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Phone (07) 3553 6344

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 27 October 2022

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THURSDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2022


 The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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


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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Jewish Community

 **Mr SPEAKER:** This morning in the gallery we have several members of Queensland's Jewish community. On behalf of the parliament, I wish to welcome: Holocaust survivors Dr Bert Klug and Suzi Smeed; the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors; President of the Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies, Jason Steinberg; and Rabbi Nir Gurevitch, from the Gold Coast Hebrew Congregation. Please make our visitors feel welcome here today.

School Group Tour

 **Mr SPEAKER:** I wish to advise members that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from St Joseph's Primary School, Kangaroo Point, in the electorate of South Brisbane.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Tourism Industry

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.32 am): This weekend marks another key step towards rebuilding Queensland's international tourism market after the pandemic. From Sunday, the world's third largest carrier, United Airlines, will add Queensland to its global network—for the first time flying direct from San Francisco to Brisbane three times a week. It will be the first new transpacific route by a US airline since the pandemic began. It is not just any carrier: United has more than 100 million loyalty members and is the largest and longest serving US airline in the Australian market.


Before the pandemic, in 2019, 236,000 Americans came here each year—our third biggest market—spending over \$419 million. The flights from San Francisco are expected to bring 40,000 Americans a year, bringing \$27 million a year in economic benefits and supporting hundreds if not thousands of jobs. This is a massive boost to our tourism industry and is just one example of how we are helping operators who were hard hit by COVID-19.

This is all part of our government's landmark \$200 million Attracting Aviation Investment Fund to give our airports the certainty to fast-track direct international flights—because my government recognises how critical they are to Queensland's ongoing tourism and economic recovery. More direct flights means more visitor spending, a stronger economy, more air freight capacity to export and more good, secure jobs for Queenslanders. The Attracting Aviation Investment Fund comes on top of \$66.4 million in this year's state budget to support the tourism sector's recovery and over \$1.1 billion in assistance during the pandemic. This is proof that our government will always back our tourism operators and airlines to restore and grow the industry.

I also look forward to joining the Minister for Tourism and the Deputy Premier to attend the annual DestinationQ next week on the Gold Coast to meet and speak directly with stakeholders. I will be attending an investor breakfast with key tourism infrastructure investors and government

decision-makers to support tangible investment outcomes and encourage further investment. Then I will be attending the official opening, including more than 900 key tourism stakeholders from across the state, at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre to discuss our journey to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and how we can work together to build on Queensland's amazing strengths. The assistant minister will be there as well.

Holocaust Museum and Education Centre


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.34 am): It is still hard to fathom that in total six million Jewish people died during the Holocaust, with 1.5 million of them being children. It is so incredibly important we continue to tell the horrific stories of the past, so that history is never forgotten and never repeated. That is why our government is helping to fund Queensland's first Holocaust Museum. We committed \$3.5 million and today I can announce a site has been chosen.

In a partnership between the Queensland Holocaust Museum and Education Centre and the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane, the centre will be located in Brisbane's Cathedral Precinct at the Old Archives Building and Penola Place in Charlotte and Edward streets. It will honour the legacy of those who faced awful atrocities and will feature locally recorded stories. It will also be able to reach the regions through online and mobile exhibits. It will ensure future generations never forget. This is a significant milestone in the state's cultural history.

Today I will be meeting with members of the Jewish community and Holocaust survivors and descendants of survivors to whom this museum means so much, and I honour their presence in the chamber today. Among them are: Dr Bert Klug, a 100-year-old Holocaust survivor and his son, Ian; survivor Suzi Smeed; Rabbi Nir Gurevitch from the Gold Coast Hebrew Congregation; Esther Friedlander, the daughter of Holocaust survivors John and Ida Lipski; Suzie Berkhut, the daughter of Holocaust survivor Zelig Berkhut, along with his granddaughters, Cheyene Buckley and Jesse Smythe; and Rochy Miller, daughter of Holocaust survivor Lea Leibowitz.

I want to thank: the chair of the Queensland Holocaust Museum and Education Centre, Jason Steinberg, for his passion and hard work to make this project a reality; the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane for the site; and the federal government and council for their funding contributions also. This is an important new landmark for Queensland and it is expected to open to the public early next year. Mr Speaker, I also note your attendance this morning and I thank you for your time.


Housing

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.37 am): My government is committed to addressing the housing challenges facing this state—issues not just here, but around the country. Since coming to office in 2015, my government has built over 4,000 social homes—almost 1½ social homes per day. We held the Queensland Housing Summit last week, and under our Housing and Homelessness Action Plan we have boosted current investment, with a further \$1 billion put towards social and affordable housing, taking the total investment to almost \$4 billion. This means by 2027 we will have commenced more than 13,000 social and affordable homes—the largest concentrated investment in social and affordable housing in Queensland's history.

This week we also welcomed the federal budget's National Housing Accord to deliver one million new homes over five years from 2024, including 10,000 extra affordable homes, with 2,000 here in Queensland. Today I want to announce another housing initiative from ideas echoed at our Housing Summit. Today we will introduce legislation to enable the expansion of the not-for-profit Homes for Homes initiative established by *The Big Issue* magazine into Queensland.

Homes for Homes already exists in other states and would mean Queenslanders buying or selling their own home will be able to voluntarily participate—only if they wish—in a charitable scheme that will help increase the supply of social and affordable housing. The housing minister will go into more detail soon, but essentially it would enable sellers to donate tax-free 0.1 per cent of the sale price of their property or land at the time of sale for a good social cause. Across the country, Homes for Homes has already granted \$1.28 million to 13 social and affordable housing projects, providing housing for 96 people. This is just another way we can help ease pressures on the challenges facing our housing system.


Queensland Greats Awards

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.39 am): Each year around Queensland Day, we add more names to a prestigious list of Queenslanders who have helped shape our state through our Queensland Greats Awards. A Queensland Great can be an individual or an institution. They can come from all walks of life across communities and industries, being recommended for their outstanding achievements and service. They are united by a significant contribution to our state and the Queensland way of life.

Since the first Queensland Greats Awards in 2001, we have honoured 123 individuals and 18 institutions. Previous recipients include the likes of Professor Ian Frazer, Allan Border, Margaret Olley, Uncle Albert Holt and Karyn Walsh, just to name a few. Recent Queensland Greats advocated for better health for our First Nations people, made landmark scientific contributions to wildlife protection, impressed the world with local Indigenous art, and curated our state's scientific and cultural history. Their contributions to health and research, science and technologies, the arts and education have provided pathways for disadvantaged communities and pioneered life-changing developments.

These awards are an amazing platform to not only honour extraordinary Queenslanders but also to share their incredible stories and work. Now we are once again calling upon Queenslanders to help select the next inspiring group of Queensland Greats. I encourage everybody in this House to think about who in their community has contributed, and put their name forward. These nominations are now open for 2023, so if you know a Queenslander worthy of Great status, it is time to jump online and submit a nomination. Remember, each and every honour begins with a nomination, and yours could be the one to cement a Queenslanders' legacy—their place in history. I invite all members to submit a nomination by Friday, 17 February 2023, and I look forward to meeting our next new Greats on Queensland Day next year.

Resilient Homes Fund


 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure) (9.41 am): I am pleased to announce today that the Palaszczuk government has signed an historic new partnership agreement with major insurers to help flood-affected Queensland home owners repair and return to their homes sooner. This partnership will benefit Suncorp and RACQ policyholders eligible for assistance under our \$741 million Resilient Homes Fund. These arrangements provide an opportunity for home owners to have their insurance builder complete government funded resilience work at the same time as repairs approved under their insurance policies. The partnership begins with a pilot phase that will enable us to rapidly test and refine a process to ensure we can deliver quality outcomes and value for money before a broader rollout.

Over 7,000 homes were damaged in last year's devastating floods and over 1,300 are still unoccupied. The sheer scale of the flooding has had a major impact on our housing supply and the broader construction industry. That is why we have been rolling out the largest resilience program of its type in Australia's history. The \$741 million Resilient Homes Fund, co-funded by the Queensland and Australian governments, provides financial assistance to eligible home owners to help repair or raise flood-affected homes and minimise the impact of extreme weather. In the most severe cases, properties are being purchased so home owners can re-establish their lives in areas less prone to flooding. We will continue to work with the insurance industry and the Insurance Council of Australia to streamline the funding process for impacted home owners.

Assistance through the Resilient Homes Fund is available to both insured and uninsured home owners to ensure we help as many Queenslanders as possible. Suncorp and RACQ are the state's largest insurers, so having them working with us means home owners will benefit from having their homes repaired and more resilient to extreme weather events sooner. Negotiations are continuing with other insurers who have also indicated they are willing to help deliver the program for the benefit of their policyholders.

We understand how hard it is to find a builder right now, so our partnership leverages the insurers' supply chain to coordinate and deliver retrofitting works of up to \$50,000 per property. Insurers will benefit as works will allow the state government's nation-leading flood resilient design guidelines that help minimise future flood damage to homes. Events of the magnitude that Queensland experienced at the start of this year had a huge impact on insurance industry costs, and that eventually affects all insured home owners through increases in premiums. By making homes more resilient and less vulnerable to damage, we are reducing the burden on the entire community.

Defence Industries

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.44 am): I join with the Premier in welcoming leaders of the Queensland Jewish community to the gallery of the Queensland parliament this morning, including Mr Jason Steinberg. In particular, I acknowledge survivors of the Holocaust, the Shoah, in the Queensland parliament this morning. We say their names so we never forget.

The terrible war in Ukraine reminds us every day of the importance of the Australian Defence Force, and the importance for the Australian Defence Force to have access to the very best equipment. For the Australian Army, the very best of that equipment is being manufactured right here in Queensland.


Rheinmetall's Boxer Combat Reconnaissance Vehicle is at the absolute front line of Australia's land defences. I am pleased to say that the first 25 Boxers being delivered under the LAND 400 Phase 2 project have achieved an important milestone in their certification process. The Australian Army has declared the Boxers have achieved initial operating capability. This benchmark is not some desktop exercise. It is the result of extensive test and evaluation processes, including deploying the Boxer during Exercise Sea Raider. The exercise was conducted in September at the Cowley Beach Training Area near Innisfail and involved the Boxer doing an amphibious landing from HMAS Adelaide. The Boxer is now deployed with the Army's 7th Brigade based at Gallipoli barracks, Enoggera.

Getting defence projects to the point where they provide our defence personnel with the protection and projection they need is always challenging. For the Boxer to achieve initial operating capability, it is a great testament to the work of Rheinmetall Defence Australia, led by its CEO, Mr Gary Stewart, its team of highly skilled workers at Redbank and many small and medium Queensland businesses who support Rheinmetall.

This week's federal budget has also confirmed progress on another important Queensland defence project. The Defence Portfolio Budget Statements confirmed a funding commitment of \$220 million to be spent in 2022-23 to stand up production of Boeing's MQ-28A Ghost Bat uncrewed aircraft. This is part of expanding Defence's Ghost Bats acquisition from three aircraft to 10. Boeing is establishing its advanced aerospace manufacturing facility at Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport to assemble the Ghost Bat. It will be the first military aircraft designed, developed and manufactured in Australia for over 50 years.

As Queensland's Strategic Defence Adviser, retired Rear Admiral Simon Cullen, notes in today's *Australian* newspaper, our government has been working hard to support Defence's capabilities. He says the Queensland government does this throughout the state through 'the provision of infrastructure and facilities, skilled people, world class research and a growing defence manufacturing base' which really makes a difference in our state. We look forward to continuing to work with the federal government, with the defence department and with industry to bring more defence projects to Queensland.


Public Sector, Wages Policy

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.47 am): I also acknowledge members of the Jewish community in the gallery. The Palaszczuk government is proud of our record in leading the nation when it comes to a wide range of reforms concerning Queensland workers, and we are proud to lead the nation on wages and conditions of public sector workers. Our government deeply values the crucial roles our public sector workers play, especially those who provide frontline services to the Queensland community. We are committed to ensuring that Queensland's public sector workers are provided with fair and reasonable wages, especially those on lower rates of pay.

I am pleased to advise the House that the government has settled its wages policy for this enterprise bargaining round. This new wages policy is leading amongst all Australian jurisdictions. Together with the cumulative wage increases delivered by the Palaszczuk government since 2015, we are delivering the highest public sector increases in the country. The new policy includes three-year agreements with headline increases of four per cent in the first year, four per cent in the second year and three per cent in the third year. The Palaszczuk government recognises the current cost-of-living pressures facing Queensland workers, including those employed in our public sector. That is why the wages policy also includes a cost-of-living adjustment of up to three per cent additional where, in an agreement year, the relevant consumer price index measure exceeds the headline wage increase percentage. This is an important safeguard during these uncertain inflationary economic times.

I am pleased to also inform the House that we have finalised negotiations for a number of key frontline public sector agreements. These include agreements covering nurses and midwives, teachers and the Queensland Police Service, and final certification processes are now underway. In addition to the wages policy, our government has also embarked on superannuation enhancements for public sector workers relating to changes to the superannuation guarantee. This once again demonstrates the Palaszczuk government's commitment to our public sector workforce and, importantly, ensures we remain an employer of choice.

Coronavirus, Update

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.50 am): Yesterday our parliament passed our new COVID management framework. This new framework allows Queensland to adjust its approach to the management of COVID-19 to reflect the new reality we are all living with. This means that on 31 October a significant milestone will be reached in our COVID-19 journey: the public health emergency declaration that we have relied on for 1,006 days will cease.

When that declaration was first made on 29 January 2020 the world was still coming to terms with this strange virus emanating from Wuhan, China. The modelling at that time suggested that more than 10,000 Queenslanders would lose their lives if there was widespread community transmission before vaccination, but that did not happen. Thanks to the collective efforts of Queenslanders, we did not let the virus run rampant. We contained it. Queensland led the world.

We were able to live with a semblance of normality throughout the pandemic that very few other communities had. However, we must acknowledge that even during that period we lost seven lives. Since reaching our vaccination targets and opening our borders we have lost 2,277 lives. I want to acknowledge the grief associated with each and every life lost. I know that grief is shared by our health staff. Our hearts go out to all of the bereaved families and friends who have lost a loved one to COVID. This grief extends to the many thousands of health workers whose lives have been lost around the world treating COVID patients. They make up part of the 6.5 million lives lost to COVID so far.

It is now very clear that we are in a different stage of the pandemic. At our peak, there were 1,123 beds in our public hospitals occupied by COVID patients in Queensland. Today that figure stands at 92 in our public hospitals. At its highest, there were 54 COVID patients in our ICUs. Today that figure sits at three, but that does not tell the full story. Here are just some of the extraordinary facts about Queensland's management of this virus.

We have conducted more than 8.6 million PCR tests. We have administered more than 12 million vaccinations. A total of 925 vaccination locations were stood up. This is an extraordinary figure. We have had more than 132,749 bed days occupied by COVID-19 patients since 13 December last year. That is only since 13 December last year. I repeat: over 132,000 bed days lost.

We have had more than 346,000 staff days lost to isolation and quarantine just since March this year. That is almost three times our total staffing population across the public health system—just since March this year. There have been 493 public health directions issued and 1.5 million calls to 13HEALTH and 134COVID. More than 251,000 businesses registered for the check-in app and there were more than one billion check-ins with the check-in app. In fact, there were 1.06 billion check-ins.

Behind these facts there are the people who made our COVID response as successful as it has been. I speak of such people as our chief health officers. There was Her Excellency Dr Jeannette Young. We will be forever grateful for her leadership and guidance, her willingness to give guidance to the government to be the first jurisdiction—

An opposition member interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I find it extraordinary that those on the opposite side will interject. There was Her Excellency Dr Jeannette Young and Dr John Gerrard. We thank him for his guidance through that difficult time of opening our borders and dealing with that virus spreading throughout our community. There were our Queensland Health staff, from the doctors and nurses to the wardies and cooks. I give a shout-out to the cleaners and the BEMS team because they stood up and did an incredible job in infection control and setting up temporary isolation wards and ICU COVID wards so quickly when we needed it. We could not have done it without them. There were also our paramedics and the QAS staff—

Ms Grace: And in our schools, too.

Mrs D'ATH: I am getting to them. There were also our paramedics and the QAS staff—their fears every time they went to a home not knowing whether they were going to transmit COVID back home to their families and the support they gave to everyone in hotel quarantine. There were our private health

providers, who partnered with us, our GPs and our pharmacists; we say thank you. There were our First Nations health workers and the Aboriginal and community controlled health organisations, the students in medicine and nursing who put their hands to the wheel during our vaccination efforts, our CALD community leaders and our religious leaders, our community organisation leaders and professional sporting clubs.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: There were also all of the government agencies, who made such a difference. I make special mention of the Queensland Police Service. For the work they did on hotel quarantine and our borders we say thank you. To our education staff—we know it is so difficult for our teachers and for the families; to housing and to justice and attorney-general; to every agency that stepped in and stepped up to make sure we supported the community; to the Queensland Health SHECC team—they will have been operating for 1,010 days once this declaration lifts. To the Deputy Premier as the former health minister I say thank you for your guidance in those early days and for the work you have done. Last but not least, I say thank you to the Premier, who led Queenslanders tirelessly and fearlessly, who withstood abuse and stuck to her guns, who took the health advice, who did the right thing no matter how difficult the decisions. Queenslanders are safer, healthier and more prosperous thanks to her. She was the person who withstood calls 64 times to open the borders. We say thank you, Premier.


The enormity of this undertaking is still something that I do not think any of us can fully appreciate, but we know that the actions of every Queensland—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members to my left, there are too many general interjections. I do not believe that the minister is being provocative in any way with the statement being made.

Mrs D'ATH: I think we should show respect at this time in reflecting on what we have achieved over 2½ years. We can know that the actions of every Queenslander have meant that we have been able to weather the impact of this virus better than almost any other place in the world. For that, Queensland should be very proud. We say thank you.

Holocaust Museum and Education Centre

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (9.57 am): Mr Speaker, I would like to join with you and the Premier in acknowledging the presence in the gallery today of the President of the Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies, Jason Steinberg; Holocaust survivors Dr Bert Klug and Suzi Smeed; Rabbi Nir Gurevitch; and descendants of Holocaust survivors as we make today's momentous announcement.

Across the globe, Holocaust museums and education centres play a vital role in educating and reminding us of how we can individually contribute to stopping racism, hatred and genocides and of the risk when we do not. In October 2020, our government committed \$3.5 million towards the establishment of the Queensland Holocaust Museum and Education Centre. This complemented funding commitments of \$3.5 million by the federal government and half a million dollars by the Brisbane City Council. I am delighted to acknowledge the Premier's announcement that the centre will open in Brisbane's cathedral precinct at the old archives building and Penola Place in Charlotte and Edward streets. I extend my appreciation to the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane, in particular Archbishop Mark Coleridge for partnering and providing this important site. The centre will include exhibitions, education and training resources about the Holocaust and will also shine a light on devastating genocides committed in other countries.


The site will be home to both tangible and interactive displays, teaching resources and a virtual museum to ensure global connectivity. A mobile museum, which includes interactive components, will ensure statewide access to the museum's stories and resources for students and teachers. Once operational, the centre will help to educate Queenslanders and visitors about the importance of standing up against racism and prejudice and about the devastating human toll of bigotry. Work has already started with the recording of memories and stories of survivors of the Holocaust to form part of the displays at the centre, as well as the online virtual museum.

In May I attended Yom HaShoah with my two young boys. At the service, children from the Jewish community read the accounts of children who had experienced the Holocaust. Few diaries and journals have survived, but those which have provide eyewitness accounts of the Warsaw Ghetto, of children living in hiding or as concentration camp prisoners. All of the accounts shared were confronting to hear—they were particularly confronting for my children—but we must never turn away from such stories and from the difficult conversations that such accounts generate, because stories are powerful—

stories such as that of Dr Klug, who in 1939 was sent to a forced labour camp in Poland for two years while his parents were deported to German concentration camps, where they were devastatingly killed; or the story of Suzi Smeed, who, along with her parents, survived the Holocaust thanks to the kindness and bravery of friends and strangers who kept them hidden with the full knowledge that providing such assistance could lead to a death sentence. These are the stories that need to be told, and the Queensland Holocaust Museum and Education Centre will do just that for generations to come.

I look forward to hosting members of the Jewish community and Holocaust survivors and descendants of survivors along with the Premier this morning, and our government looks forward to continuing to partner with the Jewish Board of Deputies president and chair of the managing entity, Jason Steinberg, and the Jewish community to see this important project delivered.

Fire and Emergency Services

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.01 am): The government's significant investment for Queensland fire and emergency services, announced yesterday, has been met with overwhelming support from stakeholders. For instance, Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland President Ian Pike said, 'It's probably the best thing that's happened to Rural Fire for many years.' United Firefighters Union Queensland Secretary John Oliver said that 'the UFUQ ... welcome the review and ultimately the announcement of the restructure'. He recognised that 'the current QFES model has run its course' and said that the UFUQ 'are looking forward to a new Queensland fire department being established'. Fire and Rescue Senior Officers Union President Adrian Stafford said that the reform ensures fire and rescue services in Queensland are more effective and provide better preparedness to enhance service delivery to the community, while Eddie Cowie, the President of the SES Volunteer Association, said that the announcement strengthens SES resources throughout Queensland well into the future.


Our local councils have also been acknowledged. Local Government Association of Queensland CEO Alison Smith said the reform is 'much welcomed'. She said—

The LGAQ and its members now look forward to consultation beginning with the Reform Implementation Taskforce.

SES Volunteer Consultative Committee Chair Sharn Pogan said that this change 'gives the SES a renewed identity and wonderful improvements to equipment, resources and relationships'. Most importantly, Sharn said, like all of our stakeholders and many members of the community, these reforms will mean better services for the community. That is what this announcement is all about: delivering for our communities with better resources, more personnel and stronger alignment for emergency services.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the MPs who attended the briefing sessions yesterday to learn more about these important changes, including the member for Burdekin. I appreciate his acknowledgement and support at the briefing. Media coverage was also generally supportive. I think Channel 7 hit the nail on the head when reporter Ned Balme said it was a different name but the same dedicated service. The name may change, but the dedicated service of our frontline officers, staff and volunteers will always remain the same, now and into the future. More resources, more personnel, focused services, better alignment: it means good jobs and better services for Queensland. That is what our government delivers.

Aviation Industry


 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement) (10.03 am): I acknowledge the great step forward today around the move for the Holocaust museum, acknowledge my friend Jason Steinberg for the work he has been doing on that very important project and join others in acknowledging that the Shoah—those people affected by that devastating global incident—should never be forgotten. The Holocaust is replete with stories that must be retold, and the Holocaust museum will play a very important role in that.

Aviation is absolutely critical to Queensland's visitor economy. Attracting international aviation to Australia has never been more competitive. Global and interstate destinations are reopening arrivals halls, rebuilding holiday itineraries and relaunching tourism marketing campaigns for their own COVID recovery. That is why the Palaszczuk government has partnered with Queensland's four international airports to create a \$200 million international aviation war chest, to ensure we are the destination of choice. It is Australia's biggest international aviation attraction fund, and it needs to be. Queensland is strategic and persistent in our pursuit of new direct international flights to the state's key visitor destinations to share our great Queensland lifestyle and support more good jobs for Queenslanders.

As the Premier told the House earlier, one of the first international services secured by our aviation war chest will touch down on Sunday morning at Brisbane International Airport on its maiden Queensland flight. United Airlines' first direct inbound service from San Francisco will fly in more than 250 passengers on a Boeing 787 Dreamliner for a world-class Queensland visitor experience. San Francisco has direct airline connections to 80 North American cities, making Queensland a convenient destination for 332 million potential US visitors. Traditionally the United States is Queensland's fourth biggest international tourism customer by spend, generating more than \$419 million for our visitor economy.

Queensland's Attracting Aviation Investment partnership with the Brisbane, Cairns, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast airports has to date inked five direct international services. Among them are Scoot direct to the Gold Coast from Singapore, Air Canada direct to Brisbane from Vancouver, Jetstar direct to the Gold Coast from Narita, Japan and Qantas direct from Brisbane to Tokyo Haneda. Over a year the war chest is predicted to bring more than 152,000 overseas visitors to the Sunshine State, generating an estimated \$314½ million and supporting in excess of 3,000 good Queensland jobs. There are more deals in negotiation, making this aviation attraction initiative the bright light at the end of the runway for Queensland's international tourism recovery.

Building our Regions


 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.07 am): I recently had the pleasure of writing to 38 regional councils across Queensland to let them know that they had been successful in applying for a share of the \$70 million Building our Regions round 6 grants. Since then I have been able to get on the phone with a number of mayors located right across the state, and the message from each is the same: they would not be able to do this critical work if it were not for the Palaszczuk Labor government.

These local councils now have funding to undertake 50 new water supply and sewerage construction projects, particularly in regional Queensland, that will deliver real and substantial benefits to all of those communities. This comes off the back of our announcement in June this year when we awarded 23 small regional councils almost \$8.3 million to carry out more than 35 planning jobs to get them ready for these funding rounds. The latest 55 construction projects, together with 35 planning projects, will be vital to the people and local governments throughout regional Queensland. Not only that; they will help create good, solid jobs and improve the livability of our wonderful Queensland communities.

We on this side of the House know that planning and feasibility projects must happen, because they guide measured investment decisions. Building our Regions understandably has strong support from mayors and the Local Government Association of Queensland because these funding programs are practical and they deliver real and meaningful help to councils that otherwise might not be able to find the money in their budgets.

Under this announcement, the Burdekin shire will receive \$2 million to undertake earthworks on a macroalgae wastewater treatment plant that is the first of its kind in the world. It is going to revolutionise the way that coastal councils treat wastewater. People are moving to our regional areas in droves and it is critical that water and sewerage infrastructure keeps up with population growth. In many cases, these grants are the difference between project viability and deferral, and we know this program works. To date, including round 6, the Building our Regions program has committed almost \$416 million in funds for more than 360 projects across 68 local government areas in regional Queensland. The program has leveraged close to \$610 million in additional funding from other sources, bringing the total program expenditure to more than \$1 billion, and even more importantly supporting more than 3,000 construction jobs during that time. The Palaszczuk Labor government is a government for all Queenslanders and I look forward to visiting each of these councils in the future to see how our support is making their lives a lot better in regional Queensland.


Federal Budget, Seniors

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.10 am): I welcome the measures in the Labor federal budget that support our older Australians. With cost-of-living pressures rising, the Labor federal budget provides for an increase in income thresholds as well as the amount pensioners can earn before their pensions are affected. These measures complement the \$6.7 billion in funding provided by the Palaszczuk government for concessions and rebates in the 2022-23 state budget that put more than \$1,100 back into the pockets of eligible Queensland seniors. With calls from Australians

for government to step up when it comes to residential aged-care facilities, federal Labor has responded. Queensland seniors will benefit from more than \$2.5 billion over four years to reform the aged-care system. This investment will deliver better care, healthier food in nursing homes, more registered nurses over more hours, training for carers, and pay rises to attract skilled workers.

The Labor federal government has also budgeted \$18.1 million over two years to increase financial transparency and reporting for residential aged-care providers and establishing an Aged Care Complaints Commissioner with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. This is good news for Queensland seniors. These measures will also back in our efforts to create an age-friendly Queensland where older people can lead healthy, productive lives and have access to good jobs, better services and our great Queensland lifestyle. These commitments are affirmed through the Palaszczuk government's *Future directions for an age-friendly Queensland* and will guide the development of a new seniors strategy to be launched next year. We will deliver actions for an age-friendly state where Queensland seniors are connected to their communities, cared for and supported, and contributing to their local communities in ways of their own choosing.

Housing

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algerie—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (10.12 am): We know that the entire housing system right across Australia has been under increasing pressure. Reports show that private rental listings have dropped while demand is increasing across Queensland, and this has been the same across other jurisdictions. At last week's Housing Summit we heard from the Treasurer that a growing change in household formation, in that households are getting smaller, means we need more houses for the same population. Add to that net interstate migration has come surging back and beyond to historic highs. The private rental stock is also under pressure due to properties being sold or held for sale or properties being used to establish businesses at home, which is why the Deputy Premier has also announced we are looking into the impact short-term rental properties are having on private rental supply. Of course, there are many homes that are still under repair as a result of the floods.

But the challenges we face cannot be solved by one entity alone. That is why last week's Housing Summit was critical, bringing local, state and federal levels of government together alongside industry and sector expertise to explore solutions for Queenslanders. The Housing Summit was an opportunity to discuss actions, ideas and solutions and it was incredibly well received by those who attended. The REIQ CEO said that having local, state and federal government representatives in the room listening to a variety of stakeholders has been an important step towards addressing our state's housing crisis. The CEO from Micah Projects said that the Housing Summit was the start to renewed focus and energy to build a more equitable, diverse and inclusive housing system that ensures a place for the most vulnerable Queenslanders.


It was great to also have the federal housing minister in attendance at the Queensland Housing Summit and very refreshing to see the federal Labor government step up to the plate when it comes to housing with this week's budget announcement of a new Housing Accord, setting an initial aspirational target of one million homes across Australia. This is on top of the \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund to build 30,000 new social and affordable homes over five years. The federal Labor government has also reaffirmed its commitment to develop a 10-year national housing and homelessness plan.

Working together and looking for multiple, innovative short-, medium- and long-term solutions was at the heart of our Queensland Housing Summit which is why, as the Premier announced this morning, I will be introducing legislation later today to allow Queenslanders buying or selling their property to voluntarily contribute to Homes for Homes, an independent not-for-profit social enterprise established by the *Big Issue*. Homes for Homes generates private sector revenue to invest in social and affordable housing projects by securing voluntary donations from landowners, including property developers, upon the sale of a participating property.

Under the scheme, home owners and property developers can voluntarily enter a donation deed to make a tax deductible donation of 0.1 per cent of the sale price of their property at sale. We have seen the success of Homes for Homes in other states and territories over the past few years, with several millions of dollars donated and in turn invested in new social and affordable homes in those jurisdictions. To support the expansion of the Homes for Homes initiative in Queensland, the Palaszczuk government will also invest \$500,000 seed funding. To tackle the housing challenges being faced right across Australia, the Palaszczuk government is working with all stakeholders, local government and industry to address supply and supporting Homes for Homes in Queensland is just one innovative solution to deliver more housing outcomes for Queenslanders. The Palaszczuk government continues to invest in good jobs, better services and a great lifestyle.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE

Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner, Report


 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (10.16 am): As chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee, I lay upon the table of the House the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner's report titled *Report of the work and activities of the Crime and Corruption Commission under chapter 11 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* dated September 2022. The report is being tabled within 14 sitting days of receipt as required.

Tabled paper: Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner: Report of the work and activities of the Crime and Corruption Commission under chapter 11 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, dated September 2022 [[1763](#)].

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

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

Hospital Services

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.16 am): My question is to the Minister for Health. Has the minister been briefed on the deteriorating clinical environment putting anaesthetists' training accreditation at risk and delaying surgeries at Queensland's largest hospital?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. If the member is talking about the significant pressures that we are facing in relation to our workforce shortages, yes, I certainly am aware of that. That is a constant conversation that we are having and we are continuing to work with the profession on that. If he is talking about a particular—I do not have the correct term—type of—

Mr Crisafulli: Surely the minister would know this!

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, the minister is being responsive as I hear her answer.

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Pine Rivers.

Mrs D'ATH: I do not have the term off the top of my head, but in relation to a particular medication that they use as part of the anaesthesia that is provided, yes, I have been briefed on that.

Princess Alexandra Hospital

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Minister for Health. A Queensland Health email obtained by the opposition shows the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists has only given the PA a probationary accreditation, with a threat it could be withdrawn citing inadequate supervision and clinical support time and the hospital not being staffed in accordance with the college's guideline. How was this allowed to occur at the state's largest hospital?

Government members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I take the interjections from the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier that it is not the largest state hospital, but these issues—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Pine Rivers, you are warned under the standing orders. Members to my left will cease their interjections or I will start naming members.

Mrs D'ATH: As the opposition should be aware, these are operational matters that are worked through with the leadership of the hospital and the HHS in relation to staffing and practices within the hospital.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Dr Miles interjected.

Mr Dick interjected.

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier will cease his interjections, as will the Treasurer. The member for Currumbin will cease her interjections.

Mrs D'ATH: Those on the opposite side continually go out to their little town hall meetings and brag about their four-point action plan that will allegedly fix every pressure in the health system.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, there is only one member who has the call; that is the Minister for Health. I will hear her answer.

Mrs D'ATH: One of those actions in the plan—in fact, one of the ones that the opposition claims is one of the top priorities—is putting doctors and nurses back in charge of hospitals and making decisions.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Currumbin, member for Mudgeeraba, you are both warned under the standing orders. Leader of the Opposition, I am cautioning you to cease your interjections.

Mrs D'ATH: When it does not suit them they want myself as the minister to reach in to operational matters to determine what the clinical decisions should be and managing the day-to-day staffing and operations of any individual hospital. As those opposite know, there are 16 statutory authorities that operate our hospital and health services across this state. They should know because they set that system up. Those hospital boards are directly responsible for the governance of those HHSs. Those boards are answerable to me and have to make sure that they are fulfilling—

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, you are warned under the standing orders. Member for Coomera, you have been consistently interjecting, designed to disrupt the minister on her feet. You are warned under the standing orders. Treasurer, you will direct your comments through the chair or you will be warned.

Mrs D'ATH: I remind those opposite that there are former members from their side who sit on those boards while they seek to make commentary about the board's representation.

(Time expired)

Training and Skills

Mr SPEAKER: I call the member for Thuringowa.

Mr HARPER: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and good morning.

Mr SPEAKER: Good morning, member.

Mr HARPER: My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is ensuring we are delivering the training and skills today for the industry jobs of tomorrow?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Thuringowa, and good morning to you, member for Thuringowa. It is a good morning because there is a bright future for Queensland. Not only have we more jobs since the pandemic, an extra 200,000 jobs created since the pandemic, but a lot of these jobs are in regional Queensland—and there will be more. On this side of the House we look to the future. We know that hydrogen is a big issue.

Mr Lister interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: There are no plans from those opposite, but I will get to that in a moment.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Southern Downs, welcome to Thursday. You are warned under the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is not a good morning for the member for Southern Downs. In the last sitting of parliament I outlined how Townsville and North Queensland are a huge hub for a future hydrogen industry, including Sun Metals Zinc Refinery, their parent company Korea Zinc and its subsidiary, and the MOU with the Townsville Port to ship 120,000 tonnes of hydrogen to South Korea;

the Han-Ho Hydrogen Consortium and the MOU to build a green energy export corridor from North Queensland to Northeast Asia; and Arc Energy also signed an MOU for Townsville TAFE to upskill and train in the industry. We have also rolled out our \$62 billion Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan including the hydrogen sector. This builds on our hydrogen road map that we have introduced—here is another plan for those opposite!

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, will you be tabling that document? Please stop using it as a prop.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The hydrogen industry workforce training plan is about more jobs in regional Queensland.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mermaid Beach!

Ms PALASZCZUK: That side of the House cut the health workforce.

Mr Dick interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right: it would be less. Going back to your plan you released there would be less. It is not a good morning for the member for Mermaid Beach. Under this plan we need to see that we have more—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: We need to make sure we have more plumbers, electricians and people who are able to train people in these new industries, which is, of course, why we opened the new industry plant where we held our cabinet meeting. Today I am pleased to announce that industry leader Energy Skills Queensland will deliver this new program. We will engage 30 Queensland schools to train over 2,000 students over the next three years. This side of the House has a plan and we are putting that plan into action.

(Time expired)

Health System

Ms BATES: My question is to the Minister for Health. Whistleblowers have told the opposition loss of accreditation means fewer anaesthetists and fewer surgeries. How many Queenslanders will miss their vital surgery, how much longer will they wait and what steps has the minister taken to fix another Queensland Health failure?

Mr SPEAKER: There is an element of hypothetical in that question. I will allow the question, but the minister is free to answer it in any way she wishes.

Mrs D'ATH: Just to provide detail in relation to this particular issue, I am advised that the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists undertook a routine inspection of the training posts at the Department of Anaesthetics at the PA Hospital in November 2021. The accreditation assessors provided feedback regarding workload of the trainees and the consultant staffing levels. On 8 June 2022 a follow-up accreditation visit occurred and the PA Hospital received feedback in June 2022 from the college's trainee accreditation committee that accreditation will be extended until 2023. A further on-site accreditation visit will be scheduled for 2023.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the House to order! Deputy Premier, you are warned under the standing orders. Member for McConnel, you are warned under the standing orders. I am going to issue a general warning to members to my left. There is a significant amount of interjection occurring today. Members, do not be surprised if you are asked to leave the chamber based on that general warning.

Mrs D'ATH: I can advise that Metro South Hospital and Health Service has been running a recruitment process for consultant anaesthetists at the hospital.

Mr Brown interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: I think that clearly addresses the hypothetical. There is not an accreditation being lost at the current time as those on the other side would seek to infer. I think the line of questioning that we have just heard is another example of the disgraceful behaviour of those opposite who would rather talk down our health system and put fear into the community—and this is key—that they cannot rely on

our public health system. That is not just atrocious, it is dangerous. It is dangerous to send a message to the community that they should not feel safe in our public health system. The other day I came across a great article from *Independent Australia*.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: It was published on 6 January 2015. It is headed 'Ten vital things to remember about the Newman government'. Let me go through them: attacks on the judiciary; attacks on lawyers; attacks on doctors, nurses and midwives; raising caps on political donations; cash for legislation deals; muzzling the anti-corruption watchdog; sacking of the PCMC; media manipulation; sacking public servants; and silencing dissent. That is the record of those opposite and now they want the public to think they cannot have faith in our public health system. Shame on them!

Job Creation

Mr McCALLUM: My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier please update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is working to create more good secure jobs for Queenslanders?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Bundamba for that question. On this side of the House we are about creating jobs in Queensland and what a great record we have. It is one that we are very proud to talk about each and every day and, of course, for the next two years leading into the next election. Over the past year we have created 106,400 jobs, the unemployment rate is 3.7 per cent and there are 463,800 more jobs than when we were elected in January 2015. That is a proud record because it means jobs for Queenslanders. It means being able to put food on the table and being able to pay the bills.

Not only do we acknowledge the jobs that have been created; we are looking at creating even more jobs in new industries. I acknowledge Rheinmetall's Milvehcoe training centre that has been set up in Ipswich, bringing manufacturing back to that region. I am pleased to say that today we are very honoured to welcome to the Queensland parliament the global CEO of Rheinmetall. He will be attending a meeting with the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer and I. On behalf of Queenslanders, we welcome him and his investment into the great state of Queensland. There are more good secure jobs to come, linking with our schools to make sure that they have the opportunities that they need into the future.

Members heard me speak earlier about the opportunities in the hydrogen industry for Gladstone and Townsville. Our Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan will create 100,000 jobs over the next decade, right across regional Queensland. The largest infrastructure project in the state will be in the electorate of the member for Mackay. More than what has been spent on Cross River Rail and other construction down here will be spent in Mackay. Of course, sitting next to the member for Mackay is the member for Maryborough. Trains will be made in Maryborough at the new manufacturing facility, where I turned the sod with the Minister for Transport.

Do we have any plans or ideas from those opposite? Are there any plans? I encourage the shadow ministers to let us know: are there any plans? There are no plans.

(Time expired)

Princess Alexandra Hospital

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Minister for Health. A Queensland Health email acknowledges that on the PA Hospital waiting list there are 1,300 patients who have already waited longer than clinically recommended. How long is too long and will the minister accept responsibility for another Queensland Health failure on her watch?

Mr SPEAKER: Given that there are imputations in the tail of that question, I will give the minister latitude in her response.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, I was worried you were going to rule the question out of order. In replying to the member's question, I must say that I find it extraordinary that the opposition would talk about waiting lists. Remember the waiting list for the waiting list? How many millions was it that they wasted funding the 'waiting list for the waiting list' campaign? You would get off the train and the signs would be there with the wait-time guarantee. What is extraordinary is that the long waitlist that existed under the opposition was about the same as what we have today except that we have had a national suspension of elective surgery and multiple suspensions during lockdowns due to a global pandemic, but those on the other side had none of that.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

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

Mrs D'ATH: I am happy to be corrected but I think it was around 104,000 on the long waitlist, which is extraordinary. Our amazing health workers and the Palaszczuk government are investing in fast-tracking elective surgery. We have to be careful on how much that is fast-tracked because we still have to have some bed capacity, but we are moving as quickly as we possibly can. We are also partnering with the private sector. Through Surgery Connect we are partnering with the private sector to ensure that we get people off the long waitlists so they can have the surgery that they need. That will take time because we have a backlog nationally around elective surgery because of COVID. We do acknowledge that people are having to wait longer than clinically recommended. We are working tirelessly and our health workers are working tirelessly to do that.

One thing we can do is free up the 500 beds that are being taken up by aged care and disability so that we can have more planned care. Thankfully, we now have a federal government that actually gets it. It is investing in aged care and disability services. It is actually putting people into the hospital system to help those with disabilities get assessed, get their packages and get into homes or other appropriate care. People with disability should not have to live in a hospital bed not because they need medical care but because there is nowhere else for them to go. The federal Albanese government gets it. They are putting those people first. They are putting our elderly and people with disability first. The Morrison government failed and those on the other side ignored this problem.

(Time expired)

Local Government

Ms LUI: My question is of the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure. Can the Deputy Premier outline to the House how the Palaszczuk government is supporting local governments across Queensland and is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Cook for her question. I know she was as pleased as the member for Cairns and the member for Barron River to see community leaders from right across the state converge on Cairns for the annual Local Government Association of Queensland conference. I congratulate Mayor Mark Jamieson and CEO Alison Smith on putting together an excellent conference, as well as all of the mayors, deputy mayors and councillors from Queensland's 77 councils who were in Cairns. I thank them for their contribution to the conference and for the work that they do every day serving their communities.

The Palaszczuk government demonstrates, throughout the pandemic as well as all of the disasters we face, just how important it is that the state government and local governments work together. The dividend of that combined effort is the economic growth and the jobs we see created right across our great state. It is a testament to the value that the Palaszczuk government puts on local governments just how many of our members were at the conference. I was joined by the Minister for Transport, the Minister for Resources and the Minister for Small Business; my assistant minister, the member for Pine Rivers; and the assistant minister for tourism, the member for Cairns.

There was one topic that everyone wanted to talk to me about, which was, of course, the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan because, as responsible community leaders, they want to see their fair share of that \$62 billion plan invested in their regions. They know that 90 per cent of that will go into the regions and they want to see their regions benefit. Seventy per cent of the 100,000 jobs will be in the regions. Understandably, the mayors want to see their regions benefit from their share of the industries of the future, whether that is through the rare minerals in the north-west; on the coast, which will be powered by the SuperGrid; in all of the regions that will generate, store and feed energy into the SuperGrid; or in the more regional parts of the state where people will finally see the end of dirty diesel generators that will be replaced by clean green renewable energy and batteries.

Those leaders know that that plan and those benefits are only possible because we have a Labor government here in Queensland, one that kept our assets in state hands, the very assets, the very GOCs, that will deliver this Energy and Jobs Plan for all of Queensland. Those opposite would have sold them all off to the highest bidder and had no opportunity to deliver a planned transition. They said that we could not get to 50 per cent. Now we will get there two years earlier and every part of the state will benefit.

Princess Alexandra Hospital, Accreditation

Mr LAST: My question is to the health minister. The Mackay Base Hospital lost accreditation to trained specialists prior to an investigation which found appalling failures of patient safety. Is the minister concerned for patient safety at the PA given its accreditation to train specialists is now at risk?

Mrs D'ATH: If ever there was an example of those opposite not being able to think on their feet, wow, that is embarrassing. Leader of the Opposition, manager of opposition business, come on, quickly scribble a new question. Do anything. What a set-up! That is so unfair to the member for Burdekin. Why would you do that? As I have said, back in June they were advised that it would be extended until 2023. We are in the process of recruitment right now. The fact that those opposite would stand up and ask about this when I have clearly just answered it and shown that it is not about to be suspended—

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: The member for Burdekin is looking over at the member for Mudgeeraba and asking, 'Why did you do that to me? Why?' The next one to ask a question of me is asking, 'Should I ask it? Am I allowed to change it? I don't know? What does strategy say? Oh, there is no strategy. What do I do?' That is embarrassing. That is shameful.

Ms Palaszczuk: What did shadow cabinet say?

Mrs D'ATH: What did shadow cabinet say?

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I will take that interjection. If those on the opposite side believe that the accreditation committee has changed their view, please provide that information to this chamber. If there has been a change, please produce the evidence to back it up, because we know those on the other side are pretty light on when it comes to evidence.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Leader of the Opposition, you have had a great crack today. You are warned under the standing orders. The member for Lytton has been interjecting continuously. She is also warned under the standing orders. Minister for Health, you have 55 seconds remaining.

Mrs D'ATH: As I say, there was an accreditation visit in June. We have been advised that the college trainee accreditation committee has advised that it will be extended until 2023. I could not make that clearer. Just so that I am helping out the next member and the next member and the next member, we do have until 11.16. I am just saying that members might want to have a look at that question they are about to stand up and ask, because I think their side is absolutely giving them an own goal.

Racing Industry

Mr O'ROURKE: Mr Speaker—

Ms McMillan interjected.

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

Mr O'ROURKE: My question is to the Treasurer and the Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer inform the House of the benefits of the racing industry to regional Queensland?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Rockhampton for his question, a man well known for his excellent and accurate racing tips. The member for Rockhampton is laughing as though that is not true, but I am not misleading the House. We know how accurate the member's tips are for racing. The member for Rockhampton knows how important racing is to regional Queensland in particular. In July I had the opportunity to visit Callaghan Park in Rockhampton with the members for Rockhampton and Keppel to announce a \$2.3 million investment to expand its facilities for female jockeys. Interestingly, Callaghan Park is one of the busiest race courses in Queensland, as the members for Rockhampton and Keppel know, outside the south-east but also had change room capacity for only four female jockeys. We now have expanded that almost fourfold to 15. That is what our government doing.

There are 125 race clubs in Queensland. Around the state, racing directly employs 6½ thousand people with thousands more indirectly employed. Over 43,000 Queenslanders participate in the racing industry. For more than two-thirds of those clubs, the race meeting they hold in that community is often the biggest or second-biggest event in that community for the year. We will see that next Tuesday.

I have some early form for the Melbourne Cup that may be of interest to the House, particularly those members opposite. I am sure among the excess of confidence over competence that we see in the LNP—and we have seen that on display in question time today—there will be many from those opposite willing to give a tip to the Leader of the Opposition. I say this to the Leader of the Opposition—I do not say this often—be wary; do not be fooled by the member for Kawana when he suggests you back Knights Order. There will be no knighthood on order for the member for Kawana—certainly if I have anything to do with it—and do not listen, Leader of the Opposition, to Clive Palmer if he suggests Gold Trip. The LNP knows when they take that punt that it does not work out very well at all!

I wish all punters in this House and beyond in Queensland all the very best next Tuesday. It is a difficult race to pick a winner of, but I wish you all the best. My best tip for the Leader of the Opposition for the Melbourne Cup is to stick with what he knows best. Wait for it: No. 11 Without a Fight.

(Time expired)

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will wait for silence, members.

Princess Alexandra Hospital, Accreditation

Mr POWELL: My question is to the health minister. The email sighted by the opposition was sent at the end of September this year to staff at the PA Hospital. Given it references actions taken in August that reducing clinical services at the hospital is the only way it can maintain its accreditation, does the minister wish to clarify her previous comments and acknowledge that this issue has worsened beyond June?

Mrs D'ATH: I am happy for the opposition to produce the document that they are referring to.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs D'ATH: Conveniently, they have not tabled it.

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mrs D'ATH: The manager of opposition business—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. What is your point of order?

Mr POWELL: I am very happy to table the document I have referred to for the health minister's benefit.

Mr SPEAKER: Generally you cannot table it during this period, member. If a copy would like to be provided through any informal channel, we would be happy to do so.

Mrs D'ATH: As I said, there is recruitment going on right now for the anaesthetist at the PA Hospital. What I find really amusing is that those opposite ran around very quickly. I note that the manager of the opposition business seems to have had a typed version and then some words written on the back of that one. It shows that they are a little bit agile. They are able to do—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs D'ATH: The members are asking, 'What is the question? What is the question? What do we do? How do we change it?' Well done in being a little bit agile on your feet.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Whitsunday! Member for Toowoomba North.

Mrs D'ATH: The advice I have received is that the committee has advised that there will be an extension until 2023. I am not aware of any change whatsoever in that advice.

Apprentices

Mr SMITH: My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations—

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, questions will be heard in silence.

Mr SMITH: I will not hold it against the Premier.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Correct titles will also be used, member for Everton.

Mr SMITH: My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Can the minister please advise how the Palaszczuk government is supporting Queensland's apprentices, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms GRACE: What a great question. Finally we get a good question asking about the skills of the future. It was a pleasure to join the member for Bundaberg at Kepnock State High School, where we announced an investment of nearly \$10 million to build a new training centre there. The facilities are part of our \$45 million Local Schools Local Jobs project. My Assistant Minister for Education has been ploughing along. We are investing in schools, ensuring that we have the skills for the future.

Can I just sidetrack and say that I agree with the member for Mansfield: poor things! I will do a little bit of education here. Leader of the Opposition, the largest hospital in Queensland is actually the RBWH and it is in my electorate. Making things up when you come in here does not add anything. Going along with the racing theme of the Treasurer, the questions today are like flogging a dead horse. The hypotheticals have come in; they have got it wrong. They have been proven to get it wrong. Then I thought in question time that Christmas had come early, because they all have a list and they are checking it twice. It is incredible that after all of these years under the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition those opposite cannot even get the hypotheticals right. They come in here and make it all up. May I remind them of the laptop debacle and making it up? It was found to be an absolute fabrication and misrepresentation of the truth. But Mr Speaker, I digress.

Mr SPEAKER: I was just going to ask you to come back to the question, Minister.

Ms GRACE: I could not help but digress. The skills of the future are what we are concentrating on here. We have free TAFE courses. There are 59,000 young people in those courses today learning skills for jobs of the future in hydrogen, plumbing, electrical, aged care, construction and engineering. We are building TAFE; we are investing in TAFE. We are not cutting \$170 million out of TAFE like those opposite. We are not sacking 2,100 staff out of TAFE like those opposite. I am not making any of this up because those are the facts. When it comes to us linking with the Albanese government to roll out free TAFE for our students we cannot wait, because we know that we are going to invest with industry and our schools and TAFE to provide the skills of the future.

Mackay Base Hospital

Ms CAMM: My question is to the health minister.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Redlands and the member for Callide were both quarrelling before. I am going to ask both of you to leave the chamber. I have given fair warning, members.

Whereupon the honourable members for Redlands and Callide withdrew from the chamber at 10.53 am.

Ms CAMM: My question is to the health minister. Dr Daryl Stephens had reprimands against his registration before being hired by Queensland Health. Now women from Western Australia have come forward with similar complaints as mothers from Mackay against gynaecologist Dr George du Toit, who failed to have his contract renewed in Western Australia. Can the minister explain to the women of Mackay why the government hired Dr du Toit as head of obstetrics and gynaecology in 2020?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for her question. I addressed this issue in the last parliamentary sitting week. The minister not only does not hire and fire health workers within the department and HHSs but is specifically prohibited under the Hospital and Health Boards Act from in any way interfering with employment arrangements. All of those issues are being looked at currently by the interim chief executive of accreditations and so forth as far as the recruitment of staff. It is important to understand that, where someone has been allowed to practise under Ahpra or the Office of the Health Ombudsman, then the hospital is able to employ an individual as long as they are practising within the scope that is set within any restrictions. That includes whether their practices have been reduced, whether they have additional mentoring or oversight.

Ms Camm: It's okay in regional Queensland.

Mrs D'ATH: I will take that interjection. That is appalling from the member for Whitsunday, who said we only employ duds in regions. I want to repeat that because that is—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Whitsunday, what is outrageous is that I am giving a ruling and you are talking over me. You are warned under the standing orders. Actually, you can leave the chamber for one hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Whitsunday withdrew from the chamber at 10.55 am.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Aspley will stop gesticulating. You are warned under the standing orders. I have been clear, members, that the level of interjection has been way too high this morning.

Mrs D'ATH: I apologise. I said the member for Whitsunday, but I believe the interjection was from the shadow health spokesperson, who says we only employ duds in the region. That is a reflection on all of the hardworking health workers—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Mudgeeraba, you were warned under the standing orders already. You can leave the chamber for one hour. I can do this all day.

Whereupon the honourable member for Mudgeeraba withdrew from the chamber at 10.56 am.

Mrs D'ATH: I have said in this chamber on more than one occasion now that what occurred at the Mackay Base Hospital is shocking. It is appalling. I have unreservedly apologised for the harm that has been caused to these women and their families. I have said that a number of times. We are working with these women. We are working with consumer groups. We are working with the staff who are there, who are working hard to deliver quality health care to the people of Queensland. They do not want to be referred to as duds. They deserve respect because they are working tirelessly to provide high quality service to the people of Mackay and the region.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Premier will cease her interjections.

Mrs D'ATH: It is appalling that the member for Mudgeeraba, who is the health spokesperson for the LNP in this parliament, would call them duds. It is disgraceful.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Nanango, you were warned under the standing orders already. You can leave the chamber for one hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Nanango withdrew from the chamber at 10.57 am.

Mr SPEAKER: Warnings are not a guide; they are a warning. It means there will be zero interjections from those members. I cannot make myself any clearer, honourable members.

Bruce Highway

Ms LAUGA: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister provide an update on Bruce Highway upgrades in Queensland, and is the minister aware of any alternate approaches?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the honourable member for Keppel, who is a fierce advocate and has a strong record of delivering regional road funding in her area. I know she supports the Bruce Highway project. The Bruce Highway project is a \$13 billion commitment over 15 years. I can inform the chamber that our record on the Bruce is that we have delivered 415 projects already, and that number is only increasing. I have previously advised the chamber there were 50 Bruce Highway upgrades underway right now. I can update that figure: there are now 55 Bruce Highway projects underway in Queensland at the moment—compared to four under the LNP when they were in power, two of which were desktops. There are 55 under this government around the state, including: the Townsville Ring Road, Mackay Northern Access Upgrade, the Gympie bypass and our \$33 million upgrade just north of Rockhampton.

No doubt, the members for Keppel and Rockhampton were also pleased to see \$200 million in brand new funding for the Bruce Highway between Rockhampton and Gladstone in the federal budget. Another upgrade of note is the work in and around Bowen. Earlier this year we had a contractor collapse due to the high inflation left by the Morrison government, but in good news for the Mackay-Whitsunday region I can announce to the chamber that we have now locked in a contractor to resume those works between Bowen and Proserpine. North Queensland based RMS Engineering and Construction will get started in the coming weeks to complete the 20 kilometres of safety improvements between Bowen and Proserpine.

I ask the House to note those words 'Bowen and Proserpine'. I saw the member for Chatsworth was doing some media from the comforts of Carindale. He said on 16 September—on a day that I was actually in Brisbane as well—that, 'The minister is in Townsville and is looking at roads north of Townsville.' I had been doing that, but that was a week before. He was a week behind. He was referring to work south of Townsville. That is a very broad statement, because most of these works are actually south of Bowen, which is 200 kilometres away. From the comforts of Carindale, the member's geography is pretty scant. He obviously does not drive the Bruce Highway to be that far out. It is kind of like saying, 'I didn't swing by Bundaberg last time. I was in Gladstone.' That is the kind of thing. I say to the member for Chatsworth that he should get out of Brisbane more often, even if it is in his BMW convertible, which is the same car as Teena McQueen.

(Time expired)

Electricity Prices

Ms BOLTON: My question is to the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen. Given the predictions from the federal government that electricity prices will rise by over 50 per cent over the next two years, what will the Queensland government be doing to offset these increases for Queenslanders who already are under severe financial duress from cost-of-living increases and cannot withstand anymore?

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for Noosa, a non-government member of this House who represents regional Queensland. I think we all appreciate that she would never describe frontline workers in her community as duds, and neither would those on this side of the House.

The member for Noosa makes a very strong point. It is clear right across this nation that the ongoing and illegal war in Ukraine is impacting global fossil fuel energy prices. The forecasts that are being described by commentators are hypothetical at this stage. The default market offer, which sets that standard price regime across the nation, is six months away, although if those global factors do not ameliorate Australians are likely to see continued inflated energy prices, because of our ongoing exposure to those global fossil fuel markets.

What action is our government taking on that? We have delivered the \$62 billion Energy and Jobs Plan, designed fundamentally to break our reliance on those global fossil fuel markets. It is because we are investing in more renewable energy—more Queensland made and owned wind and solar storage—that we will be able to break that nexus between what Queenslanders pay for their energy compared to global fossil fuel prices.

Since 2017, we have had: \$4 billion in household and small business electricity price relief—an extraordinary \$4 billion back into the pockets of Noosa businesses and Noosa households because those communities have kept their assets in Queensland hands; four \$50 asset ownership dividends; a \$200 COVID utility relief rebate; the \$500 COVID electricity relief for small businesses; a \$175 cost-of-living rebate, which constituents across Noosa and every part of Queensland are receiving right now; \$638.5 billion off electricity bills, being delivered by the community service obligation in regional Queensland in the Ergon network; the Electricity Rebate Scheme; the Electricity Life Support Concession; and the Home Energy Emergency Assistance Scheme. I could go on. We can do this because Queenslanders kept their energy assets in public ownership.

In the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan, we are delivering: an eightfold increase in renewables; \$4 million to help industries like sugar cane expand into biomass to drive down energy costs; and \$35 million through the Queensland business energy saving and transformation program. I want to make particular mention of the environmental upgrade agreement regime which will commence in 2023. I know this is something that Zero Emissions Noosa has fought long and hard for, and this government will deliver.

Integrity in Government

Ms BOYD: My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. Can the Attorney-General advise how the Palaszczuk government has implemented strong measures to restrict improper influences on government, and is the Attorney-General aware of any other approaches?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for Pine Rivers for her question. The Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to a strong, effective and independent corruption watchdog. I was pleased to hear the CCC chair discuss the ongoing work of the commission during a public PCCC meeting earlier

this year. This important work includes a focus on combatting major organised crime, as well as implementing the recommendations from the Coaldrake review and the recent Fitzgerald commission of inquiry.

However, we know that not everyone in politics believes in basic compassion, transparency, accountability or even delivering for the community. Surprisingly, it is not just those opposite who will not stand up for issues that matter to people who elected them. What we have seen from the Greens political party over the last few weeks has been appalling. The revelations about Senator Thorpe's undisclosed relationship with a former bikie have exposed their disregard for transparency and accountability. I know the Greens political party are all about doing politics differently, but this is very different.

Senator Thorpe has been forced to step down as their deputy leader in the Senate, but we all know it is not just because of this lapse of judgement. Time after time Lidia Thorpe has faced allegations of abuse and bullying of staff, even by First Nations elders. What has been most galling has been her staunch opposition to a Voice to Parliament for First Nations Australians. A few weeks ago, it was reported that Senator Thorpe had been meeting with conservatives to discuss campaigning against a Voice to Parliament—even tweeting Pauline Hanson, of all people, asking her to help stop a Voice to Parliament. Senator Lidia Thorpe said that a referendum on Voice was a waste of money and a wasted exercise.

What have we heard about the senator's comments from the member for South Brisbane and the member for Maiwar? Surely as self-proclaimed progressives they would be standing up to support a Voice to Parliament, but we have heard nothing—absolutely nothing from the Queensland Greens. They have failed to call out Senator Lidia Thorpe. They have failed to call out her opposition to Voice.

I remind everyone in this parliament what the Uluru Statement says: that reform must come; voice, treaty and truth. It says that these reforms are necessarily sequential: a voice first and then treaty and truth. Her opposition to a Voice to Parliament absolutely puts at risk a successful referendum, and the members for South Brisbane and Maiwar must call it out.

Economy

Mr ANDREW: My question is to the Treasurer. The latest report from the ABS shows inflation hit 7.3 per cent in the September 2022 quarter. Recent data from the ANZ-Roy Morgan index meanwhile is showing that consumer confidence in Queensland has crashed to historic lows. What steps is the Palaszczuk government taking to reduce inflation and the cost-of-living pressures in Queensland?

Mr DICK: We are proud as a Labor government to have delivered the strongest performing economy in the country. Two years ago, as we heard this morning from the health minister, this state entered its greatest peacetime crisis since the Great Depression. The strength of our health response to COVID-19 has led to our economic response, and that is the reality: the lowest unemployment in this state for 44 years, the biggest surplus in this state on record and more jobs created in this state than any other state or territory—more than 211,000.

We have rebuilt the strength of our economy when we anticipated double-digit unemployment, when we anticipated breadlines—people lining up for social security support and other mechanisms. All governments in this country responded to that, but the health setting of our government ensured that our economy was protected because we knew the wealth of our people was connected to the health of our people. Because of the leadership of our Premier, notwithstanding the calls of others to open the borders and let the virus in and let it run rampant in our economy, in our families, in our community, our government stood strong, and we protected our people and we protected our businesses, our industries and our economy as a consequence.

There are other forces at work, member for Mirani, that are beyond the control of the Queensland government. I cannot control a despotic leader of Russia who started a war in Europe—I cannot control Vladimir Putin—and that is one of the single biggest drivers of inflation in this country and increase in energy costs. That is just the reality, member for Mirani, and there is nothing that I as Queensland Treasurer nor the Queensland government can do to address that, other than taking effective steps to deliver the essential services that our state needs by not only a record investment in health care but also the biggest uplift in health care, the biggest investment in health infrastructure, the biggest investment in mental health in our state's history, the biggest investment in education in our state's history, and the biggest investment in transport and main roads. Our responsibility is to deliver those services for which we are responsible as a state government, to take pressure off families to ensure

they get the essential services that only state governments deliver. We will work with our colleagues in Canberra to provide the housing, to provide the other support mechanisms that our people need, as we work through this very difficult time of global instability and the ongoing risk of climate change.

(Time expired)

Cost of Living

Mr WHITING: My question is of the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts. Will the minister provide an update on how the Palaszczuk government is supporting cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders through investment in frontline services?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for Bancroft for his question and for his ongoing advocacy for frontline service workers, particularly those in our neighbourhood and community centres. I know that he is a massive advocate for them. I point out to the House that the 127 neighbourhood and community centres funded by the Queensland government are situated right across the state, including in regional Queensland. I can assure the House that those workers in those neighbourhood and community centres are not duds. It was absolutely appalling to hear earlier the member for Mudgeeraba talk about health workers in regional Queensland as duds. Every regional member of parliament on that side opposite should immediately call that out. They should immediately apologise to the people in their own regions, in their own electorates, for the appalling statement from the member for Mudgeeraba.

As I said, in terms of neighbourhood and community centres, the workers there are not duds. They are incredibly hardworking. They have done an incredible job during COVID, and they continue to do an incredible job right now in response to what we know is cost-of-living pressure. That is why in this year's budget we saw a record investment in our neighbourhood and community centres. The \$115.8 billion boost to government-funded neighbourhood and community centres included the biggest boost to their minimum operating funding ever. This investment secured a minimum \$230,000 base funding, almost double for the 127 government funded neighbourhood and community centres.

We also expanded the Community Connect worker program with a \$9.3 million investment, supporting 20 workers in those areas of greatest need, and we committed \$39 million to redevelop or construct new centres, which is alongside our commitment to community organisations who are at the front line helping people in terms of food security and other services.

What did we see from those opposite when they were in office? We saw cuts to the community services sector in Queensland: cuts to Foodbank Queensland, cuts to Volunteering Queensland, cuts to Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland. In fact, over \$340,000 was cut from Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland under those opposite. Wesley Mission Brisbane lost \$2.2 million as a result of their decisions. They do not back community workers and they do not back community services. We see that in the way that they treated community services when they were in office, and we see that in the way that they treat community workers. Let me tell the House, community workers in regional Queensland are definitely not duds.

(Time expired)

Queensland Health, Contractors

Dr ROBINSON: My question is to the Minister for Health. How much taxpayer money has the government wasted using contractors because Queensland Health electricians have been stopped from doing their job in Queensland hospitals?

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

Mrs D'ATH: This is an issue that started back in 2014 in relation to changes in the structure of statutory borders and who is employed by whom. Where they are employees of the Department of Health and they are doing work for the HHSs, there needs to be a contracting licence, and when there are employees of the HHSs doing work for other HHSs of the department, this has to occur. It has recently been brought to the attention—


An opposition member interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I will take that interjection. Nothing was done under the LNP when they were in government. It is ok; we are fixing it. The regulator has recently brought this to our attention. I believe that the application will be in in the next 10 days. It is complex to get the licensing arrangements correct to make sure that there are not issues with the different licences that are required, but we are working with stakeholders to rectify the issues.

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired. I will ask members who are leaving the chamber to do so quietly as a courtesy to the next member on their feet.

POLICE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

Introduction

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (11.16 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Disaster Management Act 2003, the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Police Service Administration Act 1990, the Police Service Administration Regulation 2016, the Weapons Act 1990 and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Community Support and Services Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2022 [[1764](#)].

Tabled paper: Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2022, explanatory notes [[1765](#)].

Tabled paper: Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2022, statement of compatibility with human rights [[1766](#)].

The main objectives of this bill are to deliver operational improvements and efficiencies for the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services by amending the Police Service Administration Act 1990, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Weapons Act 1990, the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 and the Disaster Management Act 2003.

It has always been and remains my expectation that the interactions between Queenslanders and members of the Queensland Police Service are always courteous and consistent with community values of tolerance and respect. Rightly so, Queenslanders expect much of their Police Service and, accordingly, they hold the members of the Queensland Police Service in high esteem. With that, however, also comes an expectation that the members of the Queensland Police Service will consistently be held to high standards. Let me be very clear: the examples that we have heard during the public hearings of the commission of inquiry are completely unacceptable, but it has been my experience that the vast majority of police officers treat their colleagues and the broader community with respect and are dedicated to keeping Queensland safe.

I will support, stand with and defend those people and the work they do every day of the week. I know the government and the community also support and are grateful for these police officers and police staff, especially in light of the dangerous, difficult and traumatic job that they do on behalf of all of us. But for people who do the wrong thing, there is no place for them in the Queensland Police Service.

It is important to note that the use of local management resolution is governed by QPS policy and procedure, and the application of local management resolution is already being addressed by the Police Commissioner. However, the government will carefully consider the recommendations the commission of inquiry might make about the police discipline system and consult all stakeholders about any need for legislative amendments during this term of government.

Today, the government is acting on the advice of the Queensland Police Service to strengthen Queensland's police discipline system. Many members in this House will remember the changes this government made to the police discipline system in 2019. The changes followed a review of the discipline system led by the Crime and Corruption Commission and agreed to by the Queensland Police Union, the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union, the Queensland Police Service, the government and the opposition.

Over 30 years ago Tony Fitzgerald asked us to remain eternally vigilant so that history would never repeat itself. The improvements to the police discipline system contained in this bill build on the Fitzgerald legacy and are an acknowledgment of the Queensland Police Service's commitment to continuous improvement. The government continues to monitor the new discipline system, making changes and improvements as the need arises. That is exactly what we are doing in this bill.

The amendments in the bill will enable the immediate dismissal of a police officer or police recruit when they are sentenced to imprisonment by an Australian court for an offence, including a suspended imprisonment sentence. This contrasts with the current position where a police officer may be

imprisoned in jail but not dismissed from the Queensland Police Service until all criminal appeals have ended and a police disciplinary investigation is finalised under part 7 of the Police Service Administration Act.

Unfortunately, the current process can take many months. This amendment will avoid the unacceptable situation where a sentenced and imprisoned police officer, who has chosen not to resign from the Queensland Police Service, continues to be employed until all criminal appeals have expired and the police disciplinary process orders their eventual dismissal. The dismissal power will not be dependent on, or delayed by, criminal appeals, the police discipline process or administrative reviews.

This amendment is a simple reflection of the standing that our police officers have in the community. We hold police officers in high esteem. We expect police officers to be professional and to hold themselves to the highest standards of behaviour. It is a nonsense for a police officer to continue in that role if they are a convicted offender imprisoned in jail. Dismissing a police officer or police recruit upon being sentenced to imprisonment simply is common sense and is consistent with community expectations.

The bill will also make a number of other amendments to ensure that the police discipline system continues to operate at maximum efficiency. The bill also modernises the Police Service Administration Act legislative framework through ensuring this act complies with contemporary drafting standards. This will include omitting provisions which are duplicated in other acts such as the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act.

This bill also amends the Weapons Act to allow for more efficient processing of weapons licences and permits to acquire weapons by the Queensland Police Service Weapons Licensing branch. Weapons Licensing has the responsibility of managing the regulation of weapons and weapons licence holders. Weapons Licensing receives thousands of applications for licenses and permits to acquire annually. On a weekly basis, Weapons Licensing receives an average of 350 new licence applications, 360 renewal applications and 1,000 applications for permits to acquire.

Although Weapons Licensing is predominantly staffed by Queensland Police Service staff members, the Weapons Act holds that an authorised officer must be a police officer, limiting Weapons Licensing's ability to use the full potential of the experienced staff it has at its disposal. This bill addresses this by allowing the licensing functions of an authorised officer under the Weapons Act to be delegated to a police officer or a Queensland Police Service staff member. This amendment is consistent with the practices adopted by other Australian firearms registries.

These amendments will provide certainty for Queensland Police Service staff members working in the weapons licensing area as currently there are no express provisions within the Weapons Act allowing staff members to act as agents or delegates of authorised officers. As a consequence, Weapons Licensing relies upon common law principles that permit decision-makers to act through their agents.

A further amendment in the bill will confirm that any firearm licences, renewal of firearm licences and permits to acquire issued by an authorised officer prior to the commencement of this bill will be valid. This will eliminate any concern that may be held by licence holders about the validity of licences issued in reliance of the common law principle. I would like to take this opportunity to place on record my thanks to the firearms industry, which has worked collaboratively with the Queensland Police Service and the government on this issue.

The bill also amends the Fire and Emergency Services Act to ensure all fire safety installations required for a building fall within the definition of 'prescribed fire safety installation' to streamline compliance activities and apply the building fire safety requirements, including the same penalties, to all these essential facilities. The bill also enhances data and information sharing between Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and the Queensland Police Service relating to the investigation of fires involving a death or serious injury. The bill contains a series of amendments to the Disaster Management Act and the Fire and Emergency Services Act to provide for online publication of notices about local fire bans, declarations of a state of fire emergency, guidelines for preparing fire safety management plans or notices about deemed approvals under the Planning Act during a disaster situation.

The bill also amends the offence of pretending to be a fire services officer, authorised rescue officer, emergency service unit member, State Emergency Service coordinator or State Emergency Service member in the Fire and Emergency Services Act. The amendment will extend the offence to include pretending to be a member of a rural fire brigade to provide the same safeguard to protect the

reputation of the Rural Fire Service that applies to the Fire and Rescue Service and the State Emergency Service. The bill also makes a number of other amendments to the Fire and Emergency Services Act to support the operations of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services.

When considering this bill it should be acknowledged that this bill does not amend vast tracts of law or make revolutionary changes to how the Queensland Police Service or Queensland Fire and Emergency Services do business. This should not detract from the importance of this bill. The bill introduces a number of changes, each of which is designed to bring incremental improvements to the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. Small changes can lead to big outcomes. Collectively, the amendments introduced by this bill will have a substantial impact.

We all rely upon the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to keep our family and our community safe. The personnel in these agencies have a difficult and sometimes very dangerous job to do. They do not need their work to be more complicated through unneeded legislative procedures or outdated provisions. This bill plays its part by ensuring that the legislative framework for the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services is operating efficiently, placing our emergency services in the best possible position to keep all Queenslanders safe. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (11.27 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.


Bill read a first time.

Referral to Community Support and Services Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Community Support and Services Committee.

HOUSING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (11.28 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Housing Act 2003, the Housing Regulation 2015 and the Retirement Villages Act 1999 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Community Support and Services Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 [[1767](#)].

Tabled paper: Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, explanatory notes [[1768](#)].

Tabled paper: Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, statement of compatibility with human rights [[1769](#)].

This bill will amend the Housing Act 2003 to support the Homes for Homes donation deed model in Queensland and amend the Retirement Villages Act 1999 to increase transparency, accountability and consistency of financial reporting in retirement villages. The Palaszczuk government is committed to supporting innovative ways to help deliver social and affordable housing. Every bit helps, and the amendments to the Housing Act 2003 will clear the path so that a community based organisation can do good work for people in need.

Homes for Homes is a not-for-profit social enterprise established by the *Big Issue* magazine. It generates funds from donations to invest in social and affordable housing. Funds are raised when a developer, home owner or other property owner agrees to donate a portion of the sale price of a nominated property or land to Homes for Homes.

In other jurisdictions the Homes for Homes model involves a property owner signing a donation deed and granting Homes for Homes an interest in their property which is secured by a caveat. The caveat reminds the seller of their agreement to donate at the time of the sale and remains on the title when the property is transferred; however, Queensland's land titling laws do not allow the use of caveats in this way. To clear the way for this initiative to expand into Queensland and deliver more

housing solutions for Queenslanders, the amendments to the Housing Act 2003 and regulation will enable the recording of an administrative advice noting the existence of a Homes for Homes donation deed on a land title. This will serve as a reminder to make the donation at the time of sale, enabling Homes for Homes to operate in Queensland as it does in other jurisdictions. The administrative advice does not give Homes for Homes any interest in the property. Any owner, buyer or future buyer who acquires a relevant land title and who chooses not to participate can withdraw the land from the initiative and terminate the donation deed at any time at their discretion.

Funds raised by Homes for Homes in Queensland will be allocated to social and affordable housing projects to grow the supply of housing that meets the diverse housing needs of Queenslanders. To help establish the initiative in Queensland, the Palaszczuk government will contribute \$500,000 seed funding to Homes for Homes, adding to the Palaszczuk government's investment of almost \$4 billion in social and affordable housing.

I now turn to the amendments to the Retirement Villages Act 1999 in the bill. Under the Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027, the Palaszczuk government is increasing protections for older Queenslanders living in retirement villages. The amendments to the Retirement Villages Act seek to deliver more consistent, transparent and accountable financial reporting by retirement village operators to residents and the department. They also benefit prospective residents when comparing villages and choosing a village. Seniors invest a significant amount of their capital to move into a village and, as residents, pay ongoing fees for maintenance and general services for operation of the village.

Village residents continue to tell us that financial transparency and accountability are very important to them. A new object in the Retirement Villages Act strengthens its purpose and commitment to Queensland having a financially transparent and accountable retirement village industry. A new head of power will enable a regulation to prescribe the form and content of financial documents such as the budgets for the general services provided in the village for village maintenance and for capital replacement as well as quarterly and annual financial statements, audit reports and quantity surveyor reports. Financial documents will be made clearer and more consistent by prescribing in the regulation requirements for particular information, how information is presented, the standards or principles to be applied in their development, village operator declarations or statements and disclosure notes.

The regulation will increase disclosure about shared expenses between a village and other onsite businesses or corporate head office or co-located aged-care service. It also allows for increased disclosure about operator related party transactions, operator liabilities to former residents and fund surpluses and deficits. Other amendments in the bill give residents increased access to draft budgets and quantity surveyor reports, which facilitates their engagement in the village budget process.

The amendments clarify ambiguity in the act and ensure more consistent penalties apply for offences relating to budgets and financial reporting. The regulator's communication with operators and residents will be enhanced by providing for the chief executive to make and publish guidelines to assist people to understand and comply with the Retirement Villages Act. An amendment regulation will contain the details for the new financial reporting requirements, noting its content and progress are subject to passage of the bill. The department will continue to consult with operator, resident and legal groups on drafting of the amendment regulation and financial guidance material. This guidance material is to assist operators, especially smaller operators, to implement the changes.

Continued stakeholder input will help ensure the new financial reporting requirements are administratively efficient and workable for villages of different sizes, tenures and corporate and management structures. The bill will give residents and the department a clearer line of sight over operators' financial reports to ensure that residents' money is properly spent and accounted for, ongoing fees are set correctly, and operators are accumulating the necessary funds for ongoing maintenance and, most importantly, for capital replacement. Together, the proposed act changes and amended regulation are expected to reduce complaints and disputes, as budgets and financial statements will be more transparent and accountable and operators will have clearer standards and guidance.

The bill delivers on our commitment to finalise reforms to village financial statements under the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025. It builds on reforms commenced under the Housing Legislation (Building Better Futures) Amendment Act 2017, stakeholder consultation and advice on standardised village financial reporting by an independent financial advisory and accounting firm in 2019 and further consultation on a 2021 draft amendment regulation, and it addresses issues raised in consultation with peak groups representing residents and operators. I have asked the department to take a supportive approach to implementation by industry where we will work with them closely to assist them to understand and implement new obligations.

To conclude, the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 will help increase the supply of social and affordable homes through new investment, partnering with the community housing sector, private industry and members of the community. The bill seeks to maintain public confidence in the retirement village industry by improving transparency, consistency and accountability of financial reporting and by striking a balance between consumer protection and industry viability. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. LM ENOCH (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (11.36 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Community Support and Services Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Community Support and Services Committee.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 26 October (see p. 3111), on motion of Ms Grace—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Before I call the next speaker, I remind the chamber of members on a warning. It might actually be quicker to read out a list of people who are not on a warning. They are the members for Pine Rivers, Currumbin, Mudgeeraba, Coomera, Buderim, Southern Downs, Nanango, McConnel, Murrumba, Capalaba, Kawana, Broadwater, Lytton, Mansfield, Redlands, Callide, Aspley and Whitsunday.

Mr BOOTHMAN (Theodore—LNP) (11.37 am), continuing: That certainly is quite a list! Last night I was talking about the importance of giving people choice. We would not be in this situation if the Red Union was giving resources to the Labor Party. If it was receiving resources, we would not be debating this legislation. I say to the Red Union: if you were negotiating with those opposite, they would be more than happy to get resources and funds. If they did, we would not be debating this legislation. But the Red Union want to do the honourable thing and have no political alignment whatsoever. They just want to represent their members and be a strong advocate for their members.

One example is the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union and the NPA. The NPA has seen an extensive increase in membership. That just shows that these organisations that are not politically aligned are proving popular—so popular, in fact, that it is worrying those opposite in terms of the money and resources coming into their campaigns. That is all this is about. There are parts of this legislation that have merit—

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Buderim, you are on a warning. You can leave the chamber for one hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Buderim withdrew from the chamber at 11.39 am.

Mr BOOTHMAN: There are parts of this legislation that do have merit such as strengthening laws when it comes to sexual harassment in the workplace. It is a shame that the government could not put these types of legislative changes in other bills and not tie them to this bill, because that certainly does have merit. As I said, there are certain aspects which should certainly be put forward. However, when those aspects are tied to a bill that destroys the rights of the worker to choose, then that is wrong.

We keep on talking about individualism. We keep on talking about the rights of people to choose. I remember back when Peter Beattie decided to deregulate the retail market for energy because he said that people needed to choose which energy provider they wanted—give choice. Why can the Labor Party not accept that there should be choice when it comes to industrial advocates for these professional associations? Why can it not accept that? It all comes down to money and resources.

Those opposite will rub their hands together with glee and excitement knowing that they are going to benefit in the long run if they can get rid of these organisations because it will force workers to go to a Labor aligned union for the protection of their right works. I have no qualms with unions whatsoever. However, I believe that there should be the ability to have competition in the marketplace. That is a fundamental belief, and there should be competition when it comes to this issue.


This bill also refers to delivery drivers. One issue that many of my local restaurants and cafes expressed to me was their concerns that these changes would have a direct impact on their profitability in terms of their ability to deliver their food services. If there is a limited number of delivery drivers, that will have direct repercussions on the ability of those cafes and restaurants at peak times to get food delivered. Therefore, that will have a direct impact because if people think that their food will be delayed—they could get it in 40 minutes—then they will not be happy and they will never use that service again. It is those local tourism cafes on the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast and Cairns that will be directly affected.

We need to tread carefully here. Before the election the Albanese government said that it was going to look into this matter. Why can we not wait for a national approach for this matter? Why are we going it alone and directly impacting our local small businesses—the cafes that we love to go and see which make good money from these delivery services, which employ young people in our areas and give those people their first jobs? But no. We are potentially going to directly impact them and their profitability. During the pandemic a lot of my local cafes relied heavily on these delivery services to survive and this legislation is just going to kick them in the guts. We should be ashamed of that. We should all be ashamed of that and those opposite should certainly be ashamed of that.

They should reconsider this position. Give those workers in the nursing professions and the teaching professions a choice. Whatever those opposite do, do not kick our hospitality industry in the guts any further because interest rates are rising and the economy will start slowing, as the federal Treasurer has outlined, and that will have direct ramifications on the ability of our local cafes to employ young people in our local areas. This bill is a bridge too far and I ask all members to vote it down.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Before I call the next speaker, member for Theodore, you used unparliamentary language. I would ask you to withdraw.

Mr BOOTHMAN: I withdraw.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.44 am): The Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill touches on many aspects of industrial relations and employment law. Importantly, the bill provides greater flexibility when it comes to parental leave, and in this day and age when parents are sharing much more of the caring arrangements for their children it makes sense that parents should be able to determine how they want to allocate parental leave within the family. The gender pay gap is an issue that continues to plague women in Queensland and I am proud that the changes to good faith bargaining will mean that detailed information on the gender pay gap must be provided and considered through negotiations for agreements. Transparency around the gender pay gap will go some way to being able to identify the issues and barriers that lead to a pay gap and, importantly, help us close it.

The bill is also focused on making sure that associations or organisations that are seeking to industrially represent workers are subject to the same rules and regulations as registered organisations. The amendments to the Associations Incorporation Act are essential to tackle confusion on the part of employers and employees regarding the ability of an entity to represent their industrial interests where the entity is incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act but is not a registered organisation under the IR Act. If an association wants to represent the industrial interests of its members, the bill ensures that those associations cannot avoid the obligations that come with being a registered organisation by instead registering as an incorporated association, and there are significant consequences for those associations under the IR Act that, among other things, falsely present themselves as having a right to represent the industrial interests of employees or employers.

Let us talk about why this bill is so important, and the best place to do that is to head on over to the website of the Red Union Support Hub, which at the top of the page states, 'Support without the politics'. There are a number of different organisations which people can join—the Nurses' Professional Association, the Teachers' Professional Association, the Professional Drivers' Association, the Australian Medical Professionals' Society, the Sworn Officers' Professional Association, the Independent Workers' Union and the Business Union. I ask: who are these organisations on this Red Union website? What kinds of entities are they? Are they unions, are they incorporated associations or are they companies?

The Industrial Relations Act has a number of obligations which must be met by industrial organisations, including having rules that set out how the organisation will function, elections to ensure transparency conducted by the ECQ, the conduct of officers who are honest and in the best interests of the organisation, financial reporting and other matters, including membership and financial management training.

The transcript of the public hearing of the Education, Employment and Training Committee in relation to this bill is interesting and at times entertaining and, quite frankly, unbelievable. A read of the transcript will show that not only was the member for Kawana taken to task quite eloquently by Jacqueline King representing the QCU but also the representative of the Red Union Support Hub does not appear to grasp the importance of transparency when it comes to representing workers. Mr Jack McGuire gave evidence that he is not only the managing director of the Red Union Support Hub but holds executive positions on the Australian Medical Professionals' Society, the Sworn Officers' Professional Association, the Independent Workers' Union of Australia and the Teachers' Professional Association, but he was unable to identify which other entities he was in fact a treasurer for. Quite confused he was about what his positions were.

There are three shareholders of the Red Union Support Hub—Mr McGuire and, in his evidence, Graeme and Kath—no last names. Mr McGuire believes that the shareholders are disbursed with wages but could not confirm and that the Red Union Support Hub is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Queensland Association Services Group and—wait for it—the Queensland Association Services Group is owned by Mr McGuire and the same Graeme and Kath. Mr McGuire advised the committee that elections, which are apparently conducted but for which no information was provided, are not conducted by the ECQ or the AEC.

Let us get this straight: those opposite have spent this entire debate saying there needs to be transparency and accountability and that they are not supporting these provisions because they believe that entities such as the Red Union Support Hub should be allowed to exist free of regulation and governance when those organisations, let us be clear, do not hold elections conducted by the ECQ or the AEC, they are unable to recall what positions they hold on the myriad of interrelated entities that exist and we do not know what their rules are or how they report their financial obligations. In short, we have no idea where the members' money goes. Let us talk about transparency and accountability. We have heard the fake outrage from those opposite about how legitimate registered organisations spend their money. Do members know how we know how they spend their money? Because there are rules in place where they have to disclose how they spend members' money. What about the fake unions? There are no rules or regulations in place so that those fake unions have to tell their members where their hard-earned money goes.

Last night the member for Kawana told me I needed to have a water and calm down. I have had a water but I have not calmed down because of the hypocrisy from those opposite claiming that this bill is all about making sure that there is less transparency and accountability. This is all about making sure that those organisations that purport to represent members industrially have the same obligations as every other union. That involves transparency about where members' money goes.

I have said in here before—many times, actually—that the member for Kawana was the worst Attorney-General in history. He was also the industrial relations minister, and given that they sacked 14,000 public servants he was also the worst IR minister we have had. Those opposite talk about these hardworking frontline workers and about their choice to join an organisation. When they describe them as duds working in regional Queensland this seems, again, a little bit hypocritical. It is clear that the members of the opposition are desperately conflicted.

How can the member for Mudgeeraba not be concerned about the lack of transparency across the Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland of which she is a member? What is she doing to ensure her membership fees are, in fact, being utilised for what they should be and are not being used to run anti-vax rallies outside 1 William Street? It turns out that these three characters we have heard about who apparently run these organisations, Jack McGuire and Graeme Haycroft, are not current members of the LNP—but they are former members of the LNP. These three individuals who run all of these entities are former members of the LNP. The LNP are not supporting these provisions because they do not want to know where the members' money is going.


We have heard from those opposite that this bill denies hardworking frontline members a choice. These organisations absolutely can still exist. They can go and be a company limited by guarantee, but they do not want to do that under the Corporations Act—because they have obligations around transparency and accountability under the Corporations Act. This is absolutely not about denying

members a choice, this is about these fake unions being able to set up as an incorporated association and have no transparency and absolutely no rules around their governance and being run by three individuals linked to the LNP. This bill absolutely does not deny freedom of association and freedom of choice. To say otherwise is absolutely incorrect.

These provisions are supported by the National Retail Association. These provisions are supported by the Australian Industry Group. Employers support these positions. The LNP comes in here and says this is just Labor cosying up to the unions. The employer groups, the industry groups, support this because they want certainty and they want organisations that are governed by strong regulation, accountability and transparency. It is absolutely outrageous that the LNP come in here and say that this is just about Labor cosying up to unions. The Queensland Law Society supports these provisions. The Queensland Law Society says—

It is incongruous that unregistered organisations can operate and attempt to exercise representational and other rights without the correlative obligations that registered organisations are required to comply with ...

Every other stakeholder supports these provisions except for the fake unions and the LNP. Even the Queensland Police Union said we need to crack down on these associations. This bill is a rejection of fake unions that have no accountability and no transparency. It is time we found out where members' money is going.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.54 am): I rise to address the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. In the more than 13 years that I have had the honour of representing the people of Glass House in this parliament there has been a lot of legislation debated. There has been a lot that has been technical and had bipartisan support. There has been a lot that was not technical in nature but had the best interests of Queenslanders at heart. There has been vigorous debate around some of the aspects of that legislation. I accept that when those opposite are in government sometimes they bring in legislation that I am ideologically opposed to, but I hope that underlying all of that is their intent to make sure that this state is a better state through the legislation they bring into this House. We have very vigorous debate. I can probably count on one hand though those pieces of legislation that come into this House that are amoral, dishonest, underhanded, shady and vindictive. I add this legislation to that list.

The Attorney-General said we are implying that Labor has cosied up to the union. It goes far beyond cosying up to the unions. Those opposite are owned by the unions—lock, stock and barrel. Those opposite take their marching orders from the unions. They bring legislation into this House because of the unions.

Mr Stevens: Puppets!

Mr POWELL: They are the puppets of the unions. I take that interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. They are totally infiltrated by the unions. Those opposite talk about the political membership of the associations. How many members of the CFMMEU or the ETU are card-carrying members of the Labor Party? I suspect every single one of them. If members want further proof of how infiltrated this Labor Party is by the unions we saw it this morning. They have also infiltrated the parliament itself. We saw on the balcony of Queensland parliament CFMMEU workers flying their flags. Is there no government building safe from these militant unions? Is there no workforce safe from these militant unions? There are staff in this parliament who deserve to know they can come to work and be kept safe. Instead we have protesters standing on balconies flying their flags, making gestures to staff and members of parliament alike that are inappropriate. I am calling that out. It is shameful and it should not continue to occur. Those opposite simply smile and continue to bring in this sort of legislation.

The Attorney-General also talked about how she had done some research on a number of websites. I have done some research too. At the end of the day this legislation is about removing the ability of non-Labor Party aligned employee organisations, what we call red unions, to represent workers in industrial relations matters. I thought the Labor Party had a proud record of allowing Queenslanders to represent their priorities. I went to the queenslandlabor.org website where it says: 'Working Queenslanders know that they once again have a government that places top priority in the dignity of work, job security and workplace health and safety.' They now need to add the following words: 'but only if you join a Labor aligned union that donates to the Labor Party'. It goes on to say, 'As a party, we believe in the values of equality, opportunity, fairness and reform,' but again they need to add, 'but only if you join a Labor aligned union that donates to the Labor Party'. It says, 'Labor ... has continued to stand up for workers' rights, and a dignified life for all Queenslanders.' They need to add to that line, 'but only if you join a Labor aligned union that donates to the Labor Party'. At the end of the day that is what this is all about.

I have immediate family members who are members of these associations. Why? It is not because I am a member of parliament who happens to be in the LNP. No. It is because, as professional nurses and teachers, they have looked at what they want out of an industrial association that will represent them and what they want is the indemnity insurance—

Mr Langbroek: Cheaper indemnity.

Mr POWELL: Cheaper indemnity; I take that interjection from the member for Surfers Paradise. They want to know that what they are paying is going to achieve that and nothing more. They want to be represented in an apolitical manner. They do not want either party, Labor or the LNP, to be representing their views. They do not want to have to pay \$400 extra for the privilege of handing that straight over to the ALP.

Mr Fumer interjected.

Mr POWELL: It is about money; I take the interjection from the member for Ferny Grove. It is about lining the pockets of the Australian Labor Party. This is about ensuring that they can continue to get their donations—hundreds of thousands of dollars—from the QTU, the QNMU, the CFMMEU and from all of the unions that continue to donate on a daily basis to the Labor Party and will continue do so.

I remind the voters in the electorate of Glass House and across the state that, on top of this legislation, we also have the donation cap laws that mean, for me and others in the party that I represent, the maximum we can spend is \$150,000 to continue to represent our constituents while those opposite can run a candidate, have the unions pile on and spend more than \$2 million doing the same. That is what this is all about. It is all about ensuring that they can continue to be funded—

Honourable members interjected.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Order! Pause the clock. Members, we have a lot of people on the list. Does anyone else want to join it? We will have silence, then.

Mr POWELL: They want to continue to be able to line the Labor Party's coffers so that they can continue to manipulate the outcomes of election campaigns here in the state of Queensland. We will get told that these recommendations were the result of a review. Let us put paid to that. It was a sham review. It was a Clayton's review. The media statement that was issued when the review was launched spoke only about sexual harassment. It did not disclose the true intent of the review to attack workers' rights to choose who represents them. Who was it chaired by? It was chaired by former Labor attorney-general and Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union director, Linda Lavarch. Who was the co-chair? It was John Thompson, who happens to have been the general secretary of the Queensland Council of Unions in 1995. If members want to know why this was a stitch-up from day one, it is because only selected organisations were invited to make submissions. The ones that this bill affects in particular, the red union associations, were not invited to make representations.

As other members have said, there are elements of this bill that we potentially could have supported were they in a separate bill, particularly those elements around sexual harassment. I reiterate what others have said: it has no place in Queensland workplaces and strengthening provisions in that area is well and truly supported. We do want to see all people respected. We want to see them treated with dignity. We want to see that occur for members of these associations, too. Those opposite are not extending that same courtesy to all teachers, nurses and frontline workers—workers who those opposite continue to go on and on about. They say they support them, but clearly not. Those workers have made a decision to join these associations and those opposite should respect that rather than criminalise it.

I want to touch briefly on the changes around gender-neutral language. Again, others will have used these words: I want to make sure that women do not have their identity erased. They need respect. They need to be valued and they need equality. By removing some of this language you are actually devaluing women. I have said in this chamber before that I am surrounded by amazing and incredible women starting with my wife, my mother, my mother-in-law, my daughters, my staff and my colleagues. I am surrounded by them. By changing this language you are devaluing them. I will not support that.

I come back to where I started: this is a further indication that the Palaszczuk Labor government is completely owned, completely infiltrated and completely at the service of the unions in this state. If it were not then we would not be debating this legislation. It is shameful, it is immoral, it is dishonest, it is underhand, it is shady, it is tricky, it is vindictive and it needs to be thrown out.

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (12.04 pm): I rise to speak to the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I and, I am sure, all members on this side of the House are very

proud to bring to this place more reform that backs working Queenslanders and that adds to the list of significant reforms such as the wage theft reform and the legislation that we brought to this House to restore workers compensation laws, to licence labour hire, to enshrine protections for tradies and the list goes on. This is another important chapter in Queensland's nation-leading reforms to protect Queensland workers. For almost two centuries, Queensland workers have shown that they are stronger when they stick together. The union movement in this state has stood up for the rights of workers to decent, secure jobs with good conditions. They have done that alongside Labor governments, whether it has been standing up for the eight-hour work day in the 1850s or fighting to keep our energy assets in public hands.

These amendments to the IR Act read like a who's who of true Labor values. This bill improves upon existing employment standards, further promotes collective bargaining and continues our efforts to close the gender pay gap. I will start by commenting on the gender pay gap and the amendments to the Queensland Employment Standards to make them comparable to those outlined in the National Employment Standards in the Fair Work Act, ensuring Queensland keeps pace with community expectations. All members of this House will know that I have served working Queenslanders not only as a member of this place but also as an organiser of a trade union. Never have I been prouder, more determined or more inspired than when campaigning alongside the working women of this state for pay equity.

Importantly, these changes include modernising terminology around parental leave entitlements, ensuring the entitlement to all prospective parents, and providing them with the time and support that they need during an important time of change in their lives. We acknowledge that nothing can take away the grief and pain that a family suffers with the devastating loss of a stillborn baby. In another important change, the bill provides those parents with equitable access to parental leave provisions under the act. It is hoped that these amendments allow them time to grieve their loss, to recover with dignity and to deal with their loss with privacy, without the pressure of having to return to work before they are ready. Further amendments give parents real flexibility in parental leave because, on this side of the House, we recognise that every family is different.

The bill also addresses the repositioning of the gender pay gap, moving it from one of the last agenda items when it comes to bargaining to one of the first agenda items. The rights of women have never been an afterthought for our government. They are always our top priority. Our reforms mean that they are now at the top of our priorities when it comes to bargaining as well. As a result, wage-related information on the gender pay gap will be required as soon as practicable after bargaining commences, bringing much needed transparency and accountability to address gender pay equity through the bargaining process.

I congratulate the Attorney-General on her remarks and for calling out fake organisations that purport to represent working people, as we heard just a moment ago. As she and other speakers on this side of the House point out, it is important that industrial organisations uphold a high and uniform set of standards. Our act sets rigorous reporting requirements for registered organisations to ensure transparency and accountability about where members' money goes—

Mr Power interjected.

Mr Perrett interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Logan and member for Gympie, cease your cross-chamber chatter.

Mr de BRENNI: Those standards ensure that all members of Queensland trade unions can rest assured that the organisations—the unions—that they are members of demonstrate good governance practices.

Queensland unions meet these high standards, but unregistered associations and those others just do not. They are simply not subject to the same level of accountability and reporting—that is a fact. This opens the door to their misrepresenting their registration status and their ability to represent the industrial interests of workers, something I am sure those opposite would prefer, especially the members for Broadwater and Mudgeeraba.


These fake unions have been active—we know that—working away insidiously in the shadows, putting our COVID health response at risk, using their grey zone to undermine good working conditions. Our reforms make it clear that any such misrepresentation will be subject to penalties, penalties that are determined by an independent umpire, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. As the Attorney said, if they were really serious about representing workers, they could meet the rules just like

everybody else. Let the record forever show that the Liberal National Party came into this House as part of this debate and advocated for organisations that trade in the shadows. That is so incredibly dodgy.

The Palaszczuk government is proudly a government for all Queenslanders. Whether they live in Coolangatta, the cape, Coorparoo or Cloncurry, they deserve a fair go. I am pleased to be a part of this Labor government that is backing workers no matter their work status or where they live. The reforms in this bill that set new standards of work for independent courier drivers are important to take note of as well. I acknowledge Professor Emeritus David Peetz from Griffith University for providing his insights and for teaching me and a number of members of this House so much about how working people properly organise and make such a positive contribution to this state, nation and our world. He highlighted issues as part of this process for transport workers including: long hours, the low average hourly rates of pay, and higher debt levels for owner-drivers and business owners linked to a propensity that forces them to take unnecessary risks, that forces them to skip breaks just to make ends meet.

The provisions under Chapter 10A will address these matters, providing safer roads for all Queenslanders and better jobs for those drivers. We heard about how important the independent five-year review was. There has been widespread support for these reforms. We have seen employers, registered employee and employer organisations, peak councils and the legal profession all put their support behind these reforms. There is only one organisation that has put its opposition to these reforms on the table; that is, the Liberal National Party, still keen to back fake unions.

I commend the minister for bringing these reforms forward for all members on this side of the House to support, because standing up for Queensland workers and backing Queensland workers is union business and it is this government's business, too.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (12.12 pm): I rise to speak on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The primary objective of the bill is to give effect to the Queensland government response to the 40 recommendations of the *Five-year review of Queensland's Industrial Relations Act 2016: final report*. The bill which as we have already heard from the shadow industrial relations minister, the member for Kawana and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, which the LNP will oppose, will give legislative effect to 31 recommendations. As others on this side have said, the bill is based on a flawed review of the legislation. That is pretty simple when you look at who the reviewers were, former colleague Linda Lavarch, former attorney-general.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I take the interjection. She may be respected but, when doing a review and you come up with what the government clearly wants you to come up with, it is a question as to whether it is a flawed review. Obviously with Linda Lavarch who is also Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union director doing it as well as the former general secretary of the Queensland Council of Unions, John Thompson—

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Logan, you have had a pretty good run. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr LANGBROEK: I heard the member for Logan, when reference was made to John Thompson, saying, 'Johnno, yeah, great bloke, Johnno.' That is the sort of relationship that members on the other side of the House have with someone who is supposedly an independent reviewer, someone elected as the general secretary of the Queensland Council of Unions in 1995.

As others have pointed out, only selected organisations were invited to make submissions. For example, the red unions were not invited. I refer to an article from the *Brisbane Times* dated 24 July 2022 titled "'Radically anti-union': Qld Labor accused of trying to freeze out new worker groups', by Matt Dennien. The article refers to the Red Union Support Hub, RUSH, associations including the Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland being forced to fly 'below the law' if the proposed industrial relations amendment package is passed into legislation.

Given the last few years of dealing with a global pandemic and the publicised hospital ramping fiasco, if there were ever a time the government should support our nurses it is now. The article goes on to mention—

Retail and Fast Food Workers Union secretary Josh Cullinan, who made a submission and appeared before the ... committee ... said that the power to effectively ban a worker from having representation of their choice was a "bizarre and outrageous intrusion" that was "radically anti-union [and] anti-worker."

Cullinan said the decision in the Gilbert case "makes [it] plain [that] changes are not required", with the fix instead a tweak of definitions in the Queensland law and the banning of associations being used "as cover" for a for-profit entity.

However, he said—

... the Queensland Labor approach is anathema to a modern democracy or a genuine labour government.

I table that article from the *Brisbane Times*.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Brisbane Times*, dated 24 July 2022, titled “‘Radically anti-union’: Qld Labor accused of trying to freeze out new worker groups’ [1770].

Mr Power interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: No, it is actually from the *Brisbane Times*, member for Logan. Here we are emerging from a global pandemic where nurses, teachers, police and independent courier drivers were pushed to their absolute limits to care for the sick, educate our children, enforce unprecedented laws and deliver our pizzas and they are not covered by this government’s proposed industrial relations amendments. There are a number of amendments to this bill. The bill amends the definition of an industrial matter to include the sexual harassment or sex- or gender-based harassment of an employee in the workplace, enabling the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, QIRC, to exercise its powers to conciliate, arbitrate and make interlocutory orders or interim injunctions in such matters.

The bill amends the definition of ‘misconduct’ for the purposes of dismissal to include sexual harassment or sex- or gender-based harassment. Occasions for summary dismissal, that is dismissal without notice, are limited to theft, assault and fraud. This bill makes it clear that, if an employee sexually harasses another person, that would make it unreasonable for the employer to continue the employment during the period of notice set out within the Industrial Relations Act.

As others have said, sexual harassment has no place in Queensland workplaces, and strengthening provisions are supported. If the government had not shackled it to anti-worker and anti-democratic measures, it could be supported. We want to see all people respected and treated with dignity at work. We want genuine action to prevent and prosecute sexual harassment.

The bill also makes amendments to bring entitlements into line with the prevailing conditions in the Fair Work Act. These include providing employees with greater flexibility when taking unpaid parental leave by being able to take up to 30 days unpaid flexible parental leave within the first two years of the child’s birth.

The bill also makes a number of amendments throughout the act to update the language to avoid gendered divisions of parental care. For example, ‘maternity leave’ is replaced by the term ‘birth related leave’. Being a proud father of two daughters I can say that women do not need to have their identity erased; they need respect, value and equality. By removing some of this language, the government is devaluing women.

The committee report notes that the department stated the adoption of gender-neutral language in relation to parental leave was recommended by the review report to modernise the provisions, ensure consistency with the Fair Work Act and contribute to gender equality. However, the Commonwealth’s Fair Work Act groups birth related leave together for both parties. It still identifies the pregnant employee as female, still uses the word ‘maternity’ in reference to special maternity leave which relates only to the pregnant employee and still refers to ‘she’. The section this bill most significantly removes all gender-specific language for is section 63 which is entirely about the pregnant employee. It is not talking about the partner or a surrogate parent; it is the pregnant employee, and that means we are talking about females.


The bill empowers the QIRC to make orders setting minimum conditions for independent courier drivers in the transport industry. The amendments permit the making of contract determinations and negotiated agreements covering independent courier drivers, principal contractors and relevant registered organisations. Transport operators such as Deliveroo and DoorDash and stakeholder groups such as the Queensland Trucking Association have all raised concerns about the bill’s provisions regarding minimum conditions for independent courier drivers. These concerns include the added regulatory burden of state-based industrial relations provisions, as opposed to a national standard, and the different needs of workers in this area, which range from food delivery drivers in the gig economy through to long-distance line-haul truck drivers.

The bill is an attack on democracy as it seeks to outlaw employer organisations—red unions—that do not support the ALP either financially or otherwise. It is an attack on freedom of association. It is unjust that nurses and teachers be punished for voting with their feet and joining an association that may sometimes stand up to this ALP government and better suits their needs.

We heard from the Manager of Opposition Business that one of the concerns with lower costs is often around indemnity insurance. It is fairly obvious in the portfolio that I used to represent as minister for education that the Queensland Teachers’ Union frightens teachers into believing that they need this

indemnity insurance when there have been very few cases of teachers being sued by anyone and needing the indemnity insurance that the Teachers Union provides. They are frightened into having it, and the union takes a significant chunk of that money given that very few teachers ever need that insurance. Very rarely will these people be left to their own devices. Indemnity insurance is something that these professional associations have been able to deliver far more cheaply but now that is being outlawed.

Nurses and teachers have the right to be represented by anyone they choose in the commission unless it is in competition with the QNMU and the QTU. The government justifies this action by saying that it is a recommendation of an independent five-year review of the act. As mentioned earlier, this review was led by Linda Lavarch and John Thompson—a former ALP minister and member and a former ALP Council of Unions president—so any claims of independence are farcical. This is about trying to increase the left-wing ALP favouring campaign take. Monopoly unions mean wealthier ALP unions, better funded ALP campaigns and those opposite know it. They are gloating in it. They just want to see those opposite who are supporting this bill re-elected.

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (12.22 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The Palaszczuk government is committed to the transparent and effective representation of industrial interests within Queensland's industrial relations system. The changes to the act contained in this bill provide clear distinctions between registered employer and employee organisations and other bodies that are not registered under the act who seek to represent employees.

The bill acknowledges the primacy of the role registered employer and employee organisations play. It provides protection against those who make false and misleading claims about being able to represent the industrial interests of employers and employees under the act. The bill makes clear the distinction between organisations that are registered under the IR Act and represent the industrial interests of employees and other entities that are not registered under the IR Act and cannot properly represent workers' industrial interests in our industrial courts or in collective bargaining.

The bill also responds to the rise in misrepresentations by entities that purport to represent workers without meeting the registration requirements under our Industrial Relations Act. It does this by making it unlawful to make false or misleading representations that these unregistered organisations have the right to represent a person's industrial interests. Unregistered associations—call them red unions, call them fake unions—are simply not subject to the same level of accountability and reporting that properly registered industrial organisations are. This opens the door to them misrepresenting their registration status and their ability to represent the industrial interests of their members—the people they are taking money from. These reforms make clear that any such misrepresentation will be subject to penalties, as they should be, which are to be determined by an independent umpire—the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. The reforms also ensure that, under the Associations Incorporation Act, there are consequences for incorporated associations that falsely present themselves as having a right to represent the industrial interests of employees under the IR Act.

The bill also makes amendments to the IR Act to address the misrepresentation of services by paid agents and some legal practitioners in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, the Queensland Industrial Court and the Industrial Magistrates Court. The policy intent of the Industrial Relations Act regarding agents was to allow for unpaid advocates like friends or colleague to provide assistance and support to people who are involved in industrial matters. However, recent cases before the commission and the courts have revealed that some agents are charging fees which is clearly inconsistent with the intent of the IR Act.

In written submissions to this bill, the Hon. Justice Peter Davis, President of the Industrial Court of Queensland, and the Queensland Law Society stated that there is an urgent need for the regulation of agents who charge a fee to represent Queenslanders in the QIRC and Industrial Court and are not legal professionals. Justice Davis cited the example of a recent case in the Industrial Court in which an agent represented a party to the case but failed to advance the interests of the client because 'he simply did not have the skill to advocate for the applicant'. That is absolutely shameful. To combat this unscrupulous and predatory conduct, the bill clarifies the existing provisions in the IR Act which require the commission or court to grant leave to agents to represent people. The amendments provide that the relevant tribunal must have regard to both discretionary considerations in deciding whether to grant leave and mandatory considerations where leave cannot be granted.

With this bill the hardworking people of the Bundamba community and workers right across Queensland will now be protected from what are, in my opinion, predatory con artists who have been deliberately flouting the law. These red unions work hand in glove with the LNP. Their hierarchy has

strong connections with the LNP. Their leader was a former chair of the LNP industrial relations committee. Their predatory model is basically a ponzi scheme. That is why they do not want registration. If they were registered they would be outed by the regulator.


These organisations are driven by greed and self-interest. They are deliberately opaque through complex arrangements that are designed to expressly avoid regulation through exploiting loopholes in the current regulatory system. There is no transparency or accountability to the public or to their members. In fact, they hide where their members' money goes. We have seen evidence of this opaqueness thanks to the member for Redlands who, during her contribution, tabled documents which clearly draw the links to the LNP. Ultimately, the true purpose of these organisations is to attack the strength of proper unions and to attack the strength of the true collective power of ordinary working people.

By supporting these red unions and opposing this bill the LNP is continuing a longstanding war on Queensland workers. We have seen it here at the state level and we have seen it at the federal level. After eight long years of the LNP in federal government wages have flatlined or gone backwards. It is the same government that has created a cost-of-living crisis and left us with over \$1 trillion in national debt. There have been deliberate strategies to suppress the wages of ordinary workers, and key to that was attacking registered industrial organisations like unions. All of this at the federal level was aided and abetted by the state LNP, which sat silent while their federal counterparts waged a war on the wages and conditions of ordinary working Queenslanders. In this debate there have been attempts to hide behind the spurious arguments of choice and competition. There is plenty of choice when it comes to unions, and there is plenty of competition when it comes to unions and registered organisations.

When it comes to industrial reform here in Queensland there is a stark choice between the Palaszczuk Labor government and the LNP. The Palaszczuk Labor government introduced labour hire licensing laws, a national first. That was opposed by the LNP. We introduced paid domestic and family violence leave—again a national first, again opposed by the LNP. We introduced industrial manslaughter laws, the first state in Australia to do so, and guess what? That was opposed by the LNP. We made wage theft a criminal offence. The LNP opposed the wage theft inquiry.

Here in Queensland we have delivered nation-leading wage increases in the public sector and a strong framework that protects the rights of workers. Whether it is the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace, paid domestic violence leave or more progress towards true gender equity in the workplace, there is only one party in this chamber that will stand up for the rights of workers, and that is the Palaszczuk Labor government.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Before calling the next speaker, member for Gympie, you were warned about interjecting across the chamber. You are now warned under the standing orders.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (12.32 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill was introduced into the Legislative Assembly and referred to the committee on 23 June 2022. The committee received 35 submissions.

As set out in the explanatory notes, the bill's primary objective is to give effect to the Queensland government's response to the recommendations of the so-called independent *Five-year review of Queensland's Industrial Relations Act 2016: final report*. The first thing to note about this report is it was conducted by the former Labor Party government attorney-general Linda Lavarch, so not only do we have a review being conducted by someone with an obvious bias but, unlike the committee process, any submitters to the formation of this bill were by invitation only. This is how this Palaszczuk government formulates policy: selected submitters or have participants sign a confidentiality agreement. This would appear to be becoming a common trait with this government.

Whilst there are some aspects of this bill that are able to be supported, the attack on a worker's choice of industrial representation is simply outrageous. We have just heard the member for Bundamba talk about different pieces of legislation which he alleges the LNP opposed. The sexual harassment section of this bill is fully supported. The record will show that we voted against this bill, but that part of this bill is fully supported. Sexual harassment has no place in the workplace. I see there are schoolchildren in the gallery above us here, including young girls, and we want them to be respected in the workplace. We support this section of the bill but, as stated by the shadow minister, we will be opposing this bill because of its attack on a worker's right to choose who represents them.


This legislation is specifically targeted to remove the ability of non-ALP aligned employee organisations—or the red unions, as they are called—to represent workers in industrial relations matters. This is a direct attack on the right of workers to have a choice in who represents them. That is a right that every Australian should have and it should not be taken away by this chamber.

The bill is an attack on democracy. It seeks to outlaw the red unions that do not support the ALP either financially or otherwise. The government justifies their actions by saying it is the recommendation of an independent five-year review. As I stated earlier, it is hard to put much credence in a review that was co-chaired by a former attorney-general and member of the Labor government, Linda Lavarch, and co-chaired by John Thompson, who was general secretary of the Queensland Council of Unions. When you have these two as co-chairs, what do you think the result is going to be? Exactly what we are presented with: an attack on anybody who is not part of a union that supports this government. As I stated, the original review did not provide an opportunity for public submissions, which means that any consultation was limited to registered unions and other entities that would support the review's predetermined outcomes.

This is not the first time we have seen legislation like this come into the House. In my time here we have seen a number of these pieces of legislation that support the encouragement of union participation. We saw the union encouragement legislation come into this House. When the Deputy Premier of this state, Dr Steven Miles, has a doctorate in union encouragement, what sort of legislation do you think is going to come into this House? We have large amounts of money pouring into the Labor Party to be used on their campaigns. We saw the CFMEU make a significant donation and recently we saw them storm 1 William Street. The Premier will not give up that donation. The federal government is talking about excluding the CFMEU from discussions on industrial awards at the federal level, so the federal government has recognised this is a union that is out of control but this Palaszczuk government has not.

Donation laws were another thing we saw come in here. They were aimed at this side of the House only. They did not have any impact on unions. Unions can contribute to their heart's content. It was against donors that would support this side of the House. We went to compulsory preferential voting. That was changed with 17 minutes notice in this House because the government saw it as an advantage to themselves to get Greens preferences to get their members across the line. There is no way this government cannot say they are completely conflicted with this legislation. Every one of them owes their seat to a union in some fashion, shape or form. If they want to stand for parliament they have to have the support of a union to get preselected. If they want to raise money to win a seat in this place they need to get money from a union to do it. If they want to sit in those seats over there, the unions decide who will take their place in those chairs after an election has been won. The unions control this party lock, stock and barrel. This parliament has become a plaything for this government. Pieces of legislation like this, which are for the distinct benefit of the Labor Party and its members, is a disgrace. That is why we will be opposing this bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Before calling the next speaker, I would like to recognise the former member for Lockyer, Ian Rickuss, who has joined us in the chamber today.

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (12.38 pm): It is such a pleasure to follow on from that passionate contribution from the member for Condamine. I start by commending the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to the House. One of the key objectives of this bill is to support effective representation of employees and employers by registered industrial organisations and maintain the integrity of the registration framework for industrial organisations. Having been a union official in a registered industrial organisation—a real union—I know just how badly this reform is needed. Conservatives through this debate masquerade their support of allied scab unions as a choice—a choice for workers. This is never about choice.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Pine Rivers, did you use unparliamentary language there? Can you assure me you did not?

Ms BOYD: I will just withdraw. They say this is a choice for workers. This is never about choice; this is really about division, about dodgy organisations aimed at weakening a collective to benefit the enterprise. This is just about another form of union busting, and it should be called out for what it is. This is dangerous, it is exploitive and it needs to stop because Queensland workers deserve better.

I have seen firsthand how this is deployed—a promise of equivalent representation, only for workers to find when they are at their most vulnerable that they do not get the support they need, they cannot have proper representation and they are not properly advocated for. These organisations are just shonky businesses and they are a stain on our society, and I am proud to vote for reforms that will

scrub them from existence. They are not unions. At their very best they are not even associations; they are mysterious, nebulous private organisations. They are a scam, and lurking all around the fringes of these shonky operations are those opposite. They have their little sticky fingers all over it.

I commend the committee for their report and the minister for bringing this legislation forward. This legislation lays bare the insidious practices of these fake unions and their even dodgier foundations. These unions have the most tangled webs of association, with private interest executive holders and indeed the conflicts of interest that have been outlined in speeches by government members. This is truly bottom of the barrel.

I want to pick up on some of the points that have been made by previous speakers. I start with an interjection from the member for Gympie last night, where he claimed to be a member of a union. I automatically presumed it was the Shooters Union. I checked his register and it turns out that the union he was referring to was AgForce, a registered union of employers. I looked a little further because it is not a registration currently on the QIRC website. I have since learnt, through a simple Google search, that it was deregistered from the QIRC on 14 February 2020. I can inform the member for Gympie, as he is a member of this organisation, that the AGM unanimously resolved to deregister themselves as a union of employers in the Industrial Relations Commission. I see the member for Gympie's eyebrows are very highly lifted at the moment so this may be news to him. I advise the member for Gympie to have a look at the Register of Members' Interests and make some adjustments in that regard because something that happened—


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Pine Rivers, there are procedures if you are making an accusation. I suggest you move on and come back to the long title of the bill.

Ms BOYD: Let me move on to the member for Hinchinbrook. The member for Hinchinbrook last night talked about Labor aligned unions and how there were members of his community who did not want to be married to or tied to Labor aligned unions. The party that the member for Hinchinbrook is a member of received a \$20,000 donation from the CFMEU on 20 May 2019. For the member for Hinchinbrook to come in here and say that proper industrial unions are a problem because they are aligned to the Australian Labor Party, yet be a recipient of funds through his political party from those same unions, I think is most egregious. I think that is worth putting on the public record as well.

I want to talk about the provisions around pay equity in this bill. I commend the minister for bringing forward the collective bargaining considerations around gender pay equity. I got involved in the labour movement from working in a female dominated industry that remains to this day underrecognised and underpaid. Despite fighting for the better part of 20 years on this campaign, that still remains. We know that this kind of systemic problem requires a big change, often a legislative change. It is something that I remain committed to and I am proud to be part of a government that is implementing change like this that will shift this to a priority and front of mind. I support this change because it will deliver fairer outcomes to some of our state's most disenfranchised workers.

In modern Australia it is not unusual to have working families where the mother works and the father stays at home, such as my family. We value the diversity that exists in our communities, and that diversity extends to families that do not look like the nuclear family. We know that if we avoid gender neutral terms we may also avoid any implied gender division of parental care. Further, I completely support the bill extending access to parental leave by introducing an entitlement to parents of stillborn children to parental leave and raising the age limit of a child for adoption leave and cultural parental leave from five to 16.

Finally, it is with profound disappointment that we continue to see instances regarding sexual harassment and discriminatory conduct in workplaces right across the state, and disturbingly even in our workplaces of parliament. We often see motions from the crossbench and we have seen some allegations out of Canberra that are truly horrendous. It is clear that workers need stronger provisions, and I am proud to be part of a government that delivers on it. These changes will create a society with a stronger fabric and more connected and cohesive family units. They are policy changes that demonstrate that we are a government with heart. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (12.47 pm): Some heart the CFMEU has, when we saw them recently storm the transport department office, and I note that the majority of the members opposite have not condemned those actions. Why would they, when this particular union has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars over a number of years to Labor? Let me come to what matters here. We believe that workers have a right to choose their union, to belong to a union or not to. They should not be forced, through a lack of choice, to only be able to have a union that is aligned to, or that is predominantly donating to, the Labor Party.

When we have raised this issue in parliament, I have watched the demeanour and I have heard the interjections from those opposite. I have seen their actions when we have said that this legislation is not about the rights of workers. This legislation is about a slush fund for the Labor Party and a payback for all the campaign assistance given by those particular unions. Those unions are now having their competition locked out of the market. They are removed as a choice for workers who want and need the opportunity to have professional indemnity and advice with respect to industrial relations but who do not want their union dues, their workers dues, handed over to a union that will go out and campaign politically. Whether these workers are politically aligned or not, they should not be forced by a lack of choice to have to donate funds via this mechanism to the Labor campaign.

We have seen that as much as \$400 more is coming out of the pockets of workers, such as nurses and teachers, and is being channelled to the unions in this state. There is quite a difference between what it would cost to run a union versus the money they are charging people. When my colleagues were talking about how this is a rort and a slush fund mechanism of payback for the Labor Party and how it was going to help their campaigns, we saw the Minister for Industrial Relations literally rubbing her hands together and others chortling. I can still see the smiles on their faces.

This is what is wrong. Industrial relations and the opportunity to choose your union and those who represent you should not be about this power play of Labor, abusing and overreaching here in Queensland. We have seen more and more abuses and overreach of power. Because they have the power in a unicameral parliament, they just figure, 'We are going to do it anyway.' It is going to keep entrenching them in power because they have also watered down and changed the campaign donation laws.

We saw at the last election that certainly there have been caps in donations, but also caps in respect of expenditure, except if you have a third party. What happens if you have multiple third parties in this case? Unions who are donating to the Labor Party or running parallel campaigns that are directly attacking the LNP and promoting the Labor Party have this other mechanism where they have distorted the donation laws and the campaign rules, once again to entrench themselves in power. This takes gerrymandering to the worst level we have ever seen, and it has to be called out.

I saw at the last election advertisements that, on first blush, you would think, 'That is a Labor Party ad,' but when you click through to the links you found it was in fact a union that donates or in this case provides a parallel campaign to support the Labor Party. Potentially you can have some seats where the candidate who is endorsed, say, by the LNP or maybe another non-Labor Party, may be capped on what they can expend in their campaign, and certainly capped with donations, but their competitors, by virtue of the fact that they could be joining together in a chorus of activity with the various unions, can outspend 10 to one legally. Their hands are tied behind their backs. There is not a level playing field—and that is the gerrymander.

This is what this government is about. It talks integrity and does the opposite. It rorts the system by abusing power. The overreach in this parliament that we are seeing with this legislation is breathtaking. They have no shame. They think it is a wonderful joke. It is like kids under the Christmas tree unwrapping the presents, except these are the presents that they are delivering up to their union mates which in turn entrenches them in positions by a lack of balance and a lack of a democratic process. It has to be called out.

I want to reiterate that I do believe there are some provisions in this legislation which are not offensive and which we support, as my colleagues have outlined. Why on earth would they roll them into this piece of legislation? It is because it is politics rather than about the principle or the policy that has been talked about, such as the sexual harassment provisions, as my colleague and the shadow minister and deputy leader, the member for Kawana, Jarrod Bleijie, outlined earlier.

Let's talk about the gender-neutral language in what they are doing. I am proud to be a woman, and it is something that I do not want to see erased by the language of this woke brigade who do not have respect for women and want to remove them off the statute books. They want this gender-neutral language which I think is offensive to the majority of women. It has to be called out. This is a government where there are attacks upon integrity. We saw what they did where—

Mr Skelton interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Pause the clock! Member for Nicklin, you have had enough warnings. You are now warned under the standing orders.

Ms SIMPSON: This government's attacks upon integrity and statutory office bearers in this state is also breathtaking. We had a situation where the former integrity commissioner raised concerns about matters that were happening within her office and how she was treated—a statutory position which is

independent. The concerns that she was raising were extraordinary, and this government once again were silent in respect of the concerns she was raising publicly which I believe amounted to bullying against that independent officer and yet behind the scenes the actions of this government were black op teams going around, background briefing against the Integrity Commissioner. We also saw their actions in respect of the former state archivist who spoke out about some of the integrity issues of this government.

Mr KELLY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I know there has been a wide latitude in relation to this, but none of this has any relevance whatsoever to the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Maroochydore, I draw you back to the long title of the bill.

Ms SIMPSON: The next point relates to integrity and productivity and is directly related to this legislation as well, and that is the fact that the Queensland Productivity Commission was also axed for speaking with voices that the government did not want to hear. They certainly do not want to hear the voices from those workers who do not want to have their choice of unions removed by this action. This is a government that is going to ban or make illegal the use of some of these alternative unions that are not aligned to the Labor Party because they do not like competition. I believe those workers should have the right to have access to those alternative unions. Why shouldn't they? I belonged to a union. A number of years ago I was a journalist. People can debate how powerful it was; it probably was not. A lot of journalist jobs have disappeared over the years, in fact. I think the majority of people who have come out of some of the organisations I have been associated with are now working for the government.

An opposition member: It might be all of them.

Ms SIMPSON: Yes, it is a retirement home for journos who have found that their jobs have disappeared or they got a better offer and, boy, doesn't the government know how to pay up big when it comes to building up their personal media machine.

This legislation is offensive in so many ways. It tries to dress up some issues that we have outlined that we support, such as the sexual harassment provisions, but why on earth would they put them in here? Because it is a red herring. We do not support the removal of the rights of workers to have these alternative unions operate. We do not support the fact that this government is so in bed with some of the most outrageous behaviours of the worst of the union movement. There are other unions that do not do this, but what the CFMEU has done in this state which has not been called out by this government and what they did when they stormed the transport office just down the road was outrageous. They have been on this precinct as well, waving their protest flags, which is a matter of concern.


I want to say that people should have the right to choose. They should not be forced by this government. We have to call out what is essentially Labor's way of creating this slush fund when they are so desperate. It is overreach. I believe the public will see that this government is so desperate, to overreach, to do whatever it takes to stay in power, while we see a culture of bullying that has been called out also from the public servants who have been treated so appallingly under this government. This government say they are there for the worker and then they do the opposite with this bullying culture, which in turn creates a situation where we lose good people who we need in the Public Service. We have services which we see in a number of hospitals, as one example, where they do not want to work there and the patients and the public are the ones who lose. It is time that people were put first, that workers have a true choice, and that there is transparency and accountability. This legislation does the opposite.

Debate, on motion of Ms Simpson, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 12.57 pm to 2.00 pm.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Princess Alexandra Hospital, Accreditation

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.00 pm): The Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane is a flagship facility in Queensland and, in fact, right across this country. It is the only Queensland hospital with more than 1,000 beds. It is a proud facility staffed by proud clinicians. Imagine for a moment that the PA Hospital's accreditation to train anaesthetists is under threat. Imagine the potential flow-on effects: theatre lists being slashed and junior doctors potentially left stranded with nowhere to train. Honourable members need not imagine it because it is happening. So real is the threat of accreditation

being lost that the only way the hospital can maintain it is by slashing the number of surgeries performed each day. That is a fact. It is outlined in a damning email to staff at the PA Hospital, which the opposition has obtained, and it paints a troubling picture.

This is what the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists told Queensland Health. According to the leaked email, the college indicated that the PA Hospital was not providing adequate supervision, was changing rosters excessively, was not providing adequate clinical support time—and here is the kicker—the department was not staffed in accordance with the college's guidelines.

Under the threat of having its accreditation withdrawn, the only way for Queensland Health to salvage it was to slash the number of surgeries performed at the PA. That means Queenslanders miss out. They miss out on vital surgery for which they may have waited months, some even years. It is someone waiting to have their cataracts removed, it is someone waiting for their knee replacement and it is someone waiting for a shoulder reconstruction. The Palaszczuk government is losing control of Queensland Health and it is patients like them who are paying the price.

What is really troubling about all of this is it appears the minister did not even know about it. After being questioned by the opposition this morning, the minister painted a very rosy picture of the accreditation being renewed sometime in June this year. Minister, you had best wipe the smirk off your face that you wore this morning because this damning email well and truly—


Mr STEWART: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is common—and we were reminded by the Speaker today—that comments need to be directed through the chair, and I believe the member on her feet was not actually doing that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): I will remind the member to put all comments through the chair.

Ms BATES: The email well and truly shows that things have deteriorated since then. The email, sent in late September, went on to say that it would be disingenuous to offer a time line of when the problem would be resolved. That is in stark contrast to the minister's comments this morning, who seemed to think the problem was fixed. This is the situation at the PA Hospital because of the accreditation bungle: patient safety was potentially compromised; people to this day are missing out on their surgeries; and clinicians are scrambling with what little resources they have. If that is the minister's idea of the situation being 'fixed' then the minister is even more out of her depth than any of us could ever have imagined. Minister, it is over—

(Time expired)

Energy and Jobs Plan

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (2.03 pm): The Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan means a future of clean, reliable and affordable energy. It will power good jobs and new industries and its benefits will be felt across our vast state. It delivers security on two fronts: electricity reliability and job security for workers. Since its release, there has been a long line of leading voices welcoming the government's Energy and Jobs Plan and our vision for a clean energy future. The Clean Energy Council said—

This plan will put Queensland in front of the game as far as becoming a global leader in clean energy transformation.

The Queensland Resources Council supports the transition to a lower emissions future and the vision to be an energy superpower. The Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland said the plan would 'support our businesses' and community's viability and create opportunities now and into the future'. The Australian Energy Council calls it a significant reform and WWF said it is a once-in-a-century investment for a global renewable energy superpower.


There is one group that has been fairly silent on our Energy and Jobs Plan and that is the LNP opposition. I have certainly searched. I googled 'Energy and Jobs Plan LNP', 'Energy and Jobs Plan Crisafulli', 'Energy and Jobs Plan LNP are you out there' and not much emerged. I did manage to find a vague statement from the shadow minister for energy, who was quoted as saying, 'Queenslanders would still have a few questions to ask.' Great! I certainly have not seen those questions asked here in this chamber. Those opposite have been too busy asking the health minister to intervene and make clinical decisions in our hospitals and call regional health workers 'duds'. I still have questions about the 'fake Bradfield' scheme and the 'LNP road trip to nowhere on the Bruce Highway' upgrade debacle, but no-one is answering those.

Meanwhile, it was time to broaden my search to 'renewables and LNP' and I struck gold, starting with Senator Gerard Rennick—wow, could not find a frozen lamppost he has not licked! You need to navigate your way through a lot—and I mean a lot—of anti-vaccination posts before you find these

jewels. He said, 'A whopping 1,200 billion insects are being smashed to pieces by the wind turbine blades every year ... won't someone think of our food supply?' What? He also said 'too much money has been invested in wind and solar' and 'climate change is junk science'. I had to stop reading after that because I needed a shower.

We then have Senator Matt Canavan, who seems to be doing a side gig for the nuclear energy lobby, who also shared some interesting thoughts. He said, 'Climate change has not weakened our national security but climate change policies have,' and, 'Renewables are the dole bludgers of the energy system'. Wow, inspired! When I think of bludgers, I could not help but find the latest from the former member for Callide, now the federal member for Flynn, who made another stunning first speech in the federal parliament rejecting that climate change is man-made and declaring hydrogen as 'extremely dangerous' and 'extremely flammable'. Wow! If members of the opposition do not fill the silence they will soon find it filled by the likes of Rennick, Canavan and Boyce, but maybe that suits them just fine.

Urannah Dam

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.06 pm): In my maiden speech I talked about the importance of water and, in fact, I called my maiden speech 'Just Add Water'. The centrepiece of course was the construction of the Urannah Dam in my electorate. My support for that project has not wavered since that time. It continues to this day because that is a dam project that does stack up. It is a dam project that offers massive opportunities not only for that Bowen-Collinsville area but also the broader North Queensland area. In terms of agricultural development and hydropower, it is a project that could be the cornerstone of North Queensland not to mention the jobs it would create during construction and ongoing after.


Whilst the LNP committed to that project in the lead-up to the 2020 election, those opposite would not commit. What they did do was throw a lot of barbs. Of course, the then resources minister called on Scott Morrison to deliver on Urannah. In May 2020 it was the Premier who was quoted in a media release as saying 'progressing projects like this will help to secure our state's future'. In fact, it was on 7 May 2020 that the Premier said that and she mentioned Urannah's potential to create up to 1,200 full-time equivalent jobs during construction and 675 full-time jobs once operations have commenced. Ironically, it was on that same date that the project was declared a coordinated project by the Coordinator-General. Surely that is not coincidence.

After the federal budget this week we do know that Labor no longer supports this project. Despite all the claims and the media stunts by those opposite, Urannah has fallen victim to the Prime Minister and his razor gang. The rug has been pulled out from beneath the feet of Collinsville and Bowen, and we will not forget that when it comes to the next election. It confirms what we have known all the way along that this mob do not build dams in Queensland.

I have news for this Labor government and their mates in Canberra. Despite their best efforts, Urannah is not dead. Whilst the project may take longer to complete, Bowen River Utilities and organisations like Bowen Collinsville Enterprise will do what people throughout regional Queensland have done for seven years: they will get on with the job and they will make that project happen, not with Labor support, but despite them.

This is a project which must be delivered for the future of Queensland and which must be delivered for the future of North Queensland. We are determined to make it happen.

Ipswich Jets, Awards Night

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (2.09 pm): I was pleased to attend the 2022 Ipswich Jets awards night, held at the North Ipswich Reserve Corporate Centre on 22 October. Most members would be aware that the Ipswich Jets are an outstanding Rugby League club, having produced players of the quality of Allan Langer, Kerrod Walters, Kevin Walters, Chris Walker and Gary Coyne and, more recently, Maroon great Kurt Capewell and future Maroon Sam Walker, but the Ipswich Jets is not just a Rugby League club; it is also a champion netball club and competes in the HART Sapphire Series and Ruby Series. So when the Jets have an awards night it is both a Rugby League awards night and a netball awards night.

Since 2019 the Ipswich Jets have competed in the HART Sapphire and Ruby netball competitions and are a feeder club to the Queensland Firebirds. The awards given to Ipswich Jets netball players on the night included: Jets Netball Emerging Jet of the Year, Sapphire Series, Jess Laga'aia; Jets Netball

Emerging Jet of the Year, Ruby Series, Renee Cubby; Jets Netball Players Player, Ruby Series, Naomi Solomona; Jets Netball Players Player, Sapphire Series, Ashleigh Ervin; Jets Netball Best and Fairest, Sapphire Series, Siobhan Shirlaw; Jets Netball Best and Fairest, Ruby Series, Sam Ryan; and Jets Netball Club Spirit Award, Kiara Condon.


The Ipswich Jets Rugby League awards presented on the night included: Ipswich Jets Hostplus Cup Tyson Lofipo Emerging Jet of the Year, Lucky Pokipoki; Ipswich Jets Hostplus Cup Walters Family Players Player and Ipswich Jets Allan Langer Award, Nathaniel Neale; Ipswich Jets Hastings Deering Colts Jaydon Adams Memorial Foundation Emerging Jet of the Year, Samuel Inoke; and Ipswich Jets Hastings Deering Colts Brendon Marshall Players Player and Parcell Family Best and Fairest of the Year, Samson Sauaso.

Club awards presented on the night included: Ipswich Jets Keiron Lander Community Award, Josh Chandler; and Ipswich Jets Danny Coburn Club Person of the Year, Danny Coburn. It must be an extraordinary situation when somebody receives an award named in their honour. It was also announced that TAE Aerospace would be the club's major sponsor in 2023, taking over from Savige Pest Control.

Sadly, there were some retirements announced on the night, including player and club captain Nathaniel Neale, Colts coach Chris Ash and club trainer Danny Coburn. All will be missed and all have left their mark at the Ipswich Jets.

When I received my invitation to attend the awards I was advised that I could bring a guest, so I invited my good friend John Brown, former Queensland and Australian Rugby League representative player and Queensland Sheffield Shield cricketer. I was so proud to have him there on the night.

Federal Budget, Agriculture Industry

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (2.12 pm): Federal Labor's budget has failed agriculture. It confirms that Labor is not a friend of agriculture and of everyone who lives, works and invests in our regions. National Farmers' Federation President Fiona Simson said the budget is 'wanting when it comes to some of agriculture's greatest challenges'. She said—

We can't turn a blind eye to the pressure this is putting on household budgets. There are steps the Government can and should take ... like improving access to labour, bolstering supply chain infrastructure, and securing our access to water.

There are cuts to major infrastructure like Urannah Dam and Hells Gates Dam, the cancellation of the ag visa and the 50 per cent rise in electricity prices. Whether in Canberra or Brisbane, Labor has no clue about agriculture, about rural and regional communities. At least federal Labor recognises that biosecurity threats exist but, as AgForce CEO Michael Guerin said, more needs to be done to protect farmers. He said that the budget had failed to deliver on its clear election promise to do more to establish a sustainable and secure funding stream for Australia's biosecurity system. For years I have warned about biosecurity risks, yet under Minister Furner animal welfare and biosecurity officers have been cut over successive years. It is either ignorant or deliberately indifferent. Federal Labor is no different. Michael Guerin said—

The time has come for Labor to put its money where its mouth is and make the long-term commitment to biosecurity that it promised voters.


He warned—

... there are a host of diseases and pests lurking in the shadows, poised to attack our crops, pastures and livestock at any moment, and it's frustrating that the Government is yet to deliver on its election promise to deliver long-term sustainable funding arrangement to keep this country safe.

I have been visiting primary producers across our state. Whether in Bowen, Ayr, Mareeba or the Atherton Tablelands, calls to act on labour shortages are unanimous. Today's *Queensland Country Life* has an article headed 'Lack of workforce holds agriculture to ransom'. Labour shortages and skyrocketing costs are impacting grocery prices at the checkout. They are pushing up fruit and vegetable prices on supermarket shelves.

Labor's cut of the ag visa is politically motivated, misguided and reckless and will make things worse. Labor's election commitment to cover worker travel costs under the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme will be replaced by underwriting the scheme. It is a broken election promise. Growcom called the underwriting scheme a 'poor consolation prize'. AgForce said it was 'rubbing salt into the wounds of the loss of the ag visa initiative'. The labour crisis is a major barrier to farm production, and without a real solution production costs will continue to rise and consumers will be hit with even higher grocery prices. Labor is failing agriculture, failing consumers and failing rural and regional communities.

Energy and Jobs Plan

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (2.15 pm): It was an historic and welcome moment for Queensland recently when the Premier announced our bold new Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan. Ambitious and achievable, this plan includes a renewable target of 70 per cent by 2032, just 10 years time; and the beginnings of the Queensland SuperGrid to connect up renewable energy sources across the state, unlocking new storage opportunities and increasing capacity. Members may not realise, but I was an electrician in the industry, and I cannot tell you how excited I am by the initiatives in this plan. I think this speech will need a sequel, because I could talk for a while on this subject. Today I will just talk about pumped hydro and the conversion of our coal-fired power stations into clean energy hubs.


We should all know that we have had the Wivenhoe pumped hydro power station as part of our state owned generation mix for decades. I know it well. In a previous life I was a site facilitator/supervisor for the rebuild of Mt England switchyard, which connects Wivenhoe to the grid. Wivenhoe, from memory, has a generation capacity of about 500 megawatts and can run for up to 10 hours on the current water supply from Splyard Creek. Wivenhoe pumped hydro station was critical in stabilising the network when the coal-fired unit at Callide failed recently. With two more of these pumped hydro stations, which dwarf Wivenhoe in capacity, coming online—like big batteries that can provide generation when the sun is not shining and the wind is not blowing—they will provide a lot of security to the network.

Our existing publicly owned coal-fired generators will transfer over to clean energy hubs, with workers' jobs guaranteed. Whether that means retaining the existing turbines as synchronous condensers, which basically take the place of a large capacitor bank and serve to balance the state's load against inductive loads like electric rail, or repurposing the power stations to different forms of generation, as well as the clean energy hubs providing manufacturing opportunities, there will be plenty of jobs continuing in these stations and in the towns that service them.

Of course, connecting all this will be a major upgrade to our state transmission network to make the whole system more secure. I know that those opposite see system stability and built-in redundancies as gold plating, but I for one like the idea of having backups in our system for when Mother Nature sends her worst along. I can tell you that my old industry is pretty excited about this work coming. The renewable future is electric—pun intended.

It is not just words. With the newly opened renewable energy training centre and a hydrogen training centre coming as well, we are ready to train the tradies to do this work. I am nearly out of time. I just have to say: this is an historic plan. I am so proud to be part of the Palaszczuk Labor government delivering. I would like to thank all the stakeholders. It is awesome.

Federal Budget, Health Funding

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (2.18 pm): Last sitting week we heard the worst ever news on Redland Hospital: under the Palaszczuk government the hospital experienced the triple hit of the worst ever ambulance ramping of 73 per cent, promised hospital upgrades stalled and claims of a misleading of a government MP by Queensland Health officials.


Just when we thought it could not get any worse than worse ever for patients and hospital workers, has federal Labor's first budget taken things to a new low? Instead of the federal budget steadying the ship of the stalled Redland Hospital upgrade by clearly confirming the promised federal funding for the hospital, the budget fails to make clear—at this stage at least—if the federal \$30 million is actually in the budget. My hope is that it is. If the funding though has been cut, then the worst ever could be even worse. I imagine none of the 160,000 Redlanders are okay with the current stalled upgrade and no-one wants Labor's stalled upgrade to become the shelved upgrade. Labor governments have a history of overpromising and underdelivering at Redland Hospital, so it is important that the Albanese government budget provides that certainty for this vital hospital upgrade. It is not yet clear if funding is in the federal budget for the promised Dunwich harbour upgrade and road projects like the Wellington Street-Panorama Drive upgrade that is federal and council money as well as the hospital, let alone any dollars for things like the Cleveland line duplication.

One would think the state government might know—if the right hand talks to the left—so while Henry Pike is interrogating the budget in his federal role, I have asked some questions this week of our relevant ministers in the hope of confirming the funding is indeed there at least for the hospital, however unclear at first look. Hopefully the health minister will provide more meaningful answers than to date on the record bad ambulance ramping, the stalled hospital expansion, the new time line for construction

of stages 1 and 2 and address the extraordinary claims made by a government MP to the media of being misled by Queensland Health officials and why the minister said that the Metro South board was not at fault in contradiction to the other extraordinary statement that the Metro South health board should be sacked.

The health minister dismissed the call for sackings and seems to have ignored the claims of misleading by Queensland Health officials, but the health minister offered no reasonable explanations to the public for these extraordinary events. So now I am demanding answers of the health minister this week about the promised \$30 million federal funding that is meant to be for Redland Hospital. Is state Labor going to stump up the shortfall if there has been an Albanese health cut, or has the stalled upgrade become the shelved upgrade? The minister must answer these questions or resign.


Education Week; Wulguru State School, Diamond Jubilee

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (2.21 pm): I rise to speak about education. Yes, it is Education Week. I want to thank all of our professional teachers right across the state of Queensland for educating Queensland's future leaders—teachers, health workers, engineers, tradies, the list goes on. I also want to personally thank all of the teachers in the seat of Mundingburra who are doing an exceptional job educating our young people of tomorrow. I also want to thank my future son-in-law Dave Ashby, who is a teacher here in Brisbane doing excellent work educating tomorrow's leaders. This year's theme is 'Realising the Potential of Every Student', and that is what our teachers do in this state each and every day. They give our young people motivation and belief that they can achieve anything through their excellent education right here in Queensland.

I want to name one school in particular, the Wulguru State School, which is celebrating its 60th birthday this year. This is a diamond jubilee celebration for a school that has educated thousands of young people who have grown up in the area and they, too, have sent their children to this school. In some cases, three generations from a number of families have attended this highly respected school. I want to publicly thank Wulguru State School Principal, Ms Tracey Kenway, and her team of professional educators and support staff for the exceptional work that they are doing educating and caring for our young people from Wulguru and adjoining suburbs. I also want to thank the school for the excellent collection of school photos and school history which it has collected for many years and shared with my office just recently. It even has the original letters from when the minister first declared the school 60 years ago as a school. The school is always well maintained and presented by Mr John Walsh—an excellent job by John—and I thank him on behalf of the community for the work he does in maintaining the school to a very high standard.

I have sent out a community newsletter this week acknowledging and celebrating the Wulguru State School diamond jubilee and sharing a little bit about the school's history and inviting the broader community to come along to celebrate with the school community from 4 pm on Friday, 4 November, with just over a week to go until the big event. Minister Grace, we would love to see you there celebrating with the school and celebrating the 60th birthday with the broader community. I will be there with the school team to meet former students and to hear their stories from their days at this fantastic school. Happy 60th birthday to the Wulguru State School.

Sunshine Coast, Rail Infrastructure; Housing

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (2.24 pm): On Tuesday the federal Labor government delivered its first budget. Dismal for Queenslanders is being nice, with more than a billion dollars in cuts for critical Queensland projects. However, it was a surprise to hear the transport minister advise the Queensland parliament that the much needed Sunshine Coast direct line, formerly called CAMCOS or the Beerwah to Maroochydore line, was still included when he said—

... a confirmed \$1.6 billion initial funding allocation on the Sunshine Coast direct line ...

He said that that was part of the federal budget. That is good news indeed—if true. Maybe he has a telescope rather than a microscope because it is hard to find where it is in the budget papers and it is so far into the forwards, but I table some Queensland Parliamentary Library research.

Tabled paper: Queensland Parliamentary Library and Research Service, Research brief, dated 26 October 2022, titled 'Sunshine Coast rail—budget references' [[1771](#)].


I asked the library to try to find the funding in the federal budget and it could not. However, it is great to have the Queensland minister's commitment that the feds are going to fund it. The previous coalition government had committed \$1.6 billion towards the project, with funds outlined in the March budget.

I do welcome the transport minister's commitment that the feds are committing, but what about the state? It is time now for the state transport minister and for this government to commit their funds—the fifty-fifty—that is required to see this project get underway and be built in time for the 2032 Olympics. The project is needed regardless of the Olympics, but if we do not see this government commit state funds it will not happen. Now the onus is on this government to stump up and give a commitment to the funds and a time frame so that it can be constructed. The longer this project is delayed the higher the costs, especially in this high-inflation environment that we are living in. I will say it again: it is time for rail to Maroochydore to get on track, to be built and to connect the Sunshine Coast to South-East Queensland with this new line. The state Labor government is running out of excuses. When will it commit the funds? It must do this.

On another matter, in the midst of a housing crisis, the state's answer is a wrecking ball, huge waste and great trauma by proposing to knock down brand new homes beside the Bruce Highway at Dohles Rocks Road north of Brisbane as part of the highway upgrade. It is not enough that the state has the second highest inflation rate in the nation, but hardworking people who have been building their homes and putting their dreams into their new homes have now been notified of this absolutely heartbreaking news. They are the human face of the failure of this Queensland government to do the planning and to get it right, and that is why we have a housing crisis in Queensland.

(Time expired)


Cooper Electorate, Emergency Services

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (2.27 pm): A Labor government will always back our frontline workers. One thing that I know for sure is that you will never hear any member on this side of the House refer to regional frontline workers as 'duds'. I absolutely condemn the words spoken by the shadow health spokesperson this morning. A Labor government will also always back in our emergency services, and we have seen that promise delivered again this week. Yesterday the minister announced a major enhancement to Queensland's fire and emergency services, including a restructure, hundreds of additional staff and a \$400 million funding boost over four years. It was great to catch up again with local SES workers Shaz, Adrian and Davina, whom I first met at the Newmarket depot during the February flooding event. We spoke about the need to get our community storm-ready coming into another La Nina summer season. The response from them of course on this was simple: clean your gutters, tie down loose objects outdoors, monitor and respond to the weather predictions.

Today I really want to lend my support to our wonderful officers at the Queensland Police Service, in particular the great working relationship that our office has with The Gap and the city stations with officers including Sergeant Jose Sarmiento; Senior Constable Wendy Fletcher; Sergeant Shane Dan; Senior Constable Matt Forrester, who recently took up a role with the CPIU; station administrator Jo Webster, who has been at The Gap forever but not as long as Chris Pemberton, who has been the OIC of The Gap for 17 years, which is impressive; and Inspector Corey Allen. A lot of us would know of Corey. I have had a lot of interactions with him. He is amazing. For those who have the chance, check out his TED Talk on how he responds to youth offending in particular.

Since being elected I have worked closely with the QPS. We have held community safety forums, both in person and on zoom. We have organised numerous Coffee With a Cop events which have had great attendance from our community. People have responded well to the data behind what is happening in terms of crime trends and, importantly, the strategies that we know make a difference in target-hardening our community. The need for people to be safe and to feel safe is one of my greatest priorities. It is why I work closely with our QPS team and why we respond immediately to local crime trends. It is concentrated action like this that has enabled our suburbs of Ashgrove, The Gap and Paddington to be amongst the safest suburbs in this state. I put on record my thanks to the local crime prevention teams in The Gap and the city. It is only a Labor government that will back in, defend and invest in our police and emergency services. We have seen that commitment reiterated this week. I look forward to continuing to work with the guys at The Gap.

Surfers Paradise, Touting

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (2.30 pm): The contravention of council touting by-laws is a uniquely Gold Coast problem. This means it is yet another problem that Brisbane Labor does not get. With pubs and clubs in the night-life precinct trying to find their feet after the pandemic, touting has become an issue. My constituents have shared numerous incidents with me of pub crawl staff behaving inappropriately. I table a time sheet made from security camera footage outside a Surfers Paradise nightclub.

The footage captures people working at booths walking onto council property when they are dealing with potential customers or touting. These staff members consistently call out to people walking past, offer free drinks as an enticement to buy a ticket on the club crawl and approach people who are at times discomfited. These examples are in violation of local law 5.1, the distribution of business advertising publications and touting, as well as part 6 of the Liquor Act, specifically 14ZZC. Where is the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation amidst our residents' and tourists' frustration? I table an answer to a question on notice I asked on 11 May this year which highlights the lack of law enforcement.


Tabled paper: Bundle of documents relating to investigation and prosecution of licensed venues and pub crawl workers on the Gold Coast [1772].

Five months later and there have been no public signs of increased presence. The Labor government has dropped the ball with licensed premises. In May it was to do with assaults on hardworking police in Surfers Paradise by drunk patrons exiting licensed venues; now touting has reared its ugly head as yet another issue OLGR has neglected to resolve. I have stood in this House time and time again to suggest that the OLGR should be doing more to ensure the responsible service of alcohol and safety of those frequenting the Surfers Paradise nightclub precinct. There are now fewer prosecutions.

The 2019-20 period saw three prosecutions, 15 charges and \$11,000 in fines. The 2022 reporting period, covering nine months, reports only three prosecutions, three charges and a meagre \$2,500 of fines. Warnings by Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation related to licensed venues are down 30 per cent from pre-COVID levels. The total number of warnings issued by the OLGR is an issue of real concern. There were 215 warnings in the first comparative period, a drastic contrast to 111 for the first nine months of this financial year. At this rate we will have numbers heading to 148 by the end of June compared to 215—a 30 per cent decline.

There are fewer inspections when you compare the first three-quarters of the 2021-22 financial year to the 2019-20 financial year. There are 205.7 OLGR full-time-equivalent staff in Queensland who routinely undertake liquor compliance inspections. The Gold Coast has 10 of these. Locals question whether this is sufficient for an area with such a concentration of licenced venues and two safe night precincts. There needs to be more monitoring of licensed venues and checks about RSA. These trends are not our friends. Residents deserve to feel protected. We do not need less from the OLGR; we deserve more from the Brisbane-centric government.

Cost of Living


 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.33 pm): Cost-of-living pressures are putting a lot of strain on individuals, families and households right across Queensland. When it comes to communities in my electorate, combined with the extra burden of remoteness and low socio-economic status, cost of living continues to widen the gap for social and economic prosperity in the region. While I acknowledge the pressures that cost of living has on households across Queensland, communities of the Northern Peninsula Area and the Torres Strait Islands are slapped with triple the cost and are paying a huge price for remote living.

The Torres Strait and the Northern Peninsula Area covers some of the most disadvantaged and complex communities in Cook, but even with that in mind, they are the most hardest hit communities when it comes to protecting their lifestyle. We know the impact that remoteness has on true economic growth and development. This leads to a lack of economic opportunities available for locals which underlies the high unemployment rate across the region. Just saying that, one can see that already communities are operating at an economic loss. Trying to protect your lifestyle is almost like waking up to fighting a losing battle every day. There is no denying that low to average income earners in the Torres Strait and NPA are doing it tough to keep up with everyday expenses.

For most communities there will only be one shop, one fuel bowser, one airline company and one freight company. I will say this, and I say this in the most respectful way: their prices are not doing my communities any favours. The monopoly, while great for providing essential services, does not provide any competition for options. Food prices are ridiculously high—still contributing to chronic diseases and other health problems; fuel prices are three times more than places like Cairns; the increase in freight costs restricts the option of freighting goods into communities; and airfares, even under the government's Local Fare Scheme, for some reason are still unaffordable, especially when compared to other travel costs in other areas around the state. There are many examples and there is not enough time today to discuss them all.

When our Premier made the important announcement to support a cost-of-living summit in the Torres Strait later this year, I, along with my communities, celebrated the announcement because we finally get to tackle a longstanding issue to influence positive change into the future. The Torres Strait and NPA cost-of-living summit is set for 7 December and I am given the wonderful opportunity to co-chair the summit with Minister Grace Grace. I am looking forward to having some robust discussions with government and key stakeholders around this important longstanding issue to unpack the challenges and come up with some tangible solutions. Change starts with good quality leadership. I want to acknowledge and thank our Premier and the Queensland government for supporting this very important initiative to influence positive change in the region.

Energy Plan

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (2.36 pm): For two years I have called on this Palaszczuk government to deliver an energy plan. In September it was finally delivered. While I and all Queenslanders are pleased to finally see some sort of forward planning, it is fair to say that this plan has raised more questions than answers. The plan states that the \$62 billion plan will deliver 70 per cent renewable energy by 2032 and 80 per cent renewable energy by 2035. This would include 12 gigawatts of new large-scale wind and 10 gigawatts of large-scale solar.


What the plan does not say is how the government will achieve these predictions or how they will be funded. Queenslanders deserve confidence that this is not a PR exercise designed to get this government to the next election in 2024. Queenslanders rightly deserve to know the KPIs to deliver the infrastructure that they have committed to. I am informed the turbines required for these projects can have over five years in construction lead time. Significant development in transmission infrastructure will be required, let alone the land agreements for such works. Make no mistake, this will be an extraordinary task.

The government has recognised that it needs baseload power and part of this plan will see two large-scale hydro projects constructed, Pioneer Burdekin and Borumba. The minister may not realise this, but there will be significant infrastructure works required before any dam works can even start. The total spend of this renewable plan is, as I said, \$62 billion. We all know this government's appalling record when it comes to overseeing large-scale projects, whether it be Cross River Rail or the Rockhampton Ring Road, which has gone from \$1 billion to \$1.7 billion before a sod has even been turned.

The Premier and her energy minister must answer the following questions: what is the funding model; how much is the federal government committing and has the minister reached any form of agreement; how much will the state contribute; how much will the private sector contribute; and what actions will be taken by this government to inspire confidence for the private sector to invest. The Pioneer Burdekin project is \$12 billion alone. This government has committed it to be in operation by 2035, without a business case, resurreptions of land or even any community consultation. Given this government's abysmal track record, how can any Queenslanders possibly believe them.

This week the federal Labor Treasurer confirmed household electricity prices will rise by over 50 per cent in the next two years. The government's energy plan, on the other hand, says Queenslanders can expect lower electricity prices. Only one of these statements can be correct. The federal Labor Party was elected on the premise that they would reduce electricity bills by \$275. Queenslanders will not forget this broken promise.

Housing Summit

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.39 pm): Last Thursday I had the privilege of attending the Queensland Housing Summit. I want to thank the Premier for bringing together this event and encouraging everyone to contribute ideas. More and more Queenslanders are facing housing stress and homelessness. They urgently need this kind of leadership to quickly deliver housing solutions. Housing is an essential human right. Secure long-term housing is a basic starting block that enables us to lead fulfilling lives and pursue meaningful goals such as education or starting a family, a career or a small business.

In Ipswich, the housing problem is very bad. Families are living out of their cars, bunking in with relatives in overcrowded dwellings or pitching tents in people's backyards. It is not just a problem affecting those on the lowest incomes. Even average wage-earners with excellent tenant histories are applying for dozens of rental homes only to be knocked back time and time again.


The pressure on Ipswich housing and homelessness services is immense and they are facing a growing caseload of clients. I take this time to acknowledge the extraordinary work being done by our housing services, including the Ipswich Housing Service Centre, inCommunity Inc., STARH Wesley Mission and all the other housing agencies at the coalface of this housing crisis in Ipswich that I work with. I know it is not easy but I do greatly appreciate their commitment, their hard work and their advocacy. They need to know that it is making a big difference to people's lives.

The Queensland Housing Summit aimed to deliver tangible housing solutions. We have already made some major decisions including an additional \$1 billion investment boost to our Housing Investment Fund. This will help build 5,600 new social and affordable homes by 2027. It will fast-track approvals for emergency housing for people impacted by natural disasters, which will be essential as we head into another wet summer. We are doing an audit stocktake of state owned land to see what can be unlocked for housing and faith-based organisations are undertaking a stocktake of their own land holdings to see what they can provide.

The Commonwealth budget, handed down by the Albanese government on Tuesday night, sees more relief on the horizon. I was delighted to learn that, after almost a decade of shameful neglect under the Morrison government, this government will commit to delivering one million homes over five years from 2024 under the new National Housing Accord as well as a number of other investments that will increase affordable housing supply.

Since the 2015 Palaszczuk government election, we have ramped up investment in social housing across Queensland. In the Ipswich electorate we have built 117 new social housing dwellings and I know that another 166 will be built by 30 June 2025. The Housing Summit recognised that the state and federal governments cannot solve the housing crisis on their own. There is an opportunity for a range of other players, including local governments, community housing providers and private investors, to play a role in boosting housing supply and helping Queenslanders to get into secure housing. I look forward to the results.

Townsville, Crime

 **Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (2.42 pm): It is becoming harder and harder to come to parliament knowing what is going on in Townsville when it comes to crime, including property crime and youth crime. Although I am a victim of crime myself, I do not want to talk about my personal experience. I want to talk about the victims who approach me on a weekly basis so I can share their stories with the House.

This week I was approached by Zali Sturgess, who was set upon in Denham Lane in Townsville in an attempted carjacking. Zali wrote—

A young Indigenous boy was standing in the middle of the lane as I was trying to leave. He held up his hand as if to say stop and curled under his fingertips was a knife. There were 9 other kids surrounding the front of my car and the rest of the laneway. He walked around to my windows—looked in and smiled and laughed at me as some of the kids he was with tried to open my back drivers side door. Some of these kids looked younger than 10. I managed to get away unharmed but what if that wasn't the case.

Zali went on to describe her experience and finished by saying—

I can't go back to my house because I'm scared it will happen again.

I had to have 3 people walk me to my door just to grab some stuff to get out of there.

I shouldn't have to live in fear.


The member for Traeger, the member for Townsville, the member for Burdekin and I had a chance to meet with Zali last week and hear her story.

Last month, in Townsville alone, there were 11 robberies, 493 unlawful entries and 153 unlawful use of a motor vehicle offences. That represents 11 people who were robbed and who will not feel safe. It represents 493 people who had their homes broken into. Parents who do not feel safe in their own homes have to try to tell their children that they should feel safe going to their bedrooms at night. There are 153 people who do not have a motor vehicle. They cannot get to work, they cannot drop their kids to school, they cannot pick up a friend or take a sick relative to hospital. Those people need to be represented in this House. I hope we can all work together to do something better.

There are a number of things going on in the youth justice system that are not working. The QPS annual report refers to the implementation of the Working Together, Changing the Story 2019-23 action plan, which I do not believe is working. Last week the Mareeba Shire Council raised a motion with the LGAQ to push for support for remote sentencing. That is something that we can all work together on. I would love to see the youth justice minister actually look at this properly because, while the complexity of this is real, the reality of not fixing it will have long-term consequences.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Before I call the next speaker, I would like to acknowledge all of the students in the gallery who are here for the Buy Smart program. Well done. It is very impressive. I particularly acknowledge the students of Loreto College, Coorparoo, in the electorate of Greenslopes.

Comments by Member for Mudgeeraba; CQ Health, Staff Recognition Awards

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (2.46 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, I echo your congratulations to all of the recipients of the Buy Smart awards and, in particular, the recipients of the Commissioner's Award, which I was pleased to accept on behalf of the students and staff of Wadja Wadja High School in Woorabinda.

I think that everyone on this side of the chamber and, hopefully, those opposite were completely dismayed at the comments made by the member for Mudgeeraba, the shadow opposition health spokesperson, when she said what she really thinks about regional healthcare workers this morning in this place. She said that regional healthcare workers are duds. I am absolutely shocked and dismayed that the member has not taken the first opportunity to apologise in this place for her comments this morning. Our regional healthcare workers are tireless and passionate healthcare workers and they are leaders in their fields. I take this opportunity to stand in this place and praise our regional healthcare workers, in particular our regional healthcare workers from the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service, because last week I attended—

Mrs Frecklington: We've been doing that for years.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Ms LAUGA: I am sure that the regional healthcare workers in Nanango would be incredibly disappointed with the comments made by the member for Mudgeeraba this morning. If I were a member of the opposition from a regional area, I would be picking up the phone or tapping the member on the shoulder and saying, 'Please take it upon yourself'—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Nanango, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms LAUGA: We will remember the comments made this morning and we will make sure that we keep count of the number of days that the member for Mudgeeraba refuses to apologise for those comments because it is absolutely disgraceful.

Last week I attended the CQ Health awards for excellence. The wonderful care provided by our Central Queensland health staff was showcased at the fifth annual CQ Health Staff Recognition Awards. Our CQ healthcare heroes—which is what they are; they are heroes, not duds—have been working tirelessly throughout the pandemic and continue their important work to help keep our community healthy and safe. I was very pleased to attend and present the CQ Health Values Awards.

A big congratulations goes to one of my favourites, Dr Gulam Khandaker. He is also a leader in his field, not a dud. He took out the Employee of the Year Award. The Community Care Unit in North Rocky was awarded Team of the Year. Special mention goes to Deborah and Wayne Broome who won the Closing the Gap Award for their dedication to supporting the Woorabinda community through the global pandemic. Wendy Kemp, from the Capricorn Coast Hospital ED, who won the People's Choice Award, but was too busy working to be there to receive that award. That just goes to show the level of dedication of our regional healthcare workers. Thank you to the CEO of the CQHHS, Dr Emma McCahon, and the entire HHS team for the invitation. I also thank the board chair, Paul Bell, and the entire board. Congratulations to all of the award winners.

Far North Queensland, Youth Crime

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (2.49 pm): Far North Queensland centres are suffering from a constant, massive youth crime wave that is affecting everyone in these communities. We are always hearing the government spin doctors trying to portray themselves as taking a tough stand, but the reality is people have had an absolute gutful. It has become that bad that, at the Local Government Association of Queensland's annual conference, youth crime was discussed heavily, culminating in a motion from the Mareeba Shire Council to establish diversionary facilities on remote state owned properties for wayward youths. The majority of state councils voted in favour of this motion because they are constantly being hammered by victims of youth crime.

The vote sends a clear message in support of KAP's relocation sentencing policy to be an alternative option for the courts when dealing with juvenile crime. The current system has proven to be a dismal failure. Relocation sentencing provides an opportunity to break the current cycle that turns habitual juvenile criminals into adult criminals. Sending youth to Cleveland detention centre, which costs Queensland taxpayers up to \$1,500 a day, is a badge of honour for them.


To put this further into perspective, 95 per cent of youths sentenced to the Cleveland Bay Detention Centre reoffend within the next 12 months. Relocation sentencing can be delivered as a real alternative and for a fraction of the cost. Relocation sentencing would give magistrates the power to send youth to remote locations, teach them values and skills such as droving, how to build cattle yards and cattle troughs along with other proven, workable programs.

Anyone who believes that youth who commit these crimes are innocent are under an illusion. They know right from wrong and know exactly what is right under the law. Homes are being ransacked, cars stolen and burned, businesses destroyed, and elderly residents are scared to leave their homes. Based on Queensland Childrens Court data, under siege cities—many of these in North Queensland—have experienced a massive increase in theft related and violent crimes. Theft related charges almost doubled from 6,500 in 2014-15 to 12,902 in 2020-21. Break-in charges rose from 4,250 to 8,200 in that same period while robbery and extortion related crimes tripled.

The state government data also shows youth becoming more violent with overall 'acts intended to cause harm' charges rising from 1,350 to 2,390. The KAP's relocation sentencing policy should be implemented as a real alternative to bring this crime crisis to an end.

(Time expired)

Comments by Member for Mudgeeraba

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.52 pm): I have heard some things said in this House over the last eight years, but nothing like the disgraceful, insulting commentary the entire backbench heard this morning from the member for Mudgeeraba in saying that regional health workers were duds, that we employ duds in regional Queensland. The member for Mudgeeraba's position is untenable. I demand that every single LNP member ask her to come into this House and unreservedly apologise to every single hardworking, dedicated, regional healthcare worker in this state who protected us during COVID and who deliver dedicated professional health care right throughout regional Queensland. I know about it, having done it for over 30 years in regional Queensland.

The member for Mudgeeraba's position is untenable. Where is the Leader of the Opposition? He needs to call for her to stand down, to come in here and apologise or to sack her. Take her out of the front bench. It is disgraceful. It is a slight, a slur, on every single hardworking health professional in this state. In 30 years of working in the regions, I never heard anything quite like it. It is indefensible. There is not one member opposite who can defend what the member for Mudgeeraba said in this House this morning. If I were a healthcare worker listening to that commentary in the Queensland parliament this morning, I would be disgusted.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member for Burleigh, return to your seat. Pause the clock. If the member for Burleigh wants to participate in the debate, he will need to be in his own seat.

Mr HARPER: It is unbecoming of a member of parliament to use that language in this House. The member for Mudgeeraba no longer has the integrity to hold the position of shadow minister for health on the opposition benches. Every single member opposite needs to demand that the Leader of the Opposition sack the member for Mudgeeraba from her position. It is over. The member for Mudgeeraba consistently talks down health workers in this state, consistently abuses the healthcare workers of this state. This morning was the absolute straw that breaks the camel's back. No more, member for Mudgeeraba. We demand that you come in here and unreservedly apologise to every single health worker—from the Torres Strait, the southern borders and out west. We all are disgraced at the language. You should be ashamed.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Comments will come through the chair.


Mr HARPER: All LNP members need to be hanging their heads in shame. They cannot stand behind the member for Mudgeeraba any longer. Her job in this House is finished.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr POWER: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The member for Burleigh returns to his seat knowing what my point of order will be. For the second time in two days his interjections used unparliamentary language. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: We did not hear the language to which you are referring but, member for Burleigh, if you did use unparliamentary language I would ask you to withdraw. I will check the transcript.

Weather Events; Education Funding; World Teachers' Day; Kenmore State High School

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (2.55 pm): Local residents, families, businesses and students have been significantly impacted by the recent inundation and closure of Colleges Crossing. Gated dam releases combined with significant in-flows from severe wet weather resulted in this closure and once again highlights the deficient level of local infrastructure not only for residents in the Moggill electorate but in surrounding areas including in the electorate of Ipswich West. Enough is enough. Ongoing, serious questions are being asked about the operation of Seqwater by local residents.

Local residents and businesses do not have to continue to be punished by virtue of their residential, school or business address not only because of the state Labor government's failure to fix Colleges Crossing with an appropriate flood-proof river crossing solution but also Labor's delayed delivery of a new Mount Crosby bridge, not to mention timely repairs to the existing Mount Crosby Weir bridge.


As the state Labor government has repeatedly warned, the severe wet weather events experienced again are only the start of this La Nina season with more severe weather anticipated over the coming months. Just as local residents continue to follow the advice of QFES, the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service, to get ready and prepare for this storm season, there can be no excuse from any level of government or responsible disaster management agency not only to be ready to respond immediately, communicate clearly and accurately and provide prompt support to local residents over the coming months and year ahead but also in terms of the local and state government reviews and recommendations released this year.

On a separate issue, as the LNP shadow minister for education I continue to be contacted by Queensland families and kindergartens kept in the dark by the state Labor government's proposed new funding model for 2023. The new kindergarten funding model was first announced by the state Labor government in February this year. Families and kindergartens need certainty. They need to be able to plan, to budget and to calculate costs. The Labor state government's failure to prioritise significant and meaningful investment in our state's kindergartens and early childhood education sector will undoubtedly have implications on broader, long-term educational outcomes. We know that New South Wales and Victoria have already announced multi-billion dollar investments in early childhood education.

In concluding, I take this opportunity to wish all of our state's hardworking and dedicated teachers, especially those in the schools in the electorate of Moggill, a very happy World Teachers' Day which is being celebrated across Queensland tomorrow. I know the members for Currumbin and Toowoomba South will be celebrating with their schools.

Finally, it will be a pleasure to host, at the Queensland parliament later this evening, Acting Executive Principal of Kenmore State High School, Sally Hawkes, as well as outgoing school captains Kate Tarvit and Ben Waldeck and vice-captains Bella Susanto and Philip Tomane. On an annual basis, I host the student school leaders of Kenmore State High School to thank them for their service and outstanding leadership. Again, these students have been a credit to themselves, to their school communities and to the broader community. I thank them for their commitment.

Capalaba Electorate, Housing

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (2.59 pm): I am glad the Minister for Housing is in the chamber because I want to thank her for last week coming out to Capalaba and opening 11 new social housing units. It was only at the start of the year that we were standing on an empty block. Those units have gone up quickly. It is fantastic for those people with disability, women escaping domestic violence and those less fortunate in our community who will be moving into the units.

I thank the minister for this \$3.4 million project. It has been warmly received by just about everyone. We had LNP members in the Redlands criticising it, saying the quality was too good. They want the disabled, the less fortunate and women escaping domestic violence to live in social housing units of a lesser quality. They want the neighbours to live next door to lesser quality housing. I am glad that we could produce such high-quality social housing units in our local area.

That is only the start of what we are doing with regard to housing. I have spoken many times about the need for Redland City Council to produce a housing strategy. I congratulate the Deputy Premier for taking that work over. We have been asking for that work to be done for four long years. This has been warmly received by the business community. Leading up to the summit, the chamber of commerce met with the Deputy Premier's office to convey the research they have done on the local area and the need for diversity of housing stock. We cannot bury our heads in the sand, which the Redland City Council has been doing for years now. They have now voted against having a housing strategy. We have taken it over. We are going to do their work, we are going to do our work and we are going to get on with solving the housing crisis.

I congratulate the Walker Group for bringing the EIS to fruition. This is a \$3.4 billion project for the Redlands area. This is four years of scientific work by 11 scientists and a 5,000-page report. I look forward to the public having the chance to respond to this report. It is important that the science is scrutinised. As a scientist myself, I want to make sure that this project stacks up environmentally. This is the opportunity to do so. I welcome scrutiny. I will not shy away from it. I have always said that I will support this project as long as it stacks up environmentally.


I congratulate the Walker Group for the work they have done over four long years which involved 11 scientists and resulted in 5,000 pages of work. I look forward to my local residents having a say on this project, be they for or against it. They can scrutinise it, have their say and consider the science. I look forward to the federal Labor government scrutinising the submissions and considering the project in due course.

MENTAL HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

Resumed from 14 October (see p. 2845), on motion of Mr Kelly—

That the House take note of the Mental Health Select Committee Report No. 1, 57th Parliament, *Inquiry into the opportunities to improve mental health outcomes for Queenslanders*, tabled on 6 June 2022.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (3.02 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on report No. 1 of the Mental Health Select Committee titled *Inquiry into the opportunities to improve mental health outcomes for Queenslanders*. I would firstly like to very much thank the committee for holding a regional hearing in Kingaroy on 20 April and for allowing me to participate. I note that the member for Moggill and the member for Whitsunday encouraged the committee to come out to Kingaroy. I thank you very much.

It was very important that the South Burnett community were heard by the Mental Health Select Committee. Unfortunately, the region suffers from the impact of limited access to mental health services. This has unfortunately resulted in the highest suicide rate in Queensland. The Kingaroy hearing was a chance to explain the significant barriers our community faces when they need mental health support, along with other factors which also impact people such as no public transport, no locally-based paediatrician and the distance to specialist services.

I take this opportunity to thank our local agencies that took part in the hearing, including: Nina Temperton, Nick and Leanne from South Burnett CTC; Margie Hams; Michael Sanford from Bunyarra Counselling; and Damo Martoo from the Kingaroy Chamber of Commerce and Industry who gave an incredibly moving submission. The evidence that they presented was powerful. I was pleased to see their contributions about the direct impact of suicide of family members inform the committee's report. They were able to shine a light on the gaps in mental health services in our region and the lack of mental health professionals, resulting in the burnout of the overworked staff we have. One of the themes that came out of the hearing is that timely, face-to-face support for people who need mental health care is key.

I will read some of the important comments from the Kingaroy hearing that were included in the report. Importantly, Michael Sanford from Bunyarra Counselling told the committee of the barriers to seeking help in rural and regional areas. I would encourage everyone to have a look at his submission. It was very good. He stated—

... we are looking at everyday workers, students, tradesmen and farmers who are taking their own lives and struggling with mental health. These are often the ones who do not have the capacity to reach out and get support because they are normally working 12- to 14-hour days. They cannot get into town. They cannot drive 100 kilometres to access support. There is also a pride factor in reaching out and going to get these supports too, so a lot of this support is about reducing stigma and creating education.

Damo Martoo spoke about the sad and tragic loss of his son Jack. He stated—

The Kingaroy Chamber of Commerce & Industry has been going deeply into mental wellbeing and mental health services within the region over the last 12 months through direct impacts to our chamber through people who have suicided. I myself personally lost my own son

and Bronnie's son Jack—


just before Christmas to suicide. This is a really important opportunity for the state government to see the impact mental health is having on not just the community but the business community as well and the flow-on effects into people's personal lives. It just does not stop immediately after you lose your child. This is a forever issue now not only for me but for my business community and my entire family.

I know this reduced the entire committee to tears. I want to give a shout-out to every single committee member because this was really moving.

I have always held the belief that just because we choose to live in a regional area it does not mean we should accept poorer health outcomes. This was especially relevant when it comes to access to mental health services by people from all parts of our community, from our farmers to our young people, to our families, to our business owners, to the people who work in the businesses, to the power station workers who are losing their jobs, to the Tarong mine workers who are losing their jobs. They all deserve support from the Palaszczuk government.

I note that there are many recommendations. I support the dissenting report because we know the truth behind the reason for this report. Mental health in regional Queensland needs to be looked into more.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (3.07 pm): Firstly, allow me to acknowledge the Consul-General for China in Queensland, Dr Ruan, who is in the public gallery today. It is great to see Dr Ruan here.

I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the report of the Mental Health Select Committee titled *Inquiry into the opportunities to improve mental health outcomes for Queenslanders*. I acknowledge the chair, the member for Greenslopes, in particular, but also acknowledge all other committee members who acted in the true spirit of bipartisanship of select committees. In my time in this parliament I have not had the opportunity to be on a select committee but certainly in my previous career in the Senate I did. This committee acted similarly if not exactly the same—in a true bipartisan way.

As all of us in this chamber know, the Palaszczuk government has committed \$1.6 billion in the recent budget for better mental health. That is a record investment in terms of addressing mental health. I wish to comment in respect of a couple of the recommendations. Firstly, recommendation No. 7 is about improving service provision to rural and regional Queensland and expanding those service models. I pay particular attention to some of the statistics in this regard. As stated in the report—

Suicide remains the leading cause of death for Australians aged 15 to 44 years, with regional communities reporting a 54% higher rate of suicide than capital cities. Suicide rates tend to increase with remoteness, with suicide rates in very remote regions reported to be almost twice that of the national average.

The report further states—

While the prevalence of mental illness is similar in urban and regional Australia, the outcomes are worse for people living in rural areas.


There may be many compelling reasons why this is the case. Queensland is the most diverse state in the nation, and remoteness as a result of our diverseness could be one of the very factors that demonstrates why this might be the case. Nevertheless, that is why the Palaszczuk government has invested \$1.6 billion in terms of mental health.

I have seen it quite often. We are the most natural disaster prone state in the nation. I believe there have been about 100 natural disasters in the last decade. We have had years of drought and now flooding, cyclones and fires. I am sure there are many regional members in this chamber who go out and engage with their constituents. The one event that stuck in my mind—and will always be in my mind—is the monsoonal event in 2019 affecting the Flinders Highway out from Hughenden to Cloncurry. You hear quite often about the resilience of farmers, but you wonder how far they can be tested after what they went through with that particular natural disaster. When you looked into the eyes of those farmers you could see the shock and stress, particularly around Julia Creek, where we were engaging

with them to make sure they were getting provisions through QRIDA. The Australian government, working hand in hand with the Queensland government, delivered up to \$75,000 to assist those farmers in recovering from that extreme event. As a state, we lost more than 500,000 from our cattle herd as a result of that natural disaster, but you wonder at times how long it takes for them to recover. With good governments like the Palaszczuk government assisting them, their recovery was possible.

In terms of other organisations, I have seen QFF engaging with an opportunity called Are you Bugged, Mate? Craig Zonka from the ABC and I launched that in Toowoomba several years ago. It offers assistance to farmers in regional centres who suffer from mental illness. Another example of where this government is assisting is through our drought preparedness model. We have brought in reforms to assist farmers to make sure they can claim drought preparedness assistance before they are in drought. A prime example of that was when the cabinet was in Stanthorpe. We went to McMahon Bros Orchards and saw the assistance the Palaszczuk government was providing with regard to five kilometres of polypipe to irrigate their orchards. These sorts of measures go a long way towards assisting people in rural communities who need that assistance most.

Once again I want to commend the committee members for this report. It is an excellent report. It demonstrates where we need to make changes with regard to mental health.

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (3.12 pm): I rise to speak to the Mental Health Select Committee's report, which addresses opportunities to improve mental health outcomes for Queenslanders. Specifically, today I want to focus on the issue of support for Queensland veterans, serving ADF personnel and their families.

As the Premier highlighted yesterday, Queensland has the largest veteran population in Australia, which is why Queensland should be leading the way when it comes to supporting veterans and their families. The committee report we are debating today briefly touches on the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. Since the select committee report was tabled, the royal commission has published their interim report—a report which, I might say, is refreshingly frank—and deals substantively with many of the issues affecting the veteran community.

First and foremost, among these issues is the abject failure of the Department of Veterans' Affairs to perform the role they were created to deliver. That role is to support veterans. I have made similar comments about DVA in the past. I want to make it clear that my criticism is not one of the current federal government, but rather directly of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, its secretary Liz Cosson and former federal governments of both persuasions, LNP and Labor. All are responsible for presiding over a situation where veterans and their families have had their mental health made worse because of their failures.

Perhaps most significantly, the royal commission report illustrates that the DVA's failures have resulted in veterans' deaths by suicide. Veterans suffering from mental health conditions and at their wit's end are taking their own lives. Veterans deserve better from DVA and governments at all levels. The royal commission interim report highlights the impact on families who support serving and ex-serving ADF members. Submissions to the royal commission described families living with PTSD, domestic violence, limited support from the ADF and DVA, suicidality and helplessness. As the father of four young children and as a veteran who has suffered from PTSD, it was the sections that addressed the impact on children living with a veteran battling mental health challenges which hit home hardest. Submissions talk of families being torn apart, irreparably damaged, and of long-standing trauma that destroyed the whole family. While veterans' issues are typically seen as a federal responsibility, let's not forget that the families of 163,000 veterans who live in Queensland are not supported in any substantive way by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the ADF or the federal government. That is why the state government needs to step up and do more.

I have been critical in the past of the relative focus placed on commemorations and memorials rather than on tangible measures to support veterans and their families. Refurbishing ANZAC Square is great and it is important, but the priority should be on ensuring that veterans and their families get the support they need and the support they deserve. I acknowledge that the state government has taken some initial steps to deliver support to veterans. It is not my intention today to make this a party political issue, but my message is that we need to do more.


Veterans and their families are disproportionately affected by mental health issues. More broadly, they are consistently placed at a disadvantage relative to the rest of the population because of their military service. The families of veterans and serving ADF personnel should not be disadvantaged in relation to their employment, schooling, access to housing or when seeking care in Queensland

hospitals—all of which are state government responsibilities. That is the situation that exists now, and these factors directly contribute to the isolation and lack of support that feed the very mental health concerns addressed in the Mental Health Select Committee report.

One idea that has been proposed to tackle some of these issues is for the state government to enact a veterans and veterans' family covenant, which would enshrine a position that veterans and their families not be subjected to disadvantage in the provision and continuity of public services due to their military service. While the former federal government legislated the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant, it does not go far enough. It too should ensure that a no-disadvantage clause is implemented to tackle some of the systemic challenges that continue to persist right across our society for veterans and their families. Such a proposal has already been legislated by the UK government and municipalities right across the UK.

One area where some progress has been made is in relation to support for veterans during transition to civilian life at the end of their military service. The royal commission identifies this as a particular risk factor in relation to mental health and suicidality. This too is an area where the state government can contribute and make a meaningful difference to the welfare of veterans and their families.

The best monument that politicians can provide for veterans and their families is providing them with the support they need to better deal with some of the challenges that arise from military service. I believe these issues should be above party politics, and I will continue to fight to get more support for veterans and their families. As I have said in the past, I again offer to work with the government to improve the support available for veterans and their families so we can address the mental health challenges affecting the veterans' community.

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (3.17 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Mental Health Select Committee's report and to add to what has been said already by my colleague, the member for South Brisbane. I would firstly like to acknowledge the work of all of the committee members and the secretariat in supporting them. I would especially thank all of those witnesses who came forward to share their experience with the select committee in what was a really important inquiry.

Since the report, and even since the last time we debated it here, it has been revealed that UN inspectors for the subcommittee on the prevention of torture were in fact refused entry to mental health facilities in Queensland, forcing them to cut short their OPCAT compliance visit. I want to put the question quite broadly: how are we expected to have faith in Queensland's mental healthcare system while this kind of thing is happening? The committee heard directly from witnesses who expressed their concerns about the provision of these kinds of mental health facilities, particularly on issues like the availability of acute and subacute beds. Now we are hearing UN officials criticise the Queensland government for obstructing their visit and breaching our obligations under OPCAT.

The government's response to this, I have to say, is really quite shambolic and a bit suspicious. We heard the Premier yesterday, I think it was, saying that there are legislative reasons, and the health minister responded similarly. I am not the only person scratching my head and working hard to try to understand that response. As I understand it, there is only one section in the Mental Health Act that allows the government to refuse access—that is, section 408—and that only applies where they are satisfied the visit would 'adversely affect the patient's treatment and care'. An explanation of how that was the case would also need to be expressed in writing to the UN. I am completely unclear on how an anti-torture inspection could have that outcome, and we still have not seen any justification or explanation from the government on this.

The government have now, as I understand it, indicated they will introduce OPCAT legislation that will address this. Again, we are left asking: why now? We signed OPCAT in 2009 and it was ratified in 2017. We knew well in advance of these visits that they were going to happen. If this legislation is designed to protect patient wellbeing, why does it need to be changed? I suppose the unspoken question here is: what is the government hiding in these wards that they could not even get it together to prepare themselves for an inspection with months notice, and what are they now scrambling to cover up? The damage to our international reputation has been done and I am concerned that this also undermines Queenslanders' trust in our mental health system and this government's willingness and ability to uphold their human rights.

I want to turn to one other missed opportunity that comes from this inquiry, and that is improving our response to drug misuse. The new alcohol and other drugs strategy for Queensland that was released only a couple of weeks ago includes some really good things. I am specifically interested in

the focus on expanding harm reduction, but this has been recommended time and again. When and how will it be implemented? Diversion is fine, and I welcome the recommendations from the Mental Health Commissioner about additional diversion programs, but it is still rooted in a fundamentally punitive response in the criminalisation of drug use.

The ACT has decriminalised personal drug use. We are now three years on from the Queensland Productivity Commission's recommendations to legalise cannabis and MDMA in Queensland, and we are still locking up Queenslanders for using drugs. There is a quote from the Mental Health Commissioner's report from the Achieving Balance strategy which says—

There is clear evidence that law enforcement responses, particularly incarceration, are less effective and more expensive than alcohol and other drug treatment. Rates of alcohol and other drug use are disproportionately high among people who have had contact with the criminal justice system.

The bottom line here is that drug use is a health and mental health issue; it is not a criminal issue and it is high time the government responded to it as such. There is a wealth of evidence that criminalising drug users further stigmatises them and pushes them away from supports and further into harm and addiction. We desperately need to look at reallocating the budget away from law enforcement around our response to drugs. Currently, I understand that something like two-thirds of our spending goes on enforcement. We need to put that money into treatment and harm reduction measures instead.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr RUSSO (Toohey—ALP) (3.23 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee Report No. 31, 57th Parliament, *Oversight of the Queensland Family and Child Commission*, tabled on 19 August 2022.

Under the Queensland Legislative Assembly's Standing Rules and Orders, the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's functions are: to monitor and review the performance by the entity of the entity's functions; to report to the Legislative Assembly on any matter concerning the entity, the entity's functions or the performance of the entity's functions that the committee considers should be drawn to the Legislative Assembly's attention; to examine the annual report of the entity tabled in the Legislative Assembly and, if appropriate, to comment on any aspect of the report; and to report to the Legislative Assembly any changes to the functions, structures and procedures of the entity that the committee considers desirable for the more effective operation of the entity or the act which establishes the entity.


As a committee, we reviewed the QFCC's annual report for 2020-21 which was tabled on 30 September 2021. The committee's recommendation was that the Legislative Assembly notes the content of its report. The committee held a public hearing with representatives from the QFCC on 28 March 2022 to hear evidence as part of the committee's oversight. The QFCC is a strong organisation focused on inspiring positive changes within the systems that uphold the rights, safety and wellbeing of Queensland's children. At the public hearing, we heard from the Principal Commissioner, Luke Twyford, who commenced in his role on 31 January 2022. The committee joins with Commissioner Twyford in acknowledging the former principal commissioner, Cheryl Vardon, and the work she did in leading the commission.

Commissioner Twyford spoke of the highlights of the commission's work in the previous year, which included: Principle Focus, an exploration of the factors leading to over-representation of First Nations children in our statutory systems; Rights, Voices, Stories, a pathway through which they engaged with 11 youth researchers to build upon their lived experience in the out-of-home-care system; Growing Up in Queensland, a survey of 8,000 Queensland young people; Measuring what matters, a review of the impact of the implementation of the Supporting Families Changing Futures reform; and Yarning for Change, a process of speaking directly to young people involved in the youth justice system to identify from their perspectives systemic improvements. The commission also produced the first Child Death Review Board annual report, along with their analysis of 16 years of child death data.

The commissioner advised the committee that on 13 January 2022 the *Independent review of the performance of the Queensland Family and Child Commission of its functions* was tabled in parliament. The review found that the commission was delivering its legislative functions and was maintaining a significant influence within the child protection system.

Forward focus of the QFCC into 2022 and next year sees the commission remaining focused on its core objectives of raising awareness, advocating for improvement and ensuring overall system accountability. Commissioner Twyford expressed his concern about: the areas of the rising incidence of youth suicide in Queensland; the pervasiveness of domestic violence in many, if not all, of the case files that they review; the life trajectories of children who are removed from their family; and society's view of children who commit a crime.

Commissioner Natalie Lewis gave evidence to the committee with an outline of her current focus in her role at the commission. Commissioner Lewis identified that the QFCC is at a critical juncture, which presents both challenges and opportunities. She stated a commitment to embedding a child rights approach within the QFCC as a key component of the QFCC's organisational identity. It was this child rights approach that establishes a significant point of difference between the QFCC and other statutory bodies. The commission is undertaking a review of interventions with parental agreement to highlight areas of good practice.

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (3.28 pm): Firstly, I would like to thank and acknowledge my fellow committee members, the committee chair, the committee secretariat and all of those involved in the reporting process, including the Queensland Family and Child Commission's Principal Commissioner, Luke Twyford, and Commissioner Natalie Lewis. The Legal Affairs and Safety Committee has statutory oversight over the Queensland Family and Child Commission, and the committee also reviewed the QFCC's annual report of 2020-21. The QFCC has one of the most important roles in our state. It is tasked with protecting and representing the rights, safety and wellbeing of children in Queensland. The QFCC has an obligation to build awareness of, and accountability for, the safety and wellbeing of all children in Queensland within the child and family support system. In this regard, the QFCC has oversight of the child protection system. Throughout the 2020 and 2021 reporting period, the Commission participated in several oversight initiatives, including systems oversight and performance oversight.

In relation to systems oversight, the committee heard that the review into the responsiveness to the five-day and 10-day notifications of child harm in Queensland found that there is an unacceptable delay between when an investigation and assessment process is commenced and when a safety officer physically sights the child who has been reported. While there was variation across Queensland regions, on average it is taking between two and nine weeks to sight a child when the notification was commenced by information. The QFCC has identified that this is an area that needs improvement, and when you combine this with the fact that the child protection and family support workforce feels strained, I ask the minister for child safety: what is she doing to address this very serious and potentially life-threatening concern? The minister cannot—she must not—wait until it is too late, until the notification of child harm turns into a tragedy. We cannot have our most precious and vulnerable children living away from home in potentially dangerous circumstances and an unacceptable delay in physically seeing and ensuring that a child is okay. We cannot have a situation where our vulnerable and precious children are dying, but tragically that is what we are seeing, both in relation to children known to the child protection system and child mortality statistics for suicide and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.


During the 2020-21 year, the QFCC conducted its 16-year review of child death data. The review identified that the rate of youth suicide has increased by an average of 2.6 per cent each year. Based on this increase, that is nine more children committing suicide year on year. For context, during the 2020-21 year, there were 30 confirmed or probable suicide deaths of young people in Queensland, nine more than last year. Over the five-year period, suicide was the leading external cause of death for 10 to 14-year-olds and the leading cause overall for 15- to 17-year-olds.

It seems this horrific trend is reaching children under the protection of the state. During a different public hearing conducted by the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, on 22 September we heard evidence from the chief executive officer of the Aboriginal Law Justice and Governance Association on Mornington Island. During that evidence Ms Sellin told us—

Unfortunately we have just had some sad news this morning that a 15-year-old girl who was removed off the island because families could not care for her due to the blue card situation—they moved her to Mount Isa and unfortunately she committed suicide last night.

I have asked our committee secretariat to write to the child safety minister and the Attorney-General regarding this evidence. Not only does this evidence on its face reveal yet another death of a child known to the child protection system but also it adds to the unacceptable trend that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continue to be over-represented in child mortality

statistics, dying at around twice the rate of non-Indigenous children. It is not good enough that children are committing suicide, but it is a damning indictment on this government if children in the child protection system are committing suicide. What the review of the child death data shows is that children known to the child protection system are over-represented in child death statistics. They are dying at a higher rate than children in the general Queensland population. It is completely unacceptable that this is happening. This child safety minister needs to take some action in this space and she needs to do better because these are our most vulnerable children.

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (3.33 pm): I rise to speak to report No. 31 as it relates to the Queensland Child Commission and its oversight by the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee. The committee held a public hearing with Principal Commissioner of the QFCC, Luke Twyford, and QFCC Commissioner Natalie Lewis on 28 March 2022, and also reviewed the QFCC's annual report 2020-2021 which was tabled on 30 September 2021. The QFCC annual report advises on the QFCC's performance in relation to its priorities which are identified as awareness, advocacy and accountability.

In 2020-21, the QFCC undertook some significant work and reports in the following areas: *Changing the sentence: overseeing Queensland's youth justice reforms* was an oversight project to examine options for further youth justice systems and processes to ensure investment decisions are implemented to support the best outcome for children, young people and the community.


Seeing they are safe: responsiveness to 5 day and 10 day notifications of child harm in Queensland was a review which examined the differing context in which the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs delivers its investigation and assessment function and the complexities and challenges facing its frontline workforce. The report found some improvements in response times and innovation in investigation and assessment approaches, but also that there is a delay between when an investigation and assessment process is commenced and the child safety officer sighting the child. The Rights, Voices, Stories project focused on the experiences and perspectives of children and young people who rely on the child protection system to stay safe and well, as well as identifying their views on outcomes that they believe should be measured.

The act requires the QFCC to report on the performance of Queensland's child protection system in achieving state and national goals; Queensland's child protection system performance over time in comparison to other jurisdictions; and Queensland's progress in reducing the number of, and improving the outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system. To this end, the QFCC conducts annual data collection activities, including surveys of the community and frontline child protection and family support sector workforce, and designing and conducting system-level evaluations.

One of the critical areas on which the QFCC records data is in relation to child deaths, and the news in this area is mixed. While infant mortality rates continue to decline, as have unexplained infant deaths, youth suicide has increased and our First Nations people continue to be over-represented in mortality statistics. That said, the QFCC is developing a child death prevention strategy which focuses on using the research and analysis of Queensland's child death data to influence child death prevention practices and policy changes.

As part of its responsibility to engage with and take account of the views of children, young people and their families, and uphold the rights of children to participate in decision-making that affects their lives, the QFCC promotes and raises awareness of their rights in a number of ways. In 2020-21, they sought participation from children and young people through three key engagement mechanisms: the Growing Up in Queensland project, the Families are First project, and the QFCC Youth Advisory Council. I single out for special mention the Growing Up in Queensland 2020 project to provide opportunities to share their views and to discuss issues that matter to children the most, and the online safety initiative, Out of the Dark, to prevent, recognise and respond to online child sexual exploitation. As the parent of a 10-year-old boy, I do admit to having one or two anxious moments when he is online, and I have contemplated tossing his iPad out of the window on more than a few occasions, so I am highly appreciative of the QFCC's work in this space.

In closing, I would very sincerely like to commend Mr Luke Twyford and Ms Natalie Lewis for both the breadth and the very high quality of their report to the committee. On that basis, I commend the report to the House.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (3.38 pm): I rise to address the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee report No. 31, and the oversight of the Queensland Family and Child Commission which involved public hearings as part of that process. The principal commissioner, the commissioner, the executive director


of child death prevention and the executive director of oversight all attended the hearings to report on the range of activities undertaken by the commission in pursuit of positive changes in the systems that uphold the rights, safety and wellbeing of Queensland children.

In particular, the commission reported on the new child death register, known as Coda, which consolidates information from a range of sources including Births, Deaths and Marriages; the coroner; police; and child safety authorities to provide as much information as possible about the death of a child or a young Queenslander. As we have heard reported, child death and mortality rates have generally declined over the last 17 years, decreasing by 2.7 per cent per year, mostly due to fewer deaths by natural causes.

As we have heard, however, the commission has highlighted two trends that are not moving in the right direction. The first involves motor vehicles. As the commission reported, of the children and young people who died in Queensland in 2020-21, 19 lost their lives in motor vehicle crashes. This is the highest annual figure since 2014-15. It is heartbreaking for families and loved ones as well as our communities.

We have all seen the recent media reports of some horrific motor vehicle accidents with our young people dying or being severely injured, some suffering lifelong disabilities as a result. More than ever, we must consider further safeguarding measures such as mandatory defensive driving courses as part of obtaining P-plates. One such course is the existing RYDA, which stands for Rotary Youth Driver Awareness. This course is delivered to our high-schoolers and it is brilliant. I give a special shout-out to our Noosa RYDA volunteers for the fabulous work they do.

The second is, tragically, youth suicide, which is showing a slowly increasing trend, with 30 suicides in 2020-21. Last month I attended the Don't Bottle It Up conference hosted by our Rotary Clubs where Professor Jim from our world renowned Thompson Institute on the Sunshine Coast spoke of the importance of moving away from subjective diagnosis and treatment with mental illness to that based on neuroscience. He also highlighted the advances being made with youth depression and suicidality and the importance of immediate support being provided via psychologists, psychiatrists or counsellors should medication be given as there is a danger period in the first two weeks of commencing medication. As we know, this is not happening, and we have spoken about the wait times that must urgently be addressed as part of reducing the incidence of self-harm. In closing, I would like to thank our chair, fellow Legal Affairs and Safety Committee members and our secretariat as well as the commission for the incredible work they do in this most important undertaking in creating greater safety for our children.

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (3.41 pm): I also stand to make a contribution to the debate of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's report No. 31, titled *Oversight of the Queensland Family and Child Commission*. I will start by joining my colleagues in acknowledging the hard work of the secretariat, who do such a fantastic job of making us all look very good. I would like to thank my colleagues, in particular the chair, the member for Toohey, and the deputy chair, the member for Currumbin.

I would also like to acknowledge the contributions and the work of the Principal Commissioner, Luke Twyford. Luke, as we have heard, replaced former principal commissioner Cheryl Vardon in January. I think it is important to acknowledge the work of Cheryl Vardon. She has been a stalwart of the QFCC and has done a lot of fantastic work in her time and provided some wonderful systemic oversight. I know they will feel her loss, but I also know that Luke comes from a fantastic background in the NT. He has done a lot of work in the juvenile justice system there, so he will make a fantastic contribution to the commission.


I would also like to acknowledge Commissioner Natalie Lewis, who is phenomenal. Anybody who sees Natalie perform and advocate would acknowledge that she is such a warrior of a woman. Notwithstanding all of the hardworking people in the QFCC, she has absolutely advocated for a human rights lens to be applied to that organisation. I really want to congratulate them both on their work.

As we have heard here today and as we have heard a lot and I am sure we all recognise, the department of child safety operates in a really difficult and complex service delivery environment. It does have multiple oversighting measures including independent bodies, and I think we would all understand the reasons why that needs to happen. Any agency that has the functions and powers to remove a child from their family because a family cannot or will not protect them needs to have appropriate oversighting measures in place. The QFCC is one of those oversighting bodies. There are a few others, but I will stick with the QFCC because that is what the report is on.

The QFFC's work looks at the systemic advocacy for children and young people. Some of their statutory functions include: oversight of the child protection system; promotion and advocacy regarding the responsibilities of families to protect and care for their children; reviewing, analysing and evaluating systemic policies and practices relevant to child protection; and reporting that to the minister. Under the act they do need to give a disproportionate focus to the voices of young people, which is so important, and a focus on our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, which they do. During the reporting period we heard they did this in a number of ways. I will talk to only a couple of those.

The first is its report *Changing the sentence: overseeing Queensland's youth justice reforms*. In the period this report was prepared there were three tragic and fatal vehicular incidents involving young people. That obviously significantly changed the public discussion on the topics within the report. Those deaths were sudden and shocking and rightly led to community demands for changes that would prevent recurrences. As the QFCC report states, in order for these changes to be lasting, as a community we have to actively engage with the sometimes confronting concept that preventing crime means looking at the causes of crime. As we know, youth justice is much more than court, bail diversion and detention. We are looking at health, education, keeping them safe in culture and safe in family and how we respond to victims of crime.

The other report I want to mention is Rights, Voices, Stories. This was a project that focused on the experiences and perspectives of young people in the child protection system. Importantly, it looked at the outcomes they thought should be measured. We often talk about child protection measures in terms of outputs and inputs, but it is important to look at the outcomes. They identified five things they wanted to focus on which were: identity, stability, health and wellbeing, feeling safe and loved, and equity and fairness. This is something the QFCC will continue to work on in the following years, working with the agencies responsible for our children in the child protection system, making sure that they are implementing recommendations and looking at those wellbeing indicators, and performing that oversighting and monitoring role themselves. That is something that the QFCC is going to be reporting on annually. They are going to start collecting the data. I look forward to our next hearing with them so we can understand that a little bit further. I commend the report to the House.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (3.46 pm): In talking to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's report titled *Oversight of the Queensland Family and Child Commission*, it is worth noting that the commission has oversight of our child protection system. It seems to me unfortunate that we are somewhat constrained in the debate and discussion we can have in this session of parliament about the child protection system and we are limited to the report and its contents because it is such an important part of what the state does. It is something that I am sure challenges all members when we hear the individual stories of tragedy that come to us in our electorates of people who have had dealings with the child protection system and it has not worked out well or of young people who are victims in most senses of the word through no fault of their own. They are the people we need to remember at the base of all of this; there are individuals, young people, who need to be looked after. Sadly, all too often that falls to the state in our society.

The Family and Child Commission has that responsibility. I want to focus on a couple of points from this report. I would note that the member for Currumbin has spoken about some of the things that I was going to speak about. I am not sure whether the member for Currumbin has mentioned previously that in her prior career she was a public prosecutor working in child protection. That obviously gives her a unique insight into these matters. I want to accord myself with many of the remarks of the member for Currumbin but also thank—

Mr Nicholls: Associate, not accord.


Mr KRAUSE: I accord myself—associate myself with those comments. Thank you, member for Clayfield for pointing that out. First of all, I want to thank all the workers in the child protection system. It is a difficult job, whether they are frontline child protection agency workers, carers or kinship carers in particular. It is not an easy task that they take on, but it is one that definitely needs to be undertaken.

I want to talk about the Supporting Families Changing Futures reform program and some of the comments in the report, particularly about the need to measure what matters to the children and young people in the system. It has certainly been my experience in some of the local matters I have had to deal with as a member of parliament that sometimes the system forgets to take into account the needs of the child and the clearly expressed desires of children who are in the child safety system. In fact, it is an observation I have made before that sometimes the system seems to be working more for the system than for the children it is meant to be looking after, and that is unfortunate.

Recently in our committee we have heard of difficulties in kinship care arrangements whereby a child can be placed into a kinship care arrangement—a risk assessment is undertaken and it is deemed to be satisfactory—but when someone in that household turns 18 and is required by the law to obtain a blue card that child needs to be taken out of that kinship care arrangement because there are difficulties with getting blue cards for some of the people in the household. There is no difference in the risk factor before or after that person turns 18, but the system says that it has to happen so it happens. But that is no good for the child who is in care. In fact, we have heard about tragic consequences for people who are wrapped up in the problems of the system.

There is so much in the report that I could talk about. The over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child safety system is not decreasing. That is most unfortunate. I also want to point out the findings from the workforce survey in the child protection system. Respondents working for non-government organisations were often more positive than those from government agencies. I think that is something that should sound alarm bells for the government, that people who are not working for the government in child protection are more satisfied and more positive about their role in the system than those working for the department. What is wrong with the department's culture and their direction that they are getting those results?

Finally, the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in mortality statistics is something that really needs to be focused on. There is so much more we could discuss. We should have a larger discussion about this.

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (3.52 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate of the report of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee titled *Oversight of the Queensland Family and Child Commission*. Firstly, I thank the committee and the secretariat, as always, for the work they put into the report. My thanks especially goes to all of the staff at the QFCC. They do absolutely outstanding work. I particularly express my thanks to Commissioner Lewis and Principal Commissioner Twyford, who have always done, in my experience, exceptional work and been really forthcoming in their assistance for not just the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee but also the Community Support and Services Committee.

There is one particular piece of work that the QFCC has done recently that I want to highlight and that no-one in this place seems to have noticed or have any particular interest in talking about. Only days after the government voted against my bill to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility, the QFCC released, and the government accepted, a report that recommended raising the age of criminal responsibility to 14. I find it a little bit hard to believe that the government would not have had some expectation, some knowledge, that this was on the way. I do not, I suppose, find it hard to believe that the government would be willing to so completely ignore the evidence, the views and the recommendations of such a well-qualified and experienced body as the QFCC on an issue like this that falls so squarely within their responsibility. I guess we are just getting a little bit used to the views of experts being drowned out by the howling from conservative commentators and all the nonsense about crime waves across the state that seems to occupy so much airspace in here.

The government clearly were not interested in the views of all of those experts who gave evidence on the private member's bill that I brought; the 300-plus submissions in support of it; or the evidence of the lawyers, the doctors, the human rights experts, the First Nations advocates, the social workers or the criminologists, all of whom gave evidence in support of raising the age to 14, along with the QFCC, to recognise that until we make changes like this we are only going to make the issues of criminalisation of children across the state worse. Until we provide the supports and until the alternative approaches that we know are effective are made available to those children, things are only going to get worse.

It is also timely to note that maybe within a week of voting down my private member's bill the government accepted a petition with 26,000 or more signatories calling on the government to raise the age to at least 14. Again, we are seeing a government that is ignoring the expert evidence and so much community sentiment in favour of politics and taking policy cues from the *Courier-Mail* and other conservative commentators.

In submissions and in the report the QFCC notes that the age of 14 is our minimum obligation under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. There is no real equivocation about this anymore. They have moved from 12 to 14. It is a shocking indictment on the government that I think we are going to see this kind of meandering from now until whenever: 'We might get to raising the age to 12 at some point soon.' All of the advocates in this space recognise that as a complete policy failure. It is not a

half-measure; it is a complete failure, because it addresses such a slim proportion of those kids under the age of 14 who are wrapped up in the criminal legal system. The issues paper from the QFCC states—

Raising this—

the age—

to 14 years will enable the causes of children's offending behaviour to be addressed in an individualised and developmentally appropriate way that reduces the risk of future offending.

That is it. It is laid bare there. Anyone who wants to go along with the youth justice chest beating and the tough-on-crime approach should do a little bit of homework. They should look up this report from the QFCC—it is not hard to find: *Designing a better response to youth offending in Queensland: raising the age of criminal responsibility*. It is well worth a read.

Members should listen to the experts and read the report of the QFCC. If the government had any respect for the evidence and for the experts in this space, it would be listening to folks like the QFCC instead of pouring money into a failing youth justice system—a criminal response—and pouring money into building a new youth prison in Cairns.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr RUSSO (Toohey—ALP) (3.57 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee Report No. 33, 57th Parliament, *Inquiry into matters relating to donor conception information*, tabled on 31 August 2022.

Earlier this year the Legislative Assembly agreed that the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee inquire into and report to the House on issues relating to the access to donor conception information, including: the rights of donor-conceived persons, including to know their genetic origins; the extent to which identifying information about donors should be given to the donor-conceived persons, taking into consideration the right to privacy of donors; access to historical clinical records and implications of retrospectivity; access to support and counselling for donor-conceived persons and donors; whether a register should be established; and the benefits, risks and implications on donor conception practices arising from any recommendations.

The journey to becoming a parent is different for everyone, and for those who do struggle to conceive creating a family can come with difficulty and heartache. Assisted reproductive technology is an increasingly popular option and it is therefore timely that the Queensland government consider the unique needs of those who are conceived through this process. Children born through donor conception often have the same desire and need to know their genetic history as any other person. However, Queensland's legislative arrangements—

Debate, on motion of Mr Russo, adjourned.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 3157, on motion of Ms Grace—

That the bill be now read a second time.



Mr KELLY (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.01 pm): I have been looking forward to speaking on this debate. Going back a good 12 to 15 years was when I first encountered a gentleman from the QPSU who was a disgruntled prison officer who set up his own scab union and caused immense damage to the interests of the members of the QPSU. What was he doing? Nothing more than pretending to be a union when in fact all he was doing was trying to tout for business for a back-end law firm. It was disgraceful then and it continues to be disgraceful to this day.

Yesterday the member for Southern Downs accused the Palaszczuk government of being scrofulous in bringing this bill. Do members know what I think is scrofulous? I think it is scrofulous that the LNP has found yet another sneaky, underhanded, scrofulous way to try to destroy the vehicles that

working people use to empower themselves and improve not just their workplaces but society generally. However, we should not be surprised because the LNP and its various predecessors have been doing this for hundreds of years.

First, it accused workers who spoke to one another about wanting more money to feed their kids or perhaps not even having their kids working in a factory next to them and getting an education. Those people were accused and convicted of conspiracy. They were put on boats and sent to none other than Australia. That continued on down through the 1890s with all of the tools of state repression being used on behalf of the ruling class to suppress the legitimate rights of workers to organise and represent themselves. Perhaps because there were so many Labor rats in the ranks of the United Australia Party in the 1930s we seemed to go through a period of relative detente where unions seemed to be respected. Perhaps it was the contribution they made at various points during world wars. That seemed to last for a long time federally, but then of course enter Howard, Reith, Costello and their great mates from the HR Nicholls Society and all of that ended and it was back to war on the wharves.

Then came the hated WorkChoices, and the union movement was backed by Australians at large to throw out this ridiculous nonsense and the ridiculous government responsible, including the then prime minister who lost his seat—

Mr Whiting interjected.

Mr KELLY:—for the first time in Australian history since Stanley Bruce pulled off the exact same trick in the 1930s, and I thank the historian for his interjection. Here in Queensland our very own ‘Don’t you worry about that’ tin-pot dictator tried to break the mighty ETU, and didn’t that work out well? Then we had the hated era of the Newman government where, try as it might, it could not stop working people standing up for their rights. Remember, it tried to get us all to stop wearing badges. We were not allowed to wear our union badges. It harks back to the 1912 tram strike. There was the exact same issue at the start and it has been going on for hundreds of years, so I ask the House: when is the LNP going to learn that working people have a right to organise and be represented, and Labor will back this? No matter what sneaky, underhanded, scrofulous methods those opposite come up with, we will be waiting to ensure that workers’ rights are protected.

Some 34 years ago when I was leaving home and about to jump on a train to Brisbane to start my nursing training my father gave me some advice. He said, ‘When you start work, find a union delegate and join the union. You might not really understand what they do, but they really can help you out a lot.’ My dad was no rabid trade unionist. He was a member of the Independent Teachers Union until he reached the lofty heights of principal and he had to leave, but neither he nor mum spent much time discussing unions or politics at home. However, they were both very committed to Catholic social justice and they obviously knew how vulnerable an 18-year-old kid entering the workplace 1,600 kilometres from home could be and they knew the protections that a trade union could offer in that circumstance. I took that advice. It was pretty easy advice to take, because on day one the Queensland nurses union visited our workplace and signed us up.

Since that time I have learned a lot about workers, unions and industrial relations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises the rights of workers to form and join a union. The minister in her second reading speech outlined the approach of the government to the ILO’s ‘conveniently belong’ rule. We know from the bitter lessons of history that when workers form rival organisations it is bad for everybody involved—workers, employers and society. No matter how much the opposition might try to pretend this is the case, applying this rule is not unique in Queensland; it is rolled out in industrial relations jurisdictions right around the globe. It is rolled out to afford workers protections, it is rolled out to afford employers protections and it is rolled out to afford society at large protections. It is a feature of sensible, moderate unionism, and the Australian union movement has never strayed to the far right or the far left as has happened in other countries. It has remained committed to achieving outcomes sensibly, preferably through dialogue and by participating in parliamentary democracy which we do to this day. Our movement has never been interested in destroying businesses or wrecking democratic institutions. As we all know, there have been those who have attempted this in the past, but they have been resisted inside our movement, sometimes at great cost.

These so-called professional associations are not unions. First, unions consist of workers freely associating to further their collective interests. These organisations are effectively privately owned entities set up ultimately for the private profit of Graeme Haycroft and his mates.

Second, unions are democratic, transparent and accountable. I would urge members to re-read the speeches given by the member for Redlands and the member for Stafford if they want to delve into the murky world of these non-transparent, non-democratic organisations which are effectively a business model for a couple of dodgy lawyers.

Third, the purpose of unions is solely to empower and support workers. These organisations exist to make some people rich and to destroy unions and the ALP. How do I know this? Because one of the senior leaders in one of these dodgy operations told me this. Thankfully, the now former member for Gaven Sid Cramp told me this in a maxi taxi on a trip we did to Cairns for a parliamentary committee. He announced proudly to our entire committee when he was foreseeing the future that if he lost the election—thank God he did—he would go back to pursue his passion. Was that being a paramedic? Was that helping people? No. His passion was working with his organisation to destroy unions and to destroy the ALP—really uplifting stuff.

I feel really sorry for the workers who get deceived into joining these organisations. Those workers are just trying to fix problems in their workplaces, just like I was trying to do all those years ago and continue to do. Sadly, they encounter these charlatans who pretend to care about what they care about when really they have a whole other agenda. The Leader of the Opposition posed a question in his contribution about choice. I have been a worker who had to make choices in lots of different scenarios in lots of different workplaces over a 25-year period before I was elected.

Ms Grace: They can choose to join or not to join.

Mr KELLY: I could have chosen not to join a union. That is right; I take that interjection. I could have chosen to start a ginger group and run around causing problems, but instead I made a choice to get active in my union, to get educated and to put myself forward for election as a delegate. I chose to fix things that I was unhappy about. It was not easy and sometimes I had to come to the really tough realisation that the things I thought were wrong and I did not like were actually supported by a majority of my union colleagues, and I had to accept that as the collective will of the organisation.


Whatever sneaky, underhanded mechanisms those opposite come up with to try to smash unions, the Labor Party will be there, supported by our good friends in the union movement, resisting those scrofulous attempts, always working to empower and advance workers and to advance all Queenslanders.

I want to spend my last few moments in this debate responding to comments made by members opposite. The member for Theodore claimed that the QNMU is a Labor affiliated union. I can tell the member for Theodore that I wish it was. In the early nineties when they had a vote about whether they should stay in the ALP or move out of the ALP, I was out there campaigning for them to stay. Unfortunately, I lost that debate and the nurses' union left the Labor Party at that time. That was a completely misleading statement by the member for Theodore.

In his contribution the member for Kawana stated, 'The nurses' union put out a flyer saying "We support Labor's plan to fix aged care."' What do they support? A plan to fix aged care! I read their journal every month. They would happily write any other political party's name in there if they had plan to fix aged care. Just like they would have backed those opposite if they were prepared to back ratios.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr KELLY: Those opposite do not like to hear it. The QNMU is a non-affiliated union. It is a union that first and foremost puts the interests of nurses, midwives and patients at the forefront.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (4.11 pm): I will start by commenting on the contribution of the member for Greenslopes. He said that when he was first a nurse he had three choices: to join the union, to go off by himself and start a ginger group, or he could choose not to do anything. At that stage he had a choice. After this legislation, if passed, that young nurse just starting will not have a choice.

A government member: It will pass!

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will take that interjection. I like it to be proven. The member for Greenslopes clearly said he had three options: to join a union, not join a union or to start a ginger group. It begs the question: why is the member for Greenslopes a member of parliament if his union was helping him out so much? What made him come in here to change the system?

Mr Kelly: The Newman government!

Government members interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Hence why he is the Deputy Speaker. The member for Greenslopes had that freedom of choice that every single new employee in this great state should have—unlike the nurses who are trying so hard right now to have that choice but who will have it ripped away from them. Because the Labor Party do not wish to give that choice any longer, they have brought in the most

draconian, terrible piece of legislation that I have ever seen come through this House in the 10 years I have been here. It is absolutely unbelievable that every new nurse or teacher who has found a home in an alternate union is no longer able to do that.

It is interesting that the member for Greenslopes was able to make that choice when he started. The nurse's union has become so tied at the hip to the Labor Party—and that is just one of the unions—and feeds it cash from those hardworking nurses. They could save around \$400. That is a lot of money. It may not mean much to the member for Pine Rivers, but that \$400 means a lot to all of those junior graduate nurses. That is why they are leaving in droves. Thousands of people are leaving the draconian union movement because they know that the coffers of their respective union are going into the coffers of the Palaszczuk Labor government. That is the only reason why the IR minister has brought this draconian legislation into this House.

Where have we come to in this state when, if you end up before the QIRC, the only person who can represent you is a union. Seriously. This Palaszczuk government has decided it can only be a Labor aligned union. What happens if that young nurse or teacher, that person who wants to start a career, does not have the same political leanings as the Palaszczuk Labor government? They do not get represented. The alternate unions have found a home because the government is completely aligned with and absolutely run by the union movement. We know that.

There are protests every day against the government. As soon as that happens there is a little scuttlebutt and ministers might move sideways, backwards or upwards—whichever way they go—because it is the unions that put the ministers' backsides in these seats. The \$400 of that poor nurse or teacher is going towards making sure one of these people gets elected in this parliament. How is that fair when that young person may not wish their affiliation fees to go to the Labor Party? That is exactly why these alternative unions have sprung up.

That does not get through to members of the Labor government. It is all about control. Those opposite cannot understand the economics of why there is a \$400 saving. It is because \$400 of the union dues goes straight to the Labor Party. Those opposite are so economically incompetent they do not understand that. I beg them all to do Economics 101. Do IR 101. The Labornomics that is taught and bred into this group of people is absolutely astounding.

The Deputy Premier has a doctorate in union organisation. He is a doctor in increasing membership. Imagine the cabinet meeting, with 'Dr Union' sitting beside the most powerful unionist in the cabinet in the member for McConnel. She would have been there thumping her fist, singing *Solidarity Forever* and going, 'Oh my goodness, look at this. We have to stop these people. There are 120,000 people who are paying their money to an alternate union. At \$400 each we are going to lose millions and millions of dollars'—something like \$48 million. That is exactly what the union movement will lose—sorry, that is what the Labor Party will lose—and that is why the all-powerful factions around the cabinet table were sitting there saying, 'Hang on a minute, the Labor Party is going to lose, but that means we will lose our backsides on those seats.' That is why they brought this particular piece of legislation to the House.

Mrs Gerber: It is anti-democratic!

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will take that interjection. It is anti-democratic. Those 120,000 people are joining these alternate unions for a purpose. They have a right to be represented at the QIRC. They deserve to have their voices heard.

I can tell the House that the 12 nurses who constantly come to sit in my office to complain about the failures of the health system in Nanango have been to the union. They are members of the union. They have tried. Do you know what the union said to those locals? 'We can't do anything because it is the Palaszczuk government and they're our masters.' That is why they are not being represented and that is exactly why they have gone to NPAQ. I feel so sorry for any junior nurse, junior teacher or other junior person in the workforce who wants to be affiliated so they can be represented. They deserve freedom of choice. The people on the other side have no idea.


Just before I heard the words 'accountable' and 'unions'. I cannot repeat the exact quote because I was so blown away. Accountable? Accountable to whom? It is the government that is accountable to the unions, not the other way around!

Government members interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: As soon as those squawking backbenchers understand that then they might understand that this piece of legislation is simply undemocratic. It has no place in this great House. There is absolutely no place for this piece of legislation. I absolutely, 100 per cent, support the

Deputy Leader of the LNP and every word that he said in his submission. The Labor Party would do well to play it on repeat when they lose in 2024 because this legislation will be the reason for that loss. There are people out there, including ones in the unions, who do not want this legislation.

(Time expired)

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (4.21 pm): I do not really know how to respond to that, Mr Deputy Speaker. I want to reflect on the day that my late father retired. My late father had achieved much in his working career. He was a teacher of the deaf and then an academic. He worked on early childhood education and the acquisition of language. I was extremely proud of his commitment to teaching and the deaf community. The strange thing is that, at his retirement—the union came along with a mug—one of the things that he said to his fellow workers was, ‘One of the most important things you can do every day at work is look after your fellow workers.’ He was the sort of man who was always on committees. He was always talking about the way casualised workers were treated. Despite having achieved so much, what he wanted to remind people of was the many hours we spend with our colleagues and that how we treat them and how they are treated is really important.

I say that because there are all these slurs about why we are motivated to do this and why we believe in trade unionism. It is deep within our families and our families’ histories. It is about how we respect others in our society and in our workplaces. I know that it is on their talking points, but for many of us it is deeply offensive. We do this because we deeply believe it is the right thing to do for Queenslanders. Organisations that represent workers should have at the heart of their intent the democratic structures that are part of the Industrial Relations Act. They should have at the heart of their intent a desire to make life better for workers and not, as we have heard, an attempt to undermine workers’ organisations in the long term. Before I started my speech proper I wanted to reflect on that.

Since I have been a member of parliament, we have seen some pretty radical changes to the way that people can be employed. It used to be pretty simple. A company or perhaps the government would directly employ somebody. You knew who your workers were and you knew who your employer was. Then, at times of peak flow, some companies would employ temporary workers. We understood that. There began to be a business for intermediaries that employ contracted workers. Then we saw that some companies changed all of their workforce to contracted workers. They no longer directly employed people so that there was always a buffer between the person who was building the enterprise and profiting from the workers and the workers themselves.

Now a lot of companies have moved to the so-called gig economy model where an app directs workers, often through an algorithm. The relationship was that you knew the company you worked for, you knew your line manager and you even knew who your boss was. You would know who they were and you could tell them what was happening. Now you stare at your phone and you wonder where your directions are coming from. Do they come from an AI app or an algorithm? Do they come from somebody who has done a study in the United States on the way that people behave when faced with certain choices on an app? Members should think carefully about the contribution of David Peetz, which is definitely worth reading, and also the TWU report that goes into the specifics of the reality of this in Queensland.

Almost all of these companies are multinational companies that seek to introduce new technology. I do not see that their aim is to improve productivity; often they are there to get around regulation or, in some cases, to make the administration of regulation impossible. This arbitrage is to make profits by moving the costs to their workers, such as the cost of plant and equipment and the cost of insurance. Of course, they also move costs to others such as road users who are endangered by long hours and low pay and, ultimately, to the government and the taxpayers of Queensland. It is not just the LNP who is influenced by the supposed productivity of apps; over time we have failed to see any actual gain and now we are looking for better ways to protect workers and the public.

As I said, Professor Peetz’s contribution is worth reading. He outlines the clear case for a fair and especially safe race. He states that gig workers are controlled by apps. It is not the type of work that can support a family or build a home. Only 25 per cent of gig workers said it was their main job. Professor Peetz stated—

There is ample international evidence of low payments amongst gig economy workers. There is nothing special about independent courier drivers that makes them exempt from such low rates of pay in the absence of appropriate legislation.

‘Gig economy’ work provides essential income for a minority of participants.

As I said, only 25 per cent of gig workers said it was their main job and that is because of the way they structure it.

Companies try to hide the real costs from their employees. Recently I was reading about an app that has been designed to inform gig workers of the underlying costs of their work and their real wages. You put in information about your car or vehicle, the state and cost of your tyres, the cost of fuel and, of course, the time you spent in preparing and waiting. The app would then give an automated view of how much money you were making per hour. Of course, this is the internet. We are providing greater information. Because these companies are into the brave new world of the internet and information, one would think they would embrace their workers having that information. However, it has been revealed that, in some cases, workers are earning well under the minimum wage, although they do not understand that in the moment of earning those wages.

We see advertising on TV about how much you can earn an hour, but that does not reflect the underlying costs of insurance, tyres and, of course, the cost to the economy in general when people are injured by the long hours they are forced to work because of the low wages. The companies did not embrace that information. Instead, they changed the algorithm to make it impossible for the app to process the data. In some cases, they sued the app maker to prevent the information getting through to their workers.


There is not the transparency that is required for workers to understand what they are engaging with. Well may they want to hide those real costs. They do want to hide those real costs, because we understood that only a quarter work full-time and that 62 per cent said it was not enough to save for leave or superannuation. Again, that is a transfer of profits from the Queensland government and the Australian government across to these multinational companies which are not taking responsibility for it. David Peetz said, 'Pay in the gig economy is low and often below minimum wages.'

In its submission the Transport Workers Union said that, when a client continues with the underlying pressure from the top supply chain, gig operators then have to open a new front by unfairly competing with transport operators through highly exploitative work practices. There is a vicious cycle. Even those companies that are in that old model of employer to employee have to try to compete against those being driven harder and harder by an algorithm and a faceless app.

Workplace health and safety said that time pressures were the two most important factors in the food delivery industry. Gig companies are now moving into heavier freight. That itself is a danger because we see that over time when there is pressure on workers to work harder there are safety concerns. The Minister for Transport, who I know is keenly aware of this, knows that if drivers are driving too long or too hard it does put a danger both to themselves but, just as importantly, other drivers and users of our road network who have not made any of these decisions. We know that this is pushing owner-drivers into more and more precarious situations and the companies themselves into worse situations.

I urge members of the House to consider those details. I recently spoke to a member of the Christian community who—

(Time expired)

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (4.31 pm): This bill and this government are against workers, equality and our great democracy. The Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill before us has been innocuously named. It covers a lot of ground. There are amendments within this bill that relate to workplace sexual harassment which are admirable, but there are many more reminiscent of the 1950s. It reeks of hypocrisy and self-interest and cannot in good conscience be passed. This bill is a slap in the face to workers right across the state. It is nothing more than a bill to further entrench Labor aligned union monopoly in Queensland and to take away choices for teachers, nurses and frontline workers. It is draconian, antiquated and flies in the face of our democracy.

What more can we expect from a government that is driven by pure politics, power-hungry ministers and a hate for competition? In introducing this bill, the Minister for Industrial Relations spoke about the five-year review of the Queensland Industrial Relations Act 2016. The minister was adamant and seemed especially proud to claim that the view is independent. What a farce. It just so happens that this independent review was conducted by a former Labor Party attorney-general who we know is heavily involved with the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union. Just to cement this bias, it was co-led by a former union official. There is absolutely no independence in this report.

We cannot have an independent review if a former member of the Labor Party, a puppet master union boss, is leading the review. The minister may also be surprised to know that we cannot have an independent review when that review is not advertised, open for submissions from affected stakeholders and not open for public consultation.

An honourable member: It is not really a review.

Mrs GERBER: It is not really a review. The minister has deceived Queenslanders. Her trickery cannot be allowed to pass through this House. We were told that this bill seeks to strengthen protections against sexual harassment in the workplace. Yes, an objective of this bill is that one does not sexually harass a workplace officer. The inclusion of this important issue is hiding some truly draconian amendments and this subterfuge is appalling. What makes matters worse is that the minister has made this protective objective in name only. There are no punishments included in the bill for someone who sexually harasses a workplace person. If the minister were serious about this crucial issue, she would have moved a separate bill so some bipartisan debate could occur—not used the very real and very concerning issue of sexual harassment to shield amendments to further entrench Labor aligned union monopoly in Queensland. It is truly disgraceful behaviour. Queenslanders deserve so much better. When introducing this bill the Minister for Industrial Relations said—

The bill clarifies the rights and protections conferred upon registered industrial organisations and provides that such rights are limited to organisations which are registered or otherwise eligible for taking steps towards registration under the IR Act.

This bill goes so much further than that. It goes so much further than simply clarifying the ability of such groups to represent and protect workers; it attacks our very democracy by seeking to outlaw those employee organisations that do not support the Australian Labor Party. In the words of the minister, they are rogue entities. I repeat that: it seeks to outlaw those unions that do not support the Australian Labor Party. This means non-ALP aligned employee organisations, or red unions, would not be able to represent workers in industrial relations matters. This is completely and utterly disgraceful. It is an affront to our democracy and it should not be allowed to stand.

In a submission to the Education, Employment and Training Committee, the Retail and Fast Food Workers Union wrote—

The Bill seeks to put beyond any doubt that representatives of workers, including genuine unions, that are not registered as 'registered organisations' cannot represent workers under the IR Act and goes further to impose penalties on those which mistakenly or otherwise represent that they can or do ...

The Retail and Fast Food Workers Union goes on to say—

In doing so, the legislation seeks to impose radically anti-union and anti-worker changes on Queenslanders.

The managing director of the Red Union Support Hub, Jack McGuire, echoes this sentiment on behalf of the Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland, the Teachers' Professional Association of Queensland, the Professional Drivers' Association of Australia, the Australian Medical Professionals' Society, the Sworn Officers' Professional Association of Australia and the Independent Workers' Union of Australia. In his opening statement to the committee he stated—

Over 17,000 workers are under attack under this bill. Hundreds of thousands of workers in Queensland are having their rights to choose their representative taken away from them and their human rights stomped on ... This is the most anti-worker bill ever introduced into this Parliament and if any members here got elected off the back of the worker, they should be ashamed that a supposed Labor government would even draft this bill. It makes a mockery of Gough Whitlam. What this bill hopes to do is shut down independent unions—unions that dissent against the government.

This bill tears away protections that hundreds of thousands of Queensland workers rely on, leaving them stranded. Queenslanders deserve a choice in what industrial association they want to represent them. The Red Union Support Hub in July this year had almost 1,000 matters listed before the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. Currently, the Red Union Support Hub can and does represent workers. Under this bill, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission will only acknowledge one professional association per specific profession. It will ensure a monopoly of Labor aligned unions on industrial relations and remove the individual's right of association, forcing many workers to inevitably join or in some case re-join Labor aligned unions.

To make matters worse—as if it could even get worse—I can think of at least once Labor aligned union that consistently uses antisocial behaviour and storms government buildings. On 23 August this year, public servants were put at risk. A government building was forced into lockdown and events were cancelled after hundreds of militant union members from the CFMEU stormed a building on Mary Street just two streets up from here. That behaviour was disgraceful, yet it is endorsed by this bill. The saga continued when just last Friday Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk told the media that she would not cut financial ties nor instruct her Labor HQ to hand back the \$90,000 received in donations from the CFMEU this year.


Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): The members for Kurwongbah and Kawana will cease their quarrelling across the chamber.

Mrs GERBER: By limiting workers' ability to choose an independent union this bill is removing the option for workers right across Queensland to join a union that does not donate money to the Labor Party or provide election support to the Labor Party. This is blatant gerrymandering of our democracy. I cannot believe that in 2022 we are being presented with such regressive, power-hungry legislation. In fact, I urge the minister to come to Currumbin to meet with our local teachers, nurses and frontline workers face-to-face and be completely up-front with them and tell them exactly how much of their union fees are being funnelled back into the Labor Party to support re-election.

We have looked at the membership fees associated with joining the Queensland Teachers' Union and the Nurses and Midwives' Union. It is a staggering \$400 more than what it actually costs to provide a core service. This is being funnelled back into the Labor Party. These Labor affiliated unions have abandoned their values. They are not acting in the best interests of their members. They are taking the hard-earned money of their members—our teachers and frontline workers—and funneling it back into the Labor Party. I urge the minister to come to Currumbin and tell our hardworking teachers, nurses, other frontline workers and anyone else who is a member of a Labor affiliated union exactly where their money is going. I guarantee you, they would be horrified.

This bill serves only one purpose: to use the money of hardworking Queenslanders to line the pockets of the Palaszczuk government. This is a government that needs union support. This will ensure that they continue to get elected off the back of unions. This Palaszczuk government is controlled by the unions. Time and time again we see that this government is only interested in big unions and big governments. This bill says exactly that. This bill takes away the rights and choices of workers in this country and it is utterly disgraceful.

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (4.41 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The Palaszczuk government is committed to the transparent and effective representation of industrial interests within Queensland's industrial relations system, demonstrated by unions like the well-respected Queensland Teachers' Union. That commitment is underpinned by the framework of employee and employer organisations which are properly registered under the Industrial Relations Act 2016. Furthering the Palaszczuk government's commitment to ensuring effective industrial representation, this bill also makes amendments to the IR Act to address the misrepresentation of services by paid agents and some legal practitioners in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, the Queensland Industrial Court and the Industrial Magistrates Court.

At the outset, I declare that I am a proud member of the Queensland Teachers' Union of more than 27 years, a principal union representative of 13 years where I diligently represented my colleague principals on the Queensland Teachers' Union. The Queensland Teachers' Union is an Australian trade union with a membership of more than 48,000 teachers and principals in our Queensland government's primary schools, secondary schools, special schools, senior colleges, TAFE colleges and other educational facilities. The QTU has been registered under the Queensland industrial legislation since 1917—something that we are very proud of—after the system of registration of trade unions was introduced in this country with the Industrial Arbitration Act 1916.

Ever since registration was introduced, the emphasis has been on having one registered organisation to represent a calling, like teaching, in the commission rather than a multiplicity because that is how industrial relations is settled most efficiently and effectively. Over 100 years, the QTU was the first state registered union to: have equal pay for women incorporated in the award; achieve non-contact time for teachers; have arbitrated pay increases through cases detailing the increasing value of the work of teachers and principals; and have 10 successive enterprise bargaining agreements for schoolteachers, and 11 for TAFE, since the first in 1994.

It is no surprise that those opposite do not like the proposed amendments of the IR Act. When they were last in government they tried to regulate unions out of existence. They tried to put in place laws that distracted unions, like my union, the Queensland Teachers' Union, from doing what they do every day—turning up and fighting for better salaries and working conditions for their members.

I remember during the Newman years as principal of Glenala State High School when QTU representatives were denied access to staff on school grounds, ensuring that teachers did not meet with the QTU during work hours. What the LNP learned during these years was that they could not stop the QTU and they could not stop unions from doing their jobs.

Perplexed and desperate to break the union movement, they decided to join with some of their lawyer mates and came up with these so-called red unions—which although they call themselves unions are not and never will be anything other than a business selling membership. Why do I suggest this? Because that is exactly what they are. These organisations have stated that they will be never be registered unions. In fact, they have said registration is an anachronism and is outdated. They say that registration gives one very little benefits. What they fail to say is that, as a registered organisation, unions have rules and regulations that they must comply with. This is one of the reasons that the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission found last year they were not a trade union. When the QIRC can say that one of these so-called red unions' legal, personality and corporate status is inconsistent with that of a trade union, we have a responsibility to ensure that these entities are seen for what they are.

Let us talk about what a real trade union does. It works with members to achieve improvements in working conditions. They are run democratically and they are member focused. The DNA of a union is one set up by the workers for the workers, not one set up by lawyers implementing a business model in an effort to disrupt the power of a group of workers campaigning together, acting collectively for safe and healthy working conditions and for pay that shows their value. Real unions use their collective strength to support their members, protect their members' rights and defend their members where necessary. They are also not afraid to tell their members the truth.

In my experience as a school leader, I may not have always liked the advice or information I received from the QTU, but I was grateful that I received it. I am grateful that rather than telling me what I wanted to hear my union told me what was right, and then if there was something that needed to change the QTU worked with me and my colleagues to campaign and bring about that change. I recall instances in my school when the union members in our school came together to force the department to do what was right for the safety and wellbeing of not only teachers and school leaders but everyone in my school. This is what democracy looks like.

Can I also tell members what else a real union does? It organises, it rallies and it gets real workers to turn out and support its campaigns. It does not rely on others to prosecute arguments. It does not get together with groups like the People's Revolution to march through the streets of Brisbane and try to intimidate and threaten individuals. I table evidence of the TPAQ calling their members to the People's Revolution anti-vaccination rally held on Wednesday, 31 August.

Tabled paper: Extract from the webpage of Teachers' Professional Association Queensland titled 'TPAQ—Teachers' Professional Association of Queensland' [\[1773\]](#).

Further, Malcolm Roberts recently published a video lauding the TPAQ. This is enough evidence that the TPAQ is an extreme right organisation peddling extreme right policies and that their mantra—protection without politics—is a farce. Not only are they politically aligned but they are politically aligned with the far right of Australian politics. Sally McManus, the ACTU president, supports this sentiment and was quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 1 October this year talking about organisations like TPAQ. She said—


These are fake unions run by LNP members and their associates set up to try and divide working people.

These fake unions should not be out there pretending that they can do what registered unions can. Of course, I should mention that TPAQ is not its real name; it is just a trading name. There was a decision in the Federal Circuit and Family Court on 1 September this year where they had to use their proper name—QTeachers First Inc.

Let's look at what these amendments do. They say that if you want to call yourself a union, then be a union. Be transparent about your membership and what you do with members' money. If you choose not to be a union, tell the truth about what you really can do for the people who are paying you money. These amendments are not about stifling choice, as those across the chamber would have you believe: it is about forcing their mates to be honest. The bill makes clear the distinction between organisations that are registered under the Industrial Relations Act and represent the industrial interests of employers and employees and other entities that are not registered under the IR Act and cannot properly represent industrial interests in the state's IR Tribunal and collective bargaining such as the Teachers' Professional Association of Queensland. Employer and employee organisations properly registered under the IR Act are subject to a range of stringent accountability and transparency obligations. This allows members of those organisations to have confidence about the exercise of these representation rights in industrial matters.

The IR Act sets rigorous reporting requirements for registered organisations to provide transparency and accountability to their members and demonstrate good governance practices. Unregistered associations like TPAQ are simply not subject to the same level of accountability and

reporting. This opens the door to them misrepresenting their registration status and their ability or inability to represent the industrial interests of members. In making these changes to the IR Act, the Palaszczuk government further strengthens the stable, cooperative industrial relations system which has long been a feature here in Queensland and which delivers fair outcomes for workers and employers. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (4.51 pm): It is a privilege to speak this afternoon on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I, like others on our side of the House, hoped this bill would be presented to House in a couple of different sections so we could support some very sensible aspects of the bill and criticise others. I certainly will attempt to do that this afternoon, but what I want to focus on first is that there are some sound parts of this bill, particularly with regard to sexual harassment, and changes that will see people protected with regard to misconduct. We support those things; we want to see workers protected. It is interesting that we support the government in that position. As the Leader of the Opposition said, when there are good things done we will pay tribute to that, but when there are bad things done we will criticise it.

Other aspects of this bill are fundamentally wrong. Those opposite are all members of unions, and unions select those members to have the privilege of being elected to this House. That is completely different to this side of the House. We are all democratically appointed by our members locally in our branches and state electoral councils. We are not beholden—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order, members! Order! Pause the clock. The House will come to order.

Mr McDONALD: As I was saying, those opposite are beholden to their union masters. They are appointed by their union masters and they are coming here to infringe on the rights of other workers in Queensland and take away their right to choose their own union to represent them. Those opposite are members of the unions that appoint the government. Freedom of choice is a fundamental value of the Australian landscape, and this government in Queensland is fundamentally destroying democracy for those who wish to choose their own representation.

That is an absolute slur on the government of the day. I challenge the media today and in the days and weeks ahead to continue to tell the story of this union-driven government so that people in the community understand what has gone on. We all know that when a news story breaks there are some who see it and then in the days and weeks ahead others will come to realise, 'Oh, this does affect me.'

The hypocrisy of this bill is that those opposite talk about protecting workers, and they say it proudly. I have to say that the DNA of the Labor Party of today is nothing like those who gathered around the Tree of Knowledge when the Labor Party was first set up. It is nothing like it at all, and in their quiet times those opposite in the government will reflect on that. This is a simple thing to correct: take away the ridiculous monopolistic control by the unions to have only those unions represented in the government and allow other unions and associations, which are providing very sound, articulate and good legal advice to others in our community, particularly nurses and teachers.

I am informed there are over 17,000 teachers and nurses now who have become part of those alternative unions. I have met with some of those people. They have told me firsthand that they have received very good, sound advice. Guess what? They have saved themselves \$400 a year on their union dues. I was a proud member of the police union, and I can tell you—

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Thuringowa!

Mr McDONALD: It is interesting that those opposite get a little bit excited when the truth comes out. They are beholden to the unions. The unions appoint them and then they are elected by the people of the community. I was a proud member of the police union and I paid my union dues. I did not need legal protection, but that is why it was there. I am well-informed to talk about union participation. I know there are good unions such as the police union that do good things for their workers. I have seen and been a part of enterprise bargaining agreements, and we have achieved some great things. This action by the government is purely an erosion of a worker's choice.

As I said before, \$400 less was paid by each of the members who chose to go to an alternative union where they do get some good advice. I was here last night when the Deputy Leader of the Opposition gave his contribution. He said, 'This is about the \$48 million', or words to that effect. It


certainly was \$48 million, because we are talking about 200,000 workers potentially going across to the other unions at \$400 a head. It is already \$6.8 million and growing. When the deputy leader gave that contribution, I was in the House and I witnessed those opposite rubbing their hands together and gesticulating to show just how important that money is. I know that when money goes from organisations it hurts, and I know that no doubt those unions are hurting.

I want those opposite to reflect on the choice of workers in our community, the great state of Queensland, who have a choice to go with an association who gives them sound legal advice with a \$400 saving. Those opposite are well-heeled in terms of their earnings. For those workers out there who have a choice to pay \$400 less it is a big difference for them. That is a great thing, and I support them in making that choice. If those who go to an alternative union want to take that \$400 and give it as a donation to the Labor Party, that is their freedom of choice. I do not know how many will do it; that is a different argument.

This appears to me to be a desperate law by a desperate government that wants to protect its union masters. I would suggest there are those opposite who have been very generous in their support of this bill to make sure their future, whether it be inside or outside of this House, is guaranteed. As I said at the beginning of this contribution, this is a very poor bill that is threatening the rights of workers. I really appreciated the contribution of the member for Currumbin before when she said, 'This is a blatant gerrymander of our democracy.' I thought that was a great description from one of the newer members in the House.

Some of those opposite talked about other sections of the bill regarding birthing rights for parents as opposed to maternity services. They were shouting out, 'That's their choice to make.' Well, it is a choice for workers to choose the associations and unions that they go to as well. As I said before, I challenge the media to pick up on this story and the 48 million reasons why the government and their union masters are threatened by this bill and the effect it is having on those competitors.

I challenge the media to ensure that story continues. We saw it happen with our shadow Treasurer recently with the backdown on the land tax. The shadow Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition prophesised that, with the right media story and the right pressure, there are 48 million reasons why this bill should not pass the House. If it does, then I hope the leadership of the government realise the damage it is going to do. I want to be part of the future promotion of the impact this bill is having on the rights of good Queenslanders and their right to choose. There are some other aspects of the bill with regard to the rights of workers, and those opposite gladly support those. Well, they should support the workers who choose to go to the other associations and take their \$400 saving away from this government.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (5.01 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. From the outset, I would like to declare that I am a member of a union—the mighty United Workers Union and the Plumbing and Pipe Trades Employees Union. Prior to that I was a 20-year member of the Queensland Police Union of Employees.

From listening to the contributions of members on this bill, I understand that there are parts of this bill which are contentious and which get members fired up. There is passion on both sides when it comes to the rights and choices of workers and that choice being exercised or protected. I too am passionate about the rights of workers in the workplace. I am passionate and I would hope that other members could be just as passionate about a worker's right to experience a workplace free from sexual harassment, sexism and discrimination. Imagine if everyone in this chamber could bring that passion to this topic.

For the information of the member for Currumbin, the part in the bill about sexual harassment is hidden on page 1 of the explanatory notes. The aspect about the consequences is hidden at the top of page 2 in black and white. Perhaps some reading might not have gone astray. It is in clause 4, so it is not even that far into the actual weighty bill.

Members, we stood in this chamber 18 months ago—on 24 March 2021 to be precise—and we all supported a motion that condemned the harassment and assault of women across Australia. We supported all women across Australia and their right to be safe in their homes, their workplaces and their community. It was a motion moved after an outpouring of anger and disillusion by women across the country about the lack of action and respect afforded to women by those in power in Canberra. The irony is not lost on me about where those particular matters sit as of today. It is very hard not to be discouraged.

Members might recall during that motion 18 months ago that many members in this House rose and spoke of their experiences in the workplace—some in their current workplace. In my contribution I said that I could stand here and fill an entire sitting week with my experiences of harassment and sexism in my previous workplaces, not just three minutes. I think we should all be very thankful that I was limited to three minutes.


Anyone who has been following the Independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service Responses to Domestic and Family Violence will understand that the workplace is still not always a welcoming one for women. I had been trying my best to avoid the inquiry, to be honest, but what was uncovered has certainly attracted attention—necessary attention—and outrage; I would posit necessary outrage. It brought back so many memories. While many victims in this workplace were afforded anonymity, it is not a culture or organisation that actually affords anonymity. We all know who those women were, and I can say that reliving these experiences so publicly has not been easy on them.

I applaud the Police Commissioner for fronting up to this inquiry and taking this load because, let us be clear, the culture in that workplace—particularly that which has been reported—has been decades, if not over a century, in the making: decades of boys' clubs and a male-dominated workplace. Yet it is the QPS's first female commissioner on whose shoulders the task to address this must fall. Why is it always falling to women to clean up the toxic messes left by men?

Sexual harassment in the workplace is unacceptable. It is the manifestation of a lack of respect because of another's gender. It is the result of a belief system which believes that someone else is less than, that they are not deserving of respect, that they are an object, that they are something to be ogled, pursued, objectified, touched and handled in an inappropriate manner, that they are not equal.

Sexual harassment has costs to an organisation, a workplace and individuals. You can look at the financial costs, sure—the lost productivity from time lost in mediation, workplace harassment claims and suits, stress leave and managing employees leaving an organisation or being allocated to other parts of an organisation—but it has a larger, often intangible, effect on the workplace as well: the loss of cohesiveness and the loss of teamwork and trust. Can I just say that, when you are in a workplace where you rely on your partner to be there, to back you up and maybe save your life, to know that they believe that you are less than and not worthy of respect is going to have a big influence on how you do your job. It is going to have an influence on your mental health, particularly when your employer is limited, restricted or just downright not interested in preventing ongoing sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

This bill seeks to make amendments to how an employer can deal with sexual and gender-based harassment. The first is the expansion of the definition of 'industrial matter' to include workplace sexual harassment and sex- or gender-based harassment. The provisions ensure that sexual harassment is misconduct for the purpose of summary dismissal. For those repeat offenders, there are no more continual slaps on the wrist. Dismissal is an option—so bad, so sad, bye-bye, and good riddance I say. These are not good workers, and I do not care how good a bloke you thought they were. They are dangerous in the workplace, they are dangerous to productivity and they are dangerous to everyone else in the workplace. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (5.07 pm): I rise to speak on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. There are parts of this bill that the Greens think are really important and we will be supporting this bill. Strengthening protections against workplace sexual harassment, improving conditions for independent courier drivers and updating the Industrial Relations Act to adopt gender inclusive terms are very welcome. It has been really disgusting to hear the transphobic arguments against gender inclusive language during this debate. It is a ridiculous notion that respecting people's human rights devalues any of us, including any of us who identify as women. To any trans people watching this debate, we see you, we respect you and we value you, and we hope these changes will make things a little easier for you.

It is clear from the debate so far in the chamber that this bill is rather explicitly about crushing the so-called red unions and maintaining a level of restriction on union representation via a registered organisation's framework. The red unions are no friends of Queensland workers. As others have well outlined in this chamber, they have made little to no attempt to do the things that a pro-worker union would do—organising people collectively, negotiating for better wages and conditions, and bringing people together to fight for their rights.

I am a member of the Services Union. I was a member of the NTEU for some years when I was teaching. I have been proud to join workers in solidarity in strikes and actions and Labour Day marches for many years. The union movement has showed up in solidarity for the refugee movement, for women's rights, for LGBTIQ rights and for First Nations struggles.

As tree-clearing begins today out at Deebing Creek Mission, I acknowledge the ongoing role that unions have played in standing with First Nations defenders in protecting that land, to push back against property development and to protect what is culturally and ecologically significant land, and it is shameful what is happening out there today.

I was lucky to join the ETU workers at the University of Queensland a few months ago who went on strike to fight for better pay and conditions. They gathered daily on campus, bringing workers together. They were joined by students, other university staff and the student union, and I was proud to join them for a morning. They won their fight, a reminder that working collectively and particularly withdrawing their labour and going on strike is one of the most powerful tools that workers have. Strikes work.

The Greens think the objectives of this bill could also have been achieved by restricting commercial organisations from being able to be registered as an employee organisation. For-profit commercial organisations take advantage of workers. Using union or membership dues for for-profit ventures can see workers exploited not only by their employers but also by their unions. What this government should not restrict is how and when workers can organise in their workplaces. Workers should be free to form grassroots organisations to fight for better wages, conditions and further their collective interests. We head down a dangerous path when we start to restrict the way workers can organise.

As the Retail and Fast Food Workers Union said in its submission on this bill, 'This legislation seeks to impose radically anti-union and anti-worker changes on Queensland workers.' RAFFWU was formed six years ago in response to the widespread wage theft and rights-stripping that the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association and its Labor mates presided over. In the SDA, we have an unbelievably regressive union, affiliated with the ALP, telling its often very young members that abortion is wrong, that marriage equality is wrong and that they have to accept whatever deal is cooked up by Coles and Woolies. It is no wonder that retail and fast food workers have looked elsewhere for a union that will actually defend their rights. As the RAFFWU submission points out, the SDA oversaw Australia's greatest wage theft which it imposed, with employers, across the retail and fast food sectors. Millions of workers, including many Queenslanders, had billions of dollars stripped from their wages because of SDA deals. No wonder RAFFWU's member base has grown dramatically: workers want a union that will actually represent them.

As they say, this is a fundamental failure to recognise that responsible, modern representation of workers starts with the workers' rights to freedom of association and choice of representation. The act should have been changed to enshrine those rights in a way which acknowledges not all unions will choose to be registered organisations but which, in any event, are effective union representatives. Instead, RAFFWU argues this bill doubles down on old, exclusionary, monopolistic protectionist systems which have cost Queensland workers billions of dollars.


The red unions, operating for profit and without any attempt at collective action, are no friend of Queensland workers. This debate today has laid clear how hostile the LNP are to workers organising. But what is Labor's track record on workers' rights? If Labor was a friend of workers, why would they limit the right to strike? Thanks to Labor, we have a near complete prohibition on industrial action, except during legally sanctioned bargaining periods for new enterprise agreements at individual workplaces, breaking up workers' struggles. These same laws legally protect employers who lock workers out. These laws are codified in the Commonwealth Fair Work Act 2009 from the last time Labor was in power federally. However, their origins go far back to the Hawke and Keating years and the LNP government kept these laws when they were in power because these laws are effective in constraining collective work organising.

The current industrial relations regime, whose architect is Labor, does not work for workers. While wages have stagnated and the cost of living has soared, the profit margin on labour has gone from 26 to 62 cents for every dollar paid in wages since the 1970s. Someone is benefitting from this and it is not workers. These laws make a mockery of International Labour Organisation conventions ratified by Australia.

I was interested to hear talk of the Housing Accord in federal parliament this week when I would have thought 'accord' was a dirty word. Let's not forget the Prices and Incomes Accord, a series of agreements between Labor and the Australian Council of Trade Unions where unions would moderate

wage demands in exchange for other concessions from the government, and look where we are now. Wages have not risen to meet inflation as the accord promised and instead have flatlined while inflation is skyrocketing. Enterprise bargaining has split up union organising. The accord ushered in some of the biggest union defeats in Australian history, including the use of armed forces to break up the pilots' strike in 1989, and the mass sacking of SEQEB workers in Queensland in 1985.

The ETU mobilised just outside the annexe this morning saying that apprentices are living in poverty, and government departments are no longer bargaining in good faith and making substandard offers. The red unions are no friends of working Queenslanders, neither is the LNP and neither is Labor.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (5.15 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 was introduced into the Legislative Assembly and referred to the Education, Employment and Training Committee for detailed consideration on 23 June 2022. The objectives of the bill are to give effect to the Queensland government's response to the recommendations of the *Five-year review of Queensland's Industrial Relations Act 2016: final report*. The review report was conducted to inquire into and report on the operation of Queensland's Industrial Relations Act 2016 which was passed by the Queensland parliament on 1 December 2016. The government considered that it was now timely to review the operation and performance of the provisions of the Industrial Relations Act.

The review report made 40 recommendations, 36 of which were accepted in full by the Queensland government. Of the accepted-in-full recommendations, 31 called for legislative amendment. The review report not only looked at the operation and performance of the provisions of the IR Act but also looked into new developments over the intervening years. There was a particular focus on sexual harassment, registered organisations, gender equity and protections for precarious workers.

A number of issues specific to the act warranted further action in response to the Queensland government's response and key actions to the recommendations of the *Respect@work* national report. The primacy of registered organisations was promoted by providing a scheme whereby organisations can seek and provide representation rights for employees, including standing rights in relation to particular matters. The review found that there should be clear definitions of the types of organisations to which it refers, along with a clear distinction to be made between registered and unregistered bodies. Furthermore, other organisations should be excluded from the formal operation of the system, and people in them should not be able to benefit from false claims about their role in the system.

Workers employed in the gig or platform economy were identified as being precarious workers, and their employment conditions. The review report recognised that while some employees seek more structure in their employment status, others enjoy the nature of their work and their current employment conditions. The balance must be in establishing conditions that would, where appropriate, be comparable in value to those applying to equivalent award employees.

The main issue identified for collective bargaining by the review report is the persistence of gender pay inequality. This was highlighted just recently through the recognition of Equal Pay Day or, as I have heard it called, 'unequal pay day'. In 2022, Equal Pay Day fell on 29 August, and it recognised the extra 60 days after the end of the financial year that Australian women work to earn the same average salary as a man. This year, the national gender pay gap is 14.1% for full-time employees, a rise of 0.3 percentage points over the last six months.

The Department of Education conducted targeted consultation with key stakeholders from industry, government and the legal profession during the drafting of the bill. This included the distribution of two exposure drafts of the bill for comment. The committee was broadly supportive of the bill and believes it will help to achieve the primary objectives of the Industrial Relations Act, providing for a framework for cooperative industrial relations that is fair and balanced, and which supports the delivery of high quality services, economic prosperity and social justice for Queenslanders.

The committee recommended the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Bill be passed. The committee's examination of the bill highlighted key aspects of issues identified as particularly important or contentious during the inquiry process. The bill proposes to amend the industrial laws to strengthen protections, expand access to remedies for employees subject to workplace sexual harassment, and sex- and gender-based harassment.

The clear purpose of the amendments is to deter and eliminate sexual harassment and sex- or gender-based discriminatory conduct in Queensland workplaces. These provisions will ensure that sexual harassment is misconduct for the purposes of summary dismissal and allow wider powers for the QIRC to consider whether a dismissed employee engaged in sexual harassment or sex- or gender-

based harassment when deciding whether the dismissal was harsh, unjust or unreasonable. Although some submitters raised concerns about the specific aspects of the amendments relating to workplace sexual, and sex- and gender-based harassment—detailed below—no submissions opposed them.

The purpose of a number of amendments is to address pay equality. According to the explanatory notes the bill introduces a new mechanism to further enshrine equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value in collective bargaining. A number of stakeholders expressed support for those changes, with the Queensland Law Society advising that it believes these amendments may provide greater efficiency in the resolution of bargaining disputes.

The bill proposes to update the Queensland Employment Standards to ensure personal and parental leave provisions in the act are aligned with federal standards. The submitters who commented on the bill's amendments to the parental leave provisions expressed support for the increased flexibility and expanded access that those provisions will provide. However, some submitters expressed divergent views on the adoption of gender neutral language and the provisions relating to parental leave.


The bill expands the QIRC's jurisdiction to set minimum entitlements and conditions for independent courier drivers and principal contractors. The bill proposes empowering the QIRC to make orders relating to contracts which are courier service contracts in effect, though not in form, by declaring that a contract is a courier service contract. The intention is for the QIRC to balance the need to ensure a safety net for independent couriers' remuneration and working conditions while factoring in a range of other elements including, but not limited to, market conditions, business costs and financial risk. Submitters expressed diverse views about whether the objective of improving work conditions and safety for independent couriers should be addressed at the state or national level. Some stakeholders raised issues specifically in relation to on-demand delivery drivers.

A number of stakeholders expressed support for the proposed changes as a whole. For example, the Queensland Council of Unions advised it supports the provisions for independent couriers that provide them with access to minimum wages and conditions through the decisions of the QIRC and negotiated agreements between parties as well as introducing important protections against unfair contracts and dispute resolution procedures.

Collective representation is central to Queensland's industrial relations system. In return for the right to represent, employee and employer groups must be registered and must comply with the governance and reporting requirements stipulated in the IR Act. In recent years entities have emerged that seek to represent their members' or other persons' industrial interests without registering or complying with the requirements of the IR Act.

The bill seeks to reduce the risk of employers and employees being misled or confused about which entities are able to represent them, or have standing, under the IR Act. Submissions from employee organisations currently registered under the IR Act and peak bodies representing them were supportive of the amendments designed to prevent unregistered organisations from representing employees in the QIRC and imposing penalties for unregistered organisations that purport to be able to do so.

The bill proposes extending protections from unfair dismissal to an increased number of casual workers. It does this by amending the definition of 'short-term casual employee'. Submitters who commented on this issue were broadly supportive of expanding protections against unfair dismissal to more casual workers. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (5.25 pm): I rise to speak to the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I read with interest the committee report on the bill in relation to protections against workplace sexual, and sex- and gender-based harassment. It states—

A diverse mix of organisations expressed broad support for these changes, including: the Australian Christian Lobby ... Maternity Choices Australia—

and a number of other submissions. The committee report also states—

Although some submitters raised concerns about specific aspects of the amendments relating to workplace sexual, sex and gender-based harassment ... no submissions opposed them.

This is false. The Australian Christian Lobby's submission specifically states—

The Australian Christian Lobby has no opinion on the material aspects of the proposed amendments. In general, we welcome amendments that offer genuine protections against sexual harassment.

The KAP 100 per cent supports this as well. However, the ACL submission goes on to say—

We are however, strongly opposed to amendments that remove gendered language from the Industrial Relations Act. Specifically, we refer to proposed amendments to remove the terms 'maternity' and 'she' and replace them with 'birth-related' and 'the employee', this language is dehumanising and an insult to Queensland women. Maternity leave is a right afforded to women and an affirmation of the importance of mothers in a healthy society.

I table that submission.

Tabled paper: Education, Employment and Training Committee: Inquiry into the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022—Submission No. 1, dated 1 July 2022, from the Australian Christian Lobby [1774].

The Maternity Choices submission also states—

That to entirely desex the language of the legislation when relating to matters that affect women risks making women and mothers invisible and would undermine the intent of the inclusion and protecting the rights of women in this area.

I table the Maternity Choices submission.

Tabled paper: Education, Employment and Training Committee: Inquiry into the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022—Submission No. 20, dated 5 July 2022, from Maternity Choices Australia [1775].

It is another perfect example of the government cherrypicking and twisting what was actually said in the submissions specifically against this part of the bill. Ten years ago when the 'woke wars' first started if anyone had said we would be debating a bill to remove the words 'maternity' and 'she' from the industrial relations legislation, we would have thought they were stark raving mad. It is bizarre that in the Parliament of Queensland we are debating removing the words 'maternity' and 'she'.

The bill also includes complementary amendments to the Industrial Relations Act 2016, IR Act, regarding entities incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act 1981. Put simply, this is the government's response to several organisations or entities that popped up over the last few years when the government's vaccination mandate resulted in the loss of employment for many Queenslanders. These Queenslanders could not get representation from their unions, so they were forced to turn to alternative representation in their time of need. As far as we know, in a free and democratic state it is their right to do so. When people were desperate, when they were banished from all facets of society and barred from their job, they needed to turn to someone.


The first Australian unions were formed by free workers, or non-convict labourers, in the late 1820s. Unions spread across the country from the late 1830s, and between 1850 and 1869 about 400 unions were formed in Australia. My point is this: most unions started somewhere. Some were splinter unions who broke away from another union to meet the needs of the workers. Now we seem to be arguing over a bill that is seeking to stop new unions from forming in exactly the same way they were formed nearly two centuries ago.

I have the utmost respect for the union movement because I have seen three governments wiped out as a result of a powerful campaign by the unions. Members can cast their minds back to when the Goss government was kicked out. Goss came to power after kicking out the Liberal-National parties after over 40 years in government. Goss made out that we had cleaned out the cobwebs and come out of the dark ages, but then he started attacking the Queensland railway employees and started to close down railway stations and sidings. They were the biggest employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders across the state, but many lost their jobs. Then there was the Mundingburra by-election. The police and rail unions campaigned heavily, and Labor lost that by-election and ended up losing government.

Then it was the Bligh government that sold Queensland rail assets. I believe it also sold part of Forestry Plantations Queensland. There was a massive campaign by the ETU and the CFMEU. That campaign was so powerful because the government was doing the wrong thing by the people of Queensland by selling our profitable assets. The Labor government was kicked out of power and Labor was reduced to seven seats.

Then the Newman government came to power with 78 seats, having reduced Labor to seven seats. Then it came up with this bright idea to sell the Port of Townsville and our energy assets. The campaign from the ETU and the CFMEU at that time was so powerful that that government had its number of seats reduced from 78 to 42.

If a government is not going to do good or if a union is not going to do good, the people will kick them out. If the unions are doing their job—like the unions I have just mentioned—we have no need to bring in this legislation. We will be opposing this bill.

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (5.32 pm): I rise to speak on this bill, particularly the provisions around independent courier drivers. These are very welcome provisions which I thank the reviewers of the IR Act for recognising and the minister for acting on. At the moment in Queensland, sadly, many independent couriers have to make the choice between operating unsafely and going insolvent. We are taking action to address these well-known issues of exploitation and mistreatment of independent courier drivers. We are addressing these issues using a model that has been in use successfully in New South Wales for more than 40 years. This is a rare issue on which New South Wales has historically done a better job than we have here in Queensland.

Whilst we have known about food delivery apps and rideshare apps for a while, it has been a trend in recent years for this on-demand gig economy type employment to be creeping in to the parcel delivery industry. I refer to the submission from the Transport Workers' Union. It states—

Gig transport companies are now moving into more traditional forms of transport including heavy freight and the parcel delivery sector and in doing so, threatening to extend these worrying effects to new frontiers.

I spoke in my maiden speech in this place of the rise of the gig economy and the risks inherent in it, and I am very pleased to see that we are taking action regarding the independent courier sector in particular in this bill. Far from being an unnecessary intervention by government into a formerly unregulated area of commerce, as some of those opposite would say, the new laws in this bill implement a well-understood and time-proven approach to an issue identified in the review of the act. The purpose of the independent courier provisions is to ensure the safe performance of work, reduce fatalities and injuries on Queensland roads, reduce the economic cost of transport related crashes, and address unsafe economic and contracting practices.

It has been noted in the past—I refer again to the Transport Workers' Union submission—that in 2019 a third of all worker fatalities that occurred were within the transport, postal and warehousing sector. Seventy-two per cent of all worker fatalities in Australia were related to vehicles, with worker fatalities resulting from vehicle collision increasing 79 per cent between 2018 and 2019. You can clearly see that the economic pressures and the contracting pressures coming from the top of some of these supply chains really are causing issues further down for workers in the sector.


These workplace injuries, traumas and deaths have immense social and economic impacts on drivers, their families, businesses and the general public. The economic cost of road crashes alone equates to over \$27 billion per year, with approximately 1,500 crashes resulting in hospitalisation and a further 11,000 crashes leading to injuries. The committee noted that the underlying economic and contracting pressures are the leading causes of this safety crisis.

Drivers risking their lives and wellbeing must be supported by an appropriate regulatory framework administered by an independent body and designed to address these underlying economic and contracting pressures, with an emphasis on safe rates and payments for drivers and companies as well as a safe workplace. I know that there were findings presented by Professor David Peetz, from Griffith University, who found that fatal accidents declined by two per cent a year across the country between 1989 and 2020 but in New South Wales deadly accidents decreased by over five per cent a year over the same period. Professor Peetz went on to highlight that the key issues the New South Wales provisions address for transport workers include long hours, below-average hourly rates, and higher debt levels for owner-drivers and business owners. This situation is directly linked to a propensity to take increased risks including speeding, skipping breaks, taking drugs and overloading trucks to make ends meet.

The independent courier provision in chapter 10A of this bill will address these matters, providing safer roads for Queenslanders. The model established by these new laws will benefit the independent courier sector by empowering the commission to set minimum standards for courier services contracts where the parties want those standards to be established. The commission then gets out of the way and lets the parties run their businesses unless or until a dispute arises, at which point it sets out a pathway for the dispute to be resolved quickly, simply and, above all, cheaply. It has worked in New South Wales for decades and it will work just as well in Queensland.

More broadly, this bill strengthens protections against workplace sexual harassment, supports effective representation of employees and employers by registered industrial organisations and maintains the integrity of the registration framework for industrial organisations. I note the submission from the Red Union Support Hub. It goes to the core of some of these issues. No-one even put their name to this submission. It was just lobbed in by an anonymous organisation. No-one knows who is in charge—who the president is or who the secretary is. I am glad that is being addressed by this bill.

Other measures that this bill looks at are: empowering the QIRC to set minimum standards for courier drivers, as I mentioned; updating the collective bargaining framework to ensure access to arbitration by a single commissioner during negotiations; including equal remuneration as an aspect of good faith bargaining; and many other well-supported measures. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (5.38 pm): I cannot believe how appalled I am at this legislation, which is nothing short of a complete and utter abomination. I would like to think that any government of the day will always make decisions, at the very least, that they can argue will improve the lives of the average Queenslanders. That is absolutely not the case in this instance. The Labor Party will try to say that they are a party for the workers, but this bill just shows that they have not been a party for the workers for a very long time. This bill, the so-called Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, should be called the 'Protect Our Mates, Line Our Pockets and Protect Our Gravy Train Bill'. Never did I think I would see the day when the Labor Party introduced legislation that blatantly reduces the rights of workers in Queensland, but here we are. Many of those opposite, including the member for Bundaberg, are saying that there are fake unions and real unions. I would agree with the member for Bundaberg, because a fake union is one that does not care about the interests of its members and is beholden to the political agenda of its power-hungry Labor mates.

Want to know what a fake union is? Look no further than the QNMU and the QTU. I will give the House some statistics to back that up. In the last four years the QNMU has had 68 published decisions in front of the QIRC. Red Union Support Hub on the other hand—the very real and prestigious group of unions that those opposite are trying to shut down—has over 800 matters in front of the QIRC. The minister and the Labor Party have even acknowledged how important the Red Union group is with their own amendment which means that the Red Union can continue to represent its members on cases currently in front of the QIRC, and that is even after many comments made in this chamber that suggest the Red Union cannot represent its members properly. Yes, that is right: the Labor Party through its own amendment has acknowledged that the Red Union is actually representing its members a hell of a lot more than the unions that blatantly support the Labor Party. Why is this? Maybe the unions beholden to the Labor Party do not want to make their masters look bad so they choose to go soft on their members, go soft on the workers of Queensland, all in the name of politics.

Yesterday the member for Bundaberg said red unions should just register. If he had actually looked into it, he would have worked out that they cannot because of legislation from the Labor government. The statement of compatibility with human rights refers to this very legislation. I am of course talking about the 'conveniently belong' rule. Should an individual or group seek to form a new industrial organisation and seek registration, the individual only can if there is no existing registered organisation to which they could conveniently belong. In other words, the Labor Party has a complete monopoly on unions.

I have only been here for a few months and even I can do that basic research to understand that those opposite are completely misleading in their claims. Why are those opposite doing this? It might have something to do with money. It costs about 300 bucks to join a union. Have a look at the registered nurses union in WA run by Mark Olsen. The NPAQ with less scale can run it for 400 bucks. The QNMU charges over \$710. Where does the extra 400 bucks that the QNMU slugs frontline nurses for go? Some 60,000 QNMU members times \$400. That is \$24 million a year—just a bit more than pocket change. Where does that end up? It ends up being spent on political campaigns to get the ALP team in cosy political jobs.

The claim by those opposite that these unions that they are trying to shut down cannot represent members is a complete fallacy. Fake unions such as the QTU and QNMU are so embarrassed by their complete incompetence of being a union that they have called on their Labor mates to ban their competition. If this was a bill so critical to protect workers, then why did those opposite have a direct crack at Red Union 28 times yesterday alone? That is right: Labor Party members referenced Red Union 28 times yesterday, and we do not even have today's count. I do thank them for so actively promoting what is a great union and one that represents nearly 600 nurses and teachers in Callide. To the nurses and teachers of Callide, thank you for all of your hard work. I will always have your back. You play a critical role in society and I am forever grateful for everything you do.

We know how bad the health crisis is at the moment, so rather than give nurses and doctors the support they need, here we have the Palaszczuk government stripping away their rights. The Labor Party does not want to fix the health crisis. Instead, it is trashing the choice of nurses. It is also offending mothers with this bill. The Maternity Consumer Network in its submission stated that it is deeply offended by some of the provisions in this bill. One of its concerns is updating terms such as 'maternity leave' and replacing it with 'birth related leave'. I will tell members a fact: regardless of this bill, Callide


will still be without 'birth related services' thanks to the failures of the Palaszczuk Labor government and the Queensland health minister. The 'birth related services' in the electorate of Gladstone will still also be on bypass. That is the reality we face in rural and regional Queensland while the Palaszczuk government is here shutting down the rights of workers. This is the Labor Party in 2022 and a government that cares more about its own pockets and more about its mates than the mothers of Queensland.

If you are a worker in Queensland and have a problem with your employer, would you choose a representative body to defend your rights that either (a) is completely independent and only beholden to its members or (b) approved or appointed by your very own employer? No doubt most workers would know the answer to that, but for those opposite I will give them a bit of a clue: the answer is (a)! Imagine if the shearers back in the 1890s could have only been represented by a group dictated to by the pastoralists. Just imagine that for a second. That is exactly what this bill is doing. Those shearers would be rolling in their graves at the thought of this bill and they would be appalled that a so-called Labor Party is even proposing it.

For those who are still trying to draw a conclusion on how appalling this is, let me give a few examples of why this will negatively impact every single worker in Queensland. By changing 'industrial associations' to 'industrial organisation', it is stripping protected industrial actions from individuals and groups. A previous employer of mine had been making an error in relation to my wages and those of my colleagues. Some of my colleagues had been aware of this for several years but had no success in having it rectified. I understand right from wrong, so I acted. I stood up to our employer on behalf of me and my colleagues. One of my colleagues had been getting short-changed for so long they owed him nearly \$10,000 in entitlements. This bill stops individuals from choosing who represents them in the commission. It is an ALP union or nobody.

I will give yet another example of the difference between a fake union and a real union. The committee inquiry into this bill alone is proof of the pudding. The QNMU submitted 10 pages to the inquiry, with a few of them being more or less blank. The QTU—a union that supposedly represents teachers—submitted two pages: two whole pages, and one of them was a cover page. Here we have a so-called representative of teachers putting forward a submission on what the Labor Party claims will help the teachers of Queensland and the Queensland Teachers' Union only submitted one page of content. I even made a trip back to the printer because I thought, 'Surely not!'

In contrast, a real representative of teachers in Queensland worked hard because that is what it does for its members. The Red Union submitted 43 pages—43 pages—because it cares about the workers of Queensland. To every teacher, every nurse and every worker in Queensland, I am here today to fight for you and your rights. I care about you having access to appropriate representation and to be able to have your matters advocated on by who you choose. No employer—absolutely no employer—should set the rules on who their employees choose to represent them. Do not be fooled by the spin of the Labor Party. This bill takes away your choice. It takes away your fundamental rights. You have the right to choose who represents you and who your union is. Join a real union. Join the TPAQ or join the NPAQ because they will stand up for your rights and will not be beholden to a political agenda. I absolutely oppose this bill because I support the workers of Queensland.

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (5.48 pm): I rise to support the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I start my contribution by saying that I am a proud member of the Together union, a registered trade union. I am a proud member because I know that this registered union will fight for my rights and that of its membership and does so under the Industrial Relations Act. The objectives of the bill are to give effect to the Queensland government's response to the recommendations of the *Five-year review of the Queensland Industrial Relations Act: final report*. The final report made 40 recommendations and this bill represents the extensive and great work done by the Palaszczuk government to ensure that industrial relations laws in this state are contemporary and fit for purpose in today's IR environment.

The policy objectives of the bill are pretty clear. The bill amends the IR Act to strengthen protections against workplace sexual harassment; ensures the primacy of registered employee and employer organisations by providing a scheme whereby all industrial organisations can seek and provide representation rights for employees and employers; ensures that workers under the jurisdiction of the IR Act have access to prevailing employment standards; introduces minimum entitlements and conditions for independent courier drivers; updates the collective bargaining framework to ensure access to arbitration by a single commissioner during enterprise bargaining negotiations; and enhances equal remuneration in collective bargaining provisions.

I will speak to a couple these amendments this evening. The bill's sexual harassment amendments are necessary to provide protections and deterrents against sexual harassment and sex- or gender-based harassment connected with employment by adding key provisions to the main purpose of the IR Bill and replacing existing definitions of sexual harassment and discrimination in the IR Act with those contained in the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991. The bill's amendment to the definition of an industrial matter to include sexual harassment and sex- or gender-based harassment will facilitate access to orders and permit the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, the QIRC, to exercise its general conciliation and arbitration powers for sexual harassment and sex- or gender-based harassment complaints. These provisions will ensure that sexual harassment is misconduct for the purpose of summary dismissal and requires that the QIRC consider whether a dismissed employee engaged in sexual harassment or sex- or gender-based harassment when deciding whether a dismissal was harsh, unjust or unreasonable.

As the minister said in her introductory speech, and I concur, the actions being undertaken by the Palaszczuk government to support the *Respect@work* recommendations is important work that spans a number of areas within government, including the realm of anti-discrimination legislation. Not surprisingly, the former Australian federal government provided a limited response to the *Respect@work* report by amending the Fair Work Act 2009 in 2021 to clarify that sexual harassment can be a valid reason for dismissal and expanding the existing stop bullying order provisions to include stop sexual harassment orders. This bill makes it clear that if an employee sexually harasses another person then that would make it unreasonable to require the employer to continue the employment during the period of notice set out within the IR Act. These reforms will ensure Queensland's IR system provides comprehensive and contemporary industrial protections to guard against and address sexual harassment and sex- and gender-based harassment.

The bill includes amendments that address the risk of employers and employees being confused about the ability of entities to represent industrial interests where the entity is not an employer or employee organisation under the IR Act but is incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act. The bill amends the terminology used in the IR Act to provide clarity around the rights and responsibilities of employee and employer organisations registered under the IR Act and confirms that the rights and protections conferred upon these entities by the IR Act are limited to employee and employer organisations which are registered or otherwise eligible for and seeking registration under the IR Act. Under the IR Act, registered organisations are subject to a range of accountability and transparency obligations, including reporting, to ensure they operate with rigour and integrity—in other words, they are transparent and open. The provisions also clarify that an incorporated unregistered industrial association does not have the right to represent its members under the IR Act.

The bill provides a clear distinction between registered employee and employer organisations and other entities not registered under the IR Act but seeking to represent employees' or employers' industrial interests. In submissions to the enquiry held on this bill, it was made very clear that the QIRC in 2021 determined that entities like NPAQ, an incorporated association purporting to represent the industrial interests of nurses, was not a trade union within the meaning of the IR Act and, by extension, a member of the association was not entitled to the general protections under the act.

After the disgraceful slur this morning from the number one ticket holder of NPAQ in this place, the LNP shadow health spokesperson, describing regional healthcare workers as employed duds, I have no doubt that regional health workers are now seeing what NPAQ is really about, given that we now know what their chief promoter, the member of Mudgeeraba, really thinks of regional health workers. As a regional member, I find what was said an absolute insult to the integrity of hardworking frontline health workers who every day during the pandemic put their lives on the line and who work hard to keep my community and all communities around this state safe. It was disgraceful and the member should come in here and apologise. I digress.


It was noted during the committee hearing on this bill that the so-called representative of the red unions could not answer a very direct question about whether they could represent workers in an EB bargaining hearing before the Industrial Relations Commission. They cannot. It is very clear they are fake. Why are they taking money from their members when they have no authority under the IR Act to do anything other than campaign on behalf of the LNP against the trade union movement and the Labor government? It is shameful. It is disgraceful. What do those on the other side do? They do not care. They come in here supporting fake unions—unions in name only: empty, shallow, money-sucking vessels who cannot represent fully their members in the IR Commission and have been set up by mates of the LNP. It is disgraceful that they come into this House and champion fake unions, abusing the rights of hardworking people and insulting hardworking regional health workers. It is just disgraceful.

Even when these fake unions are exposed as frauds, it does not stop those in the opposition promoting them in and outside of this House. These fake unions are taking advantage of the hardworking men and women of Queensland who they cannot even represent fully. They are like a flim-flam man: 'Have I got a deal for you!' They are cheap and nasty.

The primacy of registered organisations representing both employers and employees has been a central feature of the IR system throughout Australia for generations, and Queensland's industrial relations system is no different. The IR Act sets out the roles and responsibilities of registered organisations. Sitting alongside these rights comes responsibility and accountability. The IR Act imposes on registered organisations rigorous reporting requirements to ensure registered organisations are transparent in their dealings, accountable to their members and demonstrate good governance practices, none of which these red unions can do because they are fake. By contrast, an entity that is not defined under the IR Act as a registered organisation is not subject to the same rigorous level of scrutiny, reporting or prudential standards. There stands the contrast between what is real and what is fake—open transparency.

The review heard from stakeholders that there is growing confusion and concerns by employees and employers in identifying which organisation can fully represent their industrial interests under the IR Act. I am sure the other side is happy to foster that confusion. This follows the emergence of self-proclaimed entities promoting industrial representation capabilities without adhering to the strict regulatory requirements. The bill confirms the status of incorporated associations not being eligible for registration as an employee organisation and introduces civil penalties for misrepresenting an entity's registration status.

I congratulate the minister for introducing this very important bill that will drive accountability and transparency in representation so that the hardworking men and women of Queensland will not be duped by these fake unions and ensure that workplace standards and practices are encoded into the act to protect workers from discrimination and harassment. I congratulate the Employment and Training Committee, ably chaired by the member for Redlands, for its work on this bill and the committee's secretariat. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (5.58 pm): The Industrial Relations Act 2016 provides a framework for industrial relations for Queenslanders. The act also regulates the state public sector, local government employees and the employees of several statutory authorities. The proposed Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 amends the Industrial Relations Act to strengthen protections against workplace sexual harassment—which, of course, is supported; empower the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to set minimum standards for independent courier drivers—and we have heard the issues around that; and to change the system for registering industrial organisations in such a way as has been highlighted, which has been very contentious. Listening to both sides of the House and what has been going on has also added to some confusion, but I will get on to that later.

While the Education, Employment and Training Committee is broadly supportive of the bill and believes it will help to achieve the primary objectives of the IR Act, it did identify particular issues where there were opposing views during the inquiry process. These included the issues of representation by registered organisations and minimum standards for independent courier drivers, however, made no recommendations on them.

Submissions against components of the bill come from a recently established group of organisations collectively known as red unions. One example is the Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland and, again, I send my gratitude for the work that all of our health frontliners do. As we have heard, these industrial organisations are not constituted the same as usual trade unions, which are registered under the Industrial Relations Act. They operate and are organised as incorporated associations, in a similar way that many charities and local community groups are, and have relied on a broad interpretation of the term 'association' under the Industrial Relations Act to do their work of representation. This has raised issues around their standing at the Industrial Relations Commission and other matters related to the industrial relations legislation. However, rather than remedying that, this legislation has the effect of abolishing those organisations.

First, the bill effectively requires industrial organisations to be registered under the Industrial Relations Act. As the explanatory notes explain, it does this by amending the terminology used in the IR Act to provide clarity that the rights and protections conferred by the Industrial Relations Act are limited to employee and employer organisations that are registered.

Second, the operation of the Industrial Relations Act does not allow any more organisations to be registered if there is already a union for that industry. That is key here. As the Red Union submission states—

The current registration conditions effectively have the impact of creating “union monopolies” where members of a particular industry are only able to be officially represented by the organisation that is already registered ...

After listening to some of the debate last night, I went to verify that. I found a section in the Industrial Relations Act 2016 at chapter 12 under the heading, ‘Industrial organisations and associated entities’, which has not been amended in this bill. It states—

608 Additional criteria for registration as employee organisation

(1) If the application is for registration as an employee organisation, the commission must also be satisfied of the following—

...

(b) either—

(i) there is no organisation to which the applicant’s members might belong; or

(ii) there is no organisation to which the members could conveniently belong that would effectively represent them in a way consistent with the objects of this Act

From that I translated that a new employee organisation could not be registered if there is an existing one in the same industry.

Third, the chief executive of the register of incorporated associations must cancel the registration of an incorporated association if the registrar of industrial organisations gives notice of an adverse order or industrial penalty against the organisation. As the explanatory notes state, this will ensure there are significant consequences for incorporated associations that falsely present themselves as having a right to represent the industrial interests of employees or employers under the IR Act.


In summary, ultimately all of this will have the effect of seeing these new organisations unable to operate while leaving traditional trade unions intact. This will remove choice for Queensland workers, limit competition and, overall, weaken rights for workers through that lack of choice. Unions should not be monolithic, as with any form of representation. You would not want just one political party as your only choice. There has to be room for diversity, different viewpoints and offerings, as we expect in just about every realm. As stated by the Retail and Fast Food Workers Union in their submission to the committee—

There is a fundamental failure to recognise responsible modern representation of workers starts with that worker’s right to freedom of association and choice of representation.

It is that simple.

From our understanding, having multiple representative organisations in the enterprise bargaining process in the same industry does not weaken the efforts on behalf of workers. After perusing the submissions, I have been unable to find any rationale that clearly articulates negative effects to workers by having choice. I acknowledge that there have been concerns raised regarding capabilities, legalities and the capacity of those new organisations. However, ultimately, should their members have not received the representation they expect then they would take their membership elsewhere.

Despite the explanatory notes stating that there were literally no alternatives to achieving the policy objective, the bill could have provided a pathway to registration for these new organisations to address any concerns, such as amending the section I referred to. Again, I will say it: diversity of viewpoints is important in a modern progressive Queensland, as is freedom of choice. This component of the bill progresses neither and, even though I am appreciative of the efforts of all as well as some of the debate, I will not be supporting the bill.

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (6.05 pm): I rise to speak on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I will make the disclosure that I am a member of the UFU and the TWU. Following on from the recommendations provided in the *Five-year review of Queensland’s Industrial Relations Act 2016: final report*, this bill will provide the necessary amendments to ensure our legislation keeps pace with the expectations of the community, supporting Queenslanders in good jobs with better services and a great lifestyle. The report looks at a number of areas of concern to the community, including the prevention of sexual harassment and sex-based harassment in the workplace, regulating precarious gig work in the logistics industry, achieving gender pay equality through collective bargaining as well as reviewing our wage recovery provisions.

The bill also contains the required measures needed to provide clarity to employers and employees about the ability of entities to represent industrial interests where the entity is not an employer or employee organisation under the Industrial Relations Act 2016. Unions, employee associations and enterprise associations are required by law to be registered and report to the Registered Organisations Commission, which is an independent federal authority that, ironically, commenced on 1 May 2017 under the federal LNP government, the minister responsible being Michaelia Cash. Ironically, the 'scam unions' are not registered after laws for more rigorous scrutiny was the agenda of the LNP's federal counterparts.

Mr HART: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think the member used unparliamentary language and I think that should be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): I did not hear that and I will ask for some advice. Member for Nicklin, it might assist the House if you were prepared to identify if you had said something unparliamentary and are prepared to withdraw.

Mr SKELTON: It is written here, for the record: 'scam unions'. I did not say the other word.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr SKELTON: This is a spectacular own goal of an LNP-backed entity that cannot even comply with the regulatory requirements enabled by their federal counterparts.

In a rare example of public interest journalism by the *Sydney Morning Herald*, ACTU secretary Sally McManus called the red unions 'fake unions run by LNP members and their associates set up to try and divide working people.' She also called red unions 'an LNP-sponsored anti-vaccination campaign which will directly and needlessly cause working people to contract a deadly virus.' There are various other examples of the red unions recklessly sowing misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccine. For example, NPAQ—a red union that claims to represent nurses—shared a video on their Facebook page with a nurse purporting to say—

It's not even a vaccine, it's not preventing the spread of illness, it's not preventing you from getting sick, it's not a vaccine. We should not even be using this word ... I'd prefer to use the term 'experimental biological agent' because that's closer to the truth.

Predictably, Jack McGuire, a director of a red union, a law student and formerly of the Liberal National Party, has distanced himself from those comments by saying that he is not responsible for individuals' media posts.

However, it is very clear what these red unions are trying to do. A cursory read of the comments sections on any Facebook post by a red union reveals a swathe of vaccine conspiracies. Mr McGuire may try to hide the true intentions of the red unions by deflecting and claiming that he respects the views of individual members of his so-called unions; however, to the rest of us it is clear what the red unions are—Liberal National Party organisations masquerading as unions to stoke fears about COVID-19 vaccines which have been proven to be safe and effective and to stonewall the work of actual unions all at the expense of Queensland workers.

The anti-vaccination bent of these red unions cannot at all be understated. Recent research shows that the demographic of people most likely to not get vaccinated for COVID-19 are generally female. At the time of this study, only 48 per cent of pregnant women in Australia intended to be vaccinated.

The red unions are a destructive force against Australian industrial relations. Their wedge politics will inevitably mean the deaths of more workers in Australia, if not from COVID-19 then from the weakening of workplace safety laws that would inevitably come about as a result of their attempting to tarnish the legitimacy of real workers unions—real unions that do actual work to ensure that workers on the job site can feel confident they will be coming home for dinner.

Red unions are not representative of Queensland's workers; they are representatives of the Liberal National Party which has been hostile to Australian workers since its inception. I note the comments of members opposite proclaiming to be all for their health workers and teachers whilst running down the QNMU and the QTU and also referring to regional health workers as duds. It is a disgrace.

The Palaszczuk Labor government is dedicated to ensuring Queenslanders can rely on a safe work environment free from the threat of harassment. The bill amends the IR Act specifically to clarify sexual harassment and sex- or gender-based harassment as misconduct and includes it within the definition of an 'industrial matter'.


This will facilitate access to orders and permit the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to exercise its general conciliation and arbitration powers for sexual harassment and sex- or gender-based harassment complaints. It also includes provisions to ensure summary dismissals can be used where sexual harassment has occurred where those powers were previously limited to theft, assault and fraud, and allows the QIRC to take into account matters of sexual harassment or sex- or gender-based harassment when deliberating whether an employee's dismissal was harsh, unjust or unreasonable. After listening to the member for Macalister's testimony, I am very glad these provisions are here.

This will ensure that the objects of the IR Act reflect the importance of dealing with sexual and sex-based harassment. Definitions of sexual harassment and discrimination in the IR Act are consistent with those in the main legislation which deals with those issues as recommended in the five-year review. These amendments confirm that Queensland is leading the nation in protecting its workers from sexual harassment, providing considerably more support and options to resolve a complaint than what is currently provided for in the federal Fair Work Act 2009.

The bill also looks after our independent courier drivers, making their jobs and our roads safer, by committing to the provision of minimum standards and entitlements for those in precarious and insecure work. The amendments contained in the bill will provide a level playing field for commercial operators who may provide independent couriers with precarious and insecure gig work.

The last thing we want in this industry are operators competing against one another to offer the most exploitative conditions in a race to see who can be the most profitable, compromising worker safety and service quality along the way. Through these amendments, we will enable the QIRC to set minimum conditions for independent courier drivers, ensuring their rights at work are appropriately protected. Independent courier drivers will be able to collectively bargain with principal contractors and have the QIRC certify their negotiated agreements, similar to the existing enterprise bargaining agreements. This brings our legislation into line with standards introduced by other states ahead of the Albanese government amending the federal Independent Contractors Regulation 2016 to give effect to the amendments above.

In conclusion, this bill demonstrates the Palaszczuk Labor government's commitment to the working men and women of Queensland. As always, the Queensland Labor Party will stand shoulder to shoulder with workers in protecting their rights in every respect. We will not allow people to rip them off by misrepresenting as unions. We will stand by them. The implementation of the recommendations of the 2016 Industrial Relations Act report means more protection for all workers in Queensland. It means more protection for workers from scam, unaccountable, so-called unions that are run by external bodies. It means more protection for Queenslanders from sexual harassment and misconduct in the workplace. It means more protections for independent courier drivers from the precarious gig economy. The bill preserves the dignity and integrity of Queensland workers and, as such, I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (6.15 pm): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise this evening and talk about the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I guess it is fair to say that often we are in the general community and people come up to us and say, 'It does not really matter—ALP or LNP—what party you belong to; you are all "the same"'. Most of the bills that come in here—probably 75 per cent because of the nature of state government being fundamentally a service-based level and tier of government—are approved and go through on the voices. Well, not this one. This is one where, when we read members' contributions in *Hansard* and we hear them firsthand on the floor of parliament, we understand the DNA of where members' ideological views have been formed.

In many cases one only has to go back to inaugural speeches. I make it a point of habit: for every new ALP member who comes into the chamber I try wherever practicable to give them the courtesy of listening firsthand to their maiden speech. If I have not, I will then get the *Hansard* inaugural speech. Because it absolutely is telling—

An honourable member interjected.

Mr MINNIKIN: I will not take an interjection because that is not true, but I will say this: I absolutely know that, when members of the ALP get up not only are they absolutely sincere, heart to head thanking their union, they know that their very political survival depends on it. That is not a bad thing in so far as my first experience with the union was when I was 16 back at the Chandler Police Station. I was there working as a casual labourer. It was the first pay week after the Friday afternoon three o'clock bell would ring. I received my first ever cash pay packet back in the day. Then I had someone with a very strong Scottish accent come up to me, which I will not attempt to impersonate, who effectively said, 'I

am taking 10 per cent.' I said in my probably high-pitched voice, 'What for?' 'That is the price for you being a union member.' I said, 'What will I get in return?' He said, 'That is what you pay to be a union member.'

My very first iteration with the union probably was my own family. My two uncles, as Grace Grace the member for McConnell will attest, were shop stewards, one of them with her old union. Still to this day one of them will walk over hot coals to try to see my political demise, and good for him. I absolutely will always while I have breath stand up for the right of people to absolutely join a union of their choice, but there is the choice between collectivism and a word that means everything to my ideology—choice, which I will come back to very shortly.

The simple fact of the matter is: you start off with an industrial relations debate on a fifty-fifty proposition. What have we seen and will see with the passage of this bill? That fifty-fifty proposition will be tilted on its axis. The simple fact of the matter is we have some unions that have absolutely done for many years the right thing by their members, but you know what? At the end of the day I fundamentally believe that that collectivism is trumped by choice. I will use the example dear to my heart. I have someone very close to me in the independent teachers community who absolutely must have public indemnity insurance. This applies to nurses, teachers and other professions as well.

At the end of the day, not all but many do not want to be in any way, shape or form attributed to the ALP—washed through the Trades and Labour Council. They want nothing to do with it. What do they want to do? They want to be able to exercise their right. We have had examples of saving \$400—it may be less, it may be more. The thing that I will bang on about is the fact that people should have that choice.

The member for Lockyer said in his contribution a bit earlier that it is a bit sad that when we go through the explanatory notes of the bill there are some provisions in relation to sexual harassment that are absolutely spot on—bingo!—and we could not agree with them more, but unfortunately they are part of the in globo package of this legislation and, therefore, sadly cannot be supported in isolation. They have to be looked at collectively with the other provisions of the bill.

Members can bang on about 120 years ago and the extreme situation where there were 10-year-olds working in Welsh coalmines who were taken out of poverty, but then we can wind the clock forward to what we see in modern society. We have some unions that should absolutely—and members opposite who are associated with them; the CFMMEU is one that comes to mind—hang their heads in shame.

On my own dime, my own coin, I flew to South Australia to help with the election back in March this year. Malinauskas won and it broke my heart, but guess what? I will give that Premier credit for one thing. He handed back circa \$125,000 in donations from the CFMEU. He handed it back. That is called leadership. There is a vacuum of leadership in this state when the Premier of this great state will not do the same with the \$90,000 taken from the CFMEU.

This is a union that only a matter of weeks ago protested at 1 William Street targeting a senior bureaucrat. Coincidentally, the minister was gone. He was not around. What was the deal that was brokered according to whistleblowers to me? From that 1 William Street incident—an incursion with the CFMEU storming the basement or at least outside—they were then entitled to have either two, or it might have been three, delegates attend a QTRIP forum a matter of weeks later. We all know what happened from the media reports. I have done media with the member for Kawana on this. It was absolutely disgusting.


If we want to talk about unions, let us keep some degree of balance. There are unions that some of the members opposite should be proud to be associated with, but let us call this for what it is worth. There are unions that are truly beyond contempt. The reality of the matter is this. If we want to be fair dinkum about industrial relations in this state we have to get back to a semblance of common sense and call it out for what it is. This is nothing short of a financial gerrymander—where we have a union that can absolutely not always represent the best interests of their members.

What is this about? Let us cut to the other 'c' word. I have talked about collectivism. I have talked about choice. Let us get to the nub of this. It is cash. The simple reality is this. It was said in this chamber two weeks ago when we last sat—and I will reiterate it—that for the next two years all of us on this side of chamber in the LNP will go out and raise money. We will have our fundraisers. We will do what it takes to get money that has now been crippled and capped—our \$1,000 limits. We will work within the gamut of the law. That is what we will do. We will go out and raise money. Do members know why we raise the money? Because this is a House where battles take place, unfortunately rarely, but this is a great bill.

This is where there is a line in the sand between the LNP and the ALP. Industrial relations is pretty much the tip of the spear. The simple fact of the matter is that the union movement at times can cause the taxpayer of Queensland, what I call, the overall harm principle. Here is an example—and I am not going to table this because I am aware that we have millions of tabled documents—that I will refer to directly. I have here a list of TMR projects where BPIC principles apply.

BPIC is the darling of the CFMEU. What is the importance of this? The member for Miller, whom I shadow—option A was on the email—takes riding instruction from that union. Members might say, 'Big deal!' Here is the rub. It is costing the taxpayers of Queensland \$4 billion. If we apply an indices of 20 per cent on top of the projects listed in question on notice No. 259—if we multiple those projected budget costs by 20 per cent and not the purported 28 per cent that we are hearing from industry—the project budgeted \$21.079 billion of capital expenditure will have another \$4.216 billion added to it.

In my remaining 14 seconds, I will talk about Cross River Rail. It is not awesome. It is over budget by billions of dollars and it will keep rising because of undue union influence.

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (6.25 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. A clear and effective system of industrial representation is a vital part of making sure that the interests of Queensland working women and men are protected. Unions have long been recognised by Queensland law for their particular role in fighting for the rights of Queenslanders.

I am a proud union member and a proud member of the Australian Labor Party—a party that has its origins in the union movement and a party that still shares union ideals of equality and equity, of a fair go and for workers reaping rightful compensation for their work. As a union representative I have fought for the rights of police officers. I have fought for the rights of truck drivers. I have fought for the rights of workers at Golden Circle who, coincidentally, cherish their 75th anniversary tomorrow. I have worked for all kinds of union workers. I have fought for fair pay, for penalty rates and for fair workers compensation and lifesaving safety conditions.

What do we hear about unions from those opposite? We hear the constant deriding of unions and union members. There are constant attacks on the unions that protect the safety of building and construction workers. There are constant attacks on the unions that stop truck drivers being forced to drive for dangerously long hours. There are constant attacks on the unions that stand up for the heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic—the nurses, midwives and other health and hospital workers.

It was only this morning that members of parliament in this chamber during question time heard the member for Mudgeeraba describe health workers in the regions as duds. That is a scurrilous attack on health workers in the regions. That is something that should be dismissed. That is something that should be apologised for.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): You know I am not in the business of preventing interjections but that was over the top.

Mr FURNER: The member for Mudgeeraba has the opportunity to come in here tonight and apologise for the scurrilous attack on health workers in our regions, referencing them as duds. What a disgraceful attack on our health workers who have been saving Queenslanders' lives for the last several years.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, I will commence warning members if the interjections continue in that fashion.

Mr FURNER: Those opposite may try and slur our brave health workers, our union workers, our workers across the wonderful state of Queensland every single time but they have not once been ashamed to be a member of a union. When the LNP attack unions they are attacking people who dare to think that workers deserve a standard of living.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Minister, would you please resume your seat. I do not prohibit interjections, but cross-chamber quarrels are not to be borne. I want to be able to hear the minister uninterrupted. Minister, please continue.

Mr FURNER: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. When the LNP attacks unions they are attacking people who dare to think that workers deserve a standard of living, deserve to be safe and deserve proper conditions of work. Then, at the height of LNP hypocrisy, they get their LNP mates to set up fake unions in an attempt to deceive workers that they are on the side of workers.

They set up a fake nurses union. The member for Mudgeeraba has been singing their praises. That organisation came out against COVID-19 vaccinations. At the very time the Palaszczuk government was saving thousands of lives by urging as many Queenslanders as possible to get vaccinated, there was the LNP and the anti-vax union trying to recruit members.

This bill makes clear the distinction between organisations that are registered under the IR Act and represent the industrial interests of employers and employees and other entities that are not registered under the IR Act and cannot properly represent workers' industrial interests in the state's IR tribunal and collective bargaining. Organisations properly registered under the IR Act are subject to a range of stringent accountability and transparency obligations. This means their members can have confidence about the exercise of their representation rights in industrial matters.

Registered organisations have rigorous reporting requirements under the IR Act, and they should. It is for the protection of their members' interests as well. Unregistered associations do not face the same level of accountability and reporting and therefore should not be able to misrepresent their status to their so-called members. This bill makes clear that any misrepresentation will be subject to penalties, and so it should. If you listened to the LNP, you would have to wonder what genuine unions have ever done for Queenslanders. Let me tell the House what unions have done.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr FURNER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I take offence to the disgraceful comments of the member for Kawana and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Everybody will remain silent. I am going to take some advice. Member for Kawana, it would assist the House if you would state whether or not you made an offensive remark to the member for Ferny Grove. If so, would you withdraw?

Mr BLEIJIE: It was to the Attorney but in reference to the member for Ferny Grove. I withdraw.

Mr FURNER: Unions have provided eight-hour working days, annual leave, sick leave, long service leave, maternity leave, health and safety requirements—think about protective clothing and equipment—domestic leave, superannuation and the list goes on and on. Every single one of these life-changing vital reforms has been brought forward and won by real unions properly representing the interests of their members. This is a legacy that all of us on this side of the House, members of the Australian Labor Party, are extremely proud of. If you trace the history of industrial relations, you will see that time and time again at a change of government, whether it be a change from Labor to the LNP, there is a change in industrial relations. That is what we are doing here today: we are correcting the record. We are correcting the entitlements of workers.

I turn to a key focus of the IR Act review, which is to provide protections for workers subject to sexual harassment. This is a fundamental amendment to bring about measures to prevent sexual harassment in our workplaces. The bill amends the definition of misconduct for the purpose of dismissal, which will include sexual harassment. Should this occur, this change would send a clear message to perpetrators that this conduct is unacceptable and could lead to dismissal. In my lifetime I have represented many female workers who have been sexually harassed. It has been my pride and joy to represent those members, sometimes against other members. But it is the right thing to do, and it is the right thing to make sure it is enshrined in legislation to protect women in workplaces against perpetrators of sexual harassment.

In conclusion, I want to reference a comment made this evening by the member for Nanango. She made the false claim that union fees go back to the Labor Party because of their affiliation. What about the Queensland Police Union of Employees? They have never been affiliated with the Australian Labor Party. Their fees do not go back to the Australian Labor Party. They are a recognised, proud union that I have had the privilege to work for. I have represented police in the Industrial Relations Commission, the Workers' Compensation Tribunal and in workplace health and safety matters. To come in here and make false statements demonstrates the insincerity and lack of credibility of the Liberal National Party. They come in here and make false comments. They are not affiliated with the Labor Party. In fact, the QPUE has been successful of late suing the Sworn Officers' Professional Association of Australia.

These Ponzi schemes, which are unregistered organisations, are not subject to the rigorous and transparent registration and reporting requirements that registered union and employer organisations are subject to. There are clear differences between real unions and these fake Ponzi schemes. They seek to undermine collectivism and what they do is the very opposite to unionism. Real unions focus on organising and fighting for members and improving the communities in which they live and work. I am very proud to represent the Australian Labor Party and the Palaszczuk government. I commend this bill to the House. We support workers, unlike those opposite.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): I did not want to interrupt the minister again while he was on his feet, but I warn the members for Everton, Buderim and Currumbin.

Mr MANDER (Everton—LNP) (6.36 pm): I rise to speak on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. This is my 11th year as a member of the Queensland parliament, and I am sad to say that aspects of this bill are the most egregious I have seen in the last 10½ years. It is at times like this—and I cannot believe I am saying this—that I wish Queensland had an upper house, because I think it is the only way you would block this type of radical legislation from entering our parliament. The Labor Party abolished the upper house 100 years ago.

The goal of wiping out unions that compete against those that support the Labor Party strikes at the very heart of our democracy. One of the bedrocks of our democracy is freedom of association, and this bill will take that fundamental right away from thousands of Queenslanders who have made the choice of whom they want to represent them industrially. This is a policy that communist China would be proud of. If this bill is passed we should no longer call the member for Inala Premier Palaszczuk: we should call her ‘Chairman Palaszczuk’.

Mr BROWN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I would ask that the member use proper titles, please.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Everton, the Chief Government Whip does have a point. Please refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr MANDER: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. This government is no stranger to undermining the democratic processes in this state. We all know, as has been mentioned by many members beforehand, that they changed the voting system with 18 minutes notice. They target a section of the community that contributes to the prosperity of this state and say they cannot be part of the democratic process by donating to a political party. This just adds to the undermining of the democratic process.

In another smack in the eye for due process, the original review did not provide any opportunity for public submission, meaning that consultation was limited to registered unions and other entities which would support the review’s predetermined outcome.

Mr Stevens: It was run by Linda Lavarch.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. Who were the reviewers? Labor luminaries—Linda Lavarch and John Thompson. How could anybody on that side of the House say that is an unbiased review? It was limited in terms of who could make submissions and the people making the review were Labor Party acolytes. It is an absolute embarrassment. If it was not so serious, it would be funny. You cannot make this up. Why is the government introducing this erosion of democracy legislation into the Queensland parliament? Let me give a few suggestions. The first is that union membership in this country—

Mr Stevens: Twelve per cent.

Mr MANDER: It is actually 14 per cent; I checked the latest ABS census. Union membership in this country is 14 per cent, and Queensland is actually a little higher at 15.7 per cent. This is the only state that has increased union membership in the last six years—with an increase of 0.3 per cent—and why do we think that happened?

Mr Stevens: 60,000 reasons.

Mr MANDER: Thank you very much, member for Mermaid Beach. That is exactly why there has been an increase in membership. Here is the figure that really resonates: the figure 30 years ago in 1992 was 40 per cent. Back then, 40 per cent of Australians were a member of a union and now that rate has gone down across the country to 14 per cent. What a rapid lack of confidence in the trade union movement. What an amazing deterioration of relevance that workers see in the trade union movement. If the public sector were taken out, they would be single figures. One of the reasons this bill is being introduced is that these Labor Party aligned unions need every bit of help they can get for their survival. If these unions were effective, they would not need this type of protection.

The second reason this bill has been introduced in my opinion is that, as we all know, the Australian Labor Party is the political arm of the trade union movement. Every Labor MP is a trade union member. Every Labor MP is in their seat because the trade union movement tapped them on the shoulder and said, 'You're one of the chosen ones.' Every Labor Party member takes their direction from the trade union movement. Every Labor Party MP is a puppet of the trade union movement. When the trade union movement says that they want something, Labor are obliged to act, they have no choice.

Incredibly, the *Courier-Mail* this year named the most influential Queenslander, and it was some bloke who most Queenslanders would have no idea who he is. We know who he is and those people over there know who he is. Gary Bullock, head of the United Workers Union, is the one who calls the shots. When the Premier is asked questions, he is the one they talk about: 'What does Gary think?' That is what happens: what does Gary think? What the unions want, the unions get.

Mr Brown: Who is he?

Mr MANDER: I will take that interjection from the member for Capalaba because he knows who he is: 'Yes, Gary. Yes, sir. No, sir. Whatever you say, Gary. Do you want your shoes cleaned, Gary? I'll do whatever it takes to stay in my seat, Gary.' That is how it works. This bill is the closest this state will come to institutionalised corruption. That is what this is. This assures that the Labor Party's coffers continue to be filled by trade union fees.

The third reason this bill has been introduced in my opinion is that this government hates competition. When those who support the government cannot compete, their puppets legislate against their competitors, and the competitors' union—

Mr Stevens: \$400.

Mr MANDER: The member for Mermaid Beach is very insightful tonight, and I will take his interjection once again. If the unions did not charge so much, if the unions represented their members better, if the unions did not donate to the Labor Party, this legislation would not be necessary. This is the type of bill that is introduced by a third-term government when they know they will not be here after 2024. This is a classic example of overreach. I will go so far as to say this: this is the state Labor government's version of Howard's WorkChoices, and it will come back and bite them.

There is another issue in this bill and it relates to priorities. While mothers recover from botched surgeries in Mackay, while mothers cannot have babies in Gladstone, while ambulance ramping is at record highs and while criminals run free because of failures in forensic testing, what does this government focus its attention on? It focuses its attention on enshrining some sort of political correctness by insisting on gender neutral language in matters that do not require it.

Honourable members interjected.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Pause the clock. There are too many interjections. It is too loud. It is a spirited debate and I do not want to stifle it, but please take a chill pill.

Mr MANDER: I was talking about priorities. This government focuses its attention on enshrining political correctness. There is no need to change the term 'maternity leave' to 'long birth-related leave' nor to remove the pronoun 'her' when it relates to maternity leave. The section this bill most significantly removes all gender specific language for its section 63, which is entirely about a pregnant employee. It is not talking about a partner or a surrogate parent; it is the pregnant employee and that means we are talking about females. Why are we embarrassed by that? Females have maternity leave, males have paternity leave, and 'her' is related to maternity. Why is there so much confusion? We have these ridiculous emails being sent by government employees with pronouns on the bottom about his and him and her and she. I tell you what: I am 'mate' and I am 'bloke' because I am a man and we should not be embarrassed by that. If you have any decency, vote against this bill.

Mrs McMahon interjected.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I warn the members for Macalister and Thuringowa under the standing orders. Before I call the member for Mount Ommaney, I would like to draw the House's attention to the presence in the gallery of student leaders from Kenmore State High School in the electorate of Moggill. You are most welcome here.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.48 pm): I rise to speak to this bill and I want to begin my contribution with an observation. Throughout the parliament, there are a number of research projects that have been put together over many years by the Queensland Parliamentary Library research teams. We all walk past these every day, but as I was walking along the colonnade yesterday I noticed one of the research exhibits that they had prepared with fresh eyes.

At the end of the colonnade as you enter the annexe, there is a story about the number of women elected to the Queensland parliament, and the number really took me by surprise. In the history of this Queensland parliament, the number of women elected to this place—across all political parties, independent and otherwise—is still today fewer than 100. I thank the Parliamentary Library for confirming this detail with me and then very kindly providing me with a list of every single woman who has ever been elected to the parliament. I am very proud that over 60 of them have come from the Queensland Labor Party and many of them are still in the House today.

I bring this up and begin with this point because I think it is really important to have women's voices at the decision-making table and advocating for issues that impact on women in significant numbers, as significant aspects of this bill do around sexual harassment and workplace leave.

It has been really interesting to hear the heartfelt pleas from those opposite about the need for choice, for people to make their own decisions. For a moment, sometimes I could close my eyes and imagine that they were advocating for a woman's right to choose for herself. Like a woman's right to choose, it is no coincidence that the issues that impact women end up being legislated when there are more women in parliament—we know that—and I commend the minister for the fantastic work around sexual harassment and employment standards contained within this bill.

Sexual harassment is a serious issue that permeates all elements of society. Unfortunately, that includes the workplace. The landmark 2020 *Respect@work* report found that addressing sexual harassment in Australia is still complex and confusing for victims and employers to understand and navigate, and it calls for a nationally consistent approach to the issue. I was lucky enough to attend the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Conference that was hosted earlier this year, here in the Queensland parliament. One of the speakers appearing was Kate Jenkins who was absolutely fantastic. She really clearly outlined the importance of the *Respect@work* report, all of the work that had been undertaken so far in the federal parliament and all of the work that was still to be done. We know that there is much that is still to be done in our society to ensure that sexual harassment is stamped out. I am really proud that the Palaszczuk government is leading the way in addressing sexual harassment and sex- and gender-based harassment of people.

The bill will address these issues by making three key changes. Firstly, the bill ensures that the definitions of 'sexual harassment' and 'discrimination' within the Industrial Relations Act align with the Sex Discrimination Act and Anti-Discrimination Act respectively. Adopting consistent definitions is really important—it is boring, but it is important. It is vital for building awareness and understanding the issues for workers and workplace delegates, team leaders, frontline managers, human resource practitioners and executive leaders.

Secondly, the bill makes sexual harassment or sex- and gender-based harassment an industrial matter. In practical terms, what this means is that victims can seek assistance from the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. The commission's powers include early intervention assistance for victims of sexual, sex- or gender-based harassment by making injunctions or interlocutory or interim orders and also has conciliation and arbitration powers.

The final significant change is that a person committing sexual harassment or the other kinds of harassment can summarily be dismissed on the grounds of misconduct. Given the serious nature of the misconduct, the bill gives the parties leave to have legal representation for matters before the commission concerning these issues.

The Palaszczuk government has no tolerance for sexual harassment in the workplace. We expect workers to be able to work free of discrimination or harassment. These are important changes and it is really pleasing to see the broad support that existed for these changes in the submissions and the testimony to the parliamentary committee from a broad range of stakeholders. We have taken the lead on this really important issue and we have delivered pragmatic solutions to change the workplace culture. I really do think that a big part of that comes down to the significant number of women in our caucus because unfortunately all too many of us have lived experience with these issues and that is why it is so important to many members of our caucus.

I will turn now to the provisions around employment standards and pay equity. The Palaszczuk government knows that all strong economies rely on the hard work and the commitment of our workers. These workers, I think we can all agree, deserve fair and decent working conditions—a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. We recognise that when employment standards keep pace with social and economic changes, the community as a whole benefits. We have certainly seen that over COVID where more and more employers have been flexible and have been willing to look at work-from-home arrangements because they recognise the benefit of that for their employees, and when their employees benefit, the whole workplace can benefit as well.

This bill improves on existing employment standards, further promotes collective bargaining and continues our government's efforts to close the gender pay gap. It amends the Queensland Employment Standards to be comparable to those outlined under the National Employment Standards in the Fair Work Act 2009, ensuring that Queensland keeps pace with community expectations. These changes include modernising terminology around parental leave entitlements, ensuring the entitlement to all prospective parents and providing them with the time and support they need during this exciting time.

One element of the bill that has received some negative feedback relates to the removal of gendered language. On this side of the House we firmly believe that Queensland families should be able to make their own decisions on parental care arrangements. The bill ensures that the needs of contemporary family units, in all their many different shapes and sizes, are better accommodated through providing a broader range of options available to parents when it comes to juggling parental arrangements and work. The bill also provides employees with flexible parental leave where they can take up to 30 days of unpaid parental leave within the first two years after the child was born, adopted or began residing with the employee under a surrogacy or cultural recognition arrangement. The changes also clarify the definition of 'child' for the purposes of adoption leave and cultural parental leave and increase the age of a child from five to 16 years.

In another important change, and one that I know will be close to the hearts of many members of this House, sadly due to personal experience, this bill provides that parents of a stillborn baby have equitable access to parental leave provisions under the Industrial Relations Act. We know, of course, that nothing can take away the grief and pain that a family will suffer after such a devastating loss, however, we hope that these amendments will at least allow those parents the time to grieve their loss and recover with dignity and privacy without the pressure of having to return to work before they are ready. This bill clarifies that sick leave is, and always has been, exclusive of any public holiday that falls during that leave period.

The Palaszczuk government is also leading the nation by extending existing entitlements of domestic and family violence leave to casual workers. Under the new arrangements, long- and short-term casuals will be equally entitled to 10 days of domestic and family violence leave per year. These changes will provide critical financial support to those who are experiencing family and domestic violence because nobody should ever have to choose between their personal safety and their economic security.

In the time I have left, I will finish with this: the Palaszczuk government has always been a national leader in supporting gender equality and equal remuneration through the collective bargaining process, and this bill ensures that that proud legacy will continue. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr HARPER (Thuringowa—ALP) (6.57 pm): I very much welcome the opportunity to speak on this bill and support every single aspect and element of the bill before us today. A quick history lesson for those opposite: unions proudly built the Labor Party. This does not—it is like a sermon—maketh a union, and I will table that. This makes some kind of—

Tabled paper: Organisational Chart titled 'QAS Group and NPAA Services Organisational Chart as at 2 November 2021' [[1776](#)].

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Member for Thuringowa, do not brandish it in the chamber.

Mr HARPER: Ponzi scheme of associations pretending to represent workers. They do not.

Ms Fentiman: Run by former LNP members.

Mr HARPER: I will take that interjection—run by former LNP members. I cannot start without responding to the disgraceful, misogynistic contribution from the member for Everton. What a disgrace, right up there with the member for Mudgeeraba! Both should come into this House tomorrow and apologise to the people of Queensland.

The objectives of this bill are to give effect to the Queensland government's response to the recommendations of the *Five-year review of Queensland's Industrial Relations Act 2016: final report*. The review made 40 recommendations, 36 of which are accepted in full by the Queensland government and four accepted in principle. In particular, some elements of the bill are important around the strengthening of protections against workplace sexual harassment and the provision of greater flexibility in relation to parental leave. It is ironic that the federal parliament today introduced its Industrial Relations Act as well.

While the bill has many important elements which I broadly support, in my contribution I want to concentrate on one particular element of the bill and that is around industrial representation from registered industrial bodies. I would like to take this opportunity to commend our respective trade unions

that represent thousands of workers and public servants in this state. The bill amends the legislation to provide a clear distinction between registered employee and employer organisations and other entities not registered under the IR Act seeking to represent an employee's or employer's industrial interests. That includes adopting consistent language throughout the IR Act. The bill also strengthens the commission's powers to issue orders to stop behaviours that give rise to misrepresentation, which can lead to confusion for employees and employers about who can fully represent their industrial interests.

To put this into context, for over 20 years I was the nominated and duly elected station delegate for the Townsville Ambulance Station in the Queensland Ambulance Service. That role not only included ensuring union members were supported through various aspects of the job, but also sitting on various working committees like the regional consultative committee and representing the collective views of members when it came to enterprise bargaining agreements, or EBAs. In both 2007 and 2012 respectively as a regional union delegate and then state councillor, I made further representations with senior managers of QAS as part of the ambulance state council during those negotiations. We represented members in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. Hard fought entitlements, meal allowances, overtime, afternoon and night shift allowances, extended hours overtime, increased leave and increased rates of pay for various clinical levels were achieved in 2007. We also lobbied for more equipment, vehicles and approved rosters—all part of the work we did as representatives for a registered industrial body, our union.

However, in 2012 that changed. All they wanted to do was strip everything away. Much of the work that we had achieved was through our then named union, the LHMU, subsequently called United Voice and now known as United Workers Union of which I declare I have been a loud and proud member for over 30 years. In 2012 it all changed under Campbell Newman, the LNP and his henchmen like the members for Broadwater, Kawana and the other ghosts of Newman past who sit on the opposition benches. Union delegates were no longer able to represent at station level and many a ploy by the LNP to bust up unions in this state was begun under that awful, distressing period of our lives. The then association called EMSPA, now APAQ—as members on this side of the House know, that is the association that pretends to represent ambulance officers through engaging lawyers, but in reality it has zero industrial representation. I do understand that the member for Mudgeeraba is also a member of NPAQ. She should declare that and/or resign after their anti-vax sentiments during COVID—

A government member: And comments today.

Mr HARPER:—and the comments today, but I have already called for that. The LNP-led anti-union association was formed. I knew how it worked because they invited me—stupidly—to meet with the then LNP opposition members to become whistleblowers against the then Bligh government. What made me really suspicious was that they met in secret in a warehouse in Bohle in Townsville to dig dirt on issues within the QAS. I ask members: does that sound familiar? Does that sound like the playbook of today that the LNP use? They do. They continue to do that today.

It was then that the really nasty stuff started at the station level as they tried to divide paramedics. It became very personal for me: false accusations and allegations about me were made by EMSPA delegates. After being put through the mud I never received an apology from those responsible. Operating under the guise of the Associations Incorporation Act, those anti-union, non-registered organisations posing as some industrial body or mob simply pretended to represent workers. The failures were tangible and costly as paid lawyers were brought in to do the dirty work with no clue and no knowledge of how to truly represent our ambulance workforce.

Thank God we got rid of the Newman government. Our union fought hard to stay the course as we were led to arbitration in 2012 where our previously hard fought wins were eroded away. The Newman government wanted to strip away our well-deserving and hardworking frontline staff of everything we in the union had worked so hard to achieve. May we never see that type of behaviour again in this state. I would call the member for Broadwater, the then member for Mundingburra and the then minister in Townsville, who directed my then assistant commissioner to sack me for speaking out against the Newman government. That is the kind of gutter level politics we saw then and that is the kind of gutter level politics we see today. I will not forget it, but he is too gutless to admit it. This bill confirms that the rights and protections—

Mr WATTS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There was some unparliamentary language used.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): I did not hear the unparliamentary language. I was speaking with the Clerk. As I have done before while I have been in the chair, member for Thuringowa, did you use unparliamentary language and will you withdraw?

Mr HARPER: If I did I unreservedly apologise and I withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member. Please continue with your contribution.

Mr HARPER: They are days that I never want to go back to, days that I never want to see for our hardworking paramedics in this state, when that particular mob pretended to represent workers in this state. We know they were led—and are still led—by former LNP members. That mob should truly get a mirror and have a long, hard look into it. It is shameful; it is disgraceful. That is not representing the workers of this state. That is the job of unions. Those organisations are nothing more than a sham.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr HARPER: The member for Kawana cannot lie straight in bed and look me in the eye and say they are not running NPAQ, APAQ—all of them are under the LNP member and you know it because you were part of it that formed it.

Mr Bleijie: We are not running NPAQ, APAQ, ACAP, Westpac—whatever. We are not running them.

Mr HARPER: I seem to have your attention now, member for Kawana. Get a mirror and have a long hard look into the history—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The members for Kawana and Thuringowa will not converse across the chamber, and the member for Thuringowa will direct his comments through the chair.

Mr HARPER: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. When I am provoked I tend to reply. I will say this in summing up. Our unions represent the workers of this state. It is clear the associations are nothing more than a pretend—and I cannot believe some of the contributions I have heard from the other side when they call them unions. They are not unions; they are associations under the associations act—nothing more than that. They are lightweight, taking money off members for lawyers and donating it back to the LNP, and you lot know that it goes straight back to the LNP. That is why you are opposing this bill. You think you are going to lose some money from some people.

Mr Head: You're going to lose a lot of money.

Mr HARPER: I take your interjection, member for Callide. Welcome to the chamber! You have a lot to learn in this place.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Thuringowa is warned for repeatedly directing comments directly to other members and not through the chair. Please continue.


Mr HARPER: I say this to members on that side—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Actually, member for Thuringowa, I have just remembered that you have already been warned.

Mr HARPER: I have.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You will leave the chamber for one hour under standing order 253A.

Whereupon the honourable member for Thuringowa withdrew from the chamber at 7.08 pm.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (7.08 pm): I rise to talk about the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. First and foremost I would like to say that we support the sexual harassment workplace protections contained in this bill.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I apologise for interrupting my colleague. The member for Thuringowa is only just leaving the chamber. He has engaged in conversation, quarrelling across the table. You have asked him to leave immediately and he has only just left the chamber.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): The member for Kawana—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House will come to order while I am making a ruling. I noted that. The member has left for one hour. I think we can leave it at that. Members are warned generally that when they are required to leave the chamber under 253 they do so quickly and without conversation. Member for Toowoomba North, please continue.

Mr WATTS: I want to be very clear that I support the sexual harassment protections that are contained within the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. That said, a lot of the rest of the bill I oppose. I want to try to take people back in history. Imagine it is the 1800s and a group of people feel that they do not have decent representation, that their skills are being abused and that there is someone with monopolistic power over them, forcing them to do things they do not want to do

but for fear that they would not be able to feed their families. Imagine that monopoly controlling their lives and them coming together as a group of individuals and saying, 'If we all back each other and we stick together, we should be able to get a better outcome.' Imagine if this House made a rule that they were not allowed to come together as a group of individuals to seek their own representation.

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Pine Rivers is warned.

Mr WATTS: Imagine if this House put a veto in place that said, 'If there's another group that you don't want to be a member of that says they promise they'll represent you if you pay them more money than the one you choose, you can only join that organisation.' Imagine coming into this House in the 1800s, as workers are out there standing against the monopolistic control of those who were trying to tell people what to do, starving them, not giving them what their families need to survive and abusing their labour. Imagine if this House said, 'No, you can't choose your own representation. Thou shalt have the representation we dictate.' Imagine that situation and imagine what should happen in this House when that legislation comes forward. When that legislation comes forward, this House should respect the rights of individual Queenslanders to choose their own association and their own representation for their own interests and it should protect them. That is what this House should do. Unfortunately, I do not see that in this bill. What I see in this bill is a veto power over anybody who wants to break down the monopolistic control.

We will hear often from those opposite that monopolies are a bad thing and do not lead to good outcomes. Usually it relates to business. They will say that if the business has monopolistic control it can dominate and do its own thing and will be anti-competitive. Let me say that I see nothing good in a monopoly. I totally believe in competition. Competition and individuals' rights to choose are keys to a flourishing society, and this place should protect people's freedom of choice, individual rights and the ability to collectively stand together against monopolistic control. Of course, if we did that, that would jeopardise somebody's career.

The people of Queensland need to start putting this together. They need to understand that this is clear overreach by the Labor government. The Labor government dictates who can represent them. That organisation then dictates that they must pay a particular fee. That fee then gets donated back to the Labor member they have chosen. Sometimes they might send—I do not know—secret emails on a private email address and try to find their way around the procedures of this House. They might not want to disclose those things to people because it would mean that the nepotism, the control, the influence and the power would be affected. Those would all be really bad outcomes for the people of Queensland! We have a Labor Party in government in this state that is behaving like that. This is about power, control and money. It has nothing to do with the representation of people in an industrial court. Let's call it what it is. This is about power and control. I have heard plenty of Labor members telling me that it is not about power and control. I ask them where they got their preselection.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr Boothman interjected.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. The minister and the member for Theodore will cease their quarrelling across the chamber. The member for Theodore knows better than to interject from a seat other than his own.

Mr WATTS: What we see is that people's right of association is being restricted and their financial resources are being taken and spent in areas they do not want them spent in. What people want when they join a union is a little bit of collective bargaining, some industrial protections and maybe some insurance. The union movement in Australia has won the battle because we have fantastic industrial legislation. This House is in charge of that industrial legislation. If there is a weakness in that industrial legislation, we can bring in amendments to protect people's rights.

This is not about protecting workers' rights; this is about the government feathering its nest. To understand this we need look no further than to the Deputy Premier, who studied hard to get his PhD. What was it in? It was in union renewal. Why does he need to do a PhD in union renewal? It is because people do not want to join their unions. Why do they not want to join their unions? It is because their unions do not represent them. The unions take their money and give it to the Labor Party. The Labor Party comes in here and rewards the unions and the taxpayer pays more money, whether it is for a building, administration or any other service being provided in this state. It is clear—and there have been plenty of reports done—that with all of the legislation that has been brought forward, with union encouragement and other things, people will pay more money for infrastructure and so on. Who are those people? They are the taxpayers of Queensland.

The taxpayers of Queensland should understand the game that is being played here. The game being played is very clear. It is nothing to do with industrial representation. It is nothing to do with public indemnity insurance. It is to do with making sure the union movement makes donations and provides boots on the ground to Labor members, because the Labor members will then reward the union by giving them more power and more control over the lives of the people of Queensland. All people want is the freedom to associate with fellow members, collectively bargain with their colleagues in their workplace, have their public liability insurance in place and be properly represented on the things they want—not the things that the monster that has become the Australian Labor Party in Queensland wants. We know very clearly what the Australian Labor Party wants. It wants to be able to dictate, because it loves the power. Clearly it is not providing the services required. To see this we only need look at the hospitals, the ambulance or so many other services in Queensland that are falling apart. Why are they falling apart? It is because monopoly control is never efficient. These guys love monopolies because they have monopoly control over the taxpayers of Queensland and they line their own pockets with that money and reward the power.

That is the game that is being played, and the people who lose are the taxpayers of Queensland. They lose because the Labor ministers are selected by the union, who will then force members to pay more money in their union membership and then the union will be rewarded by those members who are in the ministry. They will pick the members who are in the ministry and then they will send them private emails and communicate with them in other ways—surreptitiously, to avoid scrutiny and the transparency that this place deserves, outside of ministerial handbooks and without any credibility. We all know the game that is being played here. The Red Union should be allowed to operate because it brings in competition. If the union movement were any good, it would get up and compete, but it cannot because its lords and masters will not let it.

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (7.19 pm): I rise today as a proud member of this parliament and of the mighty Electrical Trades Union—a union that does represent workers and has represented me for most of my working life and will continue to do so. I rise to contribute to this debate on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I want to start by expressing thanks to my friend and colleague Linda Lavarch. Linda is a legend in my part of the world, and in many others I am sure, as a former member for Kurwongbah and former Queensland attorney-general, among other accolades. Linda is also the co-author, with former Queensland industrial relations commissioner John Thompson, of the five-year review of the Queensland Industrial Relations Act 2016. I thank them both for that body of work.

Their report and our government's response was released in February this year and I am pleased to say that we have accepted all of the review's recommendations—36 in full and four in principle—which has led us here today to a bill that will strengthen the protection of workers covered by Queensland's Industrial Relations Act by bringing our employment standards into line with the equivalent National Employment Standards under the Fair Work Act. This bill will also update our collective bargaining framework in Queensland and better protect and empower independent courier drivers in our state. I have heard a lot about courier drivers from all members. I use them a lot, too, but mostly to get car parts. I want to make sure that they get a fair go and get paid properly. Importantly, this is a bill that will clear up any confusion about who can legitimately represent workers in Queensland's industrial relations court. There is clearly a lot of confusion on the other side of the chamber about this, so I will be focusing on that today.

I want to start by saying that we are not changing the laws around registered organisations that operate under the Industrial Relations Act, that is, trade unions—organisations that can lawfully exercise a right of entry and represent workers in industrial matters that come before the Queensland industrial relations court and organisations that are subject to regulatory requirements to ensure accountability and transparency. None of that will change. What is the difference between real trade unions and red unions? For starters, the business-like model of the red unions means they are not compelled to explain where membership fees go. They do not have to be clear about their business structure—and they are not. It seems they do not even have to be sure who their secretaries and treasurers are. It is hard work keeping up with all the different names they have called themselves over the years, as has been highlighted by the member for Redlands and others with that document. It looked like a spider web to me. It was pretty scary.

As I have said in this parliament before, collectivism has been around since records began. We have heard a lot of people talking about the history of unions, but I have previously mentioned that I think that the biblical figure Moses took the first union action in having his people withdraw their labour and leave the worksite, so that goes back a long way. Collectivism is taking action to achieve better

working conditions for workers. Before we had unions, we had friendly societies made up of workers coming together for support, to protect each other and to push for change. They were recognised in the UK parliament in the 1800s. In Australia we can also trace back the origins of unions to the early 1800s. This is a movement that has over decades fought and won the eight-hour working day, minimum wages and conditions, equal pay and superannuation, among other great achievements.

It was our unions that fought against the dangers of asbestos and to later get compensation for affected workers. I remember a former prime minister talking about Bernie Banton, a dying man, and saying that he was not honest. That was despicable. It was our unions that fought for entitlements to be paid to Ansett workers when the airline collapsed. It was our unions that fought against WorkChoices through the 'Your Rights at Work' campaign. I do not have time to mention the myriad ways in which the old ruling classes, oppressive employers, business associations and governments seeking to protect the interests of these groups have tried to thwart the advancement of Australian workers over the years. Slavery to mass sackings and sabotaging collective bargaining conventions are just a couple of examples. In the case of the International Longshoremen I met in America, they shot them. They called it Bloody Thursday. They shot them for taking action. If that is offensive, I withdraw.

I am proud to stand here today as a member of the mighty Electrical Trades Union—a real union registered in Queensland in 1917. I am an electrician by trade—no-one knows that, so it must be a surprise to all—and I would hope that members opposite care about the safety of electricians like I do. I have heard some disgusting remarks from those opposite about my union over the time I have been in here and I sometimes wonder if they really care about electricians, and I have feelings too.

Mr Bleijie: Oh, come on! I'll give you a hug! I'll get up and hug you!

Mr KING: I will take that interjection from the member for Kawana and decline his offer. I am proud to speak to this bill which addresses the newest way the anti-union movement has found to undermine worker protections by creating fake unions. To be a union in Queensland—that is, a registered industrial association—representing employees or employers, you must apply to the Industrial Relations Commission for registration and meet certain conditions, including that the association seeking registration is not competing with an existing registered organisation to which relevant workers may conveniently belong.

The so-called red unions—and we know who I am talking about—do not meet this test as they seek to draw away workers from the 'conveniently belong' rule. They seek to draw workers away from the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union of Employees registered in 1921, the Teachers' Union of Employees registered in 1917 and the Independent Education Union registered in 1980. Unions are about bringing workers together to get better outcomes and protections and our IR system is about maintaining industrial harmony. We are not about divisiveness and competitiveness as we have seen from the red unions and members will not hear any of the unions that I have mentioned refer to health workers as 'duds'.

Unions grow from the ground up while the red unions are more reminiscent of Pauline Hanson and Clive Palmer's style—get a few people together, call yourself a political party, or in this case a union, and then go touting for members. Unions are about representing workers and informing them about their rights, not tricking them into believing that they are protected as we have seen from the red unions. I want to quote from the NPAQ website—


The Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland is an employee union which fights to protect you, not promote a political party ... Every membership dollar supports you, your workplace issues, provides professional indemnity insurance and legal backup for you. You get a better service for half the price.

This is dangerously misleading, which was proved last year when NPAQ could not represent its own member in the Queensland industrial relations court because it was not a union. It says it can, but it cannot. In fact, the QIRC in Vice-President O'Connor's decision found—

In my view the NPAQ is not a 'trade union'. NPAQ's legal personality and corporate status are inconsistent with that of a typical 'trade union' and its history is not in any sense typical of a 'trade union'.

To claim it is not political—oh please! Come on! These fake unions have done little else but attack our government since their formation. In my opinion, you could play five degrees or less of separation between the LNP and the executive members of these so-called red unions. For all that I have heard during this debate about Labor and the unions being together, the unions formed the Labor Party. No-one makes any secret of that. In fact, I will say this to some of those opposite who seem to be mystified by that: go to the electorate of Gregory and have a look through with the member for Gregory because he explained the history of the Labor Party and the unions. He seems to get it. The LNP opposition should caucus and get its story straight on the history of Labor and the unions.

I am very supportive of the introduction of penalties for the misrepresentation of an organisation's registration status under the Industrial Relations Act. I support the proposed review mechanism under the Associations Incorporation Act to ensure applications for incorporation are not granted if it is reasonable to believe that the association could then be mistaken for an organisation under the IR Act. It is a shame when we have to spend time clarifying laws for the small percentage of people who do the wrong thing, yet here we are. I am all about accountability. I am all about protecting workers. I 100 per cent support real trade unions and always will. That is why I am voting for this bill. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (7.28 pm): I could not let this opportunity go by and not speak to the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As this government tends to do, there are some good things in this bill, but the bad things far outweigh those. In fact, some of the things in this bill are just absolutely abhorrent to me—absolutely abhorrent.

I think we can all agree that sexual harassment has no place in the workplace—or anywhere else for that matter. Any provisions that fix up those sorts of issues will be fully supported by me. On gender neutral language, women do not need to have their identity erased. They need respect, to be valued and have equality. Enough of this woke stuff that we see more and more with this government.

The main thrust of this bill is the changes being made to the IR laws. That is the abhorrent part of this bill. The Labor Party go straight back to the old Labor Party playbook. I know I have mentioned this numerous times in the House. They blame everybody else. They instigate a rigged inquiry, they shoot the messenger and then they provide a scapegoat. In this case their rigged inquiry was completely rigged. No-one knew that this change was coming. The submissions were limited to invitation only and, of course, we know who got the invitations: the people who have benefited from this bill. Then we have the people who ran the inquiry: former ALP attorney-general and Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union director, Linda Lavarch, and John Thompson, who was elected as general secretary of the Queensland Council of Unions in 1995. One would think they probably have a vested interest in making sure that theirs are the only representative bodies that can take care of workers' rights.

As I have mentioned previously in the House, I was a union representative—admittedly that was last century. That was over 20 years ago when, people will remember, unions were actually unions. They really were taking care of their members' benefits and doing things to assist their members, unlike the present unions that are more interested in their power base—and they solidify their power base through those opposite. Tonight we have had a conga line of union organisers on the other side of the House stand up and tell us why they do not want to see any competition. They do not want to see their unions lose their membership to people who may actually represent them in a better fashion.

They have come up with all sorts of excuses. They say these associations are linked to the LNP in some way. There might be some people who used to be members of the LNP, but I can tell members that representing the rights of workers is not an exclusive area for the Labor Party. Anybody can do that. Anybody who wants to represent a sector of industry can put their hand up and represent them. If they do a good job they will, of course, attract people to those associations or unions. It is quite clear that the red unions have been doing a far better job than some of the Labor aligned unions. That is why people have been leaving in droves and signing up with these guys. They are signing up with these associations because they do a better job. They are providing a cheaper service to the members and they are not getting involved directly in politics, unlike those Labor aligned unions.

There is no better example of what the government are trying to do here than what has come from the member for Pine Rivers, who said that she would like to see these organisations wiped from existence. This bill is about the Queensland Labor Party and the union movement getting their game together to support each other. This is how they build their power base. The union movement do favours for members of parliament, they preselect them, they support them financially in their election hopes and then they pick who will be the ministers. In return the government and the ministers reward their union mates with things like Best Practice Industry Conditions that has led the CFMMEU and the ETU to earn far more than they should for the projects that they are on. That money is then kicked back to the Labor Party. We are talking millions and millions of dollars here.

Most of the projects that have BPICs applied to them have far more than 20 per cent; some of them are having 50 per cent, added to them. Look at what has happened to light rail stage 3 on the Gold Coast. It has blown out by \$700 million. Where do members think that \$700 million is going? It is going to be funnelled back in one fashion or another to the Labor Party.

Quite frankly, this government is morally bankrupt. This legislation is like many other pieces of legislation they have put into this House to try to entrench their position in government. They changed the electoral laws with 16 minutes notice. No-one knew that was coming. They just went out and did that. They changed the donation laws to benefit themselves. They made it a completely uneven playing field between supporters of the LNP and the union movement supporting the Labor Party. They did not bother to change anything on that side of it. They do everything they possibly can to rig elections. Now they are rigging the union movement.

Mr Stevens: Rorters!


Mr HART: I will take that interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. It might be fine for the Labor members to call these unions fake unions, but they are not fake unions. They are trying to do the best they can for their members. The excuses that those opposite use for calling them fake unions are excuses that they have, in fact, put in place themselves. They say they cannot represent their members in the Industrial Relations Commission because they are changing the rules.

Mr Stevens: They've blocked them!

Mr HART: They have blocked them. If, for instance, the Labor Party were being reasonable about this they could have come in here with legislation to improve the situation, to make it a competitive situation in the representative realm as far as unions and associations go, but they have not done that. They have come in here in an attempt to railroad these new associations because their mates are losing membership to these associations and they do not like it.

Mr Millar: Fourteen per cent.

Mr HART: I take that interjection from the member for Gregory. Union membership has sunk to as low as 14 per cent. When I was a union representative it was 40 per cent because we did a good job of representing people. These red unions are doing a great job of representing workers' rights and unfortunately the political wing does not like that. They do not like competition. They do not like anything being on a level playing field. They want to take every advantage they can get. They use this parliament as their own personal plaything. They rig inquiries. They rig the committee system. They rig everything.

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (7.39 pm): I rise in support of the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I put on the record my thanks to the minister. I have known the minister, the member for McConnel, for a very long time. I think we go back about 30 years. There is no-one in this chamber more dedicated to workers' rights than the minister. My family and I have had a long association with the member for McConnel. I want to thank her for this bill. Once again she has delivered in spades for the workers of Queensland and, particularly, for my union. I disclose that I have been a long-time member of the Together union, which was formerly the QPSU.

Mr Hunt: Hear, hear!

Mr SAUNDERS: I take that interjection from the member for Caloundra, who also is a member and was a great prison officer. I also acknowledge the member for Hervey Bay. He was a senior public servant in my area and is also a very staunch Together member.

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: I hear the member for Gregory. My family goes back a long way in the union movement throughout Western Queensland. The Holy Grail is, of course, Barcaldine to a lot of us in the union movement.

I thank the member for Redlands, the committee and the 35 submitters who made submissions on the bill. We heard members on the other side talk about an upper house. I do not think Queenslanders want more politicians. I think what we have now is working pretty well.

Last night the member for Redlands tabled a flow chart that I was very keen to see. I was sitting up the back with the member for Redlands when I saw that flow chart. I have seen a lot of flow charts in my life. This one looks like something from Mr Squiggle: 'Hey, Miss Jane, let's draw all these lines.' There are so many addresses on the flow chart that I am very confused by it. There is Mooloolaba, there is Maroochydore, there are offices in the *Courier-Mail* building, there are offices in the Valley. Where are the members supposed to go to see their organisation, or whatever you want to call it? Being a long-time union member I have always been involved in elections. We know who the president of our union is. We know who the general secretary is. We know the body that runs the union. We know that. But in this organisation, who is it? As I said, it looks like something that Mr Squiggle and Miss Jane have put together. I table that chart which, when you look at it, is very confusing.

Tabled paper: Organisational Chart titled 'QAS Group and NPAA Services Organisational Chart as at 2 November 2021' [\[1777\]](#).

If it is confusing for us, the lawmakers on this side of the House, can members imagine how confusing it must be for the members of the so-called association? It is not a union. We know that it is an association. We know that they say they are unions but they are not. They have no power to represent workers in the IRC. They talk the talk but they cannot walk the walk, unfortunately. Let us talk about unions and what has happened in this state. I cast back to 2012 when the Together union worked very hard—

Mr Tantari interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: I take the interjection from the member for Hervey Bay because he also saw public servants who were sacked. When you sit in a room with people who have been very loyal public servants for various governments over the years, whose belongings were taken from their desks and put in a shoebox, it is pretty distressing. People were on suicide watch because of the way they were treated. That is when a union comes in. That is when you see the true worth of a union. We saw how well my union, the Together union, supported and worked with the public servants—and the teachers and nurses through their various unions—throughout that dreadful time from 2012 to 2015. That is why people have faith in unions. That is why we have to ensure that the unions are accountable and that we have proper elections. By the way, for the information of those on the other side, those elections are run by the Electoral Commission; they are not run by the union movement. We know that. We have been involved in a lot of internal elections.

When you think about those things, you think about credibility. On that side of the House they are always talking about credibility. They are always talking about honesty. How did these people in this pyramid, this Ponzi scheme, these false unions or whatever you want to call them, get elected? How did the people in charge of these organisations get elected? Where was the vote? Was it a public vote? I did not see it and I follow a lot of things around Queensland. I ask everyone in this House: did anyone see a vote on who was elected? We know there are three people involved. Who voted them in? Did they vote in a hall or did they do it like Clive Palmer did when everyone had a few beers and said, 'Yep, you're the leader, Clive'? Did that happen? I am confused because in my Together union we have a vote that is controlled by the Electoral Commission of Queensland. We have candidates and we know who is running. We know who is in charge of our union and that is because of the laws brought in over the years by good state Labor governments. In our union, representatives come from the floor. They are former delegates and they are voted in. That is what happens.

This is good legislation because it protects the rights of Queenslanders. Those opposite will say that it is all about money grabbing, but it is not. It is about making sure that the workers are protected at all times. I can tell the House that they have not forgotten 2012. That is why it is important that we have a very strong union movement in this state to protect workers' rights and to protect workers.

This week is teachers week. I have a lot of time for teachers and I have a lot of friends at the QTU. I want to thank the teachers for all the hours they put in and acknowledge the union officials from the QTU. As I said, I have a lot of good friends in the QTU, particularly the QTU organiser in my area. He is a tremendous man who looks after his members.

Mrs Gilbert interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: I take the interjection from the member for Mackay. Scott is a tremendous union organiser. Scotty Welch makes sure he puts his union and his members first at all times. I see the minister nodding her head. No doubt the minister has had many conversations with the QTU organiser for the Maryborough electorate and the Wide Bay. That is what you get when you have a proper union. You get organisers who look after their members. That is what it is all about. It is about making sure the members are looked after.

The bill strengthens the protections against workplace sexual harassment and I think everyone in this House agrees with that. It supports the effective representation of employees and employers by registered industrial organisations. That is what we are doing. It maintains the integrity of and the registration framework for industrial organisations, which is what a proper union is—not a false union. That is what a union does. It looks after the workers. It is not about three people deciding that they will have a few beers in the back of a shed and make some money, forgetting about workers' rights. The bill also amends the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991, the Public Trustee Act 1978, and the Associations Incorporation Regulation 1999.


I have talked about my 'purple army', the Together union. A lot of the doctors who work in A&E and the office people who make sure that everything is processed properly are Together members. I have been in contact with some of them today, particularly some of the doctors. They are a bit disturbed

about being called duds. When you have a car crash, a stroke or a heart attack you will present at a hospital and the doctors you will see will be Together members. They are not duds. Some of them have contacted me today to say that they were personally insulted by those comments.

Mr Tantari interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: I take that interjection from the member for Hervey Bay. Our electorates share some really good doctors and hospital administration staff who are covered by the Together union. We value our health workers. It has been a very tough two years with the pandemic. We know what the teachers, the nurses and the Together members have had to put up with for the past two years. The unions stood behind them and made sure that their workers were safe. The unions made sure that their workers had the right PPE. They made sure that their workers were looked after by a good Labor government, which is what the Palaszczuk government is. It is a good Labor government.

Before I wind up, I congratulate the minister once again. I have known the minister for many years. There is no-one who looks after workers' rights more than the member for McConnel. Thank you, Minister.

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (7.48 pm): I rise to speak on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. According to the bill's explanatory notes, clauses 29 to 64 of the bill have been introduced to 'provide greater clarity about the rights and responsibilities of employee and employer organisations, including ineligible or unregulated entities'. It is made clear that so-called ineligible entities cannot lawfully represent their members' industrial interests under the IR Act and that civil penalties can be ordered against any entity which attempts to do so. Under the bill's provisions, it will become virtually impossible for the state's new independent unions to represent and advocate for their members. The bill states clearly that these so-called ineligible entities cannot lawfully represent their members' industrial interests under the act. Civil penalties will be imposed on any entity deemed to have misrepresented its registration status or ability to lawfully act on behalf of a person's industrial interests under the IR Act.

The bill also makes the following changes: section 201 of the IR Act to be amended to clarify that a proposed agreement or bargaining instrument must include information setting out how equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value will be achieved in practice; and section 290 of the IR Act to be amended—meaning of 'engages in industrial activity'—to replace the term 'industrial association' with 'industrial organisation'.

Currently, the use of the term 'union' is not restricted by any law in Australia. That is because Australia has ratified a number of international conventions which guarantee the right of every worker to form or join their own union. Clearly, the Queensland government is trying to get around those international conventions by pretending that workers will still be free to choose to join an ineligible entity if they want to. They just will not be allowed to represent them. This is another of the government's Clayton's choices when it comes to people's human and civil rights under international law. Not only does the bill create new barriers preventing independent employee associations from representing their members; it also sets a framework for punishing them.

Under provisions in the legislation, new powers are granted to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission which enable it to issue orders against ineligible entities and hit them with heavy fines and sanctions. If passed, the bill will end the right to freedom of association in Queensland. The real motive for this bill is the tens of thousands of workers who have abandoned the establishment unions in droves in the past three years to join organisations like the Red Union and other worker groups like it.

These new unions were the only ones prepared to help those workers dealing with unfair dismissal and pay negotiations involved in the loss of their careers and livelihoods due to mandates. These unions were the only ones prepared to provide these workers with the critical assistance they needed at an incredibly traumatic time. They provided them with professional indemnity insurance, advice on how to set up public fundraising campaigns and helped them join forces with other workers to launch court actions where appropriate.

These unions have a rapidly growing membership of paid-up new members, mostly from sectors once considered the lifeblood of the union movement, including nurses, teachers, police and transport workers. They are apolitical organisations which do not sit on government round tables, do not make financial contributions to political parties and do not engage in political lobbying. They therefore have none of the conflict issues of most of the older establishment unions. Even their dues are half what the old unions charge their members, all of which makes them a genuine competitor for the establishment

unions which have ruled the roost in Australia for far too long. There needs to be opportunity and options. Clearly, they no longer exist to serve the interests of their members or workers but those of the power elites and global capital.

Today I talked to one guy out the front who had no politician approach him. When I spoke to Mick he said, 'There is no-one up there who represents us anymore, Steve.' I will not use his vernacular and say what he actually said. Basically, he said that these people do not work anymore and do not understand what we do. Not all members in the Labor Party are like that, but this is how they feel. It is so sad to see that.

This bill also introduces a new chapter 10A into the IR Act which empowers the QIRC to, on application or its own initiative, determine the minimum remuneration and working conditions for independent couriers. It should be noted from the outset that Australia's road transport industry is already one of the most heavily regulated sectors within the economy. It is also an industry which has strategic importance for our economy and which played a vital role during the recent pandemic. It also transports our food and everything up and down the coast from the country to the city, as we all know.

Many sectors within the economy rely heavily on the road transport industry and the services its operators provide, including mining and agriculture. The sector also provides its workers with a flexibility that is ideally suited to the many people who prefer to work around other commitments including studies, second jobs, family commitments and recreational activities. Many restaurants would not have survived without the on-demand platform for delivery services, and thousands of people would have had to be stood down instead of continuing to earn a wage. Under section 406B(1) of the bill, the definition of an independent courier goes far beyond any reasonable conception of an independent courier driver. It defines an independent courier in a way that is clearly intended to be broad enough to cover a range of independent contractors who perform work via gig platforms.

Overall, the bill takes an inappropriate top-down approach in determining in a heavy-handed fashion how an independent operator must run their business—a clear case of government intrusion and overreach. It is also anti-competitive and inconsistent with many rights, including the right to freedom of contract.

Proposed section 406F(2) completely disregards the needs of small business and the adverse impacts this bill's restrictive laws will have on business productivity, costs and red tape. This approach assumes that the working arrangements of platform workers are directly comparable to ordinary employees. It ignores the distinct nature of platform work and fails to provide minimum conditions that are suitably adapted to such work. It also reflects the approach in chapter 6 of the New South Wales act, which I understand this legislation was modelled on. The New South Wales system is deeply unpopular and is plagued with high rates of noncompliance. It therefore seems counterproductive for the government to be seeking to replicate a similar system here in Queensland.

I also strongly oppose the bill's conferral of retrospective powers on the QIRC, including around contract determinations. This is contrary to all principles of good governance and the bill should be amended to ensure such orders can only operate prospectively. The federal government has indicated that it intends to introduce its own regulations in the near future. As such, the bill should not be proceeded with given the extreme likelihood that any federal legislation will render many of the state provisions redundant.

The alternative is a complex range of regulations, with state-specific owner-driver laws and regulations, plus the additional overlay of the federal IC act and the Fair Work Act when amended. Chapter 10A should therefore be removed on the basis that minimum standards for independent courier drivers and other gig economy workers should be implemented at the federal level.


This government loves to talk about how important small business is to the economy and how it must be supported, yet it continues to pass law after law hell-bent on destroying it. Last month, Australia's workplace relations minister Tony Burke called gig workers a cancer on the economy. Let's just be clear about these so-called protections for workers in the gig economy. Gig workers are, by strict definition, self-employed workers. That means they are small business owners. The government wants everyone to believe that this bill is it taking on big business giants like Uber and Amazon. It is not; it is an attack on the millions of hardworking, self-employed Australians whose only crime has been to pursue a dream of becoming their own boss.

While this bill focuses on the road transport sector, its provisions are perfectly framed for rapid expansion across many other areas of small business, including cafe owners, hairdressers, small contractors, independent bus drivers, courier drivers, truckies, importers, cleaners, nannies, plumbers,

electricians and numerous other self-employed blue collar workers. That is who minister Burke and others really consider a cancer on our economy—small, independent operators. Why? Because they are the only sector big government does not yet have control over.

Interestingly, it is also the sector where cash is still the preferred way of doing business. It is the same sector that ATO bureaucrats have waged an almost non-stop war of attrition against over the past decade. Small business, contractors, sole traders and the self-employed are one of the last bastions of freedom in our economy.

I also concur with the Australian Christian Lobby and am strongly opposed to amendments that remove gendered expression from the Industrial Relations Act; specifically, referring to the proposed amendments removing the terms 'maternity' and 'she' and replacing them with 'birth related' and 'the employee'. This language is dehumanising and an affront to Queensland women. Maternity leave is a right provided to women and a declaration of the significance of mothers in a healthy society. Bills such as this one are a direct threat to that. That is why I do not support the bill.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (7.58 pm): We save the best till last, Mr Deputy Speaker. I rise to support this bill on workplace sexual harassment, which is a very important part of the bill. I am sure we would have liked to have dealt with that separately, but the government in its normal fashion of hubris and arrogance has put in place a system banning unions that oppose the money cash cow of the existing union movement.


Guess how they did that? They had former Queensland state politician and attorney-general Linda Lavarch write out a prescriptive way to make it happen. That is like putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank. It was always going to have the deliberate outcome of hanging onto the unions that need protection. All of the members opposite are members of unions.

Those opposite have passed legislation in this House around local government representatives declaring material interests in matters and not being able to vote on them. They have union masters who put them in place. Tell me which member of the government does not have a material interest in voting on this particular bill? Why have they put before this House this bill to ban a reasonable alternative to unions—the so-called red unions that compete with the cash cow union movement that they all derive their jobs from? What happens in those unions? There are the fat salaries of Beth Mohle and others of \$200,000 and \$300,000. It is abhorrent to the members of those unions that that money is being siphoned off for jobs for the boys and girls and to fund political campaigns so the puppet members over there can grab a seat in the parliament.

Everyone on the other side has a material interest in this bill. Unfortunately, they are banning other unions. I have had teachers in my office complaining about the fees they have to pay for their union. The associations—a group of people—give people an alternative to the unions and their money grabbing ways. It is abhorrent that this bill that blocks democracy and freedom of choice has been put before this House. It tells us what this third-term, arrogant, smug and hubris government is doing to stay in power. They cannot stay in power on their governance of Queensland record. They know that. Debt is out of control.

They have to manipulate the system with compulsory preferential voting and their mates in the Greens party—the Labor-Greens alliance I keep referring to. They cannot get into power without that alliance. It does not matter how much they abuse them, they still love the Greens. I wonder what the AWU members opposite think about the fact that they have to rely on the Greens to stay in government.

I will oppose this bill on the basis that it denies teachers the democratic right to choice. They are in unions to protect their jobs and protect them in disputes. The alternative unions are cheaper. They are something like \$400 cheaper because the money does not go to the fat salaries for highly paid executives or towards political campaigns run by the Labor Party. This bill totally disregards the rights and privileges that this House should be delivering.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (8.03 pm): I declare that I am a member of the Queensland Teachers' Union and also a member of the United Workers Union—two great unions. Downstairs tonight there are some functions going on. I went down earlier tonight and I was talking to some people. They were asking what is happening tonight. We were talking about this bill. Before I went down there, the member for Callide was on his feet speaking and he was using the word 'corrupt' when he was talking about the Queensland Teachers' Union and the nurses union. Those people were angry.

It is quite obvious that those opposite do not understand how a real union works. Workplace members elect a workplace representative. They go to branch meetings. They have meetings with their organiser. They elect members to go to state councils and area councils. They elect their executive. It is done in a transparent way. They have ballots that are overseen by the Electoral Commission.

It is not like the piece of rubbish that the member for Maryborough spoke about where we cannot tell who is in charge. It is like letting the spiders be in charge—there were arms going everywhere. It did not make sense. It is deliberately done like that so that nobody can work out who has the purse strings. Those opposite should not come in here talking about money because they have hidden it in a spider's web.

There is a saying that those in the Queensland Teachers' Union and the nurses union—conservatively 60,000 people in Queensland—who have been degraded use and that is: 'Not happy Jan!' They have you in their sights. Every union is made up of its members. When members call a union corrupt they are calling teachers, nurses and all other workers corrupt. That is a good lot of people in Queensland. Just watch out! Yesterday the member for Broadwater was going on about this bill being payback to unions. I am sure he understands a lot about payback. He knows that the workers of Queensland have been paying the LNP back since 2016. Payback is ringing in his ears.

Our world is changing and our attitudes are changing. That is why this bill is so important. What was expected previously and what was once seen as normal is now outdated, old fashioned, wrong or unacceptable. This is evident in workplaces and that is why we are debating this bill tonight. We no longer pigeonhole ourselves into gender specific roles at work or at home.

Some people might enjoy watching television shows like *Mad Men*—some members may have seen it—but it is cringe-worthy to see the unwanted sexual advances. They were accepted amongst the male bosses. Those advances were towards the women in the typing pool. It was a case of 'shut up and take it or lose your job'. We cannot have those types of norms anymore. The norms where girls had gender-specific jobs and boys had gender-specific jobs have gone.

Many members opposite that I have listened to have talked about sexual harassment in the workplace. They said that they love their daughters and they do not want to see sexual harassment. They should think about their boys as well. Sexual harassment happens all over the place. What are those opposite going to do? Are they going to vote to protect people in the workplace or are they going to be like the bosses in *Mad Men* and think it is okay to carry on same old, same old?

My granddaughter is graduating from year 12 soon and she has secured an apprenticeship as a heavy diesel fitter. This is what young girls in Mackay get to do. They can have apprenticeships. Diversity in the workplace is valued in my area. It is encouraged in workshops around Mackay. I expect that my granddaughter, Sienna, will be treated with respect and respected as a worker and not be subjected to harassment of any kind from any of her co-workers. This is what all modern workplaces should operate like. Unfortunately, some people do not see that and need to be dragged into the 21st century.

Back in the day when my sister went to work for Telecom—that was Telstra, for those youngsters who do not know—she trained as a technician. There were 100 people in her intake and only two of them were female. Back then if you wanted to take a 'bloke's job' you had to take what you got, so at lunchtime they would staple gun her overalls to the door so she would not get to have a lunch break or even get a chance to use the toilet. Or they would say, 'Come on, let's play cards,' and when they got the cards out it would be a deck with naked women on the back. This was seen as a bit of a joke. It was a great laugh. It was so funny for the blokes. The attitude was, 'Just suck it up, princess.' These attitudes need to change. Not everyone can see that these attitudes need changing and they have to be dragged into it. I am really pleased that we are able to bring these bills into this place so we can have a safe place for our girls and boys, our non-binary people or whatever gender or non-gender you choose to be. This is what these bills are for, because we are a modern society and we need to look after everyone.


I would just like to say that there were some people up in my area who were very upset today and they have contacted me. It got around very quickly on their tom-toms that a member from over the other side said words to the effect of 'duds get employed in the regions'. They are very angry. There are a lot of people who work in the regions, so there are thousands of people out there who are very upset today. Some of the messages that have come through from my area include: 'Don't come into our region', 'Get out, stay out', 'Don't come back', 'We don't need your nastiness and your bitterness', 'You are not welcome.'

Mr Mander interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Member for Everton, you have been warned. I am going to ask you to leave the chamber.

Whereupon the honourable member for Everton withdrew from the chamber at 8.11 pm.

Mrs GILBERT: It is obvious that the member for Everton supports those words about workers in the regions, otherwise he would not be getting so excited about it. If he supported workers in the regions and he thought they were good, quality workers, he would not be calling people who work in my region duds. That is quite disgraceful and he should be embarrassed. I support the bill.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (8.12 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak in support of this bill. I have been looking forward to this night for a very long time. I am going to enjoy these 10 minutes. It is fantastic to be the last speaker in this debate before the minister wraps up because it has given me the opportunity to hear all of the arguments from those opposite.

They talk about choice. Choice has been their whole line. 'Let people have a choice.' The LNP has had plenty of opportunity to change the 'conveniently belong' rule. The member for Kawana changed the IR Act a number of times in his time as Attorney-General but he never took up that opportunity. If you believe in choice that much and you want an even playing field, bring it in. The federal LNP did not do it. Those opposite have never done it. There is a reason why they have not done it. It is not about choice, because they had a choice and they did not do it when it came time.

I did agree with the member for Kawana when he changed the IR Act to bring in transparency around expenditure because it is important. That is why it is important we do not have these associations. These associations are bypassing the transparency regulations in the IR Act. Do we have clubs and associations that become banks or insurance companies? Those opposite say, 'Oh, it should be about choice. They should be able to lend money whenever they want. They should be able to withhold money. It's just about choice.' This is ridiculous. This is about making sure there is a level playing field in relation to expenditure in all of this.

As many members have alluded to, and as the member for Redlands rightly tabled, we do not know where expenditure is going from these unions. It is an absolute Ponzi scheme. The money comes in, it gets used for a select few cases, and then they have to get new members in to pay for the old cases. They pay themselves a wage; they are businesses. I liked it when the member for Burleigh interjected during the debate and said, 'They're businesses.' Yes, they are. He admitted it. They are not unions; they are associations. They do not even know if they are the treasurer, the secretary, the president or how many organisations they are on.

What I did find fascinating about this debate was who did not speak on it. The member for Moggill did not speak on it. I wonder why? Because the red union started up as a medical association. Oh! I am glad he has values. I am glad he is not speaking on this debate. He knows and respects it enough to understand that there is already a union in place for medical professionals.

I will move on to another point. There is a lot of talk about all these unions being associated with the Labor Party. There is no talk about the employer organisations this bill also affects. None of them—not one of them—are associated with the Labor Party. Let's look at the big unions that also are not associated with the Labor Party: the QTU, nurses and the police union. All of them have spoken up against these associations acting like unions or pretending to be unions when they are not covered under the same legislation and the IR Act, which they should be. There is a reason why we have an IR Act that governs these measures.

Those opposite also talk about ideology. As I said earlier, the member for Kawana was quick to come in in 2013 and want spouses to disclose what their interests were in unions. It went to that level of transparency and recording and red tape. But when it comes to two of their mates who are former LNP members, 'No, don't worry about that. I don't believe in that ideology.' 'I'll call your union. I'll let you represent workers.' 'Yeah, but you don't have to worry about that red tape.' I say, 'Let's open it up. Let's cut all the red tape for the unions.' Good luck with that.

Mr Kelly: Taking industrial action.

Mr BROWN: Yes, I will take the interjection—being able to take industrial action whenever you like.

Mr Kelly: You can strike whenever you like.

Mr BROWN: Yes, it would be a slippery slope indeed. We hear those opposite jumping up and down when there is a little protest outside. I have noticed the outcry of these members, yet there has not been one protest outside. Who are the only people who have come in?

Mr Kelly: There is nobody in the gallery.

Mr BROWN: No. I take that interjection. There have been people in the gallery: the ones this bill affects the most. The ones who run the red unions, they have been in the gallery. Always back self-interest; at least you know it is trying. They have been up there. Where are all of their members

who worry about lack of representation? They are nowhere to be seen. If this is an attack on democracy they would have been outside. Twice this week they have done the bidding of a select few. As I said in an earlier debate about the anti-vaxxers jumping on board against the COVID bill, do it at a time when there is no protest outside. Yet again we have not seen one protest, not one so-called red union member outside protesting against these laws, which tells me that they probably do not even know they are in these unions half the time. They do not know the financial transparency of these so-called unions.

Mr Bailey interjected.


Mr BROWN: Supposedly just knocking down his door: 'Look, Ray. Look at my \$400.'

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Members, please cease all interjections.

Mr BROWN: Yes. Come on, guys, settle down. I know this is fun. There is a reason there is an IR Act and there is a reason unions and employer groups are governed by this. It is because it is important that there is financial transparency around workers' wages and what these member organisations do with it. They are highly regulated, and they need to be that way to ensure they have the trust of those organisations. This cannot just go by the wayside because one or two of their mates set up this Ponzi scheme and want to bypass all the IR laws in this state. That is not right. If they are willing to pass up those principles but bring them in when they are in government but not legislate away the 'conveniently belong' rule, they are doing so because they are not believing in their ideology. They are believing in two blokes making a dime out of this, which is not right. What they are doing at the same time is voting against a bill that will protect women, that will give them a voice, that will stop the suffering of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Mr Watts: Separate it out.

Mr BROWN: I take the interjection. Why should we separate an industrial relations change out of an industrial relations bill? It is a ridiculous notion that somehow we should pause sexual harassment and separate it out of the bill. That would waste the time of parliament just because it is inconvenient for those opposite to have this debate. It is important to have this debate and it is important we make these changes in the IR bill. It is a ridiculous argument from those opposite that we should not have IR changes in an IR bill. That means they are willing to put in their two mates and support them over every single woman who works in this state who wants the right to go to work and not be sexually harassed. I wholeheartedly support this bill tonight.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (8.22 pm), in reply: I thank all members for their contribution on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I have been in this House for quite a while, and I honestly have never heard a debate where so many members on the opposite side got up and spoke so many untruths, used baseless arguments and made accusations with no substance. They called legitimate unions—like the QTU and the QNMU, whose membership includes over 95 per cent of teachers, nurses and midwives in this state—corrupt and other names. They accused them of funnelling money, which is untrue. It is a disgrace on those opposite that the union-bashing oldies of the past are well and truly alive in this House.

Well may those opposite laugh because their display has been truly and absolutely abysmal. There was not one scrap of evidence and it was like a broken record—over and over again saying the same misleading mistruths in this House. It was honestly quite disgraceful, and I would not be proud of any of those members opposite. On this side of the House, we make no apologies. Just like they did federally under the LNP Morrison government, the primacy in the industrial relations legislation in this state—and federally under the registered organisations act—is a registered industrial organisation. That has been the case in this country for generations.

Some members opposite might like a bit of industrial relations education because, honestly, the debate was so puerile and simplistic and their lack of understanding of industrial relations was absolutely pathetic. One of the misleading arguments which they repeated time and time again was to accuse unions of all sorts of actions. They should take that outside and see how far they get. They have absolutely no courage whatsoever. To come in here and talk like that is an absolute affront and they should all be ashamed of themselves.

The same then goes for employer organisations that are equally covered under this bill and are supporting what is occurring in this bill. If they say it for the registered union of workers, they are saying it for the registered union of employers who face similar disruptive behaviour from a non-registered organisation. I heard a lot of them saying that they charge \$400. How would they know what some of these organisations charge? What we hear from the commission is that as soon as a case needs to be

taken—and a lot of them have been anti-vaxxer cases, and not one case has got up in the commission—they take the money, they outsource the advocacy and then those people go in and misrepresent the advocacy they are undertaking to the point that the president of the QIRC has written to me about the disgusting behaviour that is going on at the QIRC.

Mr Lister interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Member for Southern Downs, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms GRACE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is not in his seat. He is interjecting and he is not in his seat. I suggest that if he wants to interject he goes to his seat and he does so appropriately.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind all members to be in their seat if they want to contribute to the debate. Member for Southern Downs, you have been warned under the standing orders.

Ms GRACE: The president of the QIRC wrote to me about the manner in which they are manoeuvring and who they are representing. They have been saying, 'I'm not an agent. I'm not a lawyer. They're not instructing me as a lawyer.' It is ridiculous. I am fixing it up in the bill and I make absolutely no apologies for that. The employer associations are getting exactly the same thing. They are going out there saying they can represent employer organisations. There is AIG and LGAQ. They are all coming in saying exactly the same thing is occurring.

There are two things you do here. You either say the primacy is registered organisations, which has been the case in this country for generations, or you say it is a free-for-all. You cannot have both. Let me say one thing. I hope I am never around when you are on these benches and you make it a free-for-all because no government in this country, no matter what colour you are—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, please direct your comments through the chair.

Ms GRACE: No government, whether Liberal or Labor, has ever meddled in that place. The member for Toowoomba North said that there are monopolies. It has been happening federally for generations. Demarcation disputes are the biggest area that the industrial commission settles. They demark eligibility rules, they demark unions which can bargain. It has happened for years. In fact the primary aim of the federal registered organisations act that was under the LNP was in relation to demarked disputes. Let us not talk about the political motivation for that, because we know it was to get the AWU and Bill Shorten. That is what that was all about, yet they come in here and talk about politically motivated bills.

At least I did not make amendments in an act around unions and their constitutional rights to spend their money on political campaigning to find that it was unconstitutional.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Members to my left. Order!

Ms GRACE: The member for Kawana did and he had to come into this House, at midnight.

Honourable members interjected.


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Glass House, order! Member for Capalaba, order!

Ms GRACE: It was Jeff Seeney, the then member for Callide, who had to come in and fix it all up because the High Court ruled that it was unconstitutional. They get up and say, 'the most draconian IR laws we have ever had to face'. At least mine are constitutional, which is more than what I can say for theirs. When it comes to the sexual harassment—

Debate, on motion of Ms Grace, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Toowoomba South Electorate, Crime

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (8.30 pm): The member for Toowoomba North and I have spoken repeatedly about crime in our wonderful city. Both he and I will not stop talking about it until there has been government intervention to strengthen the law and strengthen the local police resourcing. I want to speak tonight about a couple of experiences that people in my electorate are living through. They are horrifying. I want to reflect on Ken Cunliffe who has presented me with 29 individual cases just from a single social media post that Ken has done, talking about crime across the city. I know

these 29 entries have been forwarded to the youth justice minister. I implore the minister to read them and to take them seriously. I will speak in another time in the House about those 29 instances. Thank you, Ken, for your continuing efforts.


I want to talk about the impact of crime on people who are going to bed with garden tools under their beds because they are fearful. They are selling their houses because of the repeated crime in their streets and against them individually. I want to talk about the scale of the problem when children cannot go to sleep; children are needing to see psychologists. I want to talk about the scale of the problem that has seen a 599 per cent increase in the number of charges being laid for the unlawful use of a motor vehicle—a 599 per cent increase over the last six years. This is extraordinary! This is Toowoomba.

I want to talk about the scale of the problem where my wife is simply out walking on a Friday afternoon and runs into someone near to our home who is saying they are getting together at 4.30 pm on a grim Saturday afternoon in Toowoomba and can I come along and speak with them. That is a community which has had enough. It is a crisis and my people feel like they are at war in our streets. This government is not listening. They are not changing the law. They are not strengthening police resourcing.

Finally in the few moments I have left, I want to speak about one family's experience. Youth were seeking to steal the cars of this family who had been in their bed. The window was smashed by these young offenders. They were disrupted by this family in Rangeville. At that moment, these young offenders started banging on the front door, yelling, 'Give us your keys! Give us your keys!' The seven-year-old child in their bed thought that these people were yelling at them, 'Give us your kids! Give us your kids!' That is what my community is living through, and the member for Toowoomba North and I will not stop talking about it.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Before I call the next member, I remind the member for Toowoomba South that you will not talk about criminal charges that are before the court.

Aspley State High School, Performing Arts


 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (8.33 pm): Last Friday night was a fantastic night at Aspley State High School in my electorate. We had the latest iteration of the annual A Factor Talent Competition. I am very happy to support the event in a very small way, but it is a great event that looks like it is getting bigger and bigger every year. 'Back to the '80s' was the theme for this year. There was so many fantastic entries. I cannot list them all; I can only go through some of the winners from the night.

Murdered by Monday was the group winner. They were really great after a shaky start. They jumped the gun a bit, but they got there and it was a really great performance. The junior winner was Noah Hizon with a fantastic original song. Noah was doubling up; he was also in a band earlier, Son of Hades, which, I was very pleased to hear, performed a Nirvana cover at that time of the evening. I do not think we were allowed to do Nirvana covers when I went to school, so it is great to see that time has made everyone appreciate the artistic merits there. It was a classic. It was *In Bloom* which is a great Nirvana song. Daniel was the senior winner, featuring The Watchmen as his backup band, and Ol' Mate Special was the overall winner with a jet fuel powered cover of Kenny Loggins' *Danger Zone*. As the last act performing on the evening, it was incredible to see them in their *Top Gun* outfits just absolutely killing it on stage. It was really good to see.

Also on the night, the senior and junior dance teams were fantastic. There was a lowlight unfortunately of the evening—the teachers' band was absolutely abysmal! They were pretty shocking. They tried really hard, but their cover of *Love Shack* was really a bit all over the shop. I am joking, of course. They were really good. They put in a bit of effort, but maybe next year they can pick their game up a little bit. It was also good to see the evening finished off by Simian Sick who were the winners from last year. I see them around at various festivals and competitions on the north side. It was great to see them come back to their school and play three songs at the end. It was a really great performance.

It was really good to see that music at the school is really taking off and a very small part of that, I think, but a bigger part going forward, is the new performing arts centre which we opened there in late 2021. The spaces we have in there are absolutely incredible—the music recording studios, the dance studios. The facilities the students have mean they can really excel, really shine at what they do in the creative sector. It is really great to see going forward. I thank the Minister for Education for delivering a really great piece of infrastructure so that in the future some of these students can pick up their careers, can enjoy it for now if that is what they want to do, but going forward in the future they can absolutely do that.

Energy and Jobs Plan

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (8.36 pm): We heard a number of speeches today about the government's energy plan. I want to bring some inconvenient facts to the argument instead of the smoke and mirrors that the government puts forward. For 30 or 40 years, we had coal-fired power stations pumping out electricity at \$35 a megawatt—years and years. What has changed is we had the federal Labor Party bring in a carbon tax and then we had renewable energy hit the marketplace. As we all know, it is volatile. When the sun does not shine, when the wind does not blow, none of this stuff actually happens. Surprisingly, the government have now realised that without firming supply, without batteries or pumped hydro or something like that, their targets cannot work.

The government have a number of problems in building these pumped hydro schemes that they are talking about. They will have to build dams to make that happen, and they do not have a really good history of building dams. We are talking 70 per cent renewable energy by 2032, and then 80 per cent by 2035. To get to that, they are going to have to build these dams within 10 years. The Labor Party has a lousy history with building dams. We know how long it will take them to build dams. Even if they were serious about it, they cannot achieve this.

We have heard there is \$7 billion to \$10 billion worth of private enterprise that has put renewable energy into the Queensland marketplace. We know it is not the government; it has been private enterprise. Where do they think that private enterprise will recover that money from? They are recovering it from electricity prices. That is why we have seen the spike in electricity prices. That is why the federal Labor government are—

Government members interjected.


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Members to my right. Order!

Mr HART: Electricity prices are going to jump by 56 per cent in the next couple of years. This government thinks they can invest \$62 billion into the system that uses a cost recovery system.

We all know they release a regulated asset base of what they spend—\$62 billion. What is that going to do to the price of electricity? I will tell honourable members what it will do. It will send it through the roof. Watch this space; people's electricity bills will blow out so this government can go down its ideological way without any common sense and rush to renewable energy.

I support a transition to renewable energy—do not get me wrong—but it has to be done on an economic and engineering basis, and this government does not have one.

Integrity in Government

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (8.39 pm): I once asked one of my students the meaning of integrity after he made an unwise decision. He said, 'Miss, integrity is doing what is right even when nobody is watching.' Integrity is about doing what is right, moral and ethical, not necessarily what is popular.


The Queensland Labor Party has a proven track record of delivering services and programs for all Queenslanders, especially those who experience times of vulnerability in our community. Our Labor government has been able to successfully pivot and adjust its strategy during the past 2½ years of the COVID-19 pandemic to keep Queenslanders safe and drive a successful economy that has been the envy of other jurisdictions and western developed countries. Our state Labor government also has a proven track record to address the integrity of our democratic political systems and machinery-of-government structures and procedures to deliver integrity reform to improve transparency and accountability.

This year the Palaszczuk government commissioned two significant integrity reports. First, Professor Peter Coaldrake released his final report on 28 June 2022 titled *Let the sunshine in*, which made 14 recommendations designed to strengthen accountability and integrity mechanisms in the Queensland government. As the Premier has clearly stated, our government will accept all of his recommendations lock, stock and barrel. The recommendations are bold, comprehensive, visionary and exactly what we want for this state. Once they are implemented, Queensland will have the most transparent and accountable government in Australia.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Excuse me, member, can you confirm that you are not anticipating debate on a bill before the House?

Ms McMILLAN: Yes, I can. The second significant report was delivered to the Queensland government on 9 August 2022 by the Hon. Tony Fitzgerald AC, KC and Hon. Alan Wilson KC relating to the Crime and Corruption Commission. The commission of inquiry's recommendations are intended to improve the way the CCC operates under the guiding principle that they should all serve to restore and cement public confidence in the CCC. In contrast, the LNP has failed to support the review of our state's accountability and integrity procedures and processes. The LNP challenged our lowering of the donation disclosure threshold in the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal. The LNP voted against the banning of property developer donations and the recommendations of the CCC, and the LNP voted against the legislation that enabled the introduction of real-time disclosure. They sacked and stood over the CCC chairman, they sacked the CCC parliamentary committee in the dead of the night and they voted against every integrity measure we introduced. With a solid track record against integrity reform by the LNP, the big question is whether David Crisafulli will commit to Professor Coaldrake's reforms.

Labrador Tigers Football Club

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (8.42 pm): The federal budget told a story of cuts for Queensland, but at least one project was spared the razor. In giving credit where credit is due, I would like to acknowledge we are finally getting the funding that the Labrador Tigers Football Club has long deserved. This was a project the LNP committed to at the last state election. Unfortunately, we did not get to government to deliver the funding and the state Labor government did not support the project. I will put politics aside to acknowledge the new government's unsuccessful candidate for my local federal electorate of Fadden achieved a \$900,000 commitment anyway, which is now in the budget.

Members will know this club is close to my heart, and not just because I had a Victorian dad and so Aussie Rules was my sport of choice.


An opposition member: Go the Lions!

Mr O'CONNOR: No, I am not taking that interjection. I just did, didn't I? No, it is because for a few years I worked behind the bar at the Tigers. In fact—and members can check my biography on the parliament's website—technically my job immediately prior to politics was 'bartender/courtesy bus driver at Labrador AFL Sports Club'. It is a great local club which had an outstanding season this year. All four of their senior men's teams made the finals: the seniors, the reserves, the Colts and division 4. The reserves actually won their second premiership in a row. They had more juniors play for the Tigers this year than ever before. I want to give a special shout-out to the under-14s who, sadly, fell short in the grand final but had a great season. It is a group of boys who have played together since Auskick. I am sure they will be back stronger next year.

Labrador also started a women's team last year. In their second season they won twice as many games as they did in their first year. I will not go into the details of how many, but the club actually lost female players because of the sad state of their current facilities. We actually think this is the only Aussie Rules club in Queensland to go backwards in this demographic as women and girls now make up well over 40 per cent of players across our state. That is because Labrador has missed out on funding compared to pretty much every other club on the coast, and that is not good enough.

Getting this upgrade is really important and it will mean that the Tigers can have separate change rooms for men, women and their umpires. The design is being finalised, and pending council approvals it should be underway by the start of next year. That would be a really fitting time to get it going because 2023 is actually the 60th birthday of the Labrador Football Club and they will be undergoing a rebrand with a new logo in celebration. The final hurdle is that we need about another \$200,000 to \$300,000. I will be writing to the states sports minister to ask what grant options might be available to get this underway. If we are let down, we will have to see what funding we can get from the City of Gold Coast with the support of our local councillor Ryan Bayldon-Lumsden.

Ashgrove Electorate; Lions Clubs International

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (8.45 pm): In this House we all value our diverse experiences and values. Despite our political differences and despite our schooling, despite the differences in the electorates we represent, I reckon we can all agree that we believe in and back the work of our local Lions Clubs. Lions Clubs are part of community life, whether in Airlie, Arundel or Ashgrove, in my electorate. This month marks the 75th year of the Lions Club operating in Australia. It is also the 60th year of operation of my local Ashgrove The Gap Lions Club.


I am a member of this Lions club. They are an incredible group full of the most giving and entertaining people you will meet within our community. We meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at Zegatos restaurant. While I am on that topic, Zegatos is run by Tony, who came into local folklore when working for Il Centro. He created the now infamous sand crab lasagne, which he still does now at Zegatos.

Lions Clubs live by the motto 'we serve', and never has a truer word been spoken. Locally, they are involved in every community project: fundraising for cancer support services; cooking breakfast burgers for trekkers coming in after walking through the national park; providing financial sponsorship to local sporting clubs, including Valley Cricket's All Abilities Program; and hosting the Lions Youth of the Year events, which recognise the outstanding contributions of our local young people.

Our local Lions group is a bit of an amalgamation of clubs over the 60-year period, including Lions Clubs from Enoggera, Bardon, Ashgrove and The Gap, and it is impossible to share that diverse background in the time I have available. All the groups share the ideology that together we can achieve more. Their achievements are incredible. Anyone who is involved in a Lions club knows that you are never off duty. For example, I recently hosted some members of the local Lions club for lunch here at Parliament House. We had about an hour together and in that time they managed to sell Melbourne Cup trifecta tickets to the members for Cairns and Nanango. I have already told the members for Cairns and Nanango that if they win, they need to keep me in their thoughts.

The stories and the people behind the stories of The Gap Ashgrove Lions Club are beautiful and vast. They are also about to appear in writing as the club is in the process of publishing its 60-year anniversary history book. I say congratulations to the club and to all those involved in Lions Clubs Queensland.

Education Funding

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (8.48 pm): I want to talk about something that affects every child in this state: education funding. This week we have seen that the federal Labor government is not going to up its contribution to schools funding in this country, and I want to know whether this state government is finally going to pay its share as well. It has been 10 years since the federal Labor government dragged its feet on legislating for needs-based school funding. It left it to the absolute last moment before the 2013 election, only for the incoming LNP government to trash it.

In Queensland, as with so many things in this place, the bar set by the Newman government was so low. On needs-based school funding the Newman government was criminally negligent, but this low, low bar has meant that Labor can do the literal bare minimum, make literally any improvement, claim record funding and claim a job done. The result has been that funding for public schools in Queensland has pretty much stagnated.


With the Commonwealth kicking in 20 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard, we need an 80 per cent share from Queensland for our kids to get a decent education, but what are we at? We are at just 69.2 per cent, with no plan to get to the full 80 per cent. The government's plan is to continue to underfund schools, aiming to get to just 75 per cent by 2032—and this is despite the fact that state schools look after some of the most marginalised students in Queensland. About 87 per cent of disadvantaged students in Queensland are in public schools.

In my electorate, one of the biggest high schools in the state, Brisbane State High School, my alma mater, went underfunded by about \$11 million in 2020. It has been left to the P&C, volunteers, parents and students to fundraise for essential resources like maintaining sports fields. They desperately need the funding they deserve to give thousands of Queensland students the education, the facilities and the sports fields they deserve.

The federal budget this week delivered yet another blow to our state schools. The Australian Education Union President, Correna Haythorpe, said this week that there is one election commitment that has not yet been realised, and that is Labor's promise to secure a pathway to a minimum of 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard for public schools.

Not only are our schools wilfully underfunded but Queensland stands set to lose a state primary school, East Brisbane State School, to the Gabba demolition. This school is in a growing neighbourhood and has a growing school population, yet students do not know where they will be learning and playing come maybe 2025. If the education minister would like to find the funding needed to fully fund our state schools and to get priorities in Queensland right, maybe she should take advice from the students from East Brisbane State School, who have said, 'We need our school', 'Schools not stadiums' and 'Education first' and spend the \$2 billion they would spend on the Gabba on the education that we need instead.

Algester Electorate, Community Organisations

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (8.51 pm): The Algester electorate is home to some incredible local organisations that do so much for our community. In the last couple of months I have been reminded of just how tough the last few years have been for everyone and how vital having strong community organisations really is. At the peak of the necessary COVID restrictions, and now as families face cost-of-living pressures, it is frontline community organisations that have been there to lend an ear, provide advice and support, distribute food and other necessities, and facilitate much needed services.

I have had the privilege of working with a number of community organisations across the Algester electorate over the past seven years—organisations like *Belong*, which runs the neighbourhood and community centre in Acacia Ridge. Over more than 30 years under different banners it has been delivering support across the Acacia Ridge area. *Belong* offers food relief, emergency financial assistance and community support workers and it also provides community spaces for local groups. Their motto is ‘helping others grow and learn together’, which is just what they do. They were a fundamental support service during the height of COVID and continue to provide important supports to many across the community. *Belong* recently announced a partnership with *Community Queensland*, a larger NGO based in Brisbane, to help strengthen their organisation and their future. I recently met with Christine Grosse, the CEO of *Belong*, and Karen Dare from *Community Queensland* to hear all about their exciting plans for the centre and how they will further develop services for the community.


The Algester Parkinson Lions, of which I am a member, also serves our community by working closely with many school and community groups and is a very well known and appreciated group within the Algester electorate and beyond. The executive and the member volunteers are simply amazing. I want to give a quick shout-out to Di Henderson, Brian Philipson, Des O’Brien, Robyn Bergmansons and all the Algester Parkinson Lions, who help others and bring our community together.

Open Hands Community Care at Pallara is a relatively new charity, formed in 2008, that delivers a range of community-based initiatives to support people regardless of their cultural or social background, gender or race. From low-cost groceries to approved community care, the people who work with Open Hands are always ready with a smile on their face. I recently met with co-founder Sherifaye Jalloh and operations lead officer Pule Salafi, who shared their plans for expansion of their Pallara site. Their food drive is currently underway, and I was pleased to provide sponsorship for 10 essential goods hampers that will go to families in need.

Of course, we continue to see many organisations that do an incredible amount of work across the Algester electorate. This is what makes the Algester electorate a place where people love to live and a place that I am incredibly proud to represent.

While I am on my feet, I do want to acknowledge all of the First Nations peoples across the country who are experiencing sorry business right now. It is an extremely sad time, when you see some of the things that are happening in other states.

Department of Environment and Science

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (8.54 pm): In terms of unforeseen expenditure in the Department of Environment and Science, the 2021-22 Consolidated Fund Financial Report states reasons such as bringing forward payments to local government for the waste disposal levy, the Reef Water Quality Program, protected area estate infrastructure and enterprise bargaining.


The Treasurer recently introduced Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2022 into state parliament to enable taxpayers to pay for this unforeseen blow-out in the budget. The DES blow-out demonstrates that not only can they not manage evidence-based science in the reef; they cannot manage their finances either. Taxpayers have the right to demand that poor policy areas are no longer propped up and that good money is no longer thrown after bad. Queensland farmers, as stated by the chair of the AgForce Reef Taskforce, believe that programs such as the waste levy and reef regulations, which enforce poor, unrealistic policies, should cease or be critically overhauled. They are costly for all Queenslanders, reduce productivity, have no proven improved environmental outcomes and create undue stress on individuals.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence that the Department of Environment and Science is putting measures in place to prevent another annual budget blow-out. Since July 2022, 15 new permanent environmental officers for compliance activities have been appointed. Reef protection regulations are rolling out into all reef catchments on 1 December 2022, prior to the review of the reef Scientific

Consensus Statement. The amount of coral on the Great Barrier Reef is at its highest level since 1985. The latest data on the GBR indicates that it is in good shape. It happens to have a great deal of coral in 2022 because there have been few major mortality events over the past five to 10 years. The three or four bleaching events since 2016, which have been widely reported in the media, could not have killed much coral; otherwise, the 2022 statistics would not be good. The data since 1986 shows every region and every sector of the reef, and most reefs have had periods of very low coral cover. This is entirely natural. Much is often made of this in the media, but the health of the system is its ability to recover from major stress. The data collected by AIMS shows that the GBR is a robust and healthy system.

Additionally, properties are being purchased and added to the protected area estate, which already is comprised of 500 parcels of land across Queensland. So why does this government still target the practices of largely one sector—agriculture? Why not urban development or resources? Maybe this is due to the votes in the more high density areas. There seems to be no cap on staff numbers or planning on how to manage existing conservation lands. Will the minister curtail this Department of Environment and Science spending and the purchase of properties for the protected area estate until at least we are back in the black with state debt and review the science that underpins these reef regulations?

Comments by Member for Mudgeeraba; Noon, Mr D

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (8.57 pm): Can I just say how disappointed I am that the member for Mudgeeraba has not come into this chamber and apologised for her comments earlier today. In talking about doctors and health workers the member interjected and said, 'They only employ duds in regions.'

Mr Powell: Put it in context. That is not what she said.

Mrs D'ATH: The member has come in here and spoken again about doctors without apologising. I take the interjection from the member opposite. The fact is that, although the member has made statements outside of this House, she did not stand up and take personal offence at the comments at the time. The member has not come in here at any point to raise a matter of privilege and say that she was misrepresented and will be writing to the Speaker. Why? Because she said what she said. That is the fact. In fact, when I accidentally thought it was the member for Whitsunday and apologised and said that it was the member for Mudgeeraba, she actually responded and said, 'Yes, it was.' She actually acknowledged that they were her comments and not those of the member for Whitsunday. I expect her to come in tomorrow morning and apologise.

I also want to speak about the amazing Public Service and the public servants who work within it, in particular those Queenslanders who work right across Queensland, including in regional and remote Queensland, within the Department of Health. These Queenslanders, whether they are frontline or enabling staff, play their own unique role in ensuring our health system operates and supports Queenslanders no matter where they live. I have said it before: the Palaszczuk government respects our Public Service and we thank them for their work.

I would like to pay tribute to and thank Mr David Noon for his 40-year contribution to the people of Queensland in the Department of Health. He officially retires tomorrow. David commenced in the central office of the Department of Health in December 1981 in the home medical aids section. Since then he has seen the department go from strength to strength—from a budget in the late eighties of about \$1.59 billion to today over \$20 billion.

David worked in a number of corporate support areas of the department until he found his niche in the early nineties when the government introduced cabinet legislation liaison units. He worked his way up through the ranks and retires from the Public Service tomorrow as the Manager of the Cabinet and Parliamentary Services unit, a role which I am advised he relished and in which he built a strong rapport with hundreds of colleagues right across Queensland. David's time providing executive support services saw him support 20 ministers and 17 chief executive officers—a remarkable innings.

I am advised by colleagues close to David that he will be remembered as someone who liked working in a team environment, enjoying the camaraderie that came with the job, and as someone who could always share a joke to remove obvious pressures and the stress of the job while ensuring deadlines were always met. This is a great testament to a great public servant. On behalf of the Palaszczuk government, I thank David for his service and wish him a safe and happy retirement ahead.

The House adjourned at 9.00 pm.

ATTENDANCE

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