

TUESDAY, 26 JULY 2022

ESTIMATES—ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE—QUEENSLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Estimate Committee Members

Mr LP Power—Chair
Mr RA Stevens
Mrs MF McMahon
Mr AC Powell
Mr DG Purdie
Mr A Tantari

Members in Attendance

Mr MC Berkman
Mr DF Crisafulli
Ms FS Simpson
Mr RI Katter
Dr A MacMahon
Mr DC Janetzki
Mr TL Mander
Mr ST O'Connor

In Attendance

Hon. CW Pitt, Speaker
Mr G Hasanakos, Executive Officer, Office of the Speaker
Mr N Laurie, Clerk of the Parliament
Mr M Ries, Deputy Clerk and Director, Assembly and Committee Services
Mr J Robertson, Manager, Financial and Administrative Services

The committee met at 9.00 am.



CHAIR: Good morning. I declare the hearing for the estimates of the Economics and Governance Committee open. I would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today, the Jagera-speaking people, and pay our respects to elders both past and present. We are really fortunate to live in a country with two of the oldest continuing living cultures in the world in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whose lands, winds and waters we all share.

I am Linus Power, the member for Logan and chair of the committee. With me here is Mr Ray Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach, who is the deputy chair. The other committee members are: Mrs Melissa McMahon, the member for Macalister; Mr Andrew Powell, the member for Glass House, who is substituting today for Mr Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera; Mr Dan Purdie, the member for Ninderry; and Mr Adrian Tantari, the member for Hervey Bay. The committee has granted leave to a number of non-committee members to attend and ask questions today. Other members may seek leave in the course of the proceedings.

Today the committee will consider the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation Bill 2022 and the estimates for the committee's areas of responsibility. I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at my discretion as the chair or by order of the committee. The committee has authorised its hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcast of the proceedings are available from the secretariat. I ask all those present to ensure that phones and other electronic devices are switched to silent mode if not turned off. I also remind everybody that food and drink are not permitted in this chamber.

This year the House has determined the program for the committee's estimates hearing. The committee will examine the portfolio areas in the following order: the Queensland Legislative Assembly from 9 am to 9.45 am; Premier and cabinet, and Olympic and Paralympic Games from 10 am to 1.30 pm; Treasury, trade and investment from 2 pm to 6 pm; and tourism, innovation and sport from 6.30 pm till 9 pm.

The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022 for the portfolio of the Queensland Legislative Assembly until 9.45 am. The following non-committee members have sought and been granted leave to participate in the hearing in accordance with the standing orders. In this case we have Mr Michael Berkman. There may be others who attend.

I remind those present today that the committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and are subject to the standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly. It is important that questions remain relevant and succinct. The same rules that apply in the Legislative Assembly apply in this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard.

Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy and subjective preambles, argument or opinion. I intend to guide the proceedings today so that the relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from the government and non-government members of the committee.

On behalf of the committee I welcome the Speaker, the Clerk and, of course, the parliamentary officers and the many members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard I ask officials to identify themselves the very first time they answer a question or if a question is referred to them by the Speaker or the Clerk. I now declare that the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area administered by the Speaker open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Mr Speaker, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Chair. I am very pleased to be here this morning. Thank you to all the members of the Economics and Governance Committee. I am pleased to be here for the 2022-23 budget estimates hearing for the Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Service in my capacity as Speaker. I would also like to acknowledge, as you did, Chair, that we are meeting today on the lands of Aboriginal people and pay my respects to elders past and present. I think 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. I join the chair in acknowledging those things because—and I will get to this throughout the course of this hearing—we were on Thursday Island last week. It was certainly a momentous occasion.

I also want to acknowledge that I have at the table with me today the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Mr Neil Laurie, and George Hasanakos from my office. During my time I have definitely been very appreciative of the hard work and the initiatives of the members of the Parliamentary Service. There is a great openness in terms of the ideas in the service and those new ideas which really do come forward and grow in terms of the spirit of innovation. Whether it be in catering, education or internal business processes or information management, there are examples of innovation right across the service and proposed innovations on the way.

In catering, the expansion of the Strangers Dining Room to the public during the post-COVID situation has meant that we have this great and unique heritage dining experience as a feature. Once we know when Queen's Wharf is going to be operational, we believe this will be an amazing offering in the CBD riverside experience. A dedicated catering microsite is under construction. That will facilitate increased awareness of the Queensland Parliamentary Service spaces and retail opportunities such as gift vouchers, of course, through the gift shop.

The travel claim form process has been automated with a new app. The service has recently engaged an external IT partner to help explore the best ways to convert its existing paper based forms into digital formats. Key priority areas anticipated for digitisation include a raft of payroll services including leave requests, permanent and casual staff time sheets as well as overtime claims.

Our education team took the junior Indigenous youth parliament to the Torres Strait for the first time last week. I was very proud to preside over a junior Indigenous youth parliament in an Indigenous community itself. It was the Parliamentary Service's outreach probably demonstrated at its finest. Our parliament is for all Queenslanders across the state, and to reach out to school students from the farthest northern point of Queensland was a great example of the innovative work that our service does. These are great examples of innovation.

I now turn to the 2022-23 estimates for the parliament. The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill provides funding for the salaries and allowances of members of the Legislative Assembly as well as funding for the Parliamentary Service, which provides administrative and support services to the Legislative Assembly. The total appropriation sought for the parliament in 2022-23 is \$146.721 million, an increase of around \$43.4 million over the approved appropriation provided in the 2020-21 budget. This increase is due primarily to the total funding of \$41 million in 2022-23 to deliver major repairs to the exterior facade of the Parliamentary Annexe and, as members would be aware, an internal refurbishment of ageing members' offices and bedrooms. This significant capital works program will be the centrepiece of the parliament's 2022-23 budget.

The budget also provides provision for staff enterprise bargaining increases, changes to members' allowance rates approved by the Queensland independent Remuneration Tribunal and increases in electorate office costs associated with commercial office leasing and IT technology. In 2022-23 a major program will also commence to deliver security improvements to electorate offices through new CCTV monitoring systems. I am sure that members will agree this is a terrific outcome.

Over the next 12 months the Parliamentary Service will support a number of initiatives to improve the way parliament engages with the people it serves. A centrepiece of this engagement will be the hosting of a regional sitting in Cairns in May 2023. As a proud local member of parliament, I am very excited to see the regional sitting experience return to Cairns for the first time since 2008. Of course, as Speaker, I will be very proud to preside over that parliament in my home town.

In closing this opening statement, I would like to say that I am very pleased and honoured to appear before this committee today. I value the estimates process. In no matter what capacity I serve as a member, it is an important opportunity for scrutiny. We should never be afraid of that scrutiny; it is a critical piece of our parliamentary democracy. I thank the committee for its work in terms of scrutinising the budget and, of course, the portfolios over the course of today and subsequent committees that we will see over the next two weeks.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Speaker. We might move now to questioning and I note that the deputy chair—

Mr STEVENS: I will defer to the Manager of Opposition Business immediately, if I can.

CHAIR: Certainly. Member for Glass House.

Mr POWELL: Thank you, Mr Chair. Good morning, Mr Speaker. Thank you for your opening comments. My first question, however, is to the Clerk of the Parliament. It was noted in the Carne judgement that the Queensland parliament was involved in action taken by former public trustee Peter Carne to the Supreme Court to suppress a CCC report. How much money has the Queensland parliament spent on external legal fees to fight both Mr Carne's action as well as the legal action by Jackie Trad in the Supreme Court to block a CCC report into the appointment of former under treasurer Frankie Carroll?

CHAIR: Mr Clerk.

Mr Laurie: Thank you, Mr Chair. As the question alludes to, we have been involved in two matters of litigation regarding CCC reports. As to the reason for our involvement, I should preface it by saying that both matters touch upon matters of parliamentary privilege, without going into too much detail because I am constrained in some respect. However, in relation to the Trad matter, the cost to date has been \$14,218.75. In relation to the Carne matter, our involvement was not only at the trial stage but also at the appeal stage. To date total expenses have totalled \$13,875, but I note that there are outstanding invoices and I expect that to be an additional \$10,000 to \$15,000 or thereabouts, so the total cost would be circa \$30,000 for the Carne matter.

Mr POWELL: Moving on to the aspects of the estimates hearings themselves, Mr Clerk, could I trouble you to confirm that a direct question to a witness—for example, a director-general—that is not a question of policy cannot be passed over to the minister to answer and neither can a minister add to the answer unless directly asked?

Mr Laurie: It is correct that standing orders envisage that questions can be put to either the minister or the CEO of the entity as defined under the schedule. If a question is put to the CEO, it is for the CEO to answer the question. Standing orders do not anticipate intervention by the minister. However, there is always the possibility of the minister being asked a follow-up question or being asked a question, if you like, so it is not that ministers cannot talk. Then I would say that it would be a matter for the committee to work out the time, if that was to occur, as to whose time that should be against.

Mr POWELL: Just to follow up on that one, can the Clerk reiterate his advice provided previously regarding questions relating to matters before the CCC and whether they are permitted to be referred to under the standing orders?

Mr Laurie: Yes. I think what you are getting to is are matters before the CCC sub judice and they are not, unless there are charges pending. The exception to that, however, is unless there is another order of the court that would have to be complied with by people as well. Subject to there not being charges pending and subject to there not being another order of the court, then it would not been an issue.

Mr POWELL: Again to the Clerk, what is the total budgeted resources for parliamentary committee operations in the financial year 2022-23?

Mr Laurie: The total budgeted amount for committees is \$5,498,475. That includes about 37.2 FTEs.

Mr POWELL: Just to follow up on that one, with reference to those resources, Mr Clerk, being expended on parliamentary committees and the implicitly critical comments in both the interim and final reports of Peter Coaldrake's review of accountability in the Queensland public sector—just for reference, page 2 of that review refers to the trivialisation of parliamentary committees; page 30 to this committee failing to take up opportunities for much needed reform to the office of the integrity committee; page 59 refers to the lack of flow-freeing estimates process—

CHAIR: Order! We are getting into a preamble here. I do note that you are taking the opportunity to make sure that you are justifying the question, but that is a bit too long. I ask if you could put the question to the Clerk.

Mr POWELL: I was about to put the question; thank you, Mr Chair. Clerk, are parliamentary committees adequately resourced?

Mr Laurie: As I demonstrated earlier by talking about the budget of committees, it is a substantial budget that is provided in terms of resourcing and budgets, so I do not think resourcing is particularly an issue.

Mr POWELL: Can the Clerk confirm whether Queensland taxpayers would be obtaining value for money from that resourcing of parliamentary committees in terms of accountability?

CHAIR: With respect, at some point the question does go over into—I will put the question to the Clerk as an experienced witness on these matters.

Mr Laurie: If we go back to the 2011 review of parliamentary committees which, I suppose, set the tone for our current parliamentary committee system, when I look back at that review what I see is a committee system that was designed to do two things. The first was to improve the legislative process because we had failed every benchmark for legislative processes which were designed by international bodies. We changed the system of legislation in our House so that legislation was introduced into the House and went to the committees for detailed review and report and came back to the House. I think the legislative process has improved dramatically as a result of the parliamentary committee system and so I would say in relation to part A it has been a huge success. I think the people of Queensland are getting very good value for money out of committees with regard to the legislative process. It is not perfect, but I think that that has been largely successful.

Part B of that review would be around the issue of the secondary part of committees, and the equally important part of committees, which is about the accountability of government, ensuring government is accountable. I think that in relation to that we have a long way to go. I think that the parliamentary committees have not necessarily been discharging some of the things that were envisaged in that 2011 review, in particular around things like public works and public accounts and the review of Auditor-General's reports in a proper and adequate way. I think we have a long way to go with regard to that accountability aspect and the work of committees.

Mr POWELL: On that, to the Clerk again, how could the parliamentary committee system be improved to better ensure accountability, picking up that aspect that you just raised of the second role of the committees?

Mr Laurie: I do not know if I can give you a magic bullet and I think it is something that the parliament itself has to work on to some degree. The Committee of the Legislative Assembly was, I suppose, created to look at this issue of constant review. I think that the Committee of the Legislative Assembly is the requisite place for these issues to be discussed in an open forum to try and work out how it could be improved. I think there are a lot of people who would have different ideas about how it could be improved and I do think that what we would have to do is review what has happened since 2011 and what has worked and what has not worked. For example, I do not think, in a general sense, the estimates process that we are having is working as well as what was envisaged it would in 2011 and in some respects the system that was in place prior to 2011 may in fact be better because things may have gotten even worse in terms of the overall estimates process. However, I do not have a magic bullet and I think it is the subject of a review.

CHAIR: Just on that, as the Clerk has said, this is generally a matter for the CLA, of which the Economics and Governance Committee is not, so in general this is something that the CLA could discuss and not necessarily something for the economics committee, but we do have an experienced witness before it.

Mr POWELL: Clerk, page 70 of the final report of the Coaldrake review quotes you, among others, as being supportive of increased independence of key integrity bodies regarding their human and monetary resources. Could you expand on what led you to this view and did you provide any advice to Professor Coaldrake on how this increased independence may be implemented?

Mr Laurie: Yes, I did make a submission to Mr Coaldrake's review. It was my view that when looking at all of these various bodies they should be reviewed in terms of some sort of methodology in terms of a process by which we looked at what exactly each one of these bodies did and then how the workings of that body could be best ensured by various processes. In my view, if you are going to have independent bodies you need to look at things like terms of appointment; you need to look at budgetary independence or at least transmissibility; you need to have independence in terms of resourcing so that you are not dependent on other bodies, per se. There was a whole range of things.

The methodology, to be honest with you, that I had in my submission was too detailed for me to go into here, but it would lead to, I suppose—and it is nothing new under the sun—the sorts of things that were touched on by Yearbury, and I think there were previous reform reports in the past like Chesterman and others like that. The other thing that I think is important is consistency—consistency in the way that the people who lead these bodies are appointed, consistency in their terms of appointment, consistency in how matters of misconduct are dealt with when they touch upon these bodies. I do not think there should be any body, any agency, which is immune from review by somebody. How that system is set up is important as well. It is quite complex.

CHAIR: We are straying out of the examination of the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022 and I ask that the questions be focused on the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022. The Coaldrake report obviously had a wideranging remit—about the entirety of the Public Service. Let us have questions focused on the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022.

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, you made reference to the external repairs to the annexe building and the internal refurbishment. I have a question around ensuring that the parliamentary staff are kept physically safe during that construction period but also their overall wellbeing, given what I anticipate will be far more than 12 months worth of working in a worksite. Could you outline what steps are being taken to ensure parliamentary staff are both safe and well?

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you for the question. I can say certainly as a former minister for industrial relations who had carriage over workplace health and safety in Queensland that it has never left me. I have always had the view of people being able to go to work safely and go home to their families. In terms of the worksite itself, we will be governed by the legislative arrangements that are in place. I think it should be said up-front that that is absolutely the case.

In terms of the way that a refurbishment like this affects individuals, clearly there are changes that will occur because we will be without certain spaces for a substantial period of time. That does impact on people who may be in a casualised work environment perhaps in terms of events, but we are working to ensure that those things are continually looked at. There is probably a bit of a catch 22 there in terms of the way we are expanding our operations into our Strangers Dining Room. We believe that there are opportunities for people to pick up additional hours with the expansion of those programs

where we may lose them for some events. But looking at the parliament and looking at different event spaces, it is absolutely very important to ensure that we understand that we have to continue to operate as a parliament. This is an interruption; it is an intervention. It is going to be around for about 12 months.

Obviously, as a member yourself, you are aware that we are dealing with members' accommodation in those terms, but clearly what we do know is that much is going to come down to the way that our contractors deal with the build itself. Are there impacts? Yes. Have there been impacts already? Absolutely. We have no doubt about that. Some of those things may include things like noise in the workplace, and we have to deal with those to ensure that staff are continually monitored and spoken with, understanding that we are both carrying on a workplace and having a worksite. If we can do both of those things, I think we are going to be in a much better position. Ultimately, though, what we will do is be responsive. We will be nimble. We will react accordingly. I think that is the most appropriate thing we can do. Ultimately, I as Speaker and the Clerk as the chief executive officer of the parliament will deal with this as we would deal with most other situations, and that is making sure that we listen to what our staff are telling us and to what our contractors are telling us, to make sure that the workplace is both safe and conducive to ensuring their wellbeing.

CHAIR: We have some time left. Member for Maiwar?

Mr BERKMAN: I will put my first question to the Clerk, if I might. You will remember that at last year's estimates I asked you how much it costs to run these hearings and, while were you not able to give an exact amount, I think you said that there are a lot of sunk cost—effectively, the cost is already borne by the parliament. My question is: does it follow that providing additional time for questioning during estimates would put very little extra burden on the parliamentary budget, whether that was running multiple committees in parallel over the seven days or having extra estimates days throughout the year?

Mr Laurie: Running estimates in parallel committees, for example—we have done that in years gone past. I think that happened in 2013 or 2014 or thereabouts. There would be marginally more cost to running parallel committees because we would have to duplicate staffing arrangements and things like that, but in terms of our overall budget we are not talking enormous amounts of funds. The simple answer to your question is that the additional cost of additional hours or additional days or concurrent hearings is not what I would call a huge sum. It would be some impost, but it would not be a huge sum.

Mr BERKMAN: Referring again back to your answer in last year's estimates, I think you described that much of the value we get from estimates might be from departments preparing, reflecting on their performance, and the prospect of them being scared about what they might be asked. Touching on your comments this morning about the quality and function of these estimates hearings, is it the case that the benefits of that reflection, preparation and questioning would be even greater if there was more time in these hearings for non-government questions, fewer Dorothy Dixers?

CHAIR: Hopefully the word 'scared' is not supported by evidence.

Mr Laurie: I do not know if the word 'fear' is what I used.

Mr BERKMAN: I could read the transcript for you. I have it right here.

Mr Laurie: Maybe I did.

CHAIR: He was just reflecting on himself personally.

Mr Laurie: I do reinforce what I said last year about the fact that, in my view, the value of this process is as much about the preparation and the self-reflection that goes on as the hearings themselves. I would reinforce that. Logic would tend to say that if there was more in the way of that oversight in terms of extra hours, different days or different formats then it would probably impact the same. I think the trick would be to find the tipping point where resources are not wasted overly, because there is a lot of time and effort that goes into the preparation for estimates. We do not want it to be so much of a burden that it becomes a wasteful exercise, but we want it to be of sufficient burden that it actually achieves the purposes.

Mr BERKMAN: Just a quick follow-up, Chair, on precisely on that point?

CHAIR: I am advised that unfortunately the time is expired. Member for Maiwar?

Mr BERKMAN: Thank you very much, Chair. Very briefly, in your view are we yet at that tipping point or would we benefit from more time in estimates?

CHAIR: I might put that as a rhetorical in that there is something subjective and opinion based in it.

Mr BERKMAN: He is a very experienced witness.

CHAIR: He is a very experienced witness.

Mr Laurie: Maybe that is something for the CLA, Chair.

CHAIR: I note that the member creatively used that to get that opinion up. I might turn now to the member for Macalister.

Mrs McMAHON: Mr Speaker, I refer to your response to question on notice No. 1 outlining the planned annexe refurbishment project. While construction is underway, members are being provided with interim office accommodation on the ground floor of the annexe. Could you outline the long-term plan for this area once members return to their annexe offices? What benefits will be delivered on that level?

Mr SPEAKER: As the committee is aware, the annexe refurbishment program will deliver an upgrade and repair of the external facade of the Parliamentary Annexe which, of course, is about increasing safety as well as internal upgrades, which I am sure are of much greater interest to members appearing at the committee hearing today. Those are going to be in terms of bedrooms and offices on floors 9 through to 23. That will include a range of things such as new carpeting, repainting and the replacement of aged soft furnishings.

Last year when I appeared before the committee I focused on a range of planning and ancillary works that were needed to ensure that we could commence as quickly as possible in July of this year, in terms of the major capital works. A key element of this preparation work, of course, was the relocation of Financial Services and Property Services work units to level 6 to accommodate an interim members' office centre on level 3, given that individual members' annexe offices will not be accessible during the entirety of the construction phrase.

At the outset, I wish to thank all honourable members for their patience and cooperation in terms of vacating the vicinity, as they were required to do over the past month. That was a difficult thing because, as I can appreciate being a fifth-term member, people accumulate a lot of stuff. Members visiting the temporary office accommodation on level 3 will note that the offices that were previously occupied by the Parliamentary Service itself, that is, the finance and property teams, have been demolished and replaced with some larger rooms, basically to have structural construction and services as a base build, if you like. In practical terms, those spaces have been fitted out with temporary carpet, lighting and office furniture to provide office accommodation for the period of the refurbishment.

At the completion of the annexe refurbishment, when members return to their new annexe offices, it is proposed that the base build will then be transformed into three new large committee hearing rooms and a members' lounge. There are a number of benefits to doing this as we will be able to maximise the opportunities in terms of the location. As members would be aware, level 3 is the ground level at Parliament House and it is where the public will come through a screening process for security. It means they will be able to enter immediately on that floor without having to traverse lifts or other things, which causes both time delays and additional security requirements. To be able to walk in on the ground floor and into a public hearing space is going to be a very beneficial.

In terms of size, the proposed hearing rooms on level 3 will have significantly more capacity than the current largest committee room, which is committee room 3 on level 6. We believe that there is going to be more opportunity for the public to engage and to be in the public gallery, if you want to use that term, for hearings. As I mentioned, in terms of security it means that we will not have people travelling throughout the parliamentary precinct and into various levels. That is a really important thing. It is going to be a saving in terms of time and also peace of mind in that people can come into the public space on level 3. There is also going to be a dedicated public broadcast control centre, which is about managing proceedings, also located on level 3.

We believe that there is a really significant benefit to the way that we scrutinise both our legislation and the select functions that the committees have. We believe that this is going to mean an increase to the current arrangements and so I see nothing but positives coming from this, member for Macalister.

Mr TANTARI: I would also like to refer to the major annexe refurbishment program that is underway. From communications issued by the Clerk I am aware that the level 7 outdoor deck areas will be closed for the duration of the project. I assume that this closure will have impacts on the normal operations of Catering Services and the ability to host various community groups. Can the Speaker outline whether alternative event venues have been considered to reduce the impact of the level 7 closure?

Mr SPEAKER: As I briefly touched on in a previous response, clearly there are going to be impacts. There is no doubt about that. It is correct that the level 7 outdoor deck areas will be unavailable basically from the middle of August of this year until the completion of the project. Under the strategy that we are looking at, I am advised that level 7 will be utilised by the principal contractor as their staging area. Essentially, it is where they will base their site office, their meeting rooms, lunchrooms and amenities. Around 120 contractors will be working on this project. In addition, level 7 will be used as an area to enable access to the annexe tower for materials that need to be hoisted in and out via a large crane, which will be located on the ground level.

I am aware that level 7 is a very popular space. Obviously it is very important for members to deal with stakeholders and to be able to provide opportunities to have hold large events. There are no other locations within the precinct that are able to accommodate the same number of people and certainly we recognise that they will not have the same views. We appreciate that.

Certainly the catering team is very much looking forward to enhancing and utilising alternate spaces. One of those is the level 3 colonnade that is adjacent to the Speaker's Green. That area has the largest outdoor capacity. We will rearrange furniture and do a range of things to ensure that it will be an attractive alternative for groups looking to have the kind of outdoor event that we have all been accustomed to. We also know that the catering team will be providing new platter-and-serve barbecue options, which will be available in that space for members wishing to host community groups.

I know that all members, no matter on what side of the parliament they sit—whether they are on the government, opposition or cross benches—certainly will be able to have different opportunities going forward. Again, I thank members for their patience and their corporation during this very difficult time.

CHAIR: Mr Speaker, looking at the strategic objectives on page 1 of the SDS, can you outline any specific initiatives to support members in the tasks that they have to do that have been recently delivered or are planned for 2021-22?

Mr SPEAKER: When we talk about our Electorate Office Technology Model, we call it the EOTM. I will use that acronym going forward because it is a mouthful. Through this model, we have achieved an upgrade to each electorate office's internet connection, which has gone from 20 to 30 megabits per second to 100 megabits per second. To date, 22 electorate office sites have been upgraded, with the remainder on track to be completed by October this year.

There is the establishment of a four gig backup for all electorate offices that basically automatically kicks in to provide continuous internet access if the 100 megabit per second link is disrupted. Those links were finalised in December 2021. We have implemented greater security controls through the deployment of an end-point detection and response platform to detect and quarantine potentially malicious emails and computer viruses. I think people would be very aware that the parliament is a significantly attractive target for those sorts of cyber attacks. I have made it very plain, particularly in the House, why our security is so important.

Finally, there is the migration of office productivity tools to Office 365, including the provisioning of Microsoft Teams for video conferencing and collaboration. I should mention that Microsoft Teams was a really important thing for us, although we never had to use it, when we established essentially a model for a makeshift video-conferencing parliament due to COVID. That was going to be one of the platforms that we were able to use.

Through the wi-fi and switch replacement, members will also receive greater connectivity whilst at the precinct and a seamless experience whilst moving between the precinct and their electorate offices. From a user point of view, it will basically appear that the member is at the same venue at both locations. That obviously provides a whole range of consistency and configurations that will allow that. The project is on track to be completed by August this year.

In terms of the travel claims app, in 2019-20 work commenced to digitise and automate a number of existing manual processes related to members' allowances. As a regional member myself, those things come into particular focus. The new travel claims app went live in May last year and now provides members and electorate staff with online portals for claims to be prepared, reviewed and submitted by members and/or their electorate staff digitally. That is able to be done from any location via a range of portable devices including phone apps.

In terms of where we are going now, in 2022-23 the Parliamentary Service is looking to build on this success by re-engineering and digitising a number of its other services and key business processes. At present the Parliamentary Service still uses paper based forms and manual steps for many of those business processes. Of course, this does affect our efficiency and effectiveness as an organisation, so it is really important that we continue to work on that.

In May this year the Clerk approved the engagement of an external consultant to provide a broader review of the current digital maturity of the Parliamentary Service's business processes. That also looked at identifying key areas and systems that can be improved. Overall, the work is there to provide members with an efficient and certainly a less cumbersome service experience where interactions are digital, streamlined and more efficient. Whilst a final report is not due until August, it is anticipated that the key priority areas for digitisation will include a raft of payroll services. That includes things like leave requests, permanent and casual staff time sheets as well as overtime claims using our existing IT systems.

Finally, in terms of our parliamentary information management system for activities that support the chamber and the work of committees, which I know is of interest to the Economics and Governance Committee, the Parliamentary Service has historically created its own bespoke IT applications. This has been to support specific parliamentary activities such as e-petitions, tabled papers, the production of *Hansard* and of course the recording of parliamentary work. This was due to the unique nature of these activities and the limited technology solutions that were readily available in the market at that time. Over the next 12 months we expect that we will be able to explore a range of different vendor provided solutions being used. This is part of the reason we look at other parliaments and try to understand what they are doing as well. As members can appreciate, it is a pretty niche market. We are certainly looking over time to replacing these bespoke IT applications with ones that can deliver much greater value and efficiency.

The key activities in the next 12 months will include exploring effective ways to collect and analyse committee submissions in digital formats and, obviously, the way we produce *Hansard*. That is a completely separate conversation, but a lot of work has been going on in that space which we believe will be very important to better outcomes in terms of *Hansard* and ensuring that people watching our live stream will be able to access that in a way, regardless of whether they have any visual or hearing impairments. We expect that those things will assist in terms of accessibility for the parliament.

Mrs McMAHON: Page 1 of the SDS makes reference to the purpose of the Parliamentary Service to independently support, promote and strengthen the parliament. Can the Speaker outline any recent planned initiatives to help ensure that the Parliamentary Service remains a modern and effective workforce?

CHAIR: This workforce question is important, but we do not have a huge amount of time.

Mr SPEAKER: I understand that you need to wrap up. Thank you, member for Macalister; I will be very brief. The Clerk has provided a number of strategies which will include ensuring that our collective staff are focused and effective. There are a number of things in terms of our new workforce strategy. In September last year we commenced a project to review some of the key areas around our HR policies within the service. Needless to say, it was envisioned that this strategy will tend to provide significant improvements in terms of attracting and retaining the best staff, supporting people to develop their capabilities and their capacity and, of course, making sure we have, as alluded to earlier by the member for Glass House, a safe working environment. We are constantly going out and speaking with staff in terms of providing questionnaires and those opportunities to them. I say to people quite often that being Speaker is great, but one of the most important skills of Speaker is listening. I believe that that is important for me and important for the Clerk, to make sure we do that.

One thing I wish to highlight is our parliamentary graduate intern program, which has been operating since 2016. It is a terrific program which has allowed so many people to really experience something they otherwise never would have had access to. In June this year we started a new pilot program for the graduate intern program. Now, four individual graduates will be selected through a formal recruitment process. Over the two years, each graduate will progress through a formal six-month rotation in each of the four divisions. This is very much in line with happens in the broader Public Service. I was part of that graduate program in the Public Service before I was elected to parliament. That has been immeasurably beneficial and supportive of those graduates. To have that very similar program through the parliament is amazing. I am very pleased to see that. It will be open to any tertiary students currently in the last year of their course program. We hope that people will make that application and see that the Queensland parliament is not only a wonderful institution but also an employer of choice.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. We now are coming to the end of the allocated time for the committee's examination of the proposed expenditure for the area of responsibility administered by the Speaker. I note that no questions were taken on notice and that there probably is not anything you wish to revisit.

Mr SPEAKER: No. It is one of those strange years where I think things are going pretty well.

CHAIR: Early days, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: Not for me, Mr Chair!

CHAIR: I thank Mr Speaker, the Clerk and the parliamentary officers for their attendance. I know that you have taken a big amount of time out of your day and the work you would normally do. Is there anything you want to add before the end of the session, Mr Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: I want to ensure that I say thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee. As I said, I take the estimates process very seriously. I think it is very important that we are able to have this kind of scrutiny across the Parliamentary Service as well as all of the portfolio areas that will be examined. I thank the Clerk, George Hasanakos from my office, as well as Michael Ries and James Robertson, for being at the front table as well. I also thank all of the members of the Parliamentary Service who have helped support the work we have been doing not only for this estimates hearing but also across the board.

I hope the process throughout estimates this year is fruitful. I hope that it is done in the spirit in which estimates was created—that is, to ensure scrutiny is there. Tough questions need to be asked. At the same time, people who are responsible for various portfolios need to be provided the opportunity to answer. I hope that it is done in that spirit. I thank the committee for its time this morning.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Proceedings suspended from 9.48 am to 10.00 am.

ESTIMATES—ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE—PREMIER AND CABINET; OLYMPICS AND PARALYMPIC GAMES**In Attendance**

Hon. A Palaszczuk, Premier and Minister for the Olympics

Mr J Murphy, Chief of Staff

Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Ms R Hunter, Director-General

Mr M Carey, Acting Associate Director-General, Cabinet Office

Mr T Linley, Director, Economic Policy

Office of the Integrity Commissioner

Mr T Keyes, Acting Integrity Commissioner

Public Service Commission

Mr R Setter, Chief Executive

Queensland Audit Office

Ms K Johnson, Deputy Auditor-General



CHAIR: Good morning. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill for the portfolio areas of the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. I am Linus Power, the member for Logan and chair of the committee. With me here today is Mr Ray Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach and deputy chair. The other members of the committee are: Ms Melissa McMahon, the member for Macalister; Mr Andrew Powell, the member for Glass House, who is substituting today for Mr Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera; Mr Dan Purdie, the member for Ninderry; and Mr Adrian Tantari, the member for Hervey Bay. The following non-committee members have sought and been granted leave to participate in the hearing in accordance with the standing orders: Mr David Crisafulli, the member for Broadwater; Mr Michael Berkman, the member of Maiwar; Mr Jarrod Bleijie, the member for Kawana; Mr David Janetzki, the member for Toowoomba South; Mr Robbie Katter, the member for Traeger; Mr Jon Krause, the member for Scenic Rim; Mr Tim Mander, the member for Everton; Dr Amy MacMahon, the member for South Brisbane; Mr Sam O'Connor, the member for Bonney; and Ms Fiona Simpson, the member for Maroochydore.

The committee will examine the Premier's portfolio areas until 1.30 pm and will suspend proceedings during this time for a break from 11.45 am to 12 noon. I remind those present today that the hearing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament apply to this hearing. I refer specifically to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion.

In respect of statutory authorities, standing order 180(2) provides that a member may ask any question that the committee determines will assist it in its examination of the relevant Appropriation Bill or otherwise assist the committee to determine whether public funds are being efficiently spent or appropriate public guarantees are being provided. I intend to guide the proceedings so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members.

While mobile phone use is not ordinarily permitted in the public gallery, an exception has been made for staff who are assisting our witnesses here today and who have been permitted the use of their devices for this purpose. I do ask, however, that all phones and electronic devices be switched to silent mode to avoid any interruptions to the proceedings. Also, I remind you that food and drink are not permitted in the chamber.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the Premier, the director-general, officials and departmental officers and members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials and advisors to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the Premier or the

director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of Premier and Cabinet and the Olympic and Paralympic Games open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Premier, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you and good morning. Our government has always been and will always focus on delivering what Queenslanders need: good jobs, better services and a great lifestyle. Our world-leading health response and recovery plan has seen Queensland with the best economic performance in the nation. We have created 219,400 more jobs—the best performance in Australia. Domestic economic growth is five per cent, compared with 4.8 per cent nationally. We have record exports of goods of \$108.9 billion. In fact, CommSec reports that over the past year Queensland had annual growth rates that exceeded the national average in all eight economic indicators. Cuts to payroll tax for small and medium family businesses are an incentive to grow their workforce. Domestic tourism is back to pre-pandemic levels. Given the dark times of the past two years, this is a report card about which all Queenslanders can be proud.

This is not to say that we have been immune to the economic headwinds affecting most communities around the world. High fuel costs, caused by the war in Ukraine, has led to higher prices for the most basic supermarket items, and there are rising interest rates. The budget keeps our focus on easing cost-of-living pressures with \$6.8 billion in concessions towards cutting the cost of health care, energy, water, transport and housing. It includes a \$175 cost-of-living rebate on electricity bills, taking to \$575 the amount paid in dividends to Queenslanders who have wisely maintained their electricity assets in public hands.

We have embarked on the biggest hospital building and expansion program Queensland has ever seen. Our \$10 billion investment includes three new hospitals at Coomera, Bundaberg and Toowoomba, a new Queensland cancer centre plus 11 hospitals to be expanded around the state from Cairns to the Gold Coast. This will be an extra 2,509 beds across Queensland. I am also proud that the operating budget includes the largest mental health investment in our history and continues funding for an additional 9,475 staff in this term of government.

Women's safety also remains a top priority. The budget includes \$363 million to respond to the first report of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce to continue to rollout specialist domestic and family violence courts, support services and housing.

The budget invests a record \$16.5 billion in school and early childhood education. Another five new schools will open in 2025-26 in Caboolture, Caloundra, Flagstone, Ripley and Bahrs Scrub. I know that school communities will also welcome the \$20 million for tuckshop and playground upgrades.

The budget builds on our record in providing water to regional communities with another \$510 million, including more than \$300 million for the Toowoomba to Warwick pipeline.

Of course, no discussion about Queensland's future is complete without the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Just last week, the makers of *Bluey* reached out to see if they can help design the Olympic mascot. While we are a fair way from those decisions, it is an example of the kind of homegrown talent we have that will make the games the best ever. That includes giving our children the chance to realise their Olympic dreams and give sport a go. More than 4,000 children are registered for our You for 2032 program—the biggest talent search Australia has ever seen; turning the children of today into the Olympians of the future. The budget includes our \$100 million Go For Gold Fund—expanding and improving sporting facilities in Queensland schools, particularly those in regional and remote Queensland. The Olympics gives us the chance to showcase Queensland's fabulous lifestyle.

Our infrastructure budget, with two-thirds dedicated to outside the south-east, will connect more communities and businesses. There is \$262 million to expand our protected area estate. There is more than \$1.7 million to continue recovery, reconstruction and resilience programs. There is \$324 million to accelerate climate action and resource recovery initiatives.

Today, I can announce that our government's commitment to good jobs, better services and the great Queensland lifestyle will be enshrined in an updated statement of the Queensland government's objectives for the community—great jobs that lead to good careers, jobs that you can build a life from, better services to make the most of living in Queensland and protecting our great Queensland lifestyle.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Premier. I now move to questions. The deputy chair has indicated that the member for Broadwater has a question.

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. I refer to the SDS at page 1 regarding strong and accountable government. There are reports the former integrity commissioner was investigating Labor aligned lobbyist and their influence on the government. The former integrity commissioner had offered to stay until this estimates hearing. Why was the former integrity commissioner not allowed to stay and answer questions?

CHAIR: I note that the question contains a preamble and also that evidence should be put forward with regard to questions. I put the question to the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: My understanding is that the former integrity commissioner wrote a letter and it was deemed to be an effective ending of her contract. I want to thank her for her service. As I have said publicly before, I have always found her to provide very good advice whenever I requested it. It was always timely in coming back. Based on the Solicitor General's advice, Dr Stepanov was advised that, as a matter of law, her resignation took effect according to its terms.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Despite the former integrity commissioner advising of her resignation six months ago and the Premier saying in January, 'We will advertise and have a new Integrity Commissioner,' a permanent replacement has not been appointed. If transparency and integrity truly matters to the government, why has a new Integrity Commissioner not been appointed?

CHAIR: Premier, I give you the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I think the Leader of the Opposition is well aware that the position was advertised. There is a selection process that has to be gone through. I will keep the Economics and Governance Committee updated as I am obliged to.

Ms SIMPSON: Premier, what vetting was undertaken of the Acting Integrity Commissioner?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I might get the director-general to answer that, because my understanding is that the Acting Integrity Commissioner was appointed to fill in the role until the permanent replacement of the Integrity Commissioner. Director-General?

Ms SIMPSON: That would have been the Premier's decision in regard to the vetting.

CHAIR: Order, member for Maroochydore!

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Premier.

CHAIR: No. Order! With respect—

Ms SIMPSON: It is not a policy question.

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore—

Ms SIMPSON: My question is for the Premier to answer.

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore, you might well be aware that under the standing orders the Premier can refer questions to any departmental officer who has better information. That is directly in the standing orders. I will not have you interjecting in this manner. Seek the call. The Premier has referred the matter to the director-general. I want to see some order, member for Maroochydore. It is perfectly within the standing orders for the Premier to refer the question to the director-general.

Ms Hunter: Typically there are acting arrangements in place. Typically there are two candidates eligible to act. On that basis, there has been a standing acting arrangement. The appointment of Tony Keyes as an alternate acting arrangement was undertaken to ensure the office could continue to be staffed in the absence of the availability of Mr Mark Glen, who had previously been appointed by the Governor in Council to act as the Integrity Commissioner for a period of six months.

Ms SIMPSON: Does the Premier agree that independence and the perception of independence is vital in this role?

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is asking for an opinion. What I will say is that we want to get the best candidate for the job. That is why there has been a national process to look at getting a new Integrity Commissioner. I look forward to resolving that process as soon as possible.

Ms SIMPSON: Premier, then why did you appoint a former Labor staffer as Acting Integrity Commissioner?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am not aware that this person was a former Labor staffer. My understanding was that the person—

Ms SIMPSON: We were able to find out. What vetting did the Premier do?

CHAIR: Order! The Premier is consulting with the director-general. This is perfectly within standing orders. It is out of order to interject. You well know that as a former Speaker. The Premier has the call. We will wait for the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am advised by the director-general that Mr Keyes was seconded from the Central Land Council to the office of then senator Nick Bolkus to work on the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Bill for approximately six weeks in 1999, being 23 years ago. My understanding is that there are no issues arising from that secondment with respect to Mr Keyes' current acting appointment. Mr Keyes is the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel and has previously been a senior deputy crown solicitor for successive governments. I understand that the member for Maroochydore has never been a minister. My understanding is that Mr Keyes has worked in these roles under successive governments. If you had a problem with it then, you should have raised it then.

Ms SIMPSON: Premier—

CHAIR: Order! I remind members that we had a special briefing from the Deputy Clerk. Members are reminded that they should be able to authenticate facts in their questions and not put forward facts which they cannot authenticate.

Ms SIMPSON: Thank you, Chair. Actually, the Premier has confirmed that the government knew. It has been authenticated by the government.

CHAIR: Order! Member for Maroochydore, you know that arguing is out of order. You are trying to reinterpret the facts now. I ask you to put questions without significant preambles, which is the other point the Deputy Clerk put to us to keep an eye on. Member for Maroochydore, ask your question.

Ms SIMPSON: Premier, how can a former Labor staffer be best placed to act in this role as Acting Integrity Commissioner?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I find that offensive.

CHAIR: I have just made some comments about authenticating facts. I will put the question to the Premier because the Premier is perfectly willing to refute it.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said, the director-general just advised me that the person was seconded. It is not unusual for people to be seconded to ministers' offices for a short period of time.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Ms SIMPSON: It was an opposition senator's office; it was not a ministerial office.

CHAIR: With respect—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Well—

CHAIR: Hold on, Premier. This is now the fourth time the member for Maroochydore has interjected. I counsel the member for Broadwater, the Leader of the Opposition. You are interjecting as well and arguing across the table. I give the call to the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I think the facts speak very clearly. The person has been the Parliamentary Counsel, has an understanding of legal issues and can fulfil those duties in a temporary arrangement until there is a permanent appointment.

Ms SIMPSON: Premier, in a state of over five million people, the only person who can fill the role is someone who worked for the Labor Party?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I find that offensive and I reject the premise of the question.

CHAIR: We also know that the premise of the question is not correct from the information we have already been given. It is really disappointing that you continue to do this. Premier, do you have anything to add?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, I do have something to say. This is typical of this opposition that seeks to attack public servants in our state. The Leader of the Opposition promised a fresh start. It is absolutely no different to the way in which the Leader of the Opposition operated—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am very respectful when they ask the questions. I would like the same in return—not mumbling.

CHAIR: The member for Hervey Bay has a point of order.

Mr TANTARI: I raise a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition keeps talking over the Premier. I think it is inappropriate.

Ms SIMPSON: Chair, I would like to call the Acting Integrity Commissioner.

CHAIR: You may have noticed, member for Maroochydore, that I had a point of order from the member for Hervey Bay. He sought the call.

Mr TANTARI: Chair, the Premier has the call and the Leader of the Opposition keeps speaking over the top of her. I cannot hear the answer.

CHAIR: The point of order is in order. This is now the seventh time that I have heard the Leader of the Opposition interject. I counsel the Leader of the Opposition. If you wish to get the answers, stop interjecting through the answers. Member for Maroochydore—

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to finish my answer, Chair.

CHAIR: Premier, I apologise.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am advised that Tony Keyes performed in his position as Parliamentary Counsel under the Newman government as well. No issues were raised back then when he was performing that role. This is an acting role until there is a permanent appointment.

Ms SIMPSON: I would like to address a question to the Acting Integrity Commissioner. That is the role we are talking about here—the Acting Integrity Commissioner. I would like to ask a question of the Acting Integrity Commissioner, Tony Keyes.

CHAIR: I call the Acting Integrity Commissioner.

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Acting Integrity Commissioner. Given your former role as a Labor Party staffer in an opposition member's office, how can you give confidence to non-government members that politically sensitive information is safe with you?

CHAIR: On the point of authentication of facts, I think this is now the third time I have counselled about this. Mr Keyes will be able to answer this.

Mr Keyes: I have never been a Labor Party staffer. At the relevant time I was an employee of the Central Land Council, which is a Commonwealth statutory authority. The director of the Land Council made my services available and directed me to relocate to then senator Bolkus's office in order to provide legal and policy advice in respect of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Bill, which was then under consideration in the Commonwealth parliament.

On the second part of the member's question, I would simply say that I have always striven to perform my public duties with utmost professionalism and integrity and in a strictly nonpartisan way. I have done that in my previous roles and I intend to do it in the current role.

CHAIR: We have twice now had absolute confirmation that the assertion in the questions is not correct.

Ms SIMPSON: With respect, Mr Chair, I am referencing a publicly published document.

CHAIR: I will not broker argument! As the member for Maroochydore well knows, arguing with the chair is grossly out of standing orders.

Ms SIMPSON: You are actually prone to reiterating the facts.

CHAIR: Order! I call for order! I want to make it clear that I will not broker questions that make that assertion again. I call for order and decorum from the member for Maroochydore. My understanding is that the Leader of the Opposition has a question.

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is also to Mr Keyes. I want to know about your current role. Can I ask how you approach that role and if you have been given any indication of how long you will be continuing to serve in it?

CHAIR: I give the call to Mr Keyes, Acting Integrity Commissioner.

Mr Keyes: I was approached by the director-general and asked whether I would be available to act in the role for a short period of time pending finalisation of recruitment to the role on a substantive basis. I had not been a candidate in that process.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Keyes. Leader of the Opposition, do you have a follow-up question?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Yes, I do. How many staff does the Acting Integrity Commissioner currently have in the office?

Mr Keyes: Four.

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater, do you have a follow-up question?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Yes, I do. Mr Keyes, it was reported at one stage that the office was down to just two people. Based on your experience, how would that be in terms of the staffing level? Would two be an adequate staffing level to perform your duties?

Mr Keyes: I have only been in the role for eight days, so it is early days. Members would be aware that the commissioner has three broad areas of functions under the act. My impression is that two FTEs to discharge the breadth of those functions would be quite difficult.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Keyes. The member for Maroochydore has a question.

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the director-general. The interim Coaldrake review identified that a director-general was keeping information from their minister to provide plausible deniability. Was that referring to yourself as a director-general?

Ms Hunter: Thank you for the question.

CHAIR: Order! Order! I will allow the question because it is only worse to put that assertion without the question being answered.

Ms Hunter: I think that is properly a question for Professor Coaldrake, but I can assure you that is not my standard operating procedure.

Ms SIMPSON: I have another question for the director-general. The Premier said in April that Professor Coaldrake could provide the identity to Ms Hunter and they would be counselled. Has Professor Coaldrake given the director-general this information?

Ms Hunter: I am sorry, I would ask you to repeat that question. It was unclear.

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore, can you put the question again, please?

Ms SIMPSON: Yes, it is a follow-on question from the previous one about the director-general's—

CHAIR: We understand.

Ms SIMPSON: My question is: the Premier said in April that Professor Coaldrake could provide the identity to Ms Hunter and they would be counselled. Has Professor Coaldrake given the director-general this information?

Ms Hunter: Thank you for the question. That is clearly a matter for Professor Coaldrake.

CHAIR: You have the ability to ask a follow-up question.

Ms SIMPSON: If I could clarify: that is a no then?

CHAIR: Do you have a follow-up question?

Ms SIMPSON: The question has not been answered. Has Professor Coaldrake given the director-general this information as referenced by the Premier's statement from April?

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore, I have counselled you before about arguing with the witness. I now formally, and with great regret, after consulting warn you at this time. I ask you not to argue with the witnesses in that way. Put questions. Member for Maroochydore, do you have a follow-up question?

Ms SIMPSON: I put the question: has Professor Coaldrake given the director-general this information?

Ms Hunter: Thank you for the question. As I said, that would be a matter for Professor Coaldrake.

Mr STEVENS: Mr Chair, I have a point of order.

CHAIR: There is a point of order from the deputy chair. I do note that we are at the ninth interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. I am counting.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chair, you are doing exactly as you did last year. You run the clock down—

CHAIR: Do you have a point of order?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Yes, Mr Chair.

Mr STEVENS: I do.

CHAIR: We are dealing firstly with the deputy chair's point of order.

Mr STEVENS: My point of order is that the question is a direct, straightforward yes or no question and it should be answered by the director-general.

CHAIR: The question has been put to the director-general and it has been answered.

Mr CRISAFULLI: We are not going to go through this again, Mr Chair, are we? The Coaldrake report talks about the—

CHAIR: Order!

Mr CRISAFULLI:—need for transparency and accountability—

CHAIR: Order! I am calling for order! Does the Leader of the Opposition have a point of order?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I do. The question was very specific. It was not a question of Professor Coaldrake; the question was of the director-general. It is a very specific yes or no question and it should be answered.

CHAIR: I note that it is also a repetition of the question. The director-general has already answered the question. We will move on to the next question topic, there being no point of order. Are there any other questions from the opposition?

Ms SIMPSON: I have a question for the director-general. Is the director-general aware of any ministerial staff applying pressure to individuals in her department, including herself, for responses that minimise problems or discourage written advice on difficult topics?

CHAIR: That was directed to the director-general?

Ms SIMPSON: Correct.

CHAIR: Director-general.

Ms Hunter: Thank you for the question. I have a very respectful relationship with ministerial staff in the Premier's office.

CHAIR: Thank you, Director-General. I now turn to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. The Premier said in April that Professor Coaldrake could provide the identity to Ms Hunter and that person would be counselled. Have you checked to see if that conversation has occurred?

CHAIR: This is a question to the Premier?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The director-general has made it very clear that, if Professor Coaldrake wants to raise that issue, Professor Coaldrake can. Let me also say to the Leader of the Opposition that Professor Coaldrake has had the opportunity to address the leadership board and Professor Coaldrake will be addressing the cabinet next Monday.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Another question, Mr Chair, of the director-general. If that is a no, that means there is currently a director-general who is withholding information from the minister. Because if it is a yes, then what other confidential information has been put to you? The question is very specific. Has a conversation from Professor Coaldrake that the Premier asked to occur in April occurred with you as yet, Director-General?

CHAIR: This is now the third time. With respect, I am not going to allow this. This is now the third time this question has been put to the director-general.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It is the most direct and simple question that either could answer if they believed in transparency, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Are you arguing with my ruling?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I am just asking for a yes or no.

CHAIR: You are arguing. This is now the second time I have said it is a repetitive question. You have this opportunity to ask fresh questions. Leader of the Opposition, do you have any questions that are not repetitive?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chair?

CHAIR: I said, 'Do you have a question?'

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chair, my question is to the director-general. Has the director-general sought a meeting with Professor Coaldrake to discuss the important matter of transparency and accountability and which director-general is withholding information from a minister?

Ms Hunter: Thank you for the question. The Premier invited Professor Coaldrake to make any representations to me he would wish to make in relation to that allegation. He has not done so. Can I also say that any submissions made to the Coaldrake review were made directly to Professor Coaldrake. They are not provided to this department—to my department. Professor Coaldrake has said that respecting and protecting the confidentiality of the people who have come forward is of paramount importance to him, so this is a matter for Professor Coaldrake.

CHAIR: I now turn to questions from the government. I have a question for you, Premier. Referring to page 1 of the SDS, especially the objective of protecting our lifestyle and delivering better services right across Queensland, can you outline how COVID-19 has impacted Queenslanders and any modelling or advice for Queenslanders regarding the current wave of COVID-19?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Chair. I do have some modelling to discuss with the committee here today. We know that COVID has been one of the greatest peacetime emergencies that Australia has faced. Worldwide the virus has spread to 570 million people. Almost alone in the world, Queensland was able to vaccinate the majority of our population before the virus arrived here in December last year. Again, that meant taking some pretty tough decisions, which unfortunately some people in this room did not necessarily agree with.

More than 90 per cent of Queenslanders over the age of 12 have had two doses of vaccine. More than 60 per cent have had at least one booster shot. Vaccines are our best protection against the virus. A person aged over 65 is three times less likely to die from COVID if they have had their booster in the past four months. I once again encourage everyone to get vaccinated, and that includes getting your booster shots.

Queensland is currently fighting its third wave of COVID. The virus we are fighting now is not the same as the one we started fighting 2½ years ago. The Omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5 are the dominant type, and this third wave has already reached the numbers we saw in the second wave in March. Together with the re-emergence of the flu—which is like a double assault on us—it is putting considerable strain on our hospitals. As of today, Queensland has about 66,000 active COVID cases and 878 active flu cases. I note that there was a snapshot today in the *Courier-Mail* from 10 years ago when there was a big flu epidemic here in Queensland. There are 1,170 patients in our public and private hospitals with either COVID or the flu. We now have 33 people in intensive care. This is very serious and I want Queenslanders to take it seriously. Sadly, we are reporting 21 COVID deaths in the past 24 hours, and more than 2,000 health and hospital staff are affected.

Our modelling for the pandemic is an ongoing process. Our Chief Health Officer and Queensland Health produce their own modelling. I am happy to share with you the key figures. I am advised that in the current third wave hospitalisations are likely to peak at around 1,660 cases. This is close to 600 more than we currently have and that peak is expected to be in late August. Thankfully, it does not predict an increase in patients in intensive care. I would like to table that modelling for the committee.

CHAIR: The process with tabling is that we will take the documents and examine them.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We have copies for all of the committee members. This is very serious. We know that this is going to be our largest peak, so I am urging Queenslanders when indoors where possible to please wear a mask—and you will see people on this side of the committee doing that—and where you feel you cannot socially distance. It is very important that people get that booster. The biggest impact COVID is having is on our seniors in our community. It is excellent to see that the member for Mermaid Beach has had his fourth booster. Thank you. It does not take long to go and get that fourth booster. It is absolutely critical. The member for Hervey Bay is nodding so I am assuming he has had his fourth booster.

Mr TANTARI: No. I am about to get it.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Good. Also, our seniors should think about where they are going, especially with that peak due at the end of August. Some people will make their own choices based on that modelling I have tabled today.

CHAIR: I move a motion that the document on the modelling be tabled. All those in favour? Against? That is carried.

Mr TANTARI: My question is to the Premier. With reference to page 1 of the SDS and the objective to deliver better services, can the Premier provide details on the capacity expansion programs planned to deliver 2,200 beds over six years and what benefits this will provide?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Hervey Bay. We know how important health care is right across the state. I note too that you have a large number of seniors in your electorate. We went and visited some of the vaccination centres, but now people can go to their pharmacies and their GPs to get that booster shot. It is really important in areas where there are large numbers of seniors to go and get that booster.

What we are doing is delivering the largest health infrastructure in Queensland's history. We have had 1,350 beds since 2015, and we have another 859 in current projections. I am proud that our Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan will deliver the most investment in new hospital beds in

Queensland's history of 2,200 beds, plus an acceleration program will deliver 289 other beds earlier than planned. This record investment of almost \$10 billion is needed following the impacts on public health of the largest global pandemic we have seen in our lifetime.

I take this opportunity to thank all of our hospital and health staff across our state. They are working in extraordinary times and they have been doing this for over two years. My hat goes off to each and every one of them. Every time I go into a hospital I thank them for the work they are doing. They really are our community heroes.

This investment was made possible because Queenslanders did so well in managing the COVID health response, which allowed our economy to stay open. This is about delivering better services across Queensland, protecting and enhancing our Queensland lifestyle.

As I said, we are going to be building three new hospitals: the new Bundaberg Hospital, with \$1.2 billion to deliver around 121 beds; the new Coomera Hospital, with a \$1.3 billion investment that will deliver around 404 beds; and a new Toowoomba Hospital, with \$1.3 billion to deliver 119 additional beds. We also have expansions. In Hervey Bay we have \$40 million that will deliver around 35 additional beds. During my term as Premier we have had that expansion of the Hervey Bay Hospital, which is wonderful, but this will deliver even more beds so it is wonderful to see that additional investment in your local community.

The expansions include: Cairns, with \$250 million for refurbishment and a new surgical centre that will deliver around 96 additional beds; Ipswich Hospital, a further \$710 million expansion that will deliver 200 additional beds; Logan Hospital, which the two members here will be appreciative of, a \$530 million expansion that will deliver around 112 additional beds; and Mackay, a \$250 million expansion that will deliver around 128 additional beds. In Brisbane itself, the expansions include: the PA, a \$350 million expansion with 249 beds; QEII, a \$465 million expansion that will deliver 112 additional beds; Redcliffe, over \$1 billion expansion that will deliver 204 additional beds; as well as Robina Hospital, Prince Charles and Townsville, just to name a few. We also have expanded and accelerated our rural and remote program to upgrade health facilities around the state in Moranbah, Bamaga, Normanton, Pormpuraaw, Tara and Cow Bay, and we have a very large investment in mental health.

Governments have choices. Governments can do piecemeal approaches, and I think few people would have expected the biggest investment in our hospital expansion program that the state has ever seen. Usually, you might be lucky to announce an expansion of some hospitals let alone a new hospital. We are doing the three new hospitals and expansions right across the state. Queensland Health actually sat down and briefed me and CBRC comprehensively about the timing for the beds and when they are needed. That is exactly the best planning that has been undertaken to deliver the largest health investment that the state has ever seen.

CHAIR: We have certainly seen our fair share of natural disasters of late. With reference to page 1 of the SDS, where the government is committing to protect our Queensland lifestyle, how is the government supporting Queenslanders during natural disasters like the recent South-East Queensland floods?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Chair. I know that your community was affected again with the flash flooding and the inundation that occurred around the Logan and Albert rivers, and of course that was in the Macalister electorate as well. This meant around the Logan area around 265 houses were flooded, with 33 sustaining major damage and three completely destroyed. I am advised that in total over 8,000 houses and commercial properties suffered damage from the flooding. More than 3,000 were severely damaged or totally destroyed due to a number of severe weather events during the last financial year.

From my own visits to the communities impacted, I saw firsthand the toll that these floods took on Queenslanders. For some people it is the second time that they have been flooded. I think it does not get easier, it gets tougher. That is why we have put in place one of the biggest packages for resilience and it is great to be matched by the federal government. I want to thank Major General Jake Ellwood for the work that he has done. He has finalised his report and he will be briefing our cabinet next Monday on his observations, having essentially visited nearly every council area that has been impacted.

I also want to thank our fire and SES volunteers. As with all natural disasters, our emergency services personnel have done an amazing job. We are committed to protecting Queenslanders and our communities through effectively and fully resourcing our fire and emergency services. This year's

budget will see an investment of more than \$900 million in the work of these services, including QFES, SES and Marine Rescue Service. This new and record budget will see new and upgraded facilities in key areas such as Loganlea, Townsville and Moreton Bay.

Another area is making sure we have highly trained and dedicated staff willing and prepared to step in and help Queenslanders in their hour of need. The budget supports the employment of an additional 357 firefighters over five years, which is a record investment in Fire and Emergency Services. Our budget sees a record \$43.7 million for the SES, including \$20 million to boost and enhance their operational capability and to support frontline volunteers. Once again, I want to thank everyone.

I would like to mention to the committee the Resilient Homes Fund which the Deputy Premier will probably talk more about tomorrow. At \$741 million, it is the largest program of its kind in Australia, designed to help Queenslanders make their homes more flood resilient. Queenslanders whose homes were damaged by floods can access grants to rebuild more resilient homes, raise their homes or we can buy back their homes that are in high-risk areas. Of course, that is complicated to the extent that some people do not want to move. However, if you have been impacted two or three times and you can see other people who have moved to higher ground will not be impacted, you may change your mind. I think some people saw that in Grantham where they were impacted again and they saw that those neighbours who had moved to the higher ground were not impacted. We had the chance to visit them as well. It is a very good program. I am quite sure the Deputy Premier will talk about that tomorrow.

CHAIR: On indulgence to myself, I want to recognise Major General Jake Ellwood coming to the Logan community and spending some time with people who had been flood affected.

Mrs McMAHON: Premier, with reference to page 2 of the SDS and the role of DPC in supporting trade missions, how is the trade and investment strategy supporting exports and attracting investment over the 10 crucial years to Brisbane 2032 and are there any opportunities to strengthen our partnership with Pacific nations?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you. It is a very good question. It is something which we have been thinking about at length in terms of how we can engage more with our Pacific neighbours. We have seen now a big focus from the Commonwealth government, sending more representatives over to our Pacific neighbours, and I think it is something that, being so close to Queensland, we should be more engaged with. We have record exports, the highest ever over 12 months, of \$108.9 billion. That is more than New South Wales and Victoria combined. Not only do we lead the nation in jobs creation since the pandemic but also we generate one in five of the nation's export jobs. We saw this very clearly when I visited VALD just recently, which is exporting its sports medicine technology around the world. They started with a small grant from the state government. They sat around their kitchen table talking about what they wanted to do. I visited their premises recently. They now have job vacancies for 40 people. That is a great example of companies that are doing well here in Queensland and now exporting to the world.

In relation to the Pacific nations, I think we do need to increase our connections in that region. Australia's closest neighbour in the Pacific is Papua New Guinea. There is also Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and the Solomon Islands. We have a lot in common in terms of some people from those countries who take the opportunity to come here and reconnect with families but also we know that they send their children to schools here. I think we can have better trading operations as well. That is why I have written to the Treasurer. The Treasurer and I have had a conversation about the need to look at a new Pacific trade commissioner for Queensland. I think this is something that has been lacking. We have great engagement with Japan—no, member for Mermaid Beach, you will not be appointed to that position. It will be advertised and the process will be followed.

Mr STEVENS: Is that a reference to how I look or something?

Ms PALASZCZUK: No.

CHAIR: I think the member for Mermaid Beach will make a great trade ambassador in the Pacific, but, anyway, we disagree. Premier?

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is a great opportunity and I think the engagement will be beneficial for all of those countries, as well as being so close to Queensland. Through the pandemic, we supported over 5,000 workers from Pacific nations to work in vital roles in Queensland agriculture. There is a great connection there. We also depend a lot on areas such as fisheries, resources, trade and tropical tourism. I think that this will be an addition to the trade commissioners we have. I have written to the minister who now has the responsibility for that. I look forward to seeing the results forthwith.

CHAIR: The member for Hervey Bay had indicated he wanted to ask a question about the cost of living, but we probably will not have time to deal with that adequately before returning to the opposition. I note the Leader of the Opposition and member for Broadwater has a question.

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. I refer to SDS page 1 regarding strong and accountable government. I received an email from a public servant who told me they had made a submission and was interviewed by Professor Coaldrake. He says, 'The comments by the member for Maryborough have made me feel like a dead man walking.' Is it enough comfort for whistleblowers to say, 'That is just Bruce being Bruce'?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Professor Coaldrake handed down his report. The government has accepted all of the recommendations. It is a serious report and I welcome it. Once implemented, Queensland will have the most transparent government in the country. I think the member for Broadwater is missing one vital aspect and that is the way in which no other jurisdiction in Australia will release cabinet submissions. Final cabinet submissions within 30 days. Already in relation to Peter Coaldrake's report, I asked a delegation from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to go over to New Zealand, which I understand they did last week, and met with their cabinet office over there to talk about how that is being done. We will be preparing legislation for introduction later this year to take effect. That is the most significant change that the likes of Queensland and Australia will ever see and that is something that my government—we could have rejected, but we absolutely accepted.

In relation to the second part of the member's question, I have asked Professor Peter Coaldrake to speak to the cabinet next Monday. He has already spoken to the leadership board of the directors-general, but he will also be speaking separately to all of the assistant ministers which will be meeting on Monday as well. That is how seriously we are taking this.

If the Leader of the Opposition would like Peter Coaldrake to speak to his shadow ministers, I would be more than happy to ask whether he would be available to do that as well. The more people who are briefed by him I think the better. We thank him very much. The member for Maryborough clearly understands the seriousness of the report and will be part of the assistant ministers who will be briefed on Monday.

Mr POWELL: I have a follow-up question on the statements made by the Premier just then regarding the release of cabinet documents within 30 days. Frankie Carroll was appointed as Under Treasurer in February 2019. That was over 1,200 days ago. In the interests of openness and transparency, when will the Premier release the cabinet documents regarding his appointment?

Ms PALASZCZUK: My understanding is that there are no cabinet documents relating to that. It goes to executive council.

Mr POWELL: I have another question to the Premier. Recognising that ministerial accountability brings with it an indemnity scheme, will the Premier advise why Jackie Trad is being funded over and above the indemnity scheme guidelines to prevent the release of a CCC report into the appointment of Frankie Carroll?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have answered this question on numerous occasions. Indemnity applies to ministers and former ministers of both governments. There was a question on notice and I answered the question on notice.

Mr POWELL: The Queensland Regional Accommodation Centre at Wellcamp was announced over 300 days ago. In the interests of openness and transparency, when will the Premier release the cabinet documents regarding the project?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. This is something that the LNP has been completely opposed to since day one, and that is quarantine. Let me make it very clear to Queenslanders that the state government stepped in when the then federal government, the former Morrison government, failed to step up to the plate and do quarantine. That is exactly why we stepped in and did that.

Let me also say to the member that quarantine facilities have now been built in Western Australia—I do not think they are quite finalised yet—and Victoria. If they had been built earlier, that would have been a great thing for the country. Now we have quarantine facilities—I cannot predict what is going to happen in the next two days, let alone the next two years when it comes to pandemics and world pandemics.

Mr POWELL: The documents regarding that announcement?

CHAIR: Order.

Ms PALASZCZUK: What we did very clearly is step in in terms of a need when hotel quarantine was reaching the end of its lifetime, borders were about to open and tourism was coming back. To set up a dedicated quarantine facility so quickly when you saw how Howard Springs assisted—

Mr POWELL: Three hundred days ago the cabinet documents ought to have been released—

CHAIR: Order.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to answer the question.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Please do.

CHAIR: Hold on, Premier. The Premier is being responsive to the question. I have been listening carefully. It is completely out of order to make interjections. I want to have this hearing conducted in an orderly fashion. Member for Glass House, I understand you have a question up next. I will be giving you the call next. Premier?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would be interested to hear your federal leader's comments on whether or not he now supports these dedicated quarantine facilities. It would be very interesting to see that.

Mr PURDIE: It is about the documents. It is about the cabinet documents.

Mr POWELL: It is about the cabinet documents and the Premier's commitment to release them after 30 days.

CHAIR: Member for Glass House.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Once the legislation comes in, from 30 days after that the cabinet documents will be released.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Okay!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes. Do you know what? We would love to see the cabinet documents, too, from your term in government. That would be a doozy, wouldn't it? That would be absolutely interesting reading: the cuts to the Public Service—14,000—and the building at 1 William Street.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Still back to the past, 10 years, no vision, no future. No vision, just same old games, round and round.

CHAIR: Order.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You are exactly like Campbell Newman.

CHAIR: Order.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Just the same old games, round and round. Tired.

CHAIR: Order! Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: I sit here and it is like Campbell Newman all over again.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Red carpet, glitz, glamour, no vision.

CHAIR: Leader of the Opposition.

Mr TANTARI: Inappropriate.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Chair, I find his comments offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

CHAIR: I ask you to withdraw those comments because they have been found to be offensive by the member.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Personally offensive. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I withdraw and I would ask the same.

CHAIR: Order! This is an unconditional—order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: I say to the Leader of the Opposition: do not come up to me at social events and be nice and then come in here and put on a turn.

CHAIR: Premier.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Really?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes.

CHAIR: Premier—

Ms PALASZCZUK: You come up and be nice. I take your photo with Peter Beattie.

CHAIR: Premier!

Mr STEVENS: I raise a point of order, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater, I notice that you interjected after I gave you counsel about interjecting nine times previously. There were a further four interjections during that exchange. When I sought to bring you to order you also talked over the top of me. I now formally and regretfully warn you that you are not within the standing orders, member for Broadwater. My understanding is that the member for Glass House has another question.

Mr POWELL: My question is again to the Premier. In 2017 the Ombudsman reviewed the Public Interest Disclosure Act, making 40 recommendations about potential reforms which have yet to be acted on by government. Calls for a review of the Public Records Act are ignored for years. Why should Queenslanders have any faith that the Premier will implement any of the Coaldrake review recommendations anytime soon?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Cabinet has accepted all of the Coaldrake recommendations and we will be implementing them, just like election commitments. I make election commitments to the people of Queensland and my government implements them, unlike the former government that said one thing to the people of Queensland and then did the complete opposite. It said that public servants had nothing to fear, then sacked 14,000. The member for Broadwater sat around the cabinet table and made these decisions—

Mr CRISAFULLI: Here we go again.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—with the member for Clayfield and the former member for Ashgrove.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Imagine Queenslanders watching this!

Mr POWELL: I return to a question I previously put to the Premier regarding the indemnity scheme. I want to clarify that there are no questions being asked about implementing the indemnity schemes as per the guidelines regardless of which government was in power at the time. My understanding is that the support being provided to Jackie Trad is above and beyond those guidelines, so I again ask: why is Jackie—

CHAIR: I have counselled members about repetition. The fact that you have said, 'I again ask'—we will move on to the next question.

Mr POWELL: Sorry, Mr Chair. It is seeking clarification. It is not repetition.

CHAIR: I understand that there is no—

Ms PALASZCZUK: If the member has evidence, he should table the evidence.

CHAIR: Order, Premier. I understand that the question has been put and the answer given. I do not think there was any lack of clarity. The answer has been put to the question. The fact that you set out to ask it again makes it clear that it is repetition, which is outside the standing orders. Do you have another question?

Mr POWELL: Can I ask the chair where in the standing orders that is referenced?

CHAIR: I am looking here at the guidelines for witnesses, where badgering of witnesses is seen as disorderly. As a longstanding—

Mr POWELL: Seeking clarification is hardly badgering, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: I understand that. You said, 'I put the question again.' I will not broker any argument about my rules. I counsel the member not to argue with the chair and to put another question.

Mr POWELL: I defer to the member for Broadwater, then.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, in 2017 the Ombudsman reviewed the PID Act and in that review of the act he made 40 recommendations about potential reforms which have yet to be acted on by government. Calls for reviews of the Public Records Act have been ignored for years. Why should Queenslanders have faith that the government will, after half a decade, take these matters seriously and implement what is in the Coaldrake review?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I have said very clearly, cabinet has endorsed those recommendations and we will implement them lock, stock and barrel. It would be interesting to know if the Leader of the Opposition supports all of those recommendations.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question for the Premier. Last year at estimates the opposition provided evidence where RTI officers were actively trying to block the release of information. The Premier dismissed those concerns as nothing to do with her, and I have a copy of last year's *Hansard*. The Coaldrake review has also raised serious concerns about the RTI process and the Premier's response is, 'I would hope that's not the case.' What—

CHAIR: We are getting close to a long-winded question. Can you put the question, please?

Mr STEVENS: I raise a point of order. It is reasonable for the question to be explained. It is coming up now, Chair.

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question, Mr—

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater, you have a question?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I do, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Put the question then.

Mr CRISAFULLI: What steps will the Premier take to end the culture of cover-ups and make the RTI process truly independent?

Mr TANTARI: Imputation.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I reject the premise of that question.

CHAIR: I guess the member for Broadwater, in seeking to put the question, knew that that was an imputation and outside the standing orders. I counsel the member not to deliberately put questions outside the standing orders.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chair, could we call the acting Auditor-General please?

CHAIR: I call forward the acting Auditor-General.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The acting Auditor-General would be aware that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition wrote to the Auditor-General in February this year regarding the Wellcamp quarantine facility as the people of Queensland have been prevented from knowing how much of their money has been spent on this facility to date.

CHAIR: Speech.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Can the acting Auditor-General provide an update on this request?

Ms Johnson: I can; thank you. We did receive a request from the member of the opposition and member for Kawana. This is within our mandate and an investigation has commenced. The scope of the investigation includes all of the issues requested by the member and we will assess further actions once that investigation concludes. However, it is still in progress at the moment. A copy of the request has been published on our website. It is available for anyone to see.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question also to the acting Auditor-General. Has all of the requested information been provided to date?

Ms Johnson: There is still some outstanding information.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Can you outline what the delays have been in getting that information to you?

Ms Johnson: There are no real reasons for the delays; it is just the process of requesting information, it being found from the various departments which hold that information and response to us.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Acting Auditor-General, has a time line been given as to when that will occur? When was the first request made and when do you expect this matter to be finalised?

Ms Johnson: We have been requesting that information since April.

Mr CRISAFULLI: So it is now July. When would you expect to have that information? When would be a reasonable period of time to have obtained that information after a request was made in April?

CHAIR: Deputy Auditor-General, we are straying into repetition, but there is some difference in the question. I put the question to the deputy Auditor-General.

Ms Johnson: Various parts of information take longer to receive than others. We are actively following up those requests at the moment.

Mr CRISAFULLI: One of the matters furnished was the use of commercial-in-confidence during this process, and I note and reflect on Professor Coaldrake's view. Will the investigation look at that—that is, as to why the matter was treated as commercial-in-confidence?

Ms Johnson: Yes. That is one of our lines of inquiry.

Mr CRISAFULLI: In your initial sweep of documents, what is the assessment of the information in terms of why that matter would have been deemed commercial-in-confidence? Under what guide could that have been deemed commercial-in-confidence?

CHAIR: I am not sure that someone acting would be doing initial sweeps of a report that is about to come out, but I put the question to the deputy Auditor-General.

Ms Johnson: Certainly the contents of our investigation and how we will be reporting on it is currently protected information because it has not been publicly released at this point. However, we would be looking at the guidance that was published in May 2019 by the Chief Adviser—Procurement which gives guidelines around whether the confidentiality clauses should be used or commercial-in-confidence should be used.

CHAIR: I am looking to give the member for Traeger the opportunity to ask a question, but you have another question?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Just one further one. Would it be factual to say that it is normally a competitive tender process when commercial-in-confidence would traditionally be used—that is, during a competitive tender process—rather than if one provider is given?

CHAIR: We may be straying into what is a legal opinion of what is a matter of commercial-in-confidence, but the deputy Auditor-General may have some information that is relevant. However, it is within the standing orders not to seek legal opinion on definitions of—

Ms Johnson: It depends on the facts and circumstances. Every contract you need to consider individually. There are guidelines. There are things you would consider. Commercial-in-confidence is generally very important in a negotiation stage, not so much after the contract has been settled.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Thank you, Leader of the Opposition. Member for Traeger.

Mr KATTER: Thank you, Mr Chair. My question to the Premier refers to the second dot point on page 2 of the SDS—that is, to support the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in the coordination and delivery of strategic forward cabinet and cabinet committee agenda and the implementation of election commitments. To that end, with the 10-year Queensland energy plan committed to CopperString and the north-west to deliver more affordable and secure electricity, does the CopperString implementation agreement announced in Mount Isa on the first day of the 2020 state election campaign mean that that project will be implemented and begin construction this year?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much, member for Traeger, for that question and of course we understand how important CopperString is and I know how much you have been a very strong advocate for the project as well. We are committed to \$16 million in development funding to support CopperString 2.0. We want to see the North West Minerals Province developed and our critical mineral resources unlocked because it will deliver thousands of new jobs across North Queensland from Mount Isa through to Townsville. We have the critical minerals—copper, cobalt, vanadium and zinc—the world needs to build renewable energy to reach net zero and demand for critical minerals will increase by six times. That is why we will be supporting the project with development funding and we are building a critical minerals demonstration plant in Townsville.

In relation to the energy plan, we will be releasing that plan by October this year. It will be a 10-year energy plan. In relation to CopperString, we are still in final negotiations with the federal government and we will definitely be updating you. As you can appreciate, they are settling into their new portfolios, but the energy ministers, I think, have had their first meeting, but I will ask our energy minister, Mick de Brenni, to follow up with his counterpart.

Mr KATTER: Premier, with reference to the fifty-fifty agreement in terms of federal funding on the Olympics, can the Premier outline, in the context of infrastructure versus rural health infrastructure, how the government can commit to the large commitment of infrastructure in opposition to a rural health infrastructure deficit—namely, dialysis chairs in the north-west which require an investment of about \$4 million? How can that be prioritised over that?

CHAIR: That does not sound like a brief question, but I will put it to the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is all right, and I am happy to answer that because there are quite a few topics that the member raised. First and foremost, I absolutely support the extra money for the dialysis chairs, so I will follow that up with the health minister. I know that that is something that you have raised with me before and there is definitely a need so people do not have to then travel to Cairns; they can travel to Mount Isa for that dialysis treatment.

Secondly, we have had the largest health infrastructure spend in the state which is, of course, over \$9.7 billion. That was done looking at the need across the whole state. Of course, we do rural and regional upgrades as well, and there is a whole list of capital expenditure there. That is something that I touched on earlier.

Finally, we want all of Queensland to share in the Olympics. One aspect of that is the \$100 million Go for Gold Fund. What I really want to see is schools across Queensland, so schools in your electorate, that in the past would not have been able to have funding for different sporting events. It might be a sporting field; it might be a particular sport or sporting equipment. I want to see us actually look at the needs and apply that so people can share in experiencing that Olympic dream. For example, there may be a school that has a P&C that has the ability to fundraise and invest in those facilities at that school or that equipment; there may be more remote communities in our state that do not have that, and I really want to see them share in that \$100 million and see that it gets prioritised according to what the schools need to encourage their children to get involved in getting fit—so being physical—but also to have that opportunity to find, for example, the next Cathy Freeman.

CHAIR: I knew the Premier was not going to do that one quickly, but that is all right. Premier, referring to page 11 of the SDS and the administered expenses of ministerial offices, can you advise how the cost of office accommodation has been impacted by the historical leasing arrangements on 1 William Street?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Chair. That is a very good question. I am advised that 1 William Street, which is the building across the road by the former Newman government—really, the only infrastructure project they have to show for their years in office—is owned by CBUS, an industry superannuation property trust, on state owned land under a 99-year peppercorn lease. The Auditor-General found that the LNP had sunk \$2.6 billion of taxpayers' money on 1 William Street and the management of government office buildings.

In relation to 1 William Street, the Auditor-General found that the sale of seven CBD office buildings was for \$237 million below their book value, the former government locked in lease commitments of \$1.2 billion as a result of the buildings being sold, and there were \$1.2 billion in combined lease payments and land contributions to 1 William Street. The Auditor-General found that a business case was not developed and that without a competitive sale process, and given the significant difference between the book value and the sale price achieved, prima facie it raises the issue whether the state can demonstrate that it obtained best value for money for the assets it sold. Buildings were sold under the book value. Now we are an Olympic city, think how much those buildings and that land would be worth today.

Secondly, in terms of the 1 William Street lease, I think taxpayers should be very well aware of what the Newman government committed us to. I am advised that on commencement the lease for the building was \$48.8 million per year. I am advised that from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 the annual rent has now gone to \$62.6 million. We do not own the building. This is the building that the Newman government put in place to house the government and they sold off the other accommodation.

Mr POWELL: How's Queen's Wharf going?

Ms PALASZCZUK: You want to talk about costs? We are talking here \$1.2 billion of lease commitments.

Mr PURDIE: A budget from 10 years ago.

CHAIR: Order!

Mr PURDIE: What SDS in the current budget does this relate to?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am advised that the rent paid for car parking in the building for the last financial year was \$2.6 million. This is the deal you left us. I am advised that the total building outgoings paid from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022—it includes building management, rates, insurance, security, water usage, land tax and statutory charges—is \$10.3 million. I remind the committee that these are lease costs. The taxpayers of Queensland do not own this building, thanks to the recklessness of the LNP government. I want to put that on the public record, because I was absolutely astounded. I went back and asked my officers to do some research. This is the deal that we were faced with.

Mr STEVENS: The former Labor Premier Steve Bracks did.

Ms PALASZCZUK: So it is a laughing matter, member for Glass House?

Mr POWELL: No.

CHAIR: Order, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I think you were a cabinet minister at the time, so you would have signed off on it.

Mr POWELL: It is cheaper than Wellcamp!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let's put that on the public record: it is not cheaper than Wellcamp.

Mr STEVENS: We do not know how much Wellcamp cost.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is not cheaper.

Mr TANTARI: My question is of the director-general. In reference to pages 5 and 11 of the SDS regarding ministerial services and the letter sent by the Leader of the Opposition dated 14 June 2022 regarding health matters, can you outline the cost to the taxpayer for that correspondence?

Ms Hunter: Thank you for your question. I am sorry, perhaps I could ask you to repeat just the last part of that question?

Mr TANTARI: The last part of the question?

Ms Hunter: Yes.

Mr TANTARI: Or would you like me to repeat the whole question?

Ms Hunter: Perhaps, yes, sorry.

Mr TANTARI: In references to pages 5 and 11 of the SDS regarding ministerial services and the letter sent by the Leader of the Opposition dated 14 June 2022 regarding health matters, can the director-general outline the cost to the taxpayer for that correspondence?

Ms Hunter: I am sorry, I do not have that information available.

CHAIR: It might be something we return to, or the Premier can take it on notice.

Ms Hunter: We will endeavour to find that, thank you.

Mrs McMAHON: I refer to page 2 of the SDS and the work the Premier is progressing on national reform initiatives in health. Can the Premier advise how the landmark commitment to investment in mental health funding in the budget will support Queenslanders, particularly after the impacts of COVID?

Ms PALASZCZUK: First of all, I thank you for the work you did with the report which basically listened to the stories of hundreds of people around the state. I also thank you for sharing your story. We all know that this is a very important issue. That is why we are absolutely committed to increasing our funding—our landmark \$1.6 billion mental health investment over five years under the Better Care Together funding package. This funding will support additional staff to deliver more services in priority areas including infant and perinatal mental health; children and adolescent mental health; young adult, adult and older person mental health; mental health crisis support; eating disorders; suicide prevention and after-care services; alcohol and other drugs rehabilitation; and psychosocial supports delivered by non-government providers. The Better Care Together funding will focus on rehabilitation, additional community care and adolescent day programs as well as services to help people transition from hospital to avoid hospital admissions.

I want to make the point that I think COVID had a profound impact on people's mental health. It affects almost one in five adult Queenslanders. At the height of the pandemic, one in five Australians were reporting psychological distress from the pandemic, according to the ABS. I think we have seen very clearly that people had their lives overturned. We did not know much about the virus back then. Incredible stress and strain was placed on individuals and families. I want to thank Queenslanders for the work they did in that two years because we kept people safe. To this day, I still believe that we saved hundreds of lives through the work that everybody did.

I think this is the largest investment in mental health that our state has ever implemented. The parliamentary Mental Health Select Committee found not only a terrible social cost but also an economic cost of mental ill health and suicide of \$14 billion a year. We have listened and we are acting. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, Queensland branch, said—

The budget shows the Queensland Government is serious about delivering the mental health services that Queenslanders deserve.

And further—

The Queensland Government ... should be congratulated for listening to the concerns from the frontline that were voiced through the Inquiry and for acting swiftly to address them.

We have listened to our frontline workers and we have listened to the parliamentary Mental Health Select Committee. The next step is to have our frontline workers involved in the strategic planning on how the funds will be delivered. The health minister is currently starting that process. Our message to Queenslanders dealing and living with mental illness or substance disorder is that you are not alone and we are committed to delivering better services for Queenslanders.

Mr TANTARI: Premier, I refer to page 1 of the SDS and the objective of protecting our Queensland lifestyle. Can the Premier outline how the budget supports Queenslanders with the cost-of-living impacts from global inflation on energy, transport, education and health care?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I put on the public record that we do understand the rising cost of living that Queenslanders are experiencing from global inflation. The war in Ukraine has driven up global energy prices, impacting the cost of petrol and groceries, which comes at the same time as rising interest rates. We are backing pay rises to our frontline workers including teachers, nurses, doctors and police with cost-of-living adjustments, but we also know that households appreciate direct assistance for cost of living for energy, health, education, water, transport and more. If families and pensioners are struggling to make ends meet, we want to ensure that we are trying as hard as we possibly can.

That is why we responded to the costs in the National Electricity Market. The first major announcement of the year's budget was the \$175 rebate on every Queenslanders' power bill over the second half of this year. That is a commitment of \$385 million. As I said, in the budget we have choices to make and we understand that this is a big issue. This will help households with their electricity bills. So far, electricity rebates on power bills from our asset ownership dividends are \$575 over four years. We have been able to do this because we stopped the LNP's plans to sell our power assets and we were able to direct returns to help Queenslanders respond to the impacts of global inflation. In total, we have now provided over \$1 billion in asset ownership dividends back to Queensland households. I will say that again because it is a substantial amount of money: in total, we have now provided over \$1 billion in asset ownership dividends back to Queensland households. The budget and this rebate are about protecting Queensland's lifestyle as we continue to grow. As I mentioned earlier to the member for Traeger, the energy plan will be out by October.

We also have \$6.8 billion in concessions. Concessions have risen above average annual inflation under our government. We help with transport costs through the School Transport Assistance Scheme; the Taxi Subsidy Scheme; public transport concessions for pensioners, veterans and students; and concessions on vehicle and boat registration for pensioners, seniors and eligible veterans. There is also help with education costs with up to \$590 through the school textbook and resource allowance for low-income families. We have made a \$1 billion commitment to supporting affordable access to kindergarten for four-year-olds. There is assistance for health care. The oral health scheme supports healthcare, pension or senior cardholders to access dental treatment, with average values of around \$600 for general care and \$1,600 for dentures. Of course, there is the Spectacle Supply Scheme offering \$122 per item, on average, for eligible concession cardholders.

I think we should encourage people to look at the website to get more information because some people do not know that those rebates exist. We should definitely try to promote that even more.

CHAIR: Premier, on SDS page 1 I note the objective of creating more jobs, especially in diversified industries. Can you update the committee on the progress in supporting new jobs in Queensland as we move out of the pandemic? How does that compare to other states that have similar objectives?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As we said, this budget is about good jobs and better services and, of course, in more industries. We continue to lead the nation on job creation out of the pandemic. This is a great result for Queensland with 219,400 jobs created. That compares with 159,600 jobs in New South Wales and 101,000 jobs in Victoria. There are now 472,000 more jobs in Queensland since we started our Advance Queensland and economic recovery plans. Queensland now has record exports of goods. If you think about that for a moment, when the world shut down our resources took a bit of a hit. They went backwards. Now they are skyrocketing again. The last time I looked, Japan had overtaken China as our No. 1 key export market. I am very pleased to advise the committee that tomorrow I will be meeting with the Japanese ambassador to keep fostering the great relationship that we have with Japan.

Our economy has grown fast in the nation out of the pandemic as a direct result of Queensland's economic recovery plan and all Queenslanders working together for our strong health response. The CommSec report for July includes some analysis of performance over the last year, saying that Queensland had annual growth rates that exceeded the national average on all of the eight indicators and that on jobs Queensland is best for employment growth. These are not just numbers; we have to remember that every job and every added job is about a Queenslanders who wants the dignity of work. In many cases, these new jobs are all about providing care. Health care and social assistance was the fastest growing industry, rising 13.5 per cent over 12 months to the June quarter. We also saw strong growth in the innovation and tourism industries, with professional and scientific services rising 12.5 per cent, and accommodation and food services rising 12.7 per cent.

We are not stopping there. We had the Queensland Workforce Summit in May. Minister Farmer came to me and suggested that we hold a Queensland workforce summit. It was an outstanding success. It is wonderful to see that the federal government will have their own national summit in early September. We will be releasing our Queensland workforce strategy prior to the national summit.

CHAIR: I welcome the member for Maiwar. I note that the Leader of the Opposition is seeking the call.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have questions for the Premier. I refer to SDS page 1 on the department's role of delivering better services. Last year's target for average wait times for people on the social housing waitlist in the high or very high need categories was eight months; the government achieved 14 months. The state government has now decided to change the target this financial year from eight to 12 months. Was it easier to change the target than deliver a roof over the heads of vulnerable Queenslanders?

CHAIR: We are straying into speech, but I call the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. Housing is a big issue that is impacting on people at the moment. We know that the private sector is under considerable strain as well. We also know that we are investing heavily, with the largest spend in housing in this state's history. Of course, demand has been increasing. The private rental market is much larger than the social housing market. I know that even in my own electorate there are pressures. I have spoken recently to the regional director. I have spoken recently to the director-general of Housing. These are real issues. My government is very much focused on it. That is why the Deputy Premier is very keen to release more areas for development, so we can have affordable housing. We also have people moving here. That is increasing pressure. We are building more social housing and there is money for emergency housing.

I am advised that just under five per cent of properties in Queensland are social housing, with the remaining 95 per cent making up privately owned rentals. Under our Housing and Homelessness Action Plan we have committed \$2.9 billion in funding towards social and affordable housing—the largest concentrated investment in social housing in Queensland's history. It will increase the social and affordable housing supply by almost 10,000 over the life of the Queensland Housing Strategy, including 7,400 new social and affordable homes. Additionally, our \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund is a long-term fund with returns to drive new supply to support current and future social and affordable housing needs. It will deliver a pipeline of up to 1,200 new social and affordable homes through an innovative commercial partnership.

Our 2022-23 state budget also identifies more than \$441 million for new social homes and upgrades for existing dwellings, supporting vulnerable Queenslanders. A few days ago, the housing minister announced that the first properties have been secured under the Help to Home initiative. The 18 three-bedroom townhouses in Beenleigh will support Queenslanders struggling to find accommodation. I am quite sure that the member for Macalister was very happy with that announcement. Under this program we are looking to unlock 1,000 properties for social housing. I can also inform the committee that the housing minister is today turning the first sod on 35 units of accommodation for Indigenous women and children leaving domestic and family violence situations.

Mr STEVENS: Point of order: the answer needs to be relevant to the question. The Premier's answer is straying well and truly off the question that was asked. Could she return to the question that was asked?

Mr CRISAFULLI: It was about the change of targets, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Order! With respect, I note that the Premier was talking about domestic violence and social housing. I think it is relevant to the question. I give the call to the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you. I will talk about the budget for this year.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It is about the change of the target from eight to 12 months.

CHAIR: Order! Please.

Ms PALASZCZUK: There is more than \$441 million in 2022-23 to deliver new social homes and upgrade existing dwellings for vulnerable Queenslanders; \$200 million over three years to build infrastructure that unlocks housing supply through the Catalyst Infrastructure and Growth Acceleration funds; and almost \$30 million over four years to address youth homelessness. In terms of the targets, I will refer to the director-general.

Ms Hunter: The issues around both targets and, in particular, people on the social housing register have been the focus of a recent QAO report, as I am sure you are aware. I understand that the minister has accepted all eight recommendations of that report. The challenge, as the Premier has said, has been made very difficult through the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a national challenge and I know has been the focus of discussion nationally among housing ministers.

Certainly, the QAO report was very welcome. It provided a number of opportunities for the department to improve its management and delivery of critical housing services. Improvements in the management of social housing stock obviously deliver better outcomes for vulnerable Queenslanders. One of the recommendations does relate to modelling future demand for social housing, and I think this is directly relevant to your question. Treasury is working with the department to progress that recommendation.

Under the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, as the Premier said, the government has committed to deliver 7,400 new social and affordable housing commencements, backed up by the \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund. In essence, the program in terms of construction, acquisition and emergency relief is intended to ameliorate the impacts of growing demand on social housing, much of which is evidence of the impact of COVID-19 and, in particular, the impact of the pandemic on building and construction supply chains.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, I have a further question about targets. Last year's target for the proportion of young offenders who have another charged offence within 12 months of a proven offence was 70 per cent. That target blew out to 78 per cent. This measure has now been discontinued. Was it easier to remove the target than remove repeat offenders from people's homes?

Ms PALASZCZUK: What page are you speaking to, please?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I am speaking to the Youth Justice SDS and it relates in this SDS to page 1, the delivery of better services.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I just have to get the Youth Justice SDS. I do not have that on me, sorry.

Mr CRISAFULLI: And the setting of targets is a matter for—

CHAIR: Is it something that the Premier wanted to return to at the end of the session or take on notice?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I think so. I do not have that on me at the moment.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Thank you, Mr Chair. A further question to the Premier—

CHAIR: Hold on, I want a clarification from the Premier. Is that something you wish to speak to now or at the end of the session or take on notice?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I just do not have the Youth Justice SDS on me. We will come back to that one at the end, after the break.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, previously the government has set targets for the percentage of category 2 and 3 elective surgery patients treated within the clinically recommended times. This budget does not. Is it easier to remove the target than remove people on an elective surgery waiting list?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to get advice from the health minister on that. I am not just going to accept that question at face value until I get clarification. I will come back after the break, if we can get that.

Mr CRISAFULLI: A further question?

CHAIR: Hold on.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Hang on. We just need to write them down.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chair, a further question to the Premier?

CHAIR: Order! Is this something you will return to in this session? I have to allow for a question from the member for Maiwar, so I just need to work out my time.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to return after the break.

CHAIR: For both of them?

Ms PALASZCZUK: If the member could just repeat the last question?

Mr CRISAFULLI: The last one was about category 2 and 3 elective surgery patient waiting lists which were previously a target but which have been removed in the last two budgets.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We will check that. There might be—

CHAIR: Order, Premier! We have put the question and we have made a note to return to it.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, previously the government has set targets for the percentage of vulnerable children visited by community visitors in accordance with the designated visiting schedules. This is now a discontinued measure. How does this improve the safety of vulnerable children?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Sorry, where are you quoting from, because sometimes they put in other measures?

Mr CRISAFULLI: This is from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General SDS. The target was 80 per cent; the department only achieved 67 per cent.

Ms PALASZCZUK: What page is that one? If the member could be helpful and give me the page number reference?

Mr CRISAFULLI: We will certainly furnish the Premier with that.

CHAIR: This is something the Premier is engaging with in real time and coming back to you on.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Absolutely. I have the documents here, Mr Chair. I am happy to produce those.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Okay. Thank you.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Thank you. Mr Chair, may I ask the Premier a further question?

CHAIR: Unfortunately, we made an undertaking to get to the member for Maiwar.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It would be one short one, if that is okay, Mr Chair?

CHAIR: Certainly.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Premier, last year the target for the number of people with a disability receiving departmental accommodation support services was 762. The government only achieved 667. This measure has now been discontinued. Why is that?

Ms PALASZCZUK: From the surface of that question, I would expect that it has something to do with the NDIS. I will find out for the member.

CHAIR: We might now turn to the member for Maiwar. Member for Maiwar, are you ready for your first question?

Mr BERKMAN: Yes, much appreciated. It was reported recently that you met with Lang Walker, the developer of the controversial Toondah Harbour proposal, and Graham Richardson in April of this year but that meeting was not recorded on the lobbyist register because, I understand the statement from your office said, no lobbying took place in that meeting.

CHAIR: Just be careful you are not straying into making a speech. Could you put the question please?

Mr BERKMAN: Certainly, Chair. Where do you draw the line in a meeting like that between what is and what is not lobbying? What steps can you take to ensure that no lobbying takes place with key stakeholders like that?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I met with Mr Walker who wanted to give me an update on his investments in Queensland and the fact that he desires to make more investments in Queensland. It was an update on his property portfolio and the fact that if he invests more in Queensland it means more jobs for Queenslanders.

Mr BERKMAN: Is it the case then that you would anticipate under any future reforms around the regulation of lobbying in Queensland that that kind of non-lobbying interaction with key stakeholders would continue to be allowed?

Ms PALASZCZUK: That was just an overview of his property portfolio in Queensland. There was no lobbying that took place. He was not asking me to do anything at all.

Mr BERKMAN: The question was though that you do not anticipate—

Ms PALASZCZUK: The guidelines are very clear.

CHAIR: Member for Maiwar, the Premier is giving her answer. Can you let the Premier continue before you continue. I am giving you some leeway here.

Mr BERKMAN: Of course. I thought she had finished—my apologies.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have answered the question.

Mr BERKMAN: Just to clarify that answer: there is no intention in any upcoming reforms to restrict that kind of non-lobbying engagement as you have described it?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The reason you know the meeting took place is I put it in my diary. It is being transparent me putting it in my diary that I had that meeting.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Today I have revealed four or five, but there are well over—budget measures—

CHAIR: 'Today I have revealed' is not the start of a question. Can you put a question to the Premier?

Mr CRISAFULLI: The budget measures that we have raised today have either had their service level reduced, the measure will no longer be reported or there is no target at all. Why is the government more focused on how things look than how they are?

Ms PALASZCZUK: With due respect, I said that I would come back on those particular targets after the break. I think the member was happy for me to do that. Before he jumps to conclusions, can we get that information? I would appreciate some courtesy.

CHAIR: I think that is reasonable. The Premier has undertaken to look at the underlying assumptions of the questions asked and said to the committee that she will get back to the committee. There being no further questions, we will take a break. Premier, I note that you have undertaken to get back to the committee on those questions either at the end of the session or after the break. We will now take a break. The hearing will resume at 12 pm and we will continue the examination of the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of the Premier and Cabinet and the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Proceedings suspended from 11.43 am to 12.00 pm.



CHAIR: I welcome back the Premier and officials. The committee will now resume its examination of the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of the Premier and Cabinet and the Olympic and Paralympic Games. I call the member for Hervey Bay to ask a question.

Mr TANTARI: With reference to page 1 of the SDS and the objective of more jobs in more industries, can the Premier advise what support the Palaszczuk government is providing to our traditional industries like agriculture and what steps are being taken to address existing biosecurity risks?

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is an important issue and it is one that our cabinet takes very seriously. At our last meeting the Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer came in and addressed cabinet about the particular impacts of foot-and-mouth disease. I know that our producers are concerned about it. We are monitoring the outbreak of emergency animal diseases in Indonesia—foot-and-mouth disease and lumpy skin disease.

As I said, the Chief Biosecurity Officer was there, but Minister Furner has also been keeping me well abreast of issues. We take them very seriously. There is no exaggeration in saying that an incursion would have an overnight impact because our export markets would be in huge jeopardy. There is no physical risk to humans. What is at risk if an outbreak happens is over \$6 billion worth of beef and dairy exports from Queensland. Queensland has the biggest herds. In 2020 we came close to running half of all cattle in Australia. Let me make it clear to the committee and Queenslanders that if an outbreak did happen here it would be a disaster. We would activate our natural disaster management arrangements in Queensland. They have served us well against cyclones, storms and flood and against disease in the recent past.

Minister Furner and his counterparts met last week on this issue—including Senator Murray Watt, who has just been to Indonesia to support containment efforts. I understand that layers of protection are in place at our international borders to travellers, luggage and post. In fact, I think a potential area for the disease to get through is freight and mail, so there is added importance there. The Chief Biosecurity Officer is the vice-president of the national coordination committee. We will confirm that, but I am sure he is very linked in to the national committee.

This is incredibly serious. We will continue to be updated on that. Foot and mouth is a highly contagious viral infection of domestic and wild cloven-hoofed animals including cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, camels, deer and buffalo. Outbreaks are more likely to be caused by food contaminated with the virus being illegally imported and fed to pigs and also via travellers on shoes, clothes and other items. I want to assure the committee and Queenslanders that we are absolutely keeping on top of this really serious issue.

CHAIR: I note, in reference to the SDS on page 3, that we are all pretty excited by the Olympic Games. Can the Premier specifically outline how the games will transform infrastructure in Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member. I know that you are particularly focused on the Olympics, being my special envoy for the Olympics. I am glad that you are undertaking that job. We know that public transport is critical. One of the things the IOC was very impressed with was our plans for Cross River Rail and the fact that Cross River Rail is one of our largest infrastructure projects which

will transform the way in which we move about our city, connecting regions of the south-east. The 10.2-kilometre rail line from Dutton Park to Bowen Hills also includes priority development areas. You only have to see the work that is happening at Woolloongabba—the cranes. Some of the tunnels have been completed.

Cross River Rail will take thousands of cars off the road. It will completely transform the way Queenslanders and visitors to the south-east will travel. It will mean a quicker and more convenient commute with the new Albert Street station in the heart of the CBD—the first CBD station in more than 120 years. The new station at the Gabba was a critical part of our bid to secure the 2032 Olympic Games. We have committed \$5.4 billion towards this catalyst project. We are fully funding it after the previous LNP federal government refused to contribute a single dollar to this vital infrastructure program.

Construction is progressing well. I am advised that it is on track to be completed in 2024, ahead of extensive safety testing and commissioning, with services expected to commence in 2025. I advise that there are 15 worksites keeping around 2,700 Queenslanders employed—so it is a job-creating project—including 227 women. There are 319 apprentices and trainees. Every time I go to the site I am really impressed with the number of trainees and apprentices.

It is critical that in our construction projects we build workforce capacity. For example, 19-year-old Caitlyn Clarke began a boilermaking apprenticeship with Blask Engineering when the Inglewood business was awarded a contract with Cross River Rail. Now, in the second year of her apprenticeship, Caitlin will finish her Certificate II in Engineering. She says the best part of working on Cross River Rail is 'seeing all the different bits and pieces come together and learning about their different uses—for example, the beams, the cross passage, the monorail, dewatering tanks, flood protection barriers and all the different frames and brackets'.

Another important part of the construction is work for local businesses. I am advised that more than 1,787 Queensland suppliers and subcontractors have benefited from Cross River Rail to date.

Mr TANTARI: Again with reference to the Olympics and page 3 of the SDS, can you outline how the games will benefit regional Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes. I thank the member for the question. Our budget is absolutely critical for the infrastructure that generates the jobs. It is not just in the south-east; it is in the regions as well. Our budget invests in more good jobs in our regions, with 31,100 jobs supported outside the Greater Brisbane region over the year. We will be hearing directly from local communities how things are going through our program of community cabinets.

We are focusing on more jobs in more industries and good, secure jobs in our traditional and emerging industries. In Far North Queensland we committed \$150 million to expand the Cairns Marine Precinct, works will start on a new film studio in Cairns and we have funding for the Cairns hospital. Of course we want everyone to share in the Olympics, so there will be opportunities for procurement to buy local to make sure local businesses are able to benefit as well, which means there will be jobs right throughout the state.

Mrs McMAHON: With respect to planning for the Olympic Games, can the Premier outline the status of Queensland's preparedness and how the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games will leave a lasting legacy for the people of Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. The Olympic Games are transformational. I should also acknowledge the Paralympics. We want to make sure that Queensland is an inclusive society, so having both the Olympics and Paralympics is absolutely critical. As I said, not just the south-east but all of Queensland will benefit from the games. It is about identifying those young people for the future but also the legacy and construction. Just last week we announced the formation of the legacy committee charged with helping to steer Queensland's future to Brisbane 2032 and beyond. There was a wonderful green and gold runway event on Friday, and of course Saturday marked 10 years until the Olympics will be hosted here in Brisbane. I think those 10 years will go very quickly. Like the pre-planning for the Commonwealth Games, that went faster than expected as well.

An independent analysis by KPMG indicates that the total economic benefits for Queensland are estimated to be \$8.1 billion. Over the past 12 months we passed legislation establishing the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Committee. We sought nominations from Queenslanders the length and breadth of this state who wanted to be part of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games Legacy Committee. Statewide, the You for 32, Australia's largest ever athlete talent identification program, is underway, inspiring more than 1,200 to try out. So far 4,000 young people have registered. Since it was formed in April the committee board has already met. The next board meeting is scheduled for early October. I

am very pleased that the chair is Mr Andrew Liveris. He has the breadth and depth of experience required to deliver a remarkable Olympic and Paralympic Games which has its heart firmly set in Queensland.

In May this year we hosted senior executives from the International Olympic Committee on a site tour of Brisbane 2032 venues across the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Brisbane. The delegation said they were absolutely blown away. They summed it up pretty well when they said, 'You don't realise where you live.' I think Christophe Dubi was on the Gold Coast at the time when he said, 'I cannot believe that you have access to some of the most beautiful beaches'—I reckon the most beautiful beaches—'in the world.'

CHAIR: Mermaid Beach is a good one.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You can understand what Queensland can show, and the impacts it will have on tourism will be felt for many years to come.

CHAIR: Premier, continuing with Queensland's lifestyle, on pages 1 and 30 of the service delivery statement one of the most incredible things—and the Speaker and I spoke about it—is our connection to our two Indigenous cultures: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Can the Premier outline how the Palaszczuk government is progressing reconciliation in Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. Our government has been on the path to reconciliation since our election in 2015 and a journey with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland community to build our reframed relationship. This includes: the Queensland government's Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-21; the Human Rights Act 2019, which acknowledges the importance of the right to self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders; the recognition of traditional Torres Strait Islander child rearing practices; the establishment of the Queensland First Children and Families Board; and the establishment of the First Nations housing adviser and the Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Officer.

The next step in this journey which I think the committee would be interested to know about is the release of the Queensland government's response to the Treaty Advancement Committee's report and to outline the next steps on the Path to Treaty. This will create a new future between First Nations and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. I am pleased to advise that this will occur at an event at Parliament House on 16 August. Invitations will be sent over the coming days. This will be a major and significant event in our path towards truth-telling, self-determination and a new and just relationship with First Nations Queenslanders.

CHAIR: I spoke before about the diversification of jobs and industries on page 10 of the SDS. Can the Premier outline the benefit to Queensland of having a strong screen industry right across the state, especially here in South-East Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Of course we know how important the screen industry is for Queensland because it means jobs. It means thousands of jobs and an almost permanent Hollywood based on the Gold Coast. I am absolutely delighted that we were able to attract Baz Luhrmann to film *Elvis* here in Queensland. Starring Tom Hanks and Austin Butler, it is the No. 1 movie in most countries around the world at the moment. Every single person—and most importantly, the people who worked on the set—should be incredibly proud to think that that No. 1 movie was made here in Queensland. The young man who plays young Elvis goes to school on the Gold Coast. To think that he was found by a talent scout and auditioned by Baz himself! That young man has an incredibly bright future and it was lovely to meet him and his parents. I attended the premiere of *Elvis* on the Gold Coast. When I addressed the crowd I mentioned how proud I am of this industry and the fact that people worked not only on film sets but in a whole range of roles, including carpentry, set design, make-up, clothing and costumes. We have now created a permanent screen industry here in Queensland.

We also have other movies that are coming out, including the TV series *Young Rock*, *Joe vs Carole*, and the Paramount film *Love and Monsters*. In between large productions the studios are hired out for TV commercials, music videos and small independent screen projects. We are investing \$12.6 million in a film and television project studio in Cairns. We have also secured a site in Cairns and are currently working through the detail and design. With our highly-skilled crew base, stunning locations and world-class facilities, including Screen Queensland Studios, Queensland continues to be one of the most attractive places to film. I am delighted with the work of Screen Queensland. The *Elvis* movie injected \$130 million into the Queensland economy and created 900 jobs, which means that 900 Queenslanders had jobs based on that one particular film alone.

CHAIR: In the last session we had 35 minutes for this side and over 60 minutes for the other side, so I might try and squeeze in one more question from the member for Macalister.

Mrs McMAHON: Premier, I refer to the government's objectives for the community to protect our Queensland lifestyle, and I ask the Premier how is this budget supporting the protection of our natural asset, our environment, and how the Palaszczuk government's budget is supporting the tackling of issues such as our changing climate?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Macalister. Labor governments deliver for the environment. We are focused on that. Protecting our environment is a key part of maintaining our great lifestyle. We understand how important our environment is for future generations. Our rainforests, reefs, beaches and outback underpin our important tourism industry, but they also provide so many good regional jobs.

The 2022-23 budget delivered the largest investment in protecting our environment in Queensland's history. We have a record \$262.5 million going towards creating new national parks, which is fantastic. Recent acquisitions include The Lakes in North-West Queensland and Bramwell on Cape York Peninsula, totalling around 175,000 hectares. They are examples of important habitats being protected for future generations and available for people to visit. The Queensland Conservation Council and the Pew Charitable Trusts have described this package as a win for nature. They said that investments of this scale have the potential for massive outcomes for nature conservation in Queensland.

Of course, new areas need to be managed properly, and we are also investing in better management. There will be \$12.5 million allocated to managing newly acquired land that will be added to the protected area estate. This will go towards managing feral animals, fire management and controlling weeds. The new funding builds on previous investment. In 2020 we launched the Queensland Protected Area Strategy 2020-2030. That announcement included funding of \$28 million for expanding the public protected area estate and \$8 million to continue the Nature Refuge Program.

A further \$24 million will double the number of rangers supported by the Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program. When I was in Cairns recently, I was delighted to be able to go and meet some of the rangers. We are employing more rangers. The great thing about our Indigenous rangers is that the young people said to me that they love their job. They said it is the best job in the world. I think I have the best job in the world, but this is a career path for them. They are encouraging other young people to get involved and they love what they do. They love looking after the environment but they also love showcasing our great north to the rest of the world.

CHAIR: I am glad you think you have the greatest job in the world. With that, I will call the member for Maroochydore to put a question to you.

Ms SIMPSON: Premier, I refer to question on notice No. 19 regarding the development of a sexual harassment code of practice. Have you put any thought into funding a review into the treatment of ministerial, electorate office and opposition staff?

Ms PALASZCZUK: That would be a matter for the parliament, for the Clerk and the Speaker. Electorate office staff do not fall within the—

Ms SIMPSON: And ministerial?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The electorate staff do not fall under my portfolio.

Ms SIMPSON: And ministerial staff?

CHAIR: Premier, although the question is obviously out of your purview, it did talk about ministerial staff so that might be the basis on which you answer that.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will hand over to the director-general to talk about that a bit more.

Ms Hunter: Thank you for your question. I am actually the employer of ministerial staff, notwithstanding their deployment to various ministerial offices. There is training available for ministerial staff. We are certainly committed to creating an inclusive environment that is respectful of all who work within government. Everyone has a right to come to work and feel that they are free from discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.

Standards of behaviour for ministerial staff are enshrined in the code of conduct. Ministerial staff are accountable to meet those standards, and they are held to account if they do not. The discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace policy is available to all ministerial staff. During the past year, training sessions have been provided to ministerial staff on the code of conduct and the discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace policy. Ministerial staff members are able and encouraged to report any concerns they have to either their chiefs of staff or my office or to lodge a formal complaint with our department. If the conduct in question amounts to corrupt conduct, it will be reported to the Crime and Corruption Commission.

CHAIR: Thank you, Director-General.

Ms SIMPSON: Chair, I have a follow-up question to the Premier. There are a number of options in Canberra for ministerial and opposition staff to make anonymous complaints in relation to their treatment. Have you considered making these options available to staff in Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As the director-general is their employer, they can make an anonymous complaint to the director-general. That is a course that is available for people to follow.

Ms SIMPSON: Premier, have you ever received or are you aware of any complaints about any of your MPs in relation to sexual harassment, sexual assault or bullying?

Ms PALASZCZUK: If the member has any evidence, I am happy to look at any evidence the member wants to furnish.

Ms SIMPSON: Well, there was a question I was asking the Premier to answer.

CHAIR: And the question has been put and answered.

Ms SIMPSON: I have a question to the Premier. What action did you take?

Ms PALASZCZUK: In relation to what matter?

CHAIR: Is that the question? I thought that was just the beginning.

Ms PALASZCZUK: If you have got—

Ms SIMPSON: Premier, I asked were you aware of any complaints about any of your MPs—

CHAIR: We heard the question—

Ms SIMPSON:—and what action did you take. So I am putting that question to the Premier.

CHAIR: You seem to have anticipated a different answer that does not really make—

Ms PALASZCZUK: The member has to produce evidence of—

CHAIR: Hold on, Premier. The question does not quite make sense in context. Is there any specific case that you are making reference to that you wish—

Ms SIMPSON: I am asking the question of the Premier. Yes or no: is she aware of any complaints about any of her MPs—

CHAIR: We have already ruled on that. We have ruled that the question has been put and answered. I have ruled on that. I have made that clear. That is now the third time. Member for Maroochydore, do you have a question?

Ms SIMPSON: Yes, I do. Premier, have you ever received or are you aware of any complaints about any of your ministerial staff in relation to sexual harassment, sexual assault or bullying by other MPs or ministerial staff?

Ms PALASZCZUK: If the member has any evidence or anything she would like to substantiate that question with, I am happy to look at it.

Ms SIMPSON: So the Premier will not confirm yes or no?

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore, you know it is out of order to characterise the answer. The question has been put. The answer has been given. Does the member for Maroochydore or any other member have a question? I can move on to the member for South Brisbane.

Mr CRISAFULLI: No, I am very happy to ask questions. Can I please ask the chief executive of the Public Service Commission to come forward. Mr Setter, I refer to page 29 of the SDS regarding the administration of the Integrity Commissioner's office by the PSC. How would you describe your relationship with the former integrity commissioner?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Point of order—

CHAIR: I am struggling to—

Mr CRISAFULLI: Well, the CCC report shows about the importance of the way the—

CHAIR: Order! I am giving a ruling. We are here to examine the budget and the question is that the expenditure be agreed to, and seeking an opinion is outside the order. I think you could rephrase that in a way that is in order for Mr Setter to answer.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Thanks, Chair. I am referring to page 29, which is about the administration of the Integrity Commissioner's office. What was the nature of the documents on the laptop that was removed from the office of the Integrity Commissioner?

Mr Setter: I actually do not know and it would be inappropriate for me to know.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Setter, what steps have you taken to attempt to find out? It is clearly a very important question—one about integrity and accountability. What steps have you taken?

CHAIR: With respect, Mr Setter has already put the statement that in his role it would be inappropriate for him to know about the documents, and now you are suggesting that he should take steps to—are you suggesting that he should take steps? I will put the question to Mr Setter.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Do you want to rephrase the question?

Mr CRISAFULLI: What steps have been taken to find out what was on the laptop?

CHAIR: By Mr Setter or by others?

Mr CRISAFULLI: By the Public Service Commission.

Mr Setter: Directly, no steps. The question was put to the CCC. They have published the report on Operation Workshop and they have gone to some lengths to describe that there was nothing removed from the laptop and they have, therefore, considered what was on the laptop through the work that they had done.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Setter, I want to get into—the PSCs accountable for the financial operation and administrative performance of the office supporting the Queensland Integrity Commissioner, including the provision and management of human resources. Both the CCC and the Yearbury review show this model is broken. I quote from the Integrity Commissioner's resignation letter which states—

Further, the current governance arrangements operate in such a way as to place the Integrity Commissioner in a position of inherent vulnerability due to dependence on the PSC exercising its considerable powers...

Is the CEO currently planning for any changes to this arrangement during this financial year?

Mr Setter: Matters for the arrangement are established through practice and protocol. I understand that the government is considering those recommendations in terms of changing the operating model in line with the recommendations.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Have steps been put in place to allow that transition to occur swiftly?

CHAIR: Leader of the Opposition, the question is clearly one of policy which is probably best addressed to the Premier in that the response to the review—I may be going on too far, but Mr Setter is not to set the policy of the government. I understand that public servants are not to address the policy of the government.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Thanks, Mr Chair. My question was about getting ready for any policy, but that is a good point. Premier, the CCC and the Yearbury review showed the model having the Integrity Commissioner under the guise of the PSC is not working, and the Integrity Commissioner says so in her resignation letter. Will changes be made this financial year to ensure the independence of the Integrity Commissioner?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let me say a couple of things: first of all, in his report on the strategic review of the Integrity Commissioner's functions, Mr Yearbury recommends establishing an independent Office of the Integrity Commissioner. This was supported by Coaldrake, as I said. The government has accepted that, and it will be implemented. It requires legislative change, and that will be introduced this year. Whilst I am still speaking, Chair, let me say very clearly that the CCC said in relation to the report that it handed down that

... commentary which has suggested that laptops were "seized" and "wiped" as a result of a "raid" on the integrity commissioner's offices is, in the CCC's view, a mischaracterisation of what occurred.

Let me say to those opposite that for several months they came out and said things that were found to be not correct; no substance whatsoever. This was a classic case of the opposition going too far and not letting the CCC do its job. It was outrageous. Let me say very clearly—

Mr CRISAFULLI: Great recommendation.

CHAIR: Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: And still there is no apology. There were attacks on public servants, there were attacks on members of my office, and there is still not an apology. These were said publicly. Some were said in parliament and some were said outside parliament. Nearly every day we copped a barrage of misinformation, led by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Maroochydore. The opposition leader talked about a goon squad. The member for Maroochydore talked about a goon

squad. You talked about the Premier who authorised this goon squad. Let me make it very clear: the CCC has found that not to be the case and both members have said these things outside of parliament and they are absolutely not correct. They have still not apologised to the people of Queensland.

Mr CRISAFULLI: So what steps has the Premier taken to find what is on the laptop?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let me say this: the people of Queensland can see clearly through the opposition.

Mr CRISAFULLI: What is on the laptop?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Read the CCC report. There you go again—misinformation.

CHAIR: Premier, order! This committee dealt with this issue very seriously in a bipartisan way. I will not have you interjecting, Leader of the Opposition. If you have questions to ask, you can put them in the proper process. Premier?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The CCC went through it. The report has been tabled and still there is no apology for the days and days of abuse and, as I said very clearly, there were comments made attacking my staff, departmental staff and the Public Service Commissioner day in, day out, not respecting the process. Nothing has changed from the Campbell Newman years. These are still the same ministers who had served under Campbell Newman, and they continue. The people of Queensland can see right through them 100 per cent.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, has the CCC's recommendation to hold access logs for 18 months been implemented?

Ms Hunter: I refer you again to the CCC report which, as I recall, said that it would be appropriate at some point to revisit the length of period for the disclosure log. Of course, I should remind people that the disclosure log talks to a record of those who had access to information. What they did say was—

The information security arrangements in relation to information held by the Integrity Commissioner have been in place since the office's inception.

So it was a significant period—

While there may be occasion to reconsider those arrangements as part of the broader review of the structural arrangements for the Integrity Commissioner, there was no evidence to suggest that these arrangements had led to any improper access of confidential Integrity Commissioner information.

So those arrangements will be reviewed once the Integrity Commissioner is appointed. It is a matter for the Integrity Commissioner as to how the security of their records are maintained.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Setter, I refer to paragraphs 59 and 60 of the CCC report which state

59. On 12 March 2021, the Desktop Support Engineer (a contractor employed by an external company to provide IT support services for DPC) attended the Integrity Commissioner's office.
60. While the evidence is unclear as to who made the request, it is clear that a request was made by officers of the PSC to DPC IT to collect the Director's laptop from the Integrity Commissioner's office.

Why could it not be identified who directed the engineer to get the laptop?

Ms Hunter: Ask the CCC.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Well, I am asking the person—

Mr Setter: I not able to answer that question.

CHAIR: Order! Director-general, show some restraint. Mr Setter?

Mr Setter: I cannot answer the question because I was not the one who responded to the original request that you referred to. What I can say, and I think what is important to understand, is that the PSC merely provided administrative support and services to the office. This included the provision of people, the provision of financial administration and indeed ICT services secured through DPC IT. We are basically a service provider doing so.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Setter, in terms of the logistics—the engineer has obviously been given access—was it accompanied access? Was it unaccompanied access? What were the logistics behind the engineer being able to fulfil that duty?

Mr Setter: I cannot answer that question. The CCC was part of that. The normal operating procedure would be that, for new starters, the laptops are secured from the office to be repurposed. It has happened over many years so that new starters coming into the office are ready equipped to hit the ground running.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Paragraph 95 of the report reads—

A more comprehensive audit of access arrangements was unable to be conducted because of the period for which DPC retains security and access information.

Can it be said with certainty that someone else within PSC did not access either the Integrity Commissioner's information or the information sent to the system requirement email address?

Mr Setter: I would again respectfully—

CHAIR: Mr Setter, you may be asked for knowledge that is completely outside your purview and for which a report by the CCC exists.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is a final report from the CCC.

Mr Setter: I was going to say it is not in my purview to know that. That was a matter that was picked up through the investigation. It is a question for the CCC.

CHAIR: I now turn to the member for Hervey Bay for questions.

Mr TANTARI: Premier, can you update the committee on the funding commitments in the budget to support our tourism industry to continue to recover and develop new experiences?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Hervey Bay. Of course, it is whale season in his electorate at the moment.

Mr TANTARI: It certainly is.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is going to be good for business. The tourism industry is of course vital to our economy, supporting our livelihoods the length and breadth of our state. Since the onset of COVID-19 the Queensland government has committed over \$1.1 billion in economic recovery funding and support for the tourism, events and hospitality sectors. It is about delivering good jobs and better services and supporting our great lifestyle. This budget has taken us even further by delivering more tourism investment, with up to \$66.4 million to support recovery and growth.

It was great to be in Stanthorpe recently to launch the Queensland Music Festival and to announce \$20 million to encourage more artists to go out across regional Queensland to perform—taking the arts to the people. The Queensland Music Trails initiative will see events in 16 regional communities. Queensland has a wealth of talent and this initiative will showcase it to the rest of the country and the world and encourage visitors to stay longer, especially in the regions. Other events like the Big Red Bash in the outback, the Long Sunset in the Scenic Rim and the Yarrabah music festival are some examples we want to build on.

In terms of eco and cultural tourism, these are great opportunities as well for Queensland. We are providing a further \$22 million to support priority ecotourism including the rebuilding of Binna Burra Lodge—I went up there personally and saw how it was destroyed—and \$15 million for the Tourism Experience Development Fund. In the environment portfolio a record \$262.5 million will go towards creating new national parks.

Queensland is home to two of the oldest continuing cultures on earth and the budget allocates \$4 million for First Nations tourism. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the tourism industry globally and Queensland is no exception. Last month the Tourism Industry Reference Panel's Towards 2032 final action plan for tourism recovery was released, a 10-year strategy to reshape and grow our visitor economy. We look forward to continuing to work with industry, and there will be more to say about that later this year.

Our Attracting Aviation Investment Fund is going really well. In fact, an example of that is the direct flights from San Francisco to Brisbane that will start, from memory, in October. I was speaking with Gert from Brisbane Airport Corporation on Friday and he said that the aviation attraction fund is doing really well, and there will be more announcements to come over the rest of the year.

We are also supporting the cruise industry and major events. Major events attract thousands of visitors and often these visitors return for a holiday or stay on after the event. We are continuing to work with the events industry to attract and retain major events here in Queensland.

Mrs McMAHON: In respect of page 11 of the SDS, can the Premier outline how the Palaszczuk government is investing in the front line and other strategies which are being implemented to prevent domestic and family violence in Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. Of course, we have our 10-year reform agenda. We have implemented the 140 recommendations of the landmark *Not now, not ever* report. Since 2015 a record whole-of-government commitment of more than \$600 million for domestic and

family violence service programs and strategies has been made. It is about delivering better services to all Queenslanders, particularly those who have been victims of sexual and/or domestic and family violence.

We established, of course, the independent and consultative Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce chaired by the Hon. Margaret McMurdo. The Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce was announced on 11 March 2021 and is being chaired by the former Court of Appeal judge. I am proud of my government's response to the first report of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, released on 10 May, which supports in principle all 89 recommendations of the report.

Our response highlights investments of \$363 million over five years to respond to the report's recommendations. This includes \$16.3 million for a statewide communication and engagement strategy to improve community awareness and understanding of coercive control; \$18 million to strengthen education and training for people in all aspects of our service system including police, the legal profession and courts; \$60.4 million to continue to enhance and roll out our specialist DV courts and improved court services; \$26.8 million to uplift our existing high-risk teams and establish new locations across the state; \$23 million to trial two sites of a co-responder model with police and specialist DV services; \$25.5 million to enhance our perpetrator intervention programs; and \$4 million to establish an integrated domestic and family violence peak industry body to support improved statewide coordination. The package also includes \$106 million to improve safety for victims attending court.

Our systems also need to respond better to coercive control. We need to shift our focus from responding to single incidents of violence to the pattern of abusive behaviour that occurs over time. I was fortunate to attend the Small Steps 4 Hannah fundraising function last Saturday night. The strength and resolve of Hannah's parents, Sue and Lloyd, and family to make real change is absolutely inspirational. Their work to highlight coercive control has brought about real and substantial change. In fact, Sue and Lloyd were at Parliament House the day we made the announcement, as were the families of other victims including Vanessa Fowler and our DFV council co-chair. The package also includes a community education campaign to recognise the expansion of Respectful Relationships courses and further training for police. Finally, the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce second report examining women's and girls' experiences of the criminal justice system has been received by the Attorney-General and it will be shortly considered by cabinet.

Mr TANTARI: Premier, with reference to page 2 of the SDS, can you advise and update the committee on how the Palaszczuk government is supporting our nation's veterans who reside in our great state?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take the responsibility of looking after our veterans very seriously. I also want to pay tribute to the work that Bart Mellish, my assistant minister, does in that role. Through the Office for Veterans within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet we are continuing to roll out \$10 million of funding over four years to provide additional support to veterans, their families and ex-service organisations. It is about delivering better services across Queensland and getting people ready for those good, secure jobs in traditional and emerging industries.

So far the funding has gone towards \$3 million for capital works and community projects that enhance recognition of our veterans; \$1.1 million for up to 300 traineeships and apprenticeships and enhancements of the Queensland Veterans' Portal and veteran employment pathway; \$1 million for employment services through the Oasis in Townsville—and if ever you are in Townsville and you get the opportunity to go and visit that Oasis, it is remarkable; it is a very good model and is helping lots of veterans—and \$1 million to assist ex-service organisations in managing the impacts of COVID.

I want to update the committee that I recently had the honour of joining with past and present service personnel and dignitaries to unveil Queensland's first dedicated war memorial honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service men and women at Anzac Square. It is absolutely sensational. I think anyone who goes and views it will find it very reflective. It was worth the time in terms of getting the bronze memorial right. It was designed by Wakka Wakka artist John Smith Gumbula and Gold Coast based sculptor Liam Hardy. It features four First Nations Army, Air Force and Navy medical services personnel and two dancers representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. It is an amazing sculpture and is truly very moving. It is fitting that it is in Anzac Square.

We are also getting on with the job of delivering the new Queensland Veterans' Council. The new council will be supported by the veterans reference group, which will consult with the veterans community and provide advice to our government. Applications for these two bodies opened on 30 April and closed on 22 May, with numerous applications received. The department is currently reviewing the applicants, and we aim to announce the inaugural membership of these two bodies later on this year.

Mrs McMAHON: I refer to page 3 of the SDS and the Queensland Police Service resourcing, and I ask: can the Premier provide an update on the how the Palaszczuk government is ensuring the Queensland Police Service is equipped to serve and protect the people of Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question and understand her strong interest in ensuring that Queenslanders have a well-equipped and supported Police Service. At the 2020 election we committed to delivering 2,025 extra police personnel over five years, including 1,450 police officers. That is in line with our commitment to deliver good jobs for Queenslanders and deliver better services to support our great lifestyle. The 2022 budget invests a record \$3 billion to support the Queensland Police Service to do its job—an increase of seven per cent. It was great to be in Nambour recently when I opened the brand new Nambour Police Station worth \$8.3 million, and it was also wonderful to see former speaker Peter Wellington there. The police do an excellent job up there and the station is now absolutely fit for purpose.

We are also delivering more facilities across Queensland. In Kirwan we will see a \$30 million investment in a new police station; in Cairns \$17.4 million is being invested to upgrade the Cairns police facility, supporting 55 jobs, to be completed later this year; in Aurukun there is \$7.8 million; in Woree there is \$9.2 million; and of course in Hervey Bay we have planning work commencing to replace the Water Police facility and police station, which I know the member for Hervey Bay and his community are very pleased with. In this year's budget there was \$2 million for a business case to relocate the Police Academy, which is currently located in Oxley, and co-locate it with the Bob Atkinson counterterrorism and community safety training facility at Wacol. Some of the facilities have already moved over there and this business case will look at the feasibility of moving the remainder over there so they can all be co-located in one big facility.

Mr TANTARI: Premier, we all know that education is one of the keys to success. Can the Premier outline how your government's budget is equipping TAFE for our state's future?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I think we know how important TAFE is for training and I am absolutely delighted that this year's budget invests more than \$1.2 billion in skills and training. In Hervey Bay a \$1.32 million nursing and allied health upgrade at TAFE Queensland was done which was fantastic. Not only are there more modern treatment and medication rooms but lifelike mannequins that can simulate diseases. We have upgraded one of 19 projects in Hervey Bay out of the \$100 million Equipping TAFE for Our Future.

In 2022-23 other projects include \$28.9 million for the Eagle Farm robotics and advanced manufacturing centre, \$7 million for the Bundamba metal trades manufacturing and robotics centre, over \$3 million for the Bundaberg agriculture and horticultural centre, \$3.6 million for the Bohle advanced manufacturing skills laboratory and \$3.5 million for the agricultural centre of excellence. We are mapping out the needs for the regions so that TAFEs are offering the courses that are needed for the specific jobs in the regions. That mapping had not been done before. It has been done now and we are seeing exactly where the training facilities are. Of course, we are offering free TAFE for Queenslanders under the age of 26, from memory, to ensure that they get the best start in life with training through TAFE.

Mr TANTARI: Premier, what support is provided in the budget to keep manufacturing jobs in Queensland and growth for our local manufacturing industry?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. We are committed to more good jobs in more industries across Queensland. Now as the world transitions out of the pandemic, the response to create more high-value, secure, long-term jobs is critical and manufacturing provides these good, secure, full-time jobs. Our funding will take Queensland from the Smart State in medical manufacturing to the jobs state with the translational manufacturing facility. A \$35.5 million commitment in the budget will support the construction of an \$80 million medical manufacturing facility. The facility will support up to 500 jobs and advanced biomedical manufacturing, translating our world-leading research into high-value manufacturing jobs. Professor Ian Frazer, the co-investor of the Gardasil vaccine for cervical cancer, said in relation to new medical technologies that he is developing—

I would like to see Queensland help Australia to develop the capacity and capability to manufacture products like these here and this can help us achieve this. That's why we're backing it.

Then of course we have battery manufacturing with \$50 million to expand our National Battery Testing Centre. This facility will support projects across the regions. We are further supporting our manufacturing businesses across Queensland with \$50 million to continue our Made in Queensland and Manufacturing Hubs Grant Program. These programs have helped support over \$100 million in

private investment. They have backed manufacturers to create and support more than 5,000 jobs to date, with another 7,000 jobs expected into the future. Our manufacturing hubs are in Mackay, Townsville, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Gold Coast and Cairns supporting local businesses.

CHAIR: Speaking of businesses, there are lots of great small businesses in Logan, particularly the micro and small businesses that are starting up in Yarrabilba. What support in the budget is there for more jobs in small business, and with that I reference the SDS at page 1?

Ms PALASZCZUK: We know that small businesses are the backbone of our local economies across Queensland and Queenslanders agree with supporting our local businesses because retail turnover is still an astonishing 25 per cent above its long-term trend levels before the worldwide pandemic. Some of the grants through the Business Boost grants include \$43,000 in Broadwater for Monster Electrical, \$73,000 in Maroochydore for telehealth, in Mermaid Beach \$76,000 to TechXS for iPhone repair and in Ninderry there is \$19,000 for two grants, just to name a few. In this budget we are extending small business support programs totalling \$39 million, including Business Basics boost and Mentoring for Growth. These programs and the Big Plans for Small Business Strategy are now a source of ongoing support thanks to our budget. They offer benefits to small business owners such as digital skills and upgrades and advice with business planning, marketing and staff management. Around 60,000 Queensland businesses have been supported by the grants since 2020.

Mrs McMAHON: With reference to the objective to deliver better services, how is the budget advancing water infrastructure across our state?

CHAIR: Premier, if I could, we are hoping to get back to the opposition reasonably soon.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Sure, and then after I finish this one if I could go back to the previous answers to the SDS, if that would be okay?

CHAIR: Sure. No worries. We can manage that.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thanks. We know how important water is. That is why we are committed to the Rookwood Weir in Rockhampton, the Horton pipeline stage 2—I know the Deputy Premier was just up in Townsville talking about that—and of course I have been out with the member for Bundaberg for the restoration of Paradise Dam. We were recently in Stanthorpe where we announced \$300 million to deliver the Toowoomba to Warwick pipeline which is fantastic. Mayor Vic Pennisi said that this announcement is a fantastic result for that community and a giant step towards drought proofing that region. Whenever we were talking about Stanthorpe I noticed on our social media some Mount Morgan residents were saying, 'What are you going to do about our community? When are we going to get water assistance?' In this budget we have responded to that community as well because it was facing water shortages with \$40.5 million—this is the power of social media—to deliver water security there. Rockhampton Mayor Tony Williams said—

This announcement is liquid gold for the people of Mount Morgan. I can sleep better at night knowing that we have this support. In Cairns there is \$107 million for the Cairns Regional Council water security program, with Cairns Mayor Bob Manning saying—

We thank the Queensland government and in particular Minister Butcher for the commitment which recognises how critical water security is to the prosperity of our community.

In Townsville there is another \$26 million for the water connection for the Lansdown eco-industrial estate where the mayor said—

It shows the value of this project to the Queensland government's vision for the state to become an advanced manufacturing hydrogen powerhouse.

CHAIR: Premier, my understanding is that you want to get back to the questions the Leader of the Opposition previously posed?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, if we can. I might ask the director-general to read out the response.

Ms Hunter: With reference to the Leader of the Opposition's questions about changes to various SDSs, he asked about four specific changes to SDSs for agencies that are not within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. I can inform the committee that with respect to each change mentioned there is an accompanying note in the footnotes. Given that information, I refer the member back to the relevant SDS. Thank you.

CHAIR: Leader of the Opposition?

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. At estimates last year the Premier spoke about the Hervey Bay Hospital and said—

It is state-of-the-art and there is room for expansion. I remember getting the tour and they showed us upstairs where there is the possibility of expansion in the future.

A year later, with ambulance ramping at Hervey Bay the worst it has ever been, at 39 per cent, the space is still vacant. What is stopping the Premier from bringing more beds online?

Ms PALASZCZUK: We just announced extra funding. It was in the budget. I just went through that earlier.

Mr CRISAFULLI: 2024-25. What is stopping the Premier today, in the middle of a big health crisis, from delivering the beds in that vacant space?

Ms PALASZCZUK: A \$9.7 billion investment.

Mr CRISAFULLI: One per cent of that is this financial year.

CHAIR: Order! The question was put and the Premier was beginning the answer. It is not an opportunity to restate the question with fervour. The Premier has the call.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As we said, extra money has been allocated for Hervey Bay in this year's budget. The \$9.7 billion has been focused on as needed across the state. Detailed mapping and planning has gone into this announcement. It is a record investment in health which I am incredibly proud of.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The Premier's hospital plan says that Hervey Bay will not get beds until 2024-25. Why should the people of Hervey Bay have to wait that long, with ambulance ramping the worst it has ever been at that hospital?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to speak to the committee a little bit more. I have spoken about this in parliament on numerous occasions. The pressures that our hospitals are facing are the pressures that are being faced right across the nation. That is why it was raised at National Cabinet when we realised it was a national issue. Every state and territory minister has agreed to that. It is not unique to Queensland. It is not unique to Hervey Bay.

Since 2015 our government has employed, in the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service, 422 extra nurses, which is up 27 per cent, and 142 extra doctors, which is up 38.3 per cent, and we have delivered the expanded Hervey Bay emergency department. To that end, I take the member's interjection. We did not sack the health staff, unlike the Newman government. To this day, nurses still come up to me and tell their stories about how they felt when they not only lost their job but also had to leave their communities to find a job elsewhere. Many of the people who were sacked went and found jobs elsewhere in other parts of the health system across the nation, or moved to other parts of the state or into the private sector.

CHAIR: Member for South Brisbane, I am told that the member for Ninderry wants to follow up on this topic, so I will go to him first. Apologies.

Mr PURDIE: I have another question for the Premier, in line with that same SDS. In January 2020, before COVID, ambulance ramping was back to the 30 per cent figure used by former premier Bligh when she described Queensland Health as a basket case. Was Queensland Health in crisis before COVID?

CHAIR: That is a bit of a speech but, Premier, I will give you latitude in the answer.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The member pretends that COVID never existed. The member pretends that there is no issue now facing our hospital system, with more than 2,000 staff off sick. The members seem to be not understanding that we are going to be having another peak at the end of August and we are encouraging people to wear masks.

Mr PURDIE: My question was specifically about prior to COVID.

CHAIR: Order, member for Ninderry!

Mr PURDIE: We are talking about prior to COVID.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Prior to COVID. I know that the member was not here back in the Newman government years, but after the staff were sacked my government's job was to restore those savage cuts. We actually restored the staff who were sacked and we are now building on even extra staff. We do not sack—you sack—and we actually build and have planning for the future: \$9.7 billion, the biggest investment in health that this state has ever seen. It has gone into health because we recognise that there are pressures on the health system.

CHAIR: I was going to go to the member for South Brisbane. This is the second time I am passing over her. I also wanted to mention that the Leader of the Opposition is on a warning. I do ask him to show restraint in not interjecting. Sorry, member for South Brisbane, the member for Mermaid Beach and deputy chair wishes to ask another question

Mr STEVENS: I have not asked one yet. This is the first one.

CHAIR: I know and you would be much better at it.

Mr STEVENS: My question is to the Premier. I refer to SDS page 1, the department's role in the delivery of better services. The report says that the government's plan for new housing will not be sufficient given the likely growth in demand. QCOSS says that 'solving Queensland's housing crisis is not currently on the Queensland government's list of priorities'. Premier, given this, when can Queenslanders expect a plan that would deliver the required number of houses to meet forecast demand?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I think the member may not have heard what I said earlier—

Mr STEVENS: I did

Ms PALASZCZUK: Most of the market is the private rental market and social housing makes up this amount. When you were in office there were 30,000 people on the waitlist. How do I know that? Because Bruce Flegg wrote to people wanting to ask elderly people to take strangers into their house. We absolutely rejected that at the time. He also wanted to, from memory, throw people out of their social houses if they went on leave for a particular period of time. I found that extremely offensive and discriminatory.

We have put in place the largest housing investment this state has ever seen. We are also helping people to, where they can, enter into the private rental market. These pressures in housing are also not unique to Queensland. Other people are feeling it as well. The cost of houses is going up, but it is also harder for people to get into the rental market. That is why the Deputy Premier is expanding and opening up more stock onto the market whereby you can have affordable homes. We also continue to help first home buyers with our first home buyers assistance grants.

We do recognise that it is an issue. We do; absolutely we do. As I said to you, I have had briefings from the regional director, I have had briefings from the minister and the department, and the minister regularly updates our caucus as well, and they are trying to build as many new social housing smaller units as they can.

Dr MacMAHON: My question is to the Premier. Premier, in your capacity as the Minister for the Olympics, what specific policies, including rent caps or regulating short-term accommodation, has the government considered to ensure that the 2032 Olympic Games do not drive increased housing stress and homelessness, which is a well-documented phenomenon in Olympic Games cities around the world?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. I might make a couple of points about that. First of all, when we did the bid we had to show that, when you take in the villages for the athletes and the accommodation, there is enough accommodation not only for people to come and watch the games but also for the people, the athletes and the teams that come and support them. I think there is that part of it. Secondly, London had a great legacy whereby they were able to look at some areas of London and do some renewal projects. That is something on our radar as well. We will look at some areas across Queensland and see where our legacy could be in terms of some revival in certain areas of the state.

Dr MacMAHON: Are rent caps or regulating short-term accommodation on the list of considered options?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I do not think we had that for the Commonwealth games either, but I will double-check for you. Could I add: once the village is finished with we can turn that into housing.

Mr KATTER: Premier, can you please advise how many FTE staffers there are within your portfolio and how many of those positions are in regional areas?

Ms PALASZCZUK: In the Department of the Premier and Cabinet?

Mr KATTER: Yes.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will ask the director-general to respond to staffing issues.

Ms Hunter: I am getting that information. There are a number of regional officers who currently support ministerial staff. Obviously that is to ensure that there is broader reach of that service across Queensland. Are you talking about departmental staff or ministerial staff?

Mr KATTER: The Department of the Premier and Cabinet—say, if there are five in Townsville and so many in Cairns.

Ms Hunter: I do not have the breakdown in terms of the distribution of staff. Certainly that is something that, with the Premier, we can get. I can tell you that we have full-time equivalent staffing as at 30 June 2022 of 450 people. That is actually a decrease from 2021-22 when we had a budgeted figure of 455. Our allocation for 2022-23 will increase with the allocation of an additional 24 FTE to support the delivery of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Mr KATTER: What I am more interested in, rather than the total quantum, is the proportion that would be, say, for North Queensland or out in the regions.

CHAIR: Member for Traeger, I think your question was quite clear.

Ms Hunter: That is data that I will have to get for you.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We will take that on notice for you, member. I would envisage that it would not be a high number because most of the policy related staffing is in the south-east. When you get to health, education, police, you have staffings that, of course, would be out in your region.

Mr KATTER: I just want the Premier's numbers.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We have the Office for Rural and Regional Queensland, which has 11 full-time positions based in rural and regional Queensland. That is just an example.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, who is currently in possession of records and documents generated as part of the Coaldrake review?

Ms Hunter: Professor Coaldrake.

Mr CRISAFULLI: What steps are being taken to implement those recommendations? For example, how will those documents be disseminated in a way that protects whistleblowers but can drive the cultural change that he outlined is needed to be driven?

CHAIR: I do not really understand the question but maybe the director-general does.

Ms Hunter: Obviously the recommendations drive the response. We have the report and the recommendations will drive the response. We have set up a task group within the department to give effect to the implementation of those recommendations.

I want to emphasise that protecting the confidentiality of the people who made submissions to Professor Coaldrake is a primary focus for Professor Coaldrake and obviously for our department. We do not hold any of those nor will we. They will be preserved. The confidentiality will be preserved. Protections for whistleblowers are enshrined in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010. I encourage anyone who is concerned about whether appropriate action is being taken to raise those concerns through any legislative mechanism they have.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a question to the Premier. Today, on multiple occasions, the Premier referred to the government's new hospital fund. What percentage of that fund will be spent this financial year?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I do not have that off the top of my head but I can get back to you about that.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chair, budget papers show that just one per cent of that total fund will be spent this year. After over two years—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Can we just check that, please?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Please.

CHAIR: Member, you were not framing that as a question. Do you have a question?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I do, Mr Chair. In the middle of the biggest health crisis this state has seen, does the Premier believe that that is a sufficient quantum of money to be spent this financial year?

CHAIR: The Premier has already agreed to get back to you.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We will get back to you about that. There is over \$9.7 billion for health infrastructure that we have in the forward years, but there is money that has been announced previously that is also capital infrastructure that is rolling. There is \$5.7 billion over four years. We will get how much in capital infrastructure is being spent in this financial year.

CHAIR: The Premier has said that they will get back to you on the assumptions that you put in the original statement. Obviously we have to wait for that answer before proceeding. Leader of the Opposition and member for Broadwater, do you have a further question?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question to the Premier. In what year will the first patient overnight at the new hospital on the northern Gold Coast?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I will get back you to but you are probably better off asking the health minister during the Health estimates. They have all that detailed planning. We are investing the largest amount of money—capital—ever in Queensland's history right across the state. It is the biggest building project this state has ever seen.

CHAIR: Member, you were referring to the new construction and not the existing university hospital?

Ms PALASZCZUK: What we might do too, Chair, is look back to the Newman years and how much was spent over those three years on capital infrastructure.

CHAIR: Premier, that might be a package of questions that you might wish to get back on.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question to the Premier. In January, the Premier said there was no need for an inquiry like the Coaldrake review and said there were already 'robust mechanisms and checks in place'. The Coaldrake review has shown those comments were incorrect. Given that the Premier was wrong then—

Ms PALASZCZUK: No; I reject the premise of the question.

Mr CRISAFULLI:—when will the Premier call a full royal commission into the integrity crisis in the government?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I reject the premise of the question.

CHAIR: I will give the Premier the opportunity to reject the premise of the question.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to say this: for the three years that the member for Broadwater was a part of the Newman government, matters were not investigated because they hand selected the chair of the CCC. I will not be lectured to by an opposition that did not support our reform agenda when it came to banning developer donations, lowering the thresholds for political donations and putting in place real-time disclosure. Every single strong integrity reform that we have implemented the LNP has either voted against or knocked back. It will be interesting to see if they back all of the Coaldrake recommendations when they are introduced into the parliament and whether they will commit to keeping those laws in place for years to come.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Speaking of the Coaldrake review, it says that the culture is shaped by leaders at all levels: the Premier of the day, ministers, members of parliament, directors-general and senior executives. In the report, it talks of a toxic culture.

CHAIR: Do you have a question?

Mr CRISAFULLI: How has the Premier's personal actions or inactions contributed to the abandonment of government integrity over the past seven years?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I absolutely reject that.

CHAIR: Order! It is absolutely against the standing orders to suggest that. I give the Premier wide latitude. She has already said that she objects to the premise of the question. It does contain inference and it is not within the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I find it personally offensive and I ask the member to withdraw.

CHAIR: Leader of the Opposition?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I withdraw.

CHAIR: Leader of the Opposition, the Premier finds it personally offensive and asks you to withdraw.

Mr CRISAFULLI: And I withdraw, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Premier?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Coaldrake actually welcomed the fact that I had initiated this review. It is important for governments to have fresh eyes. We said that we were going to implement it. I think the Leader of the Opposition is still not accepting the fact that the biggest change from the Coaldrake review is the release of final cabinet decisions. That is the biggest change that Australia has ever seen. That will make Queensland the most transparent.

CHAIR: I want to remind all members that before estimates the Deputy Clerk wrote to all of the chairs—I do not know about the deputy chairs—to say that we need to note that questions phrased to impugn another member with crime, misconduct, negligence or other fault are not in order. Questions can be put without doing that. I suggest that all members take that as advice and scan ahead to the questions they have prepared to see whether they fit in with those standing orders.

Mr CRISAFULLI: In March this year the Premier said that businesses do not need to hire lobbyists to get access to her, that they should just write and request a meeting. Since that date, how many formal meeting requests has the Premier received and how many of these have resulted in a formal meeting?

Ms PALASZCZUK: There is a question on notice which we answered. Over the past year I think I received over 1,100 invitations/meeting requests et cetera. I am one person. I try to do as many things as I possibly can. I have the ability to allocate ministers to meet on different issues as I deem fit.

I come back to a previous question that the director-general was asked in terms of the regional communities office. There are 16 staff in total and 11 are based in the regions: four in Rockhampton, two in Cairns, one in Townsville, one in Mackay, one in Maryborough, one in Longreach and one in Toowoomba.

I said earlier that I wanted to double-check something in terms of the biosecurity officer. He is the co-chair of the National Biosecurity Committee, so I am absolutely confident that Queensland is getting the most up-to-date information about foot-and-mouth disease because he is the co-chair of that National Biosecurity Committee.

CHAIR: Thank you, Premier. There are a fair few people who say that they want an appointment with you. I do agree to take a point forward for them, which reminds me that I have to hassle you about something afterwards. Leader of the Opposition, do you have a further question?

Mr CRISAFULLI: The Premier did say that she would come back to us on the percentage of funding for the health system in this year's budget—

CHAIR: I think we have some time.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We will take that one on notice.

CHAIR: The Premier has undertaken to take that on notice. We now go to government questions.

Mrs McMAHON: With reference to page 1 of the SDS, can the Premier outline the achievements in relation to representation and economic participation of women in Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: We have released the new Queensland Women's Strategy for the next five years. The strategy sets out our government's plan and commitment to support Queensland women and girls to succeed, with a focus on women's economic security and safety. One of the clearest examples of that is the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce that we put in place and the commitment of \$363 million. We support women. We support women in leadership roles. We support women entering parliament—in stark contrast to other members, especially when they do not particularly like young women and take their seats.

In relation to women on boards, in November last year I chaired the fifth Women on Boards event at the Gold Coast. We had more than 190 guests. This is about trying to get more women onto Queensland boards. This is an initiative that I undertook, to go out there and talk to women who might not know how to go about putting in an application or a CV to participate and to get them the training they need. That is actually really important. Of course, we have had funding for Skilling Queenslanders for Work. With our Female Founders Empower Program we had \$890,000 in grants. We have our Back to Work program.

Getting back to boards, as at 30 March 2022 the percentage of women on Queensland government boards was 54 per cent. We now have our special commissioner, Dr Linda Colley—I have met with her—who is our equity and diversity special commissioner in the Public Service Commission. She is currently reviewing public sector employment arrangements and conditions.

In a national first, we introduced 10 days of paid domestic and family violence leave for Public Service employees. We have also passed legislation to introduce portable long service leave for workers in the community service industry, the majority of whom are women. As people know, our first woman director-general is Ms Rachel Hunter, who is doing an excellent job.

CHAIR: I think we were aware of that, Premier!

Mr TANTARI: With reference to page 1 of the SDS, can the Premier give an update on how Queensland is backing more industries such as aquaculture, including in Hervey Bay?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. Aquaculture is another success story in Queensland in terms of a growing industry, especially in Hervey Bay and around Bowen, Townsville and Cairns. We have a history of supporting this industry. We have identified over 9,000 hectares in eight aquaculture development areas to attract investors. In Hervey Bay, we have the annual seafood festival coming up on 13 August. That will be a good event. This year they are inviting outside competition, with farmed oysters from outside the Wide Bay region coming to the festival.

Aquaculture has grown by 17 per cent in the last year and 61 per cent since 2015. Total production of \$120 million in 2014 and 2015 has leapt to over \$190 million. I remember that we launched the tropical rock lobster hatchery in 2019, the first place in the world to have a land based lobster farm. We also have the largest prawn farm, at Proserpine. We have seen the work that Tassal is doing with smart farming to monitor prawns and environmental conditions to optimise both. Further, 800 Queenslanders are working in aquaculture.

I just want to recap, if I may, on a question asked by the member for South Brisbane. I can confirm that no specific rent caps or other rent supports were used for the Commonwealth Games. My recollection was correct.

CHAIR: With regard to page 1 of the SDS, especially the fantastic Queensland lifestyle—and I think we underappreciate the role of the arts sector—can the Premier detail support in the budget for the arts sector?

Ms PALASZCZUK: We all acknowledge that the arts sector was hit particularly hard during COVID because people could not attend different arts events. We are partnering with the Performing Arts Centre to deliver the new, state-of-the-art 1,500-seat theatre at Playhouse Green. The theatre has a construction budget of \$175 million. It commenced in March 2020. While construction was impacted by the flood event, I understand that the theatre is still on track to open next year. The project is expected to support 100 local jobs during construction and 40 new jobs upon completion. We also have a new commitment of \$50 million over four years for Creative Together, a 10-year road map for arts, culture and creativity in Queensland.

The education minister and I had the opportunity to visit Creative Generation. I do not know if anyone else has seen that, but it is an amazing performance of some 1,600 to 1,700 students from across our state schools who come together and perform at the Brisbane Entertainment Centre. The talent in this state is phenomenal. I pay special tribute to all of the teachers and organisers involved in putting together that event. Imagine how they can be involved in the Olympic Games in 2032! It is absolutely a credit to the education department to put on a production of that scale. I think it is televised by Channel 10. I urge committee members to watch that when they can, because our students have so much talent.

CHAIR: In our schedule we have the opportunity to address issues that have been brought up previously. Is there anything you want to update us on?

Ms PALASZCZUK: In terms of the capital health spend, I will take that on notice.

CHAIR: You had a question from the member for Traeger about regional staffing. You may have partially answered that.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, and the director-general has a response to a question.

Ms Hunter: In respect of the member's question regarding cost of the mail-out by the Leader of the Opposition, I am advised by the department that expenditure incurred to date is \$29,490 excluding GST. This covers printing costs only. Other costs will be covered in accordance with the Queensland Opposition Handbook.

CHAIR: We have noted everything that was taken on notice and there are no other issues. We are reaching the end of the time allocated for the consideration of the proposed expenditure for the areas of responsibility of the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. We have noted the questions taken on notice. The committee has resolved that answers to questions on notice be provided to the committee by 5 pm on Thursday, 28 July 2022. You can confirm the wording of the questions taken on notice in the proof transcript of the hearing—it will be available on the Hansard page of the parliament's website within two hours—or by watching the archive broadcast. I thank the Premier, officials and departmental officers for their attendance. Premier, is there anything you wish to add before the end of the session?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, Chair. I thank you and the committee members. I think this has been one of the most cordial estimates hearings we have had. I acknowledge the members who have participated today. I acknowledge all of my staff, led by the director-general and Mr Murphy, all of the people who have attended today and the hours of work that the department has put into preparing for this. I acknowledge the importance of these estimates hearings. I thank everyone for the opportunity to appear today to answer your questions.

CHAIR: I hope that I can say the same after the next two sessions of the committee! Premier, I thank you for your attendance today. The hearing will resume at 2 pm with the examination of the estimates for the portfolio areas of the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment.

Proceedings suspended from 1.32 pm to 2.00 pm.

ESTIMATES—ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE—TREASURY; TRADE AND INVESTMENT

In Attendance

Hon. C Dick, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment

Mr B Kerdel, Chief of Staff

Queensland Treasury

Mr L Allen, Under Treasurer

Ms K Gould, Principal Project Officer

QIC Limited

Ms K Rampa, Chief Executive Officer

Queensland Treasury Corporation

Mr P Noble, Chief Executive

Trade and Investment Queensland

Mr R Watson, Acting Chief Executive Officer



CHAIR: Welcome. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2022 for the portfolio areas of the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. I am Linus Power, the member for Logan and chair of the committee. With me is the fantastic deputy chair, Mr Ray Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach. The other members of the committee, who are equally fantastic, are: Mrs Melissa McMahon, the member for Macalister; Mr Andrew Powell, the member for Glass House, who is substituting today for Mr Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera; Mr Dan Purdie, the member for Ninderry; and Mr Adrian Tantari, the member for Hervey Bay. The following non-committee members have sought and been granted leave to participate in the hearing in accordance with the standing orders: Mr David Crisafulli, Mr Michael Berkman, Mr Jarrod Bleijie, Mr David Janetzki, Mr Robbie Katter, Mr Jon Krause, Mr Tim Mander, Dr Amy MacMahon, Mr Sam O'Connor and Ms Fiona Simpson.

The committee will examine the Treasurer's portfolio areas until 6 pm and will suspend proceedings during this time for a break from 4 pm to 4.15 pm. I remind those present today that this hearing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament apply to this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. In respect of government owned corporations and statutory authorities, standing order 180(2) provides that a member may ask any question that the committee determines will assist it in its examination of the relevant appropriation bill or otherwise assist the committee to determine whether public funds are being efficiently spent or appropriate public guarantees are being provided. I intend to guide this afternoon's proceedings so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members.

While mobile phone use is not ordinarily permitted in the public gallery, an exception has been made for staff who are assisting our witnesses here today and who have been permitted the use of their devices for this purpose. I do ask, however, that all phones and electronic devices be switched to silent mode to avoid any interruptions to the proceedings. Also, I remind you that food and drink are not permitted in this historic chamber.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the Treasurer, the Under Treasurer, officials and departmental officers and the many members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials and advisors to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the Treasurer or the Under Treasurer. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment open for examination. The question before the committee, which guides those asking question when it comes to relevance, is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Treasurer, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes. Our erstwhile deputy chair will be checking this.

Mr DICK: I begin my opening remarks today on a note of bipartisanship. In that regard, I wanted to thank the LNP members of this committee for ensuring that Queensland's new progressive royalty regime was passed without opposition in the Queensland parliament. As committee members will recall, unlike the royalty changes of 2019, not one vote was cast against progressive coal royalties nor any of the revenue measures that were passed by the Legislative Assembly in June. I want to acknowledge and thank the LNP for their support. I also understand that the recent LNP state conference voted in support of retaining the new bipartisan progressive coal royalty tiers. It is a good thing for Queensland that all parties can come together on good policy, particularly on revenue measures.

That is not the only unexpected source of support for our progressive coal royalty tiers. Recently the CEO of Whitehaven Coal was asked about the effect of bipartisan progressive coal royalty tiers on the company's proposed new \$1 billion mine at Winchester South. He said, 'It's not a material effect on our proposition as far as Winchester South goes.' Just to be clear: that is a brand new coalmine, all of its capital costs have been funded and the advice the CEO is giving to the market is that our bipartisan progressive coal royalty tiers will have no material effect.

We also see Bowen Coking Coal has just mined its first coal at Broadmeadow East. Their share price closed yesterday at 30 cents. That is equal to its closing price on 10 May—long before bipartisan progressive coal royalties were even being speculated about. I think that confirms the good sense of the parliament to legislate progressive coal royalties on a bipartisan basis, delivering a fair return for the people of Queensland when prices are high and protecting coal jobs when prices are lower.

Moving to the budget itself: the budget shows that while COVID-19 continues to pose a challenge to the health of Queenslanders, the shackles that COVID-19 has placed on the Queensland economy continue to loosen. Despite COVID-19, the floods in February, the prices and energy pressures caused by Russia's war in Ukraine and other international factors, Queensland remains the job generating powerhouse of the national economy. Queensland continues to lead Australia out of the pandemic. Our economy has recovered the quickest and we have the strongest employment profile of the major states. We are leading the transition to a new economy powered by green electrons. Queensland's future is bright.

Last month's budget was built upon three principles that are important to all Queenslanders: the good, the better and the great; supporting good jobs, delivering better services and protecting our great Queensland lifestyle. The strength of the Queensland economy means we are able to do all of that while maintaining the strength of Queensland's balance sheet.

As I have stated on many occasions previously, Queensland continues to deliver the strongest employment growth in Australia. There are now 219,400 more Queenslanders in employment in June 2022 than there were in March 2020. That means Queensland has the fastest jobs growth in Australia. Queensland has faster domestic economic growth than the rest of Australia. Queensland has the largest increase in labour force participation in Australia. Queensland has faster lending growth, faster dwelling approvals growth and faster business investment growth than the rest of Australia.

As I noted in the budget I delivered five weeks on 21 June, the four largest governments in Australia all went into deficit to protect their economies and their people from the ravages of COVID-19. Queensland was the first of those four governments to return to surplus. We have been able to do that while continuing to deliver for Queenslanders, especially when it comes to health care. Our health budget of \$23.6 billion is the largest in Queensland history. The budget also included a \$9.8 billion commitment to deliver new hospitals and expand existing hospitals. We will recruit more doctors, nurses and frontline health workers and fund better health services for rural and regional centres.

Before I hand over, I would like to make one request. One of the themes of the Coaldrake review was respect for public servants, many of whom are witnesses here today. Today the member for Maroochydore asserted that the Acting Integrity Commissioner had been a Labor staffer. That was categorically refuted by Mr Keyes in his evidence. The member for Maroochydore owes it to Mr Keyes, a distinguished public servant, to immediately withdraw those false assertions and apologise to him. False and scandalous allegations against public servants should never be tolerated and the member for Maroochydore should withdraw and apologise immediately.

CHAIR: We now turn to questioning. The deputy chair has indicated that the shadow Treasurer, the member for Toowoomba South, has a question.

Mr JANETZKI: My first question is to the Under Treasurer. Under Treasurer, did the proposal to increase coal royalties come from within Treasury or was it the Treasurer's idea?

Mr Allen: All revenue proposals form part of our budget process. There is examination of all policy options as part of that budget.

Mr JANETZKI: When Treasury was considering the forecast for the coal royalties—in the forwards it is about \$1.2 billion—I am interested to know in Treasury modelling what is the range of likely revenue that will be gained over the next four years? I understand it is \$1.2 billion over the four years. What was the range of the modelling that Treasury undertook?

Mr Allen: If I may ask a point of clarification before I respond in relation to the modelling that you are asking about in that instance—

Mr JANETZKI: What I would like to know is—

CHAIR: I try not to encourage our witnesses to ask questions. It might give too much leeway to the Treasurer.

Mr Allen: Sorry.

CHAIR: If you want to clarify the modelling—

Mr JANETZKI: I am very happy to, Chair. When Treasury undertook the modelling for the additional revenue that was likely to be raised over the next four years, what was the range? Obviously the budget papers detail \$1.2 billion over the four years. What was the range that the modelling revealed?

CHAIR: Is that related to prices or different options?

Mr JANETZKI: Revenue being raised.

CHAIR: You are talking about options?

Mr JANETZKI: Yes.

Mr Allen: You can come up with a number of scenarios and sensitivities. Ultimately it was landed on a range, as articulated in the budget and as included within the legislation, of the rates that you saw. That was all about ensuring that when it comes to the modelling we developed an understanding of what would be a reasonable and sustainable level of additionality here in terms of the rates of royalty above the current regime.

That was all about modelling and understanding, using industry data of what costs would be incurred by a normal operation—be it a metallurgical operation or a thermal coal operation—and what their price forecasts would be for those particular commodities. We even adjusted to understand, in terms of the current environment, there is inflation that has to be incorporated within cost structures. We took both ABS and industry data on that. A range of sensitivities would go into the formulation of that. Ultimately it is about reflecting what would be an assessment of ensuring that underlying investment in the industry is sustained and that there is also ongoing investment going forward. That is where we landed in terms of those rates.

Mr JANETZKI: How much would Treasury have spent on advertising the coal royalty hikes to date?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question and I will respond to that. In terms of that advertising, I will outline how we go about the process of working with the Government Advertising and Communication Committee on that, ensuring that when we do embark on this sort of activity it is within policy and approaches that the government has adopted when it comes to controlling or monitoring these sorts of information campaigns.

The Government Advertising and Communication Committee oversees and reviews all government advertising and communication strategies such as this one. It ensures that those proposals put forward by departments are appropriate, are cost effective and represent value for money. The first step in this GACC process—that is, the Government Advertising and Communication Committee—is to develop the rationale as to why we are doing it and whether that need arises. Those responsibilities include assessing individual submissions and reviewing materials that go into that campaign.

The process is well explained in terms of information that is available publicly on that. The development of the Treasury royalties material was undertaken with GACC's advice and ultimately their sign-off in terms of an approach. The expenditure to date I have. I would need to confirm that for you. I just do not have—

Mr DICK: I have said publicly it is a million dollars.

Mr Allen: I beg your pardon, Treasurer. I was referring to the cost of the campaign here of \$1.06 million.

Mr JANETZKI: The Treasurer just noted, I know, that that was a million dollars.

Mr DICK: It was in the news.

CHAIR: Order!

Mr JANETZKI: Those comments were given last week. Is the number you have given now to today or to a specific time?

Mr Allen: In terms of what I outlined with that process, that is the budget allocated to that process.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, is there any likelihood of lengthening the advertising period? It has gone obviously since the budget. Is it likely to continue into the future?

CHAIR: Mr Allen, with respect, that might be in some ways a policy question. I am not sure. It depends on how that is interpreted.

Mr STEVENS: It is in the budget papers.

CHAIR: Okay. It is in the budget papers.

Mr Allen: Part of the process that is entailed within the Government Advertising and Communication Committee review is just assessing how the information has been received and whether any further investments are necessary. That review process is ongoing. There is no decision at this point. That would be, again, a process that we would go through in putting proposals forward for consideration.

Mr JANETZKI: I call the Acting CEO of Trade and Investment Queensland. Mr Watson, thank you for joining us. TIQ's annual report says that Japan is Queensland's second largest export market. Was TIQ's Tokyo office aware of the coal royalty increase?

Mr Watson: I am pleased to say that Japan is now actually our No. 1 trading partner at this point in time. In relation to the question, we are aware of conversations but, as you would be aware, TIQ is not a policymaker. We have an awareness of what is happening. We use that to make sure that we continually speak with our trading partners just to make sure they are aware of considerations.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasury did not communicate to you or to the Tokyo office that the coal royalty increase was being announced in the budget?

CHAIR: With respect, I do think that has been put. Just be careful to not repeat the same ground.

Mr Watson: In relation to briefings, I was part of the discussions with the Consul-General of Japan when he was first briefed in relation to the outline of what was proposed. Certainly the details were not put before us before the budget was announced.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr Watson, what have been your instructions to the Tokyo office subsequent to the budget and the announcement of the coal royalty increase and obviously Japan's concerns in relation to it?

Mr Watson: There were no specific directions. As you can appreciate, from TIQ's perspective, from an international perspective and from a trade perspective, we proactively engage with clients to ensure that any policy changes that occur are clearly understood, just to make sure there is a clear understanding of any changes that might impact any of the clients internationally.

Mr JANETZKI: Surely TIQ's role as Queensland's representative in Tokyo—and I know we have a very well respected representative there—is to work on the ground in Queensland's interests? Surely the representative there will be instructed to undertake certain activities to repair relationships or to build back trust on the ground?

Mr Watson: Trade and Investment Queensland, as I have mentioned before, is not a policymaker in this regard. In relation to consultation, certainly we continue to engage with our clients both domestically and internationally. Our commissioner does play that role for us in the market and does cover off any inquiries that come through.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, you promised no new or increased taxes for this term of government at least 26 times. The Treasurer has since stated that the promise did not apply to business. Treasurer, did you ever communicate to business the qualifications that came with your promise?

Mr DICK: I have answered this matter at length publicly in my response both in the parliament and outside. It has been very clear.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, have you sought to meet with industry leaders—in particular business leaders—since the tax promise has been broken in the budget to communicate and to build relationships again?

CHAIR: We have to be careful about assertions where there are contested facts, but I will put the question to the Treasurer noting that.

Mr DICK: The assertion is entirely false and the proposition contained in the question is false. I meet with industry—

Mr JANETZKI: Your credibility is shot.

CHAIR: Order, member for Toowoomba South. You were saying, Treasurer?

Mr DICK: Thank you, Chair. I thank the member for his question. I will repeat my answer. The assertion in the question is false. The proposition behind the question is entirely incorrect. I meet with industry all the time. I have done that throughout my entire ministerial career, not just as Treasurer but in other portfolios. That has happened before the budget, it has happened after the budget, and it will happen well into the future.

Mr JANETZKI: I will defer to the member for Maroochydore.

CHAIR: I do not know what the process for warnings before lunch is, member for Maroochydore, and whether they count. I do note, member for Maroochydore, that we should be careful with our behaviour in putting questions.

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Under Treasurer. Mr Allen, I refer to the Treasurer's media release on 6 June 2022 announcing the increase to the betting tax. Has the Under Treasurer ever seen a government media release advertising an increased profit for a listed company?

CHAIR: Was that question addressed to the Treasurer or the Under Treasurer?

Ms SIMPSON: The Under Treasurer.

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. I would ask for further clarification. I do not want to do this as a rule, but I just want to make sure the question was in relation to whether I have personally seen a media release around a policy change that increased the profit for a company.

CHAIR: Yes, that is correct.

Ms SIMPSON: Yes.

Mr Allen: Thank you for that confirmation. That infers I am aware of all press releases as they have impacted on any corporation as a result of government decision-making. I would refer to the policy in question, which is the point-of-consumption tax. That referred to a fundamental change which we know has been happening within the racing industry. The rise of online betting companies has certainly had a significant impact on the industry and the arrangements that were in place there. The industry has come forward with a proposal in relation to building some sustainability into that process, which allows for the industry to fund its activities rather than partly from industry and partly from government. We have certainly seen examples of government providing funding into areas like country racing. Going forward, those fundamentals are all part of the arrangements that are in place, which provides for the allocation of revenue to Racing Queensland to invest back into racing. Those arrangements around point of consumption apply to all providers of those racing and betting services going forward.

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Under Treasurer. Could the Under Treasurer advise of the total cost of the trade trip to Dubai?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. I do not have the actual report with me. I understand a report has been tabled in relation to that mission which included the cost, but I will confirm it for you. In the course of this hearing we will confirm when that report was tabled.

CHAIR: The minister seems to be indicating underneath his mask that at the end of this session he will come back with those details.

Ms SIMPSON: If I can follow that up?

CHAIR: I think Mr Allen has a further answer.

Mr Allen: If I could just advise the member that the report in question with the costings you are asking for was tabled 5 April this year.

Ms SIMPSON: My follow-up question is to Mr Allen. Could I also have a breakdown of the cost of the flights and what costs were borne by the Queensland government?

CHAIR: Are you asking the minister to get back to you about that?

Ms SIMPSON: No. That is a follow-up to Mr Allen indicating he was willing to—

CHAIR: Mr Allen has indicated that he does not have that data to hand. It might be something that the minister could follow up at the end of the session.

Ms SIMPSON: That is why I wanted to ensure that when the answer came back we could have a breakdown of the cost of flights as well as whether all costs were borne by the Queensland government. I just wanted to clarify that those matters will be answered when that comes back.

CHAIR: Thank you for the clarification, member for Maroochydore. The minister has indicated that the response will be provided by the end of the hearing.

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the minister. Tabcorp met with your chief of staff 17 times through lobbying firm Anacta Strategies prior to the betting tax changes. Did your chief of staff provide you with briefings following these matters?

CHAIR: I am sorry, I missed whom that question was addressed to. Was that addressed to the Treasurer?

Ms SIMPSON: That was to the Treasurer.

Mr DICK: Let me clarify some matters put forward by the member for Maroochydore. Neither I nor any members of my staff have ever met with Anacta in relation to this issue. Substantive negotiations with Tabcorp were conducted by Racing Queensland at arm's length from the government. As I understand it, Anacta—quite properly in accordance with the requirements for lobbyists—has logged a number of phone calls on the contact register. From what I know has been reported, I think it is clear that Racing Queensland has got a pretty good deal for our state. Reporting in the *Australian* today says that Queensland will benefit from a \$150 million payment from Tabcorp, whereas the New South Wales Liberal government is paying Tabcorp—is paying Tabcorp—\$22 million. I think that is a pretty good deal and it speaks for itself. None of those phone calls were made to me personally; however, I have been briefed that there was no negotiation with me or my office with Tabcorp or through their lobbyist. That is because the substantive negotiation was conducted by Racing Queensland. Those questions perhaps should be put to Racing Queensland through the appropriate minister.

CHAIR: I note that the member for Toowoomba South has a question.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, in relation to this matter can you explain the entries on the register that detail meetings between Anacta on behalf of Tabcorp with your chief of staff?

Mr DICK: I think I have given a comprehensive reply and response to that issue. Of course, all interactions, as the honourable member knows, must be recorded on the lobbyists register as part of the most transparent lobbying regime in the country, which that was introduced by Labor governments.

Mr JANETZKI: I want to turn now to the next tax in the budget. Under Treasurer, how much revenue does Treasury forecast to raise from the introduction of the multiple tax jurisdiction revenue-raising measures?

Mr Allen: As the member alluded to in the question, for interstate landholders of Queensland land the assessment of land tax will include their landholdings interstate. In effect, you are creating an assessment where you have your Queensland landholdings and any interstate landholdings when it comes to the calculation of thresholds you will then qualify for when it comes to the calculation of land tax. In relation to that process, as at 30 June that arrangement will be in place.

As I noted, the total value of the landholder's Australian land will be used to determine whether the tax-free threshold has been exceeded. The rate of land tax will be applied at the Queensland proportion of the value of landholdings. Landholders who own land in Queensland will not be impacted by these measures. Landholders who own land in Queensland and other states and territories will need to declare their interstate landholdings, including the land description value and percentage of ownership. Exemptions remain available in relation to Queensland land depending on ownership and use.

If interstate land meets the eligibility requirements, landholders can apply to have that value of land excluded from the land tax calculation. To assist with these new obligations, the Queensland Revenue Office will provide some education in relation to commencement of those initiatives. Those initiatives will apply from 30 June 2023.

Mr JANETZKI: Is there any revenue estimation?

Mr Allen: At the moment we note that that is highly dependent on how much information sharing we can get from other jurisdictions. It is reliant on us utilising available information as opposed to any direct feeds from other state revenue offices. Our estimations there are very tentative at this point.

Mr JANETZKI: That probably leads nicely—

CHAIR: No, we are just a bit over time. Treasurer, I have a few questions coming on the back of that. One is about the land tax. Do you think it is reasonable that someone who invests completely in Queensland should pay more tax than someone who invests in Queensland but splits their investments—

Mr STEVENS: Point of order, Chair: at this point in time, you are asking for an opinion. You said, 'Do you think it is reasonable?'

CHAIR: I will take your point of order and correct my own question. Would it be true under the previous circumstance that someone who invested 100 per cent in Queensland would pay a higher rate of tax than someone who split their investments and was induced to invest in New South Wales and Queensland?

Mr DICK: That is factually correct, Chair. The situation is—and it is well known—that there are a number of tax minimisation schemes promoted across the Commonwealth for individuals to invest in land across various jurisdictions, thereby escaping the land tax net. We do not think that is fair, and we certainly do not think it is fair to two groups. One of them is the mum-and-dad investors who invest in Queensland and may invest in the unimproved value of land, non-residential or non-principal place of residence over \$600,000—so that is individuals in Queensland investing. We also do not think it is fair to people in Queensland who are being pressured or squeezed by interstate property speculators who are coming here, buying properties in places like Logan and Ipswich, fuelling the increase in the cost of property and not paying their fair share of tax.

That is why government did this. Yes, we wish to raise revenue, but more importantly we want to ensure fairness and equity in the tax system. That is something I will commit myself to—just as we have increased, on a bipartisan basis, coal royalties to ensure at a time of super prices and super profits that an appropriate share goes back to the people of Queensland. I think the Under Treasurer may have that figure.

Mr Allen: If I may complete my answer to the member in relation to his question around the multijurisdictional land tax, I did note that these are very preliminary. We are putting together estimates, but at this stage \$20 million is our forecast estimate for 2023-24.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Allen. Treasurer, I refer to page 66 of Budget Paper No. 2. Could the Treasurer please advise the committee about funding the government's defined benefit superannuation scheme? I just had to glance at the Actuary because he knows this is my favourite question. How does its position compare with other jurisdictions, and how does the strength of Queensland's superannuation system assist the people of Queensland?

Mr DICK: Thank you for mentioning the Actuary. It is now 303 days since the member for Mermaid Beach has failed to apologise for the slur he cast on the State Actuary in the parliament.

Chair, I thank you for the question. Members of the committee would be aware that the Australian Retirement Trust, ART, is the merger of Sunsuper and QSuper. QSuper historically has managed our defined benefit superannuation accounts. ART is now a great national financial institution based in Queensland. ART has just made an important announcement that it has partnered with the Queensland Investment Corporation to finance new social and affordable housing supply in Queensland. Through the partnership with QIC, ART is making capital available to enable delivery of seven projects in the initial stage of the QIC-Brisbane Housing Company consortium. That means nearly 600 dwellings funded by superannuation investment. That is no accident. We have carefully put together the policy mechanisms that have enabled this announcement to occur.

Our government facilitated the merger of QSuper and Sunsuper, creating a homegrown financial giant that has the capacity and appetite for these investments. We have put in place the Housing Investment Fund, which closes the gap between rent payable by low-income tenants and the return needed by superannuation funds to build new homes. We have worked with QIC and the Brisbane Housing Company to support their consortium. That determined policy work through our government means we are now opening up a new delivery channel for social housing and affordable housing, harnessing the power of superannuation for social purpose.

We have good news for superannuation in our state and we also have good stories in regards to our defined benefit superannuation liability. The latest review of the state public sector superannuation scheme identified a \$6.649 billion funding surplus as at 30 June 2021. The funding position of the scheme has improved significantly when compared to the \$3.573 billion surplus reported in the previous annual review. That is, the funding surplus on the scheme almost doubled in that financial year. I recall when we repatriated or repurposed part of that surplus we were relentlessly criticised by some, including the LNP. 'The sky is falling'—that is the sort of language that was used. Quite clearly, it was an appropriate use of those funds. The sky did not fall. The State Actuary was not fiddling the figures, according to the member for Mermaid Beach, and we are delivering a record surplus, I believe, in that superannuation fund.

The funding surplus on the scheme has almost doubled in that financial year. The defined benefit fund is forecast to remain in surplus across the forward estimates—that will come as good news to members of the committee—and all benefits remain guaranteed by legislation. That is legislation I moved through the House, as you may recall, Chair. The State Actuary will provide the next review of the scheme as legislated in 2024.

The defined benefit fund is benefiting Queensland in other ways. In recognition of the strong funding position of the fund, our government repurposed, as you know, \$1.5 billion from its surplus in 2021 to help seed the Queensland Future Fund. The Queensland Future Fund is reducing debt through the Debt Retirement Fund, it is developing affordable housing through the Housing Investment Fund, it is caring for our environment through the carbon reduction fund, and it is forging a path to treaty through the Path to Treaty Fund. Despite the repatriation, the defined benefit fund remains in surplus. The State Actuary will provide the next review of the scheme in 2024, as I have indicated.

You have asked for a comparison, Chair. In contrast to the healthy surplus on Queensland's defined benefit scheme, New South Wales reported a \$59.9 billion—that is, almost \$60 billion—unfunded superannuation liability in its 2020-21 report on state finances. While the reported New South Wales liability is calculated in a different way to the QSuper review—that is, on an accounting rather than actuarial basis—the sum is indicative of the level of unfunded liability of that state. The New South Wales Liberal government has indicated it aims to fully fund its liability 18 years from now, by 2030. If I am not mistaken, I think that was increased by 10 years in last year's budget. The Victorian government also has a material unfunded superannuation liability and is working to achieve a fully funded superannuation liability by 2035, long after the 2032 Olympics. Queensland remains the only state government in the Commonwealth to have fully funded superannuation obligations and we have enshrined it as one of our five fiscal principles as a government.

Mr TANTARI: Treasurer, I refer you to page 45 of Budget Paper No. 2. Could you please update the committee about the recent performance of coal prices?

Mr DICK: That is a very important question. I think it is relevant to consider that in the context of the bipartisan progressive coal royalties that the parliament unanimously, certainly without opposition, agreed to in June. We saw sustained exceptionally high prices for both metallurgical and thermal coal in late 2021 and leading into the state budget this year. This included substantial increases in the prices for all three major types of coal: hard coking coal, semi-soft coking coal and thermal coal. This price spike was driven by a range of factors, including global supply issues due to COVID-19, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and related global sanctions, and increasing global activity and demand as part of the global recovery from the COVID-19 economic downturn.

To put this international crisis in context, Germany, a country that has legislated the closure of coal-fired power stations, is now restarting them to power their country. While there is a global demand for high quality coal, I think it should come from Queensland. I want to see Queenslanders in the jobs that mine it, and I also want to see Queenslanders get their share of the revenue it generates.

From September 2021 to the state budget, the spot price for benchmark premium hard coking coal averaged around US\$432 per tonne, well above the historical average of around US\$150 per tonne, so almost three times what the historical average has been across the seven years prior to the onset of COVID-19. In Australian dollar terms, spot hard coking coal prices reached as high as around \$900 per tonne in early 2022. Similarly, the spot price for benchmark thermal coal from September 2021 to the state budget averaged around US\$159 per tonne, compared to the pre-COVID historical average of around \$60 per tonne—not three times as much, but heading that way.

On a year-average basis, the premium hard coking coal price is estimated to be US\$364 per tonne in 2021-22, an increase of more than 200 per cent on 2021-22 prices. As a result of these sustained exceptionally high prices, when the budget was delivered, the value of Queensland's coal exports over the year to March 2022 increased by \$26.3 billion, relative to the previous year, reaching a total value of \$51.9 billion.

The latest ABS data published since budget shows the value of Queensland coal exports has continued to surge, growing by \$36.9 billion over the year to May, relative with the previous year, totalling \$61.4 billion. Treasury's budget forecasts are based on the assumption that coal prices will normalise in 2023. As I discussed when delivering the state budget, these are unprecedented prices for coal and none of the companies who are benefiting saw the increases coming, but these companies are capturing the benefits.

BHP released information on 19 July 2022 showing the coal price they were achieving, reflecting all of their long-term and short-term contractual arrangements, is up 225 per cent. Treasury advises me that it can be inferred from that information that their total revenues from their coal production have

almost tripled, rising by 196 per cent to \$13.9 billion in 2021-22. While costs have risen somewhat, there is no doubt about that, nearly all of that uplift is going towards their profit, and BHP is not the only one experiencing very significant profits. As I mentioned earlier, Whitehaven Coal released information on 18 July saying they are expecting record profits of \$3 billion. The investment community is describing Whitehaven coal as 'printing cash'. Their earnings are being described as 'staggering'. They have so much money, they cannot invest it all into their business. They are buying back their own shares to try to shed some of the spare cash that they are generating. I welcome that. They are making money at a time of significant prices. However, Queenslanders deserve a share of that super profit. They deserve a share of their non-renewable resource so it can go back to them in things like the upgrade of the Hervey Bay Hospital. Even as prices ease, it is still a very good time to be a coal producer or an investor in one of those companies.

Mrs McMAHON: I refer the Treasurer to page 86 of Budget Paper 2. Could the Treasurer please advise the committee on how the new progressive royalty tiers will deliver a return to Queenslanders on the state's natural resources?

Mr DICK: That is a very important question following that information on increase in prices and how we are dealing with that return on our natural resources. The background to this is that extraordinary price rise and that extraordinary profit on the uplift for coal producers that they are enjoying at the moment. Across 2021 and 2022, spot metallurgical coal prices have reached as high, as I said earlier, AU\$900 per tonne. The previous royalty structure did not provide a fair return to Queenslanders during periods of such high prices. ABS data shows that the extraordinary surge in global coal prices saw the value of Queensland exports, as I have said, over the year to March 2022 increase by more than \$26 billion compared with the previous year. Over the same period, coal royalties only rose by \$2.9 billion to a total of \$4.9 billion. These prices may stay high, but they may not. That is why the government and Treasury gave careful consideration to implementing changes to our royalty regime to ensure a fairer return when prices are higher and to ensure that any new arrangements do not significantly impact coal producers during periods of normal prices.

To ensure Queenslanders receive a fair return on the use of the state's valuable, non-renewable natural resources during future periods of high coal prices, new royalties tiers have been introduced, effective from 1 July as follows: 20 per cent for prices above AU\$175 per tonne; 30 per cent for prices above AU\$225 per tonne; and 40 per cent for prices above AU\$300 per tonne. The highest tiers only take effect on the proportion of the royalty price above the relevant price. For example, if coal prices are AU\$302 per tonne, the 40 per cent tier will only apply to the \$2 portion. Importantly, no changes are being made to the existing royalty tier rates. It is estimated that the new tiers will raise around \$1.2 billion over the four years ending 2025-26. However, most of the additional revenue will be in 2022-23 when coal prices are expected to remain high.

Coal prices are expected to return to longer-run expectations in the second half of 2022-23. Once prices return to longer-run expectations, it is estimated that the new tiers will raise around \$135 million a year on average from 2023-24 onwards. I am advised that this increases total royalty revenue by only around four per cent compared to what it would have been without the new tiers. These changes will also mean that in future periods of high coal prices, Queenslanders will receive a much fairer return on their valuable natural assets, providing additional revenue to enable the production and provision of essential services and infrastructure across the state. The new tiers are not expected to impact on the viability of our coal industry or investment as the new tiers will only raise material royalty revenue at times when coal prices reach high levels at which time coal producers will be reaping the rewards of the high prices through substantial increased revenues.

This was confirmed recently by the CEO of Whitehaven Coal. He was asked about his proposed mine in Queensland, Winchester South, on 18 July. He said that the introduction of the government's bipartisan, progressive coal royalties will 'not have a material effect on our proposition'. He is talking about a brand new, yet-to-be built coalmine, Winchester South, which needs over \$1 billion to get going. He is saying that bipartisan progressive coal royalties are not affecting that proposition. That is because the price that they used to decide the investment is much lower than where those royalties apply, so it still stacks up. It is a win-win, member for Macalister. Current or increased coal prices with the new bipartisan progressive coal royalty regime means more money for coal businesses and more money for Queensland families.

CHAIR: Treasurer, a similar question was put to Mr Allen, but it was not put to you. Could you please advise the committee of what consultation was undertaken when setting the new royalty tiers? I make reference to page 104 of Budget Paper 2.

Mr DICK: Thank you very much, Chair, for that question because it allows me to put some facts on the public record. I know that some industry representatives, led by former LNP minister Ian Macfarlane, have been complaining about consultation on the royalties change. Mr Macfarlane has stated publicly that there was 'no consultation'. I was surprised to hear that from Mr Macfarlane because I met with Mr Macfarlane on 26 May this year in my office at parliament and I told him directly that we were considering making changes to coal royalties. Without being asked, I gave Mr Macfarlane the assurance that the government would not interfere with royalty rates that applied at the existing price tiers. The government did not have to give that undertaking, but it was an important sign of a good-faith step to give people the assurances that they would not be impacted should prices fall again. At Mr Macfarlane's request, I had a meeting with a number of CEOs and leaders in the coal industry on 8 June. I was disappointed to read about that meeting in the newspaper on the day it was scheduled to occur. Nevertheless, I went ahead with the meeting. I again told them the same thing, and I invited them to provide information that they thought relevant. Some did so.

Regrettably, what we got back from industry more broadly in return for their engagement was an immediate advertising campaign. The truth is: industry was consulted. Those meetings happened. I was there. Not only did I tell them about what we were considering and not only did I give them the assurance about the existing tiers; I put on the table that we were prepared to consider other concessions.

Chair, as you and other members of the committee may know, abatement costs are an important matter for the resources industry. I offered to work with industry on concessional recognition of the cost of abatement. We were happy to consider that. I was happy to consider that and I indicated that in the June meeting. Mr Macfarlane and the industry have never responded to that request. That came as a surprise to me. All I ask is that, even if they do not like the outcome, Mr Macfarlane and the industry should be honest about the consultation process that we engaged in.

One of the important assurances I gave to the QRC and that I gave to industry is that we are not changing the royalty rates on the tiers that existed prior to 1 July. In that regard I would like to place some statements on the public record. I quote—

It is inevitable that over the next 10 years coal prices will go up and they will go down. They will go up and they will go down a couple of times in that 10-year period. That is what we would expect. We want to ensure that when the coal prices do go up the people of Queensland get the benefit. That is why we set a royalty regime that does not increase the royalty for coal below \$100 a tonne. There is no change to a royalty—

regime—

below \$100 a tonne.

I quote—

Some of the responses from the mining companies have stretched the bounds of credibility.

Those statements were not made by me. They were made by the then deputy premier, Jeff Seeney, on 12 September 2012 speaking in the Legislative Assembly chamber about the royalty changes introduced by the LNP. Everything that the then deputy premier said about the change in 2012 is equally true of the change we made in 2022. The then LNP deputy premier, Jeff Seeney, went on to say one other thing—

To suggest that an increase that equates to \$2.75 at \$180 a tonne will cause the industry to move away from Queensland is an absolute nonsense.

I can advise the committee that the effect of our change in 2022 on that price of \$180 per tonne is just 25 cents per tonne. Again, the idea that the industry will flee from Queensland because of a 25-cent increase, when they stayed on for a \$2.75 increase a tonne, makes no sense. I do not often quote Jeff Seeney with approval, but again it is nonsense.

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to the Treasurer. I want to get to the bottom of this. On the official register Tabcorp met with your chief of staff through Anacta 17 times prior to the betting tax changes. I know that you claim to have answered the question; however, given you have power to refer matters to your chief of staff to appear here, can you make that referral and clear these matters up and provide some clarity for the committee, please?

CHAIR: I am going to allow the question. We do have to be careful that under the standing orders we rely on a factual basis for the question. The Treasurer has already made statements about this, but I invite the Treasurer to perhaps go over the same ground.

Mr DICK: Perhaps I will make two observations. Firstly, just as the LNP complained about the raid that never occurred, about the laptop being 'seized', which never occurred, the members of the opposition talk about meetings. There were no meetings. I have put that before the parliament today and it would be deliberately misleading the parliament to continue to say there were 17 meetings. All of those engagements were telephone calls, and I have said that publicly.

Mr JANETZKI: Unbelievable.

Mr DICK: I have also provided a—

Mr JANETZKI: The Treasurer has no credibility, seriously. Ridiculous word games.

CHAIR: Order.

Mr DICK:—comprehensive answer to that question.

Mr JANETZKI: It is embarrassing.

Mr DICK: The reason the member for Toowoomba South knows about it is because we have the most transparent lobbying regime in the country and—

Mr JANETZKI: You have a glass jaw, mate.

Mr DICK:—we got a good outcome for Queensland: \$150 million that the taxpayers have benefited from that deal whereas the taxpayer under the New South Wales Liberal government is now paying Tabcorp \$22 million.

Mr JANETZKI: So the Treasurer will not be clearing this up, Chair?

CHAIR: I do not even know what to make of that statement.

Mr JANETZKI: Okay. I will move on.

CHAIR: Order! I have to say: I have warned you once about making non-factual statements, especially after the record has been corrected.

Mr JANETZKI: Can I go back to the multiple land tax jurisdiction, and the Under Treasurer may wish to call Mr Jackson for these questions but I will leave that in his hands. Actually, before I get specifically to the Queensland Revenue Office, has Treasury undertaken any modelling with respect to potential property investors who will leave the Queensland market, thereby worsening the housing crisis we are currently facing, simply because other jurisdictions have more favourable land tax arrangements?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. A range of information was put into that whole decision-making process, and I am happy to gather together a bit of detail and provide you with a response in the course of this proceeding if that helps. I just do not have that detail with me at the minute.

Mr JANETZKI: Can that be taken on notice?

CHAIR: That would be a question for the Treasurer, according to the standing orders. However, Mr Allen undertook within the course of this meeting to come back to us with that information; that seems to be what he was saying. We have noted that.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you. Does the Queensland Revenue Office have any formal arrangements with other jurisdictions, in particular revenue offices, to manage the collection of this land tax information to allow Queensland to apply?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. I alluded to that in my initial response, saying that there are not arrangements in place at this point in time with other state registries for that information.

Mr JANETZKI: How many FTE in Queensland Revenue Office will be put towards the collection of this land tax adjustment?

Mr Allen: I would ask if it is suitable, okay and appropriate to invite up the commissioner who would have that detail. Could I ask Mr Jackson to come forward, unless we can follow that up instead?

Mr Jackson: What is the question?

Mr Allen: It is in relation to FTEs applied for land tax.

CHAIR: My understanding is—

Mr Jackson: We will look at it and come back to you.

Mr DICK: Richard does not have to keep sitting there.

Mr JANETZKI: You are relieved, Mr Watson.

CHAIR: Thanks, Mr Watson.

Mr JANETZKI: This might be a question for the Queensland revenue commissioner—

CHAIR: Do you want to put it to the commissioner?

Mr JANETZKI: Could I? Can I call the commissioner?

Mr DICK: He is not a listed officer.

CHAIR: My apologies.

Mr Allen: I will respond to the member's question with those details during the course of the hearing.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you. Last year at estimates the Queensland revenue commissioner stated that the tax policy consultative committee would be reactivated. I would like to know how many times that committee has met.

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. That is another piece of information I will have to gather, and I will look to respond during the course of this hearing.

CHAIR: We thank you for that. We might note that we need a little bit more time to respond to these things.

Mr JANETZKI: How many times did the Treasurer attend those meetings?

Mr DICK: I will tell you now. I did not attend any.

CHAIR: Was that directed at the Treasurer?

Mr JANETZKI: No, that was directed to the Under Treasurer.

CHAIR: Would you like to direct it to the—

Mr JANETZKI:—to the Under Treasurer? We have our answer; it is okay. Under Treasurer, I am interested to know the position of the tax policy consultative committee in relation to this new land tax regime? Were they aware of it before it was announced? Had there been consultation in relation to these matters?

Mr Allen: Again, I am happy to incorporate that within the response that we are coming back to you with on other matters you have raised in relation to the consultative committee.

CHAIR: We have taken note of that.

Mr JANETZKI: My last question in relation to the land tax changes and also the tax policy consultative committee, Under Treasurer, was that the commissioner last year said here at estimates that the purpose of that committee was that there would be no surprises in relation to the business community and, more broadly, the investment committee. I am interested to understand the position of that committee given the broken tax promise in relation to this land tax adjustment, the fourth broken promise on taxes.

Mr DICK: What does it have to do with the budget?

Mr Allen: I again would seek the chair's permission to respond to the member's question in detail in the course of this proceeding.

CHAIR: Yes, Mr Allen. That question was probably more about the question than the answer, but I did put it to you. I do not know if there is any substantive part of that question; it was more about—

Mr Allen: It related to the issue in relation to matters that were raised on how frequently the committee met and I am happy to incorporate a response to that question as part of that.

Mr JANETZKI: Chair, I call Mr Noble, the CEO of QTC. Mr Noble, it has been reported that QTC gave a \$50 million loan to Ipswich City Properties. When that company was wound up it had net losses of \$78 million. I am interested to understand the terms of the loan.

Mr Noble: Thank you for the question, honourable member. Yes, QTC did loan \$50 million to Ipswich City Council which, I believe, on-lent it to the property company. That information alone is commercial-in-confidence between QTC and its client and I would refer the question to the department.

Mr JANETZKI: Mr Noble, so you are saying that the terms of the loan, the security contained and whether it was repaid is all commercial-in-confidence? I would have thought some of that information could be publicly disclosed at the very least.

CHAIR: That is not what he said, but over to you, Mr Noble.

Mr Noble: Thank you, Chair, and thank you for the follow-up question. The dealings between Queensland Treasury Corporation and its clients, including local government, are commercial-in-confidence. The process for QTC lending money to local government and associated companies is approved through a Treasury and a department of local government process. Whilst we will credit assess the loan and provide credit rating services on both local government councils as well as subsidiaries, our role is not to make the decision as to whether we lend the money to the relevant council or subsidiary, so that is my reason for referring it back to the department.

Mr JANETZKI: So are you able to confirm whether the loan has been repaid?

Mr Noble: Thank you for the follow-up question. I believe the loan has been repaid.

Mr JANETZKI: I will leave it for now on that question, Chair. I next want to turn my attention to Suncorp, so my question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, when were you first advised of the ANZ acquisition of Suncorp?

Mr DICK: I will come back with the date. I do not recall, but it is only very recently.

CHAIR: You will come back in this process?

Mr DICK: Yes.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, I accept you are going to come back with some of the finer details of your recollection of your being advised. Was it prior to or post the ASX announcement on 18 July?

Mr DICK: I do not recall. We will come back.

CHAIR: We will find that out unequivocally by the end.

Mr JANETZKI: Has the Treasurer since that time had any further meetings with Treasury in relation to the terms of any potential acquisition by ANZ?

CHAIR: I am sure you heard that question, Treasurer, but I did not quite hear it.

Mr DICK: I will provide a comprehensive response later, but—

Mr JANETZKI: That is what estimates are for.

Mr DICK:—I talk to Treasury about a lot of things, including this, so it is an ongoing discussion.

CHAIR: An ongoing discussion.

Mr JANETZKI: So when Suncorp said over a month ago that it was considering the status of the bank, the Treasurer or any Treasury representatives did not have any curiosity as to what it could mean for the bank?

CHAIR: You did not say who that was addressed to.

Mr JANETZKI: To the Treasurer.

CHAIR: The Treasurer.

Mr DICK: Did I have curiosity? Is that the question?

CHAIR: It was an ambiguous question. I thought it was did the Treasury have curiosity, but did you have curiosity?

Mr STEVENS: Killed the cat!

Mr JANETZKI: I will be more direct.

CHAIR: Thanks.

Mr DICK: Curiosity killed the question!

Mr JANETZKI: Has the Treasurer contemplated or has the Treasurer undertaken any work in relation to this matter before being briefed at a time which he cannot actually remember? Had he done any work when Suncorp—

Mr DICK: No, that is not right. That is unfair.

Mr JANETZKI: Had he done any work prior to the announcement to the ASX on 18 July as to what the state government may need to do if the Suncorp Bank had been sold?

CHAIR: I think I understand the Treasurer—

Mr JANETZKI: The Treasurer cannot remember at the moment, Chair. I am asking: had the Treasurer undertaken any work prior to 18 July?

Mr DICK: The assertion made by the member is false. It is not that I have no memory; I want to provide an accurate response to the committee. If I provided an inaccurate response, then the first person to complain and make political capital out of it would be the member for Toowoomba South, so I will consider these matters and provide a response to the committee before the end of the hearing today.

CHAIR: There are a number of those questions then that may be incorporated in that answer.

Mr DICK: That is right.

Mr JANETZKI: To the Treasurer: has the Treasurer given tacit approval to the ANZ acquisition of Suncorp?

Mr DICK: There is a process to be pursued from a state level in relation to the relevant legislation that would enable a merger. That is something that the government will consider through an appropriate process led by Treasury as we consider the matters put to us by both parties to that transaction. Ultimately, that matter will have to come before the parliament.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, it has been reported that you expect full compliance with the longstanding legal provisions. Treasurer, does that mean you will require ANZ to retain certain functions, including the Treasury function here in Queensland, post acquisition?

Mr DICK: We will consider those matters as we consider the merger and what it means for Queenslanders, but my statement stands publicly and we want to get a good deal for Queensland.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, when were you first made aware or when were you first briefed on the potential acquisition of Suncorp Bank by ANZ?

Mr Allen: Thank you, member, for the question. At the conclusion of the response that is being prepared, I am happy to include the details about my briefing which was concurrent with the Treasurer. Just to make sure that is accurate, I am happy to include those details. If the member is happy with that response, I can incorporate all of the details of when I was advised as well.

Mr JANETZKI: Also, Under Treasurer, I am interested to understand, likewise not just from the Treasurer but also from Treasury, about this when Suncorp stated this publicly over a month ago. We know that the work internally had been going on and a due diligence process or otherwise had been going on for at least six or eight weeks. Suncorp said publicly a month ago that it would be looking at the status of the bank. I am intrigued to understand what work Treasury had done in relation to a potential change of status and what it might mean, whether it be for the officers or all the legal requirements under the 1996 act. I would like to understand what Treasury has done as well.

Mr DICK: Have we moved off the budget, have we?

CHAIR: Sorry, Treasurer, but did you have a point of order?

Mr DICK: A point of order: have we moved off the budget? It is a matter of public interest, but there will be a parliamentary inquiry into any legislation that is moved.

CHAIR: It is a financial matter in a broader sense; I wonder though is it a budgetary matter about the question that we have been asked to deal with? Is there a way you could tie it better into the question as to whether the expenditure should be agreed to, which is what the committee is dealing with?

Mr JANETZKI: I will move on, but I look forward with great interest to the briefing at the end of the committee hearing. I would like to move back now to the Titles Registry from last year's budget but that is flowing through into this year's budget. Under Treasurer, can you provide a copy of the valuation as it relates to the Titles Registry?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. In relation to the valuation that relates to the titles office, as we noted in last year's hearing, there was a value just under \$8 billion at financial close. The valuation is based on the size and quality of the registry cash flows and the length of time the Titles Registry will have access to those cash flows. As we know, \$6 billion of that went into the Queensland Future Fund Debt Retirement Fund. The Treasurer has also spoken to the other funds to which the balance of those units in the Titles Registry were allocated. In relation to the valuation as it stands with the course of this financial year, the incorporation of an end-of-year valuation for the Titles Registry will be addressed as part of Treasury's financial statements in our annual report which will be incorporating reporting on the Debt Retirement Fund as well.

Mr STEVENS: Under Treasurer, in terms of valuations, obviously the titles office valuation would be based on how many years of profit et cetera, as normal valuations are. How many years was the valuation based on for the titles office valuation—how many years forward?

Mr Allen: I know that we actually spoke to that last year as well. It is for the term of the concession that was included within the original valuation, and I will seek to clarify if my answer is not correct, but that was a 50-year term. I will ask my colleagues to correct me if that is not accurate.

Mr TANTARI: I would like to further examine the question regarding royalties. Treasurer, I refer you to page 104 of Budget Paper 2. Could you please clarify for the committee how royalties have changed in the past and what was the reaction to those changes?

Mr DICK: Thank you, member for Hervey Bay. It is an important point to understand that coal royalties have changed many times in Queensland history. In fact, the period of the last 10 years with no change was an outlier in historical terms. Coal companies have experienced a long period of stability in terms of the royalty regime. Until the most recent changes, passed without any opposition in the Legislative Assembly, there had been no change for a decade—since October 2012, in fact—despite prices rising substantially over that time. That followed a range of changes to the royalty regime prior to that period, prior to that 10-year freeze, which was an undertaking—a promise—we made to the industry and we kept.

There were at least six major changes made to coal royalty rates over the previous 20 years prior to 2012. The changes prior to 2012 included the introduction in 2008 of a second tier, with a new top rate of 10 per cent over \$100 per tonne. In 2012 there was the introduction of a three-tier system of seven per cent up to A\$100 per tonne, 12½ per cent above A\$100 up to \$150 per tonne, and 15 per cent above A\$150 per tonne. Prices have increased substantially over the past few decades, as the honourable member will know, from well under A\$100 per tonne in the 1990s, reflecting an underlying persistent upward trend in price over time, including some previous periods of exceptionally high prices. From time to time we hear demands from industry for coal royalties to be indexed so the cost of royalties remains the same in real terms yet the price is not staying the same in real terms. It has gone up and up and it is quite reasonable for all parties to benefit from that increase. The coal companies should benefit, workers should benefit and the people of Queensland should benefit. The people who own this non-renewable resource and allow it to be extracted should benefit from that uplift.

The other interesting thing to note when you look back across the last 30 years or so is how the reactions to coal royalty changes are also the same. In 2012 the Queensland Resources Council summarised the LNP's royalty hike as follows—

The worse-than-feared hike in coal royalties announced in today's Queensland budget means more job losses, the risk of further mine closures and the near certainty that numerous major new coal projects will not see the light of day.

Rio Tinto Australian managing director Bill Champion said at the time—

We are shocked, surprised and very disappointed by the size of the royalty increase that has been imposed by the Queensland government—

that is, the then LNP government. The quote goes on—

This increase will further endanger jobs and investment in the coal industry, at both existing mines and new projects.

BHP at that time said—

We have made it clear to the Queensland Government—

the then LNP Newman government—

that any additional royalty impost will directly impact the profitability of our existing operations, and will affect future business decisions regarding growth capital allocation.

The then BHP chair Jac Nasser described the LNP's changes as an 'unbelievable' and 'counterproductive' move.

CHAIR: All those quotes are from 2012?

Mr DICK: That is right, Chair. Mr Nasser said the LNP's change 'was like shooting an elite athlete in the left foot'. It was not just in 2012. In 2008 Michael Roche, the then CEO of the Queensland Resources Council went on ABC Radio and said—

The Government has decided to do a smash and grab on the back of very good prices in the year ahead. The danger is that some of those 28 projects that are on the drawing board will have their sums redone and the proponents of those projects might like—not like the numbers they find.

In 2001 there was no exception. In 2001 the Queensland Resources Council described royalty changes as 'a grab for cash'; it was a 'classic case of moving the goal posts after the game has started'; the government 'introduced a significant sovereign risk into investment in Queensland'; and 'it threatens existing jobs, payments to contractors and the financial prospects for the life of the individual coalmines'.

It is worth noting that those dire predictions have not in the long term played out. The industry, of course, has continued to prosper in Queensland, its fortunes ebbing and flowing with the global demand for its product.

Mr TANTARI: So it was a good government.

Mr DICK: I will take that interjection. It was a good government. The 2008 government was the Bligh government—a very good government—and the 2001 government, of course a very good government too, was the Beattie government. That will continue. All that will change is that the people of Queensland will get a fairer share when prices reach extraordinary highs.

What has played out over decades is that companies like Rio Tinto have decided to sell out of coal. BHP too has been progressively selling or closing coalmines. That has been occurring now for the best part of 20 years. That is a decision made by BHP irrespective of the new bipartisan progressive coal royalty tiers. I think the remarks those companies are making loudly now should be considered in that context. For some of them it is not about new investment; it is about maximising the sale price of their existing investment. For those who are investing, such as Whitehaven Coal at Winchester South—I mentioned that earlier—they freely admit the royalty changes do not have a material effect on the company's investment and business proposition.

Can I respectfully suggest that industry should accept the new bipartisan progressive coal royalty tiers passed without opposition in the parliament—no opposition by the LNP, the Greens, Katter's Australian Party, One Nation or Independents. Those tiers will stay. They are not going to go away and I think everyone should get down to and get on with business. That will be the best thing for those companies, the workers they employ, regional communities and the people of Queensland who will get a dividend back, particularly through improved investment in health care across Queensland.

Mrs McMAHON: Treasurer, I refer to page 86 of Budget Paper No. 2. Could you please advise the committee about the payroll tax relief being delivered in this year's budget?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Macalister for her question. I know that that payroll tax cut is being well received in our community of Logan and in the City of Logan. I acknowledge the member for Logan and you, member for Macalister. I also have the privilege of representing communities in that city in this parliament. Certainly when I attended a function, with small business in particular, in Hervey Bay, I noted the particular interest of the people attending that budget lunch in relation to the benefit that they would get from a payroll tax cut.

We recognise the importance of small and medium sized businesses to the Queensland economy. We always have and we always will. Our state already has very competitive payroll tax settings with our \$1.3 million payroll tax threshold, which is one of the most generous in the country. Among the states only South Australia has a higher threshold, but their base rate of payroll tax for small businesses is higher than Queensland's.

The member for Macalister would be interested to know that there are more than 460,000 businesses registered in Queensland. Our generous payroll tax threshold means that 95 per cent of them—around 440,000 registered businesses—already pay no payroll tax. Under our reforms those businesses will continue to pay no payroll tax. For the small and medium sized businesses that are liable for payroll tax, we are making our system even more generous. In this year's budget we are increasing the number of businesses eligible for a payroll tax deduction and we are increasing the payroll tax deduction for businesses already receiving one. We are increasing the range for which businesses can claim a payroll tax deduction from \$6.5 million to \$10.4 million in annual taxable wages. This measure will benefit over 12,000 small and medium sized businesses in Queensland. A business with a \$2 million wage bill will receive more than \$3,500 per year in additional deductions. A business with a \$6.5 million payroll will make more than \$26,000 in savings. This measure also means that those companies will benefit from payroll tax competitiveness when you look at other jurisdictions.

To fund our record mental health investment—and I noted the Premier talking about that at her estimates hearing this morning—we have introduced a 0.25 per cent mental health levy on businesses with wages bills of more than \$10 million a per year. Businesses with annual wages of over \$100 million will pay an extra 0.5 per cent levy. That levy will impact just the top one per cent of Queensland companies—big businesses with payrolls of around 130 people or more. They should have confidence that every dollar that that levy raises will go towards the vital mental health services that Queenslanders need. That will be ring fenced and used only for the purposes and objectives of the Mental Health Act or the act creating the Queensland Mental Health Commission.

In summary, 440,000 registered Queensland businesses will pay no payroll tax and they will continue to pay no payroll tax. Over 12,000 businesses will pay less payroll tax and the top one per cent of Queensland businesses will help fund vital mental health services, which will come back to them

as they will have the largest workforces in the state. Professor Allan Fels is a distinguished economist and former chair of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, and also someone who has a lived experience of mental illness in his family. He has noted that not only is it good for the individual—and one of my principal reasons for doing this is individuals and families—but it is also good for the economy. A 25 per cent increase in mental health outcomes would be a 2.75 per cent improvement in gross domestic product for the country and I think that would be a great thing.

CHAIR: Treasurer, building on those comments about the mental health levy and referring to page 87 of Budget Paper No. 2, could you please update the committee on the government's election commitments on taxes and also, importantly, how that might compare to promises made by previous governments?

Mr DICK: I have heard a lot about the nature of—

CHAIR: A similar question was put before.

Mr DICK: Yes. I have heard a lot about promises made and promises broken. This allows me to put some more facts on the public record. Our government committed to no new taxes or increased taxes for the people of Queensland. The people of Queensland will not pay one dollar of the revenue measures announced by me in the recent Queensland budget. The 2022-23—

Mr JANETZKI: I just cannot believe he is still going on about it. Unbelievable.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the member Toowoomba South. If he was so offended by it, if he thought it was such an abuse of the democratic process, why did he support all of them in the parliament? He supported them because he knows there was no breach of promise. If he was so offended by it he would have voted against it like the LNP voted against the increase in royalties—he voted against the increase in gas royalties when it was moved in the parliament—but he did nothing of the. The clear double standard of the LNP is obvious for the world to see.

The 2022-23 Queensland budget included specific revenue measures aimed at providing sustainable funding to support the delivery of mental health, as I have said, and other essential government services and to fund the racing industry. I was so pleased to see Lizzy King at the announcement of the increase of the levy that we have put on the point-of-consumption tax. Of course, Lizzy King is the chair of the Toowoomba Turf Club. She was there at the announcement that I made with the Minister for Racing.

Mr JANETZKI: It is going to cost the Broncos \$7½ million.

Mr DICK: No. This is the biggest racing club in regional Queensland, if I am not mistaken. I am not sure if it is in the electorate of the member for Toowoomba South, or that of the member for Toowoomba North, but I am so glad that his community and the CEO of that turf club have embraced the announcement. In fact, she spoke in support of it. That just shows you, in a sense, how out of touch the LNP is with the very communities that they represent.

Mr JANETZKI: I do not think that the Broncos are real happy with it, Treasurer.

Mr DICK: The Broncos are a very valuable brand.

Mr JANETZKI: It cost them sponsors.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection. I am very confident that they will find sponsors. The LNP can align themselves with large international online betting companies based in tax havens if they wish. I will align myself with Lizzy King, the Toowoomba Turf Club and racing clubs across the length and breadth of regional Queensland that will get the benefit of this levy. In 85 of the 125 communities in Queensland where there is a racing or turf club, the big race day in the year is the biggest or the second biggest event for that community. Why should they not benefit, if I can put the question rhetorically, from online international betting companies based in tax havens paying the same as online wagering companies in this country? Of course they should benefit. It is a sensible measure and I would be most surprised if the LNP sought to oppose that when it is moved through the parliament later in the year.

Speaking of promises made and promises broken, the former LNP government announced a range of substantial tax and revenue increases in its 2012-13 and 2013-14 budgets after promising that there would be no new or increased taxes. We made a promise to the people. This is exactly what the LNP did once they got into power: in the 2012-13 budget, the former Newman LNP government announced increases to coal royalty rates, an additional new royalty tier estimated to raise an additional \$1.6 billion over four years, and increases in the rate of transfer duty for transactions above \$1 million to 5.75 per cent, estimated to raise an additional \$361 million over four years. Those were measures that were supported by the member for Mermaid Beach and the member for Maroochydore in the

parliament. In the 2013-14 budget, the former LNP government increased general insurance duty from five per cent to nine per cent, estimated to raise an additional \$990 million over four years, and deferred proposed increases in the payroll tax threshold by two years, estimated to raise an additional \$315 million over four years. The LNP does not come to this argument with clean hands. Their hands are absolutely dirty on this issue and they know it.

CHAIR: Thank you, Treasurer. I now turn to the member for Toowoomba South for a question.

Mr JANETZKI: I will go back to the Titles Registry for a moment. Under Treasurer, last year Treasury confirmed or acknowledged that Registry Co will contribute to a trust managed by QIC and the units in the trust will be held by state owned entities. Accordingly, the Queensland government has obtained a financial benefit from effectively privatising the Titles Registry without technically privatising it. Under Treasurer, do you believe that international principles for government financial accounting, recognised by the ABS, have been followed?

CHAIR: That was a rather tortured question, but Mr Allen may have followed it.

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question and I thank the chair for the referral. Unfortunately, I am not a member of an international accounting profession and international accounting laws are not something I am familiar with. I note that the Auditor-General has acknowledged the point the member made: these are entities or in units owned by a state entity so it remains within government.

Mr JANETZKI: You are confident that the accounting treatment as applied by international organisations has been followed?

Mr Allen: I can only rely on the Auditor-General in that regard in terms of his organisation's assessment and part of that review of the financial statements.

Mr JANETZKI: Can I call forward the CEO of QIC, please. Before I turn to QIC, I want to ask a question just to progress our way through this. It relates to the rental bonds that were transferred from the RTA recently. Under Treasurer, my first question is to you. Can you detail Treasury's involvement in the \$1 billion transfer of bond moneys from the Residential Tenancies Authority to QIC?

Mr Allen: The new RTA funding model was implemented on 1 July 2022 with the objective of derisking the RTA holdings of rental bonds, or at least their financial position, to ensure now that those bonds are held within the bank account, ensuring complete preservation of the bonds are held with Queensland tenants and landlords. This new funding model does not impact RTA operations, powers or core functions. No jobs are lost as part of the process; indeed, the RTA plans to increase its FTEs this year from 220 to 240.

The decision to implement these reforms has been confirmed by the RTA's unfunded position in 2021-22. This followed assessment at the time of the preparation of the 2022-23 budget of the RTA's forecast end-of-year position for 2021-22 of a \$34.02 million deficit. This continues the demonstration of the impact of volatile investment returns, with the RTA's recording of a deficit of \$7.9 million in 2017-18 and \$43.3 million in 2019-20. Based on the latest estimate, the value of RTA's investments was over \$55 million lower than the value of its bond liabilities as at 30 June. The reform is looking to derisk the funding volatility that has been incurred by its holding of the operations. These reforms have been implemented. The government would have been asked to step in, as it was over recent times, and provide the funding support for the RTA.

Mr JANETZKI: You mentioned the unfunded position in 2021. Was that when the idea was first proposed to transfer the funds?

Mr Allen: As I have outlined in that response, there was a pattern of volatility in the earnings and the extent to which the consolidated fund was being asked to contribute to the ongoing operations. We thought it made a lot more sense to derisk that funding position and for the consolidated fund to provide certainty to their funding arrangements. Thereafter, they still have access to the bonds. They sit within the bank account. They receive and pay out in accordance with normal operations, and their focus remains on their core business. The focus on managing investments is no longer an element of what they need to concentrate on. If anything, it provides for a greater focus on core business.

Mr JANETZKI: When did Treasury first flag the idea with the housing minister?

Mr Allen: I could not recollect when that was. I know, certainly, speaking with the director-general about it and us briefing the RTA on that as well.

CHAIR: My memory, Deputy Chair, is that there was discussion of this when we did this bill as this committee?

Mr STEVENS: There was.

CHAIR: We might leave it there. Member for Toowoomba South?

Mr JANETZKI: Ms Rampa, board minutes reveal that QIC staff updated the RTA board on a regular basis on the financial performance of the RTA investments. At any of those board meetings did QIC staff state that the investments were underperforming?

Ms Rampa: I would like to check that information and that data as I was not here at the time. I will endeavour to do so by the end of the session this afternoon.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you. Probably where I would like to go is: at what point or did QIC recommend to the board of the RTA that the funding model be changed? That is where I would like the question to go.

CHAIR: Sorry, say the question again? My apologies.

Mr JANETZKI: Firstly, I would like to understand when QIC went to these RTA board meetings. I know how many times they appeared, but did they ever relate to the RTA board how the investments were underperforming? At what stage before the RTA board did they recommend changing the funding model?

CHAIR: That was addressed to Ms Rampa? I do not know how that could be within her knowledge.

Mr JANETZKI: Chair?

CHAIR: Oh, you were just clarifying the question. Member for Toowoomba South?

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, just looking through the budget papers from this year's budget it is not clear how that billion dollar transfer was treated. Can you advise where in the budget papers we could find the treatment of that billion dollar transfer of funds?

Mr Allen: I note that, in the movement of funds that has been described, there will be a recognition in the RTA's financial statements, which were included within the Service Delivery Statements for the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy, which will show the value of the bonds being held. The value of the bond liability continues to be held on the RTA balance sheet. Bonds will continue to be received by the RTA and held by the RTA; however, they no longer will be invested in financial markets. They will be instead secured in a bank account. Those investments now will sit within the general government's long-term assets. They would sit within a \$40 billion group of assets that are managed on behalf of the state by QIC.

Mr JANETZKI: I call again on Mr Watson, the Acting CEO of TIQ. Mr Watson, can you describe what steps TIQ has taken to address the risk associated with foot-and-mouth disease?

Mr Watson: I thank the member for the question.

CHAIR: Foot-and-mouth.

Mr DICK: Why is it relevant to him?

CHAIR: We will find out.

Mr STEVENS: Trade.

Mr JANETZKI: Just an \$80 million cattle industry.

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr JANETZKI: You are an embarrassment, Treasurer—seriously. We are not asking you the question.

Mr DICK: It is an embarrassing question. It has nothing to do with the budget. It has nothing to do with the work of TIQ. You are just stumbling around in the dark.

CHAIR: Treasurer, order! Mr Watson is very talented. We will see what Mr Watson has to say.

Mr Watson: We are aware of the issue that is currently being reviewed. It is something that we are in discussions about with our colleagues at DAF who are leading in this regard and who are in consultation with the federal government. We are aware of the exposure to the beef export market, but it is being managed through our colleagues at DAF and their federal colleagues as well.

Mr JANETZKI: What are the key performance indicators in TIQ for the year ahead?

Mr Watson: Our internal KPIs are in relation to our export and investment outcomes. For this year we are targeting KPIs in excess of 300 for our trade exports and in excess of 30 investment outcomes.

Mr JANETZKI: TIQ's annual report states that your overseas teams worked with Queensland based staff to help clients achieve record trade and investment outcomes worth over \$1.23 billion. There were five specific contracts mentioned totalling over \$300 million. Can you provide any further detail in relation to the \$1.23 billion in trade and investment outcomes that were achieved directly by Trade & Investment Queensland?

Mr Watson: In relation to the \$1 billion, of that 256 outcomes related specifically to export outcomes to the value of \$224 million. Our investment outcomes last year were 30 in total with a value of \$792 million. That gives you that total for last year.

Mr JANETZKI: Returning to key performance indicators, do you from here in Queensland set key performance indicators for branch offices around the globe and how are they managed and measured?

Mr Watson: They are internal measures that we undertake on a regular basis. We have a strong governance process internally where we capture all of our outcomes through a CRM process. We review our performance on a quarterly basis with both our domestic and international network of commissioners to ensure we are on track to perform against the outcomes that we set internally.

Mr JANETZKI: Returning to foot-and-mouth disease, are branch offices reaching out or are they receiving any feedback on the ground from major beef partners—and others such as pig and goat partners, and the list goes on—around the globe? Are people reaching out to our trade offices around the globe wondering what is being done in Australia or are you sending out to the branch offices a clear message that they have to get out when dealing with our trading partners?

Mr Watson: Our consultation is through DAF. We provide updates through their networks to our agricultural team to make sure that there is an awareness of our international offices about any potential impacts.

Mr JANETZKI: Costs per investment lead are estimated to increase this year due to additional costs related to investment outcome facilitation. Can you expand on what investment outcome facilitation is?

Mr Watson: The way in which we calculate our investment numbers is by an attribution of the costs associated with the investment team that works on that. We have a dedicated investment team and we divide that by the number of outcomes that they secure throughout the course of the year.

Mr JANETZKI: If costs are going up in respect of investment outcome facilitation what costs feed into investment outcome facilitation?

Mr Watson: The way in which we calculate that is the total investment related budget and the number of investment leads that it facilitates. The investment related budget is the staffing and the project costs. We divide that by the number of outcomes that they achieve throughout the course of the year.

Mr JANETZKI: That is basically a staffing cost?

Mr Watson: That is right; a facilitation cost.

Mr KATTER: I refer to page 2 of the SDS where it says in part 'support the development of a Queensland Energy Plan and the energy transition of the Queensland economy'. Treasurer, you made reference to how the Morrison government failed in its final budget not to include funding for the CopperString 2.0 project, which is quite correct. The Queensland regional action plan describes it as game changing infrastructure that will grow new opportunities in mining, new economy minerals, industrial manufacturing, major hydrogen and renewable energy projects. Could you provide an update on what is going on with the project and the representations that will be made or have been made to the federal Treasurer for the October budget?

CHAIR: There are a few parts to that question. Treasurer, I do not know whether you followed it all. I will give you some latitude in answering.

Mr DICK: I appreciate that. I appreciate the question from the member for Traeger because I know how important this project is to him, and I respect that. As the member knows, but for the benefit of the committee, CopperString 2.0 is a \$2½ billion, 1,000-kilometre, high-voltage transmission project connecting the North West Minerals Province to the national electricity market. The government has provided \$16 million of grant funding to assist in the development of the project, as the member knows. We are currently evaluating stakeholder feedback on electricity supply options for the North West Minerals Province as part of the consultation and regulatory impact statement process. The Coordinator-General is currently assessing the project's environmental impact statement. An evaluation response will be provided to that. With a big project there are obviously a number of moving parts—the investment piece, the environmental piece and the community support for it.

I think it is fair to say that we are working positively on the project. In summary, we remain committed to the project. I understand Minister de Brenni has had some discussions with his federal counterpart, but I may be wrong. Collectively as a government we have certainly approached the federal government looking for support. Obviously the change of government has changed that engagement. We need to give the new energy minister, Chris Bowen, and others in the government an opportunity to engage with the project. It is only fair to them. They have only been in government for a short time.

I think the point that the member makes is important. The support of the federal government will be important—

CHAIR: Vital.

Mr DICK: I take your point, Chair. It will be vital in how this project progresses. We remain committed to it. We are moving it along. It has come a significant way. With a big project like that you have to continue to work step by step to make sure you can stand up the project if it all adds up at the end of the day. We remain committed to it and we will continue to work through the state processes but also work with the new federal government on that. We will continue to be deeply engaged with it until we get to a final decision point. It has moved significantly in the last 12 months.

CHAIR: We will now go to the member for Hervey Bay.

Mr TANTARI: I refer to page 244 of Budget Paper No. 2. Could the Treasurer please advise how Queensland's settings for taxes, fees and charges compare to settings at a local government level, which is of great interest to my local community and many communities across the length and breadth of Queensland?

Mr DICK: Our government understands those cost-of-living pressures. I acknowledge that and the comments you have made. Certainly there are many people in the member for Hervey Bay's electorate—and that would be reflective of my electorate as it is of all electorates, to be honest—where people are living on the margins, in a sense. They have a fixed income, say a pension. The member for Logan is nodding his head. The member for Macalister knows this too, as do other members of the committee. I do not want to just acknowledge the government members. Being sensitive to that and responding the best we can as a government within the area of our responsibility—as all governments must respond in their areas of responsibility, whether it be local, federal or state—is very important.

There are some levers we can pull and push as a government but some are beyond our control. Interest rate costs, the costs of fuel and supply chain costs that go into groceries—they are perhaps some of the three biggest drivers. The cost of housing, the cost of fuel, the cost of housing through interest rates and the cost of groceries—they are some of the biggest drivers for cost-of-living pressures for families. We do not directly control the levers for some of those.

One of the levers we do control is the cost of government fees and charges—the amount the government charges citizens for the services that it provides. That is a very important thing for our government. In this budget we have indexed fees and charges at 2.5 per cent. We have really taken steps to ensure we can keep that pressure down. The cost of delivering those services continues to grow for our government, but we have tried not to pass that on, the best we can, to Queenslanders.

Another important matter is the average level of state taxation—the Queensland taxation regime broadly. On average, Queenslanders paid \$1,067 less in 2020-21 than a citizen living in New South Wales and about \$500 less—\$492 less in fact—than someone living in Victoria. That tax competitiveness is very important. It is one of our fiscal principles and we are keen to progress that.

When we talk about the increase in fees and charges—before I go on to that, I should talk about tax competitiveness more broadly across the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Grants Commission provides an estimation of Queensland's tax effort compared to other jurisdictions and each state or territory's taxation revenue as a proportion of the respective size of its economy. The Commonwealth Grants Commission revenue-raising effort ratios are an indicator of the extent to which governments burden their revenue bases, with a lower ratio indicating a relatively lower taxation burden imposed.

The Commonwealth Grants Commission's 2022 update, which is the latest available commission estimate, assessed that Queensland's tax effort in 2020-21 was 1.6 per cent below the national average. What does that mean? Queenslanders, including people who live in Hervey Bay, are less burdened by tax than other Australian jurisdictions. Taxation as a share of gross state product also confirms that Queensland's taxes are highly competitive. Tax as a share of gross state product is below the average of the other states and territories and significantly lower than our major southern states. That is played out in those figures I reported to the committee earlier.

Queensland's tax competitiveness is also highlighted by generous tax-free thresholds and relatively lower tax rates applicable for several key state taxes compared with many other jurisdictions. I have talked about indexation. Had we used Brisbane CPI to set the indexation rate, government fees and charges would have grown by 4.3 per cent, but they have not; they have grown by 2.5 per cent. That is much lower than the rate adopted by the Newman LNP government, which increased fees and charges by 3.5 per cent per year every year in which they were in government. That is outside the high inflationary environment that Queenslanders are living in at the moment.

In contrast to our government's modest indexation of fees and charges of 2.5 per cent, some South-East Queensland councils run by LNP mayors are significantly increasing the tax burden, if I can call it that, on local residents—that is, the indexation rate for rates in those communities. I think that is disappointing at this time. I think all councils should be taking every step possible to reduce the cost-of-living pressure on their ratepayers. We know that has happened in the City of Logan, where rates increased by 2.49 per cent.

In the Brisbane City Council, under the leadership of Adrian Schrinner, residential rates increased by almost five per cent—4.93 per cent—in 2022-23. In some suburbs, if I am not mistaken, including suburbs like Gordon Park, it has increased by seven per cent. In the Redland City Council we know the mayor there is a proud member of the LNP and sought preselection at the last federal election and was unsuccessful. Perhaps she is wishing she was successful now.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr DICK: The minimum general rate increase was—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr DICK: You may wish to defend her, member for Mermaid Beach. I would not be defending her given her recent conduct—appalling.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr DICK: They have increased by 4.72 per cent. It is fascinating how they want to defend this exorbitant increase in rates by their fellow LNP members. The Ipswich City Council's average general rate increase for residential properties is 3.95 per cent. The mayor there of course is a member of the LNP as well.

All of those councils are increasing rates on residents at a time when Queenslanders can afford it the least. I think we are doing our bit, member for Hervey Bay. We call on other levels of government to do their bit to support their communities at a difficult time. This is a very challenging time for the global economy and for the domestic economy. It is a time of uncertainty, but we are trying to provide as much certainty as we can when it comes to our fees and charges. That will continue into the future as we stand with Queenslanders at a difficult time.

CHAIR: Referring to page 87 of Budget Paper No. 2, could the Treasurer please advise the committee about whether the government will consider replacing transfer duty with land tax, as has been considered in New South Wales?

Mr DICK: That is a very important question, Chair. I think it is worth again putting some facts on the public record, properly examining the public policy proposition that has been progressed by the New South Wales government and having a look more deeply at that. It is often discussed as a tax reform process. Like all tax reform processes, it is important to properly examine what has been suggested to see how it actually operates in reality.

A key element of our government's economic strategy, as outlined in the 2022-23 budget, is to maintain a competitive business environment that attracts investment and supports the establishment and expansion of industry and businesses across the state. This includes the government's ongoing commitment to providing a competitive tax regime, as I have talked about, and an environment that supports businesses, households and economic growth.

The New South Wales government has flagged that it wants to collect even more land tax by removing stamp duty. We should look at that a bit more closely, as you have requested, Chair. The New South Wales government announced in their 2020-21 budget that they would be opening consultation on a proposed model for property tax reform where transfer duty and existing land tax were replaced by a single property tax. New South Wales published advice at the time that the initial proposal was for over 80 per cent of properties to initially be eligible to pay an annual property tax consisting of a fixed amount and an additional percentage based on an unimproved land value. The Liberal New South Wales government indicated that the proposal was not expected to be revenue positive for at

least a decade—10 years. Sorry, I mislead the committee. It was not going to be positive for at least two decades—20 years. The estimated cost to budget was between \$2 billion and \$2.5 billion each year in the early stages.

In the 2022-23 budget, the Liberal New South Wales government announced a much narrower reform where only first home buyers purchasing properties up to \$1.5 million would be able to pay an annual property tax instead of transfer duty. The reform is much more limited than initially proposed, obviously, whereby 80 per cent of all homes would have been eligible originally. Given the narrower scope of the proposal now being progressed by the New South Wales Liberal government, the revenue impact is expected to be significantly lower based on estimates outlined in the New South Wales budget papers for the budget year that we are now in at around \$750 million over four years in reduced transfer duty revenue, partially offset by around \$90 million over four years from the new tax. That is a disbenefit of about \$660 million.

The merits of any such reform need to be considered in the context of the fact that Queensland's existing transfer duty settings compare favourably to other jurisdictions. Queensland has one of the lowest tax burdens on homebuyers including already offering very generous transfer duty concessions to homebuyers and first home buyers in particular. Importantly, Queensland's land tax thresholds are generous compared with other states, despite several other states having dwelling prices and land values that are considerably higher than in Queensland.

New South Wales has relatively high transfer duty rates and less generous concessions available to first home buyers than in Queensland. Queensland first home buyers are eligible for a full transfer duty concession to a value of \$550,000. Unlike buyers in New South Wales, if they exceed this threshold they are still eligible for the principal place of residence, a concession that reduces duty by up to \$7,175. New South Wales purchasers of a median priced principal place of residence in Sydney would pay \$24,118 more in transfer duty than Queensland.

CHAIR: More?

Mr DICK: More. Victorian purchasers of a median priced home in Melbourne would pay \$21,792 more in duty. Our government will continue to ensure Queensland remains competitive. We want to monitor the operation of all state taxes on an ongoing basis to ensure they deliver appropriate outcomes for Queenslanders. As I said earlier, taxation pressure on Queenslanders is lower than in other states and we want to maintain that going forward.

CHAIR: It now being four o'clock, I have been reminded by the deputy chair that the committee will now adjourn for a break. I was just entranced by the Treasurer. The hearing will resume at 4.15 pm and continue with the examination of the estimates in the portfolio areas of Treasury and Trade and Investment.

Proceedings suspended from 4.01 pm to 4.16 pm.



CHAIR: The committee will now resume its examination of the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Treasury and Trade and Investment. I am told that for their punishment my kids are watching. I do not know why, but I would like to say hello. With that I would like to call the member for Toowoomba South, who can greet my kids as well.

Mr JANETZKI: Good afternoon, young Power children. I will begin with the payroll tax changes. Under Treasurer, can you outline how many businesses will be caught by the increase to payroll tax of 0.25 for an annual wages bill beyond \$10 million?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. I think the Treasurer noted that in his previous response when he outlined the changes to payroll tax and those businesses that are captured as part of that.

Mr JANETZKI: Sorry, Under Treasurer, how many?

Mr DICK: It is about 5,000 isn't it?

Mr JANETZKI: So 5,000?

Mr DICK: I do not know. What is the answer?

Mr Allen: I will get you the exact number. I was looking at percentage terms and I was going to try and convert that to numbers.

Mr DICK: We will get you the number.

Mr JANETZKI: The amount beyond \$100 million as well?

Mr Allen: I will get that number for you. My apologies, I do not have it here at my fingertips.

CHAIR: We note those two questions taken on notice and we will commit to getting back to the member for Toowoomba South.

Mr JANETZKI: Staying on payroll tax generally, the Auditor-General reported last week that payroll tax relief to 31 December 2021 amounted to \$1.26 billion. Payroll tax relief was deferred, not forgiven. My question to the Under Treasurer is—and again you may wish to refer to the Queensland Revenue Office—how many payment arrangements have been entered into by the Queensland Revenue Office with people who deferred payroll tax during COVID and are now struggling to repay it?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. I will endeavour to get that information for you before this session is finished.

Mr JANETZKI: You might have to tell us how many minutes we will need to get through all of these.

CHAIR: We will do those figures that do come incrementally rather than leave them. Sorry, member for Toowoomba South, I interrupted you.

Mr JANETZKI: Rather than speaking even about the numbers, I am interested to understand Treasury discussions with business in relation to businesses that have deferred and begun to struggle to repay deferred payroll tax. What is the nature of those businesses that are struggling to repay deferred payroll tax? Is there a particular industry that has been particularly impacted? I have certainly met with medium-sized businesses that are struggling to repay deferred payroll tax. What is Treasury seeing? What trends are there? Which industries, what size businesses, what is their capacity to repay deferred payments?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. There is a lot of detail there. I think we can incorporate that within the responses we are pulling together. There is no doubt some granularity to that that we will need to capture and feed back to you.

CHAIR: I think the member for Toowoomba South is just looking for a general description.

Mr Allen: In relation to the member's question, I would obviously note that those relief measures were put in place during the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic. We certainly saw some take-up, but we also saw less take-up than perhaps would have been first projected given the quite dramatic forecast for the performance of the economy at that time. Of course, there are going to be some sectors that were more heavily impacted in general terms. Tourism is obviously a very clear example of that, given the closure of the international border and also internal border arrangements. There was direct support provided to those industries. The other point I would make is that, in addition to payroll tax relief, there were other financial measures provided at both a federal and a state level in support of those businesses.

In terms of how they have performed post, there are going to be some very particular circumstances that will apply to individual businesses. The important thing to note is that the Revenue Office will be working with each of those individuals, and under your description there correctly noting that there would be plans put in place to support businesses during this period of transition. It is a very severe economic shock and obviously we want to sustain and support as much economic capability as possible. That was the fundamental principle underpinning all of the measures that were put in place. We want to make sure that continues post, as well as that we also invest in broader economic growth and recovery activities.

Ms SIMPSON: Under Treasurer, what has been done to remedy SPER's privacy failure where more than 10,000 Queenslanders were sent other people's fines?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. Obviously, a very significant breach has occurred. The impacted debtors and other stakeholders, including the Queensland Privacy Commissioner, have been notified of the incident. That notice was also published on the SPER website and the Office of the Information Commissioner website. We have written to all of those impacted persons, and correct notices for approximately 8,400 impacted debtors have now been issued, with a new 28-day time frame for payment.

Ms SIMPSON: Under Treasurer, it has been reported that the Privacy Commissioner is still considering further regulatory action following these thousands of fine notices containing personal information being sent to the wrong people. Has the Under Treasurer been briefed on potential regulatory action that his department and officers may be subjected to?

Mr Allen: As I have noted in my response, we have been engaging with the Privacy Commissioner from the onset of this incident. They are remaining engaged as we work through implementation of measures to ensure that we do not see any repeat occurrence. Obviously, interim

measures were put in place and more permanent measures have been addressed with the service provider that is providing some of these services. I have not received any particular briefing from the commissioner on any regulatory action that would be taken at this juncture. I am sure the commission would reserve their right to do so, just as we are reserving our right in terms of any actions we would take with our provider.

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Allen, have you identified what the root cause was and why this breach has actually occurred?

Mr Allen: On notification of the incident we engaged legal advice and support to assist with a response to the incident, including the coordination of a forensic investigation of that incident. That advice has been provided and informed by that forensic investigation that I noted. The Queensland Revenue Office will work with the printing and mail dispatch provider to implement relevant actions arising from this advice. As I noted, interim assurance measures will remain in place until these permanent measures are implemented. As I noted before, correct notices have now been issued to the 8,400 impacted debtors. We will continue working with our provider to ensure there is no repeat of this incident.

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Allen, are you aware of any adverse outcomes as a result of these privacy breaches?

CHAIR: Obviously there are generalised outcomes, but Mr Allen?

Mr Allen: No specific ones have been advised to me at this point. I know that complaints were made, and the Privacy Commissioner would advise to direct those back to OSR and they will be addressed and dealt with accordingly.

Ms SIMPSON: Can the Under Treasurer provide a standard copy of the letter by the State Penalties Enforcement Registry to those whose privacy was breached? Obviously I am not seeking the detail of people's names, just the template that was provided.

Mr Allen: I do not see an issue in providing a generic letter and/or letters, given that there may have been variation inside that population in terms of the advice provided. From a legal perspective, provided that can be handed over I will certainly look to provide it.

Ms SIMPSON: Thank you. Under Treasurer, I note that in 2020-21 Queensland Treasury's total advertising spend increased from \$140,000 per annum to \$840,000. Can you advise your department's total advertising spend for 2021-22 and budgeted advertising spend for this year, 2022-23?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. I will look to get that information to you as soon as possible during this hearing.

CHAIR: As we do not want these things to build up, it might be something—

Mr Allen: We are gathering that information.

CHAIR: I call the member for South Brisbane.

Dr MacMAHON: Treasurer, with regard to the government's new royalties rate—which, from what I understand, will have little impact once the coal price drops back below \$175 per tonne—did Treasury conduct any modelling of alternative royalties frameworks which could continue to generate benefits for Queenslanders even once the coal price spike drops?

CHAIR: This is very similar to questions that were asked before. I do not think they were addressed to the Treasurer previously so I will allow the Treasurer to answer.

Mr DICK: At the outset, as I opened these proceedings, I want to thank her and the Queensland Greens political party for their support of all the revenue measures that passed through the parliament. This new bipartisan coal royalty regime is very significant. I am the person who brought together Adam Bandt and Matt Canavan on a unity ticket on coal. Who would have thought, Chair? Good afternoon to the Power children as well who I am sure will be riveted by proceedings for the next hour and a half.

We worked through this process. We made a very clear decision as a government to ensure that when there were very high prices, when there were supernormal prices and supernormal profits, that Queenslanders should benefit from that, and that was the principle that I adopted in developing this program. Of course, it is very important for us to manage and protect the revenue position of the state.

We know that the position of the Greens political party is to abolish payroll tax which would blow a devastating \$5 billion hole in the budget each and every year. That is not going to be filled by changing coal royalties, as the member for South Brisbane may anticipate, because the member for South Brisbane's party wants to shut all coal, gas and other fossil fuel mining in this state. That would, of course, destroy royalty revenue almost immediately, even if it was announced over a transition period.

The combined impact of the end of fossil fuel extraction plus an annual \$5 billion hole in the Queensland revenue position would be devastating because it would inevitably result, unless you wanted to borrow endlessly, in the destruction of jobs in the public sector, the delivery of services and the cutting of infrastructure spend, and I do not think any Queenslanders want that at this particular time when they are living in difficult times with the global economy under pressure.

Dr MacMAHON: Treasurer, to clarify, there has not been any modelling done on alternative frameworks outside of these supernormal profits levels?

CHAIR: Again, it might be worthwhile looking at the transcript of this morning's hearing because there was considerable discussion about that from Mr Allen. Do you have anything to add, Treasurer?

Mr DICK: No, I think I have given a clear response.

Dr MacMAHON: Treasurer, on 23 June during question time, you stated that the Housing Investment Fund could get \$65 million in that fund. I am hoping you can clarify what is the nature of the fund's investments and why so much more has been generated than initially projected?

Mr DICK: I would refer the honourable member to the answer to question on notice No. 1 which I provided to this committee which sets out the returns received through a fixed note arrangement that we have.

Dr MacMAHON: What will those additional funds now be used for, Treasurer?

Mr DICK: They will be used for housing. All of the returns for each of those funds, and all of which I hope will be supported by the Greens political party, are for housing, Path to Treaty and protection of the environment. I would hope that all of those returns on those funds for those purposes would be supported by the Greens. We have leveraged additional funding now through the Australian Retirement Trust, one of the largest superannuation funds in the country, to put back into social and affordable housing through those mechanisms that we have established. We are now leveraging superannuation funds to put into housing, too.

CHAIR: I now turn to the member for Hervey Bay. Do you have a question?

Mr TANTARI: Treasurer, I refer to page 86 of Budget Paper No. 2. Would you be able to inform the committee how the government is ensuring the ongoing sustainability of funding of Queensland's racing industry?

Mr DICK: There has been some discussion about that this afternoon. I am pleased to provide you with an answer on that issue. On 6 June, we announced a new funding model for Queensland's racing industry. I want to acknowledge the Minister for Racing for her work in designing and implementing that model—a five per cent racing levy added to the betting tax regime in Queensland, taxing bonus bets. Queensland is now the same as all states and territories, I understand, other than Tasmania in that regard, and 80 per cent of betting tax revenue will be ring fenced for Racing Queensland. Those reforms are based on a proposal put forward by Racing Queensland and Tabcorp. 100 per cent of the revenue from the levy will go to the racing industry. All other jurisdictions, other than Tasmania, as I have said, impose tax on bonus bets. The levy is expected to raise an additional \$50 million per annum with taxing of bonus bets expected to raise \$30 million per annum.

In the first full year under the new funding model in 2023-24, it is estimated that Racing Queensland will receive approximately \$198 million from ring fencing 80 per cent of the betting tax revenue to replace several existing Tabcorp and government revenue streams, so it takes it away from the Consolidated Fund and puts it into a dedicated funding stream raised through the levy on the point of consumption tax. The new funding arrangements will deliver greater certainty for the industry and the 6,500 jobs it directly supports, and provides opportunities to increase prize money, enhance infrastructure and provide better training facilities.

I saw that when I went to the turf club in Rockhampton, which is a very innovative turf club, and they now have funding certainty going forward. One of the things they are doing is to flood-proof the administration offices but, very importantly, to ensure that the rooms, particularly the change rooms and the other areas for jockeys, will be equal. They are expanding the space, size and capacity for female jockeys, and I think that is very important. Women riders, of course, deserve the same as men. They now number a very significant proportion of jockeys in Queensland. If it is not equal, it will be close to it. It is great to see that investment happening in regional Queensland. That is the sort of certainty race clubs will get out of this initiative.

That new levy and that new funding agreement will benefit the 125 race clubs across Queensland and the 85 communities across the state where their annual race meeting is the largest or second largest event for that community each year.

This reform recognises the significant changes that have occurred in the wagering market since the current arrangements between Racing Queensland and Tabcorp were established. That agreement was no longer fit for purpose. It had resulted in litigation, and something had to happen to put racing investment onto a firmer footing in this state. I am pleased to have taken that action, along with the Minister for Racing; I want to acknowledge her as well.

The rise of online bookmakers has seen Tabcorp's share of the wagering market decline, placing the long-term sustainability of the current funding arrangements for Racing Queensland in doubt. The new arrangements will ensure that all wagering operators make an appropriate contribution to Queensland's racing industry. The percentage of betting tax revenue allocated to racing will rise from the current 35 per cent to 80 per cent, providing a single funding stream to replace complex funding arrangements between Racing Queensland and Tabcorp and short-term government funding programs.

The impact of these changes has been factored into the 2022-23 state budget. There will be no benefit to the Consolidated Fund. I think that is an important point to make, member for Hervey Bay. Tabcorp will make a \$50 million payment for future racing infrastructure and a \$100 million payment to Racing Queensland as part of the agreement. Tabcorp's on-course sponsorship and advertising exclusivity will end, allowing racing clubs to negotiate on-course advertising with any wagering provider. Subject to the passage of legislation, the changes will take effect on 1 December this year. A bill will come forward to the House this year and we will hopefully have all parties supporting that important revenue measure as well.

Mrs McMAHON: I refer to page 101 of Budget Paper 2. Could the Treasurer please advise the committee on the impact of GST collections on Queensland's revenue position?

Mr DICK: I thank you for your question. A key component of Queensland's revenue position is the grants revenue received from the Australian government, which includes the state's GST revenue. Australian government payments to Queensland in 2022-23 are expected to total \$34.9 billion, representing an increase of \$1.9 billion, or 5.8 per cent, of total payments received in 2021-22. This increase in total Australian government payments is attributable to a \$2 billion, or 12.6 per cent, increase in GST revenue to Queensland in the 2022-23 budget year compared to 2021-22. Improvements in the national GST pool along with an increase in Queensland's share of the pool have been the key drivers of the stronger forecast for Queensland's GST revenue outlined in the 2022-23 Queensland budget.

Queensland's GST revenue in 2021-22 is expected to be 2.6 per cent higher than in 2020-21. This growth is primarily driven by Queensland receiving a slightly larger share of a larger GST pool compared with 2020-21. The Australian government has forecast particularly strong growth in the national GST pool of 9.1 per cent in 2022-23, a significant increase. Additionally, the Commonwealth Grants Commission has recommended to the Australian government that Queensland should receive a slightly larger share of GST in 2022-23 compared with 2021-22. Queensland's GST revenue is forecast to continue to grow over the forward estimates by 2.6 per cent in 2023-24, by 4.2 per cent in 2024-25 and by 0.85 per cent in 2025-26. This growth reflects the Australian government's forecast growth in the GST pool partially offset by the expectation that Queensland's share of the GST pool will decline over the forward estimates.

The Australian government's national GST pool forecasts were upgraded in the 2022-23 federal budget to be \$13.4 billion higher across the four years to 2024-25 compared with forecasts in the 2021-22 federal budget. The 2022-23 federal budget states that increases in GST receipts largely reflect upgrades to consumption subject to GST and flow-on impacts from strong private dwelling investment. The 2022-23 federal budget also indicated that expected increases in employment and wages are expected to flow through to higher nominal consumption, while the strength of private dwelling investment combined with near-term supply chain shortages has driven up prices in the construction sector, thereby flowing through to overall GST collections.

In early 2022 the Australian government accepted the Commonwealth Grants Commission's recommendation that Queensland requires a larger share of GST revenue in 2022-23 compared to 2021-22. The Commonwealth Grants Commission's recommendation that Queensland receive an increased share of the GST pool was driven by mining revenue and population growth. On mining, a decrease in the value of coal production in 2020-21 combined with an increase in the value of the iron ore produced in Western Australia reduced Queensland's relative capacity to raise mining revenue. On population, Queensland's growth rate was faster in 2020-21 than it was in 2017-18, thereby increasing Queensland's assessed need for new infrastructure. The increase in Queensland's share of the GST pool as a result of these factors was partially offset by wages expenses, Commonwealth payments and capital improvements.

Wages growth in Queensland was lower than the national average between 2017-18 and 2020-21, decreasing the state's GST share. Queensland's share of Commonwealth payments, particularly for infrastructure and health expenses, was higher in 2020-21 compared to 2017-18, thereby decreasing Queensland's GST revenue.

Regarding capital improvements and cost of construction in 2020-21 compared to 2017-18, Queensland's total urban transport investment increased faster than the growth in the GST pool and the cost of construction grew less than the national average, thereby decreasing Queensland's GST share. On balance, the Commonwealth Grants Commission recommended that Queensland's GST share should increase in 2022-23 relative to 2021-22.

States' and territories' share of GST revenue fluctuates over time, as the member would know, based on the Commonwealth Grants Commission's assessment of their fiscal capacity and expenditure needs. Some key drivers of changes to Queensland's and all states' share of GST are factors that are not Queensland specific, including the impacts of changes in royalty revenue from iron ore in Western Australia, as I have mentioned, and transfer duty collections in New South Wales.

CHAIR: Referring to page 76 of Budget Paper No. 2, could the Treasurer please update the committee about Queensland's borrowing position, and especially compare it to that of the other state governments?

Mr DICK: I am very pleased to answer that question. I am pleased to advise that Queensland is leading the way for all of Australia's significant states. We are at the top of the leaderboard of the eastern seaboard. There are key metrics which are widely reported when discussing general government sector debt, related matters being net debt and total borrowings. It is important to note that Australian governments at all levels increased borrowings to combat the COVID-19 crisis. Even so, against a range of measures, Queensland's debt metrics are far better than those of our interstate peers.

Queensland's net debt and gross debt are also lower in the 2022-23 budget than forecast in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 budgets. On net debt, general government sector net debt is forecast to be \$19.8 billion at 30 June 2023, which is \$13.6 billion lower than forecast in the 2021-22 budget—one year later. The net-debt-to-revenue ratio or net debt burden in 2022-23 is estimated to be 27 per cent in comparison to the 2020-21 budget forecast, a net debt burden of 50 per cent. We have gone from a 50 per cent forecast in the 2020 budget to 27 per cent net debt to revenue in the 2022 budget. Queensland's net debt burden in the budget year has almost halved since last year's budget, an important point to make.

Queensland's net debt forecast is lower than that of New South Wales and Victoria, both in this year and in every year of the forward estimates. That is the sort of 'state of origin' I like to win. In 2022-23, Queensland's net debt is \$19.6 billion. In comparison, as you have asked, Chair, that would be \$58.4 billion lower, or one-quarter the size of the New South Wales Liberal government's \$78.2 billion net debt—

CHAIR: What year is that?

Mr DICK: That is in this current budget year. Net debt in Queensland is just a tick under \$20 billion; in New South Wales it will be \$78 billion and in Victoria it will be \$118.5 billion. This is net debt, Chair; this is not gross debt. Queensland's net debt this financial year is forecast to be one-quarter that of New South Wales and one-sixth that of Victoria. Even in the final year of the forward estimates, if we cast forward, Queensland's net debt is projected to be \$39.2 billion. That would be \$75.6 billion lower than New South Wales. That is \$114.8 billion—

Mr JANETZKI: It is a worrying trend.

Mr DICK:—net debt in New South Wales, so one-third the size of the Liberal Party—you just cannot trust the Liberal Party with debt. That is a debt bomb—

Mr JANETZKI: Net debt is tripling in three years.

Mr DICK:—that is going off in New South Wales because they cannot manage money the way Labor governments can manage money. There is \$128.3 billion—

Mr JANETZKI: Net debt is tripling in Queensland in three years.

Mr DICK:—or one-quarter the size of Victoria's \$167.5 billion in net debt. If I was a resident of New South Wales I would be wondering how the Liberal Party, which promotes itself as better economic managers, has blown their debt out by \$114.8 billion. The answer is simple: Queensland managed the pandemic better than any other part of the country.

There were many people who demanded that the borders be opened early. The LNP called for the borders to be opened early 64 times. Sixty-four times they called on the government to open the borders. Can you imagine the devastation to our fiscal and economic position if that had happened?

Let's have a look at net debt to revenue, Chair. You asked me about the comparison with other states. Queensland also compares favourably with other states on that metric. In 2022-23 Queensland's net-debt-to-revenue ratio is 27 per cent. New South Wales is 75 per cent—so we are 48 percentage points lower—and in Victoria it is 145 per cent. In the budget year Queensland's net debt to revenue is 27 per cent, New South Wales is 75 per cent and Victoria is 145 per cent. Even in the final year of the forward estimates, even if you want to go on about the increase in debt, net debt to revenue is a good indicator of how you can service your debt.

In the final year of the forward estimates, 2025-26, Queensland's net debt to revenue ratio will be 50 per cent. That will be half of what it is in New South Wales—it will be at 102 per cent—and Victoria will be at 183 per cent. In the State of Origin when it comes to net debt, Queensland wins again. Let us have a look at net debt per capita, Chair, as you asked me about the comparison. Queensland also compares favourably to other states when adjusting for their larger populations. In 2022-23 Queensland's net debt per capita will be \$3,709, in New South Wales it will be \$9,484 per capita and in Victoria it will be \$17,617. In the final year of the forward estimates, 2025-26, Queensland's net debt per capita will be \$7,064, in New South Wales it will be almost twice that at \$13,490 and in Victoria it will be three times that at \$23,634.

I thought the LNP would be very happy with my management of debt and deficits. It has been criticising Labor governments for two decades on this and now I am winning. We are beating New South Wales and Victoria in the most important time of our lives. There has never been a time of greater global economic uncertainty. There has never been a more difficult time for the Australian economy in the last 20 years than what we are seeing now. The single biggest way you can protect your people from the impact of that is managing your budgets and managing your debt profile, and we are doing it better than anywhere else in the country.

Finally, let us talk about net debt to output, Chair, because you asked me about a comparison. Queensland's net debt compares favourably to other states when adjusting for their larger gross state product. In 2022-23 Queensland's net debt to output ratio of 5.1 per cent is 6.1 percentage points less or half the size of New South Wales at 11.7 per cent and 18.1 percentage points less than or a quarter of the size of Victoria's with a 23.2 per cent ratio. In the final year of the forward estimates, 2025-26, Queensland's net debt to output ratio of 9.3 per cent will be 6.7 percentage points less than or three-fifths the size of New South Wales at 16 per cent and 21.1 percentage points less than or a third the size of Victoria's with a 30.4 per cent ratio. I will not go into any of those figures as it would apply to the massive federal debt bomb left by the Morrison-Frydenberg government that is causing all sorts of trouble for our country—a trillion dollars in debt and not much to show for it. Can you imagine if they had invested in productive infrastructure with some of that money, but they did not?

In summary, in every year of the forward estimates Queensland's net debt is lower in absolute numbers, lower as a ratio to revenue, lower as a ratio to state output and lower per person than it is in New South Wales and Victoria, and we will be working hard to keep it that way.

Mr TANTARI: Treasurer, I refer to Budget Paper No. 2 at page 151. Would you be able to update the committee about the borrowing position of Queensland's government owned corporations and what is their asset position?

Mr DICK: That is a very good point, member for Hervey Bay, and I want to thank you for that question. It is important to compare not just the debt position but the overall asset base of these government owned corporations. Government owned corporations fall into the public non-financial corporate sector, or the PNFC. Of course, they remain in the PNFC because our government scrapped plans by the previous LNP government to privatise those assets. These corporations belong to Queenslanders, as the member for Hervey Bay knows, and their assets are used for the benefit of Queenslanders, and I know he is a strong advocate for that.

The PNFC sector provides essential services such as electricity supply and distribution, water supply, rail and port services. Borrowing is an integral part of the financial management of the sector, as it is of any corporation, as it facilitates investment in vital infrastructure in maintaining an optimal capital structure in these entities. Borrowings also include derivative liabilities associated with hedging activities undertaken by government businesses. PNFC sector entities are required to take a prudent and sound approach to debt management.

The 2022-23 budget shows that PNFC sector borrowings are forecast to decrease over the forward estimates. By 2025-26, borrowings will revert to around \$41 billion in line with borrowing outcomes in 2020-21. The budget reports a one-off increase of \$7 billion in PNFC sector borrowings compared to 2020-21 which largely relates to the electricity GOCs. This is due to movements in the value of hedging contracts entered into prior to an upward shift in market conditions. Publicly owned generators operate in a highly dynamic industry, producing electricity for Queenslanders every day. They also manage complex financial risks to provide revenue certainty. In doing so, businesses either enter short-term contracts to buy and sell electricity. For accounting purposes, changes in the value of those contracts are reflected in the assets and liabilities of the businesses.

Given current market volatility, this means our generators are reporting large assets and liabilities in the short term. These large assets and liabilities unwind as the contracts end and electricity is generated over the forward estimates. Importantly, PNFC asset values are a relevant factor when considering overall sector borrowings. On average for 2022-23, PNFC sector entities borrow around 55 per cent of their asset values. In addition, PNFC net worth is expected to increase by an average of \$1.5 billion in each year of the forward estimates from 2022-23. In addition, net worth across the non-financial public sector, which includes the general government and PNFC sectors, is expected to increase to \$214 billion in 2021-22, nearly \$11 billion higher than the \$203 billion expected in the 2021-22 budget. Movement in borrowings is more than offset by increases in the value of total assets over time, with the ratio of borrowings to total assets falling to around 54 per cent in 2025-26. By keeping public assets in public hands, the Palaszczuk government will support the essential services directly that Queenslanders need.

CHAIR: I call the member for Toowoomba South.

Mr JANETZKI: I will give the Treasurer a breather from all that boasting and I will talk to somebody who knows about net debt, and I want to go to the Under Treasurer to talk about net debt. Net debt in 2021-22 was \$11.39 billion. It is expected to reach \$27 billion in 2023-24 before peaking at \$39 billion in 2025-26. That is well over three times net debt in four years. Given net debt is used by credit rating agencies to determine our rating, is Treasury concerned with that exponential growth in net debt?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. The net debt profile reflects the capital program that has been implemented in large part as well as other ongoing borrowings, and that is reflected in our budget forecasts and it is a sustainable level of debt.

Mr JANETZKI: And credit rating agencies have observed that trend that is coming down the pipeline and are comfortable with it?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. Rating agencies have reaffirmed the state's rating with that outlook in mind.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, how much of the state's interest rate expense is hedged beyond 2023?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. In relation to management of the debt, I think we might have highlighted in last year's committee the successful strategy that has been implemented around lengthening our duration while we saw ultra-low rates in the market, so that has provided us in effect a hedge against the short-term movement in rates that we have seen. No doubt rates are trending up, but we have been fortunate to put in place strategies to try and minimise that increase and to lock in some of the benefits of those lower rates, so that is effectively the execution of the strategy to minimise that. The use of liabilities and hedging in that regard is quite minimal and I think for the most part is just a short-term measure that QTC might use in the course of its execution of managing the state borrowing program.

Mr JANETZKI: What is the effective interest rate Treasury is aiming for on that debt?

Mr Allen: In terms of the effective interest rate at this point in time—and I am going to quote a number that relates to the duration that I am talking about—for the general government sector it is high two per cent—2.8 per cent and above.

Mr JANETZKI: At what interest rate levels would Treasury need to consider additional revenue measures to meet the current forecast provided to rating agencies?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. Just to confirm, you are saying at what interest rates would we need to put in place revenue measures, or the government would need to put in place revenue measures, to lock in the credit rating?

CHAIR: With respect, that would to some extent be a policy decision of government rather than an automatic Treasury policy decision, but I will let Mr Allen continue.

Mr Allen: I was going to infer that ultimately those decisions, the revenue decisions, are a matter for government at that point in time. We have just seen a budget with quite significant revenue measures put in place and that provides for us some degree of certainty into the medium term. The important part is that if you look to the forward estimates we are predicting that the budget is moving back into surplus and that is obviously going to underpin ratings at that point.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, just getting to the interest rate levels perhaps, which is not a question of policy, more so interest rate risk management, what sorts of levels would you imagine there?

CHAIR: Earlier we heard that Treasury had locked in some interest rates. Are you meaning the aggregate overall or a rate of the market in future?

Mr JANETZKI: I will let the Under Treasurer speak.

Mr Allen: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the member for the question. I have noted in relation to the sustainable level of debt and the interest expense that that is only a small part of overall budget consideration. When we put together budgets, obviously interest expenses are an important part but not the only part, and I think you have to look at budgets as being the aggregation of a whole lot of both revenues and expenses and, as I note, with some very shallow deficits forecast in the next couple of years and a return to surplus we are in a reasonably good position there.

CHAIR: I guess it would be a more serious concern for the under treasurers in Victoria and New South Wales.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you for the commentary, Chair. Can I ask another question of the Under Treasurer. I expect you may need to take this on notice. Following up on the payroll tax issues, how many businesses or companies, sole trading style businesses that are in bankruptcy or companies that are in administration or liquidation would have an outstanding payroll tax debt as of today?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. That is a level of detail I do not have to hand, but I would, if I could, address the question that was asked before in terms of the number of businesses that are impacted by the levy. I would note that this is a specific levy as distinct from any other change, so it applies to that proportion of wages above the respective taxable wage amounts. This is on a marginal basis. I was just going to note the numbers of businesses impacted, because I said I had percentages and I have been able to get the numbers for you on that.

ABS data notes that at 30 June 2021 there were a total of 480,807 businesses operating in Queensland, with 189,888 of those being employing businesses. This equates to 1.2 per cent of total operating businesses in Queensland and three per cent of employing businesses in Queensland estimated to be liable for the levy. In relation to that, there are 5,669 businesses impacted, 4,824 of those up to the \$100 million threshold and 845 of those over the \$100 million threshold, noting that in relation to this measure around 84 per cent of the revenue from the levy will be raised from those 845 businesses with wages over \$100 million per annum.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, last year the Housing Investment Fund, Carbon Reduction Investment Fund and Path to Treaty Fund were listed as line items in chapter 7 of Budget Paper 2. Where can I find those equivalent measures in this year's budget papers?

Mr Allen: They represent funds that sit inside our general government long-term assets so they would be reported within that. I think they appeared as particular line items in that regard because they were new measures.

Mr JANETZKI: So they do not appear in this year's budget papers simply because they appeared once as new items last year and then they no longer appear?

CHAIR: Is that a statement?

Mr JANETZKI: It is a question.

CHAIR: You have summarised what Mr Allen said very well.

Mr JANETZKI: I will ask a question. Have those items, once appearing in last year's budget paper, been omitted from this year's budget papers because they have appeared once and then no longer appear?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. As highlighted, they now form part of our aggregate longer term assets. The inclusion last year, as I was saying, reflected that they were new measures.

Mr JANETZKI: Treasurer, Treasury's annual report noted that six human rights complaints had been received last year. What was the nature of those six complaints?

CHAIR: Who received them?

Mr JANETZKI: Treasury.

Mr DICK: I am not aware of those matters. I have no knowledge of it.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, Treasury's annual report revealed that six human rights complaints had been received in the last year. What was the nature of those complaints?

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question and I will get that information for him. If I cannot do that quickly, I will get back to you as soon as I can.

CHAIR: I do note there may be some privacy issues about the nature of some of the complaints.

Mr Allen: To the extent that we can provide some insight into what they are, we certainly intend to. They are listed in the annual report.

CHAIR: That was implicit in the member for Toowoomba South's question.

Mr Allen: I will have to take that on notice, Chair.

CHAIR: Not on notice.

Mr Allen: Sorry, I will respond within the course of this meeting.

CHAIR: We will take note of that. It is to do with human rights. Member for Toowoomba South?

Mr JANETZKI: That further information will be provided?

CHAIR: The Under Treasurer has undertaken to get further information before the end of the hearing.

Mr JANETZKI: Thank you, Chair. This question is a direct question to the Under Treasurer. It may require a slightly more philosophical approach, but I will try to make it as direct as I possibly can. Under Treasurer, can you explain why Queensland's share of Australian private business investment has declined over the last seven or eight years?

Mr DICK: Point of order on relevance. Seriously, I am happy to have a philosophical discussion, but it is not the point of estimates.

CHAIR: I think, with respect, member for Toowoomba South, you would need to have a better tie-in.

Mr DICK: What is the factual point? Can he substantiate the point that he is putting to the Under Treasurer?

CHAIR: Order, Treasurer. I think that question, while philosophically interesting, about the nature of the Queensland economy and private investment, might be difficult when looking at the question we have been asked to examine, which is whether the expenditure should be agreed to. Is there another way you can phrase that or another question you can move on to?

Mr JANETZKI: There are certain forecasts and certain assumptions in the budget that go directly to private business investment. My question to the Under Treasurer is: why has Queensland's share of private business investment declined over the past seven years?

CHAIR: Mr Allen, I do not know whether you can answer.

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question. It is a complex issue. There are a number of factors, I am sure, that go into reflecting that performance over that period of time. I would probably note also that we should look at the period to which we are measuring. It may well have come off a very large peak. I am thinking about the development of the—

Mr DICK: We do not even know whether that assertion is right.

CHAIR: Order, Treasurer.

Mr Allen: That may well have been the measurement period in question. There are a number of variables that could have impacted there. I look to the tale of investment in industries like LNG which were significant in national terms. It has potentially some relevance to that. But as I say, there are multiple variables that would go into that. We would argue that, given the relevant performance of the economy during COVID, given the ongoing investment that we see in capital, given the interstate migration that we have seen into Queensland, given the ongoing investment into our traditional and our new industries, given the enablement of our proximity in a geographic term to large markets, the outlook is quite positive for business investment. I know that a lot of concerted effort goes into ensuring Queensland secures its fair share. As I note, I think the outlook is quite positive.

Mr JANETZKI: Chair, can I again call Ms Rampa, the QIC CEO. Ms Rampa, last year QIC anticipated generating a commercial return of around seven per cent on the government's Virgin investment. What has the commercial return been in the past 12 months?

Ms Rampa: QIC was very pleased to assist the government in meeting its objectives in relation to Virgin Australia as a Queensland based company and the jobs and economic activity that it generated for 2021. Economic modelling suggests that the retention of Virgin Australia's key operations will deliver approximately \$2½ billion of economic value to the Queensland gross state product over a 10-year period. Across the full package, QIC anticipates generating a commercial return, as you said, of around seven per cent. I would equally like to confirm that the investment package is commercially confidential. We are not represented on the board of Virgin or involved in the day-to-day management of the company. However, the company remains in compliance with its obligations under the investment package, including in relation to local employment.

In relation to the financial performance of the investment, Virgin Australia releases financial statements and it would be inappropriate to provide commentary outside of the formal announcements, given the nature of the Virgin entity. It is worth noting that the investment package has obligations over 10 years so we regard this as a long-term investment to deliver both jobs and financial returns.

Mr KATTER: Treasurer, I am interested to know, for the past financial year, what was the payroll tax from wind and solar energy operations in Queensland as opposed to that of coal- and gas-fired power stations? The government talks a lot about the jobs associated with renewable energy projects but we want to know what the benefit is in the long term. Could the Treasurer provide some numbers on that?

Mr DICK: I think it is clear that the number of people working in renewable power generation is lower than the number of people who work in coal-fired or gas-fired power generation. They are different forms of electricity generation. As the honourable member would know, one is very machine intensive, requiring more workers. As a general principle, payroll tax receipts will be lower from renewable energy generation than from coal-fired or gas-fired power generation.

Mr KATTER: Is it possible to get some quantum on that?

Mr DICK: I do not think the quantum would take the proposition any further. The transition of the economy to a decarbonised economy or a lower carbon economy will have numerous benefits, particularly for regional Queensland where the majority of renewable power generation will be. As I have said publicly, the transition to a lower carbon economy is not about less jobs; it is about more jobs.

Queensland has the capacity to be the home of heavy industry in the Asia-Pacific region. That is not just me saying that; that is the Clean Energy Council. We have a great opportunity, including the yet to be fully realised benefit of new economy critical minerals—not just extracting them from Queensland but also converting them into manufactured goods that will power the renewable energy revolution and the renewable economy for Queensland. Those jobs will not reduce. Those jobs will increase and that will increase, ultimately, payroll tax receipts to the state.

CHAIR: I now turn to the member for Macalister.

Mrs McMAHON: Treasurer, I refer to page 133 of Budget Paper No. 2. Could you please update the committee on Queensland's total borrowings and how they compare with forecasts in previous budgets and with total borrowings in other jurisdictions?

Mr DICK: Even on the high debt numbers that you can find for Queensland, we are still in a better position than other major states. Over the past two years, the number '\$130 billion' has been widely reported as our gross non-financial public sector borrowings figure. At the end of our forward estimates in 2025-26 that figure is now down to \$128.6 billion. That is \$92.4 billion lower than the total New South Wales debt of \$221 billion and \$97.7 billion lower than the total debt of Victoria of \$226.3 billion.

As a ratio to revenue, it is the same story. Queensland's gross non-financial public sector debt is less than one and a half times the size of its revenue in 2025-26, that is, 38 percentage points lower than the ratio in New South Wales of 186 per cent and 83 percentage points lower than the ratio of Victoria at 231 per cent. Just as we do on net debt, Queensland also compares favourably to other states on gross non-financial public sector debt when adjusting for their larger populations. In 2025-26, Queensland's gross debt per capita of \$23,200 is \$2,800 less than gross debt per person in New South Wales of \$26,000 and \$8,800 less than gross debt per person in Victoria, being \$31,900.

Finally, Queensland's gross debt compares favourably to other states when adjusting for their larger economic output. In 2025-26, Queensland's gross debt to output ratio of 30.4 per cent is half a percentage point lower than the ration in New South Wales of 30.8 per cent and 10.7 percentage points

lower than the ratio in Victoria of 41.1 per cent. In summary, even on the largest numbers you could possibly find, Queensland's gross non-financial sector borrowings are lower in absolute numbers, lower as a ratio to revenue, lower as a ratio to state output and lower per person than in New South Wales and Victoria.

CHAIR: Treasurer, a question was put to the Under Treasurer about the credit rating. Referring to page 78 of Budget Paper No. 2, could you please update the committee about Queensland's credit rating and the rating agencies' perspective on Queensland's economic outlook going forward?

Mr DICK: I am very pleased to provide a response to the committee. The Queensland government's most recent rating outcomes are AA-plus stable, affirmed by S&P Global on 22 February 2022; AA1 stable, affirmed by Moody's on 10 December 2021; and AA-plus stable, upgraded by Fitch on 13 December 2021 from AA stable. These ratings outcomes are supported by the prudent and effective management of pandemic impacts, as I said earlier, and the government's commitment to delivering strong budgetary performance and stabilising the level of borrowings.

Under the LNP Newman government, the only changes to Queensland's credit rating were downgrades. Under Labor, the only changes have been upgrades. That is an interesting point to make.

Our government maintains positive relationships with all of the ratings agencies and we welcome their assessments of Queensland's nation-leading economic recovery and strong fiscal position. In December 2021, Moody's affirmed Queensland's rating of AA1 stable. The Moody's assessment recognises that, while Queensland has experienced significant economic and revenue disruptions from the pandemic, its credit profile is underpinned by a strong institutional framework as well as the strong revenue recovery in 2021-22 and resultant lower borrowing requirements.

Fitch upgraded Queensland's rating from AA stable to AA-plus stable in December 2021, reflecting the diversity and underlying strength of Queensland's economy and Fitch's expectations of Australia's improving macro-economic environment. Fitch expects that Queensland's strong financial management and our commitment to restoring operating surpluses will keep debt levels manageable into the future and relative to our southern state peers.

S&P Global affirmed Queensland's AA-plus stable rating in February 2022. The assessment reflected the expectation that the impact of COVID-19 on Queensland's budget performance would be temporary and would improve as the economy continues to recover and as the budget is effectively managed. S&P Global also notes that Queensland's debt levels compare well to similarly rated peers.

The member asked me about the history and comparison to the past. Since 2015 Queensland's credit rating from S&P Global and Moody's has remained unchanged. In 2017 Moody's revised Queensland's outlook from AA1 negative to AA1 stable. As I have noted, Fitch upgraded Queensland's credit rating in December 2021 from AA stable to AA-plus stable. The upgrade to Queensland's credit rating by Fitch under our government is in sharp contrast to the credit rating downgrade Fitch imposed, from AA-plus to AA, under the Newman LNP government in the wake of its first horror budget in 2012. We are approaching the 10th anniversary of that budget shortly. At the time of downgrading Queensland's credit rating under the LNP Fitch noted that it did not believe the state's credit profile was consistent with the higher AA-plus rating, which has since been restored by the Palaszczuk Labor government. In its report, Fitch commented negatively on the then LNP government, saying—

The downgrade also reflects QLD's increasing vulnerability to non-domestic investors as the absolute amount of ... debt has increased which makes QTC more reliant on offshore wholesale funding markets.

Fitch went on to say—

Fitch is expecting a slower recovery process of the state's finances.

Fitch also noted—

Positive rating action is unlikely in the near term given the weak fiscal balance and large debt position. Further negative rating action could occur should QLD be unable to improve or stabilise its fiscal position over the next two to three years.

The maintenance of or improvement in Queensland's rating under our government also contrasts with the performance of the governments of New South Wales and Victoria, both of which have seen credit rating downgrades over the course of the pandemic. All jurisdictions were tested at this time of trial, but I am pleased to say that Queensland has come out on top. Victoria's AAA rating with Moody's was downgraded twice—to AA1 in 2021, then AA2 in 2022. The downgrade was driven by persistent material fiscal deficits and the consequent structural increases in its debt burden, a fate which Queensland has avoided. The New South Wales Liberal government was also downgraded by S&P Global, from AAA to AA-plus in 2020.

We will continue to work with the ratings agencies and with Queensland Treasury Corporation—I want to acknowledge the work of QTC under its CEO, Philip Noble—to ensure our state is in the strongest fiscal position, with attractive financial products and low borrowing rates. We will continue to work hard to deliver that for the people of our state.

CHAIR: I am aware that we have some questions that people will be getting back to, if the opposition is ready. Member for Toowoomba South, we might move back to you to make sure we can manage that.

Mr JANETZKI: I have one last question to Ms Rampa on QIC's target return on investments in the Queensland Future Fund. Is there a targeted return? If so, what is it?

Ms Rampa: The performance of the Queensland Future Fund will be reported in Queensland Treasury's annual report, which will be released later this year. Obviously, we manage a lot of accounts for various clients, including government. All accounts have certain objectives that we try to deliver on and will report on. That will flow through in the report to be released later this year.

CHAIR: Has the member finished with Ms Rampa?

Mr JANETZKI: Yes.

CHAIR: I apologise: I had promised you a particular question but you did not get it this time.

Mr PURDIE: Mr Allen, earlier this morning this committee heard from the Acting Auditor-General, Ms Johnson, who confirmed that her office was doing an investigation into the Wellcamp quarantine facility. She also said that they have requested relevant government departments provide information and documents to them and that they are still waiting on some of those documents from a request made in April. Has your department provided those documents that have been requested? If not, why not?

Mr Allen: Being aware of the question that was asked, I did check. To the best of my knowledge, there is no information that the QAO is seeking from Treasury that it does not already have.

Mr JANETZKI: While we are on the Wellcamp quarantine facility, Under Treasurer—and I am sure the Treasurer will be quick to say, 'That is commercial-in-confidence'—how quickly did Treasury have to find the \$200 million to meet the requirement for the Wellcamp quarantine facility?

CHAIR: We are talking about a quantum. The question is: how quickly did they have to find a quantum of money? I do not know how you answer that, Mr Allen?

Mr Allen: In the course of any year, the government is making decisions that are then reflected in a reconciliation for that year and a request for unforeseen expenditure. It would be incorporated within that. It is not a question of seeking immediate funding for that.

Mr STEVENS: Under Treasurer, as the Gold Coast Light Rail usage has halved since 2018-19 figures—from 10,743,025 passengers to 5,639,048 passengers to May 2022—can you advise the committee how much the private operator of the light rail is being paid annually for this shortfall in usage?

CHAIR: Is there a reason this would not be a question for Transport?

Mr STEVENS: I think the Under Treasurer would know, from Treasury's point of view of funding this particular shortfall?

CHAIR: Mr Allen, I do not know if you have anything to add. It could be better dealt with in Transport, but I will put it to you.

Mr Allen: I thank the member for the question.

Mr STEVENS: It is a large shortfall.

Mr Allen: On establishment, the funding arrangements would be the responsibility of the relevant department. We obviously work with them and other agencies on an initiation and establishment of that. Then their responsibility is to manage that forward. I do not have details of that particular contract. I note that the period in question probably reflects the reduced patronage associated with COVID, but I do not have that information. I think that would be a question better directed to Transport.

CHAIR: That question may be taken up further by the transport committee.

Mr STEVENS: Treasurer, since 2015 the government has employed an extra 60,000 public servants at an annual recurrent extra cost to the budget of approximately \$6 billion. Is it a fact that without this government job 'pork-barrelling', to use the old terminology, unemployment in Queensland would be 5.7 per cent, the highest in Australia?

Mr DICK: No.

Ms SIMPSON: Under Treasurer, last year the Treasurer introduced a bill targeting \$3 billion of savings over four years. Where are those savings measures included in this year's budget?

Mr Allen: As reflected in previous statements on the savings and debt plan and as a reminder to people, the overall savings and debt plan was a \$3 billion measure over the forward estimates at that point in time. Those measures have been incorporated within the budgets of respective agencies. In line also with observations by the Auditor-General who has reviewed this matter, these are measures that the relevant agencies have to implement. There is not discrete reporting per se. They are now incorporated within the forward estimates. Each agency has the responsibility and accountability to manage their resources and incorporate management of those particular savings and debt targets.

CHAIR: I think we went through a similar process in questions last year.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, I want to turn productivity measures and in particular the Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction. I am interested to understand how many people are in that part of Treasury?

Mr Allen: There are currently 18 FTE within that part of the division.

Mr JANETZKI: Can you refresh my memory: how many people were in the Productivity Commission when the Productivity Commission was abolished?

Mr Allen: At transfer the office had 21 employees or 20.2 FTE. As at 30 June 2022, as I noted, they have 18 employees or 17.2 FTE.

Mr JANETZKI: Can you advise the committee what work is currently being undertaken by the office in respect of productivity measures or red-tape reduction? Can you give the committee a flavour for what the office is currently undertaking?

Mr Allen: The office is delivering a wide range of work to support the government's productivity and regulatory reform agenda, informing the development of policy and solutions identifying opportunities to improve regulation. In 2021-22 the office delivered a comprehensive work program, including advising on and identifying productivity enhancing reforms across a range of priority areas such as housing affordability and innovation and administering the government's regulatory review requirements to ensure regulation is necessary, fit for purpose and well designed.

The office assessed 247 regulatory proposals, provided training to 416 Queensland government policy offices on best practice regulation as well as supported government agencies to identify and progress regulatory reforms, particularly where regulation unnecessarily impedes investment in new industries and technologies. An example of that is a review of the regulatory framework to enable the safe and sustainable development of the hydrogen industry, which is a piece of work that we have underway. To improve the way that regulators administer and enforce regulations, including through the regulator performance framework, a review and evaluation of the framework's effectiveness has been conducted in consultation with those regulators. Some 22 regulators that impact business, particularly small business, publish performance reports in this regard. Working with the Queensland Small Business Commissioner, the office has also worked on areas to identify regulatory reform priorities for small business.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, you mentioned particular measures around housing affordability or work that has been undertaken in the office. Has that information, those findings or that research that has been undertaken by the office in relation to the housing affordability piece of work been publicly disclosed?

Mr Allen: It has certainly been incorporated with any policy work we are doing around affordability in housing, yes.

Mr JANETZKI: Under Treasurer, has the office set up within Treasury to deliver productivity and better regulation made any recommendations for abolishing any regulation in Queensland?

Mr Allen: As reflected in my response, the office is advising on any number of regulations and regulatory proposals. They are brought forward by departments and they will work with those entities. In the course of work with those departments, I am sure there have been regulations that have been removed, modified and, I think the important part, also avoided. They would be some of the outcomes that have been achieved.

Mr JANETZKI: Do you think that there is merit in publicly identifying where regulation or better practice has been adopted? My view is that we have lost any visibility whatsoever on productivity measures, better regulation or the abolition of unnecessary red tape—

CHAIR: I think we both have an opinion on that. I guess the gist of the question is about productivity in Queensland, which we are all supportive of.

Mr JANETZKI: I will come to the question. Will the office publicly report on regulatory efficiencies that it has delivered for the Queensland taxpayer?

CHAIR: It does not sound like the question you started off with.

Mr Allen: As noted in my response before, assessments of 247 regulatory proposals have been undertaken in the course of the year. In relation to a review of the regulatory framework, in terms of the policy decisions that are made those regulations are published. We are running a model where internally we are getting the benefit of that immediacy of input into productivity assessment and evaluation as part of the policy process. In terms of advice when it comes to the development of policy and the publication of policy around those regulations, there is nothing limiting it being publicly disclosed. That is what I would say if I have interpreted the question correctly. Apologies member if I have not.

Ms SIMPSON: I want to follow-up, Under Treasurer, with regard to regulatory reform and their impacts. I believe you mentioned housing affordability. There are regulations coming through that will increase the cost of construction due to changes to the construction code. Do you know whether the proposal to change the construction code, which has a red-tape implication, has been put to the Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction for consideration?

Mr Allen: I do not know specifically whether or not those proposals have been put to the office. That would be brought forward by, I assume, the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Energy.

CHAIR: Although that is not an invalid question, that might be a question better asked of the relevant committee.

Ms SIMPSON: With respect, it is to do with regulatory reform and there is a unit with Treasury in that regard.

CHAIR: I did not rule out the question. I do not disagree with that. Mr Allen has given an answer about that. I said that it was a valid question and could possibly be followed up with the relevant committee.

Mr JANETZKI: Can Mr Watson the Acting CEO of Trade & Investment Queensland return to the table. I refer to the earlier question that I asked about increased investment outcome facilitation. You noted that that particular definition related to staffing. Page 36 of the SDS forecasts an increase in employee expenses of 12½ per cent in 2022-23, but page 33 states that costs per investment lead will increase by over 38 per cent for the same period. How do you reconcile the remaining 25-odd per cent in terms of that difference against that definition?

Mr Watson: The key variance is in relation to the overall FTE that you are referring to. The investment team is only a very small component of our overall FTE number. That is why there is a variance in that.

Mr JANETZKI: I will leave that questioning there. Chair, will I have additional time to ask questions after the whole range of information that is outstanding has been delivered?

CHAIR: It will depend on time. The member for Macalister had a question that she wanted to ask if we have time as well. I have already made an undertaking for the member for Macalister to do that.

Mr JANETZKI: I will save my remaining time for asking questions once that information has been provided.

CHAIR: Certainly. We are dependent on the various people getting that information. That is not strictly the constraining factor here, if that makes sense. If there are no more questions, I could take some questions from the government side.

Mr JANETZKI: We need the information.

CHAIR: Sorry?

Mr JANETZKI: Ideally we would get the information.

CHAIR: I understand. It is also information that has to be collated. That is what we are dependent on. It is not really in my hands. That is what I am saying, member for Toowoomba South.

Mrs McMAHON: Treasurer, I refer you to page 2 of the budget paper. Could the Treasurer please update the committee about the government's commitment to mental health and how this will be funded?

Mr DICK: I know this is an important matter to the member for Macalister and I appreciate her question very much. State funded mental health services have a critical role to play in providing treatment, care and support for Queenslanders experiencing mental illness and substance misuse issues. However, the system is impacted by some key challenges including increasing service demand, workforce constraints and the continued impact of COVID-19.

The ABS—and the member for Macalister may be aware of this—released the first phase of the latest National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing, their national mental health and wellbeing survey, last Friday and it does make for interesting reading. The survey indicates that two in every five Australian adults have experienced a mental health disorder at some time in their lives. In terms of young people, 40 per cent have experienced a mental health disorder in the last 12 months, with young women reporting the highest rates of mental disorder and distress over that period.

The Mental Health Select Committee has recommended that the Queensland government increase funding for mental health services and create a dedicated funding stream for mental health service provision, and that is something we have done in our budget. I know that the member for Macalister is a strong advocate for more mental health services in the community and more funding.

In 2022-23 Queensland budget, we committed to provide an additional \$1.645 billion in operating funding for new mental health care and suicide prevention services over five years. Our government has also committed an additional \$28.5 million in capital funding for improved mental health, alcohol and drug services, as well as suicide prevention systems for care and support.

The investment will support a new five-year plan—*Better care together: a plan for Queensland's state-funded mental health, alcohol and other drug services*—and will meet our state's obligations under the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement. It also supports beds for new crisis response services and will provide more than 1,000 new staff to operationalise this plan. Additional funding is also being provided to support enhanced provision of psychological support to be delivered by non-government providers. Having a strong relationship with the non-government sector who can help us provide those services is very important.

To fund these enhancements to mental health services and our record mental health investment, we are introducing the payroll tax levy we discussed earlier in the hearing—0.25 per cent on payrolls above \$10 million with an additional 0.5 per cent on payrolls over \$100 million. Given that reform is a specific levy as distinct from any changes in tax rates, the levy will only apply to the portion of wages above the respective taxable wage amounts—that is, it will be applied only on a marginal basis. That levy will apply to the top one per cent of Queensland's largest businesses. Importantly, Queensland's payroll tax exemption threshold of \$1.3 million, as I have said earlier, is one of the highest of all thresholds of all states and territories.

It is an important initiative—I know one close to the heart of the member for Macalister. It is important, I think, that all members of this House support that investment and also support the additional care that will come to Queenslanders as a consequence.

CHAIR: It is time for some follow-up answers.

Mr DICK: Chair, I will respond to some of those matters raised during the hearing. The member for Maroochydore asked about the cost of the international trade and investment mission to Dubai. In accordance with the Ministerial Handbook, the total estimated cost of travel will be included in the actual costs reported in the public report of ministerial office expenses, which is presented to parliament on a six-monthly basis. This report will be published in coming months and will ensure that all costs can be accurately recorded and attributed appropriately. This is the general practice of members of this and previous governments including the former treasurer and current LNP member for Clayfield, Tim Nicholls.

The member for Toowoomba South asked a range of questions about interstate land tax including whether Treasury had 'undertaken any modelling with respect to potential property investors that will leave the Queensland market thereby worsening the housing crisis'. I would like to clarify for the member that when an interstate speculator sells their property in Queensland the property stays in Queensland. It becomes available for another person to own and lease or own and occupy. That is the object of our reform. It means that young families in places like Logan or Toowoomba will no longer face unfair competition from speculators in Sydney who are flipping properties around the country at a furious rate. Treasury expects the impact on investment to be negligible, I am advised.

The member also asked about the FTEs that will be dedicated to our interstate land tax reforms. The number of FTEs is subject to agreement with the Public Service Commission and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet including discussions about the use of the whole-of-government unallocated FTE pool. We anticipate around nine FTEs ongoing will be allocated to this reform, but this too is subject to future budget deliberations.

In response to another question from the member for Toowoomba South, the Under Treasurer indicated that we do not have access to other revenue offices' data. However, it should be noted that Treasury will have alternative mechanisms to access relevant information concerning property valuations from other state authorities including through third-party providers.

The member for Toowoomba South also asked the Under Treasurer about meetings of the tax policy consultative committee. I am advised the committee met three times. The committee is not a policymaking entity, can I assure the committee, and is administrative in nature only.

The member for Toowoomba South asked when I was advised about the ANZ's intention to acquire Suncorp Bank. Like others, I thought it was obvious. I had read the publicly available media briefings and reports speculating about the merger. Both the Under Treasurer and I were briefed about the matter at 4 pm on Sunday, 17 July. ANZ made its announcement to the Australian Stock Exchange at 7.35 am the next day—Monday, 18 July.

The member for Toowoomba South asked when QIC recommended that the funding model for the RTA be changed. QIC does not, did not and should not exercise the function implied by the member. I am advised by QIC that they report regularly to the RTA Board on the performance of their investments, as they do for all clients. That is appropriate. It is not the role of QIC to make recommendations to their clients about funding models. Instead, that is a matter for Treasury, as the Under Treasurer has outlined.

The member for Mermaid Beach asked about the concession period of the Titles Registry. I can confirm this period was 50 years at financial close. A year has now elapsed. The concession period is now 49 years.

The member for Toowoomba South also asked about the recovery of payroll tax deferrals. I noted that just five per cent of businesses registered in Queensland pay payroll tax. Of these, I am advised that 101 businesses entered into payment arrangements out of 11,241 who applied for relief. I would also suggest to the member for Toowoomba South that such detailed questions are more suited to being addressed via letter rather than in a hearing like this—or on notice, can I add.

The member for Toowoomba South asked about Treasury's advertising budget. That will be reported in the annual report. The member for Toowoomba South also asked about private investment over the past seven years. I would draw the attention of the committee to private investment eight years ago in the last year of the LNP government. Under the LNP, in the absence of a pandemic, non-dwelling construction investment fell by 27 per cent; machinery and equipment investment fell by eight per cent; business investment fell by 19 per cent; and private investment fell by 15 per cent. In contrast, under our government over the past year private business investment has increased by 10.7 per cent in Queensland compared to three per cent nationally.

The member for Traeger asked about payroll tax paid by coal companies versus renewable energy generators. I addressed that in the hearing. I can confirm that more payroll tax is received from coal and gas-fired energy generators than from renewable energy generators, but given the small number and large size of payroll-tax-paying coal generators the data cannot be anonymised by the Queensland Revenue Office.

In relation to human rights complaints, in accordance with section 97 of the Human Rights Act Treasury will include the required details in Treasury's annual report. In relation to letters to debtors, I table those letters for the information of the committee.

CHAIR: I thank the Treasurer. According to the notes the secretariat has been keeping, all of the questions the Treasurer had undertaken to get back to the committee with have been answered. Member for Toowoomba South, do you have anything further that was not answered by the Treasurer?

Mr JANETZKI: I note what the Treasurer said about it being administrative in nature rather than policy, but I was interested to understand if the land tax change had been put before the committee and what the various committee members' feedback was about such a change.

Mr DICK: There seems to be a misapprehension in relation to the development of public policy by the LNP. Public policy is determined by the government. It is determined by me, but then that is put to—

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Mr DICK: If I could just answer the question, respectfully, because there seems to be this assertion that there—

Mr JANETZKI: It does not really matter.

Mr DICK: There seems to be an assertion that there is some sort of issue in relation to how the government develops public policy. We develop public policy. We consult. The government makes a decision through a collective process known as the cabinet and then we implement it. We take responsibility and accountability for those decisions, so when we make a change to tax law I take responsibility for that. That is my decision. That is moved through the cabinet. If my colleagues agree with it, it is then implemented either by way of regulation or legislative reform.

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Mr DICK: You can support it or not, member for Toowoomba South, just as you supported every single revenue measure that I moved in the parliament during budget week. You supported every single one of those measures. You supported increasing coal royalties. You supported all of those other measures without complaint. In fact, the only issue raised during the debate was a matter of consultation and process. Not one member of the House opposed the substance of what we did as a government. What does that say? It is done on a bipartisan basis. Why? Because the member for Toowoomba South knows it is good public policy. That is why it was not opposed. I stand by those decisions. It is the right thing to do for Queensland. I will always stand by the matters I put before the House.

CHAIR: Treasurer, I represent an area that is growing very quickly. I refer you to page 56 of Budget Paper No. 2. Can the Treasurer please advise the committee on the impacts of COVID-19 on Queensland's population growth? What are the implications of the growing population for the budget, especially for growing areas like my own?

Mr DICK: That is a very good question, Chair, and I thank you for it. In fact, all parts of Queensland seem to be undergoing growth at the moment. You have a particularly fast growing electorate. I want to acknowledge the work that you do to ensure the delivery of effective government services, particularly in health care and education, to the people of the electorate of Logan.

As outlined in the budget, despite net interstate migration and natural increase still growing in 2020-2021, with national border restrictions curtailing net overseas migration Queensland's overall population growth slowed to one per cent in that year. That was down from 1.7 per cent in 2019-20—so it was one per cent in 2020-21, down from 1.7 per cent in 2019-20—however, Queensland clearly remained the most attractive jurisdiction in which to live, recording the strongest population growth of any state or territory during our recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. At the time of the budget, the latest available ABS data showed that Queensland's population had grown by 1.1 per cent over the year to the September quarter 2021, which is much stronger than the national growth of only 0.3 per cent over the same period. Subsequent data released by the ABS for the December quarter 2021 showed that Queensland's population grew by 1.4 per cent over the 12 months to 31 December 2021, the highest growth of all states and territories and much higher than the national average population growth of 0.5 per cent over the year. The re-opening of the international border in early 2022 is expected to drive an ongoing gradual recovery in net overseas migration in 2022 and 2023. Net overseas migration is expected to reach pre-COVID levels later in the forward estimates as virus related uncertainties dissipate and travel logistics normalise over time.

Throughout the pandemic Queensland's net interstate migration has been the highest of any jurisdiction in Australia. This is consistent with the long-term trend of Queensland being a substantial net recipient of interstate migrants. Queensland's relative success in avoiding COVID-19 lockdowns along with fundamentals such as employment opportunities and housing affordability, which historically drive interstate migration, remain favourable, driving strong interstate migration. As a result, during the lengthy Delta variant lockdowns in New South Wales and Victoria net interstate migration in Queensland rose to more than 40,600 persons over the year to the September quarter 2021, the highest increase across any state or territory across Australia at that time. ABS data released after the 2022-23 budget showed that, in line with budget expectations, this strong growth in net interstate migration has continued. Net interstate migration to Queensland rose a further 19,200 in the December quarter to be 50,200 over the year. This represents a record high of net interstate migration in both quarterly and annual terms.

According to the latest Australian government budget forecast released in May this year, Queensland's net interstate migration is expected to continue rising the most of all jurisdictions over the four years to 2025-26. The forecast net increase of 88,000 persons for Queensland over the period

contrasts with the Commonwealth's forecast of a 90,000 net reduction in New South Wales and a forecast net increase of only 14,200 persons for Victoria. As outlined in the budget, a slight elevation in the birthrate in the first three quarters of 2021 provided an upside to the population rise attributed to natural increase in Queensland. The latest data released after the budget shows that the birthrate broadly returned to its pre-COVID trend in the December quarter. Overall, Queensland's population growth is forecast to pick up by 1¼ per cent in 2021-22, then strengthen further to 1½ per cent in 2022-23 and stay at that rate over the rest of the forward estimates in line with the expected return of international travel.

Queensland's ongoing population growth will continue to support the state's economic growth. The Queensland government is committed to ensuring we have effective policies, frameworks and strategies in place to manage our growth, respond to changing demographics and trends, and deliver the necessary services and infrastructure so the state can continue to grow and prosper. The 2022 budget outlined the government's commitment to leverage the momentum of the state's strong recovery to grow the economy and enhance the quality of life for all Queenslanders through its three priorities: creating more jobs and industries, better services and protecting Queenslanders' lifestyle.

Strong interstate migration experienced during the recovery from COVID-19 and solid population growth in key regions has contributed to the strength of the housing and residential construction sectors. This has been exacerbated by historically low interest rates and the substitution of expenditure towards housing due to international border closers and supply side constraints, which has impacted affordability. Housing affordability, of course, as members know, is a national issue that requires national solutions and action from all levels of government. I have made observations on that previously. However, we are doing our bit to provide support to deliver quality housing and accessible prices for all Queenslanders, including support for first home owners, which I know is very important to the member for Logan.

CHAIR: We have now reached the end of the time allocated for consideration of the proposed expenditure for the areas of responsibility administered by the Treasurer. We note that there are no questions taken on notice because all of the issues raised were resolved by the Treasurer in answering those questions. Thank you, Treasurer. I also wish to thank the Under Treasurer and officials and officers of the department for their attendance. I particularly want to note that public servants do not necessarily sign up to be involved in robust political discussions—the Treasurer made that point at the beginning—nor should they be in some cases. I regret that I did not get to put my annual question about the fiscal position of our defined benefits scheme. Treasurer, is there anything that you wish to add before we end this session?

Mr DICK: I want to echo your comments, Chair. I would like to thank the committee members for their attendance today. This is a very important part of our democratic parliamentary and accountability process in the state. I appreciate the engagement of all members. I am always pleased to appear before the committee, although it may not seem the case. I would also like to thank the staff of Queensland Treasury, our government owned corporations and our commercial statutory authorities. These are often unseen public servants; you are quite right, Chair. They commit themselves diligently to supporting me, to supporting this process and to supporting democratic accountability in Queensland, and I want to thank them for this. They have worked very hard to prepare for this hearing and they are deserving of our praise and thanks.

CHAIR: The committee will now have a break. The hearing will resume at 6.30 pm, at which time the committee will examine the estimates of the portfolio areas of the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement.

Proceedings suspended from 6.01 pm to 6.30 pm.

**ESTIMATES—ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE—TOURISM,
INNOVATION AND SPORT; OLYMPICS AND PARALYMPICS SPORT AND
ENGAGEMENT****In Attendance**

Hon. SJ Hinchliffe, Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement

Ms K Adams, Chief of Staff

Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport

Mr J Lee, Director-General


Mr J McAlister, Deputy Director-General, Tourism Infrastructure and Investment

Ms L Diffey, Deputy Director-General, Innovation

Mr A Sly, Deputy Director-General, Sport and Recreation

Tourism and Events Queensland

Ms L Coddington, Chief Executive Officer

 **CHAIR:** Good evening. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2022 for the portfolio areas of the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement. I am Linus Power, the member for Logan and chair of the committee. With me here is Mr Ray Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach, who is the deputy chair. The other committee members are: Mrs Melissa McMahon, the member for Macalister; Mr Andrew Powell, the member for Glass House, who is substituting today for Mr Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera; Mr Dan Purdie, the member for Ninderry; and Mr Adrian Tantari, the member for Hervey Bay. The following non-committee members have sought and been granted leave to participate in the hearing in accordance with standing orders: Mr David Crisafulli and Mr Sam O'Connor. There may be other members who attend later this evening and I will acknowledge them when they come in. The committee will examine the minister's portfolio areas until 9 pm.

I remind those present today that the hearing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament apply in this hearing. I particularly refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy and subjective preambles, argument or opinion. Minister, the great thing is that we have had no questions that have not fulfilled that criteria here today.

In respect of statutory authorities, standing order 180(2) provides that a member may ask any question that the committee determines will assist it in its examination of the relevant Appropriation Bill or otherwise assist the committee to determine whether public funds are being efficiently spent or appropriate public guarantees are being provided. I intend to guide these proceedings so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members. A reminder that officers permitted to use their mobile phones and electronic devices should ensure they have switched them to silent mode. I also remind you that food and drink are not permitted in the chamber.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the minister, the director-general, officials and departmental officers, and members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials and advisers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the minister or director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of tourism, innovation and sport open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Thank you for the opportunity to make a few comments as part of an opening statement. The 2022-23 budget charts a course to deliver good jobs and provide better services and support to Queensland's great lifestyle. It is important that we chart that course to map our emergence from the pandemic that has shaken and disrupted us like nothing before.

Queensland tourism is one industry that is bouncing back strongly following the Palaszczuk government's \$1.1 billion in support for the tourism, events and hospitality industry since the onset of the global pandemic. The 2022-23 budget builds on this support for the tourism industry with the \$200 million investment in aviation attraction announced earlier this year. The budget also commits up to \$66.4 million over four years for the action plan for tourism recovery to help our tourism operators rebound even more strongly, particularly in regional communities.

During budget week, I was pleased to release the Tourism Industry Reference Panel's final action plan for tourism recovery titled *Towards 2032: Reshaping Queensland's visitor economy to welcome the world*. When the panel was first established in early 2021, it was at a time when we were in the midst of rolling COVID impacts, when many could not see beyond the challenges in front of us, though we knew better days were coming. The panel has now set the course for Queensland not just to recover from the pandemic but also to re-emerge from supply and staff shortages, rising costs and uncertainty to make the industry more futureproof.

The panel recommends 75 actions. We will consider all the recommendations and shape a Queensland government response with input from industry and broader stakeholders. The \$66.4 million over four years for key initiatives aligned with the action plan's recommendations include: up to \$15 million over two years for the Tourism Experience Development Fund; up to \$4 million over two years towards a First Nations tourism program; up to \$27.4 million over two years for priority tourism projects as part of the Recovery for Regional Tourism program; and \$5 million for the Act Eco initiative to activate low-impact ecotourism infrastructure near state forests, timber reserves and national parks.

This year's budget also starts planning the legacy Queenslanders want to achieve from the 2032 games and supports the development of a world-leading sports technology industry. We have a 10-year runway for transformational opportunity up to 2032, and we are determined not to waste a second of it. That is why I was pleased to join the Premier last week in announcing the membership of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games Legacy Committee, which the Premier has asked me to chair. The committee will share their diverse experience and expertise to help shape the Brisbane 2032 legacy vision and plan across the whole of the state with a broad array of partners. Queensland's two golden decades of unrivalled opportunity before and after those games have started and are transforming the state before our eyes. We are investing in sport, from community club infrastructure and game day support to building games legacy, supporting sport tech and discovering and nurturing elite Queensland athletes with Youfor2032.

The 2022-23 budget commits an extra \$80.2 million over three years to Activate! Queensland 2019-2029, bringing the total allocation to that government policy to \$394 million to help Queenslanders stay active more often. Today I am pleased to announce the second three-year action plan under Activate! for the period called Accelerate 2022-2025. This focuses on building and strengthening industry capabilities, strengthening Queensland's sporting pathways, better using existing precincts and venues, enhancing delivery of priority sport and recreation infrastructure, and leveraging events and opportunities.

I was also pleased to join the Premier yesterday to announce \$142 million over three years to drive the future of innovation in Queensland. This next phase of Advance Queensland will capitalise on the success of the program over the last seven years and accelerate economic growth opportunities for Queensland in the lead-up to that mark that we are mentioning quite a bit—2032. I will talk more about these initiatives throughout the evening. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the officers of my department and the related agencies for all their work in preparing for this estimates hearing. Chair, I also want to thank you and your committee members for the opportunity to appear before you today and be part of this important scrutiny process. I welcome any questions that you, your members or your guests have.

CHAIR: I note the deputy chair is indicating that the member for Broadwater has a question.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, at last year's estimates I asked the minister why the Wangetti Trail project had lost its way. At that point, the Capital Statement showed that the project was underspent by \$6.2 million. This year the project is \$8.8 million underspent. I ask the minister again: why has the project lost its way?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for his question. What is now the \$47.1 million Wangetti Trail, after a further \$5.7 million allocation in this year's state budget, is very much the lead edge of Queensland's first purposely designed ecotourism trail in a national park. The development of the trail is a pilot project being delivered through an innovative and collaborative model to create genuine ecotourism experiences and iconic destinations in partnership with traditional owners. There has been \$39.1 million of Queensland government funding allocated to the construction of the trail which is complemented by the Australian government's investment of \$8 million from the National Tourism Icons Program.

The Wangetti Trail has reached several important milestones with the finalisation of the Cultural Heritage Management Agreement, significant steps towards finalising the Indigenous Land Use Agreement, the ILUA, following negotiations with Cairns regional playing group representatives and approval of the first section of the trail, Wangetti South, by the Australian government as a controlled action under the EPBC Act. Wangetti South is approximately 33 kilometres of trail from Palm Cove to Wangetti and is planned to include a public camping area and link to Ellis Beach.

The Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport in its contract with Wagners Composite Fibre Technologies have obtained a development approval from Cairns Regional Council for a portion of the trail and are now in the final stages of securing the remaining development and environmental approvals. Finalisation of the detailed design by Wagners CFT has indicated the need for more retaining and trail stabilisation infrastructure along the Wangetti South section to provide a safe and sustainable shared-use trail that meets the latest standards in national parks. Coupled with the global increases in construction costs and supply chains, the Palaszczuk government has reaffirmed our commitment to the project with that additional boost in funding, but it is important that we keep doing this in the context of working closely with cultural heritage and native title obligations, working with traditional owners. Once development approvals have been secured across the whole of the project, we will be in a position to re-engage with the ecotourism market around those sorts of issues. However, while the progress has not been as fast as we would like—this was discussed, as you say, last year—we have seen movement and we have seen progress, and we are on the cusp of significant expenditure out of the budget that has been made available.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, I want to explore that \$5.7 million overrun that the minister just mentioned. Why is that held centrally? I notice that has been held centrally. Why is that?

Mr Lee: There is not a cost overrun. It is with regard to how we have contracted this; we have gone out to a contracting model. However, what has become clear over the last 12 months, as the minister explained, is that there have been some design and scope issues that needed to be re-examined and that has been coupled with the challenges of trying to source materials and products from overseas that will then fit out some parts of the trail. As you know, it is not only a walking trail but also for mountain bikes, so on that basis it needs to be designed to a certain standard which will satisfy both environmental needs and also users' needs.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Lee, the money is held centrally. Why is that?

Mr Lee: With your indulgence, Chair, I will get my deputy director-general to answer that specific part of the question.

Mr McAlister: The \$5.7 million is repurposed funding from some growing tourism jobs, grant funding from last term that was unspent because two projects did not proceed.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, I refer to the statement in 2020, issued by the then minister, that the trail would be 'operational and open to the public in 2022'. The website now says that the trail will be operational and progressively open to the public from 2023 onwards. What is the forecast completion date for this project?

Mr Lee: With the two components of the trail that have been categorised both in its northern component and its southern component, it is our estimate that at this stage both of those will hope to be completed by late 2023.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, I note that the Mowbray North section of the project has expended \$3.8 million with only \$1.6 million to be spent this financial year. Is that enough funding to complete the works between the bridge and Port Douglas?

Mr Lee: I will take that on advisement and come back to the committee.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, we have seen there has been significant change in the design. I believe originally it was a 2.25 kilometre mangrove experience boardwalk and a five kilometre trail to Four Mile Beach, and now it is a 4.2 kilometre trail made of the road base you talk about and the \$395 million boardwalk. That is correct, the change in the scope?

Mr Lee: That is our understanding.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, can you confirm that the trail is still intended—you mentioned before—to be dual use the entire section for both mountain biking and hiking? To be more specific, will the mountain bike access to Twin Bridges Track be restored as part of the project?

Mr Lee: Again, I will take that on advisement, but it is fair to say that with the dual access, there will be one section of the trail where the hiking trail will be separated from the mountain bikes.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, can you explore what efforts you have done to get through some of the challenges that have been raised in this? Clearly there are issues. What intervention have you injected yourself into the process to overcome them?

CHAIR: It is great to have a metaphor of exploring on a wilderness trail.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: This has been a challenge project with a number of challenges, challenges well beyond the nature of the project, challenges external, but challenges that have been associated with all of the partners that we have had to deal with through the process as well. That is why one of the things I did was to ask my assistant minister to lead a process of stakeholder engagement, and that has been very effective. I think we are at some three or four meetings, including one I have attended myself, with a range of stakeholders directly involved, broader stakeholders engaged in the industry, in his role as a local member and also engaging with the other state members of parliament whose electorates are affected—the trail lies in the electorates of Barron River and Cook—and, as a consequence, there has been strong ongoing engagement with those stakeholders about the challenges and seeking to address those challenges.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, looking at question on notice No. 7 regarding the Great Cooloola Walk, which shows that the approvals for the projects have been delayed, and question on notice No. 12 regarding the Paluma to Wallaman Falls Trail which is not being progressed this year, could you give your opinion on the status? Are those projects likely to come to fruition?

CHAIR: Director-General, not opinion, but I think the Leader of the Opposition meant an update on the status.

Mr Lee: Yes, it is fair to say we have found some of these ecotourism projects very challenging. On the direction of the minister, I visited Paluma and looked through that lookout walk and the start of that walk. There are various challenges that we have faced with these projects, not only because of some of the challenges with the flora and fauna but also from traditional owners who have some very strong views about how this might be delivered. I think it has been very important that we have listened to those views and consulted with them in a very detailed manner. As we have learnt from other jurisdictions, when you undertake ecotourism developments, they do have various challenges. It is not like working in the roads department where you just construct a road base on there being scrub. These are highly sensitive areas that we are dealing with.

CHAIR: If I could seek your indulgence, we have a question that we wanted to ask about that project. Seeing as it is on topic, we might ask that question and change the time over.

Mrs McMAHON: With reference to page 1 of the SDS and the commitment to drive the return and growth of a sustainable and competitive tourism industry, will the minister provide an update on the Paluma to Wallaman Falls Trail?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Thank you for the question. The Palaszczuk government is committed to creating unforgettable ecotourism experiences that exceed visitors' expectations and create lasting memories of Queensland's natural and cultural assets. In line with this commitment, we have been pleased to support the development of a business case for the proposed Paluma to Wallaman Falls ecotourism trail in the Townsville region. We secured \$450,000 of joint state and Australian government funding for this scoping work from the \$5 million 2019 monsoon trough category C Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements as part of the Tourism Recovery Program.

The Queensland government has commenced feasibility assessment activities which involve working with local traditional owners to define the project and determine their aspirations. The project has also been supported by the three local councils involved—Charters Towers, Hinchinbrook and Townsville—which together have invested some \$45,000 for the development of the concept plan. The proposed concept of a 125-kilometre trail from Paluma to Wallaman Falls needs to be tested vigorously to ensure that any proposed product, itinerary or cultural experience accords with market demands. We know from other ecotrail proposals that there are significant challenges, as we have already discussed this evening, such as design, approval and stakeholder support as well as construction costs. Engagement and partnership with traditional owners is fundamental and also a statutory requirement

under the existing native title and current cultural heritage legislation. Formal support for the proposed project has been received from the Warrgamay and the Gugu Badhun traditional owner groups, with opportunity for the Nywaigi First Nations people remaining open as the project progresses.

I can report that in July 2022—this month—TRC Tourism Pty Ltd completed work on the Paluma to Wallaman Falls business case, which confirms the feasibility of the concept trail alignment and tourism opportunity and recommends a staged approach for its delivery. In recognition of the Paluma to Wallaman Falls business case findings and recommendations and to reinforce the state's commitment to investing in ecotourism projects that leverage our significant natural assets and grow our tourism market share in partnership with traditional owners, I am pleased to announce that our government is committing a further \$2 million for some early works that will advance the first stage of the proposed Paluma to Wallaman Falls Trail. The next stages of the project will likely focus on identifying and activating opportunities on existing trail infrastructure; identifying and mapping solutions to design and approval issues; scoping governance and management arrangements; and supporting traditional owner capacity building, training and education.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, would the Springbrook Cableway, which is prosed by the Gold Coast city council, be eligible for funding under the Tourism Experience Development Fund, or would the environmental roadblocks be insurmountable?

Mr STEVENS: Great question.

Mr Lee: In terms of the response, I should say from the outset that that is actually a matter for the Department of Environment and Science rather than ourselves. Because your question was specifically around funding, it is fair to say that it would be subject to a business case process and then there would be a determination after that, but there is a series of other approvals that would be a precondition. There are a lot of complex matters, as you would know, locally around land tenure and other things.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, in September the government refused to rule out a merger between TEQ and the department of tourism. Can the minister today confirm that both bodies will remain separate?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The reality is that, like we have seen with so many tourism and hospitality businesses across the state needing to adapt and change in response to the impacts of the pandemic over the past couple of years, I think it is reasonable that Queensland government agencies always continue to consider and review how they operate, look at their activities and their staff and determine how to adapt their services and better support their businesses and employees. These discussions should consider a variety of factors including administrative arrangements and statutory bodies established to enable success. Consistent with that sort of principle and the principle set out by the government's savings and debt program, work was undertaken to look at where duplication exists and whether operational improvements could be made. Many other agencies have also undertaken this sort of work across government.

The work identified opportunities for improvement, particularly in the way that investment attraction in aviation and major events activities were performed by both the department and Tourism and Events Queensland. As a consequence of that work, the entities of Tourism and Events Queensland and the department remain and remain separate. However, I have asked the department and Tourism and Events Queensland to work closer together in these areas. I understand that the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund is now being coordinated by a single point of contact within the department rather than it being split and varied between the different agencies. That is an example of how looking at these things and scrutinising them properly has achieved a better, more effective and efficient outcome. However, I make it clear that the separate entities of Tourism and Events Queensland as a statutory authority and the department remain separate.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, there are currently 13 regional tourism organisations in Queensland. Will this remain the case?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for the question. He does allude to one of the recommendations of the action plan for tourism recovery—and their initial preliminary report that was handed down last year did speak to and look to whether there might be some potential for a more effective network of regional tourism organisations. I want to make a few comments about this and then I will hand over to the TEQ CEO for some further details as this is ultimately a matter for the statutory authority—the statutory authority that I have just reaffirmed continues to have an important role in our superstructure. This question does give me an opportunity to confirm and clarify that there will be no

cuts to funding of the regional tourism organisations network, as had been erroneously suggested during budget week by the member for Mirani. If that has inspired your thinking on this, I want to clarify that for you.

Queensland's tourism industry has been hit incredibly hard by the pandemic; we all know that. Since the onset of the pandemic, as I mentioned earlier, the Palaszczuk government has committed approximately \$1.1 billion in support for tourism, events and hospitality sector including our Regional Tourism Network. The interim action plan for tourism recovery recommends, as I made mention of, that the Queensland government look at new ways of working and consider the best way to achieve coordination and alignment with regional industry organisations.

The current tourism industry network model has been in place for more than 20 years, with only minor amendments over that time. There are some opportunities to potentially redevelop the model to achieve even greater outcomes for Queensland's regions. That is why Tourism and Events Queensland, the independent statutory authority, has identified an opportunity to redefine the model for the network to maximise tourism promotion, experience and development, and event acquisition outcomes within the funding they have—boosted funding that they have already had and boosted funding going forward. This approach is supported by extensive research into destinations around the world, examining the alignment of regions and experiences in Queensland and identifying opportunities for greater partnerships involving a suite of metrics to support formulating a funding approach and ongoing industry consultation.

That consultation commenced in early February this year with a range of stakeholders including the RTOs, the LGAQ and other stakeholders, and consultation is ongoing. I encourage members of parliament who work with and talk to their RTOs in their local communities to be informed about that and be informed on the process. However, it is fundamentally a decision for TEQ to be making with the funds that have been provided to them for the Regional Tourism Network.

It is fundamentally a matter for TEQ to determine how that distribution works and the ongoing work to ensure that it is responsive to the needs of the sector going forward as we see it. All of this comes off the back of work that we have done to provide support for industry to make decisions and investigate the way in which the future can be rebuilt through our *Interim action plan for tourism recovery*, but it is a great opportunity for reflection off the back of the impacts of the pandemic on how a great tourism industry here in Queensland will continue to grow, and our regions are fundamentally important to that and we will continue as a government to support our regional tourism network. I want to ask Ms Coddington to make some further comments around the question around the regional tourism network.

Ms Coddington: TEQ works in partnership with regional tourism organisations and all levels of government and industry to enhance Queensland's profile as a tourism and events destination. On the back of the *Towards 2032: reshaping Queensland's visitor economy to welcome the world* and its recommendation for us all to find new ways of working, we have commenced this work with the RTOs. The current funding model, as the minister mentioned, for the RTOs has been in place for more than 20 years with only minor amendments over that time and over many years TEQ has received feedback from some local governments that they did not feel that the experiences on offer in their area aligned with their RTO's primary marketing experience proposition. With those two things—a model that is dated and boundaries that potentially can be looked at—we have been working very closely with the RTOs to look at the funding model for the tourism network fund and also the funds available through the \$15 million Rebuilding Queensland Tourism's election commitment to develop a coordinated approach to market maximising the opportunities for each of Queensland's regions.

We are continuing the consultation on the proposed regional network approach, including with selected local governments in partnership with the respective RTO CEOs, to seek input on the proposed regional boundaries and the destination partnership approach and TEQ has continued consultation with the executive of the Queensland regional tourism network. The funding allocation for each RTO in the financial year 2023 from the \$7 million tourism network fund has been guaranteed at a minimum of the prior year's allocation and a new metrics based funding model is under development that will recognise each RTO's respective efforts in stakeholder engagement, marketing, experience development and event acquisition outcomes. Transition to the new model will occur from 1 January 2023, with those RTOs that will receive increased funding under the new financial model to receive a part-year increase to their TNF grant. Full implementation of the new funding model and any changes in RTO boundaries will commence from 1 July 2023.

CHAIR: I now call the member for Macalister.

Mrs McMAHON: Minister, with reference to page 2 of your SDS and with reference to Activate! Queensland 2019-2029, a 10-year strategy to enrich the Queensland way of life through physical activity, will the minister provide an update on that strategy?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for Macalister for the question and I know you have great interest in supporting physical activity. The 2022-23 budget commits an extra \$80.2 million over three years for Activate! Queensland 2019-2029, bringing the total allocation, as I said earlier, to some \$394 million to help Queenslanders stay active more often. The first three-year action plan, Our Active8, ended on 30 June 2020. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, I am pleased to announce that the second three-year action plan for the period, Accelerate 2022-2025, focuses on those five areas that I made mention of, those five pillars—building and strengthening industry capabilities, strengthening Queensland's sporting pathways, better using existing precincts and venues, enhancing delivery of priority sport and recreation infrastructure, leveraging events and opportunities. They are the core of this next stage and this next plan.

Initiatives to be delivered over the next three years include FairPlay vouchers to help eligible young Queenslanders increase their physical activity by reducing the financial barriers to participate in sport and recreation activities; increasing the support for young Queenslanders selected to attend state, national and international level events through the Emerging Athlete Pathways program; further First Nations sport and recreation program and the Deadly Active Sport and Recreation Program to reduce inequalities in participation through the delivery of community identified physical activity opportunities for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; continued support for not-for-profit local and regional sport and active recreational organisations to encourage volunteers and to provide flexible and safe physical activity opportunities; a forward schedule of grants to invest in community infrastructure that enhances participation opportunities; upgrades to existing precincts and venues to leverage this infrastructure for broader community use, including support for pathways and industry collaboration; funding for the ActiveKIT program to support innovative products or services to enable more Queenslanders to be more physically active; and continued support for state level organisations and industry peak bodies to build the capacity of industry and enhance participation opportunities for Queenslanders. The Activate! Queensland 2019-2029 initiatives work with and support the sport and recreation industry to deliver participation activities throughout the state, grow grassroots participation, improve mental health outcomes and support Queensland's talented athletes for the future. They are the core of what we are seeking to achieve with this next plan and the continued delivery of Activate. It is a very exciting furthering of what we have already achieved but recasting it in that context of that green and gold runway through to 2032.

Mr TANTARI: Minister, with reference to page 2 of the department's Service Delivery Statements and the reference to \$66.4 million of additional funding over four years to implement targeted initiatives for tourism recovery, will the minister provide an update on the action plan for tourism recovery?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank Mr Tantari for his question. The pandemic has been an enormous challenge for tourism which is why the Palaszczuk government has continuously been so committed to supporting the tourism and events and hospitality sectors. As I have mentioned a few times, there is that \$1.1 billion worth of support that we provided in response to COVID. As we deliver practical, on-the-ground support, it is also important that we have to look ahead and plan for the industry's return to growth and long-term success. That was why I established the independent Tourism Industry Reference Panel in March 2021. The panel included highly-respected tourism industry leaders who then worked closely with industry to identify the actions needed to support our rapid recovery. It has been really great to see the work that Ms Liz Savage as the chair, Mr Brett Godfrey and Mr John O'Neill did working together with industry.

Following over 12 months of industry engagement and research, in June 2022 the panel released its final action plan for tourism recovery, a report titled, as I have mentioned before, *Towards 2032: reshaping Queensland's visitor economy to welcome the world*, and the final action plan goes well beyond recovery. It reflects an industry-informed, long-term blueprint for the growth of Queensland's visitor economy. The report includes the panel's findings and makes 75 recommendations to reshape Queensland's visitor economy. It sets a very ambitious vision for 2032, with Queensland being Australia's destination of choice for domestic and global visitors seeking the world's best experiences, and the Palaszczuk government welcomes the panel's report, its ambitious advice and its wideranging recommendations to facilitate and guide the industry's long-term success.

In conjunction with the action plan's release, the government did release an interim response identifying key areas of opportunity for immediate action along with areas for further consideration. The government's full response will be developed over the coming months and, alongside the next long-term tourism strategy for Queensland, we see it being released in November this year after we have had

that broader industry and broader stakeholder engagement. However, the 2022-23 Queensland budget does include a range of measures that respond directly to the specific recommendations under the final action plan, with that figure of \$66.4 million over four years focused on experience development, tourism infrastructure, ecotourism events and First Nations tourism. This is in addition to outcomes already achieved in response to the panel's *Interim action plan for tourism recovery*, which was released in October 2021, and those initial government responses included the \$200 million aviation attraction fund, a \$14 million package for business events, delivering the successful \$7.5 million Work in Paradise program and extending the valuable Tourism Business Financial Counselling Service which I know has been very popular.

The Tourism Industry Reference Panel's action plan for tourism and recovery builds on the momentum that was kickstarted by the Palaszczuk government as we supported industry coming through the pandemic. These further initiatives are the start of that next chapter as we seek to futureproof Queensland's visitor economy and give it the best platform to go forward.

CHAIR: Minister, referencing the department's Service Delivery Statements on page 1 and the commitment to drive economic growth post COVID and especially job creation through innovation, will the minister provide an update on the funding for Advance Queensland?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Thank you, Chair. I really thank you for the question because I think there have been a few misunderstandings about this out there. Yesterday the Premier and I were pleased to release a new \$142 million road map setting out the state's innovation priorities in the lead-up to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Brisbane. *Advance Queensland: innovation for a future economy 2022-2032 roadmap* looks to build on the momentum created by the Advance Queensland initiative. I might just remind you that when we started on the Advance Queensland journey in 2015 our aim was to build the state's capability in innovation and entrepreneurship so that we could fully engage in an emerging global future economy. Advance Queensland built on the highly successful Smart State investment, which saw the establishment of key scientific infrastructure throughout the state, producing a wealth of research and highly skilled university graduates.

Since 2015 the Queensland government has invested \$755 million through Advance Queensland, in turn leveraging a further \$988 million from industry partners—close to a billion dollars from industry partners being leveraged out of that investment—supporting more than 27,000 jobs in the state, of which I note over 11,400 are in the regions. I note that that \$755 million was not announced in one package in 2015.

Advance Queensland is now ready to move on to the next phase, capitalising on its success and accelerating economic growth opportunities for Queensland. The Innovation for a Future Economy Roadmap provides the direction for this to happen. As part of the 2022-23 state budget, \$142.2 million over three years is provided to drive the future of innovation in Queensland. This includes \$100 million over three years for new and existing programs under Advance Queensland; \$15 million for the Queensland Innovation Precincts and Places Strategy, an action plan, which was released yesterday; \$10.2 million for the Innovation Action Plan and Office of the Chief Entrepreneur; and \$17 million for the Department of Environment and Science to support priority industry science centres of excellence and partnerships and accelerate that university commercialisation that is such an important part of the concept going back to the original Smart State, but now we are seeing Advance Queensland build on that capability.

As part of this funding we will continue to deliver new and critical programs and services for our innovators and entrepreneurs, particularly in our regions, to help accelerate Queensland's economic recovery and growth. We will also continue to support the flagship programs including a reinvigorated Ignite Ideas Fund, the industry research fellowships, as well as our ongoing commitment to the Advance Queensland Regional Futures Program, Female Founders and Deadly Innovation programs. We will also continue to work with other agencies to identify and deliver innovation opportunities and help connect the innovation community with government because, very importantly, this is a whole-of-government, collective approach to innovation. Innovation delivery provides the foundation for a sustainable and thriving economy and we have to do this across the whole of government. It is not just a single-agency activity. Major Queensland government strategic investment initiatives such as the Queensland Jobs Fund also provide opportunities for greater entrepreneurial activity and new jobs creation. It is very clear that that is part of the broader delivery of Advance Queensland.

We have many impactful programs in place, assets we can build on and new opportunities as we go forward, and these and other activities will consolidate on what we have achieved, leverage the size of our investment and innovation and ensure the benefits are there for all Queenslanders for years to come.

Mrs McMAHON: With reference to page 2 of your SDS and the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, will the minister provide an update on legacy planning?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for the question. As the Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement, I am very pleased to be leading the work of legacy planning and strategy for the Queensland government. Part of this task has been to establish the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games Legacy Committee, which the Premier has asked me to chair. Last week the Premier and I announced the 13-member panel who will share their diverse experience and expertise to help shape the 2032 legacy vision and plan. First Nations leader Georgina Richters has been appointed to be the deputy chair of the panel. I will give some highlights of who is on the panel. It does include seven women: Georgina Richters, as have mentioned; Diaswati Mardiasmo; Imogen Ruyg; Ingrid Proud; Danya Hodgetts; Ashleigh Morris; and Sharon Boyce. There are four people from regional Queensland, including a couple of those I have just mentioned, two First Nations representatives and one person who has a lived experience as a person with a disability. There are two youth representatives, including 16-year-old Imogen Ruyg, who lives in Normanton and is also the youth member for Traeger in the YMCA parliament. I should correct that. I think Imogen has turned 17 recently. Her colleague, also a youth representative, Sam Zhu from Brisbane, is also 17.

These Queenslanders will help shape the impact of Brisbane 2032 on Queensland. Their guidance and experience will have a direct bearing on the future of what we achieve out of this opportunity. Having people from a very diverse range of backgrounds, including people involved in property development, from the circular economy, from the disability sector, social service sectors, community sport, innovation, events and education, will help make sure that we take into account the range of things we want to achieve.

The plan is that the legacy committee will meet up to four times per year. The first will probably be a virtual catch-up planned for early next month and the first in-person meeting for the committee is planned for early September on the Gold Coast. There were more than 400 applications received by the 4 April closing date. Those who have made it through the selection process have had to demonstrate their broad interests, their commitment, that they are not just a single-issue person and that they have a broad vision for what they want to do. Most fundamentally, it has been about their commitment to Queensland and what they want to achieve in that regard.

Legacy committee members will be providing their expertise and advice on legacy opportunities, but most importantly we will be asking other Queenslanders what their priorities are for their community. This is a process of outreach and engagement. It is not a closed loop. They will contribute to the development of the Brisbane 2032 legacy plan, which will identify partnership opportunities and strategies for encouraging community participation and involvement in the consultation process as well. The legacy benefits for Brisbane 2032 should be demonstrated in the strength of all of our communities, with every region needing to be different. The reality is that the committee will use the coming months and years, and we will see it emerge and change over time, to prioritise what Queensland wants to get out of Brisbane 2032, because having the biggest event in the globe happening in our part of the world is a transformational opportunity, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity generally, and one that is important for our state and our community to get the best benefits out of for many years to come.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I turn now to the Leader of the Opposition

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, recommendation 1 of the Queensland Tourism Industry Reference Panel is to establish a new \$140 million fund to develop significant new and visionary products and experiences. Where in the budget is that fund?

Mr Lee: As you will know, the recommendations and the final report were received after the budget had actually been constructed. There is some initial funding for some experiences, which the minister outlined at the start of estimates. There will be further considerations throughout this year.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, in June the minister announced the 2022-23 budget Tourism Experience Development Fund. Where is that fund in the budget?

Mr Lee: That is part of the \$66.4 million, which forms part of the \$15 million I am advised.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question to the director-general. The Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund has \$1.58 million in the budget for this financial year, but I do not see anything in the forwards. I know the Queensland Tourism Industry Reference Panel did want an additional \$50 million. Could you shed some light on that?

Mr Lee: That is a continuing program.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Where is that in the budget? Have I overlooked that? I see it in the capital statement on page 100.

Mr Lee: I am happy to take that on advisement and come back to you on it.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chair, that is all from me other than to say that this will be the last time that we get to see Ms Coddington. I wanted to thank her for her service to the industry.

CHAIR: We all share that sentiment. Thank you, Ms Coddington, for your service. I know that you are very committed to events and tourism.

Mr PURDIE: My question is to the deputy-director. In order to deliver the department's objectives as set out in the Service Delivery Statements, clear and consistent communication between the responsible minister and the department is vital. Has the director-general or any senior members of his department ever withheld information from the minister so they can maintain plausible deniability?

Mr Lee: No.

Mr STEVENS: My question is to the director-general. Is the director-general aware of any ministerial staff applying pressure to individuals in his department, including himself, for responses that minimise problems or discouraging written advice on difficult topics?

CHAIR: With respect to the questions, while I am certainly going to allow them the idea of fishing for standardised allegations is in very poor form. Director-General?

Mr Lee: The short answer is, no. The long answer is that our department enjoys very fruitful relationships with the ministerial office.

Mr MANDER: My question is on sport, if that is not obvious.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: It was a gearshift that crunched.

Mr MANDER: Yes. My first question is to the director-general. Director-General, what was the estimated cost of damages incurred by community sporting organisations because of the rainfall and flooding event earlier this year?

CHAIR: That is a good question.

Mr Lee: I might ask my deputy director-general to join me because he worked very closely individually with sporting clubs. If there are more detailed questions from the member, we will deal with that then.

At the time, the Sport and Recreation Disaster Recovery Program supported not-for-profit sport and active recreation organisations. They were able to be funded immediately with up to \$5,000 for clean-up and re-establishment of their facilities and activities. There were numerous natural disasters throughout the south-east over a nearly 12-month period. To date there were 379 organisations that had been approved for funding under that program. There were other programs and I am happy to detail them to the member or provide them on advisement.

Mr MANDER: I have a further question on that. I am interested in the actual financial cost of damage to the clubs?

Mr Sly: I can give a ballpark figure.

Mr MANDER: I am happy with a ballpark figure. That is fine.

Mr Sly: Currently, we are assessing as part of the community recovery plan. Roughly \$77 million has been allocated under the joint disaster funding arrangements. We have received more than \$132 million worth of applications under that expression of interest. Our department, through sport and recreation, is currently working on assessing those. Needless to say, there is significant damage. \$132 million is what we know through EOI, but several further local government areas have recently been declared, in the last week or so. They will be added to that as well. It exceeds \$132 million.

CHAIR: Could we pause opposition questions. I want to say that, from five years ago when we saw damage around Logan, some of the clubs are much more resilient now. The investment that the member for Everton is talking about is really important. I congratulate him for bringing up this issue.

Mr MANDER: Chair, I have a follow-up question to the director-general and the deputy director-general. There is \$132 million worth of applications. None of those have yet been granted; is that right?

Mr Sly: There are several levels of disaster recovery. Level 1 is up to \$5,000 and we have given more than 300 of those to date.

Mr MANDER: Last financial year?

Mr Sly: Including to today. There is then the second level, which is \$20,000, of which there are some and I can get that number. There are some that have applied for the \$20,000. QRIDA has up to \$50,000 beyond that. Beyond that again is the balance of the \$77 million. There are various clubs and various different stages, but we hope by September to be in a position where we can allocate that \$77 million.

Our staff have been out on the ground since those events, pretty much since January but then there was the major one in the south-east in late February/early March. We have been to many of the affected local government areas and our staff have very good knowledge coming off not only Brisbane 2011 but particularly the Townsville events of 2019 where we delivered more than 48 projects and \$13 million. We are going through a process. It is a difficult process because there is a huge amount of damage. Chair, as you correctly point out, there are a lot of clubs that are lot more resilient today than they have been, but there are examples of clubs in Gympie that have been flooded five times in a decade, as you would well know. We are working through it and we hope by September to be in a position to announce where that \$77 million will be allocated.

Mr MANDER: I want to follow this further. I am trying to understand the amount of funding that is available, what has been spent and what has not been spent. My understanding is that there is the \$77 million joint program with the federal government. I assume that is \$38½ million each, is it? Right. Where does that component of Queensland's contribution appear in the budget papers?

Mr Sly: It is administered funding through the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. We are administering that funding on behalf of the QRA. That is where it will appear, in their budget.

Mr MANDER: Thank you, that is helpful. On the same subject, my understanding is that the \$77 million is broken up into two categories: the Sport and Recreation Recovery Grant program and the Community and Recreational Assets Recovery and Resilience Program.

Mr Sly: Yes.

Mr MANDER: What is the allocation of the \$77 million against those two categories?

Mr Sly: \$45 million through the CRARRP—if that is the right acronym and I will not say how that is spelt out—and then \$32 million through the other fund. We will be working with the QRA to reallocate some of the \$32 million to top up the \$45 million, which is where the CRARRP comes from.

055 **CHAIR:** Some of the funding should have been spent on redoing the acronym! Obviously you saved it for the important stuff!

Mr MANDER: I refer to page 8 of the SDS, which states that the budgeted capital outlay for 2021-22 was \$166 million. Director-General, will you confirm that there was a 26 per cent underspend of this allocated funding at the end of the financial year?

Mr Lee: I am not sure I have the actual percentage. A question on notice had the raw numbers, from memory.

CHAIR: It is fine to confirm those raw numbers.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, question on notice No. 20 refers to the \$43.9 million capital underspend. As this funding is yet to be spent, can you confirm that only \$79.5 million of new appropriation has been allocated for the 2022-23 financial year?

Mr Lee: That is a good question. I will take it on advisement, but I think there were some overspends and underspends within that amount which formed part of the question on notice. Let me ascertain the net number for 2022-23. Before the end of the hearing I will come back to you on that.

Mr MANDER: I want to make sure that you understand my question. Of the \$123 million that is committed for the next financial year, 2022-23, is the \$43 million underspend included in that figure?

Mr Lee: I understand the question. Thank you.

CHAIR: The director-general is going to confirm and get back to us. We have noted that down for follow-up.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, I noticed that there is \$10 million allocated for the Sunshine Coast Stadium this financial year. What is intended with that expenditure of \$10 million?

Mr Lee: Obviously there has been an issue with the Australian government funding. It was a \$20 million commitment, which was part of the question on notice. Until such time as there is a commitment that is matched, it is literally sitting there.

Mr MANDER: Fair enough.

Mr STEVENS: Minister, the Gold Coast has 600,000 people and ran a very successful Commonwealth Games. Can you explain to the Gold Coast people why there is no-one from the Gold Coast involved in planning for the 2032 Olympics? We have the Paralympics but we do not have the Olympics.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: You will find that Ms Rebecca Frizelle is a quite active—

Mr STEVENS: She is with the Paralympics; I said the Olympics.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: No, she is an independent director of the Olympics and Paralympics organising committee. She is not there to only do things to do with the Paralympics. You have a fundamental misunderstanding of what her role is. I think there is a very prominent and very capable Gold Coaster who plays a lead role in the organisation.

Mr TANTARI: Minister, in relation to page 2 of the department's SDS and the reference to leading the \$100 million Attracting Aviation Investment Fund to secure flights and rebuild Queensland's \$6 billion international tourism industry after COVID-19, can you please provide an update on the fund?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I am very pleased to. As a government, we are acutely aware of how important airline route development is in growing aviation capacity—attracting new routes of strategic importance to Queensland and, as a consequence, delivering the economic benefits to regional communities that come through tourism. That is why in February this year the Premier and I, alongside our key aviation partners, stood shoulder to shoulder to announce our partnership with the private sector to deliver \$200 million in funding to secure more international flights for key tourism destinations. As a consequence of that \$100 million committed by the Palaszczuk government and \$100 million committed by our four international airports in Queensland, we have the biggest war chest in the country to attract airlines to land directly here in the Sunshine State.

Our key partners understand that the Palaszczuk government not only listens but also delivers for the tourism industry. This is an issue that had been raised with us. I remember very clearly when I had some industry people saying to me that they were really worried about the \$60 million that Sydney Airport had on the table. We have blown that out of the water. We have really taken that into a nation-leading space. That is why we saw at the time of that announcement leaders such as the then CEO of Queensland Airports Ltd, Chris Mills, saying that the government has listened to the tourism and aviation industries and recognised the importance of supporting the restart of international services. We saw Brisbane Airports Corporation CEO Gert-Jan De Graaff welcome the partnership with the state government, saying the government has delivered for our industry and hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders right across the state who rely on a strong aviation sector.

Today I am very pleased to be able to announce the fourth offer secured under the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund: Jetstar's Narita to Gold Coast, supporting the return and growth from three services per week. This builds on the three previously announced routes supported to date: United Airlines' San Francisco to Brisbane—a completely new route, with three services per week; Scoot's Singapore to the Gold Coast, supporting the return and growth from three services per week; and Air Canada's Vancouver to Brisbane, supporting the return and growth from four services per week. Each of these four routes is estimated to deliver some 267,007 seats precisely, which represents up to \$311 million in overnight visitor expenditure and supporting approximately 1,885 jobs.

My department continues to consider numerous other proposals under the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund and work with airports and airlines on new proposals. The combined \$200 million investment is estimated to deliver in total 5.3 million airline seats per year and generate almost \$4 billion in overnight visitor expenditure. In what is a very highly competitive commercial environment, we as a government are focused on working with airlines, airports, regional tourism organisations, Tourism Australia, the tourism industry and our trade partners to stimulate international aviation and tourism in Queensland. All of our capabilities are aimed at that objective.

Mr TANTARI: Thank you, Minister. That is great news.

CHAIR: One thing I do not have a full understanding of but wanted to ask more about relates to page 2 of the Service Delivery Statements. There is a commitment of around \$66 million in additional funding over four years to implement targeted initiatives for tourism recovery. I refer to the Queensland Music Trails initiative. Is this something you can provide the committee with more information about?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I am very pleased to, Chair. As part of that \$66.4 million announced in the budget to implement tourism recovery initiatives, the Palaszczuk government is investing \$20 million over three years to establish the Queensland Music Trails to drive visitation and grow regional

economies. The music trails will put Queensland on the map as a leader in music tourism, attracting domestic and international visitors to regional destinations with itineraries that link music events and local tourism, art and cultural experiences with established calendar fixtures.

Our state has an abundance of destinations and stunning landscapes that can set the scene for incredible live music events. Delivered by the Queensland Music Festival, a known and capable group, the Music Trails will include 16 events in 2023 held across four regions—the Far North, the northern, the outback and the south-east regions. When the Premier and I recently announced the funding for Queensland Music Trails, the CEO of Queensland Music Festival, Joel Edmondson, said—

This investment will enable artists and arts workers from around the state to make a significant contribution to the evolution of our visitor economy.

Never before have the arts and tourism sectors engaged in such a sophisticated and meaningful collaboration, which is a great example of the way Queenslanders are collaborating on the road to 2032. Events along the Queensland Music Trails will showcase the best our communities have to offer and highlight the diverse range of destination experiences on offer across our vast and diverse state. The first music trail will be held in the outback in May 2023. The first music trail will build on the pilot Outback Music Trail held in 2021. It involved several events across Queensland, including opera at Jimbour Homestead on the Darling Downs, music while stargazing at the Cosmos Centre in Charleville and visual theatre at twilight in Quilpie.

The tourism industry reference panel, which I made reference to earlier, appointed to guide the economic recovery of Queensland's tourism industry identified that Queensland required new and compelling reasons to attract future visitors and called for more homegrown events to feature on our state's events calendar. They want to make sure there is a strong mix of events. We have seen over the last couple of years that there has been a strong sports element to what we have been able to achieve and stand up very quickly. Having a greater mix of arts sector events is important as we rebuild. Equally, we have to acknowledge that prior to the pandemic the arts sector contributed some \$8.5 billion annually and supported more than 92,000 jobs across Queensland. It remains vital to the state's economy and our recovery as we move forward.

The Queensland Music Trails will be a key step towards building Queensland's cultural events calendar to be ready not only for growing that element of our visitor economy but also laying the groundwork for it being part of the way we present ourselves to the world for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Mr TANTARI: With reference to page 1 of the department's SDS and encouraging new industries and using new technology, will the minister provide an update on the exciting SportX strategy?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The SportX: 2032 Sports Economy Strategy will establish a statewide overarching strategic direction for sports technology and sporting innovation in Queensland to grow Queensland expertise in and accelerate and revolutionise sports technology and sporting innovation for the state. I am very pleased to announce that the Palaszczuk government will commence targeted consultation with the sports tech and adjacent industries, key sporting organisations and peak bodies, corporate representatives with sporting connections and venture capital companies that invest in sport, wellness and active living industries.

The SportX strategy aims to grow Queensland's expertise and accelerate and revolutionise sports technology and sporting innovation. The strategy will leverage emerging Queensland strengths in sports science, sport technology and adjacent industry with the ability to support sport tech such as artificial intelligence, gaming and immersive technologies to spur further investment and growth in local research, business and ultimately jobs. The global sports tech market is currently valued at \$17.9 billion but it is estimated to be worth \$40 billion by 2026. We want to have a slice of that. I think we are well positioned to have slice of that.

Some of the big ticket items include things like wearable tech—I know the deputy chair will be across all these things—virtual and augmented reality, sports data analytics, digital signage, smart stadiums and live streaming of events. Queensland is already a genuine world leader in many of these fields. This encourages innovation through work across the portfolio—with Sport and Recreation, the Queensland Academy of Sport and Stadiums Queensland. Along with our innovation hubs, supported by Advance Queensland, it provides the opportunity for those elements to work together and encourage great opportunities.

The SportX strategy will outline the key opportunities for Queensland in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032 relating to how to grow and diversify the sports economy and supercharge sports tech and innovation. The strategy will look at how to establish Queensland as a global powerhouse in sports

tech and innovation, build the skills of people and companies in the new sectors and establish ways that businesses can enjoy the opportunity of this green and gold runway over the decade and beyond. A strategy is being developed to plan ways of creating generational benefits off the back of the major event in 10 years time that we are so excited about.

The 2032 games will provide us with two decades of possibilities, enabling Queensland to revolutionise sports tech and innovation, create jobs and identify opportunities for communities and initiatives. It is also important that we see this in the context of new global trade and investment opportunities. We will see Queensland become a world-leading sports innovation hub. That means that we can be a more attractive destination for visiting teams and athletes to base themselves—and not have them just focused on the things they can do in preparation for the major event in 10 years time but be a destination of choice for development for many years to come. We will see major sporting organisation and professional teams from across the globe wanting to come here and use the capability and facilities we have here and take advantage of our high-quality sports tech.

The more we do in that space the greater the opportunity we have to put more athletes on the medal daises in Paris, LA and then Brisbane. At the same time, we will create a sustainable industry that sits around expert performance for support teams. The opportunity through the SportX strategy for sports tech to be at the core of expanding a wonderful industry that is already well established in Queensland is very exciting.

Mrs McMAHON: With reference to page 2 of the SDS and Stadiums Queensland and its activities, will the minister provide an update on the events held and why it is so important to have a top class field of playing surfaces?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic one of the real opportunities and challenges has been the sheer amount of elite level sport that has been played in the showpiece stadia operated in Queensland by Stadiums Queensland. Combine this with the rainfall levels that we have had, particularly in the south-east corner of the state, and you are faced with what I can only imagine is the stuff of nightmares for grounds staff.

Despite all this, the grounds teams at Cbus Super Stadium, Suncorp Stadium, QSAC and the Queensland Country Bank Stadium continue to deliver sporting surfaces that continue to draw rave reviews from participants across multiple sports. At Cbus Super Stadium, where the grounds team is led by Phillip Burke, they have had to deal with more than 2.2 metres of rain in the year to date. With nine NRL games, a Super Rugby Pacific game and the recent Champions Cup involving the Brisbane Roar and Leeds United, the biggest challenge was making the venue available with 14 hours for two solid days of play for the under 14 and 15s and the under 17 and 18s Queensland schoolboy Rugby League championships after the initial venue was inundated in late May. This is in addition to the usual training load on the field for the hiring team. It is a challenge but I am told that the team are relishing it.

The Wintergreen Couch, sourced from the same turf farm as the old surface at QSAC when the Broncos played there, is oversewn with ryegrass in winter to continue the colour and turf density needed during the football season. With approximately 3,000 square metres of the field in permanent shade for four months of the year, portable LED lights are also used to encourage growth, while reducing power consumption.

In Brisbane at Suncorp Stadium, Malcolm Caddies and his team have maintained a world-class pitch despite being flooded in February and have delivered 35 games so far this year. To have the Strathayr turf ready to play 10 days after almost the entire field was underwater is remarkable. Further challenges, including the 241 millimetres of rain in the lead-up to Magic Round, have truly tested the skills of the dedicated crew there. During eight days earlier this month, while some 169,000-odd patrons enjoyed the Wallabies, Broncos, Maroons and English Premier League teams all playing on the surface in a short period of time, the crew worked tirelessly to keep the field safe including delivering a surface for a football game that both Aston Villa and Leeds United described as world-class.

Again, technology such as grow lights are used from April through to August to compensate for the reduced sunlight. While I am certain the team can claim all the results as their own, I am sure the lights do their share of the hard work, too. I know that the team at Suncorp Stadium are excited to host eight games in the FIFA Women's World Cup next year. I am confident they will deliver a playing surface that will once again perform on the world stage, genuinely.

CHAIR: I had a real interest in this. I was recently watching some eighties Rugby League games.

Mr STEVENS: Did you see the ref?

CHAIR: There is no need to talk about the bad bits! It was amazing to see how cut up the fields were. They could not cope with one team playing on them each week. What is the difference—the lights or fertiliser or irrigation or drainage? What makes the difference?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: There is an amazing array of things that make a difference. The biggest single thing is irrigation. If you compare it to the fields of the seventies—

CHAIR: I thought you were going to say the bad refereeing in the nineties!

Mr HINCHLIFFE: No. I would not dare say such things. I leave that to when I am in North Queensland in reference to referee decisions.

It is certainly the professionalism of these teams. I want to make mention of the grounds manager in Townsville, Bruce Fouracre, and his team and the amazing amount of work that they do. They have had multiple codes of elite sport over the last 12 months including State of Origin, the NRL, Super Rugby, the Matildas and the historic 100th Rugby Union test between South Africa and New Zealand. Who would have thought that would be played in Townsville? They had all of that ready to go. It is because they have the best capability, the best know-how and the best technology.

Drainage is the single biggest thing that makes the difference. The Queensland Country Bank Stadium is the only venue in Queensland that features the specialised ready-to-play turf system. It is a hybrid stitched system that combines natural turf as the playing surface with an underlying mesh of artificial fibres of turf which creates a vertically and horizontally stable pitch, I am told.

Being able to have the locally grown Greenlees Park Couch on top of that system means that you can see NRL games being played there 48 hours after the surface is laid. They can be playing on it straightaway. It is amazing that just in the last week or so the English football legend and now manager of Aston Villa, Steven Gerrard, raved about the facilities in Townsville and said that they were absolutely brilliant for their preseason tour.

CHAIR: You lost me with Steven Gerrard. I am a Celtic supporter, so you lost me there. We are moving on.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, how much money has the Queensland government invested in preparing facilities specifically for the Women's World Cup?

Mr Lee: Next year the Women's World Cup will be held in multiple jurisdictions. Unlike the southernmost state from Queensland that is using multiple venues for the Women's World Cup, we are dedicating the use of Suncorp Stadium for the Women's World Cup. As the minister has just articulated over a three- or four-minute period, there has been an investment in turf and making sure that the field of play will be, as a standard, comparable to many other pitches that international women's football is played upon. There will also be some costs related to the displacement of both the Queensland Reds and the Brisbane Broncos for that period of time that exclusive use will be made available for the Women's World Cup.

In terms of training and practice venues, there are some other investments in that regard. Spencer Park, which is home of the Brisbane City Football Club, and Perry Park, which is home of the Brisbane Strikers Football Club, have been confirmed as official training sites. There are a number of other sites that have also been short-listed.

It is fair to say that, in terms of total projects around football activity overall, there is nearly \$21 million in capital projects for those fields or ovals dedicated to football. Then there has been the subsidisation for pathways in junior football of another \$8.8 million.

On top of the participation component of football, I will literally call the assistant director-general back if we are starting to talk about the women's facilities—the change facilities that was a major investment a couple of years back. If you are wanting a report on that, we can get that for you.

In terms of the actual event, there will be a fan festival that will be staged at South Bank Parklands as well. There is a multitude of activity. During that eight-week period there will be a focus around Suncorp Stadium and the city for the Women's World Cup.

Mr MANDER: My question is to the minister.

CHAIR: Don't ask him about turf!

Mr MANDER: Minister, what legacy does the government plan to leave after this very significant event?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I think the overarching legacy will be around promoting football and promoting women's participation in football. We want to see a promotion of participation in active sport across the board. Events like this help achieve that. I appreciate that there is a strong desire to make sure that we

see football, and women's football in particular, strongly supported. I think the director-general has already made reference to some of the areas where we are making contributions and where we are working with the facilities that are needed to support the event. That obviously delivers legacy outcomes for the game. It is important that we continue to work with our partners in this delivery—not only with FIFA but also with Football Australia and Football Queensland.

Mr MANDER: You talked about an infrastructure legacy with regard to the games. Could you elaborate on that?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The focus in that space is on making sure that we are prepared for the event to be held. There is good work that we have been doing. I met with the Secretary-General of FIFA to discuss the capability of our facilities to support the event. The Secretary-General had a tour of Suncorp Stadium and she was very complimentary of the capability of the facility, as we have heard from others whom I have just spoken about. There is a very strong understanding of how good that facility is for those events.

It is also about making sure that we have the right facilities to support the capability of training venues. Any improvements that happen in relation to those training venues obviously have a legacy well beyond the event itself. The improvements that are made and the support that is provided will deliver for women's participation in football at those venues, and that is a very strong focus.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, you look like you want to tell me something.

Mr Lee: Only that I know the member recently visited the Queensland Academy of Sport and QSAC and met with the CEO. The Matildas have been training at that facility for some time, and the capital expenditure that we have seen in the strength area—in particular the gym—is being utilised by the Matildas and other pathway programs. Our hope is that for women's elite sport in particular—just as with swimming in Australia Queensland is now the destination where all swimmers like Ariarne Titmus, who moved from Tasmania to train at Chandler—there is going to be more of that over the coming years. We hope to see women's Rugby Sevens and other sports move here. The word legacy is used—and I think overused—at times, but I think what high-performance athletes, coaches and sports want is expertise that is going to support them to be world's best, and that is what we are trying to achieve through the academy.

Mr MANDER: Minister, I suppose the best way for me to ask this question is: what do I tell a 16-year-old female soccer player at Mitchelton or the Albany Creek Excelsiors what they will get out of the 2023 World Cup being played in Brisbane?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: What they will get, for a start, is the opportunity to see their heroes firsthand, get a chance to work with them and meet with them. Obviously we will have the Matildas playing in September at Suncorp. There will be five group stage matches including a Matildas match, a round-of-seven match, a quarter final, and the full playoff will be held here at Suncorp Stadium next year. Particularly to those clubs you made mention of I would say that what we need to be doing and where our primary focus will be—as we were discussing earlier in response to the impact of flooding on those particular venues—is on getting those facilities back up to scratch. Anything that we do will be to make sure that those facilities will have universal design, to make sure they are catering for all players equally and that they will be supporting broad participation, including the important growth area of female participation. Getting those facilities—particularly at places like Mitchelton, which I know very well, and ACE at Albany Creek Excelsior—back up to scratch after the terrible impacts of the weather events earlier this year is the first priority. Anything we can do to make sure this global event will provide a focus on female football will be important in that regard as well.

Mr MANDER: We really look forward to our artificial pitch at Mitchie being repaired at some stage in the future. Minister, it has been mooted that cricket and AFL could be moved to the showgrounds while the Gabba is undergoing redevelopment for the Olympics. Has the RNA redevelopment been costed?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for the question. The reality is that, as we know, the Gabba will undergo a significant redevelopment not only for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games but to ultimately provide a state-of-the-art facility for our oval sports here in Queensland. During that time the Gabba is going to be closed and teams like the Brisbane Lions, Brisbane Heat, Queensland Bulls and Cricket Australia will need a venue for their events. A number of options are under consideration for the relocation of AFL and cricket events, including the Brisbane Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association, the RNA Showgrounds.

The relocation of events to the RNA would require a significant investment to accommodate the required field size and suitable seating. My advice is that it would be in the order of \$80 million because it also includes things like facilities upgrades, suitable seating and the installation of required sports

broadcast lighting. While there are a number of options under consideration, Stadiums Queensland is working with the RNA, architects and quantity surveyors to make sure we get a better picture of those costs associated with the option, but that is the figure I understand at this point.

We do need to look at the range of options that are available and make sure they are all considered sensibly, but equally we have to acknowledge and understand that the RNA facilities and whatever costs there might be involved in any changes to those are also part of the Olympic and Paralympic Games project because in the bid documents it is there as the equestrian venue. So if there were to be a change made, they would be things that would deliver for that outcome as well potentially. It is not as simple as saying that anything that would be done would be purely for that displacement issue. I want to reiterate that we will look at every option and engage with all of the stakeholders in working through all of those options. Every option is not necessarily about a relocation of activities from one venue to another venue. It can be about other forms of disbursement and making use of the great variety of fantastic venues and facilities that we have right across the state.

CHAIR: I take it that the Park Ridge Pirates and the Jimboomba Redbacks would be top of the list.

Mr MANDER: Minister, when the costing was done for the Gabba redevelopment were these types of costs such as working out alternatives included in that redevelopment cost, or was that above and beyond that?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: There was an element of displacement that was taken into account in terms of the costing, but let me reiterate that no decision has been made about relocating to the RNA and there is no funding allocated for that.

Mr MANDER: They have to go somewhere.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Yes, but certainly a displacement cost, based upon experience from the past, was taken into account in the costing of the Gabba proposal.

Mr MANDER: My question is to the minister. Minister, I refer to question on notice 20 where there is a list of actuals versus budgeted comparisons. I note there were two significant underspends last financial year. Referring to local community sporting infrastructure, there is an underspend of \$13.5 million and then another fund called the Community Sport Infrastructure Program is underspent by \$7.8 million, so that is over \$20 million. Can you explain that underspending?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: They do relate to election commitments and the funding provided to deliver on election commitments. While I can advise that the projects have been approved and announced, I understand that—and this is in relation to the sport infrastructure program—that payments will be made in accordance with the executed grants deed. The issue is that they have not necessarily been delivered upon. That is for a variety of reasons, but as you can appreciate in this space a number of them have been around the supply of materials and the capability of projects being delivered. Some of those relate to projects where potentially the budget allocated has not necessarily met what has been required for the project to be delivered. While I made mention of a number of these being in relation to election commitments, they are election commitments that in a budgetary sense have been loaded in the first year of a four-year cycle. The expectation was not necessarily that we would see them all delivered in that first year. There are four years in which to deliver them. I have been regularly advised that the biggest challenge is in terms of whether the funds available cover the projects and the supply of things like lighting and things like that.

Mr MANDER: Minister, what I am hearing is that the majority of that underspend is committed funding that has not yet been spent because of whatever reasons. That brings a lot of relevance back to that question I asked you earlier, Director-General. Do you have a response to that yet?

Mr Lee: I do not have it at this stage but I will have it before the end of the hearing.

Mr MANDER: Thank you.

Mr O'CONNOR: Director-General, as the minister confirmed earlier, Advance Queensland's funding was \$755 million since 2015 and yesterday's announcement about the next phase was \$142 million over the next three years. At a rough calculation, does that show that innovation funding has gone from an average of \$100 million a year to not even \$50 million a year?

Mr Lee: If we go to the actuals for the financial year 2021-22, there was a budget of \$62.6 million, so it was not \$100 million in that year. The actual expenditure was \$41.7 million. For the budget year just coming up, 2022-23, it is \$41.9 million plus the additional \$35 million of the \$100 million that has been profiled in year 1—

Mr O'CONNOR: So the \$755 million—

Mr Lee: If I could just finish the answer—

CHAIR: Order! The director-general is being responsive to the question. Let us do this properly.

Mr Lee: So the budget of 2021-22 is \$62.6 million. You will see that number on page 6 of the SDS. If we include the announced funding yesterday, that will be \$41.9 million plus \$35 million which will give us \$76.9 million, which is an additional amount of just over \$14.3 million from one year to this year.

Mr O'CONNOR: So the \$755 million that we have heard was spent since 2015 for Advance Queensland is still going?

Mr Lee: Well, that was up until the year 2021-22 and now there is additional funding coming through—committed funding.

Mr O'CONNOR: And the additional funding is the \$142 million. I do not know if the director-general has a calculator, but if you average \$755 million over seven years it is an average of over \$100 million per year, and the new funding is an average of less than \$50 million a year.

Mr Lee: It depends what is in and out of that amount. If you look at the amount literally announced in this year's budget, you actually get a number of \$370.7 million—this is on page 2 of the time to shine document—and it includes: \$125 million for the innovation economy, \$17 million for science and industry, another \$68 million in the resources industry where they are looking at innovation techniques, another \$140 million in another one of our strength sectors of agriculture and fisheries, plus \$50 million in advanced manufacturing. That gets you \$370.7 million for this financial year.

Mr O'CONNOR: Director-General, that is pulling from across government though. That is not Advance Queensland specifically.

Mr Lee: And that has been the case since Advance Queensland started in 2015. The reason I went back to the numbers of budget and actual of 2021-22 was to give a like-for-like comparison. If you are giving a comparison of the \$750-odd million, we have to then include all the other sectors that have innovation activities as part of their remit.

Mr O'CONNOR: Minister, in the joint statement issued by you and the Premier yesterday, the Premier said—

We have to continue to innovate and grow and to capitalise on the success of Advance Queensland initiatives to accelerate economic growth opportunities for Queensland in the lead up to Brisbane 2032.

If this is the case, why would you cut funding by so much at this important time?

CHAIR: Hold on. We have just heard that that is not correct, but I will give the minister the opportunity. Once we get new information, we cannot just read the same questions. I call the minister.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for giving me the chance to clarify this again. This is not representing a cut. This is genuinely seeing the building on the momentum created by the Advance Queensland initiative. It is one of the signature initiatives of the Palaszczuk government and of the Premier herself, and that is why it is very much a whole-of-government activity. Since 2015, the government has invested, as I have said, some \$755 million through Advance Queensland and importantly—and I will reiterate it again—leveraged in turn close to \$1 billion in industry partner investment. We have seen what that has done in terms of 27,000-plus jobs being created in the state.

This next phase is around taking that further. Yesterday's announcement was specifically around the programs that are run to leverage up and support that innovation sector. There is \$142.3 million over three years to drive future innovation in Queensland. If you go back and look at that \$755 million, it was not announced all in one lump and there was no averaging done at the time over the last seven years. It has been done in different lumps at different points and different focus. This is one stage. This is the stage we are at now.

You have to take the time to look at the road map, as the director-general pointed out. The document outlines that the 2022-23 state budget for innovation funding also includes \$68.5 million for resources industry development, \$140 million for agriculture and fisheries and \$50 million for advanced manufacturing. They were not separate parts of what we are doing now. We are seeing innovation and Advance Queensland embedding itself as a philosophy throughout the whole of government. We will see more about that in the near future.

This totals more than \$400 million in just those ones I have mentioned in 2022-23 for innovation programs across government, with, as the Premier said yesterday, more to come. In addition to our innovation road map links to the \$3.34 billion Queensland Jobs Fund I mentioned earlier to grow more good, secure jobs and attract more innovation investment, this is part of how we are using Advance Queensland to continue to build the state's innovation ecosystem and innovation capacity. In the next

stage of Advance Queensland, it is genuinely our time to shine. That innovation is going to come in many forms—not just in the ones that might be sitting under the programs and part of that announcement yesterday but more broadly across the state.

Mr O'CONNOR: Director-General, the \$100 million announced yesterday was specifically administered by this department. That will be for the next phase of Advance Queensland administered by this department?

Mr Lee: With ourselves and DES, because a lot of it is around research.

Mr O'CONNOR: The DES was the \$17 million separate. Director-General, how much of the \$755 million for Advance Queensland was administered by the innovation department? I am trying to compare like for like.

Mr Lee: That number is \$320.5 million. This was at March this year from the AQ budget. In terms of a more detailed breakdown, \$270 million had been expended, and then we have another \$31 million that has been contracted and committed. I could give an analogy that would make the minister laugh—there is a difference between being involved and being committed—but I might save that until the end of the hearing. It has to do with bacon and eggs but I will not bore you, unless I have the indulgence of the chair.

CHAIR: No.

Mr O'CONNOR: Was that \$260 million expended?

Mr Lee: So \$320.5 million was the total budget number. Of that, \$275 million has already been expended. There is another \$35 million that is contractually committed and there are milestones that will form part of that, then reconciliation and payment. Then there is a further \$5.6 million. They are part of what we call pipeline commitments, so we have agreed to it but we do not have a hard contract with those. That will bring the total financial commitment to close to \$331.5 million of the previously announced \$320 million. It is called 97 per cent committed.

CHAIR: We are moving now to government questions. Minister, when it comes to the funding for Advance Queensland and the ability to generate economic growth and job creation through that innovation, there might be different departments that are better to administer those particular funds, and in some cases it is going to be your department, but all are part of the Advance Queensland agenda, generating innovation and jobs. Would that be fair to say?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Absolutely. That is why we saw importantly the role which the chief entrepreneur is playing with the Innovation Advisory Council as being an adviser to the whole of government and working with all of government and a range of agencies in this space. That is very much how we see it.

CHAIR: Anyone looking at that particular one figure would not have a proper understanding of the Advance Queensland agenda?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: That is a good characterisation and one that I am sure the committee will take into account. It is extraordinary to have members of the opposition trying to draw this line when it is clear that the former Newman government slashed \$50 million—there is no question about this—from the innovation budget and \$20 million taken out of the Smart State grants. There is a recording and understanding of cuts there. This is not cuts. This is continuation. This is taking this extraordinarily important program around diversifying the state's economy further, and a program that is, as I say, a signature program of the Palaszczuk government and one that we are, the whole of government across all the portfolios, very proud of.

CHAIR: Referencing page 2 of the department's Service Delivery Statements and the commitment to support Stadiums Queensland, will the minister provide the committee with an update for the funding for Stadiums Queensland and the fantastic things that they do?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I promise not to mention grass. The 2022-23 state budget does provide some \$254.2 million over four years to support Stadiums Queensland's operations and the capital activities that continue to operate and maintain the state's portfolio of major sporting stadiums, high-performance and community venues to an absolute contemporary standard, importantly in the lead-up to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This does include \$186.1 million over four years for Stadiums Queensland's day-to-day operations and ongoing maintenance expenses, which may or may not include maintenance of grass, but I will not mention that—I said I would not—and \$68.1 million to maintain its assets. Stadiums Queensland owns 10 venues throughout the state which host world-class events and provide high-performance facilities for the people of Queensland, including Suncorp Stadium, the Gabba, Queensland Country Bank Stadium in Townsville and Cbus Super Stadium on the Gold Coast, just to name a small number.

In 2020-21, Stadiums Queensland venues hosted nearly 3.2 million patrons across all of its venues in an extraordinary effort during a time disrupted by the COVID-19 restrictions and greater than 2019-20 where we saw some 2,653,906 patrons being hosted. The \$254.2 million funding in this year's budget will help upgrade and maintain Stadiums Queensland's \$2.9 billion worth of assets. The funding for operating expenses will assist with maintenance, insurance, property costs and subsidising operating costs for community use and high-performance facilities. It is important that not all the facilities here are the ones that are having the high-level elite sport paying for them, so it is important that we support those other facilities as well.

Mr TANTARI: Minister, in relation to page 1 of the department's SDS and the reference to driving the return and growth of a sustainable and competitive tourism industry, can you provide an update to the committee on Best of Queensland Experiences Program?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: As the Queensland tourism minister, I am pleased to update the committee on how the Palaszczuk government is assisting tourism operators across the state through that nation-leading Best of Queensland Experiences Program by working with them to ensure that they are competitive on a global scale and ensuring that consumer expectations are being exceeded—not just met, but exceeded. We know in tourism—and you know very well in your part of the world, member for Hervey Bay—that word of mouth continues to be the most influential factor on consumer travel decisions. The rise of online review platforms has amplified that influence. That is why the Best of Queensland Experiences Program encourages tourism operators to exceed consumer expectations and deliver exceptional transformational experiences, ensuring that every visitor leaves as an advocate for Queensland.

The Best of Queensland Experiences Program identifies exceptional experiences across the state by assessing tourism products against a set of criteria that reflect consumer expectations and represent best practice in industry standards. Since the program's inception in 2019, we have seen significant growth with an increase of 70 per cent of businesses now qualifying as Best of Queensland. I am pleased to announce that in 2022, we now have 2,225 tourism products identified as Best of Queensland Experiences. In 2022, 1,400 new experiences were assessed under the program compared to 2021.

Best of Queensland operators include The Point Coolom on the Sunshine Coast in the seat of Ninderry—I am sure the member for Ninderry would appreciate that; Spirits of the Red Sand in Beenleigh in the electorate of Macalister—I know Mrs McMahon is pleased to hear that; Whalesong Cruises Hervey Bay, a whale watching experience that I know the member for Hervey Bay does speak highly of; Putt Putt Golf Mermaid Beach—I am sure the member for Mermaid Beach has enjoyed a few rounds of putt putt.

Mr STEVENS: I have, as a matter of fact. It is an icon.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: We should putt putt everywhere. It is the best thing to do. We also see many great, other broader experiences some of which are not too far up the road for Mr O'Connor.

Mr O'CONNOR: Do you have one in mind?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Dreamworld and WhiteWater World—I know it is not quite in your patch, but you would be a regular visitor there, I am sure. Tourism operators in the Far North—I know my assistant minister will be pleased to hear this—including Wildlife Habitat, Sunlover Reef Cruises and Daintree Safaris, have all qualified as well. In the Whitsundays: not exclusively but including Cumberland Charter Yachts, Elysian Island Retreat and Red Cat Adventures. We know that the increase of new experiences assessed has been driven by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse, with the membership fees being waived by the Palaszczuk government because that was an essential part of being part of this program. Campaign activities such as Holiday Dollars and the Great Queensland Getaway encouraged tourism businesses to have that Australian Tourism Data Warehouse listing in in order to participate.

The industry response to the Best of Queensland Experiences Program has been extremely positive and we are seeing tourism operators actively taking steps to deliver that improved visitor experience because of the program and the consumer insight reports that they receive. The program is delivered by TEQ in partnership with the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport, with the regional tourism organisations and with Queensland Tourism Industry Council. It is a great example of the whole of the industry collaborating to deliver something that genuinely supports industry. I encourage all of you, when you are looking for your next holiday experience, to make sure you keep an eye out for that badging.

CHAIR: Minister, referencing page 1 of the department's Service Delivery Statements and with reference to really quality sport infrastructure—you know I am especially interested in the growing areas that do not have a lot of sports facilities—will the minister outline some of the priority infrastructure projects?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: The 2022-23 budget does include funding for some key sport priority infrastructure projects, including things like lights at Barlow Park in Cairns, the expansion of Hibiscus Stadium in Upper Mount Gravatt, lights at both Rochedale State High School and Mount Gravatt East State School, and funding for the Park Ridge Pirates in Logan. I know the chair has been a great advocate for that.

In relation to Barlow Park, the first stage of the 2032 Olympic Games upgrade—because it will be a football preliminaries venue for the 2032 Olympic Games—will include broadcast TV lighting. There is a \$4 million commitment to deliver that as early as possible in order to deliver the other benefits for major events in the lead-up to the games. A multi-million dollar enhancement of Barlow Park is proposed in the longer term to create a 5,000-seat legacy venue for community sport, but that \$4 million to deliver the TV broadcast standard lighting upgrades is the first step. These lighting upgrades will enable the city to host major Rugby League, Rugby Union, football and athletics sporting events during those shorter winter days in the Far North when the weather is cooler for both participants and fans. That new LED lighting will help put Cairns and Barlow Park very firmly on the NRL's radar for quality night-time premiership games. When we announced that, you would have seen that NRL CEO Andrew Abdo said—

The planned upgrades, which include broadcast quality lights, will help Cairns secure more rugby league matches in the future ...

It's a great time for rugby league in the Far North, with the future looking strong thanks to the support of the Queensland Government.

In 2020 the member for Mansfield made a public pledge in the lead-up to the election to fund 33 per cent of the Hibiscus stadium development proposal located in Upper Mount Gravatt and servicing a lot of people on the south side. Funding in this year's budget supports expansion of the existing four multipurpose playing courts with an additional four new courts and the ability to turn one of those into a show court with retractable seating for up to 2,000 seats. There is currently a significant undersupply of indoor multipurpose playing courts in South-East Queensland and in Brisbane specifically. That is why the Queensland government is committing the \$8 million to this project.

There is also funding, as I mentioned earlier, in this year's budget to help meet the 2020 election commitments to light school ovals in the Mansfield electorate. Due to budget constraints, only six of the eight schools were progressed as part of the initial scope, but the Queensland government has committed a further \$507,773 and \$423,772 respectively in this year's budget to enable the final two schools, Rochedale State High School and Mount Gravatt East State School, to also receive that sports lighting which will help encourage and support use of those assets by community sporting organisations, which is something we need to do more of across the state.

I know that you have been hanging out for this one. This year's budget also provides funding of up to \$200,000 to help build much needed new amenities for the Park Ridge Pirates. The team was established in 2009, as you say, in a growing area of our broader city and now fields senior teams in addition to junior squads for both girls and boys. I know that you, Chair, will be very pleased to hear that the Pirates will have the support to see those new amenities built and support the growing access to sport in your part of the world.

CHAIR: It would be great, Minister, to have you out to hoist the colours, as we say at the Park Ridge Pirates.

Mrs McMAHON: Minister, I refer to page 5 of the SDS and the Queensland Academy of Sport's 2032 high-performance strategy Inspiring Extraordinary Sporting Success. Will the minister provide an update on the strategy?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I really appreciate the question. It is a pleasure to inform the committee that as part of this year's state budget we are providing a further \$31.37 million to the Queensland Academy of Sport to continue its support of elite athletes to prepare them for the world stage. This commitment will support elite sport in the state through to Paris 2024, aligning with this government's strategy to improve and support elite sporting performance in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032. This funding is part of an additional \$60 million over four years that the Queensland government has committed to support the growth of sporting success for Queensland and Australia.

This investment is key to improving on the success Queensland achieved at the Tokyo Olympics last year: 13 gold, four silver and 11 bronze. Just a reminder: if we were a country, we would have been seventh on the gold medal tally—above France, Germany and Italy, not that I am proposing any secession. We are pulling our weight in terms of Australian performance. If we recall, this was all occurring just 12 months ago in Tokyo. The reality is that complacency is the enemy of excellence and we have to continue to improve if we want to remain internationally competitive.

That success that we saw in Tokyo last year is the product of the blood, sweat and tears of our athletes but also all the backup and support behind them—the expert support teams, the coaching, the facilities and, in fact, the ambition that all of that inspires. This is what the Queensland Academy of Sport does and it does it very well.

Other achievements to date under the high-performance strategy include the onboarding of 61 new practitioners including medical practitioners, dietitians, physiotherapists and psychologists. More than 80 per cent have been to Olympic or Commonwealth games, world championships or key international events and worked at the highest level in professional sports.

We have seen upgrades to facilities supporting over 450 athletes across 20 different Olympic and Paralympic sports including the additional elite training facilities at the Sleeman Sports Complex, a new BMX training facility on the Gold Coast and a new National Throws Centre of Excellence under construction at the Queensland Sports and Athletics Centre, QSAC. We have also seen the largest ever statewide search for Queensland's future Olympians and Paralympians, Youfor2032, with the goal of testing up to 20,000 aspiring athletes throughout this year and next with the ultimate ambition of approximately 400 athletes being given further support.

The establishment of the Athlete Advisory Group by the Queensland Academy of Sport to represent the athlete voice and discuss relevant issues affecting athletes has also been an important step forward, as well as the delivery of the Generation 2032 coach program—you cannot just develop the athletes; we have to develop the coaches as well—with 11 Queensland coaches, nine of them females selected in cohort 1. These are just a few of the many achievements by the Queensland Academy of Sport under the 2032 high-performance sports strategy, delivering that vision of inspiring extraordinary sporting success. I know that we will have many more good things to report, particularly over the coming week as we see the Commonwealth Games kicking off in Birmingham.

CHAIR: I am especially excited for my local athletes.

Mr MANDER: Minister, I want to go back to the question that the director-general took on notice. I assume we still do not have a reply to that.

Mr Lee: It depends which question.

Mr MANDER: The one about the \$40-odd million—

Mr Lee: I do have an answer.

Mr MANDER: It would be great if we could have that response.

Mr Lee: Regarding the overspend/underspend from question on notice 20 around the \$123 million next financial year, the answer with regard to the underspend—is it included in that figure? Yes. I could give you a breakdown on the difference between those capital grants and capital purchases. Would you like an itemised breakdown of those figures?

Mr MANDER: I think I have that already on question on notice 20, so I do not think I really need that.

Mr Lee: They are historical; they do not mention the new capital grants, which is part of the sum. If you are happy with that answer, I am happy.

Mr MANDER: I am happy, and I have a follow-up question. Minister, this is the way I read this. The department committed \$166 million for capital outlays for a budget last year. You delivered \$122 million, which we have already said was a 26 per cent decrease. We now go to the 2022-23 financial year of \$123 million, but we know that that includes approximately \$40 million from the budget for this year, so the new appropriation of expenditure this year for capital outlays is really only \$80 million. That is at least a 45 per cent decrease on what you expected to spend this year. How can you justify that cut when we are on the road to the Olympics and with the damages and costs associated with the flood damage issue at community sporting organisations?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: As was made clear by some answers to questions earlier, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority funding is completely separate and not allocated into that space at all, so bringing some of those issues into it is completely off the ball. I want to note and acknowledge the key

role that we will be playing. The budget sits with the education department, but the \$100 million program to support Olympic and Paralympic facilities and sporting facilities at schools which will be made available to the broader community as well that was announced in the budget is something that my department and my agencies will be working very closely with education on. That is part of how we are seeing that delivering and supporting what we are doing.

There are a range of ways in which we are supporting and seeing the delivery on sporting infrastructure right across the state, but it is vitally important that we have to do this in a way that sees it delivered, and that has been part of the challenge of recent times not only as a consequence of impacts of the pandemic where the priority has gone to restarting sport, as we have discussed on previous occasions, rather than into new infrastructure projects but also at a time when we see supplies being a challenge. Wanting to be clear, if you look at the budget papers, the Capital Statement and at Budget Paper No. 3, it is clear that the total capital grants that are budgeted for are a figure of \$105.1 million.

Mr O'CONNOR: Director-General, on 27 March 2019 the former minister for innovation and tourism announced a state-of-the-art research facility at Dreamworld, the future lab, which the government was providing \$2.7 million towards. What is the progress of this project?

Mr Lee: Thank you for the question. Again, I do not have the specific answer. I was not the director-general in 2019 and nor was, I think, our minister the minister, so we would have to undertake to find out some more information and get back to the member on that basis.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am happy for you to take that on notice.

CHAIR: I have not heard any indications to take it on notice.

Mr Lee: We will make best endeavours before nine o'clock. The clock is ticking.

CHAIR: The undertaking from the director-general is that they would get back to you with more information if they could go back to that period.

Mr O'CONNOR: Director-General, again with regard to the \$331.5 million expended or allocated from your department towards Advance Queensland, can I get a breakdown by year of that funding?

CHAIR: Is this the funding going backwards?

Mr O'CONNOR: Yes, the portion of Advance Queensland funded by your department. Can I get a funding—

Mr Lee: In 2015 the global number you were talking about before?

Mr O'CONNOR: Yes, that was the figure that you quoted—that is, of the \$755 million, only \$330 million was from your department.

Mr Lee: I do not have that breakdown, Chair.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am happy for you to take that on notice too, if you are happy to.

Mr Lee: I am not sure to what extent our resources will go back six years. I am more than happy to look at the last financial year if that would satisfy the member.

CHAIR: For the most part the committee, as I read out at the beginning, is interested in that the question is that the proposed expenditure going forward over the forward four years be agreed to.

Mr O'CONNOR: Part of it is ongoing expenditure, Chair. It is just trying to get an understanding of it. The \$755 million for Advance Queensland is mentioned.

CHAIR: Order! My understanding of the question was that it was about the expenditure that had been up to this point, not the continued expenditure that is new, so that is not actually correct in terms of what you had said to the director-general. Nonetheless, the director-general has undertaken to get back in the time frame what information he can get back to you.

Mr Lee: Thank you, Chair. If I can refer to my previous answer where I gave a breakdown, I think we did have a lighthearted moment talking about being involved or committed and I talked about \$120 million of the \$750 million was contracted, so there is still a remainder of that still to be spent and I am happy to take that on that basis to get a breakdown of those figures.

CHAIR: Thanks very much. Is there any other question?

Mr O'CONNOR: Yes. Specifically, I was wondering about the portion expended by your department on the Advance Queensland program that you were talking about.

Mr Lee: Of the \$129 million?

Mr O'CONNOR: Yes.

CHAIR: Member for Bonney, we understood the question.

Mr O'CONNOR: So we cannot get the breakdown? Is that—

CHAIR: No. The director-general has made an undertaking to try and get back to you.

Mr O'CONNOR: Director-General, what parameters are there around classifying whether funding falls under Advance Queensland? Is it just whatever your department determines it to be? We found out earlier that less than half of the \$755 million is actually from your department, so is it just whatever you want to classify as Advance Queensland becomes Advance Queensland funding? Could you one day look at the health budget and say, 'There's a lot of innovative stuff going on in hospitals. We're now spending this many billions under Advance Queensland'? What are the parameters around that?

CHAIR: Order, member for Bonney! You have put the question. Give the opportunity for the director-general to answer, not for you to make a speech about it.

Mr Lee: Yes, thank you for the question. In terms of our department, we meet with other departments and the centrals to have a discussion about where that allocation might be because it is the nature of the work. For example, if it is innovation in the hydrogen space it would be appropriate that it sits then with resources; it does not sit with us. There is a collaboration between the central agencies and ourselves about what is attributed or what is broken down between the departments. It is not like the vibe of the Constitution; it is something that is worked through in a departmental sense through the process.

Mr O'CONNOR: So there are no set guidelines; it is just what you figure out with other departments what you want to call Advance Queensland?

CHAIR: Order! This is now attempting to ask exactly the same question which has been asked and answered, but I am sure the director-general can give exactly the same answer once again and use the time in that way. Director-General.

Mr Lee: Thank you. In terms of the process, to give you the terminology, there is a steering committee that works across government, including participation of the central agencies—that is, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Treasury—where that delineation, if you like, or the categorisation occurs.

CHAIR: I apologise; there was more. I apologise.

Mr O'CONNOR: Thank you, Chair. Director-General, again in prehearing question on notice No. 18 there was mention of a review into Advance Queensland conducted by the Nous Group. Director-General, how much did this review cost and can you table it so the public can know what it found?

Mr Lee: I am just trying to find a precise answer to the question.

CHAIR: That is all right.

Mr Lee: We might find it within 10 minutes, Chair, but thank you for the question.

Mr O'CONNOR: That is fine.

CHAIR: So we have another one to take on notice? We might need to return to that in reasonably quick time.

Mr O'CONNOR: Chair, so is that we are parking questions on the review until we get more detail or can I ask more about the review generally? Is there someone able to answer that?

CHAIR: It depends. If it is something specific it might be difficult to ask, but it is up to you to make that judgement, member for Bonney. If you have run out we could—

Mr O'CONNOR: No. I am just trying to wait to see if we get more on the review.

CHAIR: I understand.

Mr O'CONNOR: Minister, last estimates when I asked about a review you said that it had been completed and it recommended the creation of the advisory council. The prehearing question on notice says that the review did not report back to you until January, seven months later. So, Minister, can you explain that discrepancy?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Really, the concept of the review was that the review had many facets to it and one of the things was engagement by the department and with stakeholders, and that was what I was specifically referring to in terms of the review last year, but this was further data. This piece of work

done independently and done externally was further about informing decisions about how we took the program going forward and that did inform the decisions that were made that resulted in the road map that was released yesterday.

Mr O'CONNOR: Minister, noting that the DG is following up on the review, will you commit to tabling it publicly or releasing it publicly?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I am more than happy to review those documents to make sure that they are appropriate to be made public. Sometimes these reviews involve questions from a range of stakeholders who, if they knew their document was going to be made public, might not have been as open as they were going to be, but the general principle is yes.

Mr O'CONNOR: Director-General, does the state government own the precinct in Fortitude Valley?

Mr Lee: This department does not, but I understand that the landlord is EDQ. No, sorry, pardon me. We get the lease through Public Works through EDQ. No, it is privately owned, the precinct.

Mr O'CONNOR: How much is being paid each year to the private landlord in rent?

Mr Lee: I think you should direct that question to the appropriate department.

CHAIR: That might be something you get someone to address to Public Works.

Mr O'CONNOR: Was it EDQ or Public Works?

Mr Lee: Sorry, it is Public Works.

Mr O'CONNOR: They manage your lease for you?

Mr Lee: Correct.

Mr O'CONNOR: Do we have more on the review yet?

CHAIR: Member for Bonney, we could go to our questions. We certainly have need to have extra time for the government.

Mr O'CONNOR: We have quite a few questions, so I am happy to go to your side for a bit.

CHAIR: On page 2 of the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport's Service Delivery Statements there is a reference to \$66 million in additional funding over four years to implement targeted initiatives for tourism recovery. As part of that, will the minister provide an update on Pajinka?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Thank you very much for the question. As we have mentioned a few times here tonight, that \$66.4 million in the state budget is about delivering on a range of projects that provide that support for the recovery of the tourism industry. There is \$2 million out of that package going to support the traditional owners of Pajinka on the tip of Cape York Peninsula to benefit from tourists visiting their traditional land. Pajinka, at the northernmost point of the Australian continent, attracts up to 40,000 visitors a year. These are mostly self-drive tourists traversing Cape York to reach what for many is something on the bucket list—that end point, visiting the tip, as they often call it.

The traditional owners, the Gudang Yadhaykenu Aboriginal Corporation, or GYAC for short, are keen to develop a local tourism economy, providing jobs and opportunities for their people. We are really pleased to support GYAC in making their vision a reality. That \$2 million in funding will enhance the current site for visitation including, importantly, the establishment of a self-sufficient campsite with a car park and a boardwalk as well as cleaning up the grounds around the former Pajinka Wilderness Lodge that shut down its operations in 2002 after fire damaged the buildings there. It will also support GYAC to develop and manage an operational tourism business, empowering them to offer experiences into the future with local people telling their stories about their country to visitors and providing a real important context to their connection to the land. For visitors to Pajinka that is obviously going to really enrich the experience.

I really want to thank and acknowledge Assistant Minister Healy for his advocacy on this issue and the work he has done. He visited Pajinka in September last year and heard firsthand from those traditional owners about the need to clean up the site for tourists and their desire to offer better camping facilities and better tourism products. First Nations tourism offerings are essential to attracting visitors to Queensland so we can grow our tourism industry and create more jobs in our regions, and this is just another example of what we are doing. It is all part of how we are supporting First Nations tourism and supporting an opportunity to clean up that particular iconic location.

CHAIR: I might turn now to the member for Hervey Bay. After that we might try to answer some of the other questions.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: We are probably ready.

CHAIR: I have an obligation to the member for Hervey Bay. He has an important question.

Mr TANTARI: And I would not be biased at all. With reference to page 2 of the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport's Service Delivery Statements and the commitment of \$66.4 million of additional funding over four years to implement targeted initiatives for tourism recovery, will the minister provide an update on the current Hervey Bay whale-watching season?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I would be pleased to. I know that Mr Tantari is very pleased to know about this because he is a passionate advocate in relation to whale watching and the role it plays in our tourism economy. Your electorate is able to claim the status of having Australia's first whale-watching boat tours, which started in 1987, and more recently becoming the world's first certified Whale Heritage Site in October 2019.

I recently had the opportunity to visit the Fraser Coast and launch the whale-watching season, and I thank you for the invitation for me to be part of that. When I was at Urangan Harbour to launch the whale-watching season, I was fortunate enough to meet some of the members of the Pacific Whale Research Foundation, and they told me that the Fraser Coast region is one of the, if not the, best place in the world to experience whale watching, and they gave a very good context and explanation of the reasons and the role that K'gari and Hervey Bay play in that.

As tourism minister I am pleased to report that Queensland's whale-watching season is now in full swing, with humpback numbers growing by 10 per cent. The season is expected to be the biggest yet. Prior to the pandemic we saw an average of 103,000 domestic visitors that went whale watching annually in Queensland. These visitors fill accommodation, dine locally, support the other attractions and support the local economy. Hervey Bay is a whale-watching experience enjoyed by more than 25,000 visitors annually. We are seeing that grow in so many different ways, and it is pleasing to hear from the local whale-watching tourism operators about how they are starting to receive bookings from international visitors again. That was so great to hear most recently. With more than 40,000 humpback whales expected to visit Queensland's coastline during that annual 5,000-kilometre migration, it is no doubt that this unique ecotourism experience is going to be high on the agenda for people as we go forward.

CHAIR: You knew there was no surprise, if the member for Hervey Bay was determined to ask a tourism question, what it would be? Director-General?

Mr Lee: From humpbacks to answer-backs. I have a series of answers I will try to deal with in a chronological manner. The first question was from the Leader of the Opposition and it related to the Mowbray North section. He mentioned that \$3.8 million had been allocated but only \$1.6 million provided this year and asked whether that was enough funding to complete the works between the bridge and Port Douglas. The more fulsome answer is: the requirements to build the Mowbray River pedestrian bridge to withstand local environmental conditions in accordance with DTMR's standards and increased infrastructure requirements, which has been the preference of Douglas Shire Council, will necessitate the reallocation of additional project funds from the total project budget. This will be subject to approvals and confirmation of scope by Douglas Shire Council itself. The second part to that question was: will the access to the twin bridges be restored as part of the project in relation to mountain bike access? The answer is: improvements to restore the twin bridge trails are currently under design consideration for the Wangetti North section of the project.

There was another question relating to the Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund regarding the \$1.8 million in the budget for this financial year. Then it talked about the Tourism Industry Reference Group wanting or seeking an additional \$50 million and asked if I could shed some light on that. The \$1.8 million relates to the growing tourism infrastructure budget that was deferred from last year, so it was a carry-forward for the completion of those funded projects, and the Tourism Industry Reference Panel did recommend an injection of \$50 million into the Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund to enable critical tourism infrastructure investment. This is a recommendation of the panel and it will be considered as part of the government's full response later this year, along with all the panel's recommendations regarding the final action plan at that time.

The member for Everton asked some questions regarding the funding figure actuals from the Sport and Recreation Disaster Recovery Program. Just as a point of clarification, to date 379 organisations have been approved for funding in the Sport and Recreation Disaster Recovery Program totalling \$1.175 million. The Sport and Recreation Recovery Grant provided funding of up to \$20,000 for not-for-profit sport and recreation organisations impacted by the South-East Queensland rainfall and flooding event from 20 February to 7 March 2022 to re-establish activities. Clubs and

councils in the 37 areas activated under the Queensland Reconstruction Authority's Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements can apply for funding under the Community and Recreational Asset Recovery and Resilience Program, which had an interesting acronym, CRARRP, through an expression of interest. There have been 195 EOIs from across 20 LGAs at a cost of \$132.6 million.

I did get a bit excited in one of my answers regarding the displacement of professional sporting teams. Even though at times I am accused of having favouritism towards Rugby League, I did mention the Queensland Reds being displaced but their season has actually been brought forward so they will not be displaced as part of the World Cup. It was the Young Matildas and the Future Matildas who are at QSAC.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: There was a question asked of the director-general around the Dreamworld Future Lab. I can clarify that in 2019 the Queensland government committed funding under the Advance Queensland: Connecting with Asia initiative to support the development of the Dreamworld Future Lab and keep the Gold Coast front of mind for prospective tourists, particularly international visitors from key Asian markets. In the context of the pandemic—

CHAIR: What happened in 2020?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: In early 2020 Dreamworld requested that the project be placed on hold while it focused its future investment activities on new rides and attractions. At that time the Queensland government launched the \$25 million Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund to help the tourism industry accelerate its recovery from COVID-19. Under that fund we saw Dreamworld seeking assistance for the support and construction of a new multilaunch roller-coaster ride. In view of the Future Lab project being placed on hold, the Queensland government approved that the funding previously approved for the research facility be repurposed to support the construction of the new ride, taking into consideration the immediate impacts of the pandemic and the appeal of new tourism offers likely to attract returning domestic visitors and international tourists when borders reopened. I am pleased to advise that where that ended up was in the newest attraction, the Steel Taipan, which opened in December 2021.

Mr O'CONNOR: So the koala lab funding went to a roller-coaster?

Mr Lee: Based on a request from Dreamworld. I have two other quick answers for the member for Bonney. The Nous Group were paid a total of \$375,000 for their work. It is the intention for these independent evaluations to be published so there are no restrictions on that publication. On your question around lease payments, in terms of total lease payments it is approximately \$3 million for the precinct. That is 88,000 square metres, some of which is then sublet with revenues being received for that letting.

Mr O'CONNOR: \$3 million a year?

Mr Lee: Correct.

CHAIR: Director-General, is there anything else or have we concluded everything? From our records we think you have given answers to all of the questions that we have on record. It now being 9 o'clock, I thank all of the participants. Unfortunately we are coming to the end of the time allocated for the consideration of the proposed expenditure under the responsibility of the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement. We note that there are no questions taken on notice. That is my understanding and the understanding of others. The committee thanks the minister, the director-general, officials and department officers for your attendance. Minister, are there any final words that you would like to conclude with?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank all of the committee members and guests for their contributions to this important scrutiny process. I join the Leader of the Opposition, who was here earlier, in acknowledging that this will be Leanne Coddington's last estimates hearing in her role as CEO of Tourism and Events Queensland. I thank you her for her extraordinary service to the state's visitor economy and to the state more generally over a long career.

CHAIR: Hear, hear! Ms Coddington, there have been appeals from the opposition to have former staff come back just for the fun of it. Who is to know whether you will be requested although I doubt you would concur with that request.

That concludes the hearing. I thank all of the participants. I know it is a big effort to re-evaluate your budgets throughout the year and think of all of the questions that could be put to you. I thank my fellow committee members, especially the deputy chair. I think we have a great relationship although occasionally it has some friction. I thank the other members of the committee and the visiting members who participated today.

I thank the secretariat. A lot of work goes into these hearings. I especially acknowledge Jillian Langford. This is her first estimates committee and I think she enjoyed it thoroughly. I also thank Bernice Watson who, of course, has even more experience. I thank Hansard. I thank the audio people, who do a really important job. I always recognise them because I know they make the whole process work much more smoothly. They are quick on the dials, ensuring that people are not cut off at the beginning of their speeches and I really admire that. I thank all of the other parliamentary staff who assisted here today. I declare the hearing closed.

The committee adjourned at 9.05 pm.