queensland Competition Authority said was that your solar feed-in tariff would go up by 41 per cent under this government. They do not understand, they do not get it or they want to mislead Queenslanders. Despite what the LNP have said, there is absolute adequacy of supply here in Queensland. Not only are Queensland's assets able to support Queenslanders and serve our own requirements but we have sent to New South Wales enough electricity to power over half a million New South Wales households. That is cheaper electricity, adequacy of supply and public ownership.

*(Time expired)*

### Health Services

**Ms KING:** My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier update the House on our government's commitment to delivering more and better health services for Queensland and creating better jobs in the process?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Pumicestone for that really important question because it goes to the heart of families across our state getting good quality health care and the ability of a government to provide the services that Queenslanders expect—whether it is more doctors, more nurses, more allied health professionals. It is about a government that recognises that keeping Queenslanders safe during a pandemic saved countless number of lives. It is about a government that recognises during a peak of a flu season that getting people vaccinated for free as quickly and safely as possible will ease pressure on hospitals. It is about a Labor government that is committed to building, in an Australian first, satellite hospitals across the south-east to cope with that change.

As I said in my ministerial statement this morning, it is about a Labor government that will deliver a record health budget today—the likes of which Queenslanders have never seen. It is not long now for the member for Broadwater to wait to see this record health investment, but let me say this. There has been a lot of work that has gone on behind the scenes in the production of this budget today. There

have been a lot of meetings. There has been the opportunity for us to talk to health professionals, but we are also listening to Queenslanders. When Queenslanders say that we need to cope for our growing state—

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:**—that is exactly what we are doing. As I said this morning, we are comparing the member for Clayfield's budget from 10 years ago to the budget that we will deliver today. As a reminder, let me just tell people that—

**Mr Crisafulli:** How dare you say she checked out!

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

**Ms Grace:** We'll check you out!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. There have been about four or five opposition leaders—I have lost count—and there have been three prime ministers.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** They all check out or have been checked out.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right, and they are watching your performance over there.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Through the chair, Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You cut 4,400 staff, including 1,800 nurses, 177 preventive health staff and—

*(Time expired)*

### Electricity Prices

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My question is to the Minister for Energy. In 2017-18 ministerial directions were issued to government owned energy producers to restrict bidding practices and lower wholesale prices. Why has the minister not done the same in 2022?

**Mr de BRENNI:** I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for the question. The simple answer—and I will take the opportunity to elaborate and continue to provide some education to those opposite—is there is no indication whatsoever that there are any practices by government owned generators that have been untoward, including their bidding practices. None whatsoever. It is incredibly disappointing that those opposite want to come into this House and attack the character of the men and women who work in Queensland's electricity system, because that is what they are doing today. There have been no indications brought to our attention by the ACCC, the Australian Energy Regulator or anybody else. It is a pure attack on workers in the Queensland electricity system right through regional Queensland.

On the contrary, those on this side of the House want to express a different message to that workforce that has been making sure there is adequate supply for Queenslanders, that has been building renewables in Queensland and that has been ensuring that over half a million homes in New South Wales have had power supply. What those on this side of the House want to say to those electricity system workers is that we thank you. To every man and woman in the Queensland electricity system who works in a coal-fired generator or a gas-fired generator, who works in our coalfields or our gas fields, we say thank you. To our transmission and distribution workers, we say thank you. To the workers in the Wivenhoe Power Station and our hydro-electric systems in North Queensland, we say thank you.

Despite what the LNP says about the causes of the recent market suspension, I can confirm that the real reason, as the Premier has outlined, was nine years of dysfunction by the federal LNP. There were 23 different energy policies in a decade. Count them! There were 23 different policies. There was a decade of inaction from the LNP and the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison governments. There was internal disunity at a state level and internal disunity at a federal level.

It was the federal LNP that did this to Australians: left Australia's energy prices at the whim of Vladimir Putin. That is what the federal LNP did to Australians, and they will never forget it. I will say that it has been government owned corporations in this space that have delivered cheaper and cleaner energy. Our message is very clear: no matter what the policy of those opposite is, Queensland's electricity assets are not for sale.

*(Time expired)*

## Regional Queensland, Manufacturing

**Mr O'ROURKE:** My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier update the House on the government's commitment to creating manufacturing jobs in regional Queensland?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Rockhampton very much for that question. I know how passionate he is about creating manufacturing jobs. In fact, manufacturing jobs are not only being generated in Rockhampton but also in Maryborough, in Gladstone, on the Sunshine Coast, up in North Queensland, in Ipswich—right across our state. It is an industry that we have been promoting front and centre of our government's agenda when we are talking about growing jobs, to make sure that young people have an opportunity to get into a job and that we are absolutely determined to grow that manufacturing workforce.

Already in Rockhampton, Alliance Airlines has been set up to do the maintenance which will create good, long-term, secure jobs. When the member for Rockhampton was with me just recently, and the member for Maryborough and the member for Keppel, we acquired the Rocky railyards, a 21-ectare site which will help in the supply chain for rail manufacturing in Queensland, not overseas where the opposition wanted to send their trains to be made. On this side of the House, we know that Queenslanders want good jobs and secure jobs, and manufacturing is absolutely a pillar of this economy that we are going to continue to grow.

Later on today, the Treasurer will hand down the budget. I am excited by this budget because it delivers for Queenslanders no matter where they live. I have said already that it is going to be a record health budget, but we will also be delivering the schools and the education, the skills and the training, we will be making sure we look after small business as well, but also we want to see new industries such as hydrogen thrive in this state.

It is great that the Deputy Premier recently went over to Japan to talk about opportunities to secure more deals for this state. Trade is important. Never underestimate how important our trade is. Japan has just overtaken China to be our largest trading partner. They want more and we are happy to give them more. What we will see today is the result of a growing economy. Our economy has grown strongly because we kept Queensland safe during our pandemic. We kept people in jobs, working, whilst there was a global pandemic. Queenslanders will never forget that.

## Electricity Prices

**Mr WEIR:** My question is to the Minister for Energy. The Australian Energy Regulator calls out the unavailability of Callide C4 as one of the reasons for electricity prices doubling in Queensland. In May last year, the minister said the Callide C4 failure would have no impact on household bills. Does the minister stand by his comments from a year ago?

**Mr de BRENNI:** I thank the member opposite for the question. Let us not forget that this is a national challenge; it is a global challenge. In terms of inflated prices in the National Electricity Market, all of the market bodies have identified three key factors that have led to increased prices of electricity generation which are being dealt with by responses led by the Australian Energy Market Operator. On this side of the House, we have full confidence in the market bodies to perform those functions. The causes of those prices are high global gas prices. Global gas prices are high because of Russia's war on Ukraine. That is the primary impact on electricity prices here in this nation and in this state. It is a real shame that the member opposite, whose job is to be the spokesperson on behalf of the LNP, does not understand the fundamentals of the National Electricity Market or global energy pricing.

**Mr Ryan:** It is too complicated for them.

**Mr de BRENNI:** I take the interjection from the Minister for Emergency Services: it is perhaps a little too complicated for those opposite. The second reason the Energy Market Operator has pointed to has been severe weather events in this nation. None of us expected a second La Nina event to produce rainfall of the significant amounts that we have seen across the eastern seaboard for effectively the last six months. The Minister for Transport will tell you that that has impacted on rail freight services because of damage to rail lines. The Minister for Resources will tell you that it has been more difficult to get coal out of mines and to power stations. At the end of that significant period of wet weather—six months effectively of day in, day out rain, which any Australian will know has occurred—we saw an immediate and unexpected cold snap which led to a significant increase in demand. Particularly in New South Wales, the demand for Queensland electricity and gas spiked. That is in part, as I said, due to nine years of inaction, nine years of failed energy policy by the LNP. That is what the market bodies have identified.

**Mr Dametto** interjected.

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

**Mr de BRENNI:** There has been a third factor identified which has been unplanned outages. It was unfortunate that there was an incident at the Callide Power Station; however, we have all units back on except for that one. We are sourcing that equipment. On behalf of the Queensland Labor Party, again I want to say thank you to the workers in that power plant and every power plant across Queensland.

### Hydrogen Industry, Jobs

**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 secure the jobs of the future in emerging industries like hydrogen production, and is the Deputy Premier aware of alternative approaches?

**Dr MILES:** I thank the member for Cooper for her question. She is so passionate about the renewable energy jobs of the future that she insisted on asking that question even though I think it might be the last words she can utter for the rest of the day. She is so passionate about it because it means jobs. It means jobs for people who live in Cooper, in the city and in the regions.

When we came to office, the previous government had not one single large-scale renewable energy project on the books. We have built 34. There are 34 operating now and 14 more under construction with the concentration of those projects in the Central Queensland region.

I can report that companies right around the world are impressed with the incredible opportunities we now have to take that renewable energy, to convert it into hydrogen and to export it to the world. One of the reasons they see that opportunity is because all of the necessary components there are owned by Queenslanders—the port, the water board, the state development area, the generator and the transmission authority. It gives the Queensland government a unique ability to put together the entire supply chain for the green hydrogen that the world is looking for, including in Japan. Of course, we would not have that ability to coordinate if those opposite had succeeded in selling off all of those assets that belong to Queensland taxpayers.

We will not stop with hydrogen. We are also determined to supply the world with the minerals that the renewable energy revolution will require: the vanadium, the cobalt, the graphite, the tungsten—all the minerals that the world will need.

Honourable members can see those continued investments: the \$10 million into our vanadium processing facility in Townsville, the \$15 million we are investing in this budget into the expansion of our battery testing facility, the Resources Centre of Excellence that the Minister for Resources was talking about previously. This government's economic plan is working because it is creating jobs—a four per cent unemployment rate—but we are not going to stop there. We are going to keep creating jobs, including the jobs of the future.

### Electricity Supply

**Mr HART:** My question is to the Minister for Energy. Why did the minister decide that the start of the coldest winter in 100 years was the best time to take two of the remaining three Callide generating units offline for maintenance?

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my right.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will not ask again, members. When I call the House to order it will come to order or members will be named and removed.

**Mr de BRENNI:** I acknowledge the member for the question. I think the response from my colleagues here underscores the bizarre nature of that query. As I understand it, the member opposite has some experience as a spokesperson in the energy sector on behalf of the Liberal National Party, and he ought to know that maintenance requirements of electricity generation units are taken incredibly seriously.

**Mr Butcher** interjected.

**Mr de BRENNI:** I take the interjection from the member for Gladstone, the minister, that these obligations are statutory obligations.

**Mr Powell** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Glass House will put his comments through the chair.

**Mr de BRENNI:** We cannot avoid the maintenance requirements of these plants. If we do ignore those maintenance requirements, those statutory requirements, not only are we in breach of the national electricity laws; we also put the lives of Queenslanders at stake.

It was only a year ago that I travelled to the Callide Power Station after an explosion that occurred there—not because of a lack of maintenance, but that is what a lack of maintenance can potentially result in; that is easily understood. Those workers there were grateful to have made it out of that building with their lives. It was only the quick actions of the workers in that power station that saved the lives of their colleagues. I continue to acknowledge that workforce and their focus and commitment on safety.

For the Liberal National Party to come into this House and allege that the challenges faced by the National Electricity Market are because of a decision that workers in our power stations took to preserve the safety of their colleagues is absolutely disgusting. Every single worker in Queensland—

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Clayfield.

**Mr de BRENNI:** I call on the Leader of the Opposition to issue a public apology today on behalf of every worker in those power stations. He will not. While he is at it, he can apologise to the—

**Mr Mander** interjected.

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

**Mr de BRENNI:**—Queensland electricity consumers whom he threatened and caused to be in fear of losing their power when he knew they were not at risk.

*(Time expired)*

### Australian Curriculum

**Ms McMILLAN:** My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Can the minister advise the House on the implementation of the revised national curriculum, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms GRACE:** At last we have a question that actually makes sense, that is not about questioning statutory scheduled maintenance on our power generators but one that actually talks about curriculum and education. I thank the member for Mansfield for bringing sanity to the House this morning. All we have been hearing from those opposite are insane accusations and nonsense comments; they have absolutely no idea about electricity and the networks in this state. It is an indictment upon them that they come in here asking those questions. They honestly are a joke. We have an ex-principal here, someone who stands up for students in her community who can ask decent questions about curriculum. Before the last election—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Toowoomba North, you are warned under the standing orders. Member for Nanango, you are also warned under the standing orders. Member for Currumbin, you are warned under the standing orders. The Minister for Education is the only person in the House who has the call.

**Ms GRACE:** We signed off—all ministers—on the new curriculum just before the federal election. I must admit I was a bit surprised, but they were very keen to do it and very keen to ensure that we all signed off on the new curriculum and get working. In fact, they pushed it through. While I have been minister in this state I have had four federal ministers, and the one who actually pushed the curriculum through was the acting education minister.

We all signed off on it. We are working on it now. We are going to start with English and mathematics. We are going to train the staff. We will have the teachers in there and the new curriculum will be rolled out in 2024. This allows time for schools to prepare, supporting resources to be prepared and teachers to undertake necessary professional development and training to familiarise themselves with the new changes. The beauty about the curriculum is it is refined, it gives teachers more time to go into depth on core subjects in the curriculum of English and mathematics and then the rest of the subjects will follow soon after.

I must admit I was highly surprised when I heard—just like those opposite not understanding in relation to the electricity market in this country—the new leader of the federal opposition, the member for Dickson, come out and talk about the fact that the national curriculum values argument is going to be one of the big debates during this parliament. Did he not realise it was actually his side and him as a senior member who brought in the new curriculum? Did he have a misunderstanding about the fact that hundreds, if not thousands, of people were consulted about this?

It is just more of what we get from those opposite: nonsense arguments and nonsense information that is not accurate, just like the question from the member for Burleigh this morning. They should be ashamed and so should the member for Dickson.

### Electricity Supply

**Mr McDONALD:** My question is to the Minister for Energy. The outage of Swanbank E was called out as a contributing factor of the extreme volatility of February's heatwave week. Months on and Swanbank E is still out of action. When did Swanbank E last provide electricity to the Queensland energy grid and when will it be back online?

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order. Member for McConnel, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr de BRENNI:** I thank the member for Lockyer for the question. Before I come to the core issue here, I want to provide advice about its return-to-service date. Its return-to-service date is September 2022. Again, I want to put on record our thanks to the CleanCo staff out there at Swanbank who are getting that generator back into service. It does draw attention to the fact that those opposite shut it down. They shut it down—

**Ms Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr de BRENNI:** I take the interjection from the Premier. They put it out there for sale along with Callide's assets, the Stanwell assets and everything else they could gather together and try to shovel out the door to the lowest bidder. That is the legacy of the member for Clayfield when he was the treasurer.

It was the Leader of the Opposition who sat around the cabinet table and approved that budget and those decisions that saw the shutting down of the Swanbank E Power Station. I know that the local member there has been a big supporter of getting that station back online because of the jobs it supports in that community.

We on this side of the House are big supporters of making sure we can return that unit to operation as safely as possible. As the member knows, it has been out of operation since before the summer of 2021-22 due to an AVR incident in December 2021. I am advised that CleanCo is sourcing those parts.

We will ensure these units are safely back into operation to support our continued growth in renewables—more wind, more solar, more pumped hydro-electric storage—firmed by publicly owned gas generation at Swanbank E. This is primarily because we on this side of the House did not sell off Queenslanders' publicly owned electricity assets. We did not close them.

Workers in the electorate of Lockyer will be wondering why we have this question today after members on the other side took an axe to those jobs out at Swanbank. On this side of the House, we have been putting downward pressure on electricity prices and providing safe, secure and decent jobs for Queenslanders in the electricity system. This is Labor's legacy in the Queensland electricity market.

### Social Housing

**Mrs MULLEN:** My question is of the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts. Will the minister update the House on how the government is investing in social housing for Queenslanders in need?

**Ms ENOCH:** I thank the member for Jordan for her question. I specifically thank her for her advocacy for social housing in the region she represents. We have already seen 241 social homes commenced since this government came to office, and we will see a further 166 commenced under our record investment of \$2.9 billion. As I mentioned in the House this morning, that record investment has already seen more than 4,150 homes commenced since the Palaszczuk government came to office. What we see from \$2.9 billion is a commitment to 7,400 commencements over the next few years. That is a massive investment. In fact, it is the largest concentrated investment in social and affordable housing in this state.

**Mr Mander** interjected.

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

**Ms ENOCH:** It is incredibly ironic to hear the member for Everton interjecting. It is so ironic that I feel like I am stuck in that Alanis Morissette song *Ironic*. You know the one, Mr Speaker: it's like having so many Tims and Davids when all you need is a Stacia.

**Mr SPEAKER:** It's a black fly in your chardonnay, yes.

**Ms ENOCH:** It is ironic when you think that the member for Everton oversaw a massive 90 per cent reduction in the construction of social housing in this state. In fact, when he left office we saw 428 fewer social homes. Not only did we see a reduction in the construction of social housing; we also saw a plan to off-load 90 per cent of social housing into the community housing sector. On top of that, one of the cruellest things he did was to put up the rent for vulnerable people in low-income social housing. He taxed important financial supports that were designed to support the most vulnerable in our community. He took 25 per cent of payments like carers' allowances, mobility allowances, pension supplements, utilities allowances and pharmaceutical allowances. In effect, what the member for Everton did was introduce a tax on tenants' wheelchairs, medication, taxes and electricity bills.

**Mr MANDER:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. That is untrue. I will be writing to you, but I take offence at the comments and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, the member has asked that the comments be withdrawn. Will you withdraw?

**Ms ENOCH:** I withdraw. The LNP have no record whatsoever. They have nothing to stand on when it comes to social housing.

*(Time expired)*

### Gas Supply

**Mr LISTER:** My question is to the Minister for Resources. In 2017 the government released 58 square kilometres of land in the Surat Basin for gas exploration on the condition that the gas be used domestically. How many megajoules of gas have been produced from this land since?

**Mr STEWART:** It is a great pleasure to talk about our domestic supply policy, because we have been doing the heavy lifting.

**Dr Miles:** Because we have one!

**Mr STEWART:** That is exactly right; I take the interjection. We are the only state that has a domestic gas supply policy.

**Dr Miles:** Did they have one?

**Mr STEWART:** They did not have one. I take that interjection from the Deputy Premier. We know that gas is a critical enabler for Queensland's economy in terms of royalties, jobs in the petroleum and gas industry and the jobs it creates in the manufacturing sector. I acknowledge the challenges being faced by the energy market at the moment. I know that my colleague Minister de Brenni is engaging with his state, territory and federal colleagues in relation to energy prices more broadly.

Queensland is doing the heavy lifting when it comes to our gas supply, particularly supplying the Australian east coast gas market. Since the southern states have imposed restrictions and moratoriums on the development of their onshore gas reserves, they are now very reliant on Queensland's gas. We know that additional supply is the best mechanism to ensure the reliability of gas supply to the domestic market. We are continuing to ensure our pipeline of gas projects is healthy—

**Mr Mander** interjected.

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

**Mr STEWART:** We know that additional supply is the best mechanism to ensure the reliability of gas supply to the domestic market. We are continuing to ensure our pipeline of gas projects is healthy through our Queensland Exploration Program. This government has released more than 20,000 square kilometres for gas exploration. That is conditional with our Australian market supply condition. This means—

**Mr POWELL:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118(b) on relevance. The question asked how many megajoules of gas have been produced from the land the minister is referring to.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you for your point of order. The minister has one minute on the clock to provide a direct response to the question as asked. I ask the minister to round out his answer.

**Mr STEWART:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. We are very proud of our domestic gas supply policy and will continue to support that. As I have said, there is 20,000 square kilometres for gas exploration to supply the Australian gas market. This means that all gas produced from these tenures must be sold exclusively to the gas market. In March 2018, Senex was awarded the first Australian market supply tenure to ensure gas from that tenure is supplied only to the Australian market and not exported.

**Mr POWELL:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118(b). Thirty seconds have passed—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member, you have raised the issue already and I am listening to the minister's answer. I will hear him out for the next 26 seconds. Minister, I give you guidance to come to a direct answer or remain seated.

**Mr STEWART:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I acknowledge that Senex is doing the heavy lifting when it comes to Project Atlas. I will need to get further details around the exact number we are producing. We know how important it is to the Australian market. We will continue to support those companies. In fact, we have only recently released another local gas tenure just to the north of Injune—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr POWELL:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. For clarification, is the minister taking that question on notice under the standing orders?

**Mr SPEAKER:** The minister has not indicated that he is. Minister, is there any suggestion that you will be providing—

**Mr STEWART:** No.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**Mr Lister** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Southern Downs, it is good to see you. You are warned under the standing orders.

### **Railways, Investment**

**Ms HOWARD:** My question is of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister outline how Queenslanders will benefit from the Palaszczuk government's record rail investment, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr BAILEY:** I thank the member for Ipswich for her question. She is a member from a proud rail town with a proud rail history and there are a lot of rail upgrades going on there in terms of station upgrades. The Palaszczuk Labor government's rail record has been a proud one. Cross River Rail was 100 per cent funded by us after there was no cooperation from the LNP in Queensland, and those opposite are still justifying it. They have lost power federally and they are still justifying the inaction and the obstruction in Queensland by the Morrison-Abbott-Turnbull governments. Despite that, we did light rail stage 2 before the Commonwealth Games, and what a success it has been. We duplicated Helensvale to Coomera. We got Cross River Rail going. We have a \$500 million station upgrade program with a lot of those already done and many continuing, including six stations underneath the Cross River Rail project.

In this budget we are seeing a rail revolution under the Palaszczuk Labor government. Kuraby to Beenleigh will be a transformational duplication for population growth and also the games, as well as five level crossing removals and many station upgrades. The Sunshine Coast rail duplication is happening under this government and in this budget. We did not even have a business case when we came to power because of the indolence of those opposite, yet we are building it with more than half a billion dollars worth of rail investment. The Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3 from Broadbeach to Burleigh is coming with a substantial budget contribution. We are seeing new technology go into our new generation trains. We are seeing trains built in Maryborough because of this government—not overseas made and not disability noncompliant as happened under those incompetents opposite. Cross River Rail was cut when they were in power, and they promised to cut it a second time in 2017. They did not learn their lesson; they tried to cut it a second time. That was their promise to the people of Queensland, but we are building the infrastructure we need.

When we look at the record of those opposite, we saw them cut Cross River Rail. We saw them cut train drivers. They had a whole new train line in 2016, so what did they do? They cut 48 train drivers. That is how incompetent they are, and they are still run by the same Newman government failures—

the member for Chatsworth and the member for Broadwater. They were there. They were part of the incompetence and they are still running their policy. The member for Mermaid Beach says that light rail is being inflicted on the people of the Gold Coast. What an embarrassment! We have the member for Burleigh's elaborate big dog-leg that would not work at all and he says that public transport will be obsolete. These are people who want to form a government. I know it is not hard to believe, but they think they are still in control. However, there are rumblings on the leadership. Look at the strategy today. No idea!

*(Time expired)*

### Spanish Mackerel Fishery

**Mr DAMETTO:** My question is to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities. The impending Spanish mackerel quota reductions may come into effect by July and could see a reduction of the total allowable commercial take by 75 per cent to 90 per cent. Queensland Spanish mackerel fishers have had no confirmation regarding what is due to occur. Since this is necessary for them to plan their futures, will the minister update them on what his plans are for the fishery?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member, I just wish to provide some advice. I think that the preamble was extraordinarily long. I will allow the question, but I will also allow the minister to answer that in any which way he sees fit.

**Mr FURNER:** I thank the member for Hinchinbrook for his question and once again acknowledge the Katter party's ongoing support and encouragement to ensure that the sustainable fisheries policy that the Palaszczuk government implements happens in order to ensure that we do have sustainable fisheries. No doubt Spanish mackerel is an iconic species to Queensland and that is why there has been so much consultation and involvement right across the sector, and I take the example of our recent engagement in Townsville. I know the member for Townsville, the member for Mundingburra and the member for Thuringowa support this species. A couple of weeks ago I took the opportunity to go to Tobin fisheries—internationally renowned for its fisheries.

**Mr Stewart** interjected.

**Mr FURNER:** I take that interjection—the best fishery in Australia, and it won an award for that. I had a piece of Spanish mackerel there a few weeks ago: it did not come from the waters off Townsville; it came from the Torres Strait. That is a recognition of this particular species and the depletion of that stock. Last year when the stock assessment was conducted a biomass of 17 per cent came through that examination.

Furthermore, the department felt that that sort of reduction was so significant that we did an independent review of that species by Mr Neil Klaer, a former CSIRO fisheries assessment scientist. That has no doubt been endorsed by the assessment of that stock. We will continue our engagement with the recreational, commercial and also the wholesale and retail sectors of fisheries right across the state. Once again, when we have a species that has depleted in that amount it is important that we consult, as the Palaszczuk government does, on every aspect in terms of not only agriculture and fisheries but also right across the sector with regard to everything that we do.

At this point in time no decision has been made and we did follow up on the surveys that were conducted by the department. More than 1,400 were received in terms of what they considered appropriate and what we will do with this species. I must say that it is disappointing, however, that only government members and the Katter party have an interest in sustainable fisheries. No other party in this place has called for any assessment or any assistance in understanding the depletion of this stock. It is important to get the proper advice rather than putting out misinformation like the member for Whitsunday has done recently, using taxpayers' funds by the way to mislead people in a scurrilous attempt to try and undermine not only this species but also the good men and women of the fisheries sector who work day in and day out to protect sustainable fisheries in our state.

*(Time expired)*

### Energy Policy

**Mr MARTIN:** My question is of the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement. Can the minister advise the House of Queensland's role in the national progress on energy policy, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr de BRENNI:** I thank the member for Stretton for the question because he knows that there is definitely nothing more prominent on the nation's agenda at this very moment than energy. However, in years gone past a statement like that would have referred to internal brawls amongst the LNP—23 internal brawls in fact. In years gone past we would see our national leaders dismissing science, we would see them dismissing economics, we would see them vetoing wind farms in Queensland and in years gone past we would see a federal government peddling expensive and outdated technology like nuclear power. To quote Bob Dylan, the times are a-changing.

While the Morrison legacy of a cost-of-living crisis that is facing all Australians remains, Australia now has leadership. We have leadership in the federal Albanese Labor government to clean up the mess left by a decade of LNP failures. This is Labor leadership that brings Australians together—that brings the states and territories together—rather than attack and divide, and Australians waited nine long years for that. From that national Energy Ministers' Meeting just two weeks ago came a clear consensus—a consensus to address the ongoing global impacts on the energy market, a consensus on more renewables and a consensus on more renewable energy storage, and in this week's budget the Palaszczuk government delivers on both.

In Queensland we are getting on with the job, because the days of the climate and the energy wars are over—unless of course, as we have seen this morning, you are in the LNP. Whilst the adults are now sitting at the table working on solutions, the LNP children are still running around the backyard making mud pies ready to throw at whoever they like. What did we see from those opposite over the last two weeks here in Queensland? No solutions were proposed—not a single one, not a single solution—just scaremongering. This Leader of the Opposition promised to be different. He promised to be different. What did we see this opposition leader telling vulnerable Queenslanders about their electricity consumption? He told them that they could not turn their kettles on. That is disgusting, even for him.

Their energy spokesperson either misled or does not understand solar feed-in tariffs. The spokesperson went into regional Queensland and discouraged Queenslanders to install rooftop solar at the very moment that they should have been supported to put more renewable energy into the grid. I called on the LNP to apologise last week and I call on them again today because we know that they are floundering in irrelevancy. Do not threaten Queensland's most vulnerable for your own cheap political gain.

### Electricity Prices

**Dr MacMAHON:** My question is to the Premier. Publicly owned electricity companies have been forced to chase profits, driving up power bills to pay dividends to the state government at costs far beyond the paltry \$175 we will be getting back. Will the government scrap those dividends and cut power bills permanently?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Under standing order 115 the question appears to me to contain an argument. I ask you to rule.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I do not believe that the question as I heard it contained an argument. I will allow latitude in terms of the way the Premier answers the question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. I can advise the House that in the budget today the dividends will be reinvested back in with the generators—the GOCs. I think that is good news for Queenslanders. Let me also add this: they can do that because we own them. Under our government \$575 has been rebated back to Queenslanders. Under the LNP—zero. Not only that, they wanted to sell off the power assets in this state. Let me say this to those opposite: there are a lot of new members over there. Whoever wrote those questions today should be sacked because there is basically no understanding of the history of this House and the history of the LNP. What they have done is they have handed out the questions to the newbies, to the new ones—no question from the member for Clayfield, not one question from the member for Clayfield. If the executive leader of the opposition or the Leader of the Opposition wrote those questions they both should go.

### Manufacturing Industry

**Mr HUNT:** My question is to the Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water. Will the minister update the House on how the Queensland government is supporting manufacturers in this state?

**Mr BUTCHER:** I thank the member for the question because I know he is a huge advocate for manufacturing, particularly on the Sunshine Coast. It is no coincidence that manufacturing is booming on the Sunshine Coast now that we have a Labor member on the Sunshine Coast. He is one of the driving forces behind many of these businesses going from strength to strength on the Sunshine Coast. I thank him for his support in this sector. It was great to be on the Sunshine Coast last week.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mr BUTCHER:** Wow, look at you go!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Buderim, welcome to the club. You are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr BUTCHER:** I look forward to taking more seats off the LNP in future upcoming elections because that is the reason why. I make it quite clear here today that I started off last week on the Sunshine Coast for National Manufacturing Week. It was great to be in the member's electorate. We have invested over \$2 million in our maiden Queensland grants for two wonderful facilities on the Sunshine Coast. One of those being Zone RV.

I might make a suggestion to a few of the LNP frontbenchers: you should go and grab yourself a caravan and head on out to regional Queensland and actually talk to some of the people about how manufacturing is going here in Queensland because it is going gangbusters, not only on the Sunshine Coast but on the Gold Coast, up in Mackay, in Gladstone, in Rockhampton, in Townsville and in Cairns particularly where our manufacturing hubs are certainly driving our manufacturing industries in Queensland and driving those jobs in manufacturing all over the state.

Another great company we visited in Mackay while I was there recently, and it was probably not the best manufacturing product for me, was an earring manufacturer, Stomping Elephants. A lot of the women in the House would wear their earrings. They started at a table in their house making earrings for markets. Now they have over 1,000 product lines in their business and are turning over a million dollars a year because of the manufacturing hub in Mackay helping those local businesses get the staff they need to put on and drive that wonderful business.

This is a far cry from the LNP and the member for Nanango's 2019 budget reply speech when she announced that she was going to cut \$26 million from the manufacturing sector in Queensland. It was a move right out of Campbell Newman's playbook. He slashed over \$30 million from industry support grants and presided over the loss of 10,000 jobs in the three miserable years that the LNP were in government here in Queensland. Since then we have brought the manufacturing industry back to Queensland. This government is proud to continue to support that in the budget by this Treasurer this afternoon.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The minister's time has expired. The period for question time has also expired.

## BUILDING UNITS AND GROUP TITLES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.15 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980, the Fair Trading Act 1989 and the Mixed Use Development Act 1993 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights and I nominate the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Building Units and Group Titles and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 [\[826\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Building Units and Group Titles and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, explanatory notes [\[827\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Building Units and Group Titles and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[828\]](#).

The main policy objective of the bill is to improve the operation of the Building Units and Group Titles Act, which I will refer to as BUGTA, and the Mixed Use Development Act, the MUD Act, with a focus on making body corporate governance arrangements fairer and more transparent for proprietors, such as unit owners, in relevant developments. The bill complements the government's ongoing reform

agenda for the growing Queensland community titles sector, which includes consideration of issues and stakeholder concerns for a range of community titles related legislation. The bill also contains amendments to the Fair Trading Act to provide for efficient and consistent enforcement options for gift card requirements under the Australian Consumer Law.

Since the mid-1960s, successive Queensland acts have provided for community title style developments, allowing for land or buildings to be subdivided into individually owned freehold lots and common property. The Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997, the BCCM Act, allows for the establishment of complex, multilayered community titles schemes, including developments intended to be progressively subdivided over a series of stages. The predecessor to the BCCM Act was the BUGTA, which did not cater for these types of complex developments. As a result, prior to the BCCM Act, several complex, multilayered community titles scheme developments were established using a combination of specialised planning laws in conjunction with the BUGTA. These specialised planning laws, also known as the 'specified acts', include the Mixed Use Development Act 1993, the Integrated Resort Development Act 1987 and the Sanctuary Cove Resort Act 1985. Basic community titles schemes established under the BUGTA transitioned to the newly commenced BCCM Act in 1997. However, because of the substantial level of complexity and risk, multilayered developments did not transition to the BCCM Act and continue to be governed by both the relevant 'specified act' used to establish the scheme and the BUGTA.

The MUD Act provides for the approval, development and management of mixed use schemes. Under this act, an overarching 'community' body corporate is established as a governance body for the whole development. Importantly, the act also contemplates individual lots within the development being further subdivided by a building units plan or group titles plan of subdivision under the BUGTA. If and when that occurs, a subsidiary body corporate is created under the act for the part of the development that has been subdivided by the building units plan or group titles plan. In general terms, body corporate governance arrangements for community and what are known as precinct bodies corporate are contained in the MUD Act. However, this act also imports certain governance provisions contained in the BUGTA. Governance of subsidiary bodies corporate created by building units plans or group titles plans of subdivision is also regulated by the BUGTA. This act also provides for dispute resolution for community, precinct and subsidiary bodies corporate.

As part of a property law review conducted for the government by the Queensland University of Technology, high-level recommendations were made for increasing the consistency between the BUGTA and the BCCM Act. In addition, serious concerns and disputes recently arising in some developments have highlighted limitations and deficiencies in both the BUGTA and MUD Act in terms of protecting the interests of proprietors and promoting efficient, transparent body corporate governance.

The bill is focused on making body corporate governance arrangements fairer and more transparent for proprietors in developments governed by the BUGTA and the MUD Act. These amendments aim to deal with the more pressing governance issues facing these developments, noting that further harmonisation of the BUGTA and the BCCM Act will be considered by the government-established Community Titles Legislation Working Group, as a later stage of work. This will be following the working group's consideration of a range of other important issues arising under the BCCM Act. In many cases, amendments contained in the bill are based on existing provisions of the more modern BCCM Act. In that respect, the bill will go a considerable way to ensuring that proprietors in relevant developments enjoy similar protections and services as unit owners in community titles schemes under the BCCM Act.

The bill includes amendments to support the provision of government information and education services to help proprietors and bodies corporate understand their rights, responsibilities and dispute resolution options. These services will be similar to those already provided by the Office of the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management for unit owners in BCCM Act schemes.

The bill also aims to make dispute resolution more accessible and responsive. First, the bill will make it easier for bodies corporate to apply for referee orders by relaxing the current requirement for a dispute resolution application to be authorised by special resolution of the body corporate. This will reduce time and cost burdens for bodies corporate seeking assistance to resolve a dispute and will be particularly beneficial where an application needs to be made urgently, including to deal with an emergency. The bill will also provide referees with greater clarity and flexibility by providing that a referee must observe natural justice, act with as little formality and technicality as possible, and is not bound by the rules of evidence.

During consultation, some stakeholders expressed concern that measures in the bill, and a general increase in awareness of rights and responsibilities, may prompt increased demand for dispute resolution services, including via unmeritorious applications for referee orders. In response to these concerns, the bill includes a provision for a referee to make a limited costs order of up to \$2,000 against an applicant who makes an application that is frivolous, vexatious, misconceived or without substance.

Bodies corporate and committees make a range of important decisions that impact on the interests of proprietors. The bill includes provisions to impose a general requirement for community, precinct and subsidiary bodies corporate, as well as their committees, to undertake reasonable decision-making processes when undertaking their functions.

In complex mixed-use developments, the overarching body corporate may be responsible for the provision of essential utility services including, for example, sewerage services, electricity, gas or water. The bill amends the MUD Act to provide that if the body corporate has entered into an agreement for the provision of amenities or services for lots within the development, then the body corporate must take all reasonable steps to ensure the continuity of any amenities or services that are essential utility services.

The bill aims to strengthen eligibility requirements for executive committees under the MUD Act and committees under the BUGTA to ensure probity and promote quality of governance of those bodies. Accordingly, the bill contains amendments to make persons who owe body corporate debts ineligible to be elected to an executive committee or committee for a body corporate. The restriction will also apply if the person owes a debt to other bodies corporate within the development.

To increase the provisions' effectiveness in the context of complex layered arrangements, which may include related commercial interests across the development, a person will not be eligible for committee membership if they are associated with a person who owes a body corporate debt. In this context, an associate relationship will generally be of a business or commercial nature.

The bill will also prevent body corporate managers, service contractors and letting agents and their associates, as defined in the bill, from being eligible to be voting members of an executive committee or committee. The restriction reflects that these types of service providers may have a vested interest in certain matters being considered by a committee. However, body corporate managers and service contractors who are also letting agents will be able to be non-voting members of the committee to facilitate these service providers providing information to and receiving information from the committee.

In accordance with the MUD Act, a subsidiary body corporate requires a nominee to represent it on overarching bodies corporate, for example, the community body corporate. The bill will help ensure the appropriateness of nominees by requiring that they are a member of the subsidiary body corporate's committee.

In addition, the bill contains provisions to preserve the voting rights of a subsidiary body corporate that owes a debt to a higher level body corporate within the development in certain circumstances. Specifically, the amendment will address the situation where a subsidiary body corporate has been unable to meet its financial obligations to the higher level body corporate due to the failure of the owner of undeveloped lots within the subsidiary to pay its contributions to the subsidiary body corporate. This will ensure resident and small investor owners who have been paying their contributions are not disenfranchised in terms of decision-making of higher level bodies corporate due to the failure of an undeveloped lot owner to pay contributions.

The bill also contains important amendments to strengthen probity and transparency of committee decision-making under BUGTA by including provisions requiring members to disclose any conflict of interest in a matter being considered by the committee and to refrain from voting on the matter. This provision is based on existing provisions of both the MUD Act and the BCCM Act.

The issues that have arisen at Couran Cove Island Resort involve complex commercial arrangements, allegations of large amounts of unpaid debts, body corporate governance issues and other matters. In April of last year I met with a number of Couran Cove residents to discuss these concerning issues and I shared in their frustrations. As members would appreciate, it is not appropriate for me to intervene in governance processes of a particular body corporate or to intervene in judicial processes or the determination of individual disputes by a referee. I have also encouraged those affected by the current disputes at Couran Cove to obtain their own independent legal advice.

However, this bill will also improve financial management for bodies corporate under the BUGTA and the MUD Act by clarifying when a body corporate must initiate proceedings to recover unpaid contributions from owners. Amendments in the bill also require body corporate contributions to be paid

in money and not via 'offset' arrangements, except in limited circumstances. In this respect, specific provisions have been included to ensure bodies corporate properly approve and receive fair value in relation to any offset arrangements.

To assist proprietors in being aware of important decisions and governance matters occurring in their body corporate, the bill contains new requirements for the distribution of committee and general meeting minutes, as well as notices of committee meetings. The bill also makes a number of technical and editorial amendments to the BUGTA and the MUD Act.

Finally, I note that the bill also includes minor amendments to the Fair Trading Act to enable infringement notices to be issued by the Queensland Office of Fair Trading for breaches of gift card requirements in the Australian Consumer Law. The relevant penalties will be 55 penalty units if the person is a body corporate or 11 penalty units if the person is not a body corporate. This change will ensure that the Office of Fair Trading is able to issue the same infringement notice penalties for gift card offences as can be issued by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.27 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to Legal Affairs and Safety Committee

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

Before moving on, I advise members that those members under a warning until lunch time include the members for Kawana, Broadwater, Hinchinbrook, Nanango, Currumbin, Toowoomba North, McConnel, Everton, Southern Downs and Buderim.

## PERSONAL INJURIES PROCEEDINGS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 31 March (see p. 841).

### 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) (11.28 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for their consideration of the Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The committee tabled their report No. 27 on 27 May 2022. I table the government's response to that report.

*Tabled paper:* Legal Affairs and Safety Committee: Report No. 27, 57th Parliament—Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, government response [\[844\]](#).

I extend my thanks to all the stakeholders who made submissions during the committee process, including members of the legal profession, insurers, industrial organisations and survivor and support advocacy groups.

The bill amends the Electoral Act 1992, the Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2020, the Legal Profession Act 2007, the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994, the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002 and the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003. The bill will stop claim farming for personal injury and workers compensation claims; prevent undesirable costs agreement practices by law practices for personal injury claims; confirm the policy intent for when an entitlement to terminal workers compensation arises under the

Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act; and make technical and clarifying amendments to the Electoral Act relating to fundraising contributions and state campaign accounts and to disclosure returns.

This bill is further testament to the Palaszczuk government's commitment to stamp out the insidious practice of claim farming in Queensland. Claim farmers, also known as claims management services, approach individuals to pressure them into making personal injury and workers' compensation claims, often with the promise of significant amounts of compensation. They will then charge a fee to sell their claim to a lawyer or claims management service provider to handle the claim.

The Palaszczuk government introduced the Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019 to provide for the first explicit legislative prohibition on claim farming in Queensland to stop the—at the time—increasingly prevalent practice of claim farming for compulsory third-party claims. Since these claim-farming reforms commenced in 2019, a significant drop has been recorded in the number of people reporting that they are being harassed by claim farmers.

Due to the success of the claim-farming reforms, the claim-farming industry has pivoted to new types of personal injury claims, with stakeholders reporting claim-farming activity occurring in respect of personal injury, including those involving institutionalised child sexual abuse claims and workers compensation claims.

To address this behaviour, the bill amends the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act and the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act to adopt a claim-farming framework in each act which will prohibit claim farming and require law practices to certify that claims they are representing have not been farmed. The bill inserts two new offences into both acts which prohibit claim-farming conduct and carry a maximum penalty of 300 penalty units. These offences include an offence prohibiting a person from personally approaching or contacting another person without their consent and soliciting or inducing them to make a claim.

Any person who pays claim farmers for the details of potential claimants or a person who receives payment for a claim referral or potential claim referral will have committed an offence. It will also be a breach of an obligation to provide a law practice certificate, or providing a false or misleading certificate, which attracts a maximum penalty of 300 penalty units.

The bill also imposes an obligation on the supervising principal of a law practice to notify the Legal Services Commissioner if the law practice, or an associate of the law practice, reasonably believes a person is contravening a law practice certificate requirement.

Recognising the need for a strong enforcement and compliance mechanism, the bill expands the powers of the Legal Services Commissioner and the Workers' Compensation Regulator to oversee and enforce the new claim-farming provisions and law practice certificate requirements. This includes empowering the Legal Services Commissioner and the Workers' Compensation Regulator to appoint an investigator who will have extensive powers to investigate suspected contraventions of the claim-farming offence. The Department of Justice and Attorney General and I have consulted extensively with the Legal Services Commissioner in relation to the mechanics of the proposed bill. I thank Ms Mahon for her contribution to this piece of legislation.

Turning to the recommendations of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, I note that the committee recommended passage of the bill but did urge the government to make some changes to the proposed legal practice certificate requirements and to the commencement of the terminal condition definition. I acknowledge the committee's recommendation that law practice certificates relevant to workers compensation claims be given to the Office of Industrial Relations rather than to scheme insurers. However, this recommendation is not supported as insurers are best placed to collect and retain law practice certificates.

Insurers are responsible for the day-to-day management of claims and will be able to recognise when a claimant may be legally represented and to identify the stages when a certificate is required and not provided. Adoption of the recommendation would create an unnecessary intermediary step, potentially leading to an increased regulatory burden on insurers and the Office of Industrial Relations as well as delays in claim processing. The bill as drafted ensures that the Office of Industrial Relations has appropriate oversight at the systems level and is consistent with the broader performance and compliance monitoring of the scheme.

The committee also recommended that law practice certificates under the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act be given to the Legal Services Commission. In engaging with the Legal Services Commissioner, it became clear that there are no clear benefits in requiring all law practice certificates

to be given to the commission as a matter of course. Given the expectation that law firms would more often than not be compliant with the law practice certificate requirements, the recommendation is likely to impose a significant, and potentially unnecessary, regulatory burden on the commission.

Further, providing certificates to the commission would not facilitate a reconciliation of when a certificate has not been provided, as required. Instead, the obligation to receive certificates and monitor compliance is primarily placed on law practices representing respondents and respondents' insurers. These law practices are well placed to know whether a law practice certificate has or has not been provided to them as required under the act, because it is their role to closely examine claim documentation to ensure compliance with the various legislative requirements applying to the claim.

The committee further recommended that only one law practice certificate should be provided under the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act at the time the law practice is retained. This represents a fundamental change in approach to the framework contained in the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994 upon which the requirements are based and which has proven successful in preventing claim farming of compulsory third-party claims. Again, this is not supported by the Legal Services Commissioner. Aligning the law practice certificate requirements across the three personal injury frameworks ensures certainty and consistency for practitioners operating in this area and lessens the potential for non-compliance and breaches due to confusion arising from various differing arrangements.

Further, I note that during the development of the claim-farming provisions in the Motor Accident Insurance Act, the Queensland Law Society strongly advocated for the completion of a certificate on settlement of judgement in the matter. According to the society, this is the time when the claimant or plaintiff will feel most comfortable in revealing the source of the claim referral. For these reasons, this change is not supported.

In relation to the provision of law practice certificates, the committee also recommended that certificates should only be provided in the statutory phase when the claimant is represented and accepts a lump sum offer as given in a notice of assessment and prior to any payment being made into a law firm's trust account.

I acknowledge that the committee was seeking to streamline the provision of certificates and respond to legal stakeholder concerns about the complexity of certificates for a statutory claim. As such, I propose to move amendments to the bill to omit the requirement to provide a certificate on retainer in a statutory claim. While this approach simplifies the requirements for when a law practice certificate is given, it continues to ensure direct alignment with the Motor Accident Insurance Act and Personal Injuries Proceedings Act by making sure a law practice certificate is provided on retainer for a claim for damages across all the schemes. In addition, linking a law practice certificate to the notice of assessment as recommended by the committee would remove important safeguards which are not supported by the Legal Services Commissioner. However, I will move an amendment which, in consultation with the commissioner and other regulatory bodies, will significantly streamline this process for legal practitioners.

Not every statutory payment is linked to a formal notice of assessment. They are only provided with respect to a permanent impairment assessment and exclude other substantial payments including: industrial deafness, terminal latent onset injuries, redemption payments and death benefits. As drafted, the bill provides greater coverage and protection for statutory claims by covering any matter that is subject to a payment direction and all substantial lump sum payments that may be attractive to a claim farmer.

With respect to the committee's third recommendation, that the proposed new terminal condition definition in section 39A have an operational date of 1 July 2022 or on proclamation, the government supports this recommendation in principle. The government recognises that diagnosis of a terminal latent onset injury has a profound and complex impact on a worker's life. The Queensland workers compensation scheme provides a lump sum payment to workers with terminal conditions, with Queensland being the only jurisdiction in Australia to offer broad-ranging statutory terminal compensation of this nature.

The bill as drafted clarifies the timing of when a worker is able to access a terminal compensation payment. It does not remove a worker's right to access a terminal compensation payment if their injury progresses. It also does not stop a worker from accessing the many other workers compensation entitlements, including weekly benefits, medical, rehabilitation and return to work support and lump sum payments before their injury is in its final stages.

It is important the policy intent of this entitlement is confirmed to ensure funds are provided at the right time, so workers and their families receive it when they need it most. However, it is acknowledged there will be some claimants who have provided certification of a terminal condition to their insurer and,

rightly so, expect it to be progressed under the current definition. To respond to the committee's findings and concerns raised by stakeholders, it is proposed to move amendments to the bill that will allow those workers with current claims or disputes underway, and who have provided medical evidence to their insurer of a terminal condition before 1 July 2022, to continue to rely on the current definition.

It is also proposed to amend the time frame to be inserted into the definition of terminal condition. A time frame of five years, not three years as originally proposed in the bill, will be progressed under these amendments. This approach balances fairness for workers together with clarifying the policy intent of the 2019 amendment.

Further, in the body of the report, the committee recommended a fulsome examination of the advertising restrictions in the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act, noting that the current restrictions are ineffective, outdated and deny people the opportunity to obtain important and relevant information about their legal rights. Whilst this recommendation is outside the scope of the bill, I intend to consult with key stakeholders to seek their views on the advertising restrictions in the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act. Consultation is likely to start later this year in relation to this issue.

To address implementation issues regarding the new political donation caps due to commence on 1 July 2022, the bill makes technical and clarifying amendments to the Electoral Act 1992. The bill will amend the requirements for managing the state campaign accounts of registered political parties and candidates by clarifying that fundraising contributions may only be paid into the state campaign account if the contribution is \$200 or less or the first \$200 of a larger contribution. The part of a fundraising contribution that exceeds \$200 must be treated as a political donation and therefore be subject to the political donation caps to be paid into the state campaign account.

Additionally, the bill will require that from 1 July disclosure returns for gifts to registered political parties and candidates must specify whether or not the gift is a political donation. The bill will also require that, in the case of political donations given to an electoral committee established by a registered political party, the disclosure return must state the name of the relevant electoral district. To ensure consistency in approach, a donor statement provided by a donor with the political donation must also specify the relevant electoral district. These amendments will support the ECQ in monitoring compliance with the new political donation caps.

In addition to those amendments in response to the committee report, I also intend to move some further amendments to the bill during consideration in detail. Firstly, amendments will be moved to clarify that barristers' fees incurred in obtaining instructions or preparing statements in urgent proceedings or after a notice of claim is given under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act and the Motor Accident Insurance Act constitutes a disbursement and is outside the scope of the fifty-fifty rule, consistent with the approach in the bill for Personal Injuries Proceedings Act claims.

Concerns have been raised that law practices are utilising undesirable billing practices by inflating disbursements thereby increasing the amount of legal costs that can be charged and in turn reducing the amount payable to the successful claimant. To address these concerns, and to ensure claimants receive a fair and equitable share of a settlement, amendments in the bill will provide for these additional amounts to be treated as claim related costs and not disbursements. Claim related costs will be within the operation of the fifty-fifty rule and must be taken into account when determining the maximum amount a client may be charged under the fifty-fifty rule.

Secondly, amendments will be moved to facilitate the use of a single approved form across the three claim-farming schemes—the feasibility of which is currently being considered by regulators. Thirdly, amendments will be moved ensuring that the claim-farming offence in the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act relating to approaching or contacting a person for the purpose of soliciting or inducing them to make a claim also applies where the contact or approach is made by way of bulk communications to vulnerable groups to address concerns raised by knowmore in their submission to the committee.

Finally, I propose to rectify some minor technical and cross-referencing issues with the proposed amendments in the bill which were identified after the bill's introduction. I want to end my contribution today by assuring parliament that the claim-farming amendments included in the bill will not affect the rights of genuinely injured Queenslanders to access justice. Claimants can still initiate and progress legitimate claims under the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act or the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act. The amendments will, however, prevent claimants or potential claimants from being incentivised, harassed and induced into making a claim by a claim farmer who will receive payment for the referral. They will ensure the justice system is not burdened by the cost of unnecessary personal injury and workers compensation claims and injured Queenslanders will be able to access more efficient

rehabilitation and compensation for their claims. Finally, the amendments make sure workers who unfortunately succumb to a work related terminal condition are able to access terminal compensation when they most need it. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (11.45 am): What a shemozzle! We have a bill that has operative provisions in relation to disclosure requirements under the Electoral Act that need to be in place by 1 July that are being debated in the last sitting week of the financial year and there are amendments to be moved to this legislation foreshadowed on the morning of debate. The committee delivered its report on 27 May—that is, over three weeks ago. What a shemozzle!

We have two amendments incorporated in this bill as it was presented in this House to an amendment to legislation that was made in 2019. All of this was under the auspices of the Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Education who should in fact be known as the ‘minister for never getting a bill right in this place’. This is the minister who, as racing minister, introduced 200 amendments to a bill. Those amendments completely replaced the bill that had been presented by her predecessor, the former member for Rockhampton.

This is a bill that the entire resources of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General could not get right—as evidenced by the amendments foreshadowed this morning. This is a bill that the entire resources of the Office of Industrial Relations not only could not get right this time but also fouled up the last time they tried to do something about it in 2019.

This is an example of a government that has ministers who just do not know what they are doing, who are not across their briefs and who do not understand the import of legislation that they bring forward to this House and are always scrambling to fix up. This is now the third bill in a row that the Attorney-General has had carriage of—I have some sympathy for the Attorney-General because she always gets lumbered with fixing up other ministers’ mistakes; although in this instance there are mistakes from her department as well—where she has had to move amendments to fix matters up.

These are matters that have been highlighted both by the committee—I thank the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for highlighting these matters—and during review. This is a sign of a government that is rapidly running out of puff and running out of capacity to properly do its fundamental job which is to legislate for the betterment of the people of Queensland.

**Dr Rowan:** It’s sloppy.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I take the interjection from the member for Moggill who does a great job. I welcome the students from Moggill State School who are here today. Your representative does a fantastic job. Make sure your mum and dad keep voting for him for as long as they possibly can so he can continue to do a great job for you. No doubt, when you get to the age to vote, you will have the common sense to vote for the LNP as well.

In introducing this bill the government claims it addresses four policy objectives. They are in order: to stop so-called claim farming for personal injury and workers compensation claims; to prevent undesirable costs agreement practices by lawyers in those personal injuries claims; to confirm the policy intent for when an entitlement to terminal workers compensation arises—I will deal with that laughable objective; and to make some technical and clarifying amendments to the Electoral Act pertaining to fundraising and disclosure—and I have already made some comments in passing in my opening on that.

While some of these objectives, such as stopping claim farming and preventing undesirable costs agreements, are sensible and desirable, they are handled poorly in this bill as it was presented to this House. That is abundantly clear from nearly every submission made to the committee during its review of this legislation—submissions made by the Australian Lawyers Alliance, submissions made by private legal practices, submissions made by medical indemnity insurance practices—again, the member for Moggill will be interested in that—and submissions made by individual representatives. Almost every submission made highlighted the failures of the government in terms of achieving the objective.

The so-called objective of providing confirmation of the policy intent for when a worker is entitled to a terminal payment is a complete furphy and is completely unsupported by the evidence that was given to the committee. The justification in the explanatory notes is a complete furphy, and I will demonstrate that.

The technical and clarifying amendments to the Electoral Act are just more confirmation, if any is needed, of this government’s inability to get its own legislation correct. Remember that this government has been talking about this legislation and introducing legislation in relation to the Electoral Act and disclosure requirements for over two years. The fact that we are debating this bill in such a rush some nine days before the new fundraising and electoral expenditure caps come into force is

ample evidence of that proposition, as are the amendments that have been circulated in the last hour—the amendments to the amendments to the 2019 amendments! This government simply cannot get it right.

Let me deal with objective 1, which is claim-farming provisions that are provided. Claim farming is a practice that is particularly invidious, reprehensible and ultimately costly to society. It is costly to all of us as it drives up the cost of insurance and it denies people who are entitled to compensation the full amount of their rightful claims. Unfortunately there are those lawyers and others who see it as an opportunity to make some big money. Some of these law firms are pretty big names you see on billboards around town. Sometimes those lawyers are referred to as ‘ambulance chasers’, and these few besmirch the reputation of the very many and good law practices who represent injured people fearlessly, ethically and diligently.

In fact, ABC’s investigations team in June 2018 ran a lengthy story on the issue. In that story it was alleged that Slater & Gordon—one of the big names in personal injuries and ‘no win, no fee’ legal actions—used telemarketing firms to continually ring potential claimants, with the story of Sandra whose son had died being continually harassed by telemarketers to enter into a claim. In fact, it was estimated in that ABC investigation story that, over an 18-month period from 2016 to 2017, more than 800 personal injury matters were generated for Slater & Gordon this way—800 new matters. That is a big number. Slater & Gordon allegedly paid \$1,290 for each client referral for a workplace or motor vehicle injury. It is no wonder that other lawyers slammed the practice as ‘parasitic’, which is what it is, after these claims were published. Slater & Gordon—you will see their name on billboards on the side of the highway and on flashing signs everywhere. This is part of their ethical practice as revealed by the ABC.

Since 2019 in Queensland the practice of claim farming for motor vehicle accidents has been outlawed with substantial penalties applicable if a law firm is found to have used one of these so-called claim farmers. While the evidence before the committee is not as comprehensive as we would like, we think it is sufficient to draw the conclusion that the 2019 legislation is having its desired effect and the number of claims arising from claim farming in relation to motor accident claims is declining.

The MAIC, Motor Accident Insurance Commission’s, 2020-21 annual report shows the number of reported scamming complaints fell from 1,300 in 2019 to 448 in 2020-21—a fairly substantial drop of 900 in the space of a year. It is not entirely clear why that drop occurred. There may be other reasons including, for example, the COVID-19 lockdowns when people simply were not driving and so the number of accidents fell. It is a substantial decline, and we in the LNP think that there is sufficient evidence there to say that there has been some success as a result of that 2019 legislation.

Other figures around new claims being made—that is, the number of new claims coming into the system—and the number of claims that have been made that are being discontinued or lapsing for want of progress also tend to show success of the amendments. As the evidence before the committee itself demonstrated, it is very difficult to pinpoint one particular reason as to why the claims experience is changing.

What we are now seeing and hearing is that the claim farmers are moving to new fields of endeavour and opportunity. In particular, there are increasing reports of claim farming for personal injuries and workers compensation. In my role as shadow Attorney-General, I first started hearing reports about this type of activity last year from a number of law firms and representative bodies.

A significant developing area of this business is now known as ‘survivor farming’ or ‘survivor advocacy’ and is apparently for potential cases of institutional sexual abuse survivor claims. This is also taking place particularly amongst the prison population and with former prisoners both in and outside of prisons, as well as some specific communities that are being identified as particularly susceptible where there is some evidence that there are quite a substantial number of people who may have experienced institutional sexual abuse.

Evidence of this is quite extensive in the submissions to the committee by knowmore. If you look at pages 5 and 6 of the committee’s report, you can see some of the claims that are being made there. I will touch on this briefly in relation to those submissions. On page 5 of the committee report, they state—

- Claim farming and related practices in respect of institutional child abuse claims is being engaged in by both claim farmers (referred to as ‘survivor advocacy businesses’) and the law firms associated with them.
- The claim farmers are paid referral fees by law firms for introducing survivor clients and passing on initial (often limited) information ...
- Survivors were being subjected to harassment, intimidation and high-pressure tactics.

On page 6 of that committee report, knowmore continues to provide further evidence to the committee in relation to the quite atrocious behaviour that is being engaged in by these people in trying to earn an income and trying to get more money—clients receiving unsolicited letters; clients being approached while attending court; clients being harassed for over a year by phone calls and correspondence from a law firm linked to a survivor advocacy business despite not having signed a costs agreement with the firm; a law firm with links to a survivor advocacy business ‘aggressively pursued’ a client to sign a costs agreement months after the client submitted an application to the National Redress Scheme; significant claim farming occurring in prisons; prisoners being susceptible to friendly cold-calling tactics; and some prisoners are alleged to have received cash deposits into their prison accounts for referrals of the names of abuse survivor prisoners to survivor advocacy businesses. There is quite a lot of evidence put before the committee about this activity occurring.

While all those who have suffered institutional abuse should be afforded every opportunity to test their claims and to receive compensation, this does not extend to a right for claim farmers and unscrupulous lawyers to unfairly and rapaciously chase claimants who are often amongst the most vulnerable and susceptible to a friendly voice and who sign up without fully understanding what they are signing up for. The LNP will support the objective of the bill in preventing this type of claim farming.

What we are very cautious about is the proposed method of enforcing the prohibition. In this respect we are very supportive of the first and second recommendations in the committee report. In addressing this I note again the amendments that have been circulated in the last hour and the comments made by the Attorney in her second reading speech just a few minutes ago. She mentioned a number of matters. Obviously, given the limited time since the government’s response was tabled and my ability to receive it, I will comment on those more when we get to debate the amendments. Let me say that those amendments, as I said earlier, are really testament to the government not fully thinking through how this legislation is going to work.

The requirements around provisions of the law practice certificate are complex and impose significant obligations on both the claimant and respondent. Some of the comments made in respect of the requirements of the law practice certificate in the committee report on pages 9 and 10 are telling. A quick look at pages 9 and 10 provide some indication of the very poor view practising lawyers, insurers and the Law Society have of the government’s drafting. Here are a couple of them: a ‘minefield of requirements ... neither practical, nor ultimately necessary’, said the Australian Lawyers Alliance; ‘will add to administrative burdens, and ultimately to the cost of pursuing actions’, again the Australian Lawyers Alliance; ‘appears to impose excessive certificate requirements’, according to the Law Society; ‘in some instances, LPCs arising out of the same injury will need to be given to a number of different entities at different times’, the Queensland Law Society. Arising out of the same action and out of the same injury you have to give certificates not only to workers comp but to the other bodies as well, adding to cost and complexity.

There is also a telling piece of testimony from officers of the department to the committee. The chair of the committee, the member for Toohey, asked, ‘Because the ultimate cost will end up with the consumer, won’t it?’ The answer from the departmental officer was, ‘Yes, we assume so.’ There is the true outcome: increased cost for the consumer. The member for Toohey knows it, the lawyers know it, the departmental officers out the back there know it, and the government should stop it.

When we heard the Attorney a little earlier today talk about consulting the Legal Services Commission, we heard a lot about convenience for the Legal Services Commissioner and we heard a lot about the cost burden for the Legal Services Commissioner, but we heard nothing about the cost burden on the injured person. For whom is this government acting? Are they acting for the Legal Services Commissioner or are they acting in the best interests of the client of the law firm who has suffered a workplace injury and who is seeking compensation? As the member for Toohey’s question to the officer of the department reveals, the cost always goes back to the client and the consumer. The member for Toohey knows it and the government knows it as well. The cost shifting is going from the Legal Services Commissioner to the consumer of the legal service, and it is impacting on the amount they will receive.

This at a time when the Legal Services Commissioner, who is not also unknown to the member for Toohey, is taking inordinately long times to resolve complaints. The legal profession continually are now put to delays of up to 18 months while the Legal Services Commissioner attempts to resolve complaints, and now the Legal Services Commissioner has informed the profession that she has enough spare time to start a pro-active complaints investigation process.

**Ms Fentiman:** More money, more resources!

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I take the interjection from the Attorney-General, who said ‘more money’ because it was under this government that the Legal Services Commission in 2015 stopped pro-active investigations. They were being done up until 2015 and then they stopped. We have a government that is more interested in the Legal Services Commission than it is in the consumer getting a good deal and streamlining costs. In this case the LNP urges the government to acknowledge the legitimate concerns—and I acknowledge the Attorney-General has addressed some of those matters in the amendments circulated in the last hour—and bring in amendments to simplify and clarify the process for the law practice certificates. We will have a close look at those amendments and comment on those when the opportunity for debate on that arises.

Let me turn to the second objective of the bill which it seeks to address: undesirable costs agreement practices for personal injury claims. Part 4 provides for certain cost practices to be prohibited and for certain expenses that might be claimed otherwise as disbursements to be included as legal costs for the purpose of the so-called fifty-fifty rule. The fifty-fifty rule is designed to ensure that a claimant receives at least 50 per cent of a compensation award and lawyers do not get more than 50 per cent. Having said that, many lawyers do not charge 50 per cent. Many lawyers charge far less than that and they do the right thing. As I say, there are ethical and scrupulous lawyers who do do the right thing, but there are those who take on speculative claims and charge up to 50 per cent. I will touch on one of those in just a moment. That rule, simply put, seeks to ensure that no more than 50 per cent of an award of compensation a client receives is paid to the client’s lawyers. Details of the changes are quite substantially covered in the committee’s report, and the Attorney has indicated some other matters that are also to be included as a result of some further investigations. They will be moved in the amendments, and I anticipate we will have no problems with that amendment in relation to those additional fees.

There is one matter not touched on in the committee report but it was raised by the deputy chair in the hearings. It is covered under proposed new section 347(8)(a)(iv) in clause 16 of the bill and it relates to the definition of other expenses. This is particularly important given the way the fifty-fifty rule works and the very significant impact it has on the compensation available to injured parties. I want to have regard to the comments of Justice Applegarth in a recent decision of *Adamson v Enever*, delivered 31 August 2021. I think it is important that we understand exactly how concerned members of the Supreme Court are in relation to the charging practices of some legal firms. This case relates to the capacity of an elderly lady who received a compensation payment of \$350,000. The report is publicly available, so if people want to have a look at it they can. I am not disclosing anything that is confidential. Justice Applegarth makes a comment in relation to costs. At paragraph 95 he says—

The first is the legal costs that she—

the claimant—

committed herself to paying Shine Lawyers and the substantial difference between their estimated amount and the standard costs that she is entitled to recover ... Any substantial costs differential will erode the settlement sum which was negotiated.

At paragraph 98 he goes on to say—

There was never an issue of liability.

This goes to the complexity of the claim and whether the costs being charged are reasonable. He continues—

Mrs Adamson ... entered into a costs agreement with Shine Lawyers on 26 October 2015.

Formal liability was admitted a few months later on 29 February. The judgement continues at paragraph 101—

There was no real dispute that Mrs Adamson suffered a serious head injury when her head and neck hit the pedestrian crossing. There was no dispute that she suffered a head injury, a back injury, a neck injury, an ankle injury and some psychological effects ... These matters became the subject of seven medico-legal reports commissioned by Shine Lawyers and six medico-legal reports commissioned by the insurer.

...

Against that background, the estimated legal costs (excluding disbursements) to which Mrs Adamson is said to be liable under her costs agreement with Shine Lawyers seem to me to be extremely high, indeed excessive. The disbursements seem high, but I have no information about the extent to which they are made up by the costs of medico-legal reports ... Shine Lawyers seemingly claim to be entitled to recover from Mrs Adamson not only a large amount of costs pursuant to its agreement with her on account of time which has been billed on her file but also what is described as an “uplift”. Presumably its agreement entitles it to an “uplift” despite liability never being in serious issue.

Then he goes on to make some further findings about the difference between the estimated indemnity costs and the costs recoverable from the second defendant. He goes on to say that the court has a supervisory jurisdiction, but investigations are better undertaken by authorities to do so. He makes some comments in relation to the true costs of these claims.

He concluded by saying that policymakers may need to consider better ways to contain legal costs, which, as a well-known professor stated, 'must be borne by someone'. He then went on to specifically exclude, for example, the photocopying costs that were charged by the firm Shine Lawyers from the calculation of fees.

Whilst we are dealing with costs agreements and unfair costs agreements, we have very real and very live claims. This is an elderly lady who was awarded \$350,000. A Supreme Court judge—who I think most people would hold in high regard, and who in fact, as head of the Queensland Law Reform Commission, delivered the report in relation to the termination of pregnancy laws and is conducting other reports—has said that policymakers need to have a good hard look at the practices of some of these lawyers and the way they go about calculating fees. He has demonstrated how these fees have a very real impact on the compensation amounts that people receive to compensate them for their loss or injury and that they are expected to live on for the rest of their lives.

This is something that has not been taken up in this legislation, although the member for Currumbin in her role did ask a number of questions of the department about it. Regrettably, the department in its answer said that it was unaware of any need to make these changes—despite this case, *Adamson v Enever*, being widely reported not only by the Supreme Court but also by the Law Society journal, the *Proctor*, last year and being referenced on a number of occasions.

The third objective of the bill seeks to address a so-called 'confirm the policy intent' for when an entitlement to terminal workers compensation arises under the act. What this is really is cleaning up yet another mistake of the industrial relations minister. Despite the claims in the explanatory notes, there is no misunderstanding of the policy intent of the 2019 amendments to the act made by the government. The mistake has been that the minister did not understand again the full impact of the changes she was making back in 2019 and now has to change those amendments back again to recover lost ground.

In doing so in the bill as presented, the Palaszczuk government under Minister Grace is removing the right for terminally diagnosed workers to claim terminal workers compensation benefits upon diagnosis of a terminal condition. To top it all off, the Palaszczuk government under Minister Grace originally was proposing to make the changes retrospective to 2015. Imagine the howls of indignation from those opposite and their union mates and the plaintiff lawyers if that change was made by any other colour of government.

We need to deal with the laughable claim that this is a misunderstanding of the policy intent of the 2019 amendments. That the claim is laughable is demonstrated easily. The policy intent was set out by the minister in her speech amending the legislation in 2019 and in the explanatory notes. A good exposition of this can be found in paragraph 48 on page 14 of the Industrial Relations Commission decision made by Commissioner Power in *Blanch v Workers' Compensation Regulator*. Commissioner Power was appointed by Minister Grace in July 2019 and is a former legal adviser for the AWU. Commissioner Power's decision neatly deals with the argument that the terminal compensation payment is for the provision of palliative care services and support for the worker in the final years of a shortened life. At paragraph 57, Commissioner Power referred to Minister Grace's first reading speech in which she said—

The payment of this lump sum allows the worker to be provided with palliative care—

tick—

and support—

tick—

and ensures that the worker can plan and attend to the financial needs of their family and dependents.

They get the terminal compensation payment so they can set themselves and their family up. They can pay off their mortgage. They can put in place arrangements for the schooling and education of their children. They can actually make a decision about their life which is going to end, as there is a diagnosis of it.

The claim that it needs to clear up a policy misunderstanding is clearly false because the minister in her first reading speech did not say, 'This is just for palliative care and support services.' She said that it was to enable palliative care and support services and to attend to the financial needs of their family and dependents. Quite clearly it is a blunder, and the Attorney-General has been sent back in to

try to fix it. The government have realised the problems and have decided that they are not going to proceed with the original amendments, as suggested by Minister Grace's department, but will now extend the terminal diagnosis claim to five years, rather than three years, and make sure it is prospective not retrospective back to 2015. Obviously, pressure has been brought to bear, and I wonder who that was brought to bear by. Nonetheless, it is an amendment that is worthwhile and it is an amendment that we will obviously be supporting.

In relation to the other changes and reforms in relation to the Electoral Act, the Attorney-General has mentioned that they are technical and go to some of the fine-tuning that is required. It is a pity that they were not understood beforehand. I understand political parties of all sides are awaiting advice from the Electoral Commissioner of Queensland as to how to properly set up accounts for fundraising. Given that that will be taking place in the next nine days—and in evidence before the committee the Electoral Commissioner said he would be preparing that information—it is very short timing indeed.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (12.15 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 and the amendments to be moved during consideration in detail by the Attorney-General. The Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill was introduced into the Legislative Assembly and referred to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee on 31 March. The objectives of the bill are to: stop claim farming for personal injury and workers compensation claims; prevent undesirable costs agreement practices by law practices for personal injury claims; confirm the policy intent for when entitlement to terminal workers compensation arises under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act; and make technical and clarifying amendments to the Electoral Act relating to fundraising contributions and state campaign accounts and disclosure returns.

The committee in its report No. 27, which was tabled in the Assembly on 27 May, has recommended to the Assembly that the bill be passed. There were three recommendations in the report. The committee heard and read about instances of great personal suffering and the devastating toll on individuals, their families and their workmates that accompanies a terminal illness diagnosis. The committee appreciates the selfless actions of those who told of their own pain in the hope of making things better for others. On behalf of the committee, I thank those individuals and organisations who appeared before the committee at its public hearing and those who made written submissions to the bill. On 5 April 2022, the committee invited stakeholders and subscribers to make written submissions on the bill, and we received 18 submissions.

The aim of the claim-farming provisions under the bill is to apply and adapt the provisions enacted under the Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Act to prohibit claim farming in the personal injury and workers compensation areas. The explanatory notes state—

It is not the intention that the prohibitions on claim farming affect the ability for potential claimants to initiate and progress legitimate claims for personal injuries arising out of ordinary civil litigation or workers' compensation matters. Rather, it will prevent potential claimants from being incentivised, harassed, or induced into making claims by claim farmers.

Flowing from the practice of claim farming, the bill aims to combat undesirable costs agreements and billing practices by law practices that currently exist in the area of speculative personal injury matters. This type of client billing arrangement is currently being used to disguise claim-farming arrangements and ultimately prevent successful claimants from receiving a fair and equitable share of judgement or settlement funds. Consequently, the bill proposes to clarify how legal fees are calculated in relation to these types of personal injury matters.

The majority of the committee recommended that the Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be passed. However, the committee urges that the amendments to the bill recommended in its report be made. In 2019, amendments to the Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Act first introduced provisions to stop claim farming. The bill today seeks to extend the prohibition to similarly prevent claim-farming activities for workers compensation claims under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act and personal injury claims under the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act. The bill aims to outlaw claim farming by prohibiting: the giving or receiving—or agreeing to give or receive or allowing or causing someone else to give or receive—consideration for a claim referral or potential claim referral; and personally approaching or contacting a person for the purpose of making a claim, or soliciting or inducing them to make a claim.

Submitters on the issue of claim farming unanimously condemned the practice, with Kare Lawyers noting that claim farming is abhorrent, it brings the profession into disrepute, threatens the viability of our insurance schemes, and causes unnecessary distress to potentially vulnerable members of the community.

Observed as having the potential to be particularly shameful was the evolving business of survivor farming or survivor advocacy. This is the name given to claim-farming activity in relation to institutional child sexual abuse survivor claims, where behaviours of claim farmers have extended beyond cold calling to targeting abuse survivors specifically by approaching particular communities to sign people up without also informing them about the existence of other free services available for abuse survivors.

The submission from knowmore gave us extensive examples of survivor farming conduct, including advice that some survivors were being subjected to harassment, intimidation and high-pressure tactics, or survivors were being asked to sign documents they did not understand with survivors unsure or confused about what work was being done for them or by whom. It was disturbing to hear of a situation where one survivor had complained to knowmore about an unsolicited phone call from a survivor advocacy business that breached the survivor's confidentiality by disclosing the survivor's status as an institutional child sexual abuse survivor to their family member who took the call and who was previously unaware of the survivor's experience of childhood sexual abuse.

Knowmore's evidence to the committee also depicted how survivor advocacy businesses are claimed to farm some of the most vulnerable survivor populations, in specific settings and circumstances of vulnerability such as prisons and remote First Nations communities as well as target the past students and residents of schools and institutions where institutional child sexual abuse is known to have occurred.

Reforms under the bill will require a law practice certificate in a form approved by the Legal Services Commission, stating the law practice acting for claimants has declared that claim farming has not occurred in relation to the claim. The committee noted the complexity of the LPC regime as proposed. Streamlining the stages at which LPCs are provided, and clarifying the repositories for the certificates, is considered likely to alleviate some of this complexity.

Concerns were raised by stakeholders that some of the initiatives aimed at stamping out claim farming do not align with the core purpose of the workers compensation scheme in Queensland. Several Queenslanders work in environments where they are potentially exposed to harmful dust and fumes. Workers such as spray painters, welders and diesel mechanics have the potential to be exposed to a number of airborne toxins, as part of their day-to-day work, or workers may have been exposed in trains, in rail infrastructure, or in the removal and transport of building materials. Firefighters are another group of workers who, in the course of their duties, are frequently exposed to toxins and poisons that evidence has clearly demonstrated put them at an elevated risk of being diagnosed with cancer.

A worker with a terminal condition has an entitlement to latent onset terminal condition lump sum benefits or compensation. The key purpose of the scheme in Queensland is to balance the provision of fair and appropriate benefits to injured workers, dependants and other persons, and to maintain reasonable insurance costs for employers.

Prior to amendments in 2019, the act defined a terminal condition as a condition certified by a doctor that was expected to terminate the worker's life within two years. Workers with a terminal condition as a result of their employment—for example, any one of a number of dust lung diseases, or work related cancers such as those sustained by firefighters—with a life expectancy up to two years had an entitlement to a statutory lump sum payment.

The committee received submissions and took evidence from stakeholders that spoke to the difficult nature of dust related lung diseases and cancers. The Asbestos Disease Support Society provides support and assistance to individuals, along with their families and carers, who have been diagnosed with an asbestos related disease or the deadly lung disease that results from the inhalation of crystalline silica.

Track workers are strong, fit and hardworking people. They are the people who build the track and fix it when it gets buckled by the hot Queensland sun. It is expected that someone in the field would earn about \$100,000 a year. Once Greg got sick, he went back to about \$85,000 for the first six months. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.25 pm): I feel sorry for the Attorney-General that she is forced to come in here yet again and mop up the mess of the industrial relations minister.

**Mr Krause:** What about the member for Toohey?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take that interjection from the member for Scenic Rim. The attorney is forced to come and mop up the mess of her colleagues who sit around the cabinet table, as accurately set out by the shadow Attorney-General earlier in his contribution. Who could forget Minister Grace Grace whose claim to fame, other than a fake Harvard degree, is—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): The member will use correct titles.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Minister Grace has a fake union degree, but she also was an industrial advocate. It was her being that—

**Mr Nicholls:** She had a full union degree and a fake university degree, I think you mean.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Yes, she had a full union degree and a fake university degree, correct. She came into this place. She was the head honcho of the Queensland Council of Unions. She was the industrial advocate. She says in this place that she is the—

**Ms FARMER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I seek your ruling on whether the member is straying from the long title of the bill.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I will take the point of order in silence. I am listening carefully to the member's contribution. I will take your point of order into consideration, but at this stage there is no point of order. Before I call the member for Kawana, I would like to remind people that the following members are on a warning: Kawana, Broadwater, Hinchinbrook, Nanango, Currumbin, Toowoomba North, McConnel, Everton, Southern Downs and Buderim.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Thank you for that reminder, Deputy Speaker. I needed that. As I was saying, the Minister for Industrial Relations is a union industrial advocate and she has said in this House on many occasions that she loves being the industrial relations minister. I put it to the House that she spends more time amending legislation that she has not got right than interrogating or having legislation that she actually gets right.

Who could forget the industrial relations great Easter bungle when they declared a public holiday but forgot to actually legislate it in one of the other bills? You have the public holiday legislation and you have the Industrial Relations Act. She did one, but not the other, so she had to come in here to correct it. The member for Clayfield remarked on the 200 racing amendments that she famously put through the House. She is known for all her amendments. To get these amendments circulated today, to see that they are amending their amendment that they did not get right in the first place, it just beggars belief.

Who is running the show? What are they doing? The incompetence when you have the minister having to correct something that she did herself in 2019 and passed legislation. They were getting rid of legislation that the LNP government had passed. She passed legislation in 2019, said it fixed the issue because, as she said at the time, the Labor Party is the party of the workers. Now they are restricting the workers compensation for the very workers she espoused in 2019. Why? Was it the wrong workers? Were there too many workers? Were the workers taking advantage of her own legislation which now she is restricting?

**Mr Nicholls:** She did not understand what her own legislation meant.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection. She absolutely did not understand what her own legislation meant. When you pass legislation to have no restrictions on capacity for a worker to claim, then it will have an impact on the workers compensation scheme in Queensland. I suspect that is what has happened. After claiming in 2019 that they are the party for the worker—and that is why they are having this, particularly for the workers with terminal illnesses—they are now restricting it and expanding it, all in the one bill. They are restricting what they did in this bill in 2019, but then they are taking it from three to five years.

If honourable members read the bill that the Attorney-General introduced, they will see it has three years. If they read the amendment that has been circulated today, they will see they are expanding it to five years. They cannot even get their amendments right at the time when they are fixing up their mistake from 2019. I do say I feel sorry for the Attorney because it is not the first time she has had to come in here and mop up the mess of her incompetent colleagues around the table. I also know, as the member for Clayfield accurately set out, the Attorney is not so pure in this regard because her own amendments have to clarify some of the mistakes she introduced in this bill as well.

As the shadow Attorney-General said, we are not going to be opposing these provisions of the bill. However, we could not let the opportunity go past without explaining to the House that we are not going to let the Labor government, who claim they are the party for the workers, make that claim any

longer. They used that in 2019 for expanding the scope of the legislation and getting rid of those restrictions. Then they worked out they did not get that quite right, so now they have to come in here in 2022 and amend it. They did not quite get the amendment right, so now they have to amend the amendment from their amendment in 2019—#confused, #incompetent. I bet they are. We know it because they spend so much time amending because they rush legislation. They come in here and say, 'Just because the LNP did it, we are going to get rid of it.' Then they get rid of it without having the opportunity to properly look at these things or the unintended consequences of rushing that legislation they introduced in 2019.

I very much look forward to the contribution that the Minister for Industrial Relations will make to this debate when she speaks later and her explanation of how she has had three different positions in a space of 2½ years. She has had four different positions if we take into account the position where she opposed what we did, then amended it, then amended it and now is amending it again today. I look forward to that contribution.

While I am talking about that, we also cannot let the debate go without highlighting the commentary by the industrial relations minister with respect to particular unions in Queensland and the unions that are absolutely supporting workers in the state. That is, of course, the Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland and the Teachers' Professional Association of Queensland. In her contribution today, the industrial relations minister no doubt will talk about that. She never misses the opportunity to belittle those worker movements that are now attracting so many members that they are an absolute force to be reckoned with. I ask members: how is this? If someone joins the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union it costs \$717.50 a year and the actual cost of service is only \$516.66. There is now the Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland, that only charge \$442 a year.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. I am struggling to find the relevance of this part of your contribution to the overall bill. I ask you to come back to the bill.

**Mr BLEIJIE**: When we talk about workers compensation in the state of Queensland it does have an impact on the workers because the very workers who are subject to the workers compensation scheme are subject to this debate. The point I am making is that workers will be better off investing in a union that puts their interests first, like the NPAQ and the TPAQ, than the traditional unions because they can save a heck of a lot of money. The saving they make from joining these other types of industrial organisations is about \$300. It begs the question: where does the extra money go? We know what the cost of service is for the Nurses and Midwives' Union. Where does the money actually go? Why does the Labor Party—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: I think the question it begs is how this is relevant to the bill. I ask you to come back to the long title of the bill, please.

**Mr BLEIJIE**: Moving on then, Mr Deputy Speaker—

**An honourable member**: You chose the wrong Deputy Speaker!

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Order, members.

**Mr Hart**: That is a reflection on the chair!

**Mr BLEIJIE**: I respect whomever is in the chair. I take the interjection.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Order, members. I do not need the assistance of the House.

**Mr BLEIJIE**: The bill also deals with another correction and that is with respect to the donation laws that the member for Clayfield talked about earlier. We are on the cusp—in a week and a half—of new donation laws coming in and the government are using the last opportunity to clarify for the ECQ. Can honourable members imagine the ECQ trying to explain to relevant parties involved in the political process in Queensland, particularly political parties, how these new laws apply when the amendments, technical as they may be, or the interpretation of them have not passed the parliament.

Here is the crux of it: this is the equivalent of the modern-day financial gerrymander which is going to kick in on 1 July. First they moved amendments and banned developers from donating to political parties but not the union movement. Then this amendment, coming in on 1 July, says that it caps donations, so an individual who is not a developer—just an individual in our society—who wants to participate in the political process can only donate \$6,000 to a political candidate or \$4,000 to a party not each year but over a term. That is \$6,000 to a political candidate. It is absolutely corruption in this state and it should not be happening.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (12.35 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The committee worked well together, as is always the case. I thank my fellow members: Peter Russo, committee chair and member for Toohey; Laura Gerber, member for Currumbin; Jonty Bush, member for Cooper; Sandy Bolton, member for Noosa; and Jon Krause, member for Scenic Rim.

On 5 April of this year the committee invited stakeholders to make submissions and in total 18 were received. The objectives of the bill are to (1) stop claim farming for personal injuries and workers compensation claims; (2) prevent undesirable costs agreement practices by law practices for personal injury claims; (3) confirm the policy intent for when an entitlement to terminal workers compensation arises under the Workers Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003; and (4) make technical and clarifying amendments to the Electoral Act 1992 relating to fundraising contributions and state campaign accounts and disclosure returns.

Claim farming itself is a process by which a third party, the claim farmer, cold-calls or approaches individuals to pressure them into making a compensation claim for personal injuries. Claim farmers may use tactics such as implying that they act on behalf of government agencies or insurers; inducing or harassing individuals to make a claim with a promise of quick, easy and significant compensation; and even offering to coordinate medical treatment. Claim farmers then sell the individual's personal information to a legal practitioner or other claim management service provider who handles the claim.

Amendments to the Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019 introduced provisions to stop claim farming. This bill is seeking to extend the prohibition to halt the same phenomena for WorkCover. The bill will prohibit the giving or receiving of consideration for claim referral or even the potential for claim referral. It will also prohibit personally approaching or contacting a person for the purpose of making a claim or soliciting or inducing them to make a claim.

Submitters universally condemned the practice, claiming it brought the profession into disrepute and threatens the viability of insurance schemes and causes distress to potential vulnerable community members. The practice itself had morphed into an even more disgusting format when it began to target the survivors of institutional child sexual abuse. This practice became known as survivor farming.

The claim farmers in this instance were paid a fee to introduce survivor clients to particular firms. In some instances these already traumatised people were subjected to harassment and high-pressure tactics while they were at their most vulnerable. Survivors were asked to sign documents they did not fully understand. Survivors were repeatedly cold-called. One survivor had their confidentiality brutally breached when they were cold-called and had the history of their sexual abuse disclosed to a family member who took the call but who was previously unaware of the personal history.

In some cases, levels of harassment went on for a full year. These amendments, with the provisions surrounding the law practice certificates, will certainly reduce incidents of claim farming. In essence, LPCs require law practices acting for claimants to declare that claim farming has not occurred in relation to the claim. LPCs could be issued at multiple stages and to multiple recipients, including the claimant, the WorkCover insurer, the respondent and the respondent's insurers.

The bill also sought to make changes around terminal conditions as they pertain to WorkCover. Terminal benefits were first introduced to the WorkCover scheme in 2005. Lump sum benefits quite rightly enable workers to secure appropriate medical and palliative care, and allow them to attend to the financial needs of their families. This scheme still allows workers to seek common-law damages if negligence has contributed to their terminal condition. Clause 58 of the bill would restore the former section 39 for injuries sustained on or after 31 January 2015. It specifies that a condition is terminal if it is certified by a doctor as being a condition that is expected to terminate a worker's life within three years after the terminal nature of the condition is diagnosed. The section is proposed to read—

A "terminal condition", of a worker, is a condition certified by a doctor as being a condition that is expected to terminate the worker's life within 3 years after the terminal nature of the condition is diagnosed.

It is fair and reasonable to say that this change attracted a significant amount of comment from submitters. Mr Peter Allen from the RTBU added—

If a worker ... cannot achieve a diagnosis that the condition will terminate his/her life within three years, he/she will not be eligible for the terminal benefit lump sum payment, which he/she would be automatically available under current arrangements. We are concerned that this will lead to an inequity in how injured workers are treated—even though there is agreement that their condition is terminal.

From the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union the committee heard—

Winding back the rights of terminally ill Queensland workers by re-introducing a three-year strict time limit is a retrograde step that will significantly disadvantage workers suffering from diseases such as silicosis, mesothelioma, asbestosis, 'black lung' and lung cancer.

Similarly, Maurice Blackburn contended—

... three (3) year strict time limit is a regressive legislative amendment that will produce unfair outcomes for many workers suffering from progressive forms of lung disease including mesothelioma, asbestosis, ... fibrosis, silicosis, coal workers' pneumoconiosis and silica induced auto-immune diseases.

Maurice Blackburn further noted that, except in the very severe cases, workers with a progressive lung disease have life expectancies generally beyond three years, although the condition is terminal. This would make them ineligible for terminal benefits at around the time of their diagnosis when they have to stop work due to illness.

The other aspect of the amendment that brought significant and highly charged feedback from submitters was the introduction of chapter 37, which provides that the proposed new terminal condition definition in section 39A applies retrospectively to all injuries sustained on or after 31 January 2015. This attracted some concern from almost every submitter. The Australian Lawyers Alliance stated quite definitively that the proposed commencement date will retrospectively abolish many Queensland workers' entitlements to terminal benefits and that those entitlements can and should be determined under the current iteration of section 39A. The AMWU offered—

Retrospectivity has the potential to 'catch out' injured workers who are already in the system.

...

It would mean that workers who have lodged an application for support under the current laws in good faith could find themselves subject to new requirements—that the goal posts have shifted.

The Queensland Law Society expressed a view—

This retrospective application will impact claimants who have taken steps based on section 39A as it has existed since the October 2019 amendments and unfairly interfere with their legitimate expectations arising from the law as it currently stands.

Similarly, the United Firefighters Union of Australia Union of Employees Queensland added—

For firefighters diagnosed with a terminal condition with an estimated life expectancy greater than 3 years, the amendment creates an inequity between those firefighters who have received terminal compensation prior to the passage of the Bill and those who may receive it after the passage of the Bill. Our members have a reasonable ... expectation under the current legislation that they will be entitled to the same benefits as other firefighters who have found themselves in ... similar circumstances.

I thank each and every one of those submitters who spoke with such conviction and those who submitted such fulsome and heart-felt written statements. After hearing these people and hearing the victims through their industrial representatives, I am very pleased to be able to say that the ministers and this government have heard you. This is another example of the positive contribution that unions make to the working lives of everyday Queenslanders. There will indeed be considerations made during the passage of this bill that will bring much relief to those who spoke so eloquently about their concerns with the change from five to three years and to those who warned against possible under intended consequences of retrospectivity. On that basis, I am content to recommend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (12.44 pm): As a lawyer and now as a parliamentarian and the deputy chair of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, I heard from numerous stakeholders with a vested interest in this bill. While I stand with these stakeholders and my LNP colleagues in supporting the objectives of the bill, there are key concerns that I would like to raise.

I turn first to the issue of claim farming. Claim farming is a process whereby a third party—the claim farmer—cold-calls individuals to pressure them into making a compensation claim for personal injuries. Claim farmers then sell the individual's personal information to a legal practitioner or other claims management service provider who handles the claim. Undeniably, claim farming is abhorrent. It is two pronged and affects both the profession and the victim. Claim farming brings the profession into disrepute, threatens the viability of industry-wide insurance schemes and causes unnecessary stress to potentially vulnerable members of the committee.

During the committee process we heard testimony from child abuse service knowmore about claim farming. Knowmore told us—

'One client was sent a costs agreement by a law firm, being unaware of ever having been in contact with that firm. It is believed that an acquaintance of our client gave their name to a survivor advocacy business, which in turn passed our client's name onto the law firm. Our client said that they "felt used and taken advantage of" by these lawyers and felt that the lawyers "were out to make money from [their] pain."

This bill introduces provisions for personal injury and WorkCover claims that will require law practices acting for claimants to declare that claim farming has not occurred in relation to the claim through law practice certificates. The law practice certificate is a means by which claim farming can be deterred and detected, rather than an end in and of itself. The intention to require a law practice

certificate mirrors the intention of the Motor Accident Insurance Act; however, due to the complexity of the law practice certificate regime in this bill, including the complex nature of personal injury and WorkCover claims and that there may be hybrid claims, the bill—indeed the amendment to the amendment of the bill in its current form—is in need of further amendment. I agree with the Law Society of Queensland when they say—

It is essential that these additional bureaucratic requirements—

being law practice certificates—

be simple and efficient to comply with ... There is no public good in law-abiding practitioners becoming overburdened by excessive certificate requirements or being prosecuted for inadvertent failure to comply.

Accordingly, the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee recommended that the bill be amended to stipulate that the recipient of the law practice certificate for WorkCover statutory and common-law claims be the Office of Industrial Relations and, further, that the recipient of the law practice certificate for personal injury proceedings and/or institutional child sex abuse claims be the Legal Services Commission.

This recommendation was made so that there is a central authority receiving the law practice certificates, to alleviate some of the very valid concerns of almost all the submitters—simplifying matters for complying legal practitioners and acting as a stronger deterrent to claim-farming practices. Ensuring a regulator has direct knowledge of claims and the opportunity to check law practice certificates is a more effective monitoring mechanism than relying on insurers, who have a discretion to report, or their solicitors.

I note that this recommendation has not been supported by the government. I remain very concerned that the legal practice certificate regime, as drafted by this bill, may not achieve its objectives. I urge the government to monitor closely the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement to ensure the bill achieves its objectives of stamping out claim farming.

The Legal Affairs and Safety Committee also recommended that the bill be amended to stipulate—

- That the obligation in relation to common law damages claims is to provide one certificate to the Legal Services Commission at or shortly following the law firm being retained by the client in respect of a damages claim
- In relation to statutory claims pursuant to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act, the obligation to give the Law Practice Certificate to the Office of Industrial Relations should only be enlivened where the claimant is legally represented at the time the claimant accepts a lump sum offer in a Notice of Assessment including for any terminal condition, and prior to any payment being made to a law firm's trust account.

Again, the recommendation was made to streamline the stages at which law practice certificates are provided to alleviate some of the complexity of the regime. To this end, the Australian Lawyers Alliance commented—

To require a Law Practice Certificate for all statutory claims is a heavy and unnecessary burden, with no tangible benefit.

...

The administrative burden of this is excessive and risks weakening the regulatory and enforcement function of the Regulator.

Again, I note this recommendation is not supported by the government in its entirety. However, I do note that the government is somewhat streamlining the regime by proposing amendments to the amendments by omitting the requirement for a law practice to provide a certificate on retainment during a statutory workers compensation claim.

Turning now to the other unscrupulous billing practices that the bill seeks to provide a protection from, currently in Queensland costs related to speculative personal injury have a fifty-fifty rule applied. In recent times we have seen unscrupulous law firms, in order to maximise the amount they can charge a client under the fifty-fifty rule, enter into costs agreements with clients which treat certain items as disbursements which normally would be expenses of the law practice so that they are not captured by the fifty-fifty limit. The bill proposes to amend the Legal Profession Act to clarify that legal costs will include an amount paid or payable to a third-party entity for obtaining instructions or preparing statements in relation to the claim, but the Attorney's department has advised that at this stage it does not envisage including anything by way of regulation to fix the problem in its entirety.

This amendment is only a step towards stamping out undesirable costs agreement practices which may be used to facilitate or hide claim-farming activity. It by no means goes far enough to address the full problem of unscrupulous law firms contracting out work that should be covered by the fifty-fifty agreement so they can chalk this up as a disbursement falling outside the fifty-fifty rule and allowing

them to cost gouge their clients. In fact, when I questioned the minister's department about this billing practice during the committee hearing, the department seemed unaware. I also note that in the first iteration of the government's amendment barristers' fees were only exempt under the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act, leaving out barristers' fees under WC or CP claims. I am pleased this sloppy drafting error has been rectified and the government has amended the bill accordingly.

Finally, I turn to the entitlement changes for terminal workers compensation proposed by the bill. In 2019 the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill was introduced by the Palaszczuk Labor government to remove the two-year time limit on terminal benefits claims. In the second reading speech for the amendment bill, Minister Grace stated—

This is an important amendment for those who need it most and a great step forward in that area.

However, now we see Labor going back on this and reintroducing a time period. Not only is Labor proposing to reintroduce a time period to fix up its blunder in the first place; it also originally proposed to make it retrospective, meaning that the proposed commencement date will retrospectively abolish many Queensland workers' entitlements to terminal benefits. The Law Society of Queensland submission commented that retrospective laws are unjust, unfair and unreasonable and as a matter of basic principle this should not be permitted to stand. The retrospective application of the abolishment of the time period was one of the major issues consistently raised throughout the committee process. It was heavily criticised as unfair and as bad law and could also be costly on injured workers where eligibility is changed mid-claim. It is pleasing to hear that the government is now proposing to amend the transitional arrangements to allow claims or disputes on foot to continue under the 2019 definition, but let us not forget that the very fact that we are seeing amendments to amendments to fix up blunders is very sloppy work by this government.

In summary, the LNP will not be opposing the bill, but the concerns raised by stakeholders during the committee process need to be acknowledged and I would suggest that those issues which form the basis of the recommendations of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee not taken up by the government need to be monitored closely. No doubt this sloppy government will be back here making further amendments to amendments because this is a government that simply cannot get it right the first time.

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (12.53 pm): I rise in support of the Personal Injuries Proceedings and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I, too, want to thank the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee and in particular the chair, the member for Toohey, who, as always, was really invested in the outcome of this report. I also want to thank the secretariat for the support that it provided. In April of this year the committee invited stakeholders to make submissions and in total 18 submissions were received. I want to thank those submitters who, as usual, brought a great depth of knowledge and personal insight into the hearings and we have attempted to capture that insight in the report and the report recommendations. The report has ultimately recommended that the bill be passed. However, the report has made two additional recommendations for suggested amendments and considerations that the committee would like to see prior to implementation. I will speak to those two recommendations, but first I will speak broadly to the issue of claim farming. It is a bit of a niche area but an important area to strengthen, as we have been hearing today.

Claim farming, as we have heard, occurs when a third party uses high-pressure techniques to get an individual who may be eligible to make a personal injury claim to agree to make that claim through them or a legal firm that they recommend. Submitters at the public hearings told us that claim farmers often use tactics such as implying that they are acting on behalf of government agencies or insurers or promising a quick, significant and often guaranteed compensation payment. The claim farmers then sell the individual's personal information to a legal practitioner or other claims management service provider who handles the claim. The benefit to the claim farmer is of course financial. Their fees are commonly taken as costs and directly reduce the amount of compensation which ultimately goes towards the applicant, and these costs are substantial.

We heard from knowmore legal service, which is a free and independent community legal centre providing legal information, advice and representation, amongst other services, for victims and survivors of child abuse, that it regularly witnessed costs agreements from law firms showing the fees to a third-party claim farmer was in the area of \$9,000 to \$14,000 plus GST, and written evidence was given to the committee that demonstrated that. That is money coming directly from the applicant's payment into the hands of an organisation whose services might be limited only to sourcing the potential client, working with them to agree to make an application and potentially some initial form filling.

To demonstrate the often limited scope of claim farmers engaging in these claim applications, I want to read from the transcript of a podcast aired in December 2020 where one of the founders of an organisation established to help survivors of historic claims of sexual assault speaks about his organisation's role. He says—

What would happen is, a survivor would contact myself, give me a call, we'll touch base and I'll just figure out a few rough details about where they were, how old they were, just see if it's worth having a look at or if we can refer them on to somebody that can support them with counselling services, drug and alcohol counsellors. And then from there, we'd pass that ... information on to the law firm, so the law firm would get in contact with the survivor, qualify them—'cos we can't actually give out legal advice 'cos we're obviously not lawyers, we're just a consultancy. They'd send out a costs agreement and we can help out with paperwork.

This is exploitative. We heard no evidence that they are referring victims to support services. What they are doing is referring them to a legal firm to make an application for compensation which they may or may not receive, and if they do receive a payment it will be months or years down the track from which substantial fees will be removed for form filling. All submitters universally condemned the practice. Kate Avery, Principal Lawyer and Director at Kare Lawyers, stated that it—

... brings the profession into disrepute, threatens the viability of our insurance schemes and causes unnecessary distress to potentially vulnerable members of the community.

Both Kate's written and verbal submissions to the committee were really strong, and I am not just saying that because she is a constituent of mine. They were great submissions. Suncorp submitted that claim farming has the potential to negatively impact insurance affordability and increase the incidence of fraud.

This practice of claim farming first emerged in the traffic accident arena and amendments to the Motor Accident Insurance Act in 2019 introduced provisions to stop claim farming. This bill seeks to extend that prohibition to similarly prevent claim-farming activities for WorkCover claims under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act and personal injury claims under the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act. One of the ways we aim to tackle claim farming is to remove that financial incentive to engage in farming by prohibiting a person from giving or receiving consideration for referring a claimant or potential claimant. The bill inserts provisions in the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act and the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act to create new and explicit offences making it a crime for anyone, including lawyers, to pay claim farmers for the details of potential claimants or to receive payment for a claim or potential claim referral.

Turning to recommendation 2 in the committee report, submitters gave us some really useful feedback in relation to law practice certificates, or LPCs. An LPC is a certificate in a form approved by the Legal Services Commissioner which provides particular prescribed information, including that the supervising principal and each associate of the law practice did not solicit or induce a person into making a claim, that they did not give or receive consideration for referring a claimant or potential claimant and that the costs agreement relating to a speculative personal injury claim complies with the requirements of the PIP Act or the Legal Profession Act. Essentially, these certificates are a declaration that claim farming has not occurred in relation to the claim. Whilst submitters raised no issue with the need for LPCs, the timing of which LPCs were required and the inefficiencies and a potential duplication of issuing certificates were issues that were raised. The committee agreed that the LPC regime as proposed in the bill could be streamlined and clarified and that that would be beneficial to the scheme, and I accept that the minister has spoken to that and circulated some amendments around that already this morning.

A final reform in this bill is in relation to terminal benefits payments that are payable to an eligible worker with a terminal condition under the workers compensation act. Lump sum terminal benefits enable workers to secure medical and palliative care and support and allow them to attend to the financial needs of their family and dependants. Two concerns were raised from the consultation on this, the first being the proposed retrospective application—

Debate, on motion of Ms Bush, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

## APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

### Message from Deputy Governor

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.00 pm):  
I present a message from the Deputy Governor.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The message from the Deputy Governor recommends the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2022

*Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68*

I, HELEN PATRICIA BOWSKILL, Deputy Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intitled—

A Bill for an Act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for the Legislative Assembly and parliamentary service for the financial years starting 1 July 2022 and 1 July 2023

DEPUTY GOVERNOR

Date: 21 June 2022

*Tabled paper:* Message, dated 21 June 2022, from the Deputy Governor recommending the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022 [\[845\]](#).

### Introduction

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.00 pm): I present a bill for an act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the Consolidated Fund for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for the financial years starting 1 July 2022 and 1 July 2023. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights.

*Tabled paper:* Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022 [\[846\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022, explanatory notes [\[847\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[848\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022. The bill provides appropriations for the 2022-23 financial year as well as interim supply for the 2023-24 financial year to allow normal operations of the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service to continue until the 2023-24 Appropriation Bill receives assent. The government remains committed to the independence of the Legislative Assembly and this extends to the means by which public moneys are appropriated to ensure its continued functioning. We are therefore adhering to the current convention that the Legislative Assembly's appropriation be contained in a bill separate from the Appropriation Bill for the other activities of government.

The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022 will provide necessary funds to ensure the continued operations of the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service. These include advisory and information services to assist the parliament, its committees and members to fulfil their constitutional and parliamentary responsibilities, the services provided by the Parliamentary Library, the committee office, Parliamentary Reporting Service, Chamber and Procedural Services and Security and Attendant Services as well as the provision of accommodation, hospitality and members' entitlements.

This bill provides the necessary appropriation for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for the 2022-23 financial year as well as interim supply for 2023-24. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.03 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

**Mr SPEAKER:** In accordance with standing order 177, the bill is now set down for its second reading.

## BUDGET PAPERS

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.03 pm): I am pleased to table the budget papers for 2022-23.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Appropriation Bills [\[849\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Budget Speech—Budget Paper No. 1 [\[850\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Budget Strategy and Outlook—Budget Paper No. 2 [\[851\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Capital Statement—Budget Paper No. 3 [\[852\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Budget Measures—Budget Paper No. 4 [\[853\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Department of the Premier and Cabinet [\[854\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning [\[855\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Treasury [\[856\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Agriculture and Fisheries [\[857\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs [\[858\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy [\[859\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Corrective Services [\[860\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Education [\[861\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Employment, Small Business and Training [\[862\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Energy and Public Works [\[863\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Environment and Science [\[864\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management [\[865\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Health [\[866\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Justice and Attorney-General [\[867\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Police Service [\[868\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water [\[869\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Resources [\[870\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships [\[871\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport [\[872\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Transport and Main Roads [\[873\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Service Delivery Statements—Legislative Assembly of Queensland [\[874\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Regional Action Plan—Brisbane and Redlands [\[875\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Regional Action Plan—Central Queensland [\[876\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Regional Action Plan—Darling Downs [\[877\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Regional Action Plan—Far North Queensland [\[878\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Regional Action Plan—Gold Coast [\[879\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Regional Action Plan—Ipswich [\[880\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Regional Action Plan—Logan [\[881\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Regional Action Plan—Mackay-Whitsunday [\[882\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Regional Action Plan—Outback Queensland [\[883\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Regional Action Plan—Sunshine Coast [\[884\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Regional Action Plan—Moreton Bay [\[885\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Regional Action Plan—Townsville [\[886\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Regional Action Plan—Wide Bay [\[887\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Budget Highlights [\[888\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Budget 2022-23: Queensland Women's Budget Statement [\[889\]](#).

## APPROPRIATION BILL

### Message from Deputy Governor

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.04 pm):  
I present a message from the Deputy Governor.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The message from the Deputy Governor recommends the Appropriation Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

APPROPRIATION BILL 2022

*Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68*

I, HELEN PATRICIA BOWSKILL, Deputy Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—

A Bill for an Act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for departments for the financial years starting 1 July 2022 and 1 July 2023

DEPUTY GOVERNOR

Date: 21 June 2022

*Tabled paper:* Message, dated 21 June 2022, from the Deputy Governor recommending the Appropriation Bill 2022 [\[890\]](#).

### Introduction

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.04 pm):  
I present a bill for an act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the Consolidated Fund for departments for the financial years starting 1 July 2022 and 1 July 2023. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights.

*Tabled paper:* Appropriation Bill 2022 [\[891\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Appropriation Bill 2022, explanatory notes [\[892\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Appropriation Bill 2022, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[893\]](#).

The budget that I deliver today delivers good jobs, it provides better services and it supports Queensland's great lifestyle. It is a budget that marks our state's emergence from the sacrifice and resilience shown by Queenslanders during a pandemic that has shaken and disrupted us like nothing before—a pandemic the impacts of which have been felt in our homes, our businesses, our schools and our hospitals.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the great resilience of Queenslanders won through, built on perseverance, discipline and hard work and that has allowed this budget to build on our extraordinary economic standing—an extraordinary economic standing that sees Queensland, on almost every indicator we have seen this year, outperforming the rest of Australia. It is a budget that puts health care first. It is a budget to propel us from times of tremendous disruption and turbulence towards a brighter horizon.

A new era is dawning for Queensland. We are taking advantage of global shifts, like decarbonisation and digitalisation, to realise opportunities in our traditional and emerging industries and to help create more jobs. We are building the infrastructure for tomorrow and we are providing better services for all Queenslanders, and we are doing all of this without compromising our cherished lifestyle.

The starter's gun has sounded on the maroon, decade-long race towards the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the decade beyond. Our nation-leading response to COVID-19 underpins the greatest ever investment in Queensland's future.

## Health

Despite the lockdowns and isolation, Queenslanders have rightly rallied behind our frontline workers. Day after day, shift after shift, they continue to be at the forefront of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They put themselves in harm's way, treating thousands afflicted with severe virus symptoms and comforting their families. Doctors, nurses, paramedics and health workers continue to give Queenslanders the very best care, because they care.

Under pop-up tents, in all kinds of weather conditions, they have administered millions of PCR tests. In the middle of the night, they have transported patients struggling to find their breath, to receive world-class health care. For our health workers, their daily routine involves multiple changes of personal protective equipment, surgical masks, respirators, gloves, goggles, glasses, face shields, gowns and aprons. Their daily ordeal has saved countless lives. To pay tribute to their service, we must make sure our health system has the infrastructure, technology and resources it needs to meet the future demands of a growing state.

These demands, and the pressures they create, are not confined to Queensland. As in many parts of the world, health care is facing short- and long-term challenges. The short-term challenges range from rising emergency department presentations to forced postponement of non-urgent elective surgeries to accommodate COVID-19 related priority care. The outbreak of influenza A has also made its presence felt, which is why Queensland became the first Australian state to provide free flu vaccines. There is also an increasing prevalence of complex and chronic illness. An estimated four out of five Australians aged 65 and over have at least one chronic illness.

Rising private health insurance premiums are also placing additional pressure on our public hospital network. Across Queensland, the level of private health insurance coverage is near the lowest level seen for the last 20 years. There are now more Queenslanders without any form of private health insurance than at any other period, with 3.1 million Queenslanders uninsured. Of those who do still have private insurance, less than 40 per cent have a policy which covers all hospital admissions. That means less than one in four Queenslanders has private cover for all hospital admissions.

Over the longer term there are also pressures associated with a growing and ageing population. Queensland has the fastest population growth of all states and territories. By 2036 our current population of 5.24 million is expected to increase by around 20 per cent, or over one million new Queenslanders, and the number of Queenslanders aged over 65 is projected to grow from 865,000 to 1.3 million people in 2036, an increase of 50 per cent.

Demands on our health system can never be addressed by cuts to frontline services. That is why the Palaszczuk Labor government will always put health care first. Today I am pleased to announce that this year's budget will deliver a record commitment of \$23.6 billion for frontline health services and high-quality healthcare infrastructure.

Today our government commits \$9.8 billion for a funding program to expand the capacity of Queensland's health system—the biggest hospital building program in the history of Queensland. That commitment will deliver 2,200 additional overnight hospital beds. There will be new hospitals in Bundaberg, Toowoomba and at Coomera. There will be hospital expansions in Cairns, Townsville, Robina, Mackay, Redcliffe, Ipswich and Hervey Bay. Metropolitan hospitals like the Princess Alexandra Hospital, the QEII Hospital, the Prince Charles Hospital and Logan Hospital will all be expanded. In an Australian first, a comprehensive Queensland Cancer Centre will be built at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

In addition, our government will reallocate \$229.7 million of existing funding to increase bed capacity under the Accelerated Infrastructure Delivery Program over the next two years. This program will deliver 289 beds across seven projects in the Metro South, Gold Coast, West Moreton, and Cairns and Hinterland hospital and health services. In total, this budget provides for an additional 2,509 beds across the state.

New ambulance stations will be delivered at Caloundra South, Lawnton, Morayfield, Ormeau and Ripley, along with redeveloped stations at Southport, Pimpama and Toowoomba. From the election of our government until today:

- the number of nurses in Queensland has increased by 10,638, or 38.1 per cent;
- the number of doctors has increased by 3,106, or 39.2 per cent; and
- the number of ambulance officers has increased by 1,103, or 29.7 per cent.

We will deliver 9,475 jobs for frontline staff—including doctors and nurses, paramedics and allied health professionals—across this term of government.

This is a record health budget. Every year the health budget grows, but this year the increase is much more than just the usual. We have listened to stakeholders in the health system who tell us that they need greater budget certainty to plan and deliver high-quality health care. They have told us that if we can give them that certainty they will find smarter and better ways to deliver health care. They have spoken and our government has listened.

This year, for the first time, we are providing a sustained, long-term uplift to Queensland Health funding across the forward estimates. This means that total budget funding for Queensland Health will grow by \$8.5 billion over the forward estimates. This is the largest total uplift in budgeted health expenditure in the history of Queensland.

Not only are we substantially increasing the funding to Queensland Health; we are also improving how we fund Queensland Health. Prevention of illness, early intervention and new models of care that help patients stay out of hospital in the first place are all activities that are front and centre when it comes to the work of our hospital and health services. That is why in this budget we are freeing up our hospitals to put even greater focus on outcomes, not just delivery. There will, of course, be accountability for funds spent. There are no blank cheques because every dollar matters but, very importantly, Queensland Health will have much greater flexibility on how to invest state provided funds on achieving outcomes.

### **Mental health**

The pandemic has painted a stark picture of the importance of mental health care. It is a picture that became even clearer with the release of the report by the parliamentary Mental Health Select Committee earlier this month. I thank the members of that committee—particularly the chair and member for Greenslopes, Joe Kelly—and all those who made submissions to this important inquiry.

The issues caused by mental health seep insidiously into so many other areas of life, from substance abuse and domestic violence to homelessness and unemployment, and it affects every part of our state. There is no community that is spared its impact. To all those who made submissions to the committee, to all those dealing with the challenge of mental illness and to all those who have lost a loved one to mental illness, we hear you and now we will act.

Our government will not leave behind those Queenslanders and those families living with the challenge of mental illness. Our record health budget will commit an additional \$1.6 billion for mental health services over five years, together with \$28.5 million in capital funding, to support plans that focus on addressing issues around mental health, addiction, substance abuse and suicide. It will focus on rehabilitation care, additional community care units, adolescent day programs and step-up step-down services to help people transition from hospital or avoid hospital admission in the first instance.

This is the biggest ever investment in mental health services in Queensland, but in order to deliver this funding we must have a sustainable funding model. To that end, our government will introduce a 0.25 per cent mental health levy on businesses with annual taxable Australian wages of over \$10 million from 1 January 2023. Businesses with annual wages over \$100 million will pay an additional 0.5 per cent levy. Treasury modelling indicates this levy will only apply to around one per cent of all Queensland businesses. By the end of the forward estimates, the mental health levy will generate \$425 million each year, a sustainable and ongoing source of funding to assist Queenslanders in need.

Our record health budget also aims to give First Nations people and others living in rural and remote parts of Queensland access to the best possible health care. In this budget our government commits almost \$1 billion over seven years for a Building Rural and Remote Healthcare Program to replace ageing health infrastructure in rural and remote parts of the state. This will ensure Queenslanders living in these areas can receive adequate and contemporary health care. This investment builds on our government's proud legacy of delivering new or renewed hospitals and health clinics across our state, including major new hospitals at Roma and Kingaroy.

We will also make sure the Royal Flying Doctor Service, born in our state, is adequately resourced to provide aeromedical evacuations throughout our regions for the seriously injured or those requiring urgent medical attention. Budget funding of \$334 million over 10 years will enable the RFDS to take care of those in need, no matter where they live. We will also allocate an additional \$60.3 million towards Brisbane Airport Corporation's new aeromedical infrastructure upgrade that will feature new patient transfer facilities and state-of-the-art hangars for fixed-wing and rotary wing aircraft.

### **Good jobs**

Since our health response to COVID-19 enabled Queensland to start accelerating away from the pandemic last year, there is one statistic where Queensland has consistently led the nation: the creation of new jobs. Since March 2020, our job creation has tracked in line with the combined number of jobs created in the two largest states, New South Wales and Victoria. Last week's labour force data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that figure is now 206,000 new Queensland jobs created since March 2020.

That May labour force data also showed something quite remarkable: in the month of May, 46,600 new jobs were created in our state. We are one in five Australians, but in the month of May Queensland created three out of every four new Australian jobs. That nation-leading jobs growth is something our government will continue to pursue relentlessly.

As Queensland's economy continues to gather speed, our government is actively seeking to identify and support the industries that will deliver the well-paying, secure, highly skilled jobs of the future. That means jobs in hydrogen and renewables, critical minerals, advanced manufacturing, resource recovery, biomedical technology, aerospace, defence, tourism and the innovation, creative and design industries.

We are determined to maintain Queensland's traditional role as Australia's energy powerhouse. More than that, Queensland is rapidly becoming a global energy superpower through investment in our state's renewable energy future, helping us to deliver more jobs in more industries. Later this year, our government will deliver our Energy Plan, setting out the next steps on our journey from national to global leadership.

Embracing decarbonisation does not need to come at the expense of the economy or jobs. To the contrary, it presents the opportunity for us to be a home to more energy-intensive heavy industry, including traditional and advanced manufacturing. Queensland can supply the world with new economy minerals and manufacture the equipment it needs to tackle climate change while supporting our growing workforce to acquire new skills.

By investing in renewable generation now, Queensland can leverage our world-class renewable resources to deliver a reliable and efficient energy system. This will also give Queensland manufacturing a strong competitive advantage to attract investment in low-emissions manufacturing and to help enhance the competitiveness of our exporters. Since 2015, 50 large-scale renewable energy projects have been committed, commenced or constructed in Queensland. These projects will support almost 8,000 construction jobs, most of them in regional Queensland. Importantly, they will produce 5,774 megawatts of clean energy. That represents more than 13.8 million tonnes of avoided emissions each year—and we are only just beginning.

Large-scale pumped hydro-electric storage will be an essential part of this transformation. The budget commits \$48 million over two years to advance early works on the Borumba pumped hydro energy storage project and will also support further investigation into other prospective pumped hydro storage sites across Queensland.

Our reputation as a resource powerhouse is growing, with strong global demand for new economy materials like vanadium and cobalt as key inputs for the world's decarbonisation technologies. At least \$10 million from the \$520 million Invested in Queensland program will support Queensland's first vanadium processing plant in Townsville. We are committing \$15 million to support the National Battery Testing Centre in Brisbane, a facility that gives prospective battery manufacturers the opportunity to calibrate and certify their products.

Building on our strong economic recovery and outlook, we are focused on achieving even more export growth to generate additional jobs and greater economic benefits for Queensland. Our dynamic, diversified and growing economy, highly skilled workforce, pro-growth, pro-business environment and advanced infrastructure offer businesses the best climate to expand and prosper.

On the back of a global pandemic, as economies look to recoup and recover, the importance of trade and investment has never been stronger. That is why our government will invest an extra \$150 million to deliver a new 10-year trade and investment strategy. This strategy will ensure we continue to support our exporters as they reach for new markets and boost sales where they are already currently trading.

Queensland's Workforce Summit held in March with business and community leaders highlighted that our emerging and traditional industries must be sustained by a skilled workforce. Our government will have more to say on our Workforce Strategy later, but we will continue to invest in our workforce

and provide greater opportunities for disadvantaged jobseekers through our Skilling Queenslanders for Work and Back to Work programs. We will keep providing training opportunities to upskill workers for more secure, well-paid existing jobs and future jobs.

While the pandemic has significantly impacted tourism, hospitality and international education, other sectors like mining, agriculture and the construction sector continue to power our economy. This budget aims to ensure ongoing success in those sectors performing well and speed up recovery in others.

Our government keeps its promises. We promised the people of Queensland that we would not raise their taxes, and the people of Queensland will not pay one dollar of the revenue measures I announce in this budget. We promised the coal companies that we would freeze their royalties until 30 June 2022. We will keep that promise. That means that for a decade multinational coal companies have benefited from royalty arrangements that have been frozen by successive Queensland governments—few industries in the world have enjoyed such a long period without change—but from 1 July, the 10-year freeze comes to an end.

It is time for new arrangements to be implemented—arrangements that reflect coal prices in excess of \$500 per tonne, not the \$150 per tonne for which the existing royalties were designed. Three new progressive royalty tiers will be introduced: 20 per cent for prices above \$175 per tonne, 30 per cent for prices above \$225 per tonne and 40 per cent for prices above \$300 per tonne. Each of those new tiers applies only on the margin, so at a coal price of \$302 per tonne the 40 per cent rate would only apply to the last \$2.

We know that the foreign shareholders of coal companies will not like these changes, but they can rest easy. We are not increasing the rates that apply at the existing tiers, as the former LNP government did in 2012, during an industry downturn. The new regime is forecast to deliver an additional \$1.2 billion in royalties over the forward estimates—30 per cent less than was forecast through the changes made by the former LNP government in 2012.

All of that \$1.2 billion, and more, will be going into regional Queensland. We will build a new hospital for Moranbah. We will expand Mackay Hospital, Townsville Hospital and Cairns Hospital. There will be more beds in hospitals at Rockhampton, at Hervey Bay and at Sarina. We will deliver two new major hospitals, in Bundaberg and Toowoomba.

We will continue to back the future of the resources industry. To support the future of our resources sector, \$68.5 million over five years will be invested through the Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan. That includes a further \$17.5 million to encourage exploration and make new mineral discoveries.

Alongside resources, we will be working with other industries because we want advanced manufacturing to flourish, to grow and to create jobs. Our \$350 million Industry Partnership Program is designed to unlock our advanced manufacturing potential in hydrogen, biofutures, biomedical, defence, aerospace, space and resource recovery.

To help small- and medium-sized manufacturers build advanced manufacturing capability in our regions, the budget commits \$50 million to the Made in Queensland and Manufacturing Hubs Grant programs.

Our agricultural sector, with its heart in regional Queensland, is continuing to diversify with potential growth opportunities in high-value horticulture, seafood and livestock. Our drought assistance and reform package of up to \$79.6 million over the forward estimates will support regions affected by drought, while \$150 million over three years will be available to help farmers prepare for, manage and recover from the impacts of drought.

Few sectors have felt the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic more than Queensland's tourism sector, yet there is growing optimism about tourism's future. This sentiment was tangible when the first cruise ship returned to the Port of Brisbane just weeks ago, with 1,500 passengers who embarked on day trips around South-East Queensland.

With both domestic and international borders open, visitors are returning but we are doubling efforts to accelerate the sector's recovery and growth. This budget commits up to \$66.4 million over four years for an action plan to help our tourism operators rebound even more strongly, particularly in regional communities.

Our tourism sector has endured challenge after challenge. Before COVID it was a series of natural disasters, including the fires that tore through so many parts of our state including the Scenic Rim. As the then minister responsible for the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, I went into the Lamington National Park.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members to my left! There are conventions around the budget speech.

**Mr DICK:** I saw firsthand the destruction of our iconic Binna Burra Lodge. While I was there, Steve Noakes, the chair of Binna Burra, dragged the iconic dinner bell from the wreckage as a symbol of hope that Binna Burra could be rebuilt. As a result of today's budget, we are taking the next step forward so that the bell of Binna Burra rings again. Some \$18 million will be donated to the Binna Burra foundation to help rebuild this iconic lodge. In addition, we will also invest \$2 million for improvements at Lamington National Park, working closely with O'Reilly's.

Binna Burra and O'Reilly's are just two of countless Queensland small and medium businesses that have done it tough, year after year. Through their hard work and sacrifice they have been an integral part of our economic recovery, and for that they deserve to be supported.

Our approach has always been to keep business costs low through competitive tax arrangements, making Queensland an attractive place to invest. Targeted regulatory reform has been a key part of our COVID-19 response, enabling businesses to grow. Today, through this budget, we will provide payroll tax relief to more than 12,000 small- and medium-sized Queensland businesses. This will be achieved by increasing the payroll tax deductions to businesses with annual Australian taxable wages between \$1.3 million and \$10.4 million.

Currently, the deduction phases out above \$1.3 million at a rate of 25 cents per dollar of wages, or \$1 for every \$4 of wages. We will reduce that phase-out rate to 14.3 cents per dollar of wages, or \$1 for every \$7 of wages. Put simply, we are increasing the number of businesses that will now be eligible for a deduction from payroll tax, and we will significantly increase the deduction available to businesses already getting it. This means a business with \$6.5 million of taxable wages will see over \$26,000 extra each year in its bank account.

### **Better services**

The Queensland government interacts with hundreds of thousands of people every day, often during some of the most difficult times in their lives. As we grow and transform, we must remember that we live in a community, not just an economy. That means we need to ensure all Queenslanders benefit fairly from our growth and prosperity, regardless of where they live or who they are. This is particularly true for our most valuable resource: our children. That is why the Palaszczuk government's record education and training budget of \$19.6 billion will set up the next generation of Queenslanders for a productive career in whatever field they choose, no matter what background they are from.

This budget takes our total investment in our Building Future Schools commitment to \$3 billion. We have already opened 21 schools since 2015, and today we are announcing another five for 2025 and 2026. More schools are currently under construction, and this budget commits a further \$390 million to build five new schools where they are needed most—primary schools in Caboolture West, Caloundra South, Ripley Valley, Greater Flagstone and Bahrs Scrub. It also includes another \$742 million for additional and renewed infrastructure in our existing state schools and \$20 million to upgrade school playgrounds and tuckshops.

Our government has rightfully acknowledged the extraordinary dedication and service of our health workers; however, teachers, principals and school staff are among the unsung heroes of this ongoing pandemic. They have exemplified Queensland's fighting spirit with their response to COVID-19, followed by the South-East Queensland floods earlier this year. They have adapted and embraced technology to encourage home learning under extraordinary circumstances. They have restructured activities and classrooms and school timetables to keep students as safe as possible. They are deserving of our heartfelt thanks.

Teachers are the engine room of our education system which is why we have created an additional 7,165 teacher and teacher aide positions since 2015. The budget provides for 675 more teachers and nearly 200 more teacher aides in 2022-23.

We will continue to invest in students with a disability to make sure they get ease of access to the best education services possible. Funding of \$80.6 million over three years will support the transition of a new resourcing model for students with a disability.

Providing even better and fairer services is also about making sure we continue to protect our most vulnerable Queenslanders, particularly children and young people who have been harmed or who may be at risk of harm. This budget supports child protection services with \$2.2 billion in funding over five years. We recognise that vulnerable young people in care face many challenges as they transition to adulthood. We want to see them succeed, to get a qualification and to find a job. That is why we are committing to providing additional support to young people leaving care. From 2023-24 we will be extending availability of the foster care allowance for carers of young people who remain living with them up to the age of 21. Those aged 18 to 21 years leaving non-family based care will also be mentored and supported financially by non-government organisations to live independently.

Our government recognises that the pandemic, along with required periods of isolation, has impacted on mental health, including exacerbating loneliness. The budget commits \$126 million over four years and \$19 million ongoing to help address social isolation and support our invaluable neighbourhood and community centres throughout Queensland. This follows from the work of another important parliamentary inquiry led by the member for Mansfield, Corrine McMillan.

In a state where the Premier, Governor, Chief Justice and Police Commissioner are all women, it is no surprise that the Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring women and girls have equal rights and access to opportunities. Women and girls should feel safe and valued. We want women to have opportunities to succeed in economic, social and cultural endeavours. The Queensland Women's Strategy will underpin this important work.

We are focused on securing better outcomes for women who have been victims of domestic violence. This budget commits \$363 million over five years and \$61.3 million ongoing for an historic overhaul of laws and practices to better protect Queensland women from domestic and family violence and hold perpetrators to account through legislation to criminalise coercive control. A further \$19.2 million over four years will go towards specialist women in custody and domestic and sexual violence support services and programs for women in custody.

Queensland has the best police service in Australia. The men and women of the Queensland Police Service work tirelessly around the clock, sometimes placing themselves in dangerous situations to keep us safe. Population shifts, the way we live and work, and the demands of a growing state all require careful consideration in how we plan for police resourcing needs. That is why we are delivering more police with more resources through budget spending of \$2.9 billion. The biggest increase in police resourcing in 30 years will continue as we deliver on our commitment to see an additional 2,025 police personnel engaged by 2025. We will make sure they have the facilities, stations, vehicles and equipment they need through a \$174.6 million capital program to support the front line against crime.

I know that many families and individuals outside of this building, all over Queensland, are working hard to cope with cost-of-living pressures. This is often a week-to-week proposition compounded by a feeling of uncertainty. We understand the impact that the rising cost of fuel and groceries is having on Queenslanders, especially on those with low incomes. That is why we continue to provide a wide range of concessions to help with transport, housing, healthcare, education, water and energy costs. This will amount to \$6.8 billion over the next financial year. That is a rise of 10 per cent on last year, benefiting millions of Queensland households.

Because Queenslanders own the state's power assets, earlier this year we announced that Queensland households would receive \$50 off their power bills. As part of the budget, that is being increased to \$175, at a cost of \$385 million. It takes the total value of asset ownership dividends Queenslanders have received over the past four years to \$575 per household, a program costing \$1.2 billion.

The Palaszczuk Queensland government is also taking substantial action to support Queenslanders facing the challenge of accessing housing. The 2021-22 budget included \$1.9 billion for the Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025, a plan also supported by returns from the \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund. Under the plan, the government will deliver 7,400 new dwelling commencements.

We are working on strategies to unlock development and increase the supply of housing in priority development areas, with \$150 million in budget funding over the next three years. A further \$50 million will be allocated to the Growth Acceleration Fund so we can speed up economic recovery, increase construction activity and support jobs. This budget builds on our housing investment, with \$29.8 million over four years and \$10 million per year ongoing to support initiatives to address youth homelessness.

Housing affordability affects all parts of the country. It is pleasing to see that the new federal Labor government has a dedicated Minister for Housing as part of the Prime Minister's cabinet. We look forward to working with them, and other states, to support delivery of quality, affordable housing for all Queenslanders.

### **Great lifestyle**

Queensland has always been one of the best places in Australia to live, work and raise a family, and our government intends to keep it that way. We are the destination of choice for so many, given our stunning beaches, theme parks, hinterland, reefs, rainforests and outback. Net interstate migration to Queensland was the highest of all Australian states and territories in 2020-21, reaching a record quarterly increase of more than 16,600 in the September quarter 2021.

While there are clear economic benefits to interstate migration, this budget invests in measures to protect and enhance our lifestyle through this period of growth. That includes investment in roads, rail, bus, cycleways and marine infrastructure to improve the way people travel. Front and centre is a \$59 billion capital investment across Queensland over four years. Of the \$15.5 billion capital program for 2022-23, \$9.8 billion, or 63.3 per cent, will be spent outside Greater Brisbane. This vital capital works investment will better connect communities and businesses while driving economic activity. Our capital program will support 48,000 jobs in 2022-23.

Protecting our lifestyle and protecting our environment are not mutually exclusive. Our diverse natural environment is the envy of not only other Australian states but also the world. As such, it is forever linked to our economic fortune. We must look after it, and this is what this budget does.

The Palaszczuk government commits \$262.5 million over the forward estimates to our 10-year strategy to better manage our protected areas, including our magnificent national parks and Great Barrier Reef. We are investing almost \$40 million to help protect our threatened species, including one of Queensland's most loved native animals, the koala. This funding will continue the work of our strategy to boost their numbers in South-East Queensland and restore key habitats.

Our single biggest economic opportunity—hosting the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games—gives us a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to put Queensland on the world map. The 10-year runway of investment and infrastructure, built in time for the games, will deliver benefits for generations to come, but it is about more than concrete and construction. It is a chance to unite Queenslanders behind an aspirational plan for our future. We have already seen tremendous interest in the Youfor2032 campaign to set potential young Olympians on a path to glory, and community interest is high around taking up volunteering opportunities for the games.

We are investing \$59.3 million over the forward estimates to support the Brisbane 2032 Taskforce as it leads 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games activities across government. This will support preparation of the 2032 games legacy program and inform design of games infrastructure, including venues and athletes villages.

Our best Queensland athletes will be supported through a \$31.4 million contribution over two years to extend the 2032 high-performance strategy, and to create further pathways to Brisbane 2032 and encourage sports participation \$100 million will establish a schools program to deliver new and upgraded sports infrastructure across Queensland.

### **Economic update**

The Palaszczuk government has never relied on hope or wishful thinking to get through tough times and secure better outcomes for all Queenslanders, whether they live in Weipa or Woodridge. Our response to the COVID-19 crisis has been no accident. It has been a response informed by sound, responsible economic and fiscal management geared towards recovery and growth.

While the pandemic is not over, Queensland's economic recovery is well advanced. By the March quarter 2022, Queensland's domestic economy was 7.8 per cent larger than it was pre COVID—much stronger than the 6.9 per cent growth in the rest of Australia. Some 206,000 extra Queenslanders have found jobs since the start of the pandemic, as many as New South Wales and Victoria combined. Our unemployment rate of 4.0 per cent in May is well below its pre-COVID rate of 5.8 per cent.

Our focus on regional jobs is also delivering great outcomes for Queenslanders. Mackay has the lowest unemployment rate in Queensland, at 2.4 per cent. The Australian Bureau of Statistics tells us Queensland created 1,500 new jobs each and every day in the month of May.

The value of Queensland's overseas merchandise exports totalled \$99 billion in the 12 months to April 2022. This is 72.3 per cent higher than the corresponding period a year ago and the state's highest 12-month total on record.

Our strong economic recovery stood the state in good stead when faced with a range of economic challenges earlier this year: the Omicron outbreak, major flooding in South-East Queensland and the global impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These shocks have all impacted the supply side of the economy and have exacerbated inflationary pressures. In spite of this, the Queensland economy is forecast to grow by three per cent in 2021-22 and then average ongoing growth of 2¾ per cent per annum over the rest of the forward estimates. This growth means even more jobs for Queenslanders.

Year-average employment is forecast to grow by an exceptional 4¾ per cent in 2021-22, the strongest rate of jobs growth in 15 years. Employment is then expected to grow by a further three per cent in 2022-23. Reflecting this strong jobs growth, the state's unemployment rate is expected to remain around its current low level for the duration of the forward estimates.

Responsible management of our finances, growing jobs and growing the economy are recognised by rating agencies. Queensland retains the equal highest credit rating among all states with S&P Global.

### **Fiscal outlook**

Our nation's four largest governments—the Australian government, the New South Wales government, the Victorian government and the Queensland government—all went into deficit to respond to COVID-19. At last budget, we were the first of those governments to announce a return to surplus. Today I am pleased to announce that Queensland will be the first of those governments to deliver a surplus.

Today I can announce that we will achieve a surplus of \$1.9 billion for the 2021-22 financial year. That compares to a projected deficit of \$1.4 billion at the budget update in December and a projected deficit of \$3.4 billion at the time of last year's budget. I am also pleased to announce that this financial year our net debt will be reduced by \$6.146 billion compared to the forecast in December last year.

### **Conclusion**

Much has changed from when I stood here to deliver last year's budget: we are back in black; we have a new federal government; Queensland can proudly call itself a future Olympic and Paralympic Games Host; and we are one up in this year's State of Origin series. But the challenges facing the world have changed as well.

From rising tensions in our region to the war in Ukraine, the rising spectre of global inflation, and labour and supply chain constraints, Queensland is not immune to these external disruptions, but one thing remains constant and that is the commitment of the Palaszczuk Labor government to deliver for the people of Queensland—to deliver good jobs, to deliver better services and to preserve and protect the great lifestyle of the place we all call home, the most wonderful place on earth: Queensland.

## **First Reading**

**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.48 pm):  
I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

**Mr SPEAKER:** In accordance with standing order 177, the bill is set down for its second reading.

## **REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

### **Message from Deputy Governor**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.49 pm):  
I present a message from the Deputy Governor.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The message from the Deputy Governor recommends the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

*Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68*

I, HELEN PATRICIA BOWSKILL, Deputy Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—

A Bill for an Act to amend the Duties Act 2001, the Duties Regulation 2013, the First Home Owner Grant and Other Home Owner Grants Act 2000, the Gaming Machine Regulation 2002, the Land Tax Act 2010, the Mineral Resources Regulation 2013 and the Payroll Tax Act 1971 for particular purposes

DEPUTY GOVERNOR

Date: 21 June 2022

*Tabled paper:* Message, dated 21 June 2022, from the Deputy Governor recommending the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 [\[894\]](#).

### Introduction

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.49 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Duties Act 2001, the Duties Regulation 2013, the First Home Owner Grant and Other Home Owner Grants Act 2000, the Gaming Machine Regulation 2002, the Land Tax Act 2010, the Mineral Resources Regulation 2013 and the Payroll Tax Act 1971 for particular purposes. I table the bill, explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Economics and Governance Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 [\[895\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, explanatory notes [\[896\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[897\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill. The bill includes a number of amendments to implement revenue measures I announced in the 2022-23 budget relating to coal royalties, a new mental health levy and payroll tax. The bill also makes a minor beneficial amendment from the budget in relation to additional foreign acquirer duty. The bill achieves these objectives by amending the Mineral Resources Regulation 2013, the Payroll Tax Act 1971 and the Duties Act 2001. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Mineral Resources Regulation provides that the royalty rate for coal is determined with reference to the average price per tonne of the coal sold, disposed of or used by a coal producer during a return period. Under the existing three-tiered progressive rate structure, the highest rate of 15 per cent applies to that part of the average price per tonne that is more than A\$150. That structure has been unchanged since 2012, but does not provide a fair return to Queenslanders on the use of the state's valuable and limited natural resources during periods of high coal prices.

The Bill amends the Mineral Resources Regulation to introduce further progressive rates of 20 per cent, 30 per cent and 40 per cent on that part of the average price per tonne of the coal sold, disposed of or used in a return period that is more than A\$175, A\$225 and A\$300 respectively, with effect for liabilities from 1 July 2022. These additional rates will only apply when coal prices exceed each of these higher tiers, at times when the higher prices would also be resulting in increased revenue for coal producers.

In the 2022-23 Budget, the Queensland Government is providing an additional \$1.645 billion in operating funding plus an additional \$28.5 million in capital funding to support a new 5-year plan, the *Better Care Together: A plan for Queensland's state-funded mental health alcohol and other drug services*, and to meet Queensland's obligations under the National Agreement on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. A mental health levy is needed to provide a sustainable funding source for the additional mental health related services and investment. The Bill amends the Payroll Tax Act to apply this levy from 1 January. Like payroll tax, the levy is based on Queensland taxable wages. In particular, the levy is applied to Queensland taxable wages paid or payable by liable employers on or after 1 January 2023. For an employer who is not a member of a group, the levy is equal to 0.25 per cent of the employer's Queensland taxable wages, to the extent that their annual Australian taxable wages for a financial year exceed \$10 million. Further, a levy equal to an additional 0.5 per cent of the Queensland taxable wages applies to the extent that the employer's annual Australian taxable wages exceed \$100 million. For an employer who is a member of a group, the \$10 million and \$100 million thresholds are determined with reference to the annual Australian taxable wages of the group, and then apportioned across group members. Adjustments are also made to the thresholds to reflect the proportion of an employer's annual Australian taxable wages that are paid or payable in Queensland. The levy will only apply to the portion of the wages above the respective thresholds, that is, on a marginal basis.

This approach to the application of the levy is consistent with the approach taken in Victoria's mental health and wellbeing levy, meaning national employers and groups will be familiar with it. The levy will be payable through the payroll tax system on the same basis, and at the same time, as payroll tax.

To ensure transparency, the Payroll Tax Act will specify that the proceeds of the levy are to be spent on the provision of services and infrastructure that are consistent with the main objects of the *Mental Health Act 2016* or implementing the guiding principles in sections 5(2) to 5(5) of the *Queensland Mental Health Commission Act 2013*. Any proceeds that are not expended within a financial year will be retained in the Consolidated Fund for expenditure in a later year consistent with those purposes.

The Payroll Tax Act will also be amended to provide tax relief to small and medium businesses, through adjustments to the existing payroll tax deduction framework. Specifically, the phase out rate of the deduction of \$1 for every \$4 will be increased to \$1 for every \$7 of taxable wages above the tax-free threshold of \$1.3 million. This will take effect from 1 January 2023 and will benefit businesses with payrolls of more than \$1.3 million, who will receive an increased deduction, and also benefit businesses with payrolls of \$6.5 million or more up to \$10.4 million, who currently receive no deduction.

The Payroll Tax Act currently provides a 50 per cent rebate for wages of apprentices and trainees which is stated to expire on 30 June 2021. I announced that that rebate would be extended to 30 June 2022 in the 2021-22 Budget. In the 2022-23 Budget, I announced a further extension of the rebate until 30 June 2023. The Bill amends the Payroll Tax Act to extend this rebate for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 financial years.

The Duties Act imposes additional foreign acquirer duty on residential property purchased by individuals who are not Australian citizens or permanent residents. This includes holders of subclass 405 and 410 visas, also known as retirement visas.

The Bill amends the Duties Act to provide that retirement visa holders will be exempt from additional foreign acquirer duty for purchases of their principal place of residence. This exemption will apply to dutiable transactions entered into on or after 1 January 2023, and will be subject to several conditions in relation to the holder commencing and continuing to reside in the property as their principal place of residence.

The Bill also implements a change I announced in the 2021-22 Budget Update to make Queensland's land tax system fairer and to close a loophole.

Under current land tax arrangements, any land that a person owns interstate is not accounted for when calculating that person's Queensland land tax liability. As a result, the amount of land tax payable by landholders with a similar value of landholdings can differ substantially depending on whether they hold land solely in Queensland or across jurisdictions.

The Bill addresses this inequity by amending the *Land Tax Act 2010* to ensure that the value of an owner's interstate landholdings are taken into account for calculating land tax in Queensland. However, land tax will continue to be imposed on Queensland land only. As interstate land is not currently relevant for land tax purposes in Queensland, these amendments re-design the land tax framework. While the change will not be implemented until the 2023-24 financial year, these amendments are being progressed now, more than 12 months in advance, to provide certainty for impacted owners and in direct response to stakeholder feedback.

The Bill also amends revenue legislation to exempt from duty certain transactions associated with Queensland Future (Debt Retirement) Fund asset contributions, small business restructures and statutory vestings relating to deceased estates, and to support transfer duty, landholder duty and HomeBuilder Grant administration. These amendments are beneficial to taxpayers or otherwise give legislative effect to arrangements that are already in place through administrative arrangements.

The Bill amends the Duties Act to introduce an exemption from transfer duty and landholder duty for certain transactions intended to advance the purpose of the Queensland Future (Debt Retirement) Fund of providing funding to reduce the State's debt, including transactions associated with asset contributions. The Bill retrospectively amends the Duties Act to give retrospective legislative effect to an administrative arrangement providing an exemption from transfer duty and vehicle registration duty for certain transactions relating to particular small business restructures from 7 September 2020 or 28 June 2021.

The Bill further retrospectively amends the Duties Act to give legislative effect to an administrative arrangement extending the exemption from transfer duty for certain dutiable transactions in the administration of deceased estates. The amendment will extend that exemption to certain dutiable transactions involving the vesting of dutiable property under the *Succession Act 1981* from 3 April 2017 and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Act 2013* from 6 August 2019.

The Duties Regulation contains a list of recognised stock exchanges, for the purposes of determining the transfer duty and landholder duty consequences under the Duties Act of certain transactions. The Bill amends that list to reflect name or status changes of two such exchanges.

The Bill also amends the First Home Owner Grant and Other Home Owner Grants Act to clarify that, for contracts signed between 1 January 2021 and 31 March 2021, the amount of the HomeBuilder grant is \$15,000. This will give effect to the Australian Government's HomeBuilder Grant policy and is consistent with the Commissioner of State Revenue's administration of the HomeBuilder grant.

Finally, the Bill amends the *Gaming Machine Regulation 2002* to temporarily reduce the proportion of proceeds from the sale of category 1 licensed premises gaming machine operating authorities paid by the seller into the consolidated fund to 15 per cent (from 33 per cent) for a trial period of 12 months.

In regards to this measure, Members will be aware that in Queensland, gaming machines are heavily regulated. Hotels and clubs are required to prepare a community impact statement as part of applying for a licence to operate gaming machines. Prospective licensees are required to undertake public consultation and to prepare a community impact statement which is considered by the regulator (the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation). Furthermore, the total number of gaming machines is capped at both a state and regional level.

There is a formal process to govern the allocation, and reallocation of gaming authorities within those caps. However, the auction process to reallocate gaming authorities for hotels within this arrangement has become non-functional. From July 2021 to May 2022 only 2 authorities traded in the South East region. Industry advice is that a key reason for this is that potential sellers are concerned about uncertainty around the proceeds of sale, after taxes and costs. I am advised that there is evidence there are hotels who wish to exit or reduce their gaming activity, but cannot do so in a financially secure way under the current allocation mechanism.

The Government is initiating a 12 month trial of initiatives to restore functionality to the allocation system. This includes this amendment to the Gaming Machine Regulation to temporarily reduce the proportion of proceeds from the sale of category 1 licensed premises gaming machine operating authorities paid by the seller into the consolidated fund to 15 per cent (from 33 per cent) for a trial period of 12 months.

Given the current low level of transfer activity, it is not expected there will be any revenue losses from the change. We believe this change will be welcomed by those hotels who are looking to exit or reduce gaming activity. The Government will review the impact of the trial at its conclusion next year.

#### Conclusion

Mr Speaker, this Bill delivers several important 2022-23 Budget revenue measures, and makes other amendments to support the administration of Queensland's revenue laws.

I commend the Bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.51 pm):

I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to Economics and Governance Committee

**Mr SPEAKER:** In accordance with standing order 131 the bill is now referred to the Economics and Governance Committee.

## APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

### APPROPRIATION BILL

### REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

#### Declared Urgent; Cognate Debate

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.51 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That—

1. under the provisions of standing order 137, the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill be declared an urgent bill and not stand referred to a committee and be set down for its second reading to enable the bill to be passed through all remaining stages at this week's sitting; and
2. in accordance with standing order 172, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill, having already been treated as cognate bills under the provisions of standing order 176, be also treated as cognate with the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill for the second reading debate, but with separate questions being put with regard to the second reading of (a) the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill and (b) the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## ADJOURNMENT

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (2.52 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 2.52 pm.

**ATTENDANCE**

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Camm, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gerber, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Janetzki, Kelly, King A, King S, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lister, Lui, MacMahon, Madden, Mander, Martin, McCallum, McDonald, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Skelton, Smith, Stevens, Stewart, Sullivan, Walker, Watts, Weir, Whiting